



SENATOR MAYES MIDDLETON

DISTRICT 11

During the Regular Session of the 88th Legislature, I was proud to pass Texas Senate Bill 763 which permits a school district to hire school chaplains to provide support, services, and programs for students as assigned by the school board. I am happy to provide the following resources to act a guide as your school board prepares a chaplaincy program to vote on a chaplaincy program.

What source of district funds can be used to pay for chaplains?

- Districts may use funds from their School Safety Allotment or eligible school safety grant funds to pay for chaplains. Districts may also use general fund revenue to pay for chaplains; however, if a district uses state special allotment funds to pay for chaplains, both the students being served and the services provided by the chaplain must meet the state program's requirements. Additionally, a district may allow chaplains to volunteer their time and services.

Will chaplains replace school counselors?

- The law does not change any requirements regarding the employment of school counselors, and the law does not allow a chaplain to replace counselors. A school chaplain would be in addition to school counselors to provide an additional resource to students.

Do chaplains need to be accredited?

- The law does not have any specific accreditation requirements. However, chaplain certification agencies exist across multiple faiths which a school district could require of their applicants if they so chose. The law was intentionally drafted to give ISDs the most latitude in designing their program.

What duties are required of chaplains?

- The law was crafted in a way to allow school districts to craft the duties to suit their districts specific needs. Example duties a district may contract a chaplain to preform include:
 - Prevention and treatment programs relating to addressing adverse childhood experiences.
 - The prevention, identification, and management of threats and emergencies.
 - Utilized for restorative discipline and restorative justice practices.
 - Provide mental health, behavioral health services, counseling, and social work services.
 - Developing and implementing mental health programs, culturally relevant instruction, and restorative justice programs.
 - Provide services and programs for suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention.
 - School Chaplains may also serve a duel function as a school guardian.

Can a Chaplain be of any religion?

- The law is silent on the religious affiliation of the chaplain. The law allows people of all faiths to serve as a chaplain in public schools.

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What students are eligible to see a chaplain?

- The law does not specify or restrict who can go to a chaplain. School Boards may establish guidelines surrounding visiting chaplains as they see fit, including, for example, requiring parental consent.

Do chaplains have to be licensed or certified?

- The statute does not contain any licensure requirements for chaplains and expressly states that a chaplain employed or volunteering is not required to be certified by the State Board for Educator Certification.

What limitations are placed on the utilization of chaplains?

- Pursuant to the statute, a school district or open-enrollment charter school may not employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain who has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense for which a defendant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure.

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