



Texans Want Public Funds Kept in Public Schools

IDRA Testimony against HB 100, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, May 22, 2023

Dear Chair Creighton and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and I am deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan 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.

IDRA opposes CSHB 100, and any other legislative proposals that divert public school funds for private use, particularly without any public transparency or accountability. This proposal includes nominal increases to public school funding and a giant private school voucher proposal with a \$500 million price tag. Evidence from comparable programs in other states shows this will increase over time (Abrams & Koutsvalis, 2023).

The attached brief from Public Funds Public Schools (2023) outlines evidence-based and legal concerns for private school voucher proposals in Texas, including education savings accounts. These programs are expensive and wasteful of public dollars, can lead to school segregation, and do not lead to increased educational achievement or opportunities for students.

Importantly, as an organization committed to protecting students' civil rights and equal access to strong public schools, IDRA condemns the late-night, last-ditch effort to move this proposal forward this legislative session. The power and promise of public schools are that they belong to all Texas students and families. We urge this committee to table this last-minute proposal and make substantial future investments in public schools that benefit all Texas students.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact chloe.sikes@idra.org.

References

Abrams, S.E., & Koutsvalis, S.J. (March 2023). The Fiscal Consequences of Private School Vouchers. Southern Poverty Law Center, Education Law Center, Public Funds Public Schools.

https://pfps.org/assets/uploads/SPLC_ELC_PFPS_2023Report_Final.pdf

Public Funds Public Schools. (May 2023). Keep Public Funds in Texas Public Schools.

https://pfps.org/assets/uploads/PFPS_Texas_Policy_Brief_-_Final.pdf

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. 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. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by leading policy analyses and

advocacy; dynamic teacher training and principal coaching; useful research, evaluation and frameworks for action; and innovative student, family and community engagement.