

TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

89TH Legislative Session

Supplemental Bill Report and Analysis

August 5, 2025

All Counselors:

SB 571 by Sen. Bettencourt (R-Houston) and Rep. Leach (R-Plano):

This bill is **effective immediately**.

There was a large push this session to reform neglect and abuse investigations in schools and ensure that bad actors are not allowed to continue to work in education. SB 571 began as a 3-page bill and ballooned to 72 pages. During the process, changes were added to Texas laws relating to the required reporting of child abuse and neglect by professionals. Please spread the word and ensure that colleagues are aware of the following changes.

- **Change in child abuse reporting requirement from 48 to 24 hours:** Effective immediately, any professional who is licensed or certified by the State of Texas and works with children, including licensed professional counselors and school counselors, must now report no later than the 24th hour after the hour the professional first has reasonable cause to believe that the child has been or may be abused or neglected.
- **Change in reporting educator misconduct:** Also, effective immediately, a school principal must notify the district superintendent of alleged educator misconduct within 48 hours of becoming aware of the allegation. Following the principal's report, the district superintendent must notify the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) within 7 days. Then, while an investigation takes place, SBEC will place the accused educator on a registry of individuals who are not able to be employed by or act as a service provider for an educational entity. The educator will be removed from this registry if they are found not to have engaged in the alleged misconduct. If criminal conduct is found to have occurred, the case will be referred to a law enforcement agency.

SB 127 by Sen. Hall (R-Edgewood) and Rep. Money (R-Greenville):

Makes the statute of limitations for prosecution of failure to report child abuse or neglect four years from the date the offense was discovered IF the offense is punishable as a state jail felony due to the professional's intent to conceal the abuse or neglect.

HB 1106 by Rep. Shaheen (R- Plano) and Sen. Hall (R-Edgewood):

Changes the Texas Family Code to state:

"Abuse" does not include the refusal by a person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare to affirm:

A child's perception of the child's gender, including a refusal to use a child's preferred name or pronouns, regardless of whether the child's name has been legally changed; or a child's expressed sexual orientation.

HB 5629 by Rep. Wilson (R-Georgetown) and Sen. Sparks (R-Midland):

Streamlines the occupational licensure of military members, veterans and spouses. HB 5629 removes rule-making discretion from licensing agencies for this population and requires them to issue licenses to military members, veterans and spouses if they hold a license in good standing in another state, which has a similar scope of practice to the Texas license, without imposing a residency requirement.

The Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) must issue licenses to military personnel, military veterans, and military spouses who fall under the above categories and follow the requirements for license application.

Licensed Professional Counselors:

HB 3783 by Rep. Hull (R-Houston) and Sen. Parker (R-Flower Mound):

Changes the statutes surrounding court-ordered counseling. The court may not:

Order counseling in which the victim and perpetrator of the violence are counseled together; or order the victim to pay any cost for the counseling.

Order a party to participate in counseling in which the person conducting the counseling requires:

- The isolation of the child from the child's family, school, religious community, or systems of support;
- A child to stay overnight or for multiple days in a location that is out of state or another location, regardless of their being accompanied by a family member;
- The child's transportation to a location by force, undue coercion, or other actions which place a child's safety at risk;
- Temporary or permanent change in the periods of possession or access to the child from the conservator who would otherwise be entitled; or
- The use of force, threats of force, undue coercion, or verbal abuse against the child.

[HB 1052](#) by Rep. Bhojani (D-Eules) and Sen. Blanco (D-El Paso):

Requires health benefit plans to provide coverage for telemedicine, telehealth, and teledentistry for visits that take place outside of the state so long as:

- The patient is a primary resident of Texas; and
- The health professional is licensed in Texas and has a physical office in Texas.

[HB 171](#) by Rep. Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) and Sen. Zaffirini (D-Laredo):

Requires at least 30 days in a treatment facility for court-ordered chemical dependency treatment. Makes other minor changes to chemical dependency treatment.

School Counselors and Other Educators:

[HB 120](#) by Rep. Keith Bell (R- Forney) and Sen. Schwertner (R-Georgetown):

Amended to delete a provision creating a "high school advising program" which gave schools the option to hire or contract with career advisors to work with students at a ratio of no more than 200 students per advisor. TCA expressed opposition to this program as it would interfere with the role of a school counselor, and the final version of this bill removed this provision.

HB 1178 by Rep. Cunningham (R-Humble) and Sen. Campbell (R-New Braunfels):

Allows the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to issue temporary educator certificates to educators who move to Texas who are already certified by another state.

HB 1481 by Rep. Fairly (R-Amarillo) and Sen. Creighton (R-Conroe):

Requires the school board of each district to adopt and implement a policy prohibiting a student from using a personal communication device while on school property during the school day.

SB 260 by Sen. Huffman (R-Houston) and Rep. Bonnen (R-Friendswood):

More than doubles the existing School Safety allotment. Note that in addition to school hardening, the school safety allotment can be spent on:

- Providing mental health professionals including licensed counselors and social workers;
- Providing mental health personnel and support;
- Providing behavioral health services;
- Developing and implementing programs focused on restorative justice practices, culturally relevant instruction, and providing mental health support; and
- Providing programs related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention

Only 1.4% of the existing school safety allotment funds were spent on mental health related services in FY2023. Monitor your districts' budgets and encourage your school districts to use this allotment to fund mental health!

SB 569 by Sen. Sen. Bettencourt (R-Houston) and Rep. Keith Bell (Forney):

Establishes standards for schools offering hybrid and virtual courses. With few exceptions, schools cannot deny a parental request for a student to enroll in a virtual or hybrid course. Establishes a funding formula for full-time hybrid and full-time virtual campuses.

SB 1952 by Sen. Paxton (R-McKinney) and Rep. Hull (R-Houston):

Establishes that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is the sole agency responsible for administering the school health and related services program.

[HB 1965](#) by Rep. Garcia (D-San Antonio) and Sen. Menendez (D-San Antonio):

Requires the Texas Veterans Commission to conduct a study on mental health services provided to veterans.

[HB 3284](#) by Rep. Frank (R-Wichita Falls) and Sen. King (R-Weatherford):

Creates the Texas Commission on Marriage and Family. The commission's goal is to study and develop strategies for promoting strong marriages and healthy families and to make recommendations to the legislature to advance the goal of creating an environment in this state that is favorable for marriage and raising children.

[HB 3801](#) by Rep. Orr (R-Itasca) and Sen. Cook (D-Houston):

Abolishes the Statewide Health Coordinating Council and the Nursing Advisory Committee of that council and creates the Health Professions Workforce Coordinating Council. Notably, both SBEC and BHEC will have representatives on the council.

[HB 4454](#) by Rep. Vo (D-Houston) and Sen. Johnson (D-Dallas):

Creates the Taskforce on Patient Solicitation, which will study and make recommendations on preventing conduct by chemical dependency and mental health facilities which would violate codes against false advertising or against soliciting patients.

[HB 5342](#) by Rep. Landgraf (R-Odessa) and Sen. Menendez (D-San Antonio):

Creates a trust fund for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

[SB 1257](#) by Rep. Leach (R-Plano) and Sen. Hughes (R-Mineola):

Requires health plans to cover "adverse effects" from gender transitions.

SB 1266 by Sen. Alvarado (D-Houston) and Rep. Hull (R-Houston):

Establishes an administrative support team to assist current and prospective Medicaid providers in completing the Medicaid provider enrollment and credentialing process.

Public Education:

SB 10 by Sen. King (R-Weatherford) and Rep. Noble (R-Lucas):

Requires public schools to display a copy of the Ten Commandments in each classroom.

SB 11 by Sen. Middleton (R-Galveston) and Rep. Spiller (R-Jacksboro):

Allows public schools districts to create a policy allowing for a period of prayer and Bible reading during the school day.

HB 27 by Rep. King (R-Canadian) and Sen. Flores (R-Pleasanton):

Changes high school social studies requirements to require one credit in United States history, at least one-half credit in government and at least one-half credit in personal financial literacy, and one credit in economics, world geography, or world history.

HB 824 by Rep. Jones (D-Houston) and Rep. Middleton (R-Galveston):

Requires the State Board of Education to develop civics curriculum for high school students.

SB 24 by Sen. Campbell (R-New Braunfels) and Rep. Leach (R-Plano):

Requires the State Board of Education to develop curriculum on communist regimes and ideologies for students grades 4-12.

SB 326 by Sen. King (R-Weatherford) and Rep. Capriglione (R-Southlake):

Creates procedures for determining disciplinary actions for student violations of codes of conduct believed to be motivated by antisemitism.

SB 1049 by Sen. King (R-Weatherford) and Rep. Frank (R- Wichita Falls):

Allows excused absences for attendance at a “released time course”. A “released time course” is defined as a course in religious instruction offered by a private entity.

Higher Education:

SB 1786 by Sen. Creighton (R-Conroe) and Rep. VanDeaver (R-New Boston):

Requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to collaborate for the establishment, implementation, and expansion of secondary and post-secondary career and technical education programs that are aligned with the state workforce development goals, and to coordinate the competitive grant programs for those programs.

HB 3062 by Rep. Guerra (D-Mission) and Sen. Zaffirini (D-Laredo):

Requires institutions of higher education to provide research-based instruction on fentanyl prevention and drug poisoning awareness to incoming students. Among the list of accepted providers for this instruction is an “organization employing mental health professionals”.

SB 365 by Sen. Eckhardt (D-Austin) and Rep. Howard (D-Austin):

Reduces the eligibility period from 10 years to 5 years for adult leaders to receive an “academic fresh start, allowing them to waive their previous academic record and re-enroll in postsecondary education.