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## Honor the Children, Teachers and Families of Uvalde through Action

One year ago, the community of Uvalde, Texas, experienced a horrific school shooting: An armed person killed 19 children and two teachers and injured many others at Robb Elementary School. This devastating tragedy was, and continues to be, traumatic for the students, school staff and families in Uvalde. What happened in Uvalde also impacted so many of us in Texas and around the world who care deeply about children, their safety, and the opportunities they have to live their fullest and best lives.

We are frustrated by a lack of meaningful school safety reforms across so many states and a misguided focus by far too many policymakers on security “solutions” that simply will not create the welcoming and safe schools we want for our students.



Collective action in support of safer schools is an important part of healing and helps many of us to express our solidarity with all who are directly impacted by school violence. The families of Uvalde have advocated tirelessly for change in their community and before state and federal policymakers, even as their most basic demands for gun reform have been ignored by so-called leaders.

As we remember the teachers and young students who were killed and injured in Uvalde and stand as allies with their families who continue to fight for them, we uplift a call to action.

We urge you to show up at community meetings, school gatherings, city council meetings, state legislature hearings, and the U.S. Capitol. We urge you to show up just as the Uvalde families continue to show up – demand that policymakers at every level show through their actions that they are committed to a vision of school safety that does not emphasize more weapons, overly-hardened campuses, and harsh punishments, but instead centers students and the inherent value each holds. We hope the tools below will help.

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## A Framework for School Safety

In addition to changing laws about weapons and how individuals are able to access them, we must work toward safer schools by investing in the people, policies and practices that research shows help to create safe and welcoming environments on a daily basis *and* help to reduce the likelihood of targeted school violence. Schools need sufficient funding for evidence-based interventions, common-sense security infrastructure, and educator supports, including:

## People



Diverse, highly-qualified counselors, social workers, and other mental and behavioral health professionals **can support individuals**, including teachers and students, in schools and **develop referral networks** in partnership with the community.

Schools must have robust family engagement strategies that **center authentic relationship building** and family involvement in education policy and practice.

## Practices



Evidence-based programs, like restorative practices and social-emotional learning, can help to **build the deep relationships** that are necessary for school safety and to resolve conflicts effectively.

Culturally-sustaining curriculum and instructional practices also help to **build relationships and deep connections**, allowing all students to see themselves and their cultures as an **important and valued** part of the school community.

## Policies



Prohibitions on harmful punitive discipline and policing practices, including all forms of physical violence, **ensure no student is excluded from the school community** and that underlying issues that lead to challenging behaviors can be identified and addressed appropriately.

Swift and effective responses to bullying and harassment allow school leaders to **address individual student needs** and proactively **oppose cultures of harm** that may persist in a school community.

## Resources and Tools

[What Safe Schools Should Look Like for Every Student: A Guide to Building Safe and Welcoming Schools and Rejecting Policies that Hurt Students](#) -- IDRA's Policy and Practice School Safety Roadmap

[Commentary: Texas bills offer illusion of school safety](#) -- Op-ed in the San Antonio Express-News by Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.

[\*\*Congressional Listening Session on Federal Relief – The Next Steps for our Children, Teachers and Parents in Uvalde\*\*](#), Testimony by Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA National Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement Presented before the U.S. Congressional Children’s Caucus, September 26, 2022

[\*\*Joint Testimony Against SB 9\*\*](#), submitted by IDRA, Texas Center for Justice and Equity, and Texas Appleseed to the Texas House Education Committee, May 9, 2023

[\*\*HB 3 Offers an Illusion of Safety but Fails to Invest in Real Solutions for Safe and Supportive Schools\*\*](#) – IDRA Testimony Against House Bill 3, submitted by Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., to the Texas House Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety, March 27, 2023

[\*\*Supporting Students in the Wake of Violence\*\*](#) – IDRA EAC-South Convening Panels in Broward County, Florida

- Communities Helping Communities – Resources and Models for Community and Student Support, featuring school leaders from the Parkland and Charlottesville communities (2 videos)
- Impact of Social Climate on Students in Schools, featuring the superintendent of an El Paso school district (1 video)

[\*\*Impact of Mass Shootings on Schools - IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 195\*\*](#)

[\*\*Principles for School Safety, Privacy and Equity\*\*](#)

[\*\*School Policing Resources\*\*](#) – Resources to assist school districts that choose to invest in strategies that create safe and supportive schools for all students and move away from school policing and other harmful approaches

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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.

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