



## **State Board of Education Should Vote Against All New Charter Proposals**

**IDRA Testimony on Item 1: Consideration of the Commissioner of Education's Generation 25 Open-Enrollment Charter School Proposals, Presented by Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes before the Texas State Board of Education, September 10, 2020**

Commissioner Morath and Honorable Members of the Texas State Board of Education:

My name is Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes, and I serve as the Deputy Director of Policy at IDRA (Intercultural Development Research Association). We are an independent, non-partisan, education non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. Thank you for considering my testimony today. We testify against the approval of the Generation 25 charter school proposals based on concerning evidence of the applicants' records serving English learner students.

### **Research**

In our review of the Generation 25 charter applications, the proposals presented concerns in their plans for bilingual education programs, accountability history, and enrollment estimates for English learners.

For instance, charter proposals from Clear Public Charter, Royal Public Schools, and Doral Academy note that they would offer ESL programs only at the elementary level, despite evidence that bilingual education – including dual language programs – is a much better model for English learner students.

Some proposals include accountability concerns, such as Rocketship Public Schools which has a dismal record of English learner progress in the states where it currently operates.

Several proposals include lower estimates of English learner enrollment than their adjacent districts. For example, Clear Public Charter estimates a 12% English learner enrollment, while a nearby campus enrolls 69%. This raises equity concerns in their admissions and enrollment procedures.

### **Recommendations**

Texas should not be using precious public dollars to finance new charter schools with poor records for serving some of our most vulnerable students. Given the urgent needs of our public schools in the coronavirus pandemic, we recommend that the State Board of Education vote against all new charter proposals at this time. Instead, we suggest investing in our Texas public schools to ensure safe learning environments, to close the digital divide, and to navigate the anticipated and unanticipated challenges of the next academic year.

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., IDRA Deputy Director of Policy, at [chloe.sikes@idra.org](mailto:chloe.sikes@idra.org).