

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2684
By: Giddings
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

School resource officers and school district peace officers are not currently required to complete training focused on working with minors in a school setting. Some, but not all, school district police departments require officer training for mental health crisis intervention, but these officers have expressed a need for training to learn techniques which specifically apply to minors in a school setting so that they can properly handle situations without risk of unnecessarily escalating the situation or harming a student. H.B. 2684 seeks to address this need.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2684 amends the Occupations Code to require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to create, adopt, and distribute a model training curriculum for school district peace officers and school resource officers in consultation with an institute dedicated to providing training to law enforcement and the development of law enforcement policies or in consultation with the Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University. The bill requires the curriculum to incorporate learning objectives regarding child and adolescent development and psychology; positive behavioral interventions and supports, conflict resolution techniques, and restorative justice techniques; de-escalation techniques and techniques for limiting the use of force; the mental and behavioral health needs of children with disabilities or special needs; mental health crisis intervention; and cultural competency. The bill requires TCOLE to provide a 30-day period for public comment before adopting and distributing any such curriculum and requires TCOLE to provide the curriculum and any supplemental education materials created for the curriculum to school district police departments, law enforcement agencies that place peace officers in a school as school resource officers under a memorandum of understanding, and any entity that provides training to school district peace officers or school resource officers. The bill requires TCOLE to review the developed and adopted curriculum and update subject matter contained in the curriculum as needed at least once every four years and to create the curriculum not later than December 1, 2015.

H.B. 2684 requires TCOLE by rule to require a school district peace officer or a school resource officer to successfully complete an education and training program for school district peace officers and school resource officers before or within 120 days of the officer's commission by or placement in a school. The bill requires the program to consist of at least 16 hours of training, be

approved by TCOLE, and provide training in accordance with the curriculum developed under the bill's provisions in each required subject area. The bill prohibits the education and training program from requiring a peace officer to pass an examination but requires TCOLE to administer an examination to qualify officers to provide the education and training to other officers. The bill requires that examination to test the officer's knowledge and recognition of the curriculum's subject areas. The bill requires TCOLE to issue a professional achievement or proficiency certificate to a peace officer who completes the education and training program. The bill requires TCOLE to make the training available to school district peace officers and school resource officers not later than February 1, 2016 and requires a school district peace officer or school resource officer who commences employment with a school district or commences providing law enforcement at a school district on a date occurring before February 1, 2016, to complete the required training as soon as practicable and not later than June 1, 2016.

H.B. 2684 amends the Education Code to require a school district that commissions a school district peace officer or at which a school resource officer provides law enforcement, not later than February 1, 2016, to adopt a policy requiring the officer to complete the education and training program required under the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.