



Input on SB 1224

Relating to the reporting of certain public school employee misconduct to local law enforcement.

April 8, 2025

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) offers the following input on Senate Bill (SB) 1224 by Sen. Sparks:

ATPE fully supports the intent of this legislation—to ensure student safety and hold individuals accountable for misconduct. Protecting students must always be our top priority. However, as currently drafted, this bill raises significant due process concerns and could result in long-term reputational damage based solely on unsubstantiated allegations.

Under current law, Texas educators are already subject to mandatory reporting requirements, including those related to child abuse and educator misconduct. However, SB 1224 would require superintendents or other administrators to report to law enforcement within 48 hours of merely becoming aware of an allegation of certain types of misconduct—without regard to whether there is any evidence or even a “reasonable cause to believe” an allegation is true or, frankly, even if the superintendent or administrator knows the allegation is false.

This is a departure from other well-established standards in Texas law, such as those in the Family Code governing reports to Child Protective Services, which require a reporter to have a “reasonable cause to believe” abuse or neglect has occurred. In contrast, this bill imposes a mandate to report allegations to law enforcement with no evidentiary threshold at all.

Additionally, the 48-hour reporting window all but guarantees that no meaningful investigation can be completed before a report is filed. School districts frequently receive misconduct allegations from a variety of sources—students, parents, staff—and some of these allegations are legitimate and others retaliatory. This requires districts to evaluate the credibility of such reports. In many cases, further fact-finding reveals that an allegation is mistaken, exaggerated, or false.

Under this bill, even when a district ultimately determines an educator did not engage in wrongdoing, law enforcement would have already been notified, and the media may have run a story. The educator’s name may have been logged into databases, associated with criminal suspicion, or even subjected to preliminary law enforcement inquiries—all before the school has determined whether there was any basis for concern.

The consequences of this policy could be devastating to educators. Reputational harm from being reported to law enforcement can linger for years, even after an individual is completely

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) is the leading educator association in Texas and has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for the more than 5 million Texas public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.

cleared. Educators might find themselves facing unwarranted stigma, jeopardized employment, and loss of future job opportunities, all stemming from an unverified allegation reported in haste. A law that forces premature reporting to police without any verification undermines that process, impedes the willingness of individuals to remain in the profession, and could ultimately harm school communities.

We urge the committee to consider amending this legislation to require that the superintendent or director have a “reasonable cause to believe” that misconduct occurred before being compelled to report to law enforcement. This standard would still protect student safety while respecting the due process rights of educators and ensuring that reports made to law enforcement are credible and grounded in fact.

We believe in transparency and accountability in our public schools, but we also believe that educators, like all Texans, deserve fairness. Without an evidentiary standard and with an inflexible 48-hour timeline, SB 1224 risks eroding trust in the system and doing more harm than good. We respectfully urge the committee to reconsider the bill's current language and adopt a more balanced approach that safeguards students while preserving educators' rights.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Texas educators and students. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.