

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 4685
By: Leach
Intergovernmental Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that although Texas schools are required to conduct regular fire safety inspections to ensure that buildings are safe for students and staff, the scope of these inspections has typically been limited to fire hazards, with less emphasis on other safety measures that could be vital in an emergency situation, such as the availability of functional automated external defibrillators (AEDs). The bill author has also informed the committee that in recent years, there has been growing recognition of the need for schools to be better prepared to handle medical emergencies, such as sudden cardiac arrest. C.S.H.B. 4685 seeks to ensure that schools are adequately prepared for emergency situations where timely medical intervention is needed by providing for regular checks on the functionality of AEDs.

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. 4685 amends the Government Code to require the minimum curriculum requirements established by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection for preparatory, in-service, and advanced courses and programs for a school operated by or for the state or a local government specifically for training fire protection personnel or recruits to require training on conducting a fire safety inspection at a public or private school in accordance with the bill's provisions.

C.S.H.B. 4685 requires a fire safety inspection of a public or private school, including an open-enrollment charter school, required by a state or local law, rule, regulation, or ordinance to include an examination of each automated external defibrillator, defined by reference to applicable Health and Safety Code provisions, on the school campus to determine whether the defibrillator is fully functional, which must include verifying that that defibrillator's pads and battery have not expired and that the defibrillator's status indicator light indicates that the device is ready for use. The bill requires a representative of the school campus to present each automated external defibrillator for inspection.

C.S.H.B. 4685 requires a person who conducts such a fire safety inspection to do the following:

- provide a written report of the inspection and any relevant paperwork pertaining to the findings of the inspection to:
 - if the inspection is of a public school, the principal of the school and the superintendent of the applicable school district; or

- if the inspection is of a private school, the director of the school; and
- at the time the person provides the report, indicate on the report the method by which, and the time and date on which, the person provided the report to the appropriate person.

The bill requires the report to be filed at the school campus to which the report relates and according to the year in which the inspection occurred.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 4685 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.

The substitute does not include a provision that appeared in the introduced that requires a fire safety inspection of a public or private school, including an open-enrollment charter school, required by a state or local law, rule, regulation, or ordinance to include an examination of each vaccine and over-the-counter medication located on the school campus to determine whether the vaccine or medication is expired.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced that requires a representative of the school campus to present each automated external defibrillator for inspection.

Whereas the introduced required a person who conducts a fire safety inspection to include in the written report of the inspection of the school the findings from the required examinations and required the report to also state the method by which the school's administrators were notified of the results of the inspection and the time and date the notification occurred, the substitute requires such a person to do the following:

- provide a written report of the inspection and any relevant paperwork pertaining to the findings of the inspection to:
 - if the inspection is of a public school, the principal of the school and the superintendent of the applicable school district; or
 - if the inspection is of a private school, the director of the school; and
- at the time the person provides the report, indicate on the report the method by which, and the time and date on which, the person provided the report to the appropriate person.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced that requires the report to be filed at the school campus to which the report relates and according to the year in which the inspection occurred.