

[2021 Session] Shrink School Policing and Prioritize Mental Health Supports for Students

Policy Background

Texas school districts often employ or contract with peace officers, designated School Resource Officers (SROs), or other security personnel to oversee school safety measures and monitor student behavior. As their numbers on campus have grown in response to school shootings and other incidents over past decades, unintended consequences have arisen, including the growth of the school-to-prison pipeline – with students facing physical restraints, suspension, expulsion, interrogation, arrest, and referral to the justice system. Many students, especially students of color whose communities have historically been over-policed, have expressed challenges learning while armed police are in school halls.

Even as schools have incrementally increased budgets for school police, they have often continued to deprioritize students' mental health and social-emotional needs. In light of COVID-19 and national unrest around police violence, students' trauma and behavioral needs must be addressed to ensure that classroom instruction is as effective, accessible, and productive as possible – both for short- and long-term academic success.

Proposed Solution

Ensure that schools and school personnel have access to the training and capacity needed to effectively and equitably implement evidence-based practices that meet the increased behavioral and mental health needs of students.

This is especially critical for students of color, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities who have been disproportionately harmed by the pandemic and who were least likely to access positive school cultures and mental health supports prior to the pandemic.

Relevant Bills

- **Bill Number:** [HB 4079](#) [Talarico]
Bill Caption: Relating to a mental health professional to school law enforcement official ratio for public schools and the use of the school safety allotment to

employ mental health professionals.

- **Bill Number:** **SB 178** [Lucio]
Bill Caption: Relating to the employment of certified school counselors by school districts.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 96** [Menéndez]
Bill Caption: Relating to the provision of on-campus mental health services by a school district and reimbursement under Medicaid for certain services provided to eligible students.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 1713** [Dominguez, Guillen]
Bill Caption: Relating to the employment of certain mental health professionals at a public school campus.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 332** [Talarico, Bernal, Buckley]
Bill Caption: Relating to expanding the compensatory education allotment to allow funds to be used to implement social-emotional learning programs.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 2004** [Lucio]
Bill Caption: Relating to expanding the compensatory education allotment to allow funds to be used to implement social-emotional learning programs.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 28** [Neave]
Bill Caption: Relating to social work services in public schools.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 226** [Bernal]
Bill Caption: Relating to social work services in public schools.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 253** [Menéndez]
Bill Caption: Relating to social work services in public schools.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 2010** [Talarico]
Bill Caption: Relating to the membership of a school district's threat assessment and safe and supportive school team and committee and the school safety allotment under the public school finance system.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 1596** [Lucio]
Bill Caption: Relating to the membership of a school district's threat assessment and safe and supportive school team and committee and the school safety

allotment under the public school finance system.

- **Bill Number:** **SB 2057** [Menéndez]
Bill Caption: Relating to a matching grant program for school districts for the development and implementation of programs to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students.

Other Bills Related to Student Discipline

- **Bill Number:** **SB 1074** [Lucio]
Bill Caption: Relating to positive behavior plans of school districts, development of positive behavior best practices by the Texas Education Agency, and reporting of disproportionate discretionary disciplinary action by school districts.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 785** [Allen, Reynolds, Jarvis Johnson]
Bill Caption: Relating to behavior improvement plans and behavioral intervention plans for certain public school students and notification and documentation requirements regarding certain behavior management techniques.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 1194** [Wu]
Bill Caption: Relating to requiring a school district or open-enrollment charter school to report data regarding restraints administered to, complaints filed against, citations issued to, and arrests made of students.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 936** [West]
Bill Caption: Relating to requiring a school district or open-enrollment charter school to report data regarding restraints administered to, complaints filed against, citations issued to, and arrests made of students.
- **Bill Number:** **SB 1979** [Miles]
Bill Caption: Relating to reporting and disseminating information regarding public school disciplinary actions.
- **Bill Number:** **HB 3485** [Goodwin]
Bill Caption: Relating to information reported through the Public Education Information Management System and to parents regarding disciplinary measures used by a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

- **Bill Number:** [HB 1163](#) [Mary González]
Bill Caption: Relating to prohibiting the use of certain restraints on students enrolled in public schools who receive special education services.
- **Bill Number:** [HB 2975](#) [Hull, Oliverson, Cain, Moody, Bernal]
Bill Caption: Relating to prohibiting the physical restraint of certain public school students by peace officers and school security personnel under certain circumstances.
TCJE Materials: [Fact Sheet](#)
- **Bill Number:** [HB 4091](#) [Talarico]
Bill Caption: Relating to a student experience study for public school students.
- **Bill Number:** [SB 272](#) [West]
Bill Caption: Relating to requiring the board of trustees of each school district to create a nonvoting student trustee position on the board.

Other Materials

- TCJE's "Spend Your Values, Cut Your Losses" [portfolio](#) and [webpage](#) [Smart and Safe Solution #6]
- TCJE [Testimony](#) on the Texas Education Agency, submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Article III [February 2021]
- TCJE [Testimony](#) on the Texas Education Agency, submitted to the Senate Finance Committee [February 2021]
- TCJE [Testimony](#) on the Texas Education Agency's Legislative Appropriations Request, submitted to the Legislative Budget Board [November 2020]
- Testimony on [SB 11, School Safety, and School Spending](#), submitted to the House Committee on Public Health [produced by TCJE, the Education Trust in Texas, Texas Appleseed, IDRA, October 2020]

See similar [testimony](#) on [SB 11, School Safety, and School Spending](#), submitted to the House Committee on Public Education [produced by TCJE, the Education Trust in Texas, Texas Appleseed, IDRA, September 2020]

- TCJE Report: [Reversing the Pipeline to Prison in Texas: How to Ensure Safe Schools AND Safe Students](#) [February 2020]

Also see the report's [Quick Guide](#).