

Knowledge is Power

IDRA A Resource for Schools & Communities

IDRA's Knowledge is Power is a national resource for educators and advocates to help you do your work for equity and excellence in education in the midst of classroom censorship policies.

Children First

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— Transforming Education

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Texas Censorship Law Leads to New Rubric for State-Approved Instructional Materials

by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.

The Texas State Board of Education recently held its first quarterly meeting of the year. Among its three-day agenda, the board approved rubrics to assess instructional materials as required by House Bill (HB) 1605, passed by the legislature last spring.

HB 1605 instituted new state guidelines for reviewing and adopting classroom instructional materials. It includes incentives for these materials to comply with Texas' censorship law (Senate Bill 3) of 2021. Read more in our [legislative recap](#) from the summer newsletter.

HB 1605 carries out the censorship law by requiring rubrics with specific criteria to assess quality and suitability of any state-approved instructional materials. The state board approved these rubrics at last week's meeting.

The *quality* rubric pertains to learning standards and content rigor in grades K-3 and 4-8 English language arts, K-3 and 4-6 Spanish language arts, and K-12 math. Other subject rubrics will be taken up in future meetings.

However, the *suitability* rubric applies to all subjects across all grades and inscribes the "prohibited concepts" from the censorship law as assessment criteria, among other criteria. This means that, as state-selected reviewers and the state board assess classroom instructional materials for approval, they will check that the materials comply with each prohibition against teaching aspects of race, sex and gender, elements of history deemed accurate, and current events (see [IDRA's guide to SB 3](#)).

Public school districts and charter schools do not have to exclusively use state-approved materials, but HB 1605 confers additional per-student funding to those that do. This means that schools are financially incentivized to use censored instructional materials.

Schools will have access to the state-approved instructional materials list starting with the 2025-26 school year.





State Board of Education Punts Course Adoption Consideration for American Indian/Native Studies

by *Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.*

Advocates anticipated the Texas State Board of Education would consider the learning standards for American Indian/Native Studies (or AINS) to add to Texas ethnic studies high school electives options. However, the [board's new chairman punted the first reading consideration](#) to an undetermined future meeting.



Educators, parents and Native Intertribal community members testified to the importance of rescheduling course consideration at the earliest opportunity: the April meeting. Native community members developed the course four years ago, and it has been piloted as an innovative course in Grand Prairie ISD for two school years.

The Ethnic Studies Network of Texas supported community members to testify to the state board and [submitted a letter from 20 organizations](#), including IDRA and TLEEC, requesting that the AINS course appear on the April meeting agenda.



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Students need to learn about uncomfortable stories of this nation's founding. Students need to make connections between this nation's past and its present. Students need the expert guidance of their trained teachers to understand deep issues like systemic racism and sexism.

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization. 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.

[Reach Out To Us](#)

IDRA
5815 Callaghan Road, #101
San Antonio, TX 78228
United States

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