



Banning Targeted Student Supports Threatens Their Educational Opportunities

IDRA Testimony Against SB 12, Submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Committee on Education K-16, May 13, 2025

Dear Chair Buckley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., and I am the deputy director of policy at IDRA, an independent, non-partisan non-profit committed to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

IDRA opposes Senate Bill 12. All students should be welcomed and supported to learn and thrive in school. Research shows that students who have teachers who are well trained to understand and support their diverse backgrounds are better able to achieve (IDRA, 2025). And school leaders who support those teachers are critical to creating a strong school district and promoting a positive school climate (Feingold & Weishart, 2023).

But SB 12 undermines schools' abilities to create and maintain safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environments. In particular, Sections 3, 23 and 27 establish vague and discriminatory requirements for school districts that undermine how schools and educators teach, mentor and support students.

Most Texas public school students are Latino, Black, other students of color and students who are from low-income households. One in four are students who speak a language other than English at home. Fourteen percent receive special education services (TEA, 2024). Educators need to know students' educational needs, their backgrounds, and the school communities to provide appropriate parent outreach and engagement and student support.

Concerns on Section 3 and 23

School employees tasked with what SB 12 outlines in Section 3 as "diversity, equity and inclusion duties" support all students and their families in navigating school services, academics and educational programs. Without them and with restrictions on how educators can support students (e.g., Section 23), these students can be pushed out, face discrimination without support to report or address it (TEACH Coalition, 2021), and experience fewer educational opportunities.

According to a preliminary report on the impact of diversity, equity and inclusion restrictions released this year, IDRA found that Texas high school students, parents and teachers report fewer college access opportunities for first-generation and historically marginalized students. Notably, students reported a diminished sense of belonging in college and lower perceptions of available support for students' academics, social life, mental health and even physical safety

