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IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: **College Readiness and Success**

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Texas School Counselors Point to Troubling State of College Advising

**IDRA Studies the Role of Middle School Counselors in Supporting
Students' College Readiness**

A decade after Texas policymakers weakened graduation requirements, middle school counselors struggle with their role of college and career advising under the 2013 House Bill 5. IDRA released a study recently, [School Counselors on College Advising Constraints – A Ready Texas Study](#), about the impact of the law on their work and on students.

The Texas Legislature ended the previous graduation requirements commonly known as the 4x4 that required Texas students to graduate with four courses each in math, English, social studies and science. The policy also states that students must choose an “endorsement” – in essence, their career path – in eighth grade.

Those changes put middle school counselors in a heightened role of advising young students to make long-term decisions about their educational careers.

Related Infographics

[More Ready Texas with Middle School Counselors](#)

[Ready Texas Graduation Requirements \(previous IDRA study\)](#)

[Math and College Readiness](#)

Keep reading Texas school counselors article



Texas' Ban on College Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Offices Takes Effect

by *Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.*

The Texas legislature passed Senate Bill 17 last spring to ban diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) offices in colleges and universities. This new anti-DEI law will have far-reaching consequences for college quality and accessibility in Texas.

DEI offices and initiatives were established to help foster more equitable and inclusive college learning environments for historically marginalized students.

They offer targeted resources and support for historically marginalized students, including Black and Latino students, students identifying as LGBTQ+, and students from low-income households, first-generation college students, students who are immigrants and military veterans.

This article and [infographic](#) outline what the law covers and, importantly, what it doesn't.

Keep reading Texas DEI ban article





Encouraging STEM Pathways through Student and Teacher Experiences

by Stephanie Garcia, Ph.D.

More than ever, there is a global priority of preparing students for STEM college and careers with high-quality experiences that increase career awareness and help cultivate relationships, mentorships and work-based experiences.



In 2023, the Defense STEM Education Consortium (DSEC) named the Alamo STEM Ecosystem (ASE) as one of only four STEM Education Hubs in the nation. IDRA co-leads San Antonio's ASE, which brings together educators, community leaders and industry partners to expand opportunities for K-16 students.

Early this month, we held San Antonio's first school-day STEM Youth Summit. And this Saturday, the Alamo STEM Ecosystem Educator Conference will take place on February 3, 2024, at Palo Alto College STEM Center (IDRA and SAMSAT are the leads). This article describes both events.

STEM Youth Summit
January 17, 2024 • San Antonio

SAMSAT STANFORD UNIVERSITY
ALAMO STEM ECOSYSTEM CYBER TEXAS FOUNDATION IDRA

"If you're curious about a particular field or industry, embrace that curiosity and explore all you can, whether that's taking classes within the field or any extracurriculars, to really learn if it's the right choice for you."
- Hannah Rosales, high school senior computer science student, president of the Mexican American Studies Student Association, and IDRA intern

Keep reading Encouraging STEM article

IDRA Priorities for the 2024 Georgia General Assembly Session

The Georgia General Assembly opened its 2024 session this month and will operate until the end of March. IDRA has outlined a set of policy priorities and recommendations in three areas.

- Ensure Fair School Funding for All Students
- End Harmful Discipline in Schools
- Promote Culturally-Sustaining School Climates that Support All Students

[Keep reading to learn more](#) and see our [one-pager highlights](#).

IDRA Policy Priorities - Georgia Legislative Session 2024

Ensure Fair Funding for All Students by fully funding the Quality Basic Education Formula (QBE), expanding the QBE formula to include additional funding for students living in poverty, and by opposing all efforts to divert public funding to private education institutions, especially through vouchers.

End Harmful Discipline by commissioning a school discipline study committee, expanding pre-suspension and expulsion MTSS availability to all students, and prohibiting corporal punishment.

Promote Culturally Sustaining Schools that Welcome and Serve all Students by ensuring that students receive a culturally-responsive and sustaining education that emphasizes the contributions and perspectives of historically marginalized communities.

About IDRA
IDRA is a non-profit organization that works to advance equal educational opportunities for every child through policy research and program development.

IDRA
Transforming Education

Mikayla Arriaga, M.Ed.
Executive Director

Theresean Wilson, J.D.
President

Antonio Wilson
President

SCAIE

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New Classnotes Podcast Episodes

Student Leaders Surprise Teachers

IDRA Classnotes Podcast #240

<https://idra.news/Pod240>

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Portrait of Hector Bojorquez

Portrait of Ana Luna YLN teacher coordinator

Portrait of Beatriz Nuñez

Hector Bojorquez, who conceptualized IDRA's [Youth Leadership Now](#) project, talks with two guests from Fabens Middle School: Ana Luna YLN teacher coordinator, and assistant, Beatriz Nuñez, about their students' first four weeks as YLN tutors.

[Learn more and listen](#)

IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode #239

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

50th Anniversary IDRA

Portrait of Celina Moreno, J.D.

This episode features IDRA President & CEO, Celina Moreno, J.D., as she spoke at IDRA's 50th anniversary gala, issuing a powerful call to action for this nation's students.

[Learn more and listen](#)

Webinar: Lau v. Nichols 50th Anniversary

The [Lau v. Nichols](#) U.S. Supreme Court decision in January 1974 defined the right of emergent bilingual students to equal access to a meaningful education.

IDRA founder Dr. José Cárdenas testified in the case and then assisted the Office for Civil Rights in the development of the Lau Remedies, the first guide for schools about serving emergent bilingual students.



This commemorative webinar via Claremont Graduate University School of Educational Studies featured the Lau plaintiff lawyer, school superintendents, policy experts and academics. They discussed the policy and practice implications of the ruling through to today. [Watch the January 22 webinar video.](#)



IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization. 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.

Reach Out To Us

IDRA
5815 Callaghan Road, #101
San Antonio, TX 78228
United States

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