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February 3, 2022

IDRA's Knowledge is Power is a national resource for educators and advocates to help you do your work for equity and excellence in education in the midst of classroom censorship policies.

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See previous editions of [Knowledge is Power](#) and related resources online.



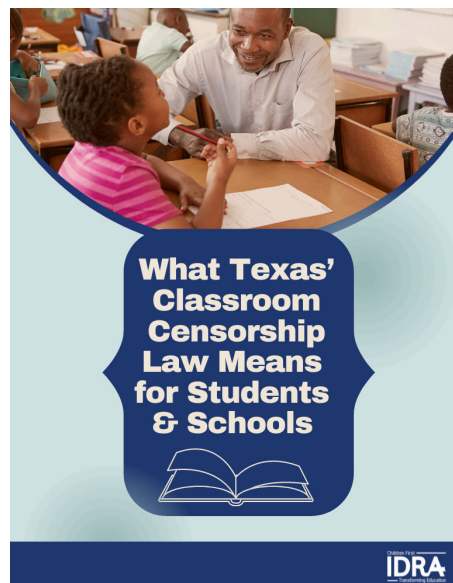
How Texas' Newest Censorship Bill Applies to School Activities

By Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., & Irene Gómez, Ed.M.

New Guide to Texas Censorship Bill

Texas' new school censorship laws are in effect. School districts, universities and state agencies began interpreting school censorship laws (Senate Bill 3 and prior House Bill 3979) at the start of this school year, making sweeping censorship judgments on instructional materials, programs, and even research studies that relate to race, racism and racial justice.

IDRA's detailed guide of the law contains analysis and our interpretation for how components of the law affect teachers and school personnel and what this means for continuing to teach the truth in schools. Educators should still consult with their district administration for local policies and procedures related to instruction, curriculum and school activities.



See Texas SB 3 School Guide



Today's Attacks on Students' Civil Rights Echo Earlier Attacks on Bilingual Education

by Dr. Lizdelia Piñón

The current attack on curriculum and on diversity, equity & inclusion initiatives is not new. About 20 years ago, we had a similar attack to ban bilingual education in several states and weaken it virtually everywhere else. "English only" groups organized in cities, counties and states proclaiming that English should be the "official language." This small, vocal minority showed up at school boards and demanded to be heard, much like we are seeing today.

Twenty years earlier, the U.S. Congress passed several laws that guaranteed citizens' access to essential public documents in languages other than English. And an essential U.S. Supreme Court ruling emphasized that schools must protect the civil rights of emergent bilingual students by taking appropriate steps to serve them.

Research shows that bilingual learning can mean higher cognitive function, better scores and grades, increased language proficiency, and higher graduation rates and college enrollment. And research by [Collier & Thomas](#) (2009) demonstrates that bilingual classrooms promote equity in education and help narrow achievement gaps.

So again, as the nation continues to debate the role of race in society, a radical, vocal minority is determined to turn our classrooms into combat zones for their fierce culture wars. They use social media to spread misleading information, just like the "English Only" proponents did through speeches and articles two decades ago.

The debates that are currently sweeping across our nation are attacking the Civil Rights Act. They are hurting all students, but most intentionally, they are harming students of color. As educators, parents and advocates, we cannot allow decades of hard civil rights work, intentionally designed to close achievement gaps, to be disrupted by this loud minority.

Show up at the school board meetings and speak up. Be a strong, accurate social media presence and share the truth! As [Gloria Anzaldua states](#): "Do work that matters; Vale la pena."

Fighting Classroom Censorship in Georgia

By Terrence Wilson, J.D.

Analysis of New Bills

Over the last two years, we have seen an increase in censorship legislation across the nation. Georgia is not an exception. These bills target historically marginalized groups, students of color and LGBTQ+ students, by removing literature and curricula that reflect and affirm their lived experiences.

Georgia Coalition Against Classroom Censorship
HB 888, HB 1084, SB 375 & SB 377 Seek to Censor Classroom Conversations and Strip Funding from Georgia Students

Summary: HB 888, HB 1084, SB 375, and SB 377 censor the adoption of resources, curricula, and materials that represent marginalized, diverse, and global perspectives. As a result, the bills seek to strip funding from schools to engage students with the realities of systemic racism and oppression in the country. Additionally, the bills further restrict school resources and allow for up to a 20% state funding penalty for schools that are believed to have violated provisions of the law. The bills target an estimated 100,000 students in 1,000 schools across the state.

What Could These Bills Do?

What these bills could do	HB 888	HB 1084	SB 375	SB 377
Clarify legislative findings that deny the historical and cultural context of the state.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.
Strip funding from schools that do not comply with the findings of the bills.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.	Does not contain this provision.
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Partnership with IDRA, February 1, 2023

Currently, there are five bills filed with the Georgia State Legislature that seek to censor classrooms and limit the educational freedom all children are entitled to. Four of those bills specifically apply to classroom materials: HB88, HB1084, SB375, and SB377. See our comparative analysis of these bills and their implications for our students.

[See bill comparison of classroom censorship bills](#)

Georgia Coalition Against Classroom Censorship Statement

Georgia’s students deserve the right to a diverse education that not only equips them for an increasingly diverse world but also uplifts and affirms the lived experiences of those students who have been historically marginalized. The Georgia legislature will hear bills that would violate that right by censoring educators and classrooms across the state from discussing the realities of systemic racism and oppression in the United States. IDRA joined several organizations across Georgia to issue a statement in opposition to these policies. Join us in defending students’ rights.

Members of the Georgia Coalition Against Classroom Censorship include:

- American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia
- Deep Center
- Georgia Youth Justice Coalition
- Intercultural Development Research Association
- Public Education Matters Georgia
- Southern Education Foundation
- SPLC Action Fund

[See the coalition statement](#)

Advocacy Tools

Lessons Learned from our Classroom Censorship Advocacy

We actively opposed classroom censorship policies, including leading a large coalition in Texas, participating in national strategy meetings, and working with partners to oppose bills filed in Georgia. As our fellow advocacy organizations continue to fight against classroom censorship in their states and communities, our hope is that the lessons we learned and tools we used in our advocacy can help support others' inclusive, community-centered work.



[See Advocacy Guide \(PDF\)](#)



Building Supportive Schools from the Ground Up

IDRA's report highlights how school districts can use federal funds to invest in strategies that ensure culturally-sustaining schools for all students. The strategies were identified during IDRA's community sessions with young people, families, advocates and other education experts.

[See Report PDF](#)

Children First

IDRA

Transforming Education

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.

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