



Greater Investments and Targeted Supports Make Texas Public Schools Better for All Students

IDRA Testimony on HB 100, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and Diana Long, to the Texas House Public Education Committee, April 4, 2023

Dear Chair Buckley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

IDRA is 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.

HB 100 makes great strides to make equitable investments in our Texas public schools. IDRA appreciates the \$50 increase to the basic allotment, the introduction of targeted supports for advanced math pathways in high schools, and the change to enrollment-based funding for the compensatory education and bilingual education allotments, among others.

This would greatly benefit our emergent bilingual students, who especially experienced instructional loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, attendance funding for bilingual education declined between the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years, and the goals of HB 3 (86R) to invest in and expand dual language programs have not been fully realized. By switching to enrollment-based funding for the bilingual education allotment, all students in bilingual education programs would be counted for funding, which would aid high-quality bilingual program supports and expansion of dual language immersion programs.

In addition, we offer the following suggestions to ensure Texas makes meaningful and sustainable investments in public schools.

1. **Section 1.10:** Revise to provide clarity over the method for calculating average enrollment to ensure districts with high attendance do not receive lower funding. One recommended method is to use average daily membership counts for each six-week period in the school year, akin to the current refined ADA calculation method.
2. **Section 1.14:** The bill as written stipulates that a student achieves the advanced mathematic pathway by starting Algebra I in eighth grade and “continues through progressively more advanced mathematics courses in each grade from grade 9 through 12.” Yet the bill is vague as to what is *progressive* in sequence means. For clarity, the progression should be specific to include: Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, Precalculus, and other advanced options that build on these prerequisites.

Current law includes Algebra I and Geometry in a sequence for required high school math courses (TEC 28.025). However, Algebra II is only required under the STEM endorsement and the Distinguished Level of Achievement, which is the plan a high school student must graduate under to be eligible for admission under the Top Ten Percent Plan to public universities.

In current rule (TAC Title 19, Chapter 111, Subchapters C & D), the State Board of Education-approved mathematics courses in a progressive sequence as determined by prerequisites include: Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II (which can be taken concurrently) with progression to Precalculus, Advanced Quantitative Reasoning, Independent Study in Math, and Discrete Mathematics for Problem Solving, all of which list Algebra II as a prerequisite. All Advanced Placement and IB mathematics courses also require Algebra II at minimum.

Currently, Black and Latino students are underrepresented in the STEM endorsement in high school (TEA, 2022). Districts enrolling greater proportions of economically disadvantaged students saw the steepest drop in Algebra II offering and the STEM endorsement four years after HB 5 (2013) was implemented (Bojorquez & Bahena, 2018). Providing financial incentives for advanced mathematics pathways is good for more equitable advanced math course options in Texas high schools.

3. **Section 2.05:** While the \$50 increase in the basic allotment is a step in the right direction, IDRA suggests an increase to at least \$7,075 (\$865 more) to align the basic allotment with current inflation since its last revision in 2019. In addition, we suggest including a factor to adjust for annual inflation according to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This type of factor has been proposed in other legislation filed this session. Adjusting the basic allotment for annual inflation would help school districts meet the fluctuating costs of providing education.

HB 100 benefits all Texas students by making basic investments and enhanced targeted support by adding funding in special allotments.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., IDRA Deputy Director of Policy at chloe.sikes@idra.org or Diana Long, Education Policy Fellow, at diana.long@idra.org.

Resources

- Bojorquez, H., & Bahena, S. (2018). Ready Texas: A Study HB5 Implementation in Texas and Implications for College Readiness. IDRA. <https://idra.news/ReadyTexas18>
- Latham Sikes, C. (May 23, 2022). High Quality Bilingual Education Programs Need More Support to Realize State Goals – IDRA Issue Brief. IDRA. <https://idra.news/TXfundingBilEd>
- TEA. (2022). Statewide Foundation High School Program (FHSP) Graduate Reports, Count of FHSP Graduate Endorsement by Race/Ethnicity, 2020-21. Texas Education Agency.

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.