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## **Testimony of IDRA on Senate SB1622 by Senator Van de Putte Before the Texas Senate Education Committee, April 6, 2011**

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Dr. Adela Solís and I am a senior education associate at the Intercultural Development Research Association, also known as IDRA. IDRA is a non-profit 501c3 research, training and technical assistance organization established in 1973 that is dedicated to strengthening public schools to work for all children.

Our organization has extensive experience with issues related to limited-English-proficient students dating back to our involvement in helping frame state policies that became the *Texas Bilingual Education Act* adopted in 1981. The state of Texas has implemented relatively effective elementary school level programs for its LEP students. Data suggest that, while the achievement gap between LEP students and non-LEP students has not been closed, it is far smaller than the great differences in achievement we see between LEP and non-LEP students at the secondary level. (See exhibit below for LEP performance levels by grade level on TAKS in 2010.)

Our review of SB1622 indicates that the proposed changes to the secondary level program related requirements would help to **greatly strengthen** secondary level ESL programs currently serving LEP in Texas public schools. When the state guidelines for the state's secondary level programs for ELLs were first drafted, we knew much less than we now know about the types of instructional programs and related staff development that would be most effective for meeting the needs of students at the middle and high school level. After decades of working with school districts to improve instructional services to ELL students in the middle and high school level, we have come to recognize that the existing state policies need substantial updating and upgrading. SB1622 provides the framework to help guide those improvements, particularly as it relates to staff development for educators – including administrators and content area teachers serving our ELL students. State TAKS data point to that need for improvement.

In an analysis of how secondary schools would be rated using PBMAS criteria applied on a school campus level, IDRA found that:

- For 87 school districts rated at Stage 0 (requiring no intervention), 84 schools that would have been classified as Stage 1A, 18 schools at Stage 1B, and 18 schools at Stage 2 with most being middle and high school level campuses
- For 157 school districts categorized at Stage 1A, 53 schools that met the criteria for Stage 1B, and another 18 that would have been rated at Stage 2 – with the same observation that the majority were either middle or high school campuses.
- For 87 districts rated at Stage 1B, 44 schools would have been rated at Stage 2 with the same pattern of over-representation of secondary level schools uncovered.

For these reasons, we conclude that SB1622 moves the state in the direction needed to correct flaws in the current secondary level LEP program requirements.

<b>IDRA Analyses: LEP Student Performance on the TAKS 2010, Grades 3-11</b>					
<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Mathematics – Percent Met Standard</b>	<b>Reading – Percent Met Standard</b>	<b>Writing – Percent Met Standard</b>	<b>Science – Percent Met Standard</b>	<b>Social Studies – Percent Met Standard</b>
3	88%	83%			
4	85%	73%	87%		
5	84%	75%		72%	
6	66%	59%			
7	61%	53%	80%		
8	66%	69%		39%	82%
9	41%	59%			
10	41%	50%		30%	71%
11	61%	53%		58%	86%

*Source: Texas Education Agency Lone Star Website 3/28/2011*

<b>Campus-Level Designation Based on PBMAS Standards Applied at the School District Level, 2007</b>				
<b>District Stage Designation 2007 – TEA</b>	<b>Campus Level Analyses – Designations</b>	<b>Campus Level Analyses – Designations</b>	<b>Campus Level Analyses – Designations</b>	<b>Campus Level Analyses – Designations</b>
	<b>Stage 1A</b>	<b>Stage 1B</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>
<b>Stage 0 (87)</b>	84	58	18	0
<b>Stage 1 A (157)</b>	89	53	18	0
<b>Stage 1 B (87)</b>	122	107	44	2
<b>Stage 2 (29)</b>	48	55	47	
<b>Stage 3 (21)</b>	34	37	8	24

IDRA is an independent, private non-profit organization, directed by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., dedicated to strengthening public schools to work for all children. As a vanguard leadership development and research team for more than three decades, IDRA has worked with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities. IDRA conducts research and development activities, creates, implements and administers innovative education programs and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance.