

- SUBJECT:** Requiring certain public school safety measures and procedures
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 13 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Allison, Ashby, K. Bell, Dutton, M. González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: CJ Grisham, Open Carry Texas; Suzi Kennon, Texas PTA)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Casey McCreary, Texas Association of School Administrators; Grover Campbell, Texas Association of School Boards; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance)
- On — Adrian Gaspar, Disability Rights Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Matthew Fuller, Sam Houston State University; Von Byer, Texas Education Agency; Kathy Martinez-Prather, Texas School Safety Center at Texas State University; Craig Schiebel)
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code sec. 37.108 requires each school district and public junior college district to conduct a safety and security audit of the district's facilities at least every three years.
- Sec. 38.022 authorizes school districts to require a person who enters a district campus to display the person's driver's license or another form of government-issued identification containing the person's photograph. School districts also may verify whether a visitor to a district campus is a registered sex offender, and the board of trustees of a school district is required to adopt a policy regarding the action to be taken by the administration of a school campus when a visitor is identified as a sex offender.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 974 would require each school district and public junior college district to conduct a safety and security audit of the district's facilities at

least every two years.

School districts also would have to require any person who entered a district campus for a purpose other than to attend a school-sponsored event that was open to the public to display a form of government-issued photo identification. Districts would have to verify whether a person who visited a campus for such a purpose was a registered sex offender.

Under the bill, school districts also would be allowed to verify whether a person who visited a district campus to attend a school-sponsored event that was open to the public was a registered sex offender.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 974 would increase school safety by requiring more school districts and junior college districts to conduct safety and security audits more frequently and by requiring photo ID and sex offender status checks for visitors to public school campuses.

By requiring more frequent safety and security audits, the bill would allow school districts and junior colleges additional opportunities to identify and address safety issues on a regular basis. Conducting photo ID and sex offender status checks for visitors to public schools would make schools safer, and it could be accomplished within schools' existing resources because schools can access the sex offender registry online free of charge. School districts also could maintain these safety standards while continuing to serve parents unable to obtain a government-issued ID by issuing them a school ID for that school year and having them check in at the front office when visiting a campus.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

CSHB 974 could financially burden school districts and negatively impact individuals who did not qualify for a government issued ID. The bill

would increase costs for school districts and junior colleges by increasing the frequency of security audits and by requiring photo ID and sex offender status checks for visitors without providing additional funding. The bill also could negatively impact parents who could not obtain a government-issued identification, such as undocumented parents. The bill would not explicitly provide flexibility for school districts to accept alternative identifications for such individuals and could prevent certain parents from advocating for their children on campus.