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## IDRA Newsletter – State Education Policy Impact

### In This Issue

Texas Legislature Fails to Address the Needs of Texas Students and Teachers

.....

Coalition in Georgia Pushes for Culturally Sustaining Education

.....

Lawmakers Refuse to Adopt School Vouchers, For Now

.....

Major Changes Ahead for Texas Future College Students

.....

Texas Prioritizes Hardening Measures Over Preventative Practices

.....

New Classnotes Podcast Episodes

.....

Recent News

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## Texas Legislature Fails to Address the Needs of Texas Students and Teachers

### More Censorship and Little Action on Teacher Shortage or Bilingual Education

*by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.*



Though Texas lawmakers began the 2023 legislative session with expert advice and plans in hand to strengthen public education by expanding student learning, addressing the teacher shortage and improving bilingual education. But they spent hours on red-meat issues instead. These efforts included furthering harmful classroom censorship policies and creating state-sanctioned censorship in books and materials with House Bill 900.

Lawmakers not only failed to address the harms caused by classroom censorship laws already in place, they also did little to address the teacher shortage or improve bilingual education. Overall, despite some lawmakers championing school funding and equitable education for all students, the session was marked by regressive policies that do little to address current problems faced by schools in favor of introducing new harms.

**Keep reading Texas Legislature Fails to Address... article**

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## Coalition in Georgia Pushes for Culturally Sustaining Education

*by Thomas Marshall III, M.Ed.*

Students, families, educators and activists in Georgia are at the center of a growing movement to fight for culturally sustaining education in response to roadblocks being placed by policymakers across the U.S. South. For the Georgia General Assembly

session in early 2023, these activists expanded the Georgia Coalition for Education Justice that was founded by IDRA in 2022.



During the recent session, coalition members organized and successfully fought back against voucher proposals, participated in a day of action to fully fund Georgia's schools, helped block Georgia's "Don't Say Gay" censorship bill, and held news conferences to push for bills critical to the coalition's policy priority areas.

[Keep reading Coalition in Georgia article](#)

Join IDRA's **Southern Education Equity Network** to connect with advocates across the U.S. South.



## Lawmakers Refuse to Adopt School Vouchers, For Now

*by Diana Long, M.Ed.*

A primary concern during the Texas legislative session was Governor Greg Abbott's push to pass private school vouchers by establishing education savings accounts (ESAs). IDRA and other organizations and individuals expressed concerns about the negative impact that vouchers would have on families, public schools and communities by diverting crucial funds away from already underfunded public schools.



Despite the pressure to push ESAs, a bipartisan group of lawmakers held firm against private school voucher bills, but the issue will likely return this fall during a special legislative session. IDRA remains committed to ensuring every child has access to an education that prepares them for a successful life and we encourage you to remain engaged and stay informed to advocate for equitable education in any upcoming sessions.

[Keep reading Lawmakers Refuse to Adopt School Vouchers article](#)

# Major Changes Ahead for Texas Future College Students

by Steve Kemgang

The 2023 Texas legislative session saw changes to college readiness and access, with benefits and setbacks. House Bill 8 allots additional state funds for community colleges based on performance outcomes and establishes a dual credit scholarship program for high school students in low-income households. Senate Bill 17 was strongly opposed by university students, faculty and education advocates. As proposed, it would have shut down DEI offices and policies in public colleges across the state.



IDRA argued that this bill would compromise K-12 programs housed under DEI offices that develop necessary college access pipelines for students. The passed version of the bill effectively defunds and prohibits DEI offices in all Texas public universities, but initiatives such as admissions, student organizations and academic coursework and research are exempted.

[Keep reading Major Changes Ahead article](#)

## Texas Prioritizes Hardening Measures Over Preventative Practices

by Alisha “Tuff” Tuff, M.Ed.

In the wake of the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, the state legislature had a historic opportunity to support gun control and make significant investments to improve safety by supporting students and their communities through evidence-based measures of support. Instead, lawmakers prioritized practices that negatively impact students, educators and families, including requiring the presence of police in schools and increased hardening standards with penalties for non-compliance.



Despite these harmful policies, the legislature passed two positive bills: the “CROWN Act” (House Bill 567) that requires schools to eliminate discriminatory dress codes and grooming standards that restrict hairstyles and textures associated with one’s race and the “No Kids in Cuffs” bill (Senate Bill 133) that prohibits school-based police and other security personnel from using physical restraints such as handcuffs, tasers and chemical irritants on elementary students in all but the most extreme circumstances.



Keep reading [Texas Prioritizes Hardening Measures](#) article



See IDRA's issue brief

### **What Safe Schools Should Look Like for Every Student – A Guide to Building Safe and Welcoming Schools and Rejecting Policies that Hurt Students**

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

## **IDRA 50th Anniversary Snapshot – Family Engagement**



In March of 2009, some 20 parents gathered to explore forming their own community-based official PTA unit. Most were fluent only in Spanish, and all were low income. The schools their children attended were either academically challenged or feeders to low-achieving secondary schools.

Through a partnership between the community-based ARISE community centers and IDRA, the founding of the country's first PTA Comuntario (now called Education CAFE) demonstrates IDRA's **Family Leadership in Education Model** in action.



Today, IDRA is helping more communities start their own Education CAFEs to partner with school district leaders to monitor the academic success of their children and other neighborhood children. Education CAFEs have influenced district practices to prepare students for college, led their high schools to improve math instruction, formalized K-12 bilingual-biliterate programs, and more.

[Learn more about IDRA's Education CAFEs.](#)

## **New Classnotes Podcast Episodes**



## The Good, Bad and Ugly of Legislative Advocacy

Morgan Craven, J.D., led the conversation with fellows: Steve Kemgang, Diana Long, M.Ed., Jonathan Peraza Campos, M.S., Alisha “Tuff” Tuff, M.Ed., and Ruth M. Youn, in this first of three episodes as they describe advocacy in the Georgia and Texas legislative sessions. [Go to podcast episode #234.](#)

## Learning from Latino and Multilingual Youth

Jonathan Peraza Campos, M.S., speaks with Dr. Jyoti Kaneria and Dr. Emily Lemon about their community-engaged research and the implications it can have in the classroom and policymaking spaces. [Go to podcast episode #235.](#)

## Recent News

### Recent Media Coverage

**Tarrant County Struggles to Find Teachers for Bilingual Education, Governing**, by Silas Allen, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 25, 2023

**Texas offered schools money to expand bilingual programs. But who’s going to teach them?**, by Silas Allen, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, July 24, 2023

**Texas Legislature did not prioritize schools this session, Children at Risk says**, by Rebecca Noel, Houston Public Media, July 20, 2023 (Also in KERA News, July 21, 2023; and KSTX-FM, July 20, 2023; Public Radio for Northeast Texas July 24, 2023; Katy Bubbly Life, July 21, 2023)

**State commission continues plan to remove words like ‘equity’ and ‘inclusion’ from teacher lesson plans**, by Ross Williams, July 14, 2023

**Georgia panel slashes more references to diversity in teacher prep rules**, by Alice Tecotzky, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 13, 2023

**UNT can charge higher tuition for out-of-state students than undocumented Texans, court rules**, by Ryan Nickerson, Houston Chronicle, July 12, 2023

**Conservative Court Makes Unexpected Decision in Closely Watched Case**, Adolfo Pesquera, Education Law, July 11, 2023 (Also in Presidents’ Alliance, July 11, 2023)

**How YOU can impact education policy | Empowering student voices** (IDRA profile), by The Nicest Nick, July 2, 2023

**South Texas activist pushed LULAC on equal rights for women in 1930s**, by Teresita Dominguez, Caller-Times, June 30, 2023

**The Supreme Court ends affirmative action in college admissions**, by Nadra Nittle, The 19th, June 29, 2023

**Growing future food and agricultural scientists at minority-serving institutions**, US Black Engineer, June 26, 2023

**OHS students among national essay contest winners**, Odessa American, June 22, 2023

**USDA Launches Program to Cultivate Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals,** USAgNet, June 22, 2023

**Biden-Harris Administration Announces Inaugural “From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program”,** The Banner-News, June 22, 2023

**LULAC Celebrates 41st Anniversary Of Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Education Case in Favor of Immigrant Children,** by Carol A. Clark, Los Alamos Daily Post, June 15, 2023

**Gov. Greg Abbott signs new law mandating armed security at all Texas schools,** by Allysa Cole, KSAT-TV, June 15, 2023

**Are Clear Backpacks the Answer to Stopping Another School Shooting?,** by Simone Carter, Dallas Observer, June 14, 2023

**Bill requiring armed security at all Texas schools heads to Gov. Abbott’s desk,** Courtney Friedman, KSAT-TV, June 12, 2023

**Black Girl’s Complaints About Racist Bullies Are Always Dismissed by Her School – Finally, She Realizes She’s Had Enough,** by Amanda Shaw, Goalcast, June 10, 2023

**Georgia Professional Standards Commission removes DEI terms from teacher preparation guidelines,** by Elizabeth Rymarev, Atlanta Civic Circle, June 9, 2023

**Major teacher training program change removes diversity, equity and inclusion from training rules,** by Courtney Francisco, WSB-TV, June 8, 2023 (Also ran in Yahoo! News, June 8, 2023)

**Georgia dropping ‘woke’ words from teacher preparation rules,** by Dave Williams, Capitol Beat News Service, June 8, 2023 (also appeared in Marietta Daily Journal, June 8, 2023; Calhoun Times, June 10, 2023; Yahoo News!, June 9, 2023; The Augusta Press, June 8, 2023; Henry Herald, June 8, 2023)

**Public to get limited chance to comment before vote to remove ‘woke’ words from K-12 lesson plans,** by Ross Williams, Georgia Recorder, June 8, 2023 (Also appeared in WABE-TV, June 8, 2023)

**Backlash Grows on Removing DEI Standards from GA Teacher Training,** by Shanteya Hudson, Public News Service, June 7, 2023

**‘It’s part of my identity’: CROWN Act hits home for San Antonians who’ve experienced hair discrimination,** Vincent T. Davis, San Antonio Express-News, June 6, 2023

**Editorial: STAAR test fails Texas students and needs to go – but not as part of school vouchers,** by San Antonio Express-News Editorial Board, June 6, 2023 (Also ran in Cleburne Times-Review, June 6, 2023)

**Editorial: Vouchers would take Texas public education backward,** by San Antonio Express-News Editorial Board, June 2, 2023

**Uvalde-driven school safety bill could put a gun in every school and a panic button in every class,** by Bill Zeeble, KERA – North Texas, June 1, 2023

**Texas Legislature's response to Uvalde: Armed security officers at every school**, by Talia Richman, Dallas Morning News, June 1, 2023

**Oficiales armados en las escuelas de Texas: Legislatura aprueba presupuesto**, by Talia Richman, Al día Dallas, June 1, 2023

**The Importance of Artificial Intelligence in Education for All Students**, by Hector Bojorquez & Michelle Martínez Vega, Language Magazine (IDRA Newsletter article reprint), May 31, 2023

**50 Years of Strengthening Education in SA, Nation**, KABB-TV Focus on South Texas, May 27, 2023

**¿Qué está sucediendo en la Legislatura de Texas en este momento y qué necesita saber la gente?**, Despierta Austin, May 26, 2023

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

## Other IDRA News

July 11, 2023 – **UNT Court Case Sides with Students, Reverses Threat to Texas Higher Education – IDRA & Presidents' Alliance React to Anti-Immigrant Tuition Decision**

July 10, 2023 – **IDRA Federal Education Policy Update** – Inside: DC reception, protecting students, AI in classrooms, and more

June 29, 2023 – **IDRA Statement: Supreme Court Ignores History & Precedent in Finding UNC and Harvard Affirmative Action Programs Unconstitutional** – Students' Racial Diversity Should be Celebrated, Not Minimized or Erased

June 27, 2023 – **Webinar – What New Education Laws Mean for Texas Schools** – Register now! Reviewing the 2023 Texas Legislative Session (also June 21, 2023)

June 22, 2023 – **Teens Win 2023 National Essay Contest Awards** – IDRA Valued Youth Partnership Program Tutors Share Stories of the Program's Impact on Their Lives

June 15, 2023 – **Plyler v. Doe Supports High-Quality Schools – U.S. Supreme Court Ruling 41 Years Ago Today Confirms Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools** (English) • (Español)

June 7, 2023 – **Alert! Georgia Education Policy Update** – Action Alert: Help keep DEI standards for teachers

May 31, 2023 – **All Our Eyes On Our Schools: A Texas Legislative Wrap-Up** (English) • (Español)

May 30, 2023 – **May 2023 issue of the IDRA Newsletter – Breaking Barriers to Learning**

May 27, 2023 – **Texas Education Policy Update** – Alert: Don't Fall for the Illusion of School Safety, Oppose HB 3!

May 26, 2023 – **Texas Education Policy Update** – Alert: Don't Take the Bait, Oppose School Vouchers! (English) • (Español)



May 24, 2023 – **Honor the Children, Teachers and Families of Uvalde through Action**

May 23, 2023 – **Texas Education Policy Update** – Advocacy News – Week of May 23, 2023 (English) • (Español)

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IDRA 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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