



Texas Appleseed
Written Testimony of Kathryn Freeman
Senate Education, Room E1.028
March 22, 2011

Texas Appleseed opposes SB 242 due to Section 25.0342 of the bill which allows school administrators to transfer an accused child to another campus. While we agree that bullying in schools must be addressed, we believe transferring an accused student to another campus is the wrong approach and unlikely to be an effective, long-term solution to the problem of bullying in schools.

Transferring the child to another campus does not address the underlying behavioral issue and places the accused bully in contact with new victims. Research has shown that students who bully typically come from troubled families or have been victims of bullying themselves.ⁱ

Transferring the child to another campus can have a negative impact on their academic achievement. Studies around school mobility have shown that students who frequently change schools are more likely to have behavioral issues, more likely to repeat a grade, more likely to dropout, and have lower levels of academic achievement.ⁱⁱ This intervention may therefore place the bully on a School- to-Prison path that is much more likely to lead to further victimization or the criminal justice system.

Moreover, research shows that individual interventions are not as effective in reducing overall bullying behavior as programs that are focused school-wide.ⁱⁱⁱ The most effective anti-bullying programs are proactive, preventative and work school-wide to create an environment that sends the message that bullying is not tolerated.^{iv} Well-designed programs not only work to significantly reduce and prevent bullying, they have also been shown to decrease other behavioral problems in schools.^v

Effective bullying prevention programs fit well within a school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) model – the evidence based practice Texas Appleseed encourages for general school discipline.^{vi} PBIS is an evidence-based, comprehensive school-wide prevention and intervention program which provides behavioral support to students and consultation support to teachers. Implementation of this model has been shown to decrease office referrals, suspensions, expulsions, and improve school climate. Using proven programs and evidence-based models like PBIS will go much farther in addressing bullying problems in schools than a solution focused on simply sending the bully to another campus.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, *Bullying in Schools* available at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/e07063414-guide.pdf> (last visited March 21, 2011).

ⁱⁱ U.S. Gen. Accounting Office, *Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently, Harming Their Education 7-8* (1994).

ⁱⁱⁱ Indiana University, *Safe and Responsive Schools, Early Identification and Intervention: Bullying in Schools*, available at <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/SrsBullying.pdf> (last visited March 21, 2011).

^{iv} *Id.*

^v *Id.*

^{vi} Texas Appleseed, *Texas' School-to-Prison Pipeline: Dropout to Incarceration*, 79 (2007).