



House Bill 1952 83rd Legislative Session Implementation Guide



TEXAS CRIMINAL
JUSTICE COALITION

H.B. 1952 (Thompson) [SP: Van de Putte]: *Relating to professional development training for certain public school personnel regarding student disciplinary procedures.*

Disciplinary Practices in Texas' Public Schools

In order to adhere to Texas' mission of meeting the educational needs of **ALL** students, campuses must implement disciplinary methods that are appropriate, proportionate to the offense, and proven to be effective. Unfortunately, this requirement has proven to be difficult to attain. Over the past two decades, hundreds of thousands of Texas students have been negatively impacted by school discipline policies.¹ The criminalization of adolescent behavior has now become the norm.

Largely due to state policies passed in the late 1990s, administrators have been required to adopt a "zero-tolerance" approach to school discipline, resulting in an overreliance on citations, suspensions, alternative placements, and expulsions. It also has resulted in a massive influx of youth into the state's juvenile justice system, especially for African American students as well as students with special education needs.²

What does H.B. 1952 intend to do?

HB 1952 aims to address the disproportionate usage of disciplinary practices by requiring those responsible for providing disciplinary sanctions to attend professional development training in effective methods of school discipline, including training related to the distinction between a technique used at the principal's discretion and the discretionary authority of a teacher. Each responsible party under this law will need to complete such training every three years.



"Once you have the 'tag' the teachers and principals make big deals out of the smallest things and that's not right. For me the more and more I got in trouble the less I cared and the more likely I am to dropout."

*~ Kayla Quintanilla
Youth Advocate,
Del Valle High School*

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How can you help implement H.B. 1952?

Parents, Guardians, & Families

H.B. 1952 **requires** a school principal, or other appropriate administrator who oversees student discipline, to attend trainings in effective methods of school discipline every three years. This includes trainings that make the distinction between the types of sanctions a principal can impose versus the types of sanctions permissible by a teacher. To help implement this new law, parents, guardians, and families should involve themselves in campus efforts to reduce disproportionate school discipline practices as well as be open to having ongoing conversations around the issue. If your student has been impacted by such policies, don't hesitate to share his or her story — doing so provides a larger voice on the matter.

Superintendents and School Board Administrators

To comply with H.B. 1952, each principal, or other appropriate administrator who oversees student discipline within your district, **must** attend trainings in effective methods of school discipline every three years. To ensure that this measure is being met, we suggest implementing a tracking system by which you can hold your principals and administrators accountable. This requirement can be met via online or distance learning courses as well as through any training available through your Education Service Center.

Principals, Vice Principals, and Additional In-School Administrators

To adhere to the requirement set forth in H.B. 1952, you will need to attend trainings in effective methods of school discipline every three years. This requirement extends to the distinction between a principal's and an administrator's discretion in discipline versus the discretion granted to teachers. You can meet this requirement by completing a course online as well as through a distance learning course. You can also reach out to your Education Service Center to inquire about any available resources it may provide.

Effective Methods of School Discipline	
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)	A disciplinary method that offers educators and administrators a systematic framework for effective decision-making during the disciplinary process.
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	A method of discipline that offers educators and administrators a programmatic framework for improving the behavior of misbehaving youth.
The Restorative Justice Model for Schools	A model that provides educators and administrators with an effective method for addressing the overall culture of misbehavior within their schools.

¹ Texas Appleseed, *Texas' School-to-Prison Pipeline: School Expulsion, The Path from Lockout to Dropout*, April 2010.

² The Council of State Governments, *Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Involvement*, July 2011.