

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing site-based school discipline policy committees
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Grusendorf, Delisi, Eissler, B. Keffer, Mowery  
3 nays — Oliveira, Branch, Hochberg  
1 absent — Dutton
- WITNESSES:** For — Tim Bacon, Texas State Teachers Association; Lonnie Hollingsworth, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; JoHannah Whitsett, Association of Texas Professional Educators  
Against — Merry Lynn Gerstenschlager, Texas Eagle Forum  
On — Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Randall Fields, Texas Association of School Boards; Dwight Harris, Texas Federation of Teachers; Byron Schlomach, Texas Public Policy Foundation
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 11.253, requires each school district's policies and procedures to ensure that effective planning and site-based decision-making occur at each campus to direct and support the improvement of student performance. Each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of the campus-level committee, is required to develop, review, and revise a campus improvement plan, which must include goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3312 would require school districts to allow for the provision and establishment of a site-based school discipline policy committee made up only of full-time classroom teachers. The committee would have to be established if 30 percent of classroom teachers signed a petition and delivered it to the principal by the 10th instructional day of an academic year.  
  
By the 20th instructional day of an academic year, the committee would have to meet and choose an executive board from its membership by

secret ballot. The committee would have to establish policies regarding discipline management and student code of conduct in accordance with of Education Code, ch. 37; goals and methods for violence prevention and intervention on campus; teacher and school personnel safety; and methods for teachers to address the committee or the board regarding individual or systematic concerns in matters of school discipline or school personnel safety.

The school board would have to consider the advice of the site-based discipline policy committee in adopting the student code of conduct for the district. If a policy committee were established, it would have the authority to determine whether a student whom a teacher had removed from a classroom should be placed back in that classroom.

The bill would take effect beginning with the 2005-06 school year.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 3312 would give teachers a voice in school discipline by allowing schools to establish campus-based discipline policy committees composed entirely of teachers. Teachers experience school discipline issues first hand, and they are in the best position to develop solutions to discipline problems.

The bill would help empower and retain teachers by giving them more authority and control over their working environment. Many teachers consider working conditions to be as important as salary in determining job satisfaction and will leave jobs if they do not feel safe. CSHB 3312 would help keep experienced teachers on the job, which would contribute to improved student performance.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

There is no need for the bill because school districts already are required to have site-based and district-level committees that address school discipline. The existing structure addresses due process and other issues that CSHB 3312 does not take into account. Education Code, ch. 37 already provides teachers with the tools they need to address student discipline issues.

**OTHER  
OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

The discipline committee should include parents and administrators as well as teachers. Students and parents would have more faith in decisions made by a group that included other perspectives.

NOTES: The original version of the bill would have prevented a principal from returning a student to class without the teacher's consent.