



Jennifer Carreon, Policy Researcher
Work: (512) 441-8123, ext. 103
Executive Director's Cell: (512) 587-7010
jcarreon@TexasCJC.org
www.TexasCJC.org

FACT SHEET 2013

H.B. 977

Examine the Use of the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) as an Alternative to Placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program

THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Texas Legislature created Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) to provide students with an appropriate educational setting while they are suspended from school.¹ Unfortunately, due to insufficient oversight, some Texas DAEPs offer students poor programming and inadequate resources.²

In fact, in a recent review of four major school districts, the state's Legislative Budget Board identified the following areas of concern: (1) failure to staff DAEPs with certified teachers, (2) failure to provide a learning environment equivalent to mainstream campuses, (3) inadequate training for DAEP instructors and staff, (4) lack of instructional alignment between DAEPs and mainstream campuses, (5) insufficient communication between DAEPs and mainstream campuses, and (6) an absence of transitional programming following a student's return to a mainstream campus after leaving a DAEP.³ These inadequacies hinder youths' ability to correct their misbehavior, potentially leading to further involvement in the juvenile justice system⁴ and, with it, life-altering consequences (e.g., reduced opportunity for employment, military service, or college enrollment).

Texas must re-evaluate the current use of DAEPs and support the use of more effective alternatives to address youth misbehavior, including Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), which emphasizes both student engagement and interpersonal/communal relationships through modification of individual behaviors.

KEY FINDINGS

- DAEPs do not currently meet the standards under which they were created. Students sent to a DAEP are met with poor programming, inadequate staff, and a multitude of barriers to successful reintegration to their main campuses.⁵
- Students sent to a DAEP are at higher risk for expulsion⁶ and dropping out,⁷ ultimately increasing the likelihood of their involvement in the juvenile justice system.
- Youth placed in alternative programs that emphasize student engagement and interpersonal relationship development (over strict discipline) have demonstrated more positive development and behavior.⁸
- Youth who choose to participate in the JROTC have improved in areas of leadership, goal setting, civic engagement, respect for authority, and positive youth development.⁹

COST-SAVING AND PUBLIC SAFETY-DRIVEN SOLUTION: SUPPORT H.B. 977 BY REPRESENTATIVE RAYMOND

- **H.B. 977 creates a JROTC pilot program in certain large Texas high school municipalities as an alternative to placing students in DAEPs.** Examining the use of JROTC through this pilot program model can provide a strong estimate of potential cost savings for Texas communities with large populations of at-risk youth. Indeed, as JROTC programs are largely funded by the US Department of Armed Forces, school districts that choose to offer JROTC programs could save millions in costs otherwise associated with funding DAEPs.¹⁰

Solution continued on reverse.

COST-SAVING AND PUBLIC SAFETY-DRIVEN SOLUTION (CONTINUED)

- **Under H.B. 977, only certain youth are permitted to participate in the pilot program, and those who do participate will continue to attend regularly assigned classes**, with modifications as necessary for program participation. **Participation will extend for up to one year**, unless prolonged placement will be in the best interests of the student.
- **H.B. 977 also requires comprehensive data collection about students placed in JROTC pilot programs**, including their race, gender, and age; conduct precipitating placement in the program; number of days assigned to the program; educational performance before, during, and after placement in the program; and any dropout information. With data collection and analysis, local and state decision-makers will be better informed about the pilot programs' efficacy, for future resource allocation.

Citations

¹ Texas Education Code §37.008.

² Texas Appleseed, *Texas' School-to-Prison Pipeline, Dropout to Incarceration: The Impact of School Discipline and Zero Tolerance* (October 2007).

³ Legislative Budget Board, *Amarillo Independent School District – A Review of the Student Behavior Management System* (2011); Legislative Budget Board, *Dallas Independent School District – A Review of the Student Behavior Management System* (2011); Legislative Budget Board, *Fort Bend Independent School District – A Review of the Student Behavior Management System* (2011); Legislative Budget Board, *Ingleside Independent School District – A Review of the Student Behavior Management System* (2011).

⁴ The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute, *Breaking School Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Student's Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement* (July 2011).

⁵ Legislative Budget Board, *A Review of Student Behavior Management System's* (2011).

⁶ The Council of State Governments, et al., *Breaking School Rules* (2011).

⁷ Texas Appleseed, *Texas' School-to-Prison Pipeline* (2007). "DAEP's have five times the dropout rate of mainstream schools," p. 3.

⁸ Janay B. Sander, Jill D. Sharkey PhD and NCSP, Roger Olivarri, Diane A. Tanigawa & Tory Mauseth (2010): *A Qualitative Study of Juvenile Offenders, Student Engagement, and Interpersonal Relationships: Implications for Research Directions and Preventionist Approaches*, *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 20:4, pp. 288-315.

⁹ Tyrone Walls, *Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps: A Comparison with Other Successful Youth Development Programs and an Analysis of Military Recruits who Participate in JROTC*, Naval Post-Graduate School (June 2003).

¹⁰ Texas Appleseed, *Breaking Rules, Breaking Budgets: The Cost of Exclusionary Discipline in 11 Texas School Districts* (October 2012). Dallas I.S.D. alone spends \$9 million to support three DAEPs, which have "markedly lower attendance rates," meaning that the district is at a financial loss once its reimbursement for weighted average daily attendance is taken into consideration.