Children First
IDRA
Transforming Education

IDRA Policy Priorities for the 2025 Texas Legislative Session

IDRA's mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. To do this, IDRA works to promote educational justice, build excellent and equitable schools, and protect the civil rights of systemically-excluded students in Texas, particularly those who are Black, Latino, and/or emergent bilingual students.

Put children first...

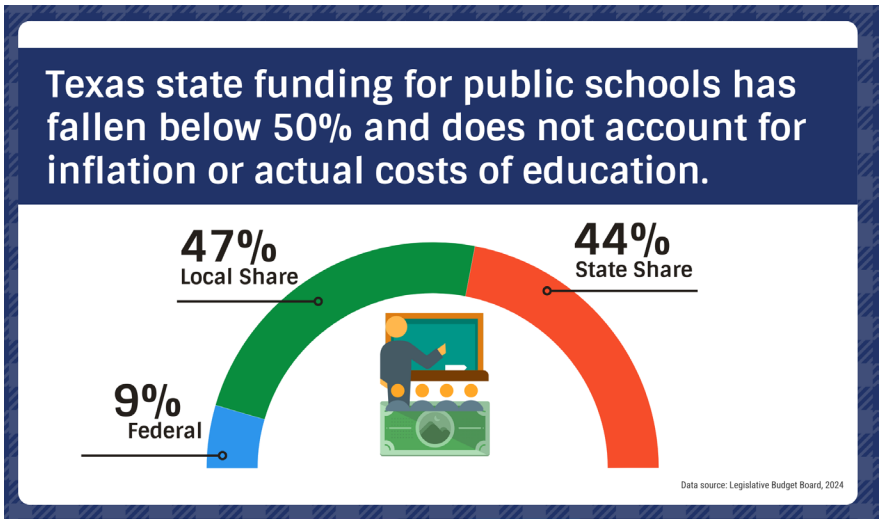
- **Secure fair school funding for all students**
- **Expand excellent educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students**
- **Promote culturally-sustaining school climates where all students feel welcome**
- **Create safer schools without harmful discipline practices or policing practices**
- **Prepare all students to succeed in college**

Secure

Fair School Funding for All Students

All students deserve to go to excellent, well-funded public schools that prepare them to access and succeed in college and beyond. But not all Texas schools have sufficient funding to provide students with the education and opportunities they deserve.

State funding for public schools remains below 50% and does not account for inflation or actual costs of education.



IDRA Policy Recommendations

The state school funding system should be based on actual costs to provide fair funding to students, especially students of color, students from families with limited incomes, and students who require additional programs, support and services. The legislature can make sure public school students have excellent educational opportunities. IDRA urges the legislature to...

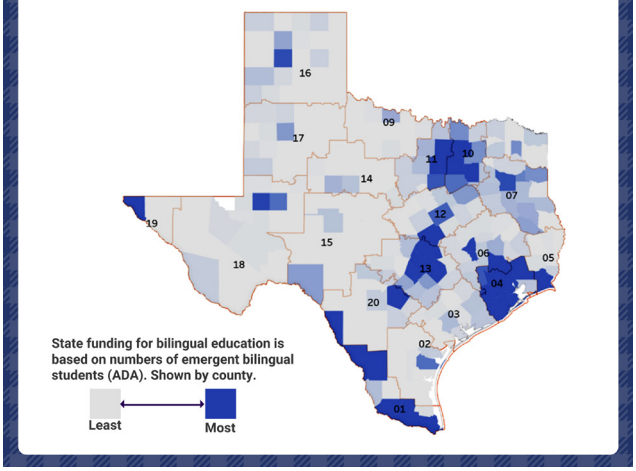
- Invest in the basic allotment to raise per pupil funding for all students, including by adjusting for inflation.
- Increase targeted funding for high-quality bilingual education programs, educators, programs and instructional materials.
- Protect local school districts' ability to determine their own local taxing rates to fund schools (M&O tax rate) without disparate compression or reduction of local revenue by the state.
- Keep public dollars in public schools by opposing vouchers and similar programs (e.g., Education Savings Accounts, Tax Credit Scholarships) that use public funds for private purposes.

Expand

Excellent Educational Opportunities for Emergent Bilingual Students

Emergent bilingual students have the right to excellent schools that support bilingualism and biliteracy in both a student's home language and English.

Emergent bilingual students make up nearly one in four public school students and attend schools in every corner of the state.



Emergent bilingual students make up over 23% of students in Texas. These are students who speak a language other than English and are learning coursework in their home language while they also learn English.

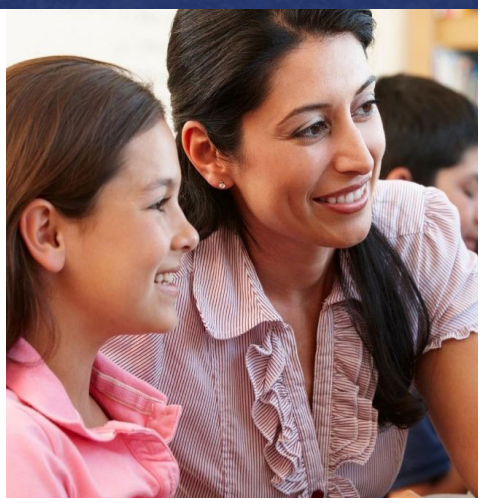
To serve them, programs must be well-funded, have high-quality trained and certified teachers, use appropriate quality instructional materials, and accurately track students' progress and achievement in both languages.

But limited access to dual language programs and a longstanding shortage of certified bilingual education teachers present challenges for students to access excellent educational opportunities from early grades through high school.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can make sure emergent bilingual students have equitable and excellent education. IDRA urges the legislature to…

- Authorize agency support to assist districts with bilingual program monitoring, technical assistance and educator training for effectively teaching emergent bilingual students, as outlined by HB 2164 (88R).
- Expand and improve dual language pathways for high school students to graduate with achievement in bilingualism and biliteracy, also called the Seal of Biliteracy.
- Increase the number of quality certified bilingual education teachers through preparation program support, strengthened teacher retention strategies and higher teacher pay.
- Ensure students and families who speak languages other than English have access to quality public education without barriers regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

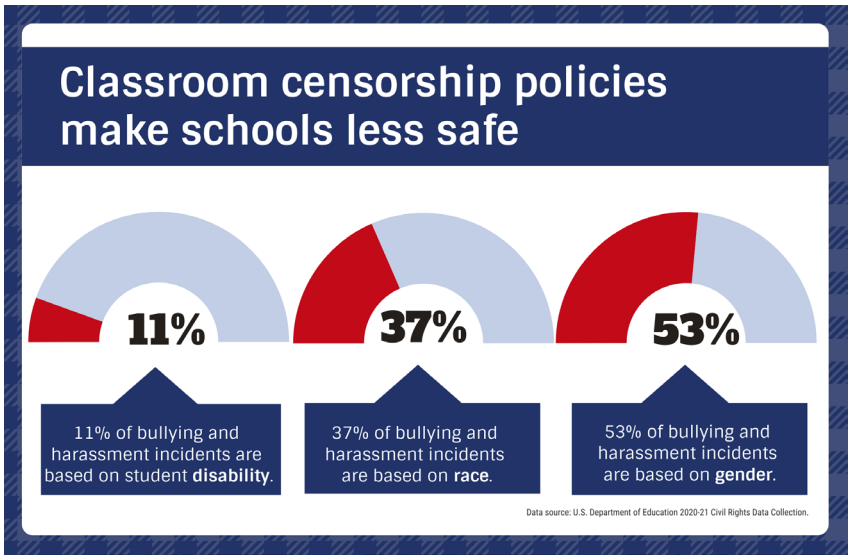


Promote

Culturally-Sustaining School Climates Where All Students Feel Welcome

All students deserve to learn in culturally-sustaining school environments that affirm their racial, ethnic, gender and other identities. Culturally-sustaining schools create positive, safe and supportive school climates for all students to receive a high-quality education.

Classroom censorship policies have made schools less safe and less supportive for students, especially those who are significantly more likely to experience identity-based discrimination, like Black and Latino students and those who identify as LGBTQ+.



IDRA Policy Recommendations

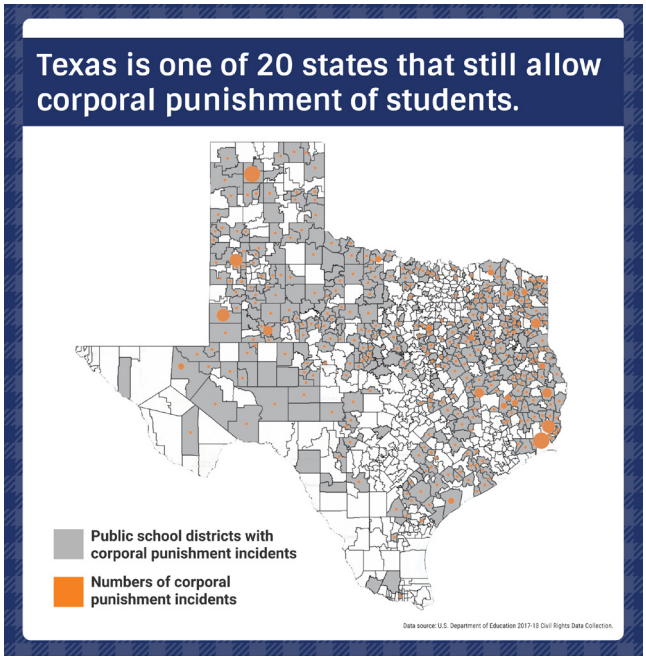
The legislature can make sure students attend culturally-sustaining and supportive schools. IDRA urges the legislature to...

- Protect students' civil rights by adopting protections against identity-based bullying and harassment.
- Sustain accurate and rigorous coursework, curriculum and instructional materials that reflect students' backgrounds.

Create

Safer Schools Without Harmful Discipline or Policing Practices

All students deserve safe and welcoming schools. Research shows that evidence-based programs and supportive personnel who keep students engaged in schools and support their needs are effective, unlike harmful discipline and policing practices. Schools must be able to invest in the people and programs that build strong campus climates and foster relationships that keep everyone safe.



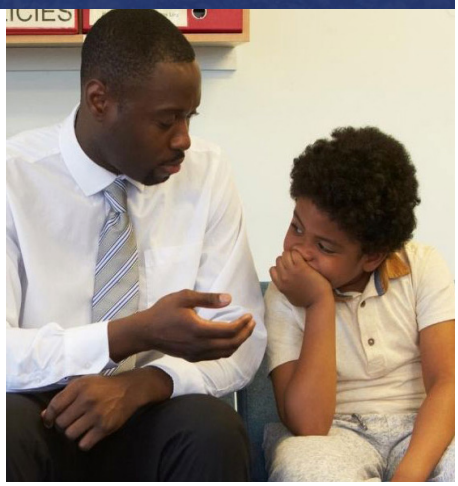
Yet, Texas is one of 20 states that still allow corporal punishment of students, and regularly incorporates ineffective and costly school surveillance strategies that do more harm than good.

For 30 years, Texas also has used disciplinary alternative education programs for expelled students with little evidence about how they are effective in educating students or providing student mental health or behavioral support.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can make sure students have access to safe and welcoming schools. IDRA urges the legislature to...

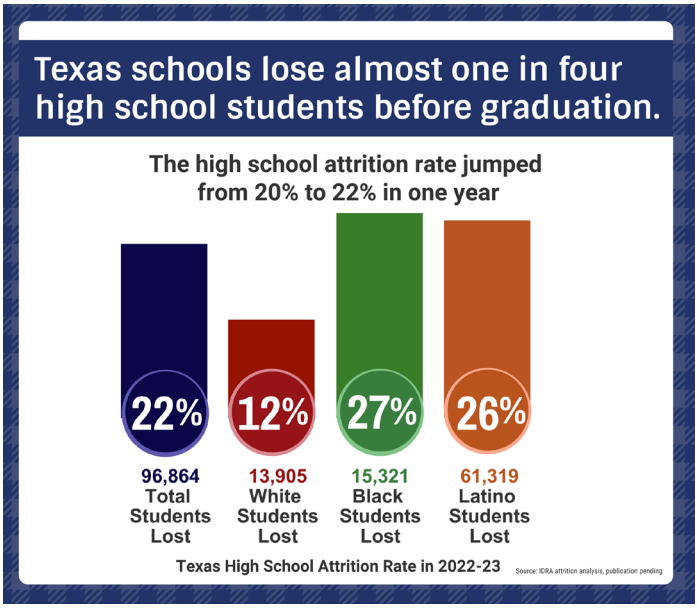
- Eliminate school officials' use of corporal punishment as a discipline strategy for students in schools.
- Invest in effective alternatives to exclusionary discipline that address root causes of challenging behavior.
- Increase due process and transparency for students and families in school discipline cases.
- Collect and assess comprehensive data to better identify and address disparate disciplinary outcomes.



Prepare

All Students to Succeed in College

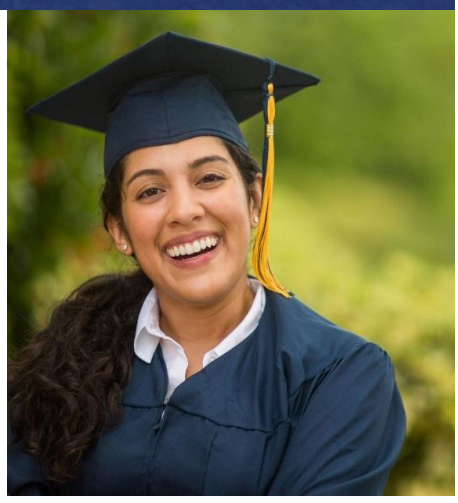
All students deserve a high-quality education that prepares them for college and lifelong success. Schools have the responsibility to prepare all students to succeed in college, but not all students are meeting readiness benchmarks.



Texas high schools are losing 22% of students before graduation day. They are losing Black and Latino students at twice the rate of white students.

To achieve state goals for college access and success, Texas must offer rigorous early college coursework, support targeted college advising and promote a strong data infrastructure for students, families and college counselors to understand and access their college preparatory pathways.

IDRA Policy Recommendations

The legislature can ensure all Texans are prepared for college and postsecondary life. IDRA urges the legislature to...

- Invest in expansive early college high school models and counseling supports for students starting in middle school, especially for historically marginalized Black, Latino, emergent bilingual students and students from low-income households.
- Develop robust, aligned data systems that track Pre-K through college academic pathways and outcomes.
- Protect policies that make higher education more accessible to all Texans, including the Top Ten Percent Plan and tuition equity for all Texas high school graduates to be eligible for in-state tuition, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.