



## **IDRA Research for Actionable Knowledge**

Ever since its first days over 40 years ago, IDRA has been conducting research in order to provide data to school leaders, policymakers and advocates in ways that are actionable. IDRA started by introducing newsletter readers into the complicated world of school finance in the state of Texas. In 1974, IDRA created a database detailing the system to better inform the public and officials. It was to be designed using information provided by TEA and IDRA's own research initiatives to provide the capability for a district-to-district comparison of school finances, demographics and educational programs and services. Over the years, IDRA has continued to provide data on school funding equity to inform litigation and policy as well as to inform the public of the impact of proposals and debates.

In the early 1970s, IDRA conducted the first study of its kind on the costs of bilingual education. Focusing on Texas, Utah and Colorado, we were able to put in policymakers' and advocates' hands concrete data how much bilingual programs should cost to inform funding decisions.

In the mid-1980s, IDRA released the first-ever report of [high school attrition in Texas](#). The data was provided by race-ethnicity statewide and at the county level. Annual updates of attrition in Texas schools have continued through today. The initial release of data led to action by the state legislature to require continued collection of dropout data and the establishment of dropout prevention strategies.

IDRA's [OurSchool data portal](#) gives community, family and school leaders a new level of high quality, accessible data to see how their schools are doing and plan ways to improve them ([see related story](#)). It provides key data for Texas school districts and high schools, including outcomes on ACT/SAT tests, college-sending rates, teacher certification rates, and district-level attrition rates. Designed around IDRA's [Quality Schools Action Framework™](#), the site provides key questions to promote community conversations and a framework that local, cross-sector partners can use to plan joint action to improve school holding power. With 2.0 interactivity, visitors can keep a "my schools" portfolio, conduct surveys and share results with local partners and policymakers. With its focus on Texas, the site is fully bilingual in English and Spanish.

More examples and resources from IDRA's research work are available online.