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## Texas Education Policy Alert

### Weekly Update

IDRA's weekly email alert includes legislative updates, opportunities for action to make your voice heard, bills to watch and other information. As state leadership calls special sessions, we will keep you updated.



### Third Special Session - First Week Recap

The Texas Governor called a third special session that began last Monday, October 9. Special sessions are called to focus on specific topics determined by the Governor, and this one focuses on proposing private school vouchers that would take public money out of public schools.

### Public School Funding & Private School Vouchers

Last week, the Texas Senate passed two bills related to this topic: Senate Bill 1 and Senate Bill 2. SB 1 is a universal private school voucher program that would provide \$8,000 to each participating student to attend private school or receive other private educational services. The money could go to students already attending private school, as well as any current public school student or first-time pre-kindergarten and kindergarten

students. That means the program is very broad without regard to student's actual financial need.

Senate Bill 2 is marketed as a public school funding bill to sweeten the deal of private school vouchers. However, it falls far short of recommendations for per-pupil funding and targeted funding that assists bilingual and special education, and it decouples future investments in schools from increasing teacher pay raises. The Texas House is anticipated to put forward its own version of a private school voucher plan with some public school funding attached.

## New Infographics from IDRA

[Texas Special Session Alert](#)  
[Texas Should Not Throw Away \\$500 Million](#)



House Floor Proceedings

[Watch the House floor debate live](#)

[Watch past hearings](#)



Senate Floor Proceedings

[Watch the Senate floor debate live](#)

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## Help us Stop Vouchers!

Putting a penny in the piggy bank to take out \$1 doesn't make sense. Proposals that hold public school funding hostage over a private school voucher plan are a bad deal for Texas students.

This week, IDRA joins students, parents, educators and advocates in the Teach the Truth Coalition to raise the call to stop vouchers and keep public funds in public schools. [Sign the petition](#) to Say No to Voucher Scams here.

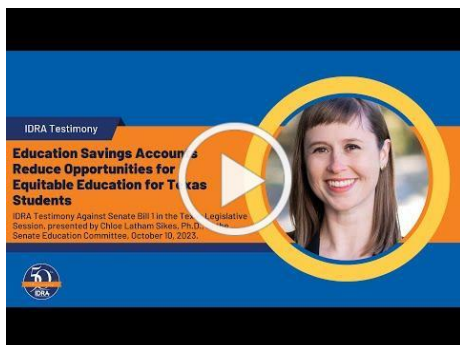
Learn more and find resources on IDRA's [Stop Vouchers](#) page.

We ♥ our public  
school students—  
say no to voucher scams

Sign the petition to  
fully fund public schools  
without negotiations



## Voucher Testimony Presented Last Week



Education Savings Accounts Reduce Opportunities for Equitable Education for Texas Students - submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the to the Senate Education Committee, October 10, 2023.



SB 1 Poses a Threat to Public Education in Texas and to Our Most Vulnerable Students - TLEEC Testimony against SB 1, submitted to the Texas Senate Education Committee, October 1, 2023.

Voucher Proposals Create Unprecedented Legal Challenges for Students and Families - submitted by Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, October 10, 2023.



## Tools & Resources

You can make your voice heard in House committee hearings through the [electronic comment portal!](#)

[Learn more about IDRA's special session policy recommendations for Texas](#)

See our Infographic: [5 Reasons Vouchers Hurt Students](#)

Read the [Special Session Policy Agenda for the Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition \(TLEEC\)](#)

[How to Testify before the Texas Legislature](#), Infographic

An infographic titled "Texas Special Session Alert!". It provides information about Governor Abbott's announcement of a special legislative session starting Monday October 9, 2023. It explains what a special session is, the time frame (5 days before meeting vs. 1 day before meeting), and the Governor's announced topics: Vouchers, Border security, COVID-19 vaccination restrictions, and Public safety. It also includes a "Get Involved!" section with contact information and a sign-up for email updates.

**Texas Special Session Alert!**

Governor Abbott has announced a special legislative session starting Monday October 9, 2023

**What is a special session?**

The Texas legislature normally meets every other year between January and May. The governor has the power to call "special sessions" that require legislators to meet outside the regular legislative session. The governor selects the topics to be addressed, which can include unfinished business from the regular session, emergencies or other important issues.

**What is the time frame?**

Special sessions are much shorter than regular sessions.

| Regular Session       | VS.  | Special Session      |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------|
| 5 days before meeting | Deadline for notices of public meetings & hearings | 1 day before meeting |
| 140 days              | Duration   | 30 days              |

Special sessions are limited to the governor's announced topics.

**The Governor announced four topics for this special session. IDRA will hold the line against any voucher proposals and promote legislation that protects students' civil rights.**

**The Governor's topics for this session include:**

- Vouchers
- Border security
- COVID-19 vaccination restrictions
- Public safety

October 2023

**Get Involved!**

There are opportunities for you to testify, contact your legislator, and stay involved! During a special session, things happen quickly, so be sure to stay connected with IDRA.

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

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