



Factsheet

Texas Must Prohibit and Prevent Racial Bullying in Schools SB 2185 and HB 4625 Protect Students from Identity-based Harassment

[Identity-based bullying](#) is defined as bullying arising from single significant act or pattern of acts by one or more students that is based on or targets a student's actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, gender, religion or disability status. This also includes bullying based on association with a person or group of people with these characteristics.

Incidents of identity-based bullying, harassment and hate crimes are on the rise in Texas and across the nation. A [2021 report](#) from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that one in four students experienced bullying that was based on their race, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation. Similarly, [hate crimes](#) – which most commonly targeted students because of their race and national origin – and physical attacks with a weapon [have nearly doubled](#) in recent years.

Effectively addressing bullying and harassment is critical to ensuring school safety and addressing youth mental health. Bullying is [associated with negative health outcomes](#), such as depression and suicide – which [can be exacerbated](#) when students experience bullying on the basis of their identity.

While Texas has made significant progress in addressing bullying in schools, schools do not have a clear framework for conducting bullying investigations, and TEA does not collect data on bullying targeting students. In addition, teachers have reported feeling unequipped and afraid to effectively address identity-based bullying and harassment due to misinformation about Texas education laws pertaining to prohibited concepts that can be taught and discussed in schools.

This legislation will strengthen Texas laws relating to prevention and response to racial and other forms of identity-based bullying by establishing the following provisions.

- Clearly identify, define and prohibit identity-based bullying in schools
- Affirm educators' responsibilities to report and respond to identity-based bullying
- Require schools to provide supportive measures to ensure student safety and continued access to education programs and activities after reporting a bullying incident
- Establish clear guidelines for documenting, investigating and resolving reports of bullying to ensure fairness and transparency for all impacted participants and accountability for schools
- Ensure impacted students and families are notified of a bullying investigation, have a meaningful opportunity to participate in the investigation, and receive information regarding resolution
- Ensure that prevention policies and instructional standards address identity-based bullying and harassment
- Establish public reporting requirements to provide transparency for the community
- Require schools to collect and report data relating to identity-based bullying and harassment to better understand prevalence and tailor prevention programming

The act takes effect beginning with the 2023-24 school year.

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