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## Transforming Education by Putting Kids First



### IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: School Leadership

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## Strategies for School Leaders to Melt the Chilling Effects of Bad Education Policy

*by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.*

While many education policies come with mandates and enforcement protocols, some extend their influence through a powerful chilling effect. A chilling effect occurs when a policy creates fear, confusion or uncertainty about implementation, especially if the language is vague.



In schools, such policies and debates can discourage people from engaging in lawful behaviors and prevent school officials from feeling empowered to protect the rights of their teachers, students and families.

However, because laws with chilling effects often rely on confusion and misinformation to create fear and uncertainty, school officials can shed light by spreading evidence-based information about school policies and practices. They can engage with community members on the policies and their district's approach and publicly resist the chilling pressures of state and federal policymakers.

[Read: Strategies for School Leaders to Melt the Chilling Effects of Bad Education Policy](#)

## Preview of IDRA's 36th Annual Texas Public School Attrition Study – A First Look at the Pandemic's Effect on Attrition Rates

*by Roy Johnson, M.S.*

This article provides the first glimpse of the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on school attrition rates and marks IDRA’s 36th annual Texas public school attrition study. IDRA’s analysis of attrition rate data for the 2020-21 school year based on fall 2020 enrollment data shows that the overall attrition rate declined by 1 percentage point from 2019-20. Further, 19% of the freshman class of 2017-18 left school prior to graduating in the 2020-21 school year.



Key findings also include that the overall Texas public school attrition rates have steadily declined over the past two decades and that the attrition gap between white students and students of color still persist. Strong evidence is not yet available to assess the full impact of COVID-19 on attrition and school dropout rates, particularly since the crisis is still not over.

**Read: A First Look at the Pandemic’s Effect on Attrition Rates**

**ReOpen • ReConnect • ReClaim**  
Ensuring Equitable Learning Environments for All Students

**On-demand videos and e-courses are live!**

**IDRA**  
EAC-South

IDRA EAC- South Region II Convening, July 2021

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- Authentic Family & Community Engagement & Advocacy
- Leading with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Reopening with Welcoming & Inclusive Schools - Response to COVID-19
- Ethnic & Cultural Studies
- Increasing Student Engagement
- Bonus Sessions

Get effective tools and information on-demand from the IDRA EAC-South’s popular virtual convening held in July with hundreds of participants across the country.

The session videos and materials are available free at IDRA’s Equity Connection community of practice. You can pick and choose from the topics that most interest you on your own time. Get effective tools and information to help reconnect with students for their

mental well-being and accelerated learning and reclaim your own sense of connectedness, community and power.

You also can earn CPE credits. Once you complete each strand of the virtual convening sessions you will be eligible to receive up to four CPE credits. There are five strands so that is a total 20 CPE credits. Just watch the video presentations, see the slide decks and complete the strand survey.

This virtual conference featured equity experts from across the country addressing the five strands:

- Authentic Family and Community Engagement and Advocacy
- Leading with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Reopening with Welcoming & Inclusive Schools – Response to COVID-19
- Ethnic and Cultural Studies
- Increasing Student Engagement

[Go to IDRA EAC-South eCourses](#)

## Priorities and Recommendations for the 2022 Georgia Legislative Session

*by Terrence Wilson, J.D., & Mikayla Arciaga, M.A.Ed.*

IDRA's Southern Education Equity Network will train and assist communities in improving education policy and practice across the South. Georgia is our next expansion state for this network. Recommendations Georgia's 2022 legislative session include providing fair

funding, creating safe schools and culturally-sustaining educational environments, and providing excellent education for emergent bilingual students.



Achieving these changes will require a great deal of reflection and transformation, from conducting a long-overdue comprehensive study of education to fully understand the needs of Georgia's diverse student population to eliminating harsh exclusionary discipline practices, rejecting attempts to censor learning, and updating Georgia's statutory language from English learner students to emergent bilingual students.

[Read: Priorities and Recommendations for the 2022 Georgia Legislative Session](#)

## The Art of Reflection for School Leaders

*by Nilka Avilés, Ed.D.*

This article underlines the importance of reflection as a tool for evaluation and improvement and provides reflection strategies and questions to ask, particularly for school leaders. Self-reflection is essential for leaders in their path toward continuous growth and improvement.



Through the process of reflection, leaders can reinforce the school’s vision and core values. They can also gain insights about their practices that can foster enhancement of leadership skillsets and competencies that can transform the school. An important suggestion is to schedule a regular time for individual and collective reflection and engaging in dialogue with a trusted partner to face challenges and gain insights.

**Read: The Art of Reflection for School Leaders**

## We're Looking for Interns!

IDRA’s internship program is designed for undergraduate and graduate students who will develop work projects and learn with our diverse staff.

Summer positions include

- Communications Intern
- Research Intern
- Educational Practice Intern
- Policy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement Intern

We also are looking for an LGBTQ+ Education Intern for the spring of 2022.



**Learn about internships**



**Go to Podcasts**

## New Classnotes Podcast Episodes

Education Advocacy Hinges on Community Collaboration – #214

An Inside Look at Advocating with Communities of Color – #215

Education Policy Fellows Get Things Done in the Suppression Session – #216

The Future of Education Advocacy and Being Pushy –  
#217 (coming soon)



## Recent News

### Recent Media Coverage

[Community, Politicians and Educators In Uproar After Ta-Nehisi Coates, William Styron and Over 400 Other Books Pulled from Texas School District Library](#), Nicole Duncan-Smith, AOL.com, December 10, 2021

[School Board discusses equity audit policy](#), Olivia Anderson, Alexandria Times, December 9, 2021

[A new, more restrictive ‘critical race theory’ law now in effect for Texas schools](#), Ariana Garcia, Chron of Houston, December 6, 2021

[A New, More Restrictive ‘Critical Race Theory’ Law Is Now in Effect for Texas Schools](#), Kathleen Sanford, LeeDaily.com, December 8, 2021

[Texas takes on critical race theory with new law](#), Caleb Shumate, Blaze Media, December 7, 2021

[A New ‘Critical Race Theory’ Law Goes Into Effect In Texas](#), Rachel Pilgrim, The Root, December 7, 2021

[Texas has passed a critical race theory that regulates slavery and racial education](#), Ana Banuelos, Securykid, December 7, 2021

[Republican legislation restricts ways to teach race, slavery, and history in Texas schools](#), David Dalpe, Texas News Today, December 3, 2021

[Republican bill that limits how race, slavery and history are taught in Texas schools becomes law](#), Brian Lopez, Texas Tribune, December 2, 2021 (Also ran in [Houston Chronicle & San Antonio Express-News](#), December 3, 2021; [Raw Story](#), December 3, 2021; [Tyler Morning Telegraph](#), December 3, 2021; [News4SA-NBC San Antonio](#), December 3, 2021; [KVII-ABC Amarillo](#), December 3, 2021; [KETR Public Radio Northwest Texas](#), December 6, 2021)

[Texas Education Agency weighs in as law changing how race is discussed in schools goes into effect](#), Jenni Lee, KVUE-TV, December 2021

**Getting out the truth on racial inequity**, Letter to the editor, Johana Jaimes, The Mercury News, November 25, 2021

**No, Love Won't Fix Institutional Racism in Education**, Altheria Caldera, Education Week, November 18, 2021

**How critical race theory laws are impacting Texas schools**, KVUE-TV, November 4, 2021

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## Other News

December 15, 2021 – **Knowledge is Power: Communities List their Priorities for Federal Funds to Build Supportive Schools; War on Obscenity is Classroom Censorship on Another Front • (Español)**

December 8, 2021 – **Computer Science Education Week – Cool stuff for classrooms and families**

December 2, 2021 – **Knowledge is Power: Georgia School Leaders Provide Counter Measures to Classroom Censorship Efforts; Give input into Texas Social Studies Standards • (Español)**

December 1, 2021 – **Applications open for IDRA's new Youth Advisory Board and summer internships – Please help us spread the word to students!**

November 30, 2021 – **Speak up for students on #GivingTuesday! – See our reading list of threatened books**

November 24, 2021 – **Book Ban Threats Make Good Reading Lists – We're doing something different for Giving Tuesday**

November 18, 2021 – **Knowledge is Power: Show Us Your... Books? The Latest Texas Efforts to Censor Classrooms; Georgia Policy Fellow • (Español)**

November 10, 2021 – **Knowledge is Power: Students Want Schools to Teach Inclusive Truth; Event notice • (Español)**

October 28, 2021 – **Texas is Not Financing College Readiness – IDRA Releases New Study on Inequitable Access to College Prep Math Courses**

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Reach Out To Us



The Intercultural Development Research Association 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. 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.

December 16, 2021