



# Children's Mental Health in the 87th Texas Legislature

Presented to Kids Living Well  
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**We drive policy change to  
improve the lives of Texas  
children today for a stronger  
Texas tomorrow.**

**Child Health**

**Child Protection**

**Mental Health**

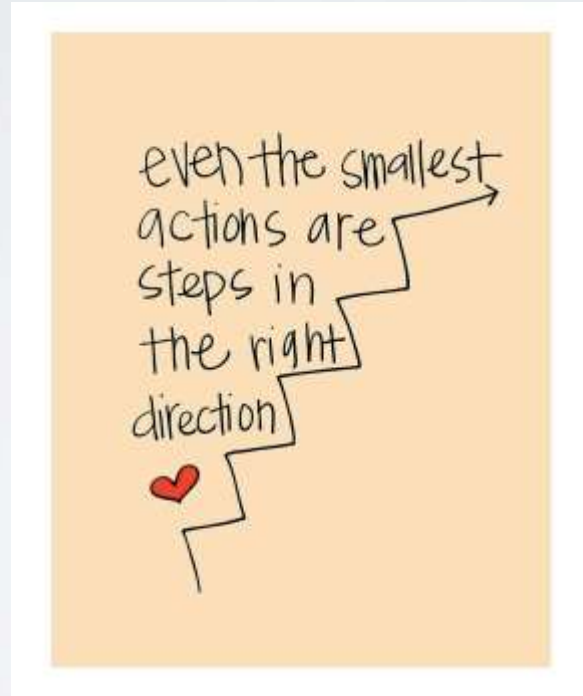
**Early Childhood**

**Youth Justice**

# AGENDA

- ❖ Legislative Decisions
- ❖ School District Requirements Related to Mental Health
- ❖ State Agency Activities Related to School Mental Health

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS



# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Health Coverage

- Extended continuous eligibility for children's Medicaid from 6 to 12 months (HB 2658)
- Extended continuous health care coverage for young adults aging out of foster care (SB 1059)
- Extended Medicaid coverage for new moms from 2 months to 6 months (HB 133)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Increased funding for Texas Child Mental Health Services Consortium projects:

- Child Psychiatry Access Network (CPAN) provides telehealth-based consultation and training to primary care providers
- Texas Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHATT) program provides in-school behavioral telehealth care to at-risk children and adolescents
- Community Psychiatry Workforce Expansion (CPWE) and Child and Adolescent Psychiatric (CAP) Fellowships

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## School Counselors

- 80 percent of school counselors' time is to be spent on duties included in the comprehensive school counseling program (SB 179)

## Social Emotional Learning and Character Education Programs

- Districts can use their Compensatory Education Allotment funds to help students develop social and emotional skills (HB 1525)
- Districts are required to integrate social and emotional skills into character education programs (SB 123)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## **Bullying Prevention**

District bullying prevention policies must include a focus on:

- School climate
- Building healthy relationships between students and staff
- Instructing students on relationship skills (SB 2050)

## **Suicide Prevention Crisis Information on Student IDs**

- Student IDs in grades 6-12 must include contact information for crisis services/suicide prevention lifeline number/text (SB 279)



# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Restorative Justice Practices

- Districts can use their School Safety Allotment funds to support restorative justice practices. (SB 1596)

## “Trauma Informed” Shooter Drills

- School districts required to adopt trauma-informed methods and policies to support the mental health of students when conducting active shooter drills on school campuses (SB 168)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Educator Training and Professional Development

- Educator and principal certification programs must include instruction related to multi-tiered systems of support, positive behavior intervention strategies, school environment, and parent involvement. (HB 159)
- State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) charged with making recommendations regarding the frequency of trainings on topics that include mental health, trauma, and suicide. School boards required to adopt annual professional development policy that is informed by SBEC recommendations (SB 1267)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Foster Care

- Increased funding for foster care (2<sup>nd</sup> special session)
- Treatment foster care can be provided to to children over age 10 (SB 1896)
- Residential child-care facilities required to adopt a suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention policy (SB 1896)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Residential Treatment Services (HHSC)

- HHSC to establish a voluntary certification process for psychiatric residential care facilities serving youth to encourage heightened quality of care standards (HB 3121)
- Families can access residential treatment services through HHSC's Relinquishment Avoidance Program without a referral from DFPS (SB 642)

# LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

## Residential Treatment Services (DFPS)

- DFPS to establish a protocol to prevent the youth from aging out of a residential treatment center (HB 700)
- Texas Supreme Court's Children's Commission and DFPS to study and recommendations related to oversight of and best practices for residential treatment center (SB 1575)
- DFPS required to conduct pilot project to develop more Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs) meeting federal guidelines (SB 1 budget rider)

# School District Requirements Related to Mental Health

# STATUTORY COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

- Safe, Supportive, and Positive School Climate
- Building Skills Related to Managing Emotions, Positive Relationships, and Responsible Decision-making
- Early Mental Health Prevention and Intervention
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention
- Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention
- Grief and Trauma Informed Practices
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
- Positive Youth Development

**Texas Education Code § 38.351**

# STATUTORY COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH

Texas Education Code § 38.351: School districts are required to:

- Develop practices and procedures concerning each component of school mental health (may address multiple areas together)
- Set out available counseling alternatives for a parent or guardian to consider when their child is identified as possibly being in need of early mental health or substance abuse intervention or suicide prevention
- Have procedures to support the return of a student to school following hospitalization or residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse



# SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

District-based multidisciplinary teams responsible for developing and implementing practices in each campus that provide for:

- Physical and psychological safety
- Multi-tiered support system that addresses school climate, the social and emotional domain, and behavioral and mental health
- Conducting behavior risk/threat assessments and providing appropriate interventions
- Acting in accordance with the district's practices/procedures related to:
  - Suicide prevention
  - Substance use prevention and intervention

# TRAINING

## **Suicide Prevention**

Districts are required to provide suicide prevention training for teachers, school counselors, principals, and all other appropriate personnel.

- Training is required at an elementary school campus only to the extent that sufficient funding and programs are available.
- Training identified by TEA and HHSC as “best practice” is suggested (but not required).

# TRAINING

## Trauma Informed Care

Districts required to adopt a Trauma Informed Care Policy that includes:

- Increasing staff and parent awareness of trauma-informed care
- Training that addresses how grief and trauma affect student learning and behavior and how evidence-based, grief-informed, and trauma-informed strategies support the academic success of students affected by grief and trauma

# TRAINING & STUDENT INSTRUCTION

## Dating Violence

Districts required to adopt a Dating Violence Policy that includes training for teachers and administrators at each district campus that instructs students in grade six or higher.

## Bullying Prevention

Districts required to adopt a Bullying Prevention Policy that includes providing students with periodic instruction on building relationships

# State Agency Activities Addressing School Mental Health

# PRIORITY NEEDS AMONG TEXAS STUDENTS

TEA: The two biggest issues facing students and schools across Texas as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are:

1. Learning loss
2. Mental health challenges

- TEA's State Plan for ESSER Funds

Submitted to U.S. Dept. of Education June 2021

<https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/06/Texas-ARP-ESSER-State-Plan.pdf>



# FEDERAL COVID-RELIEF FUNDS

## TEA's State Plan for Use of ESSER Funds

- Guidance on maximizing mental health professionals on their campuses
- Guidance on implementing evidence-based practices that help students improve their ability to respond to the stresses caused by the pandemic
- Trauma-informed teacher training modules and supports for teachers.
- Building out the Safe and Supportive Schools Framework to help LEAs assess needs within their schools and identify resources to fill gaps
- Addressing mental health needs resulting from the pandemic among students with disabilities.

While TEA lists these activities in its state ESSER plan, the Legislature directed the agency to use federal funds for accelerated learning strategies

# Texas School Mental Health Framework

## Essential Elements for a Safe and Supportive School





# Texas School Mental Health Framework

## TEA's Texas School Mental Health Website

- <https://schoolmentalhealthtx.org/>

## Texas School Mental Health Practice Guide and Toolkit

- <https://schoolmentalhealthtx.org/school-mental-health-toolkit/>

## Examples of Resources Included:

- Trauma Informed Care Discipline Considerations
- Transition from Facility to Campus
- Return to Home Campus from DAEP
- Educator Wellness
- Sample MOUs

# OTHER STATE/FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

- [TEA Statewide Plan for School Mental Health](#)
- Regional and State Mental Health Resource Inventories
- [Task Force on Public School Mental Health Services](#)
- [Project AWARE Texas](#) – federal grants for Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education
- [Project RESTORE](#) – trauma-informed training series
- HHSC's System of Care Grant (focusing on schools)
- [South Southwest Mental Health Technology Transfer Center](#) (MHTTC)



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