

State of Texas
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068
(512) 463-0107
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079
(713) 464-0282
FAX (713) 461-0108

Paul Bettencourt
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

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Contact Information
Robert Flanagan | (713) 464-0282
Robert.Flanagan@senate.texas.gov

Sen Bettencourt Files Follow up Bill to SB7 From 2017 Inappropriate Student-Educator Relationships
SB 1476 gives the Texas Education Agency a clear path forward when allegations are found to be unsubstantiated

Austin, Texas - Building upon Senate Bill 7, authored by Senator Bettencourt, from the 85th Legislative Session, Senator Bettencourt has filed Senate Bill 1476 to ensure that the Texas Education Agency has a clear path on how to respond when an allegation about an inappropriate student-educator relationship is found to be unsubstantiated.

"The Legislature made it clear that inappropriate student-educator relationships and "passing the trash" from school to school will not be tolerated in Texas," said Senator Bettencourt. **"Moving forward, we continue to set clear set of guidelines on how to proceed if an investigation clears an accused educator."**

SB 1476 provides that a superintendent or director of a school district, district of innovation, open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement is not required to notify the State Board for Educator Certification ("Board") or file a report with the Board if the superintendent or director completes an investigation into an educator's alleged incident of misconduct or before the educator's termination of employment or resignation, and determines the educator did not engage in the alleged incident of misconduct. In addition, a "Do Not Hire" registry bill will be filed by Friday, March 8th.

"Another important development is my office will be filing a 'Do Not Hire' registry that creates a database for public, charter, and private schools to use in daily operations," Senator Bettencourt continued.

Senate Bill 7 was filed in response to a 65% increase in reported cases of these relationships over just a two year period between 2015 and 2017. Testimony showed that in some cases school districts simply quashed subpoenas and "passed the trash", allowing teachers who engaged in these actions to quietly transfer to another school district and face no consequences. The legislation passed the Texas Senate unanimously, 31-0, and was co-authored by every member of the Texas Senate. It was also passed unanimously in the Texas House by a vote of 146-0.

"Senate Bill 7 was an important step during the last Legislative Session to stamp out the growing plague of inappropriate student-educator relationships," continued Senator Bettencourt. **"The Texas Education Agency needs the tools to ensure that students are adequately protected from this type of predator but also to ensure that a teacher's career is not ruined over a false accusation. SB 1476 will enhance the protections from Senate Bill 7 to ensure this is the case."**

Senator Bettencourt currently serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Property Tax and is a member of the Senate Finance, Education, and Higher Education Committees.

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