

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2050
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Bullying in public schools has become a serious problem among teenagers. In fact, according to the National Bullying Prevention Center, one out of every five (20.2 percent) students reported they had experienced some bullying. Additionally, 49.8 percent of teenagers between the ages of nine and 12 said they experienced bullying at school, and 14.5 percent of teenagers shared they experienced bullying online. Furthermore, teenagers who were cyberbullied shared that it negatively impacted their feelings about themselves (69.1 percent), their friendship (31.9 percent), their physical health (13.1 percent), and their schoolwork (6.5 percent). The National Bullying Prevention Center also reported that students who experience bullying are at increased risk of depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school. Unfortunately, teenagers who are bullied are also at a higher risk of committing suicide. According to National Bullying Prevention Center, students facing peer victimization are 2.2 times more likely to have suicide ideation and 2.6 times more likely to attempt suicide than students not facing victimization. According to the Megan Meier Foundation, one in 20 adolescents experience suicide in a single year. Children should not be committing suicide; it is unfortunate to see these statistics among our youth. Therefore, we must ensure we do everything we can to prevent teenagers from attempting or committing suicide. Lastly, we must ensure that we take all the steps necessary to prevent any bullying types in public schools.

School should not be a place where students feel trapped and miserable, but instead, students should be excited to go to school to learn and hang out with their friends. Therefore, we must ensure that we do everything we can to prevent bullying in public schools. S.B. 2050 ensures that any student who bullies another student is removed from class and placed in a disciplinary alternative education program or expelled from school if the student's actions are found to encourage suicide or harm the student. Additionally, the principal of a public primary or secondary school shall make a report to any school district police department if, after an investigation is completed, the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense. Lastly, each school district shall establish district-wide police to prevent and mediate bullying incidents between students.

There will be a committee substitute that will remove Section 1 and 2 and create a model cyber-bullying policy as a default for Section 3 of the bill.

As proposed, S.B. 2050 amends current law relating to the prevention of and the reporting of incidents of bullying committed by public school students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 37.0052(b), Education Code, to require, rather than authorize, a student to be removed from class and placed in a disciplinary alternative education program as provided by Section 37.008 (Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs) or expelled if the student commits certain violent actions against another student.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 37.0151(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires, rather than authorizes, the principal of a public primary or secondary school, or a person designated by the principal under Subsection (c) (relating to authorizing a school principal to designate a school employee, other than a school counselor, who is under the supervision of the principal to make a report to local law enforcement regarding certain conduct constitution assault or harassment), to make a report to any school district police department, if applicable, or the police department of the municipality in which the school is located or, if the school is not in a municipality, the sheriff of the county in which the school is located if, after an investigation is completed, the principal has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Section 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (relating to providing that a person commits harassment if a person sends repeated electronic communications in a manner intended and reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another), Penal Code.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 37.0832(f), Education Code, as follows:

(f) Requires, rather than authorizes, each school district to establish a district-wide policy to assist in the prevention and mediation of bullying incidents between students that interfere with a student's educational opportunities or that substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2021.