

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.S.B. 2050  
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Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Bullying in public schools has become a serious problem. According to the National Bullying Prevention Center, one out of every five students reported they had experienced some bullying. Additionally, about half of children between the ages of 9 and 12 said they experienced bullying at school, and 14.5 percent shared that they experienced bullying online. Furthermore, teenagers who were cyberbullied shared that it negatively impacted their feelings about themselves (69.1 percent), their friendships (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, and that students facing peer victimization are 2.2 times more likely to have suicidal ideation and 2.6 times more likely to attempt suicide than students not facing victimization. In order to do everything possible to prevent teenagers from attempting or committing suicide, it is crucial to take all the steps necessary to prevent any type of bullying in public schools. C.S.S.B. 2050 seeks to reinforce prevention efforts by extending requirements for district-wide policies to include prevention and mediation of bullying incidents between students, requiring the Texas Education Agency to provide a model policy, and establishing an annual reporting requirement.

### **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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of education in SECTION 2 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.S.B. 2050 amends the Education Code to revise requirements for a public school district policy on bullying, including cyberbullying, as follows:

- changes from a discretionary feature to a mandatory feature that the policy prevents and mediates bullying incidents between students that interfere with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- requires the policy to comply with the minimum standards adopted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

C.S.S.B. 2050 requires TEA to adopt minimum standards for such a policy and requires the standards to meet the following criteria:

- include an emphasis on bullying prevention by focusing on school climate and building healthy relationships between students and staff;

- require each district campus to establish a committee to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives;
- require students at each grade level to meet periodically for instruction on building relationships and preventing bullying, including cyberbullying;
- include an emphasis on increasing student reporting of bullying incidents to school employees by increasing awareness about district reporting procedures and providing for anonymous reporting of bullying incidents;
- require districts to collect information annually through student surveys on bullying, including cyberbullying, and use those survey results to develop action plans to address student concerns; and
- require districts to develop a rubric or checklist to assess an incident of bullying and to determine the district's response to the incident.

C.S.S.B. 2050 requires the commissioner of education by rule to require each district and open-enrollment charter school to report annually through PEIMS the number of reported incidents of bullying that have occurred at each campus. The rules must require a district or school to specify the number of incidents of bullying that included cyberbullying.

C.S.S.B. 2050 applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

C.S.S.B. 2050 repeals Section 37.0832(f), Education Code.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

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

### **COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.S.B. 2050 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute does not include a requirement that appeared in the engrossed for TEA minimum standards to require annual bullying prevention training for district employees and students.