



Teachers in High-Need Fields Need Supports

IDRA Testimony on SB 27, Submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas House Committee on Public Education, May 6, 2025

Dear Chair Buckley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

My name is Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D. 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 submits this testimony on Senate Bill 27 with recommendations. We want to highlight the positive components in Section 2 that support teachers in high-need fields, and strike Section 10, which contains language to remove students from the classroom, that has been addressed in other legislation this session.

Texas is experiencing a teacher shortage, with acute and long-standing shortages in fields like bilingual and special education. We appreciate that Section 2 of SB 27 includes waivers for teacher certification fees in these areas, which we know present a barrier for qualified people. For instance, a teacher pursuing bilingual education takes two additional exams at a cost of \$600 more in exam fees than teachers in general education (Piñón, 2022).

However, IDRA encourages the committee to strike Section 10 of SB 27 that relates to student removal from classrooms, including for a single incident. Such removal is contrary to existing evidence on safe school and student supports (Craven, 2022). This language was changed in other legislation moving this session (HB 6 and SB 1871) and would be conflicting.

We urge the committee to consider supports for educators without harmful discipline practices against students.

IDRA is available for any questions or further resources that we can provide. For more information, please contact Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., at chloe.sikes@idra.org.

References

Craven, M. (June 16, 2022). What Safe Schools Should Look Like for Every Student – A Guide to Building Safe and Welcoming Schools and Rejecting Policies that Hurt Students, IDRA Issue Brief.

<https://idra.news/SafeSchoolsIB>

Piñón, L. (September 20, 2022). Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention of Bilingual Educators. IDRA Slidedeck submitted to the Texas House Public Education Committee. <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/09.20.22-IDRA-Slidedeck-on-Texas-Bilingual-Teacher-Shortage.pdf>.

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.