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IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: Education Policy Issues in Texas & Georgia

In This Issue

What to Expect from Bids to Take Public Money Out of Public Schools

••••

Remove Obstacles to Ethnic Studies for Georgia Students

••••

Traditional School Discipline is Harmful for All

.....
Georgia Students Deserve a 21st Century Education for the Multicultural and Multilingual Future

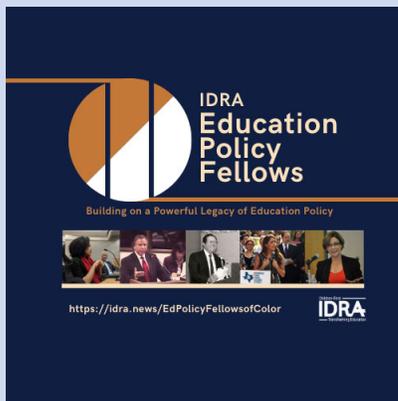
.....
Dual Credit Programs Give Students a Fighting Chance to Access and Succeed in College

.....
Bilingual Special Education Certification is One Step Closer in Texas

.....
Black History Month Features

.....
Recent News

Get the PDF version of the printed newsletter



Editor's Note

The articles in this issue of the IDRA Newsletter feature the research and policy advocacy of IDRA's education policy fellows. The IDRA Education Policy Fellows program is a nine-month fellowship designed to provide real-world training to advocates who represent the communities most impacted by state-level education policymaking. [Get more information](#) about the program, including how to support the fellows' work.

What to Expect from Bids to Take Public Money Out of Public Schools

by *Diana Long*

Public schools have become targets of censorship attacks in a new wave of culture wars and proponents of privatizing public schools use these tactics against inclusive school practices to justify private school voucher programs.

The voucher programs proposed in the Texas legislative session funnel money away from public schools to private institutions that are not held to the same accountability standards and are not required to serve many federally-required accommodations, including students with disabilities and emergent bilingual students.



Keep reading What to Expect article



5 Reasons Private School Vouchers Would Hurt Students

[See infographic](#)

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Remove Obstacles to Ethnic Studies for Georgia Students

by Ruth Youn

Ethnic studies courses positively impact a student’s academic journey, particularly for students of color and those living in poverty. Georgia approved the creation of an ethnic studies course in 2008 and, in 2020, the state approved five more courses.



Unfortunately, several barriers prevent ethnic studies coursework from being fully implemented in Georgia, from funding issues to the fact that the courses are only offered as electives.

IDRA’s recommendations for improving access to ethnic studies courses in Georgia for all students include categorizing ethnic studies as core credits for graduation, codify inclusive curriculum in the state standards and repealing Georgia’s classroom censorship laws.

[Keep Ethnic Studies article](#)

IDRA 50th Anniversary Fun



Serial Re-release of Dr. José A. Cárdenas Memoir

We are re-releasing chapters from our founder’s popular memoir, [All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories](#), that is now out of print. Watch our social media accounts and the webpage below for each new release.

Stories released to date:

- All Pianos Have Keys
- Silence of the Lambs
- The Epidemic that Never Was
- Jesus Christ Was Not Bilingual

Traditional School Discipline is Harmful for All

by Alisha “Tuff” Tuff

Across the nation, student learning is often interrupted by the harmful disciplinary practices of suspension, alternative school placements, corporal punishment, and the involvement of law enforcement. These practices especially ostracize students who are Black and/or Latino and students with disabilities.



IDRA’s recommendations for the Texas legislature regarding evidence-based improvements to discipline policy include eliminating exclusionary discipline policies, adopting restorative practices and building inclusive schools and culturally-sustaining classrooms where students feel seen, heard and valued.

[Keep reading School Discipline article](#)

Georgia Students Deserve a 21st Century Education for the Multicultural and Multilingual Future

by Jonathan Peraza Campos, M.S.

Georgia’s public schools now serve the seventh largest population of emergent bilingual students whose households speak a number of different languages: Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Arabic. This presents Georgia an opportunity to support the potential of culturally and linguistically diverse populations by investing in



multilingual, culturally-sustaining education. But fewer than 3% of students receive a seal of biliteracy from the Georgia Department of Education. To help these students flourish and contribute to the state with their multilingual and multicultural talents, Georgia’s lawmakers must build infrastructure for bilingual education.

And while Georgia is among the states with the highest immigrant population growth in the United States, Georgia is one of only three states in the country that prohibit access to financial aid for undocumented students. Georgia needs to eliminate policy barriers to higher education for immigrant students who have so much to give in an atmosphere where their right to education is being deprived.

[Keep reading Multicultural and Multilingual Future article](#)

Dual Credit Programs Give Students a Fighting Chance to Access and Succeed in College

by Steve Kemgang

A powerful way to remove barriers to college, particularly for historically-marginalized students, is to invest in dual credit and aid programs that support affordability to advance educational equity. In Texas, students who enroll in dual credit programs have a higher likelihood of remaining on track to completing their degrees and have better college outcomes.



However, Black and Latino students in families with low incomes are underrepresented in dual credit programs. Texas must establish a relevant and equitable funding model to help alleviate hurdles these students face.

[Keep reading Dual Credit article](#)



[Get set of infographics on ethnic studies in Georgia](#)

Bilingual Special Education Certification is One Step Closer in Texas



The Bilingual Special Education Educator Standards Advisory Committee presented its report to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBE) this month. IDRA education associate, Lizdelia Piñón, Ed.D., was appointed to the committee and testified at the presentation hearing.

“The most important piece to me as a scholar and a mother is that this bilingual special education educator will need to be an advocate who knows best practices to serve dual-identified students while building capacity in the school community for our often forgotten multilingual and differently-abled students.”

Though Texas has tens of thousands of emergent bilingual students with disabilities, the state has not had a teacher certification program that equips professionals to meet the needs of those students. Until now. The Texas Legislature in 2021 passed HB 2256 to create such a program. HB 2256 came out of a year-long initiative, the Texas Early Childhood English Learner Initiative.*

The State Board for Educator Certification is now developing the rules and standards. To inform the committee’s work, IDRA held a series of roundtable discussions with professionals in bilingual special education.

*For the Texas Early Childhood English Learner Initiative, IDRA served as a steering committee co-leader with Texans Care for Children; Philanthropy Advocates (formerly called Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium, TEGAC); Dr. Dina Castro, UNT Denton; and Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TxAEYC).

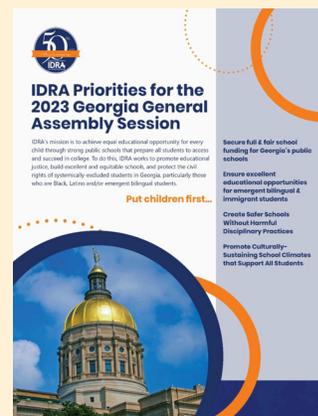
Download Our Policy Priorities Details



Federal



Texas



Georgia



Black History Month Features



During Black History Month this February, IDRA released a number of features that are now all available in one place. Check out our important articles, a policy agenda, essays on the joys of learning Black history, and tools for teaching about race.

[Go to Black History Month Features webpage](#)

Recent News

Recent Media Coverage

Groups highlight 'good' and 'bad' education bills in Georgia, Asia Ashley, CNHI News (Alabama), February 28, 2023

Texas Democrats Double Down on Defending Public Ed, Simone Carter, Dallas Observer, February 27, 2023

ABIC Action, Dreamers, Business Leaders Condemn Suit Attacking U of North Texas Over In-State Tuition Rates, Jay W. Belle Isle, Legal Reader, February 27, 2023

Fact check: Democrat says MLK's 'I Have a Dream' speech isn't required reading in Texas schools. Accusatory tweet aimed at Gov. Abbott by Democratic strategist got 9 million views. by Nusaiba Mizan, Houston Chronicle, February 27, 2023

PolitiFact: Are Texas schools required to teach Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream'?, by Nusaiba Mizan, Austin American-Statesman, February 14, 2023

Alabama 'parents' rights' bill: What would it mean for families?, Jemma Stephenson, Alabama Reflector, February 14, 2023

Presidents' Alliance and IDRA React to Oral Arguments in University of North Texas Case, release, Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, February 13, 2023

Mississippi Used Corporal Punishment in Schools 4,300 Times Last Year, by Julia James, Mississippi Today, February 10, 2023

IDRA: Here's our Policy Roadmap for Texas Education, by Rio Grande Guardian, Chloe Latham Sikes, February 1, 2023

How second- and third-generation Latinos are reclaiming the Spanish language, Karen Garcia, Los Angeles Times, January 31, 2023 (also published in The Frederick News-Post, February 18, 2023)

[See these news stories and other recent media coverage with links.](#)

Other IDRA News

February 28, 2023 – [Georgia Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of February 27, 2023](#)

February 27, 2023 – [Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of February 13, 2023 • \(Español\)](#)

February 24, 2023 – [Black History through Music, Art, Song & Dance; Rejecting Antebellum-era Policies](#)

February 22, 2023 – [Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of February 13, 2023 • \(Español\)](#)

February 16, 2023 – [Knowledge is Power – Laws to Support Black Students; Youth summit invite; Classroom lessons; and more • \(Español\)](#)

February 13, 2023 – [Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of February 13, 2023 • \(Español\)](#)

February 10, 2023 – [Middle Schoolers Becoming Software Designers while Supporting Younger Students – South San Antonio ISD Students Pilot IDRA's New VisionCoders Course](#)

February 7, 2023 – [Black History Month – The Story that Refuses to be Silenced – People to know, Lesson plans, Key policies, Segregation through vouchers, Joys of](#)

learning Black History

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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.

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