

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4257  
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Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Crisis events such as Hurricane Harvey, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Winter Storm Uri have demonstrated the substantial impact of disasters and traumatic events on children. Over the last year, Texas children have experienced higher rates of clinical depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation as the pandemic has left many children socially isolated and uncertain about the future. There have been calls for school districts to explore strategies to better support both educators and students as the lingering effects of trauma continue to impact the education community. Currently, state law requires every public school district to develop a district improvement plan that includes the integration of trauma-informed practices. C.S.H.B. 4257 seeks to build on this existing requirement by requiring districts to incorporate into their trauma-informed care policies a plan for providing support to students, teachers, and district staff in the event of a crisis.

### **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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4257 amends the Education Code to require a public school district's trauma-informed care policy to address a public school district's plan for providing support to students, teachers, and district staff in the event of a crisis, including through methods such as psychological first aid and referrals to appropriate mental health professionals and providers. The bill applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4257 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The original included a reference to mental health first aid, which the substitute changes to refer to psychological first aid. The substitute includes referrals to district mental health professionals, if available, as an additional method to those in the original by which a district may provide crisis support.