



# IDRA Quality Schools Action Framework Provides a Guide to Achieve Equal Educational Opportunity for All Students

IDRA comments on Equal Educational Opportunity, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas House Select Committee on Educational Opportunity and Enrichment, July 3, 2023

Dear Chair Buckley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

IDRA is an independent, non-partisan non-profit that for the past 50 years has committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

Through working with educators, parents and students, and policymakers, IDRA has developed a framework for students' educational equity and success. Equal educational opportunity for all Texas students can be achieved through five fundamental aspects of quality schools (see IDRA Quality Schools Action Framework):

- 1) Healthy school districts that support students to thrive;
- 2) Fair funding of school operations, educators, programs and facilities;
- 3) Race and gender equity in school policies and practices;
- 4) Strong and representative governance and policymaking; and
- 5) Supportive school leadership.

These fundamentals of quality schools translate into key policy recommendations for the Select Committee:

- **Fully and fairly fund public schools.** The Committee should raise the basic allotment by a minimum of \$1,000, incorporate an inflation adjustment factor in the school funding formula and increase targeted investments for students requiring additional educational services in bilingual education, special education, and compensatory services. Relatedly, investments in public education should be kept in public schools to realize the return on investment. No public funds should be diverted to private school voucher programs.
- **Support authentic family and student engagement.** Policies should ensure that schools are transparent and accountable to families and students in their services, in decision-making processes, and in their data and outcomes reporting.
- **Implement safe and welcoming school practices.** Students are safest and most able to learn in an inclusive and supportive educational environment. This means they have strong relationships with trusted adults, are not pushed out of school through discipline or discouragement, receive behavioral and mental health supports, and are free from violence in any form in schools (see Craven, 2022).

- **Ensure high-quality academics through teaching quality and rigorous curriculum.** Teachers should be certified, trained to educate students from diverse backgrounds, and supported to engage students and their families. Rigorous curricula should reflect learning standards and affirm students' racial, ethnic, and gender identities to engage and inspire them.

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](mailto:chloe.sikes@idra.org).

## Resources

Craven, M. (2022). What Safe Schools Should Look Like for Every Student. IDRA Issue Brief.

<https://idra.news/SafeSchoolsIB>

IDRA (2020). Quality Schools Action Framework webpage. <https://www.idra.org/change-model/quality-schools-action-framework/>

IDRA (2020). Infographic – Quality Schools Action Framework for Educational Equity & Success.

<https://idra.news/QSAFgraphic>

*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.*