

HB 1287 -- TEACHER EMPOWERMENT AND PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

SPONSOR: Lewis

This bill provides that the public policy for the State includes respecting the authority of teachers in public schools and promoting safe, respectful, and orderly learning environments while enhancing parental involvement. The bill requires school districts and charter schools in the State to develop policies and procedures to accommodate and assist parents in the exercise of parental rights.

School boards and charter schools must adopt board policies by the beginning of the 2025-26 school year as outlined in the bill.

Policies include notification to parents of serious disciplinary incidents and procedures for parental visits during school hours. Additionally, the bill provides that policies and procedures be published on the school website and teachers, school administrators, parents, and students be informed of their rights.

The bill outlines a student code of conduct that will set forth expectations for behavior consistent with ethical responsibility, community standards, and respect for school authority. The code of conduct must include high expectations of personal responsibility, encouraging students to uphold traditional values such as honesty, diligence, and civility, and will clearly prohibit any policy or program that differentiates treatment of students primarily on the basis of race or other immutable characteristics, ensuring that all disciplinary measures are applied equally and fairly to every student.

School counselors and other qualified personnel will offer interventions that empathize respect for others, problem solving, and perseverance.

The bill requires that schools must make efforts to facilitate parental engagement through regular communication, opportunities for parents to review the policy handbook and the provision of resources that support ethical responsibility and community standards at home.

The bill prohibits schools from certain actions including but not limited to allowing student involvement in school assemblies without parental permission, collection of biometric data, or schools from coercion of a minor child to withhold information.

The bill also includes the "Parents' Bill of Rights" and the "Educators' Bill of Rights" which outline specific rights for

parents of school children including to know what is being taught, view school records, and to know about child's safety. Educator rights listed include freedom from student abuse, classroom preparation time daily, and to teach in a safe, secure, and orderly environment.