Legislative Study Group (LSG) Floor Report — Wednesday, April 16, 2025

Emergency Calendar				
SB 2 Sponsor: Buckley	Relating to the establishment of an education savings account program.	Public Education 9 Ayes 6 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	**The full analysis of SB 2 is included in our supplemental materials document.** SB 2 irresponsibly allocates one billion dollars of public funds to create a voucher-style Educational Savings Account (ESA) program that would threaten public education funding and erode equity without improving student achievement.	**Unfavorable**
Major State Calendar				
HB 2 By: Buckley | Bernal | Guillen	Relating to public education and public school finance.	Public Education 13 Ayes 2 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	**The full analysis of HB 2 is included in our supplemental materials document.** HB 2 tackles the most pressing issues facing public education: school funding shortfalls; special education gaps; and teacher pay, training, and quality. While HB 2 falls short of what's needed, it is likely the only opportunity this session for increased education funding. Despite its limitations, it delivers meaningful support to a school system that is severely overburdened.	**Favorable with Concerns**
HB 2000 By: Ashby | Holt | Bumgarner | González, Jessica	Relating to the applicability of sex offender registration requirements to the offense of child grooming.	Criminal Jurisprudence 11 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	HB 2000, also known as Audrii's Law, requires individuals convicted of child grooming to register on the sex offender registry, thereby strengthening protections for children and enhancing public safety. Child grooming was established as an offense in 2023, but was not added to the list of offenses that mandate sex offender registration for the perpetrator. This has left a loophole in the law that allows sexual predators to go undetected in communities, enabling them to commit further offenses against children. Named in honor of 11-year-old Audrii Cunningham, Audrii's Law addresses her abduction, assault, and murder by a man previously convicted of a charge that would be classified as child grooming under current law. Because he was not required to register as a sex offender, there was no public warning about his past behavior. This likely made it easier for him to gain the family's trust and become close to Audrii—circumstances that ultimately preceded her tragic death.	**Favorable**

OK for Distribution

			HB 2000 closes a critical gap in the law, ensuring that individuals convicted of child grooming are tracked through the sex offender registry. By requiring registration, this bill helps prevent predators from hiding in plain sight and protects other children from suffering similar fates.	
General State Calendar				
HB 2196 By: Bell, Keith | Ashby | Buckley | Shaheen | Morales, Eddie	Relating to the provision of virtual education in public schools and to certain waivers and modifications by the commissioner of education to the method of calculating average daily attendance in an emergency or crisis for purposes of preserving school district funding entitlements under the Foundation School Program during that emergency or crisis; authorizing a fee.	Public Education 12 Ayes 2 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 2196 repeals the entirety of Chapter 30A, the State Virtual Education Network, and establishes a new statutory framework, Chapter 30B, for Virtual and Hybrid Campuses Programs and Courses. In attempting to bring structure to a growing landscape of virtual education, it raises serious concerns about quality, oversight, and accountability. **HB 2196 raises serious concerns by opening the door to unregulated, profit-driven, and potentially low-quality virtual schools.** While it does provide districts with added flexibility to partner with reputable institutions, such as universities, to offer hybrid virtual options, the bill goes too far without necessary safeguards. The bill allows school districts and charter schools to partner with private, third-party vendors to offer full-scale virtual education programs while granting sole authority to the Commissioner of Education to determine provider eligibility. The commissioner would also be tasked with evaluating provider performance. HB 2196 allows the commissioner's approval of a full-time hybrid or virtual campus to remain in effect indefinitely unless it is revoked. The bill lays out some conditions for this. **HB 2196 lacks clear requirements to ensure that 3rd-party, for-profit virtual schools are held to the same quality and accountability standards as traditional schools.** It is unclear whether these stand-alone virtual programs would require accreditation or be subject to as much oversight and accountability as traditional public schools. The only requirements outlined in HB 2196 are that hybrid or virtual courses include the appropriate essential knowledge and skills as well as appropriate rigor for the grade level. Much of the critical detail is left to the discretion of the Commissioner of Education through future rulemaking. **There are also significant concerns about how these virtual options may be misused — as a way to push out students with behavioral or learning challenges who need greater support.** School districts are prohibited from requiring students to enroll in a hybrid or virtual course; however, they may consider virtual school an alternative to expulsion. Charter schools may mandate hybrid or virtual attendance for any reason. Unlike traditional schools, stand-alone virtual programs often lack access to essential services like in-person tutoring, counseling, and intervention support.	**Unfavorable**

OK for Distribution

			Full-time virtual learning in Texas and across the country has often failed to provide a successful educational experience for many students. As such, making these options widely available without strong safeguards and limitations could be detrimental. While HB 2196 includes some safeguards for teachers—for example, ensuring that those hired for in-person instruction cannot be forced to teach hybrid or virtual classes—it still grants the TEA Commissioner broad discretion without clearly defined limits.	
HB 213 By: González, Mary | Moody | VanDeaver | Garcia, Linda	Relating to the inclusion of chronically absent students as students at risk of dropping out of school and the collection and reporting of data regarding those students.	Public Education 10 Ayes 2 Nays 0 PNV 3 Absent	By ensuring that school districts track which of their students are chronically absent, HB 213 takes a crucial step to provide support to these students. One in five Texan students is chronically absent, missing more than 10 percent of school operation time. This is roughly double the rate of absenteeism for the pre-COVID 2018-19 school year. According to the US Department of Education, students who are chronically absent for just one year between 8th and 12th grade are seven times more likely to drop out of school than those who are not. Despite these dire consequences of chronic absenteeism, Texas does not categorize these students as "at risk," nor does it track those students in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). In line with the Public Education Committee Interim Report from 2022, this bill does three things. First, it defines chronic absenteeism in statute. Second, it adds chronically absent students to the list of students who are "at risk," a designation that schools often use to target services. And third, it requires that TEA keeps track of students who are chronically absent in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Defining and tracking chronic absenteeism is a crucial measure to ensure that these less-visible students do not forgo adequate public education.	**Favorable**
HB 222 By: Talarico | Buckley | Ashby | Leo Wilson	Relating to the permissible uses of the school safety allotment under the Foundation School Program.	Public Education 12 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 3 Absent	HB 222 adds professional development for classroom behavioral management as a permissible use of the school safety allotment and, by doing so, provides funding to support a crucial pillar of student well-being. The school safety allotment, created by SB 11 (88R), allocates funding for schools to invest in material upgrades like security cameras, security personnel, and the prevention, identification, and management of emergencies and threats. This last category of permissible spending includes salaries for mental health personnel and programs for mental health	**Favorable**

OK for Distribution

			support. Not included, however, are any programs that would help teachers create safer and more positive classroom environments. HB 222 would add professional development for educators that includes training in classroom behavioral management to the list of permissible expenditures of the school safety allotment. The CDC reports that good classroom management benefits more than students academic preformance—it also strengthens their mental health and helps them avoid risky behaviors. Broadening the school safety allotment in this way would help give autonomy to local districts to take their safety—and their students' well being—into their own hands.	
HB 645 By: González, Mary | Rose | Noble	Relating to the provision of certain co-navigation services to individuals who are deaf-blind.	Human Services 10 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 645 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to implement a statewide co-navigation services program for people who are deaf and blind, also known as deaf-blind. The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities reports that about 2,500 Texans are deaf-blind. Most are adults who strive to live independently but struggle to handle daily living tasks. The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities promoted a policy recommendation to provide access to co-navigators, trained aides who provide visual and auditory cues for individuals in the deaf-blind community, allowing them to navigate their daily lives and create a pathway to independence. HB 645 mandates the HHSC to create a statewide co-navigation services program that provides deaf-blind individuals with physical access to their environment and enables them to make informed decisions. The program must not include personal care services, completing ordinary tasks, teaching, making decisions on behalf of individuals, or interpreting for them in formal medical, legal, or business settings. The executive commissioner must set reimbursement rates for co-navigators and establish a tiered wage scale based on their training in communication modes. The HHSC will ensure quality co-navigation services by monitoring co-navigators' compliance, developing funding sources for the program, and providing funding and training for navigators. The executive commissioner may also establish an advisory committee to guide the development and operation of the program. By establishing a statewide co-navigation program, HB 645 will address a critical gap in support services while promoting dignity and independence for deaf-blind Texans.	**Favorable**

OK for Distribution

HB 1458 By: Metcalf	Relating to the armed security officers required to be present at public schools and the appointment of reserve police officers by a school district police department.	Public Education 14 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 3 (88R) mandated that every school campus employ an armed security officer. That requirement was accompanied by a school safety allotment, though many schools noted that this amount was far too little to pay the salaries of a full time officer. Beyond the issue of cost, a law enforcement shortage nationwide made qualified personnel difficult to find. HB 1458 expands the definition of 'armed security officer' to include two eligible groups: • A reserve police officer who holds a permanent peace officer license • An honorably retired peace officer who kept their commission in active status The bill allows the board of trustees to allow the chief of police of the school district police department to authorize applicable officers as armed security officers on campuses. These officers could help schools fill the need for armed guards without resulting in lower standards.	**Favorable**
HB 1022 By: Morales, Eddie | Kitzman | Howard | Curry | Lalani	Relating to the course levels offered at Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College.	Higher Education 10 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 1022 will enable Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College's satellite campuses to offer full bachelor's degree programs. Currently, these campuses only provide upper-level courses, preventing students from completing their entire bachelor's degree. By removing this "upper-level" restriction, HB 1022 will allow the campuses to expand their course offerings to include lower-level classes. This would allow students to begin and complete their bachelor's degrees entirely at the Rio Grande College satellite campuses, increasing access to higher education in the region. HB 1022 represents a significant step towards increasing access to higher education for Texans in the Middle Rio Grande Region.	**Favorable**
HB 141 By: Manuel	Relating to the adoption of the revised Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children by the State of Texas; making conforming changes.	Human Services 10 Ayes 1 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	HB 141 seeks to adopt the new Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) to ensure that children are placed in safe and suitable homes in a timely manner. The ICPC is a law implemented throughout the United States that ensures protection and services for children placed across state lines. It requires that a child can only be placed in foster care in another state after the receiving state conducts a home study and approves the proposed placement. However, since the ICPC was enacted, clear standards for how child welfare agencies should evaluate potential home placements have not been established. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that about 30% of home studies took longer than 90 days to complete, citing issues found in incomplete and missing background checks, high caseworker	**Favorable**

J.C. Wall

OK for Distribution

			turnover, and failure to address financial and medical issues. Delays are worsened by incomplete packets, missing court orders, inadequate financial plans, and reliance on overwhelmed child welfare agencies. In 2004, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) passed a resolution to address the failures in the ICPC by drafting a new ICPC with uniform mechanisms and timeframes for completing a home study. For the ICPC to be binding as law, at least 35 states must enact it; 18 states have already done so. The first 35 states to join the revised ICPC will have further input on regulations formed under the compact. HB 141 seeks to implement the revised ICPC to improve the interstate placement process through established standards, clarified jurisdictions, and better coordination between states. **The revised ICPC would:** • **Clearly define areas of applicability and encourage cooperation among other compacts affecting child placement.** Specific circumstances would be outlined from which a child's placement would be applicable and not applicable to the interstate placement of a child. The revised compact protects against conflicting statutes within the Interstate Compact for Juveniles and the Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance by prohibiting the revised ICPC from interfering with the concurrent application of other applicable compacts. • **Still require the sending state to maintain jurisdiction over the child and grants authority to terminate jurisdiction under certain circumstances.** New language is introduced to clarify the instances in which the sending state may terminate its jurisdiction. Additionally, nothing limits the receiving state's ability to take emergency jurisdiction to protect the child in immediate harm or danger situations. • **Outline a comprehensive and structured framework to ensure the safe, legal, and accountable placement of children across state lines.** Processes would be presented for interstate child placement, including requesting, approving, and assessing safety and suitability. It prohibits placing a child in a receiving state without required approval and details the administrative review process for non-approvals. • **Establish an Interstate Commission for the Placement of Children.** The Interstate Commission for the Placement of Children would have one commissioner from each member state. In addition to providing rules within the ICPC, it would resolve disputes among states, issue advisory opinions, and collect standardized data concerning the placement of interstate children. The commission would report annually to the legislatures, governors, judiciaries, and state advisory councils of all member states. • **Include withdrawal provisions and penalty revisions.** Texas would be allowed to withdraw from the compact as desired. Additionally, the revised ICPC would eliminate the Class B Misdemeanor offense for those who violate the compact. By tackling the delays and inconsistencies of the current system, the revised compact ensures that children are placed in safe and stable homes.	

J.C. Wall

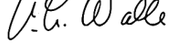
OK for Distribution

HB 502 By: Flores | Howard | Little | Moody | Rodríguez Ramos	Relating to the confidentiality of identifying information of victims of certain offenses.	Criminal Jurisprudence 11 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	HB 502 enhances privacy and protection for victims of invasive visual recording or indecent assault by allowing them to use a pseudonym in public records related to their assault case. Under current law, these victims are identified by their legal names in public files and records. They are not given the option to use a pseudonym, such as initials, which is commonly available in other sensitive cases. As a result, their names become part of public record, even in cases involving graphic testimony about traumatic sexual abuse or video evidence revealing the most private areas of their bodies. By allowing the use of a pseudonym, HB 502 helps safeguard victims' identities, easing the fear of public exposure and protecting their dignity. This added layer of privacy may also help victims feel safer coming forward, increase their willingness to participate in investigations, and help build greater trust in the criminal justice system.	**Favorable**
HB 643 By: Gervin-Hawkins	Relating to the requirement for payment bonds from certain public work contractors.	Delivery of Government Efficiency 8 Ayes 4 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 643 makes public works contracts more accessible to small contractors by raising the dollar threshold at which they need to provide a payment bond when working on state government projects. Currently, contractors are required to obtain a payment bond for state contracts valued at $25,000 or more. This requirement can disadvantage small contractors bidding on the project who may have less experience with the bonding process compared to larger contractors. HB 643 would only require contractors to have a bond for jobs over $100,000 instead of the current threshold of $25,000. This would make it easier and less expensive for smaller companies to compete for state contracts while maintaining the protections for larger projects.	**Favorable**
HB 3093 By: Villalobos	Relating to the calculation of certain ad valorem tax rates of a taxing unit for a year in which a property owner provides notice that the owner intends to appeal an order of an appraisal review	Ways & Means 13 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	HB 3093 aims to increase predictability in local budgets and tax bills for taxpayers. This bill applies specifically to counties along the Gulf Coast with populations of less than 500,000, including Cameron, Brazoria, Nueces, Galveston, and Jefferson counties. It is common for large refineries to contest their property valuations in district court. This process often takes 5 to 7 years, putting the taxable value of the county in limbo. Oftentimes, these large industries represent a significant portion of the county's overall taxable value. Such disputed values can easily change a county's budget by 2 to 3 percentage points, which is significant. HB 3093 aims to alleviate this uncertainty. The bill would require property owners with the 20 highest valuations, who anticipate substantial litigation (defined as having a taxable value that is 125% of the uncontested value), to submit their	**Favorable**

J.C. Wall

OK for Distribution

	board determining a protest by the owner regarding the appraisal of the owner's property.		total uncontested taxable value, a value that is mutually agreed upon by the industry actor and the local county appraisal district. This would enable local taxing entities to establish a baseline taxable value for setting tax rates. HB 3093 would only impact the large refineries and petrochemical industries along the coast, which were consulted during the development of this bill, according to testimony. It seeks to enhance predictability for taxing units and taxpayers as counties and other local taxing units work to budget for necessary local services.	
HB 1700 By: Fairly | Shaheen | Frank | Howard	Relating to certain records of a health professional providing a telemedicine medical service, teledentistry dental service, or telehealth service.	Public Health 11 Ayes 1 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 1700 standardizes how telehealth professionals obtain patient consent for treatment, data collection, and data sharing, including situations where communication is in an audio-only format. Currently, state and federal requirements mandate healthcare providers collect consent for treatment, record retention, and record sharing. However, standardized formats for collecting patient consent during audio-only telehealth visits remain unclear, leading to confusion about best practices. House Bill 1700 mandates that government agencies overseeing health professionals who offer telehealth adopt standardized formats for consent collection and record-keeping for patient consent regarding treatment, data collection, and data sharing, including provisions for audio-only consent. HB 1700 improves clarity, accountability, and patient protection in the delivery of telehealth services by implementing consistent consent protocols.	**Favorable**
HB 117 By: Schoolcraft	Relating to the establishment of the governor's task force on the governance of early childhood education and care.	Public Education, S/C on Academic & Career Education 14 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent	HB 117 establishes the Governor's Task Force on the Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care to pave the way for a more efficient, effective, and outcomes-driven child care system. The State's existing early childhood education (ECE) structure is fragmented, creating challenges for parents, providers, and policymakers. Parents currently encounter a disjointed system with multiple application processes and limited opportunities. HB 117 addresses these challenges by establishing the Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Education, which will be attached to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The task force will be guided by a steering committee composed of several agencies, including the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and TEA. **Key Actions for the Task Force** The task force will evaluate the governance and operational challenges within the ECE system, with a focus on how federal and local childcare programs are managed and regulated. Its membership will include educators and leaders	**Favorable**



OK for Distribution

			from public and private schools, Head Start, the Department of State Health Services, the Texas Early Learning Council, nonprofit early childhood education leaders, and other relevant stakeholders appointed by the Governor. The goal is to improve efficiency by reviewing the HHSC, TEA, and TWC's delivery of early childhood services. The task force will explore options for a large-scale redesign of these programs to enhance service delivery, improve the quality of care, and ensure more efficient use of funds. Addressing the challenges will help ensure more students start school on track, reducing later academic struggles. By December 1, 2026, the task force will submit policy and budget recommendations to the Legislature, focused on improving governance, agency coordination, operational efficiency, childcare access, and kindergarten readiness. The task force will be dissolved, and the bill will expire on September 1, 2027. **Responsibilities of the Steering Committee** HB 117 requires that the HHSC, TEA, and TWC align their goals and performance metrics to better track progress in early childhood education and care. This includes efforts to integrate and streamline statewide data systems. These agencies will be required to submit regular progress reports to the task force and continuously update statewide goals and strategic plans to ensure alignment with evolving needs of children and families. To support this initiative, TEA will use appropriated or available funds for the task force. HB 117 takes a strategic, expert-informed approach to reforming ECE governance in Texas. HB 117 aims to create a more effective and efficient system that will strengthen outcomes for the state's youngest learners, ensuring they are better prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond.	

OK for Distribution