



Advancing Our Vision for U.S. Public Schools & Students 3
 Policy Roadmap for Texas Education..... 5
 Advocacy Goals for Educational Equity in Georgia 7

Focus: Policy Priorities

IDRA Kicks Off 50th Anniversary Celebration

In 2023, IDRA is celebrating its 50th year of working for excellence in education for all children. We are reflecting on relationships we have built and on some of the changes we have seen since 1973 when a small group of concerned citizens set out to change the world.

In IDRA’s case, our purpose has not changed. As long as excellence in public schools is available to only a few students, IDRA will keep its purpose – its mission – to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

When IDRA began its work, many, including educators, did not realize that vast inequalities in school funding existed or the reasons for these inequities. IDRA worked for five decades to expand public and individual awareness and to transform classrooms. More importantly, IDRA’s efforts focused on engaging people – including key decision-makers – to move and support a system in need of change.

IDRA met with anyone and everyone who was interested: teachers, administrators, civic organizations, community-based groups, parents, ministers, business people, news media, students and policymakers.

Clearly, most public schools and communities do not have the resources and training they

need to prepare all their students. Since 1973, IDRA is the only organization that can claim continuous, uninterrupted involvement in Texas school finance reform.

IDRA’s research on school attrition in Texas led to revisions in 1984 in the state’s education law regarding monitoring and preventing school dropouts.

IDRA staff played a key role in helping to guarantee the civil rights of all children regardless of race, sex and national origin in landmark court cases, such as *Rodríguez v. San Antonio*, *U.S. v. Texas*, *Keys v. Denver*, *Lau vs. Nichols*, *Doe v. Plyer*, and *Rodríguez v. L.A. USD*, *Edgewood v. Kirby I, II, III and IV*, and *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Michael Williams*.

IDRA has provided leadership in the area of immigrant education throughout its history, from studying innovative strategies to guiding schools on their duty to welcome immigrant students.

IDRA is in classrooms working hand-in-hand with teachers and administrators to improve teaching strategies and school programs, making a difference for students. We know the challenges. We also have seen the excitement and pride of teachers, school personnel, parents and students when they work together and are successful.

(cont. on Page 2)



(IDRA Kicks Off 50th Anniversary Celebration, continued from Page 1)

IDRA helped write the federal *Bilingual Education Act* of 1968 and Texas' first bilingual education law, which is still on the books today.

Our internationally-recognized dropout prevention Valued Youth Partnership program has created transformations in almost a million students, teachers and schools.

Our Education CAFE model of parent leadership helps schools and communities see the inherent value in all families and students. We have mobilized thousands of parents to assert their value and to impact change in their schools as well as in policymaking bodies.

IDRA is a national leader in educational equity, providing assistance to schools and districts to examine their gaps and create solutions, such as addressing disparities in student access to high-level STEM courses, confronting racial and gender bullying and harassment, diversifying the teacher workforce and ending harmful discipline practices.

While the focus on its first day was Texas, IDRA soon expanded its work across the country, including adding staff in Georgia and coordinating with partners across the U.S. South.

When schools closed due to COVID-19, IDRA immediately responded to educators and families so students could continue learning.

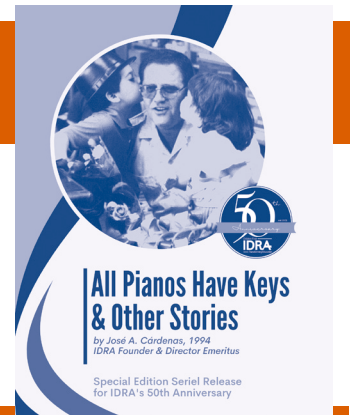
Because every child is valuable, IDRA believes that each student must count in every school system. The goal of this work has been to ensure schools embrace the characteristics of all students, celebrating the strengths and contributions that they and their families bring.

Thousands of classroom teachers, school principals, other educators, families, policymakers,

All Pianos Have Keys & Other Stories – Serial Re-release

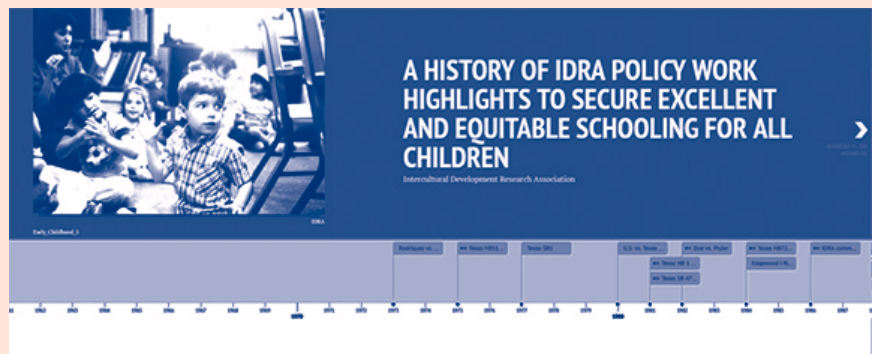
As we celebrate IDRA's 50th anniversary this year, we are re-releasing chapters from our founder's popular memoir, *All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories*, that is now out of print. Watch our social media accounts and the webpage below for each new release.

<https://idra.news/AllPianosHaveKeys>



A History of IDRA Policy Work

See our dynamic online timeline of IDRA's policy work secure excellent and equitable schooling for all children



<https://idra.news/PolicyHistoryTimeline>

community leaders, researchers and, of course, students themselves, have been a part of the IDRA story. As a result, millions of students' lives have been powerfully affected by dramatically raising educational opportunities for all

children. Today, we celebrate the progress we are achieving by working together and by taking a consistent stand when few others would.

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. 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.

The IDRA Newsletter (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2023) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children across the United States.

Permission to reproduce material contained herein is granted provided the article or item is reprinted

in its entirety and proper credit is given to IDRA and the author. Please send a copy of the material in its reprinted form to the IDRA Newsletter production offices. Editorial submissions, news releases, subscription requests, and change-of-address data should be submitted in writing to the IDRA Newsletter production editor. The IDRA Newsletter staff welcomes your comments on editorial material.

Portions of the contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and endorsement by the federal government should not be assumed.

Publication offices:
5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78228
210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714
www.idra.org | contact@idra.org

Celina Moreno, J.D.
IDRA President and CEO
Newsletter Executive Editor

Christie L. Goodman, APR
IDRA Director of Communications
Newsletter Production Editor

Advancing Our Vision for U.S. Public Schools & Students

IDRA Federal Policy Priorities

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

IDRA's strength lies in combining our research, training and policy advocacy expertise with the experience and expertise of students and families across the U.S. South who are working to transform their schools. We meet with policymakers and agencies, engage in coalition advocacy campaigns, and draw on our network of community partners to ensure the hopes, challenges and policy solutions of historically-marginalized communities are elevated to national policymakers. Importantly, we strive to make federal education policies and procedures more accessible to those same communities to encourage self-determination and engagement at every level.

Even as we oppose challenges to safe, welcoming and inclusive schools, including attacks on truthful curricula and the censoring of diverse identities and perspectives, a key part of our policy advocacy strategy at the federal level is to push an affirmative agenda that advances our vision for public schools and students.

IDRA works with elected officials and federal agency staff to build on our federal policy priority areas.

- **Ensuring fair funding for excellent public schools for all students** – Federal policies should allocate more funding to the programs that help public schools serve systemically-marginalized students, review how states and schools are spending funds to ensure equitable resource allocation, and provide incentives to increase equity in state and local school funding plans. Federal policies should not promote school structures or funding schemes that funnel public monies away from our critically-important, yet chronically-underfunded public school systems.
- **Ensuring safe and welcoming schools for all students** – Federal lawmakers and agen-

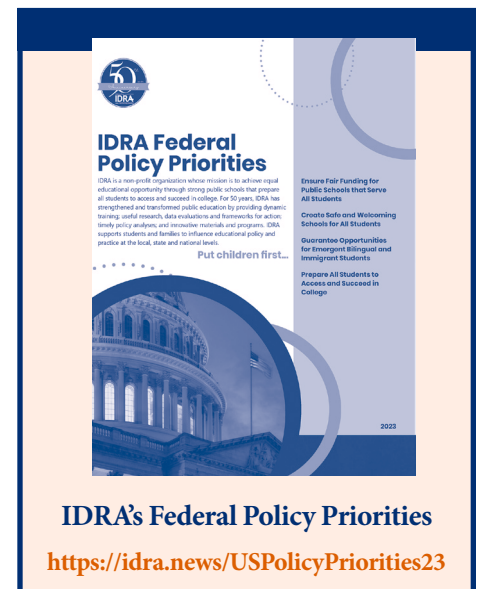
cy officials have an important role to play in ensuring safe and welcoming schools for all students, including by ending discriminatory and harmful discipline and policing practices in all schools; promoting stronger relationships between schools and the families and communities they serve; protecting students' civil rights; encouraging the use of research-based school climate programs; explicitly fostering culturally-sustaining instructional pedagogy and practices; requiring frequent and detailed data reporting; and increasing the number of diverse, highly-qualified school-based mental and behavioral health professionals.

- **Guaranteeing opportunities for emergent bilingual students and immigrant students and families** – Lawmakers should allocate more money for federal grant programs and agency offices that support emergent bilingual students, including teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention strategies, technology and instructional materials, and meaningful family engagement.
- **Preparing all students to access and succeed in college** – Federal policymakers should allocate more resources to support college preparation programs, counseling and access to advanced coursework for students who are under-represented in higher education.

As we pursue these priorities over time, we look forward to focusing our attention on specific issues during the 118th Congress, including the following.

IDRA supports a suite of discipline and school climate bills designed to end the use of harmful discipline and policing practices in schools and create programs that encourage the use of research-based school climate strategies, like restorative practices.

(cont. on Page 4)



(Advancing Our Vision for Public Schools and Students, continued from Page 3)

These bills include the *Protecting our Students in Schools Act*, which would end corporal punishment in schools that receive federal funding, and the *Counseling not Criminalization in Schools Act*, which would end federal funding for school-based law enforcement. Both pieces of legislation would create grant programs to increase the use of research-based school climate programs and increase training for school personnel.

IDRA has joined coalition partners to support these and other school climate and discipline bills and has presented expert testimony to Congress on discipline and school safety issues (Craven, 2022; Federal School Discipline and Climate Coalition, 2021).

IDRA pushes for more funding and programmatic support for schools and programs that serve emergent bilingual students. Emergent bilingual students are a large and growing population of our public school students who bring considerable knowledge and skills to their classrooms. Federal lawmakers and agencies must support these students and promote learning environments, policies,

educator supports and family engagement practices that truly meet their needs. We will always support increasing funding for federal grant programs and expanding the capabilities of the offices in the U.S. Department of Education that support emergent bilingual learners.

IDRA pushes for transparency in federal data collection. One of the key roles of federal lawmakers and agency officials is to collect, publish and review data to ensure compliance with federal laws, including civil rights protections for students. It is difficult to be responsive to students' needs across the country if we are unable to identify how they are being impacted by policies and practices in a timely manner. We will continue to support a robust, comprehensive data collection and publication, including of the federal Civil Rights Data Collection, and push for appropriate responses from federal and state actors.

IDRA supports expansion of early college high school programs. Well-supported and well-executed early college high school programs have expanded college access and success for systemically-marginalized students.

IDRA has long supported these programs at the local and state levels and published research on the efficacy of one such program in the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo school district in Texas (Bojorquez, 2019). Federal funding and programmatic support for these models will enable them to grow across the country.

For more information about IDRA's federal policy priorities, sign up for our policy alerts (www.idra.org).

Resources

- Bojorquez, H. (2019). *College Bound and Determined*. IDRA.
- Craven, M. (February 16, 2022). *Serving All Students – Promoting a Healthier, More Supportive School Environment*, written testimony presented to the U.S. House Committee on Education and Labor Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee.
- Federal School Discipline and Climate Coalition. (October 26, 2021). *Re: 205 Organizations and Individuals Call for Action on a Suite of Bills to Address Systemic Racism, Policies and Practices that Harm Black and Brown Students and Youth in Schools*, joint letter.

Morgan Craven, J.D., is the IDRA national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement. Comments and questions may be directed to her via email at morgan.craven@idra.org.

New Classnotes Podcast Episodes

IDRA Classnotes Podcast #231

The Law in Education – U.S. Supreme Court Update

Hear how what happened in the last term of the U.S. Supreme Court and what the court's most recent decisions might mean for the future of educational equity.

Featuring
Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.
Thomas Marshall III, M.Ed.



<https://idra.news/Pod231>



IDRA Classnotes Podcast #230

AIM Framework for Teaching Intercultural Skills

Hear how teachers of all grades and content areas can integrate intercultural skill building into the standards they are focusing on.

Featuring
Dr. Marlon James & Dr. Kelly Ferguson
Equality and Equity Group, LLC



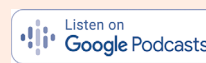
<https://idra.news/Pod230>



Ways to listen:



www.idra.org



Policy Roadmap for Texas Education

IDRA Policy Priorities for Texas Legislative Session

by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.

IDRA strives to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. As we enter the 88th Texas legislative session, IDRA is focusing on five policy priority areas to 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, and prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

Securing Fair School Funding for All Students

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. The state school funding system should provide equitable education to students, including students of color, students from families with limited incomes, and students who require additional programs, supports and services.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- 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; and

- 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 a student's home language and in English. 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.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- 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
(cont. on Page 6)



IDRA Policy Priorities for the 2023 Texas Legislative Session

<https://idra.news/TxPolicyPriorities>

(Policy Roadmap for Texas Education, continued from Page 5)

policies have made schools less safe and supportive for students, especially for those who are Black, Latino and identify as LGBTQ+.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- 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; and
- 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.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- 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.

See infographic:

Data Snacks on IDRA's Policy Priorities for 2023

<https://idra.news/5TxDataSnacks>

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 many students are not meeting readiness benchmarks. Texas' new strategic plan for higher education and workforce goals depends on all students having accessible and affordable college readiness opportunities.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- 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; and
- Protect tuition equity for Texas high school graduates to be eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of citizenship.

Stay up to date with IDRA's Texas legislative activity, events and news by subscribing to our Texas eNews Policy Updates (www.idra.org).

Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., is IDRA's deputy director of policy. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at chloe.sikes@idra.org.

5 Data Snacks on IDRA's Policy Priorities for 2023

It is the job of the State of Texas to provide an excellent, equitable education for all students. To do this, the Texas Legislature should...

- 1. Secure fair school funding.
- 2. Ensure excellent educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students.
- 3. Promote culturally-sustaining school climates that support all students.
- 4. Create safer schools without harmful discipline practices.
- 5. Prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

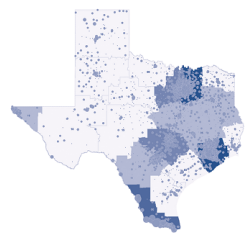
Texas state funding for public schools has fallen below 50% and does not account for inflation or actual costs of education.

49%
Local Share

37%
State Share

4%
Recapture

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



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.

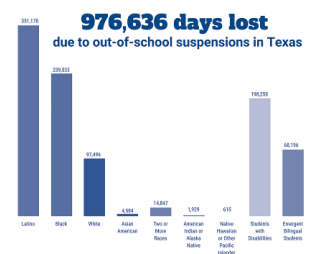
58%

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

Schools push students away when they overuse exclusionary discipline.

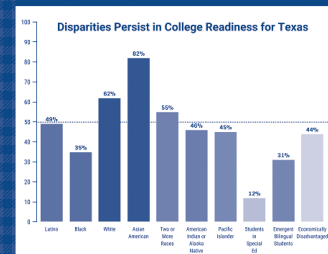
976,636 days lost

due to out-of-school suspensions in Texas



Only 53% of Texas students graduate college ready.

Disparities Persist in College Readiness for Texas



Learn more at <https://idra.news/TxPolicyPriorities>

www.idra.org
[@IDRAed](https://twitter.com/IDRAed)
[IDRA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Advocacy Goals for Educational Equity in Georgia

IDRA Policy Priorities for the 2023 General Assembly Session

by Terrence Wilson, J.D.

Over the last few elections, Georgia's political importance has been put on full display. Many of the politicians gaining national prominence have put education at the center of their platforms. For Georgia's over 1.6 million students, the decisions that these leaders make have a huge impact on their ability to be prepared for the future. IDRA's following policy priorities will create a Georgia public school system that fulfills the promise of a just, equitable education for all.

Secure Full & Fair Funding for Georgia's Public Schools

All students deserve to attend free, high-quality, fully-funded schools. However, an outdated funding formula and two decades of funding gaps, coupled with the systematic diversion of taxpayer funds toward private education, have undermined Georgia's public schools and their ability to serve Georgia's most vulnerable students, particularly those students living in poverty and in rural communities.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- Protect the state budget from continuous cuts and identify additional sources of revenue to fully fund public schools;
- Support schools and families with limited economic resources with additional state funding as Georgia is one of only six states that does not provide additional funding to schools for serving students from families with limited economic resources;
- Supplement rural district funding by amending the funding formula (QBE) to include a sparsity adjustment for rural districts;
- Increase funding allotted in the annual budget for dual language immersion programs, with appropriate oversight mechanisms to ensure that funding is applied appropriately;
- Repeal current voucher programs and reinvest those funds into public schools to en-

sure that the needs of all students, particularly students with disabilities, can be met;

- Require participatory budget practices for all districts; and
- Commission a modern cost study to understand the needs of all Georgia students.

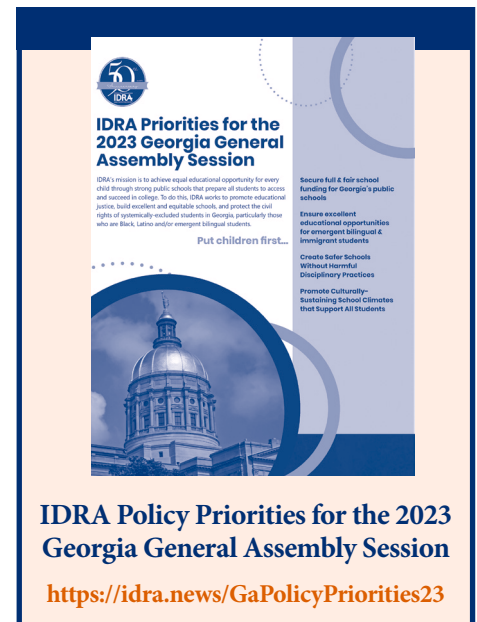
Ensure Excellent Educational Opportunities for Georgia's Emergent Bilingual and Immigrant Students

As home to the seventh largest emergent bilingual student population in the country, it is imperative that we secure their rights to excellent schools that support English mastery while developing and honoring their home languages and cultures.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- Modernize Georgia's statutory language from "English learners" to "emergent bilingual learners" to ensure an asset-based approach to students;
- Adopt a statewide strategic plan to strengthen emergent bilingual student education as other southern states have done;
- Celebrate the diversity of languages spoken by Georgia's students by expanding Georgia's English-only language law to include other languages;
- Address teacher shortages in Georgia's emergent bilingual programs.
- Expand Georgia's statewide assessments to be provided in students' home language;
- Expand the Georgia Department of Education's reporting dashboard to include seal of biliteracy attainment and ensure its accessibility for emergent bilingual students; and
- Direct the Board of Regents to repeal Policies 4.1.6. and 4.3.4. and expand access to higher education and financial aid for undocumented and DACA students.

(cont. on Page 8)



IDRA Policy Priorities for the 2023 Georgia General Assembly Session

<https://idra.news/GaPolicyPriorities23>

Focus: Policy Priorities

(Advocacy Goals for Educational Equity in Georgia, continued from Page 7)

Create Safer Schools Without Harmful Disciplinary Practices

Georgia's students should have access to safe and supportive learning environments where teachers and school administrators do not rely on harmful exclusionary discipline and policing strategies. Instead, we must invest in research-based strategies that support positive school climates and student success.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- Eliminate the state's reliance on harmful, unnecessary exclusionary discipline practices inside schools;
- Expand the mandatory use of Multi-Tiered Support Systems (MTSS) to include the entire prekindergarten-12 continuum to reduce the state's reliance on exclusionary discipline;
- Prohibit the use of corporal punishment on any child;
- End the presence of police inside schools while also collecting and publishing com-

prehensive and disaggregated policing data, including arrest, citation and use of force data, from schools that use law enforcement;

- Ensure that students, including LGBTQ+ students and students of color, are safe from discrimination in schools by expanding anti-bullying, reporting and notice requirements; and
- Provide critical funds for school-based professionals, like counselors and social workers, while expanding implementation of research-based programs, such as restorative practices and social-emotional learning.

Promote Culturally-Sustaining School Climates that Support All Students

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.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

- Codify standards that include the contributions and perspectives of Black and African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Afro-Latinos throughout American History across K-12;
- Continue support for cultural and ethnic studies courses by including these courses as social studies credit to meet graduation requirements;
- Reverse the move toward censoring our classrooms by repealing Georgia's classroom censorship bills;
- Amend the Parents' Bill of Rights to include students' rights;
- Ensure curricula and pedagogies equip students to understand gender and sexuality; and
- Incentivize school districts to implement culturally-sustaining educational practices.

Terrence Wilson, J.D., is IDRA's regional policy and community engagement director. Comments and questions may be directed to him via email at terrence.wilson@idra.org.

*achieving equal educational opportunity for every child
through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college*