

Safe and Supportive School Program

LEGISLATION RELATED TO THE SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Texas Legislature enacts laws that require school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to implement policies, programs, and procedures to support the physical and psychological well-being of students, staff, and other members of the school community. The following are selected legislative actions that are related to school safety and the implementation of the Safe and Supportive School Program.

87TH LEGISLATURE - 2021

[HOUSE BILL 3597](#)

HB 3597 updates several provisions within the Texas Education Code related to school safety and emergency operation management. HB 3597 clarifies that only school districts with a facility within 1,000 yards of a railroad track need to include policy for responding to a train derailment in their multihazard emergency operations plan. The bill directs the commissioner in consultation with the Texas School Safety Center (TXSSC) and state fire marshal to designate the number and type of mandatory school drills not to exceed a total of eight drills.

HB 3597 grants new flexibilities for superintendents to appoint members to their district's safe and supportive school and threat assessment teams. Furthermore, the bill reduces the number of months from six to three when the TXSSC must notify the TEA that a district has failed to conduct a public hearing on the district's multihazard emergency operations plan noncompliance. Each school district that enters a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or mutual aid agreement addressing issues that affect school safety and security shall, at the TXSSC's request, provide a copy of the MOU or agreement to the TXSSC.

HB 3597 entitles Texas State University to obtain criminal history record information that relates to a person who is registering with the TXSSC to provide safety or security consulting services.

This bill applies to charter schools with the exception of the provisions related to conducting a public hearing on a school district's multihazard emergency operations plan noncompliance which do not apply to charter schools.

[SENATE BILL 168](#)

SB 168 requires the commissioner of education, in consultation with the Texas School Safety Center (TXSSC) and state fire marshal, to adopt rules providing for best practices when conducting emergency school drills and exercises. SB 168 requires that before a school district or charter school may conduct an active shooter exercise, the district or charter must adopt a policy on active shooter exercises to ensure that parents and staff are provided adequate notice of the date, content, form, and tone of exercises and whether the exercise will include a live simulation of an actual shooting incident. SB 168 further requires policies adopted for the exercise by districts and charters are announced prior to the start of the exercise, including, if applicable, that the exercise includes a live simulation of a threat, such as a shooting incident.

Safe and Supportive School Program

Districts and charters must notify first responder organizations that would likely respond in the event of a false report or alarm of the exercise and create a safe zone around the area to keep out actual firearms, ammunition, or other weapons. SB 168 requires that the exercise be age and developmentally appropriate and be developed by a team of administrators, teachers, school-based mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers, with input from parents and students. The exercise must incorporate trauma-informed practices to directly address the well-being of students who participate. SB 168 applies with the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year.

SENATE BILL 1831

SB 1831, cited as the “No Trafficking Zone Act,” requires each public or private primary or secondary school to post warning signs in specific locations on the school’s premises regarding increased penalties for human trafficking. The TEA, in consultation with the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, must adopt rules regarding the placement, installation, design, size, wording and maintenance procedures for the warning signs. The rules must stipulate that warning signs should be at least 8-1/2 by 11 inches in size and be written in both English and Spanish.

SB 1831 directs the TEA to provide the signs to schools at no cost. If the agency is unable to furnish enough signs, the TEA may provide a school fewer signs than the number necessary to comply with SB 1831’s posting requirements and prioritize sign distribution to locations based on criminal activity reports in areas near that school.

SENATE BILL 2050

SB 2050 requires local education agencies (LEAs) to update their policies and procedures related to bullying to prevent and mediate bullying incidents between students.

- The bill directs the TEA to adopt minimum standards for an LEA’s policy related to bullying which must:
- Include an emphasis on bullying prevention by focusing on school climate and building healthy relationships between students and staff;
- Require each district campus to establish a committee to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives;
- Require students at each grade level to meet periodically for instruction on building relationships and preventing bullying, including cyberbullying;
- Include an emphasis on increasing student reporting of bullying incidents to school employees by increasing awareness about district reporting procedures and providing for anonymous reporting of bullying incidents;
- Require districts to collect information annually through student surveys on bullying, including cyberbullying and use those survey results to develop action plans to address student concerns regarding bullying, including cyberbullying; and
- Require districts to develop a rubric or checklist to assess an incident of bullying and to determine the district’s response to the incident.

Safe and Supportive School Program

Additionally, SB 2050 requires LEAs to report the number of reported incidents of bullying and the number of incidents of bullying that included cyberbullying, that have occurred at each campus to the TEA as required by Commissioner of Education rule.

86TH LEGISLATURE - 2019

[HOUSE BILL 18](#)

HB 18 provides for implementation of best practice-based programs and research-based practices regarding mental health promotion and intervention, substance abuse prevention and intervention, and suicide prevention in public schools. The bill revises provisions relating to continuing education requirements for a classroom teacher, a principal, and a school counselor and provisions relating to the authorized and required components for staff development training provided by a public school district to an educator other than a principal. The bill includes an emphasis on mental health, including certain associated instruction, as an additional requirement for a district's health enrichment curriculum and requires the State Board of Education to adopt essential knowledge and skills for the health enrichment curriculum that address specified matters related to substance abuse, including the use of illegal drugs, abuse of prescription drugs, abuse of alcohol, and other forms of substance abuse. The bill requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to compile evidence-based substance abuse awareness programs for use by a district in the district's health enrichment curriculum and changes the method for determining the effectiveness of such a program.

[HOUSE BILL 906](#)

HB 906 amends the Education Code to establish the Collaborative Task Force on Public School Mental Health Services for purposes of studying and evaluating:

- mental health services that are funded by the state and provided at a public school district or open-enrollment charter school directly to a student enrolled in the district or charter school, a parent or family member of or person standing in parental relation to such a student, or an employee of the district or charter school;
- training provided to an educator employed by the district or charter school to provide the mental health services; and
- the impact such mental health services have on the physical and emotional safety and well-being of the individuals who are provided the mental health services and on the number of violent incidents that occur at districts or charter schools.

[SENATE BILL 11](#)

SB 11 amends current law to revise and expand provisions relating to a public school district or public junior college district multihazard emergency operations plan, relating to a district safety and security audit and associated report to the Texas School Safety Center, and relating to additional plan components required specifically for a school district.

Safe and Supportive School Program

SB 11 provides for the establishment of a safe and supportive school program, requires each district board of trustees to establish a threat assessment and safe and supportive school team, and sets out related provisions. SB 11 requires the Texas School Safety Center to develop model policies and procedures for threat assessment teams.

SB 11 revises and expands certain public school curriculum requirements to incorporate mental health, suicide prevention, and digital citizenship, including cyberbullying information. The bill extends the duties of a local school health advisory council to address parental awareness of suicide related risk factors and warning signs of such risk and other behavioral health concerns. The bill requires each district to adopt and implement a policy requiring the integration of trauma informed care practices in each school environment and sets out related provisions, including training and reporting requirements.

SB 11 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop a rubric for use by regional education service centers in identifying specified regionally available mental health resources, requires each service center to produce an inventory of such resources, and requires TEA to develop and to revise biennially a statewide resource inventory and statewide plan for student mental health.

SB 11 amends the Health and Safety Code to establish the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium and sets out provisions relating to its purpose, composition, administration, and duties. Among other provisions, the bill requires the consortium to establish a network of comprehensive child psychiatry access centers at participating health-related institutions of higher education and establish certain telemedicine or telehealth programs.