



Texas Dual Language Programs Should Have Certified Teachers and More Program Support

IDRA Testimony on SB 2185, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Committee on Education K-16, April 8, 2025

Dear Chair Creighton and Members of the Committee:

IDRA supports additional funding for quality bilingual education, including dual language immersion programs that are delivered within alternative language programs. At the same time, we support teachers of bilingual education holding certification in that area. This has been a longstanding challenge in Texas, as we have faced a bilingual/ESL certified teacher shortage for over 30 years.

To support alternative language programs offering dual language immersion programs and encourage teacher certification, IDRA respectfully offers the following suggestions for the bill:

- Add a timeline for alternative language program plans to secure a certified bilingual teacher within the approved exception period, per TEC §29.054(a)(4);
- Maintain permissible uses of the bilingual education allotment to apply to salary supplements, not full salaries. Bilingual teachers should get the extra supplement for teaching bilingual education, but full salaries should continue to be funded by the basic allotment and other funding sources; and
- Support other filed legislation this session that expands the agency's ability to support school districts as they develop high-quality bilingual education and dual language programs and strengthens educator training and technical assistance to offer these programs.

With these adjustments, Texas can expand quality dual language programs, improve educational opportunities for all emergent bilingual students and protect bilingual education funding uses for bilingual education programs.

For more information, contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., IDRA deputy director of policy, at chloe.sikes@idra.org.

IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization led by Celina Moreno, J.D. 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.