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## Texas Education Policy Alert

### Weekly Update

IDRA's weekly email alert includes legislative updates, opportunities for action to make your voice heard, bills to watch and other information through the session until it closes in late May.

**[Make sure you keep receiving these notices by subscribing to IDRA's Texas Education Policy Alert!](#)**

**And please tell your friends!**



## Coming Up: Week of April 17, 2023

Hearings this week will address:

- Identity-based bullying and harassment in schools
- Parent grievance procedures against school districts
- Secondary grade certificates for bilingual education
- K-12 civics and censorship
- Vocational education programs in certain high schools

## Hearing Monday on Two Good Measures Regarding School Discipline and Anti-identity-Based Bullying

You can make your voice heard in House committee hearings through the [electronic comment portal](#)! Two good bills will be up on Monday in Youth Health and Safety Select, Committee: HB 4624, the anti-identity-based bullying bill and HB 4449, which institutes a study on the school discipline law in Texas. IDRA's Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., and impacted families will be testifying at the Capitol.

See IDRA's [Tik Tok account](#) or [Instagram library](#) for quick video demos on testifying (including details like where to park). We also have an infographic on [How to Testify before the Texas Legislature](#).

Before the committee hearing Monday, IDRA will co-host a news conference with Texas Legislative Black Caucus and the Senate Hispanic Caucus. Families, advocates and policymakers will speak for House Bill 4625 to strengthen Texas laws prohibiting and preventing identity-based bullying and harassment in schools.

Approximately one in four students in this country experience bullying related to their race, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation. Students across the state have been increasingly reporting alarming examples of identity-based bullying in schools – fueled in part by misinformation spread as a result of recent efforts to attack and undermine diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in education.

**Watch our [social media accounts](#) to see the news conference at 10:00 am Monday.**



### Monday

Youth Health & Safety Select Committee  
11:30 a.m. ([See notice](#))

### Tuesday

Public Education Committee  
8:00 a.m. ([See notice](#))

### Thursday

Public Education Committee  
8:00 a.m. ([See notice](#))

[Watch hearings live](#)

[Watch past hearings](#)



### Wednesday

Education Committee  
([Notice pending, check here for updates](#))

### Thursday

Subcommittee on Higher Education  
([Notice pending, check here for updates](#))

[Watch hearings live](#)

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## Highlights from Last Week

The House Public Education Committee heard testimony on five private school voucher proposals last week. Several aspects of the proposals focused on the need for additional special education services and support. Proponents of the bills shared challenges receiving special education services in their public schools and pointed to specialized service providers. Opponents of the voucher bills pointed out that, unlike public schools,

private schools do not have to meet federal or state legal protections for students with disabilities, including services provided, admission, academic accountability, or other data and reporting requirements.

The Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education voted to send SB 17, the bill prohibiting diversity, equity and inclusion activities in higher education, to the full Senate. The bill will be discussed on the Senate floor Monday, April 17, along with the Senate's version of the state budget.

## Good News!

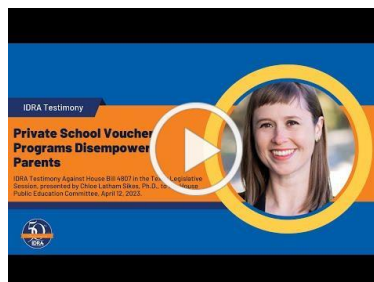
The **Texas CROWN Act** to end discrimination against students on the basis of hair texture or protective hairstyle associated with race was passed by the House Thursday by a vote of 143 to 5 (with 2 not voting). For more information, see the [bill text](#) and the [written testimony](#) and [video](#) by IDRA Education Policy Fellow, Alisha Tuff.

The **bill to end corporal punishment** in Texas schools was passed by Texas House Committee on Youth Health and Safety. See the [bill text](#) and the [written testimony](#) and [video](#) by Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA National Director of Policy, Advocacy and Community Engagement. Also see IDRA's issue brief, [Hitting Hurts: The Case for Ending Corporal Punishment in Texas Schools](#).

## Testimony Presented Recently



See [TLEEC Testimony](#) delivered by IDRA Education Policy Fellow, Diana Long, against voucher bill HB 4340



See [IDRA testimony](#) against voucher bill HB 4807 delivered by Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes



See [IDRA testimony](#) by Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., against SB 245 that expands harmful discipline practices

## Other Testimony Presented Last Week

[HB 3917 Provides Positive Framework for Students, Families and Schools to Address Chronic Absenteeism](#) – Comments in Support of House Bill 3917, submitted to the Texas House Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety, April 10, 2023, by IDRA, Texas Appleseed, Texas Center for Justice and Equity, ACLU Texas, and National Association of Social Workers Texas

[Reject Harmful Responses to Chronic Absenteeism, Such as Fines and Criminalization](#) – Comments in Opposition to House Bill 3931 and House Bill 2725, submitted to the Texas House Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety, April 10, 2023, by IDRA, Texas Appleseed, Texas Center for Justice and Equity, ACLU Texas, and National Association of Social Workers Texas - [See video](#)

[Education Savings Accounts Should Not Come at the Cost of Improvements to Texas Special Education](#) – IDRA Testimony against HB 3781, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas

House Public Education Committee, April 11, 2023

[Education Savings Accounts Contradict Steps to Improve Texas Special Education](#) – IDRA  
Testimony against SB 1474, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, April 12, 2023

[Texas Emergent Bilingual Students Should Have Quality Programs and Certified Teachers](#) – IDRA  
Testimony on SB 2497, submitted by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., to the Texas Senate Education Committee, April 12, 2023

[Schools and Families Need to Be Involved and Supported in Plans to Implement Accelerated Learning](#) – TLEEC Testimony on SB 1261: Relating to accelerated learning plans for students not meeting STAAR standards, submitted to the Senate Education Committee, Wednesday, April 12, 2023

## Tools & Resources

[Learn more about IDRA's policy recommendations for Texas](#)

See our Infographic: [5 Data Snacks on IDRA's Policy Priorities](#)

Read the [Policy Agenda for the Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition \(TLEEC\)](#)

[How to Testify before the Texas Legislature](#), Infographic

Sign up for IDRA's Texas Education Policy Alerts! Also available in Spanish.

**IDRA Policy Priorities**  
for the 2023 Texas Legislative Session

- Secure fair school funding
- Ensure excellent educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students
- Promote culturally sustaining school climates that support all students
- Create safer schools without harmful discipline practices
- Prepare all students to access and succeed in college

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## Tools Against Vouchers

**Education Savings Accounts Are Costly and an Irresponsible Grab of Public Tax Money**

The Texas Legislature is considering a new education savings account program (aka: vouchers), costing taxpayers \$334 million over the next four years at an \$8,000 per student voucher amount.

That's enough to hire 6,500 new public school teachers and support staff with an average salary of \$50,000

\$334 million would be spent on vouchers by 2028

Tell the legislature to stop the voucher gravy train!  
Invest in public education!

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**Texas Schools Need Funds to Serve Students**

Despite five decades of walkouts, advocacy, litigation, research, advocacy and state leadership promises, some students are still considered more valuable than others.

\$12,212 (Richest 100 districts)  
\$7,474 (Poorest 100 districts)  
\$4,738 difference per student

Texas schools in 2021 had a \$4,738 gap per student in how much they could raise locally for schools.

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

Reach Out To Us

