



## Texas Emergent Bilingual Students Should Have Quality Programs and Certified Teachers

**IDRA Testimony on SB 2497, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, April 12, 2023**

Dear Chair Creighton and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and I am the deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

IDRA supports additional funding for quality bilingual education, including dual language immersion programs that are delivered within alternative language programs. At the same time, we support teachers of bilingual education holding certification in that area. This has been a longstanding challenge in Texas, as we have faced a bilingual/ESL certified teacher shortage for over 30 years.

To support alternative language programs offering dual language immersion programs and encourage teacher certification, IDRA respectfully offers the following amendments on the bill:

- Add a timeline for alternative language program plans with bilingual exceptions to secure a certified bilingual teacher within the approved exception period; and
- Add provisions for the Texas Education Agency to monitor program quality and provide targeted technical assistance to bilingual and special language programs, including alternative language programs.

These changes are intended to ensure that alternative language programs receiving dual language immersion funding deliver high quality programs and receive support to certify their instructors or identify and hire appropriately certified teachers. With these adjustments, Texas can expand quality dual language programs and improve educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. Thank you for your consideration. For more information, contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., at [chloe.sikes@idra.org](mailto:chloe.sikes@idra.org).

*IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by leading policy analyses and advocacy; dynamic teacher training and principal coaching; useful research, evaluation and frameworks for action; and innovative student, family and community engagement.*