

Written Testimony to Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and Committee on Education

The seal of the Office of Court Administration, State of Texas, is a circular emblem. It features a central five-pointed star surrounded by a wreath. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "THE STATE OF TEXAS" at the top and "OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION" at the bottom, separated by small dots. The seal is rendered in a light gray color.

**Interim Charge 7: Conduct a comprehensive review of
school discipline practices.**

**Submitted by David Slayton, Administrative Director, Office of Court Administration
Executive Director, Texas Judicial Council**

The Texas Judicial Council is the policy-making body for the state judiciary. The Council was created in 1929 by the 41st Legislature to continuously study and report on the organization and practices of the Texas judicial system. The Council studies methods to simplify judicial procedures, expedite court business, and better administer justice. It examines the work accomplished by the courts and submits recommendations for improvement of the system to the Legislature, the Governor and the Supreme Court. The Council receives and considers input from judges, public officials, members of the bar and citizens.

In his 2011 State of the Judiciary Address, Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson stated:

“Charging kids with criminal offenses for low-level behavioral issues exacerbates the problem. Among those suspended and expelled, minority and special education students are heavily over-represented. Of course, disruptive behavior must be addressed, but criminal records close doors to opportunities that less punitive intervention would keep open. Let us endeavor to give them a chance at life, before setting them on a part into the adult criminal justice system.”

To assist in finding a solution to the issue, Chief Justice Jefferson formed a Juvenile Justice Committee of the Texas Judicial Council. That committee first met in February 2012 and subsequently met multiple times. The Committee unanimously adopted the legislative recommendations in late August and presented those to the Judicial Council on September 7. The Judicial Council gave unanimous support to the recommendations at that meeting and will formally adopt resolutions in support of them at its meeting on November 9.

The Texas Judicial Council’s Juvenile Justice Committee recommendations are attached in the following pages.