

Texas SB 820 (2023)

Texas SB 820 establishes cybersecurity and information security requirements for state agencies to protect government information and systems.



What it is

Texas Senate Bill 820 (SB820) is a state cybersecurity regulation that requires Texas public school districts to establish formal cybersecurity and information security practices to better protect sensitive student and staff data. SB820 aims to strengthen cybersecurity risk management and enhance resilience to cyber threats within the educational sector.

Published by the Texas Legislature and enforced by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), SB820 applies specifically to independent school districts (ISDs) across Texas. The regulation mandates development and implementation of cybersecurity policies, designation of a cybersecurity coordinator, annual risk assessments, and incident reporting to the TEA, with a focus on safeguarding data and ensuring compliance with state cybersecurity expectations.

At a glance

PUBLISHER Texas Department of Information Resources	TYPE Regulation	VERSION 2019
EFFECTIVE September 1, 2019	DOMAIN Cybersecurity	FAMILY Other
REGION Texas	INDUSTRY Government & Public Sector	ADOPTION MODEL Regulatory Compliance
IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY Moderate		

Source: <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/86R/billtext/html/SB00820F.htm>

Why it matters

- **Strengthen cybersecurity governance** Increase accountability and oversight by requiring formal security policies, risk assessments, and designated security officers.
- **Enhance regulatory alignment** Ensure state organizations comply with Texas-specific cybersecurity laws and demonstrate adherence to mandated information security requirements.
- **Improve incident response readiness** Mandate incident response planning and reporting, enabling faster identification, containment, and recovery from cybersecurity incidents.
- **Protect sensitive educational data** Drive measures to safeguard personally identifiable information and student records against unauthorized access and cyberattacks.

How SmartSuite supports TX SB 820

State Cybersecurity Governance Framework Structure policies, standards, and oversight aligned to Texas agency cybersecurity requirements.	Risk Assessment and Control Implementation Track risk assessments and implementation of required safeguards across systems and data.	Asset Inventory and System Classification Maintain visibility into systems, data, and infrastructure subject to SB820 requirements.
Access Control and Security Operations Manage authentication, permissions, monitoring, and operational security controls across environments.	Incident Response and Reporting Workflows Track incidents and manage response, escalation, and reporting obligations to state authorities.	Texas Cybersecurity Compliance Reporting Provide dashboards showing cybersecurity posture, risk exposure, and compliance with Texas mandates.

Common framework mappings

CIS Controls v8.1

CJIS Security Policy

FERPA

HIPAA

ISO 27001:2022

ISO 27002:2022

NIST CSF 2.0

NIST 800-53 Rev.5

PCI DSS 4.0.1

SOC 2

Official resources

Texas Senate Bill 820 (Enrolled Text) Official enrolled bill text detailing the requirement for school districts to adopt a cybersecurity policy. capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/88R/billtext/html/SB00820F.htm	House Research Office Bill Analysis for SB 820 Provides legislative analysis explaining the cybersecurity policy requirement for school districts under SB 820. hro.house.texas.gov/pdf/ba86r/sb0820.pdf
Texas Department of Information Resources – Texas Cybersecurity Framework (TCF) Outlines the cybersecurity framework that school districts should follow when implementing the cybersecurity policy under SB 820. dir.texas.gov/information-security/cybersecurity-framework	

Frequently asked questions

What is Texas SB 820 used for? Texas SB 820 establishes mandatory cybersecurity and information security requirements for Texas public school districts. Its purpose is to ensure these entities implement comprehensive policies and controls to safeguard sensitive student and district data against unauthorized access, breaches, and cyber threats. The statute aims to strengthen cybersecurity practices within the education sector statewide.
Is compliance with Texas SB 820 required? Yes, compliance with Texas SB 820 is mandatory for all Texas public school districts. The law requires districts to adopt cybersecurity policies, develop incident response plans, designate a cybersecurity coordinator, and report cyber incidents. Noncompliance can result in regulatory scrutiny and increased risk exposure.
Who does Texas SB 820 apply to? Texas SB 820 applies specifically to independent school districts and charter schools within the State of Texas. Board trustees, school superintendents, IT staff, and district employees responsible for information security are key stakeholders involved in ensuring compliance with the statute.

What cybersecurity policies or controls does Texas SB 820 require?

Texas SB 820 requires districts to adopt and maintain robust cybersecurity policies aligned with state guidelines. These must cover risk assessment procedures, user access controls, incident response planning, ongoing monitoring, and staff training. Additionally, a designated cybersecurity coordinator must be named to oversee implementation.

What is the role of the cybersecurity coordinator under Texas SB 820?

The cybersecurity coordinator is responsible for managing the district's cybersecurity program, including policy development, education, and incident reporting. This individual acts as the primary liaison between the district, state agencies, and law enforcement in the event of a cyber incident.

How does Texas SB 820 relate to other cybersecurity frameworks?

While Texas SB 820 is a state-specific mandate, its requirements can align with broader frameworks such as NIST CSF or CIS Controls. Districts may leverage best practices from these standards to enhance their SB 820 compliance and ensure robust protection of information assets.

What ongoing compliance activities are required for Texas SB 820?

Ongoing compliance includes regular updates to cybersecurity policies, mandatory reporting of incidents to the Texas Education Agency, continuous staff training, and maintaining documentation of risk assessments and incident responses. Periodic reviews and testing of controls are also necessary to remain compliant.

How would SmartSuite support Texas SB 820?

SmartSuite can help organizations manage Texas SB 820 compliance by providing centralized risk tracking, control management for cybersecurity policies, secure evidence collection, and audit readiness tools. With robust reporting and dashboards, districts can monitor their compliance posture, ensure proper incident documentation, and streamline response to audits or regulatory inquiries.

License included / downloadable: Yes Texas SB 820 is published by the Texas Legislature and is publicly available through official Texas legislative and state government websites. License included with platform

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/us-texas-sb820-state-cybersecurity-and-information-security-requirements