



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

**IDRA Testimony on SB 2497, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, May 16, 2023**

Dear Chair Buckley and 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.

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 suggestions for the bill:

- Add a timeline for alternative language program plans to secure a certified bilingual teacher within the approved exception period;
- Add provisions to also extend dual language immersion funding to one-way dual language immersion programs that serve reclassified emergent bilingual students; and
- Maintain permissible uses of the bilingual education allotment to apply to salary supplements. Bilingual teachers should get the extra supplement for teaching bilingual education, but full salaries should continue to be funded by the basic allotment and other funding sources.

With these adjustments, Texas can expand quality dual language programs, improve educational opportunities for all emergent bilingual students, and protect bilingual education funding uses for bilingual education programs.

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.*