



Ethnic Studies Courses Improve Student Outcomes

IDRA Testimony for HB 45, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Public Education Committee, May 9, 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 45 includes ethnic studies courses in Mexican American Studies and African American Studies as options to meet the required social studies curriculum for high school students. Research shows that ethnic studies coursework benefits students who participate in these classes through better school attendance, higher standardized test scores, higher GPAs, higher graduation rates, and even a reduction in inter-personal prejudice (Gómez, 2021).

This 2022-23 school year, 706,775 Black students and 2,921,416 Latino students were enrolled in Texas schools, and both populations have increased over the last 10 years (TEA, 2023). In total, students of color account for 74% of all students in Texas. Courses like African American Studies and Mexican American Studies help to create welcoming school climates. When students see themselves in the curriculum, materials, books and discussions in school, they are more engaged and create deeper connections to their campuses. These connections are critical to creating safe and supportive schools that prepare all students for success.

We recommend passing HB 45 to support an equitable and robust curriculum that will benefit and engage all Texas students.

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., at chloe.sikes@idra.org.

Resources

Gómez, I. (May 2021). Visions and Provisions – Planning for K-12 Ethnic Studies Implementation. IDRA Newsletter.

<https://idra.news/nlMay21d>

TEA. (2023). 2022-2023 Student Enrollment, PEIMS Report. Texas Education Agency.

<https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/adhocrpt/adste.html>

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.