



IDRA Policy Priorities for the 2023 Texas Legislative Session

IDRA's mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. To do this, IDRA works to promote educational justice, build excellent and equitable schools, and protect the civil rights of systemically-excluded students in Texas, particularly those who are Black, Latino and/or emergent bilingual students.

Put children first...



Secure fair school funding

Ensure excellent educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students

Promote culturally-sustaining school climates that support all students

Create safer schools without harmful discipline practices

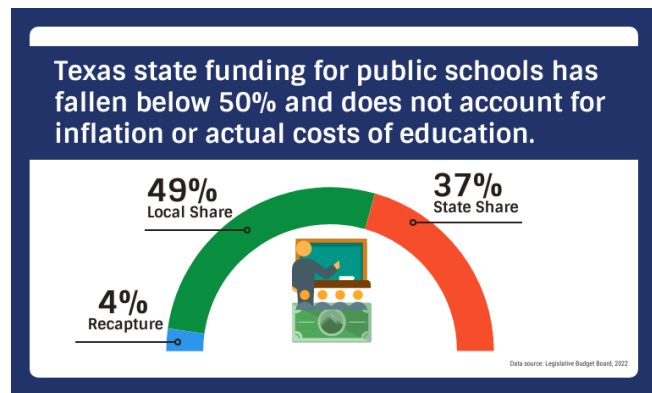
Prepare all students to access and succeed in college

Secure

Fair School Funding for All Students





Public schools are essential to society's collective success. All students deserve to go to excellent, well-funded public schools that prepare them to access and succeed in college and beyond. But not all Texas schools have sufficient funding to provide students with the education and opportunities they deserve.

State funding for public schools remains below 50% and does not account for inflation or actual costs of education.



IDRA Policy Recommendations

The state school funding system should be based on actual costs to provide equitable education to students, including students of color, students from families with limited incomes, and students who require additional programs, supports and services. The legislature can make sure public school students have excellent, well-funded and well-resourced schools. IDRA urges the legislature to...

-  Protect local school district autonomy to control their maintenance and operation (M&O) tax rates without disparate tax rate compression by the state.
-  Invest in the basic allotment to raise per pupil funding for all students, including by adjusting for inflation.
-  Make meaningful investments in teacher recruitment, preparation and retention to address workforce shortages, especially in high-need fields, such as bilingual education, special education and STEM.
-  Keep public dollars in public schools by opposing vouchers and similar programs that use public funds for private purposes.

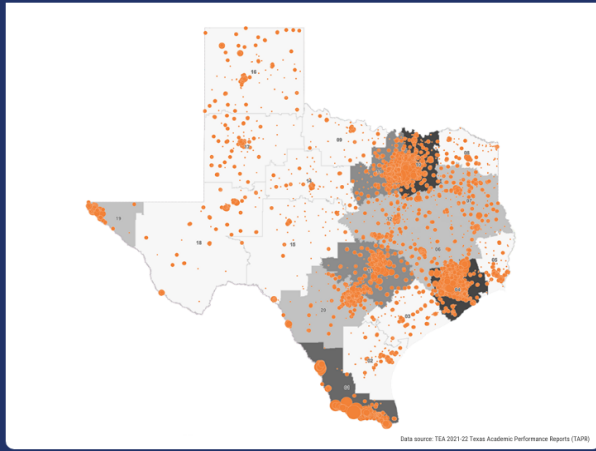


Ensure

Excellent Educational Opportunities for Emergent Bilingual Students

Emergent bilingual students have the right to excellent schools that support bilingualism and biliteracy in both a student's home language and English.

Certified bilingual education teachers are in short supply and have been for over 30 years.







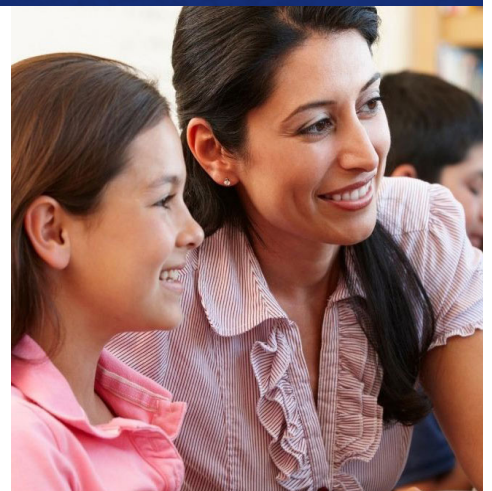
Strong programs for emergent bilingual students are well-funded, have high-quality teachers, and accurately track students' progress and needs. But certified bilingual education teachers are in short supply and have been for over 30 years.

Now is the time to address the bilingual teacher workforce to support high-quality bilingual education programs for all eligible students.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can make sure emergent bilingual students have equitable and excellent education. IDRA urges the legislature to...

-  Increase the number of quality, certified bilingual education teachers through preparation program support, strengthened teacher retention strategies and higher teacher pay.
-  Adopt the State Seal of Biliteracy with pathways from elementary through high school.
-  Raise the bilingual education funding weight and expenditures minimum to support and expand quality bilingual education educators, programs and instructional materials.
-  Ensure students who speak languages other than English, and their families, have access to quality public education without barriers regardless of citizenship.



Promote

Culturally-Sustaining Schools that Support All Students

All students deserve to learn in culturally-sustaining school environments that affirm their racial, ethnic, gender and other identities. Culturally-sustaining schools create positive, safe and supportive school climates for all students to receive high-quality educational opportunities to succeed.

Recent classroom censorship policies have made schools less safe or supportive for students, especially for students who are Black, Latino and identify as LGBTQ+, and are significantly more likely to experience identity-based discrimination.

Censorship policies weaken curriculum quality

IDRA surveys with educators show

Two thirds of students specifically request lessons on race...






and history, current events and forms of discrimination that they have experienced.

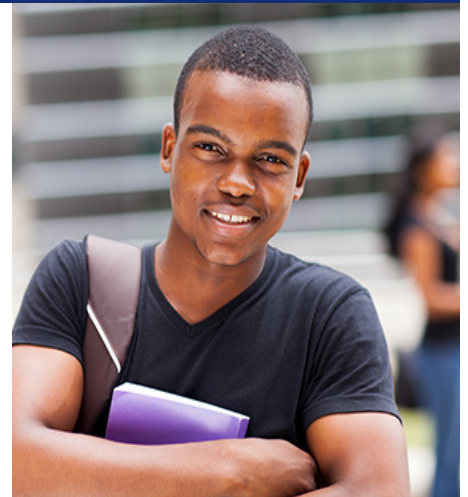
58%

of educators report negative impacts of censorship policies on classroom discussions, curriculum and content selection.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can make sure students attend culturally-sustaining and supportive schools. IDRA urges the legislature to...

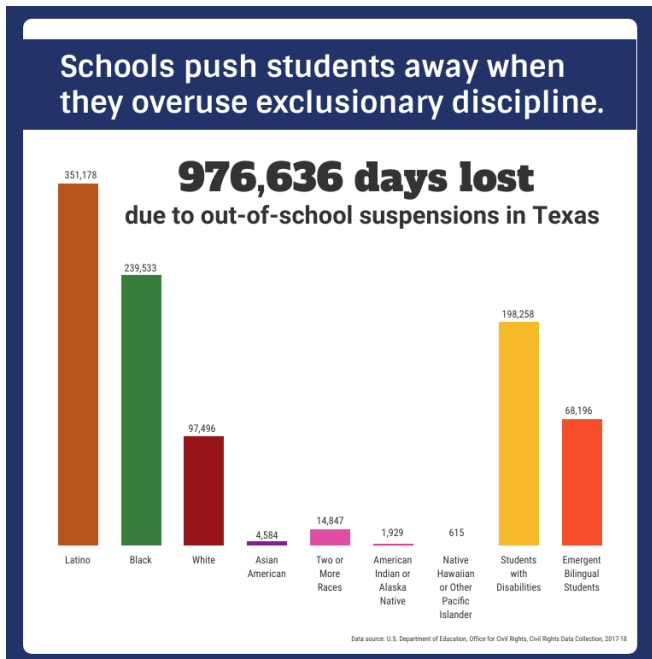
-  Promote high-quality curriculum, instructional materials and learning opportunities that are inclusive of diverse historical figures, perspectives and events, such as ethnic studies.
-  Repeal harmful censorship laws that limit quality teaching and learning.
-  Allow students to earn course credit and extra credit for civic engagement, leadership and policy opportunities.
-  Support opportunities for authentic and meaningful school-family engagement.
-  Strengthen laws designed to prevent and remedy identity-based bullying and harassment.



Create

Safer Schools Without Harmful Discipline

All students deserve safe and welcoming schools that do not use harmful discipline and school police to punish young people. To achieve this, schools must be able to invest in the people and programs that build strong campus climates and foster the relationships that keep everyone safe.

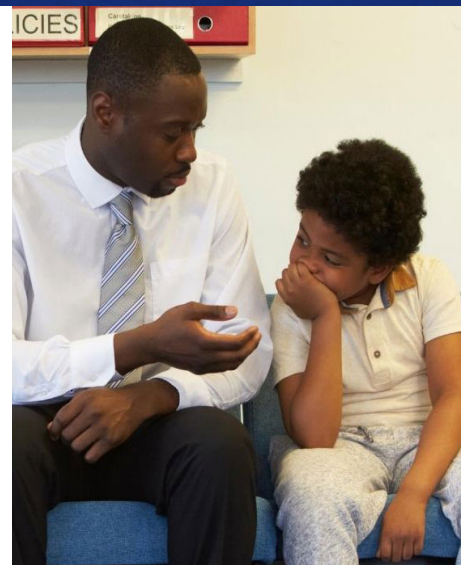


Yet, Texas schools regularly practice ineffective exclusionary discipline and costly surveillance strategies. Texas remains one of 19 states that allow corporal punishment of students. These policies do more harm than good.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can make sure students have access to safe and welcoming schools. IDRA urges the legislature to...

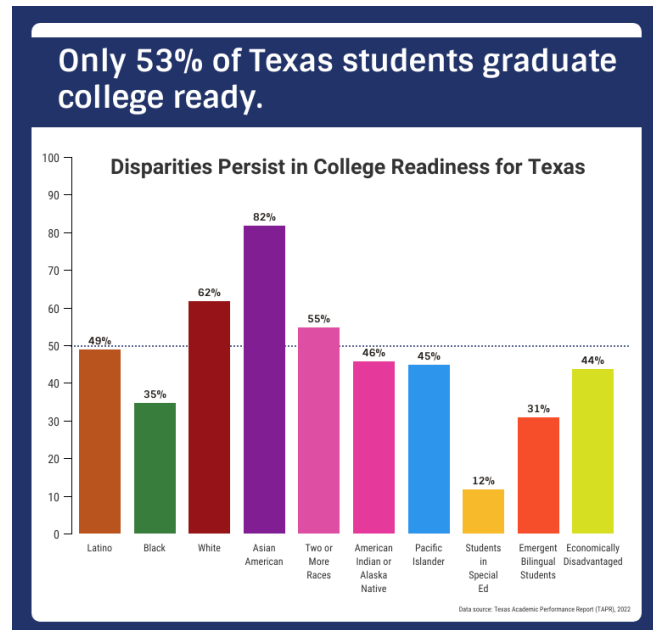
- ✎ Eliminate school-based policing;
- ✎ Increase school-based mental health resources, including counseling and social work professionals;
- ✎ Ban physical abuse of students through corporal punishment in schools;
- ✎ Invest in effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline that address root causes of challenging behavior;
- ✎ Train teachers and school employees in effective classroom management techniques, including on how to recognize and intervene in instances of bullying and harassment; and
- ✎ Collect and assess comprehensive data to better identify and address disparate disciplinary outcomes.



Prepare

All Students to Succeed in College

All students deserve a high-quality education that prepares them for college and lifelong success. Schools have a responsibility to prepare all students to succeed in college, but not all students are meeting readiness benchmarks.



Only 53% of Texas students graduate college ready, with significant disparities across race-ethnicity, language and income. All students should have the opportunity to access and succeed in college.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can ensure all Texans are prepared for college and postsecondary life. IDRA urges the legislature to...

- Expand early college advising for all students starting in middle school, especially for historically marginalized Black, Latino and emergent bilingual students.
- Invest in dual credit so that all students have access without financial barriers to advanced coursework that transfers to their colleges of choice.
- Invest in state scholarship and financial aid programs that make college affordable for students to access.
- Protect tuition equity for Texas high school graduates to be eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of citizenship.

