



IDRA Public Comments to the Texas House Higher Education Committee, Submitted August 18, 2026

Aligning Advising Initiatives: Examine investments by the state in advising systems and tools that support high school and college course planning, credential attainment, and successful transitions to postsecondary education and the workforce. Evaluate partnership based models that leverage postsecondary and labor market research and available data aligned to high-wage and high-demand careers and expand advising capacity. Assess opportunities for the Tri-Agency to better align resources and services to strengthen advising systems and improve student outcomes.

Chairman Wilson and Members,

Early and consistent advising is one of the key strategies to ensure students are prepared for successful transitions to college, careers and beyond. However, research shows that school counselors' capacity to effectively advise students in middle and high school is severely constrained and educators often do not have strong family engagement initiatives in place to make parents their partners in advising. As a result, students end up with little understanding about how to be best prepared for college pathways.

IDRA has conducted several recent studies on barriers to college access, including related to academic pathways, advising, and the state's new restrictions on diversity, equity and inclusion. Recommendations from this research are below.

In IDRA's 2026 report, *Staying on Course When Schools Steer Clear: A Community-Based Study on the Impacts of Texas' Diversity Policy Change on High School Students and Tools to Expand their College Pathways*, the team spoke with over 90 Texas students, parents and educators about the impacts of diversity restrictions on college access opportunities. The report recommends the following.

1. Invest in early and robust college advising through counselor training, targeting investments in advising programs and staff, and broadening engagement strategies with educators and families to increase capacity.
2. Ensure students can access rigorous college-preparatory coursework early, such as through dual enrollment, dual credit, and AP and IB classes. Starting in middle school and continuing through high school, K-12 school systems must ensure that students are counseled into advanced graduation plans, college-preparatory pathways and coursework like advanced math (e.g., Algebra I in eighth grade).

3. Require and support information to families in multiple languages. Language access is a key component for parent and family engagement in early advising conversations.

The IDRA college access study page with toolkits, brief and reports here: <https://idra.news/CollegeAccessStudy>. More resources are available on IDRA Ready Texas study webpage: https://www.idra.org/research_articles/ready-texas/

Thank you for your consideration to ensure every Texas student has effective early advising to support their pathways toward college and beyond.