

HB 285 -- Discipline in Public Schools

Co-Sponsors: Walton, Moore, Sager, Boykins, Bland, Hubbard, Hoskins

This bill requires each school district to establish a policy that prohibits bullying, which is defined in the bill. The policy must be consistently and fairly enforced. The bill also requires schools to report instances of making terroristic threats and permits discipline policies to address the issue of notification of students and parents concerning credible threats under conditions described in the bill. The bill amends the conditions under which school boards may suspend pupils, clarifying that pupils who are convicted of felonies may be suspended. Categories of suspension are added that cover students who have been adjudicated to have committed an act that would have been a felony if committed by an adult and students against whom a petition has been filed in juvenile court alleging the commission of an act that would have been a felony if committed by an adult or against whom an indictment or information has been filed alleging the commission of a felony.

Districts must consider including character education as part of their curriculum when they determine it would improve discipline. The bill establishes a pilot grant program for school districts to provide parental involvement services to families with children who are considered at risk.

Employees of public schools, including charter schools, are prohibited from performing strip searches on students. An employee in violation will be suspended without pay, pending an evidentiary hearing if the employee is entitled to a hearing.