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New IDRA Policy Brief Released: “Why More Charter Schools and School Vouchers Are Not Needed in Texas”

Message from Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO

IDRA is releasing a new policy brief, [“Why More Charter Schools and School Vouchers Are Not Needed in Texas.”](#) The policy brief presents IDRA’s analyses finding that no new additional charter sites are needed in Texas. Instead, more effective and efficient use of the available charters currently authorized by law could address existing demand.

IDRA’s research also shows that vouchers do little if anything to improve local public schools and, for the most part, fail to deliver on promises to provide better quality academic outcomes for students enrolled in lower performing public schools. Rather, funneling public money to private schools drains already limited resources to support private interests that are not accountable to elected bodies and are allowed to operate without regard to rules and regulations applicable to public schools, including requirements related to special education and civil rights.



Highlights from IDRA’s analyses include...

- There is no need to raise the cap on the number of charters available since there are still slots available.
- Existing charter schools are able to increase student enrollment without more charters. In 2012, charter schools enrolled a total of 151,576 students in more than 500 campuses in Texas.
- Over half of Texas’ charters have small enrollments of under 500 students, raising questions of efficiency.
- Texas is spending more than \$1 billion on charter schools. Funding has increased 179 percent since 2006 – a much faster rate than for the 58 percent for public schools.
- Not all charter schools have been given an accountability rating. Of those that have been rated, it is unclear what happens to charter schools rated as academically unacceptable.
- Families in Texas already have a wide range of education choices for their children.
- Research on vouchers in other states fails to show great results.
- Private schools are not accountable to the public for their actions or results.
- The way to improve public education is to provide equity and excellence in public schools.

As reflected in IDRA’s [Quality School Action Framework](#), the data show that our public schools are successful when students have the chance to work with highly qualified, committed teachers, using effective, accessible curricula, when their parents and communities are engaged in their schools and learning, and when they themselves feel engaged. This becomes possible when schools and school policy reflects good governance and the funding to provide excellent education for all students.

The state of Texas is required to provide an excellent education for all students. Rather than funneling tax money to private interests under the guise of rescuing small pools of children, our state must shore up neighborhood public schools where all students graduate from high school prepared for college or the world of work, no matter what the color of their skin, the language they speak, or where they happen to be born.

Texas must do what is best for all Texas students and their families. Our children are worth more than education by lottery.

[New IDRA Policy Brief: "Why More Charter Schools and School Vouchers Are Not Needed in Texas" - for the full brief...](#)

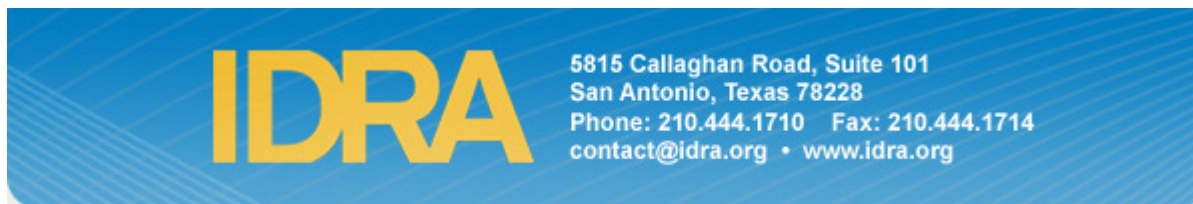
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IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.

We are a small organization with a powerful mission: to create schools that work for *all* children.



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