



## Input on HB 13

Regarding school safety training

March 27, 2023

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following neutral input on **HB 13** by Rep. King, which would add mental health first aid training requirements for each district employee who regularly interacts with children.

School safety is one of ATPE's top legislative priorities. ATPE's 2022-23 Legislative Program, which was unanimously adopted by members of the 2022 House of Delegates, states the following:

**“ATPE supports measures to ensure all educational settings are safe and secure environments where students, school employees, and volunteers can be productive.”**

Training has become a sensitive issue among Texas educators. Recent legislation has sought to reduce the load of required training, albeit with mixed results. The reading academies mandated by HB 3 in 2019 are an example of a well-intended training requirement that educators feel has become a hardship. While the reading academies are different in both size and scope from the training proposed in HB 13, we would like to avoid making any of the same mistakes. ATPE therefore recommends the following changes to HB 13:

1. **Strike “first aid” in all references to “mental health first aid training”** so that the language simply reads “mental health training.” This will provide a degree of flexibility and avoid locking schools into a single vendor that has resulted in mixed feedback from educators in the field.
2. **Add a stipend.** One of the chief complaints educators have raised regarding specific state required trainings, such as the reading academies, concerns uncompensated time. We believe the addition of a modest stipend, as contemplated in other sections of the bill, would increase educator buy-in.

Nothing is more important than the safety of Texas children. HB 13 is an important step in that direction and ATPE appreciates the opportunity to work with the Texas Legislature to make schools safer for students and staff. **We respectfully ask your consideration of these recommendations**, which we believe will make the bill stronger and more efficacious. For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or [government@atpe.org](mailto:government@atpe.org).

*The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 90,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.*