

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R5543 JES-F

S.B. 424
By: West
Education
3/21/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Youth experiencing homelessness face unique barriers to succeeding in the classroom, including lack of stable housing and support from caring adults, limited access to basic necessities like food and medical services, lack of consistent access to bathing and laundry facilities, unreliable transportation, and histories of trauma and abuse, among others.

Data shows that exclusionary school discipline policies impact these students at higher proportions than their peers with secure housing—effectively pushing them out without acknowledging that their traumatic experiences and insecure housing are likely impacting their behavior at school.

The trauma that children in the child welfare system have experienced can lead to a variety of behavioral and emotional challenges in their lifespan, some of which can manifest in classroom settings.

S.B. 424 would add a student's status as homeless or in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services in deciding what action to take related to a disciplinary infraction.

As proposed, S.B. 424 amends current law relating to determining appropriate disciplinary action to be taken against a public school student who is in foster care or who is homeless.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 37.001(a), Education Code, to include a student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services or a student's status as a student who is homeless among the list of factors when considering suspension, removal to a disciplinarily alternative education program, expulsion, or placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program, regardless of whether the decision concerns a mandatory or discretionary action.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 37.001(b), Education Code, by adding Subdivision (4) to define "student who is homeless."

SECTION 3. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2019–2020 school year.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.