

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4606  
By: Allen  
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Behavior issues within the K-12 school system in Texas are increasing, impacting the state's ability to provide the best service for students and communities. Superintendents across Harris County have been discussing the need for solutions to this rise in incidents leading to expulsion, and they look to the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) as their preferred partner in alternative education. Simultaneously, Harris County leaders are focused on crime rates and a backlogged criminal justice system. They are prioritizing minimizing juvenile exposure to the criminal justice system, and a key place to tackle that unnecessary exposure is in the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP). C.S.H.B. 4606 aims to increase financial and operational efficiency in the Harris County alternative education system while offering better services and opportunities for the students in that system. The goal is to reduce the number of students exposed to the criminal justice system while rehabilitating the maximum number of students to return to their school district campuses better prepared to finish their K-12 education and succeed in their future endeavors. Past and present members of the Harris County Commissioners Court have discussed the need for additional funding in the JJAEP, and multiple times, the county has approached HCDE for this assistance. This legislation assigns the JJAEP responsibilities to HCDE, whose expertise is in serving these alternative populations on their existing campuses. HCDE currently contracts with the ISDs in Harris County for alternative education placement, and the operation of the JJAEP will fit into their operations and allow for additional resources.

### **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. 4606 amends the Education Code to require a county department of education of a county with a population greater than 125,000 that has a county department of education, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, to develop a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) in lieu of the juvenile board. The bill establishes that, for purposes of provisions relating to juvenile justice alternative education programs, a county has a county department of education if a public school district or a county system within the county is operating under applicable former law. The bill establishes that a county department of education that operates such a program has the same authority and is subject to the same requirements as any other entity authorized to operate a JJAEP.

C.S.H.B. 4606 repeals Section 37.011(o), Education Code.

C.S.H.B. 4606 applies beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.

**COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4606 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the introduced required the juvenile board of a county that has a population greater than 125,000 and that has a county department of education to contract with that department to allow that department to operate a JJAEP in a manner that is consistent with applicable statutory provisions, the substitute requires a county department of education of such a county to develop a JJAEP in lieu of the juvenile board. The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced that establishes that a county has a county department of education if a public school district or a county system within the county is operating under applicable former law.

Whereas the introduced required the juvenile board of a county to which its provisions apply to enter into the contract not later than September 1, 2024, the substitute makes the bill's provisions applicable beginning with the 2024-2025 school year.