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## This month's focus: Fair Discipline



***"To respond to horrific school shootings by pushing students into the school-to-prison pipeline and undercutting their civil rights only begets further tragedy."***

- Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO

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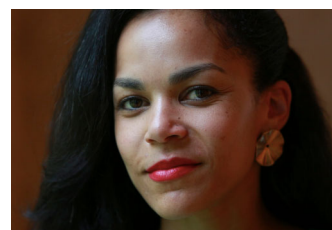
**SEE NEWSLETTER PDF**

## Fair Discipline

### **Federal School Safety Commission Recommendations Could Lead to Less Safe Schools**

*by Morgan Craven, J.D.*

This article addresses the Federal Commission on School Safety's final report. The report contains some research-based suggestions for improving school climates, including expanding in-school supports for students.



It also features recommendations that could harm young people, particularly those most vulnerable to discrimination. These potentially harmful recommendations include rescinding the Obama-era guidance issued in 2014 to address race-based discrimination in school discipline as well as recommendations that encourage extreme security measures in schools that could compromise the wellbeing of young people. Increased security, surveillance and law enforcement in schools can push students into the school-to-prison pipeline, which makes them less safe.

The report emphasizes school hardening and security despite there being good alternatives backed by research. Schools should spend energy and resources on these other approaches that improve school climate and safety without excess security measures that could negatively impact vulnerable students.

**SEE ARTICLE**

**SEE PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY, PRIVACY AND EQUITY**

### **Three Approaches for Dismantling Discriminatory Discipline in Schools**

*by Paula N. Johnson, Ph.D., & José A. Velázquez, M.Ed.*

In recent years, schools across the nation have moved toward resolving behavior issues that do not take the child out of the classroom - focusing on a "whole child" approach to student learning and success built on relationships and community.



The IDRA EAC- *South* has a three-pronged approach to addressing disparities in school discipline. First, technical assistance builds capacity to increase positive school climates through research-based services; second, revising discriminatory school discipline practices better aligns schools with the district's tiers of support for behavior; and third, building capacity for effective family and parent engagement to improve relationships between all stakeholders.

As a result, districts we've worked with across the IDRA EAC- *South* region report lower rates of suspension and expulsion each year.



[SEE ARTICLE](#)

## Discipline Policies Must Not Come at the Expense of Any Group of Students

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

Morgan Craven addresses the importance of implementing policies and regulations that are proven to reduce disparities and serve all students. A federal judge recently ruled that the U.S. Department of Education illegally delayed Obama-era regulations designed to address racial disparities in special education placements and discipline, ignoring the research that went into crafting guidelines to reduce these inequalities.



Research shows that Black and American Indian children are misidentified as having disabilities at higher rates than other groups of students, resulting in unnecessary special education services and restrictive placements. When we look at school discipline, school climate and school safety proposals, we must support those that are consistent with data and research showing effectiveness.

*Photo: IDRA National Director of Policy Morgan Craven, J.D., testified before the Texas Senate education committee on school safety proposals. "The students who are most likely to have disproportionate contact with police, despite not being more likely to misbehave, are students of color & students with disabilities. And these overly-punitive approaches can cause students to disengage from school."*

[SEE ARTICLE](#)

## Restorative Practices - Informal and Formal Processes for Addressing Behavior

by Paula N. Johnson, Ph.D.

This article provides an overview of the processes of restorative practices in school discipline, describes preliminary research findings and reviews recommendations for implementation. Schools and programs that only use the reactive elements without building the social capital first are less likely to see positive results.

Restorative discipline, on the other hand, is both proactive (developing community by building relationships) and reactive (restoring relationships by repairing harm). Both components are required for effective restorative discipline.



[SEE ARTICLE](#)

## Welcoming Immigrant Students in School

As schools register students for the next school year, IDRA shares this infographic as a reminder that public schools, by law, must serve all children, regardless of immigration status.

This infographic is in full color and bilingual and is available on IDRA's website along with many other resources for schools and advocates. We encourage you to share them across your networks.

[SEE INFOGRAPHIC](#)

[SEE EBOOK](#)

[SEE WEBSITE WITH OTHER RESOURCES](#)



## Classnotes Podcasts on Fair Discipline

[District Innovation Reverses Truancy - Podcast Episode 188](#)

[Strategies for Restorative Student Discipline - Podcast Episode 179](#)

[Civil Rights in Student Discipline - Podcast Episode 158](#)

[Dress Codes and Religion Equity - Podcast Episode 18 6](#)

[Holding Back In-grade Retention - Podcast Episode 182](#)

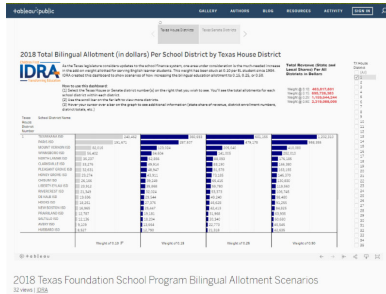


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IDRA Classnotes is available on Spotify!  
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## New Tools Released



### New Interactive Data Dashboard: Bilingual Allotment

**Most English Learners Would Be Excluded from the Proposed Dual Language Weight**

Public schools have a responsibility to educate all students who enter their doors. This safety net extends to students who enter a school speaking a language other than English. In Texas, 2.8 percent of U.S. public students are English learners (ELs). Despite a rich history of research, educator expertise, and school leadership, EL students in Texas struggle to succeed. Significant underfunding of EL education hinders school districts' capacity.

Proposed school finance legislation recommends increasing the funding for students in dual language programs in order to provide incentives for school districts to adopt dual language programs. This brief examines the impact of such a change.

**Current Policy**

The Texas Education Code requires school districts to create bilingual education programs if there are at least 20 students who are EL in the same grade. ELs in elementary school in a district must receive bilingual education. Other grade levels that receive instruction in other languages as a second language (SL) or other non-English language instruction.

The bilingual allotment was set in 1988 at 0.15, meaning that school districts receive 0.15 more funding for each EL student. Based on the 0.15 weight, we calculated the amount of what it would take to properly educate English learners in Texas. The research-based recommendation at the time was a 0.4 weight. For each year that 0.1 weight was less than what it is necessary to adequately educate the bilingual weight to adequately educate English learners.

**Proposed Funding for Dual Language**

The school finance bill proposed by the Texas House and Senate do not allow for an increase of the bilingual education weight for all ELs. Rather, they recommend the creation of a new dual language allotment, with a weight of 0.15. This additional dual language weight is consistent with the recommendations made in the Texas School Finance Commission Report (2016). Under both bills, the school districts that are required to see to create bilingual education programs and have implemented dual language programs to fulfill that requirement will receive a total 0.35 weight per student. School districts that are required to create bilingual

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### Policy Brief: Most English Learners Would Be Excluded from the Proposed Dual Language Weight

**Don't Block Graduation Because of a Test**

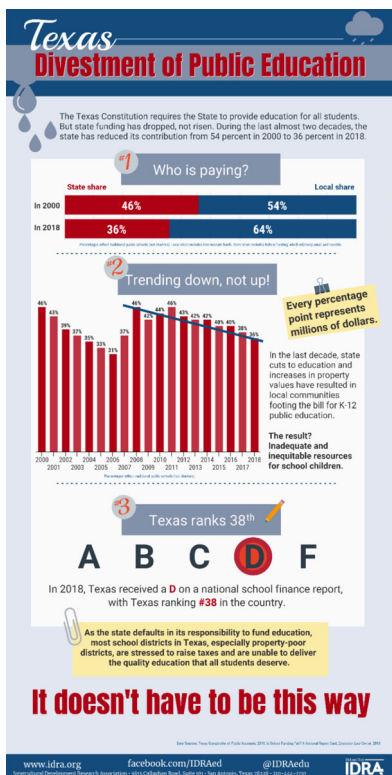
**Set Policies to Allow School Officials to Consider Other Factors Like Class Grades and Attendance**

This brief focuses on how the State of Texas can improve its public education system through more equitable high school graduation requirements and by examining additional information that the legislature can consider in evaluating the current alternate assessment for graduation. In summary, we recommend that the State of Texas do the following:

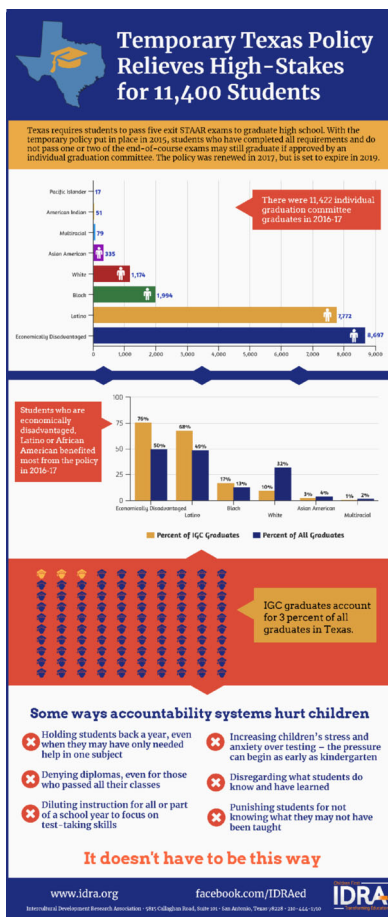
- Eliminate the graduation requirement that students must pass high school exit exams. Instead, use limited, valid, reliable and formative standardized testing for diagnostic purposes to improve learning.
- Limit testing to the subjects required under the Every Student Succeeds Act – that is, eliminate the English II and U.S. History end-of-course exams.
- Reconstruct the state's testing system to require formative assessment that is valid and reliable for all learners to monitor student learning and give ongoing feedback for teachers to improve their instruction (as opposed to summative testing that can be used in punitive ways that hurt children).
- To the extent permissible, administer testing through a randomized sampling of students capable of capturing the performance of students by race, national origin, sex/gender, socioeconomic status, language disability, and other student group characteristics identified for educational purposes across Texas.

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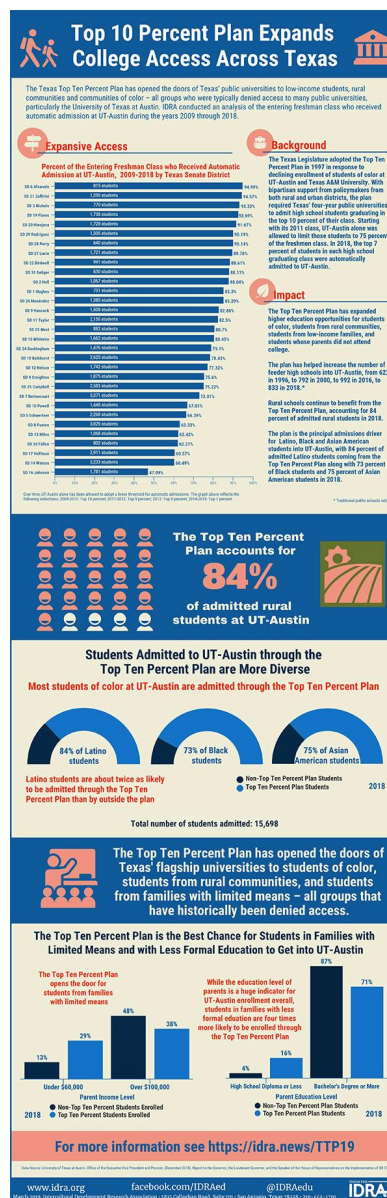
### Policy Brief: Don't Block Graduation Because of a Test



## Infographic: Texas State Divestment of Education



## Infographic: Use of Individual Graduation Committees Unlocks Diplomas for 14,422 Qualified Students



## Infographic: Top Ten Percent Plan Expands College Access Across Texas

## In Memoriam - Mr. William Acosta

Mr. William Acosta, a member of the IDRA Board of Directors for 22 years, passed away this month peacefully of natural causes and surrounded by family. He led a life dedicated to cross cultural understanding around the world and to supporting others in their pursuit of higher education.

IDRA President Emerita, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, stated: "I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work with Bill during his 22 years as an IDRA board member. We are grateful also to Bill's wife Grace and his family, especially his son Kevin, for their friendship and support. Los acompañamos en sus sentimientos. Que en paz descanse Bill Acosta."



In the late 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Acosta worked with juvenile gang groups in Los Angeles and with incarcerated youth as a psychiatric social worker. He worked with the LA Head Start program and later as a community development consultant in Panama. In the 1970s, he worked with more than 300 Peace Corps volunteers in Bogota and directed Peace Corps operations in the Dominican Republic. He also served as the regional administrator for Health and Human Services for Region VI in Dallas. He became a naval aviator in 1953. After serving active duty, he was a reservist until 1984. Five years later, he retired from public service with the federal government and went straight to Thurgood Marshall School of Law to earn a law degree.

"Bill was committed to the understanding that education is life-changing. We at IDRA were blessed to have him serve alongside us to open possibilities for so many young people," said Mr. Juventino "Tino" Guerra, IDRA board chair.

04/08/19

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring educational opportunity for every child. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.