



## Focus: The Census Effect

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# The 2020 Census is Here – Schools Should be Active

by Bricio Vasquez, Ph.D.

This spring, families and individuals across the country will complete the 2020 Census form. Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau counts every person living in the United States, including unauthorized immigrants. The results determine how many representatives each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next decade. And, critically, the census results determine the allocation of \$675 billion in federal funding for public schools and universities.

With just a few phrases in the U.S. Constitution, the founders created a monumental undertaking leading to the creation of the Census Bureau. Local untrained U.S. Marshals conducted the first census by hand in 1790. A century later, the 1890 census used a newly-invented electromechanical tabulating machine with punch cards, cutting the tabulation time from eight years to six weeks. The first census by mail did not take place until 1960.

### First Online Census Form

Individuals can complete the census form by phone or mail and, this year for the first time in its history, people can complete the census form online as well. Between March 12 and March 20, households will receive information on how to complete the census form online, using their unique ID.

However, the digital census form presents a new challenge since millions of people across the country lack internet access. According to the

American Community Survey, 18% of households have no internet access of any kind.

Schools and libraries have a significant opportunity to help people fill out the census form using school computers and community education centers. Many Texas school districts plan to set up census centers where community members can access their form or get assistance completing it.

### Census Will Not Ask About Citizenship

The 2020 Census was struck with controversy last year. The Trump Administration decided to add a question about whether or not respondents are U.S. citizens, a question that would have put education resources at risk for millions of Americans. IDRA submitted written comments to the U.S. Department of Commerce stating the census form should not include a question about citizenship (IDRA, 2019). The proposed question was deeply concerning because immigrant communities feared the census could be used as a tool for targeted oppression and deportation of unauthorized immigrants living in the United States.

In the summer of 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the addition of the citizenship question for the 2020 Census, though it did not prohibit inclusion of the question in the future. The Supreme Court sent the *Department of Commerce* (cont. on Page 2)

*With the critical importance of the 2020 Census to education, IDRA co-chairs the education subcommittee of Texas Counts, a collaboration of nonprofit organizations mobilizing complete count efforts across the state.*

**Be sure you're on IDRA's email list for new resources for teaching students online and virtual teacher training coming soon!**

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(The 2020 Census is Here, continued from Page 1)

*v. New York* case back down to the lower court for further review. The Census Bureau printed the census forms without the citizenship question.

But some damage had already been done. Considering heightened enforcement efforts by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the citizenship question controversy instilled fear of the census questionnaire among many in the Latino and immigrant communities.

Schools should understand and communicate to their students and parents that the census is confidential. The Census Bureau is bound by law to protect personal information and cannot release it to law enforcement or other government agencies.

### Support by States

State governments usually allocate state resources toward getting a full and accurate count, particularly because they benefit significantly from accurate counts. For example, California allocated upward of \$187 million to its complete count effort. Across the U.S. South, where the percentage of people in each state who did not self-respond to the 2010 Census ranged from 19% to 25%, five states allocated funds for complete count efforts: Alabama, \$1,240,000; Georgia, \$3,750,886; Mississippi, \$400,000; North Carolina, \$1,500,000, pending; and Virginia, \$1,500,000 (NCSL, 2020).

And 10 of the 11 states in the U.S. South established their own complete count committees or commissions. Texas – the second largest state in the country – did not allocate funds and did not establish a complete count committee (NCSL, 2020).

According to the Texas Demographic Center, “An undercount of the Texas population of just 1%

## Potential Challenges to an Accurate Census Count

**New Digital Census:** Since not everyone has digital access, there are significant gaps in access between White adults and Black and Hispanic adults as well as between rural and non-rural residents. People can complete the census form on paper or by phone as well.

**Citizenship Fears:** The debate over inclusion of the citizenship question can lead to fear and distrust even though the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the question for the 2020 Census.

**Reduced Outreach:** Congress decided to spend less per household than for the 2010 count. This means there will be fewer in-person outreach efforts and fewer local census offices, field staff and field tests for the 2020 Census. The largest impact likely will be among groups considered “hard-to-count.”

**Data Security Concerns:** Apprehension about the security and confidentiality of data could be elevated with the new digital form. The Census Bureau is taking steps to protect data it collects, and the law requires the Census Bureau to protect personal information.

could translate to a loss of \$300 million in federal funding for the state and Texans” to support housing, transportation, education, health and other services that “directly improve the quality of life for all Texans” (2020).

While Texas invested relatively little in its complete count effort, nonprofit organizations, including IDRA, have collaborated to form an unofficial, statewide complete count committee for Texas. IDRA co-chairs the education subcommittee. Participants’ connections help bring individuals together to communicate the importance of the census and to mobilize efforts across the state, particularly in communities deemed “hard to count.”

Hard-to-count populations include young chil-  
(cont. on Page 7)

*“An undercount of the Texas population of just 1% could translate to a loss of \$300 million in federal funding for the state and Texans.”*

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. 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.

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# They grow up so fast.

## Now's your chance to shape their future.



**A kindergartener counted in the 2020 Census this spring will be starting high school when the next census comes around in 2030: That's 10 years of school supplies, teachers, school lunches, and so much more. This is your opportunity to help ensure they have a bright future.**

Right now, students across the country are getting an introduction to the 2020 Census through the Statistics in Schools program. This program offers free activities and resources to schools to help prepare their students for an increasingly data-driven world.

Students are learning that the 2020 Census is a count of every person who lives in the United States and its territories. Responding to the census helps your community get its fair share of funding. Census data guides how more than \$675 billion in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year for schools, health care facilities, roads, transportation, recreation centers, social services, and more.

**Students are also learning these key things about the 2020 Census—and we want you to know them too:**

- Starting in March 2020, everyone living in your home needs to be counted. That includes children and newborn babies, citizens and noncitizens, relatives and nonrelatives, and even those staying with you temporarily.
- It's easier than ever to respond to the census. You can respond in 13 different languages, and you can complete it online, by phone, or by mail.
- Your responses to the census are safe and secure. The law requires the U.S. Census Bureau to keep your information confidential, and your responses cannot be used against you in any way.

**You have the power to shape your future, and the future of all children, by counting everyone in your home in the 2020 Census.**

Learn more about how you can shape your future at **2020CENSUS.GOV**.

Get more information about the Statistics in Schools program at **CENSUS.GOV/SCHOOLS**.



Shape  
your future  
START HERE >

United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census  
2020**

**This flier and other resources for schools and communities are available for sharing at <https://www.idra.org/census>**



# Los niños crecen tan rápido.

Ahora es su oportunidad para darle forma a su futuro.



Un niño de kínder que se cuente en el Censo del 2020 estará comenzando la escuela secundaria cuando llegue el próximo censo en el 2030. Eso equivale a 10 años de artículos escolares, maestros, almuerzos escolares y mucho más. Esta es su oportunidad de ayudar a garantizar que los niños tengan un futuro brillante.

En este momento, los estudiantes a través de todo el país están aprendiendo sobre el Censo del 2020 por medio del programa Estadísticas en las Escuelas. Este programa ofrece materiales y recursos gratuitos a las escuelas para ayudar a preparar a los estudiantes a vivir en un mundo cada vez más orientado a los datos.

Los estudiantes están aprendiendo que el Censo del 2020 es el conteo de todas las personas que viven en los Estados Unidos y en sus territorios. Responder al formulario del censo ayuda a que su comunidad reciba los fondos que necesita. Los resultados del censo ayudan a determinar como más de \$675 mil millones en fondos federales se distribuyen cada año a los estados y comunidades para escuelas, clínicas de salud y hospitales, carreteras, transporte público, centros de recreación, servicios sociales y más.

Los estudiantes también están aprendiendo estos puntos clave sobre el Censo del 2020, y queremos que usted también los conozca:

- A partir de marzo del 2020, se debe contar a todas las personas que vivan en su hogar. Eso incluye a los niños y a los bebés recién nacidos, ciudadanos de los EE. UU. y no ciudadanos, familiares y no familiares, e incluso aquellos que se quedan con usted de manera temporal.
- Es más fácil que nunca responder al censo. Puede responder en 13 idiomas diferentes y puede llenar el formulario por internet, por teléfono o por correo.
- Sus respuestas al censo son seguras y están a salvo. La ley le exige a la Oficina del Censo de los EE. UU. que mantenga su información confidencial y sus respuestas no pueden ser usadas de ninguna manera en su contra.

**Usted tiene el poder de darle forma a su futuro y al futuro de nuestros niños al contar a todos en su hogar en el Censo del 2020.**

**Aprenda más sobre cómo puede ayudar a darle forma a su futuro en [2020CENSUS.GOV/ES](https://2020CENSUS.GOV/ES).**

**Obtenga más información sobre el programa de Estadísticas en las Escuelas en [CENSUS.GOV/SCHOOLS](https://CENSUS.GOV/SCHOOLS).**



Dale forma  
a tu futuro  
EMPIEZA AQUÍ >

United States  
**Census  
2020**

**Este volante y otros recursos para escuelas y comunidades están disponibles para compartir en el siguiente enlace: <https://www.idra.org/census>**

# President's Proposed Federal Budget Would Cut Education Funding and Programs

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

In February 2020, President Donald Trump released a proposed federal budget for the 2021 fiscal year. The proposed budget, which is subject to congressional approval and adoption, reduces funding for the U.S. Department of Education by about \$5.6 billion. Total federal spending on elementary, secondary and post-secondary programs would decrease by 7.8% to \$66.6 billion.

Much of the federal money for education is allocated through formulae based on population counts. It is critical that population surveys, including the 2020 Census, count people accurately. If state and federal governments do not know the number of students and families who live in a particular school district and the needs of the people in that community, they cannot apportion funds or implement effective programming.

Accuracy is particularly important when policymakers are keen to cut funding and adopt strategies that decentralize important spending decisions. President Trump's proposed budget does both through significant changes to many educational funding programs.

## Consolidation of Federal K-12 Funding Programs

The proposed budget would have a significant negative impact on the K-12 federal funding structure, both in terms of the amount of money spent on elementary and secondary education and the way states use those funds.

Much of the funding cuts come from proposed changes in Title I funding. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act allocates funds to states to supplement programs for students from low-income families and school districts with concentrations of students from low-income families. The funds address gaps in resources that impact schools' abilities to serve students equitably.

President Trump's proposed budget combines the Title I funding program with 28 other federal K-12 education grant programs into a single block grant called the Elementary and Secondary Education for the Disadvantaged Block Grant (ESED). In its description of ESED, the Department of Education cited the need to "empower states and districts to decide how to best use federal funds," "reduce the federal role in state and local education systems," and reduce federal staffing and administrative costs.

ESED would cut K-12 education spending through the 29 impacted programs by \$4.7 billion. By combining these programs into one large formula grant, significant funding allocation power would shift to states.

In addition to Title I funds, consolidation of grant programs would impact funding that supports students experiencing homelessness, family engagement centers, and English language acquisition programs, among others. The reduced funding would no longer be targeted to these specific programs through the current programs' specific formulae or competitive distribution methods. Allocations to states and school districts would be based on Title I formulae.

Proponents of program consolidation argue that allowing states and school districts to issue funding will ensure the most efficient use of funds. They claim differences in student performance as a result of changing resources will be identified and addressed through existing reporting and accountability systems. But accountability systems often do not accurately capture important measures of student success, school and student needs, and district health. They are not the best method for making funding decisions and evaluating programmatic success.

And there are real concerns with combining and eliminating targeted programs and the associated

*(cont. on Page 6)*

*We must increase federal funding for schools, target monies appropriately, and use federal tools to urge states to invest in schools. This is a critical part of ensuring excellent and equitable schools for all students.*

(President's Proposed Federal Budget Would Cut, continued from Page 5)

rules governing the distribution of funds. These changes could threaten the specific and intentional dedication of funds to the programs and student populations who need them most.

### Expanding Diversion of Public Education Funds

President Trump's proposed budget emphasizes "school choice" by expanding access and funding for vouchers and similar programs. The budget includes specific funding to expand Education Freedom Scholarships with a \$5 billion annual program that would give tax credits to individuals and businesses that donate money to private scholarship funds. Some of those funds use the money to provide "scholarships" for students to attend private schools, including religious institutions.

The tax credit program would essentially function as an indirect voucher system, using public funds to provide a tax benefit to those who support private schools.

### Proposals for Other Key Programs

The Trump administration's budget keeps funding for the national network of education equity centers, which includes the IDRA EAC-South. The U.S. Department of Education funds the centers under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They provide assistance in the areas of race, gender, national origin, and religion to public school districts to promote equal educational opportunities.

However, the administration's budget proposes changes to several other key programs that impact students and their families. It would end subsidized federal student loans for post-secondary education and eliminate the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which provides loan forgiveness for people, like teachers, who engage in important public service work for more than 10 years. Simultaneously, the proposed budget increases funding by \$900 million for vocational programs in high schools that funnel students away from college and into the workforce.

The proposal also reduces the Federal Work-Study Program, cuts funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), eliminates the National Endowment for the Humanities, and eliminates Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, which provide need-based grant aid to students for post-secondary education.

## Watching the Courts as They Consider the Next Voucher Case

by Morgan Craven, J.D.

In January, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a school voucher-related case, *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*. The plaintiffs, three Montana families, sued the Montana Department of Revenue after it placed limits on a state program that gave dollar-for-dollar tax credits to people who donated to private scholarship funds.

Because some of the scholarships were used to support students who attended religious schools, the Montana Department of Revenue determined that providing tax credits for those particular donations violated the state's constitutional ban on giving state aid to religious schools or churches. The department prohibited use of the scholarships at religious schools.

The issue before the U.S. Supreme Court now is whether it is a violation of the religion and equal protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution for a state to invalidate a financial aid

program that happens to provide support for students who choose to attend religious schools. The Trump administration supports the Montana program and similar tax credit programs and even proposed a similar \$5 billion annual federal program.

Voucher systems, even indirect ones that provide tax credits rather than direct financial support to families, divert critical public funds away from public schools. Instead of providing resources to public schools for programs, infrastructure and facilities support, and much-needed personnel, schemes that allow private use of public money diminish already-stretched resources. IDRA and others across the country will continue to monitor and weigh in on legislation and litigation that impact fair school funding for public schools.

Morgan Craven, J.D., is the IDRA national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement. Comments and questions may be directed to her via email at [morgan.craven@idra.org](mailto:morgan.craven@idra.org).

The proposed dismantling of critical federal programs could threaten access to resources for the schools and students that need them most. The proposed cuts in education funding would be disastrous for the economy that relies on having top-quality schooling for all students. We must increase federal funding for schools, target monies appropriately, and use federal tools to urge states to invest in schools. This is a critical part of ensuring excellent and equitable schools for all students.

### Resources

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dren, highly-mobile persons, people of color, non-English speakers, economically disadvantaged families, persons experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants, persons who distrust the government, LGBTQ individuals, people with mental or physical disabilities, and persons who do not live in traditional housing.

In April 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will attempt to count over 320 million people in the United States. This decennial count is more than just an administrative task. It is central to the nation's continued democracy. In addition to determining how many members each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives for the next decade, the census will determine allocation of billions of dollars in federal funds used for critical programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program; special education grants; and subsidized housing vouchers.

Most of the nation's states recognize what is at stake if the census undercounts their populations. Schools are particularly vulnerable to the funding shortfalls if there is an undercount. Educators and community groups can help spread the word on the importance of the census and help dispel myths on the decennial count. To help tool your advocacy, see the box at right with resources to equip you in your census conversations with others in your community.

## Resources

IDRA. (June 27, 2019). IDRA Statement on Education Impact of Supreme Court Decision Blocking Citizenship Question on 2020 Census. San Antonio, Texas: IDRA.

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## What Schools Can Do for the 2020 Census Effort

### Share Information

Share fact-based information in the major languages of your community. Use the multiple communication tools available: district and school websites, fliers in student backpacks, open house events, parent-teacher conferences, district apps, automated notification system emails, print and digital newsletters, social media, video channels, etc. See some resources here:

- **Important dates for the 2020 Census**  
<https://2020census.gov/en/important-dates>
- **What is asked and sample 2020 Census form**  
<https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions>
- **How to respond to the 2020 Census**  
<https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond>
- **Promotional materials and guides**  
<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/promo-print-materials.html>
- **Counting young children in the 2020 Census**  
<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/counting-children-2020.html>

### Facilitate Access to the Online Form


Open up your computer lab or other space for school, families and community members to complete their online forms. Have someone available to answer questions and provide assistance.

### Bring the Census into the Classroom

Statistics in Schools is a Census Bureau program that uses census statistics and resources to create classroom activities and materials. The activities and materials boost students' statistical literacy, better prepare them for a data-driven world, and enhance their learning in many subjects. New SIS activities designed specifically for the 2019-20 school year spotlight the 2020 Census and the importance of making sure everyone is counted, especially children. <https://www.census.gov/schools>

### Connect with Local Census Partner Organizations

See the initiatives in your community (such as Texas Counts <http://texascounts.org>) and how you can play a role. <https://2020census.gov/en/partners.html>



**In Texas...**

The 2010 Census.. **#Census2020**

should have counted **102,406**

additional children under age 5.

Our undercount has cost us...

**\$118,893,366**

**every year** in funding from just five of the many federally funded programs for children and families.

Say #CountMeIn to #CountAllKids in 2020 and help us spread the word.

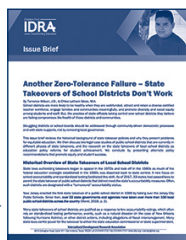
*Focus: The Census Effect*

## Listen to the IDRA Classnotes Podcast

### Latest Episode

For several decades, some states have used the threat of taking over a school district to force some kind of change. But this isn't a new trend. Since 1989, at least 22 state governments and agencies have taken over more than 100 local public school districts across the country. In this episode, hear a quick history of school takeover policies and the problems they create that hinder equitable education.

See our new issue brief: **Another Zero-Tolerance Failure – State Takeovers of School Districts Don't Work.**



[www.idra.org/Podcasts](http://www.idra.org/Podcasts) • Also available on Spotify!

### Classnotes Podcast #200

## School District Takeovers History and Today

A quick history of school takeover policies and describe the problems they create that hinder equitable education.

Featuring  
Ana Ramón talks with Terrence Wilson, J.D., and Chloe Latham Sikes, M.A.

<https://idra.news/Pod200>



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*achieving equal educational opportunity for every child  
through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college*