



# **New HQIM Rubrics Must Assess Materials to be Affirming, Relevant and Bilingual to Reflect Students’ Diverse Backgrounds**

**IDRA Testimony on HB 1605 Implementation, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas State Board of Education, August 29, 2023**

Dear Chair Ellis and Members of the Board:

IDRA is 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.

Our comments focus on two specific areas for recommendations:

1. The need for affirming, relevant and engaging instructional materials
2. The need for high-quality bilingual and multilingual instructional materials

## **The Need for Affirming, Relevant and Engaging Instructional Materials**

First, high-quality instructional materials should be affirming, relevant and engaging for students. In addition to being free of factual errors, HQIM should be inclusive of diverse perspectives. This enables students to develop advanced cognitive and critical thinking skills and to draw connections across texts and subjects to their own lives and society. This is how materials can spark students’ inquiry and inspire them in their learning. Rubrics for all subjects should account for accuracy and rigor and be inclusive of race, gender, history and current events.

Restricting curriculum and materials squelches inquiry and inspiration, and it weakens the quality of the curriculum and students’ learning experiences. Worse, skewing and silencing conversations on race, gender, history and current events can lead to new incidents of discrimination and hostile environments in schools that jeopardize students’ learning and their sense of belonging and safety in schools (see IDRA, Dec. 2022; Lhamon, 2023). Students should be encouraged, challenged and supported in their learning by high quality instructional materials that engage them and reflect their identities, backgrounds and experiences.

## **The Need for High-Quality Bilingual and Multilingual Instructional Materials**

Second, any state-approved list of instructional materials must include appropriate and high-quality materials for emergent bilingual students. School districts have long reported difficulty in finding HQIM that are originally written in students’ home languages other than English, or those that provide high-quality materials that are transadapted – meaning they are revised to maintain rigor and cultural relevance in another language – and that promote translanguaging, which is the evidence-based best practice of encouraging students to use all their linguistic tools in academic and linguistic learning (see Piñon, 2022). Bilingual and multilingual HQIM cannot be

one-size-fits-all. There must be options that provide appropriate rigor and scaffolding for students in dual language programs, in addition to other bilingual and ESL programs.

In addition to reflecting the TEKS, high-quality instructional materials rubrics should support teachers' ability to meet student needs, offer opportunities for students to be inspired, and promote access to accurate and honest materials that reflect students' realities.

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).

## Resources

IDRA. (2022). Serving Emergent Bilingual Students – Online Technical Assistance Toolkit. <https://idra.news/EmergentBilingualEdToolkit>

IDRA. (December 13, 2022). IDRA, Lubbock NAACP Join Slaton and Lubbock Families in Demanding End to School-Based Discrimination. <https://idra.news/LBKstatement>

Piñon, L. (March 2022). The Innovation of Translanguaging Pedagogy Enables Students to Use All of Their Tools. IDRA Newsletter. <https://idra.news/nlMar22a>

Lhamon, C.E. (August 2023). Race and School Programming. U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20230824.pdf?utm\\_content=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_name=&utm\\_source=govdelivery&utm\\_term=](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-20230824.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=)

*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.*