

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 1626

Compiled on: Monday, March 20, 2023 10:35 PM

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Hearing Date: March 20, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Sandy Bagwell
Self-Analyst
Lubbock, TX

FOR.

Ashley Cole, Mrs.
Self and teacher
Fort Worth, TX

For, This bill adds support for students with a disciplinary history who are transitioning back to a regular school after placement in a DAEP or TJJD.

Carolyn Parmer
self
Austin, TX

Please vote FOR HB 1626. Thank you.

Sarah Berel-Harrop
Self / Seminarian, Intern Minister & Director of Religious Education
Farmers Branch, TX

I support HB1626. All kids and youth deserve to be served in our educational system.

Sydney Carter
Network of Behavioral Health Providers
Houston, TX

NBHP registers in support of HB 1626.

Susan Burek

Self: I am a Parent and advocate for people with disabilities

Austin, TX

Thank you for allowing me to testify regarding HB 1626. My name is Sue Burek and I live in Austin, Texas. I'm a parent, an advocate for people with disabilities, and a member of several advocacy organizations that serve families with children with disabilities, including Texas Parent to Parent, Protect Texas Fragile Kids, and Loving Hearts for All.

I am testifying IN SUPPORT OF HB 1626, which adds support for students with a disciplinary history who are transitioning back to a regular school setting after placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or Juvenile Justice Program (JJP).

Please vote to APPROVE HB 1626. Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sarah Miller-Fellows, Dr.

Girls Empowerment Network

Austin, TX

Sarah Miller-Fellows, PhD, MPH

Director of Impact, Girls Empowerment Network

Texas House of Representatives, Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety

Regarding: HB 1636

March 20, 2023

My name is Dr. Sarah Miller-Fellows and I am the Director of Impact at Girls Empowerment Network. I am testifying in support of HB 1636. This bill would help improve educational access for Texas children as they exit the juvenile justice system and support their successful transition into adulthood.

As of 2020, Texas had approximately 1000 youth in the juvenile justice system (Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, 2023). Additionally, 1469 youth attended a JJAEP campus during the 2020-2021 school year (Texas Juvenile Justice Department, 2022). As of 2019, 77% of students in JJAEP campus exited to a local school district (TJJD, 2022), meaning that a streamlined process for the transition from JJAEP or another juvenile justice facility is essential for youth success.

The majority of youth in the juvenile justice system enter the system with the deck already stacked against them. They are far more likely than the general population to have experienced mental illness, have a substance use disorder or have experienced a traumatic event (National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2016). For example, while about 1 in 5 youth have a mental illness, 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have one. Furthermore, 60% of students leaving the juvenile justice system will drop out of school, making them an even more at risk student population (Beebe & Rynders, 2020).

These students are already at high risk and we need to support them as they enter into adulthood. Students leaving juvenile justice facilities face barriers such as challenges to credit transfers and stigma associated with their time in the juvenile justice system (Beebe & Rynders, 2020).

During the 86th legislative session, HB 2184 provided supports for students re-enrolling from school after leaving a juvenile justice facility. HB 1636 would build on the progress made by HB 2184 by streamlining credit transfers, including students and parents in the transition process, and including Special Education and/or 504 Coordinators in the planning process. These provisions will strengthen school connectedness, a key factor in reducing truancy and dropout rates (Duckenfield & Reynolds, 2013).

I urge you to support HB1636 and give some of Texas's most vulnerable students an opportunity to thrive.

Thank you Chairwoman Thompson and fellow committee members. I appreciate your consideration of this matter and thank you for your time.

Zenobia C. Joseph, Educational Consultant

A+ WRITERS Consulting/Self

Austin, TX

Three HB 1626 Recommendations to Improve Black Males' Academic Outcomes, in particular!

1. Line 9. Sec. 1. Add “or open-enrollment charter school” after the word district.

2. Line 15: Add “and the process to be identified as Gifted/Talented under TEC §29.122. Cross-reference Texas Education Agency’s G/T provisions interpretation. SPED only is a deficit model. <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/gifted-and-talented-education/guidance-for-interpreting-the-expectations-of-the-texas-state-plan-for-the-education-of-gifted/talented-students>

3. Sec. 2: “personalized transition plan” (p. 2). Add “shall include American Rescue Plan Act targeted accelerated instruction” after “may” enumeration.

~Justification: March 16, 2023 TX House Appropriations Committee included ARPA. Legislative Budget Board stated, “Turning to page 3, Article IX Section 1802: American Rescue Plan Appropriations. Adopted” (2:42:25): https://tlchouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=78&clip_id=24076

4. Research: "Breaking Schools' Rules" (Fabelo, 2011).

- "Of the nearly 1 million [Texas] students studied, about 15 percent were assigned at least once to disciplinary alternative education programs (27 days, on average) between seventh and twelfth grade; about 8 percent were placed at least once in juvenile justice alternative education programs (73 days on average).
- Only 3 percent of the disciplinary actions were for conduct for which state law mandates suspensions and expulsions; the remainder of disciplinary actions was made at the discretion of school officials, primarily in response to violations of local schools’ conduct codes....
- African-American students and those with particular educational disabilities were disproportionately likely to be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons.
- The great majority of African-American male students had at least one discretionary violation (83*), compared to 74% for Hispanic male students, and 59% for white male students. The same pattern was found, though at lower levels of involvement, for females—with 70% of African-American female pupils having at least one discretionary violation, compared to 58% of Hispanic female pupils and 37% of white female pupils" (p. 12). “Students were followed for one to three years beyond the year they were projected to graduate when they were in seventh grade” (p. xi).

5. Title VI Disparate Impacts: Joseph, Z. C. (2009). “I-35 Divide” Conundrum: Can a True Community-University Partnership Grant Austin’s Gifted/Talented K-12 African-American Males Access to College? Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy(XV), 9-35. My scholarship remains germane.

- February 12, 2023 Austin American-Statesman noted 8 of 11 Northeast schools “performed worse on state standards since the beginning of the pandemic.”
- March 9, 2023 Austin ISD Trustee Kevin Foster called Black students' failure to read on grade level "a centuries-old crisis."

~Amend 1626. Thanks!

Margaret Heinkel-Wolfe

self

DENTON, TX

FOR