



Association of Mexican American Educators Journal

A peer-reviewed, open access journal

Volume 13 Issue 3

2019

AMAE Invited Special Issue

Education, Law and the Courts: Communities in the Struggle
for Equality and Equity in Public Education

Guest Editors

E. Diane Torres-Velásquez
The University of New Mexico

David G. Hinojosa
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Cristóbal Rodríguez
Howard University

Marissa Bono
*VIA Metropolitan Transit, Formerly with Mexican
American Legal Defense and Educational Fund*

Editors

Patricia Sánchez
The University of Texas at San Antonio

Antonio J. Camacho
AMAE, Inc.

Associate Editors

Julie L. Figueroa
Sacramento State

Lucila D. Ek
The University of Texas at San Antonio

**A Unique Blend of Research, Policy, Practice and Engagement to Impact Public
Education for All Students**

Celina Moreno, J.D.

María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

&

Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.

Intercultural Development Research Association

Abstract

The Intercultural Development Research Association, founded in 1973, is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education along six paths: fair funding, sound educational practices, valuing students, valuing educators, valuing families and systems change. The organization has done so by uniquely crossing borders of policy, research, practice and community engagement to transform education by putting children first. The following article reviews how IDRA drives critical paths to transform education. The authors tell the story of how these paths have developed over time to push for fair funding, which was IDRA’s founding issue and continues to be a central focus; promote sound educational practices through professional and curriculum development; model valuing of students particularly as demonstrated through the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership program; support educators in excelling as asset-based teachers and catalysts for student success; and focus family engagement on leadership in education for transforming policy and practice for their neighborhood public schools. These interrelated paths are woven into IDRA’s change model: The Quality Schools Action Framework. This framework is a tool for strengthening the capacity of public schools to affect systems change to graduate and prepare all students for college.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24974/amae.13.3.452>

In December 1968, five years before the founding of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), over 60 witnesses lined up in San Antonio to present testimony before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights about the status of Mexican Americans in the U.S. Southwest. The commission dedicated two of the five days to education and, in particular, to inequities in school funding. Dr. José A. Cárdenas, who would later launch IDRA, and Mr. Aurelio Montemayor, who joined IDRA in 1975, testified. The hearings marked a pivotal moment that raised public consciousness about the many challenges students faced in schools. The commission concluded that school systems had neglected to recognize the rich culture and traditions of students and had failed to establish policies, programs and practices that would enable students to participate fully in the benefits of the educational process.

While much has changed over the years, students of color and poor children today are far more likely than their White and more affluent peers to be assigned to classrooms with less qualified teachers and fewer opportunities to prepare for and take college preparatory courses. Educational segregation is on the rise (Meatto, 2019; Orfield, Frankenberg, Ee, & Ayscue, 2019). It does not have to be this way. Research and experience show that by providing a high-quality education for all students, we can leverage opportunity if we know where and how to invest. The good news: We do know. When it comes to transforming education, we do not need to take wild guesses; many educators have already shown what works.

IDRA's work over almost five decades is a testament to what is possible. The mission of this independent, non-profit organization is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education along six paths: fair funding, sound educational practices, valuing students, valuing educators, valuing families and systems change. The organization has done so by uniquely crossing borders of policy, research, practice and community engagement to transform education by putting children first (Robledo Montecel & Montemayor, 2018a; 2018b, 2018c). Following are brief reviews of how IDRA drives critical paths to transform education.

The Path for Fair Funding

It is not possible to have an excellent education for all students if education does not have funding equity. To be effective, schools must have quality teaching, curriculum quality and access, student engagement, and parent and community engagement (Robledo Montecel &

Goodman, 2010). In this country, each state determines its own funding system for education. When states fail to provide sufficient funds, they leave many schools without the tools they need to be successful.

Dr. Cárdenas stated in his book, *Texas School Finance Reform – An IDRA Perspective*: “A more equitable funding system provides a stronger fiscal foundation for equality of educational opportunity” (1997a). In public education, money makes a difference. Equity in school finance means “equal treatment of equals” or ensuring that schools have equitable amounts of money to educate students, including taking into account that students with different needs require different levels of funding to address those needs. Without equity in education, there can be no excellence. Back when the World Trade Center in New York City became the tallest building in the world, and the nation watched the Watergate hearings, the Edgewood school district in San Antonio was in dire economic circumstances as were many of its sister Texas school districts. Parents wanted to know why their children’s school district could not do more to fix old, partially condemned school buildings, buy enough books or hire high-quality teachers like nearby school districts could. They came together to demand fair funding. A federal court agreed with their complaints and, in 1971, found the Texas school funding system unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment.

But in March 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court disagreed. It ruled that, while the Texas’ system of funding schools was indeed “chaotic and unjust,” education is not a fundamental right under the U.S. Constitution (*San Antonio ISD v. Rodríguez*, 1973). Since the *Rodríguez* case, advocates across the country seeking school funding equity have asked state courts to declare education a fundamental right under their respective state constitutions. One month after the *Rodríguez* ruling, Dr. Cárdenas left the Edgewood superintendency to create a San Antonio-based organization that would inform Texans about the serious school finance inequities. The new non-profit, Texans for Educational Excellence, took on its new name a year and a half later, becoming IDRA. From the beginning, IDRA participated in each Texas reform study group, attended each session of the Texas legislature, provided testimony during litigation in the state courts, and provided research and strategic technical assistance to policymakers and advocacy groups (Brischetto, 1973; Romero, 2001).

In 1975, the Texas Legislature reformed the school funding system, creating equalization aid and additional funding for bilingual/English as second language (ESL) and compensatory

education programs (HB 1126). IDRA provided research and technical assistance to policymakers and advocated more equity in funding. IDRA also launched a statewide information campaign on the issue (Cortez, 2004). Two years later, faced with the need to make school funding more equitable, the Legislature adjusted the equalized funding mechanism and tripled equalization aid (SB 1). IDRA provided research and technical assistance to policymakers and advocated for specific measures for equitable funding (Cortez, 1977; Foxworth, 2000; Lester, 1977; Montemayor, 1996; Villarreal & Cárdenas, 1981). In 1981, the Legislature increased equalization aid by 25% (HB 1).

As the Legislature considered making major reforms in education including more funding in exchange for more accountability, in 1984, IDRA provided expert testimony on the need for greater equity, more targeted funding for English learner, and low-income students, and more school-focused accountability. IDRA analyzed the impact of proposed reforms on funding equity and support for special population students (Bernal, 1984; IDRA, 1984). The Legislature adopted changes that year in HB 72, including standardized curricula; introduction of state testing and assessment-based accountability; pupil-based funding; and targeted funding for educating English learners and low-income students using weighted funding formulae. The Legislature increased equalization funding. But the reforms were not sufficient reflecting a lack of legislative action to seriously address inequities. This led advocates to launch a legal challenge that would become known as *Edgewood I*. IDRA convened legal and research experts to identify the right time for state litigation. IDRA also conducted extensive research on the extent of funding inequity and reforms needed and provided expert testimony at the state court trial (Cortez, 1984). On October 2, 1989, the Texas Supreme Court declared the state's school funding system inequitable and unconstitutional (Cárdenas, 1997a).

IDRA conducted equity analyses of the latest reforms, provided technical assistance to attorneys involved in the court case and provided expert testimony. IDRA supported legal efforts in presentations before the Texas Supreme Court (Cárdenas, 1991). After policymakers attempted to respond to the *Edgewood I* decision, the Texas Supreme Court ruled in *Edgewood II* (1991) that the revised funding system was unconstitutional because the state did not go far enough in changes to the system to achieve equity.

Wealthy school districts opposed consolidating tax bases that policymakers established for funding. Wealthy school districts lost advantages. They challenged the Texas school funding

system. IDRA provided testimony in the case verifying the greater equity that would have been achieved had the new county-based funding system stayed in place (Cortez, 1991). In *Edgewood III*, the Texas Supreme Court overturned the system stating that wealthy school districts needed to vote to agree to share property bases.

In 1993, the Legislature designed the new school funding system to reduce per-student disparities from several thousand dollars to less than \$700 (SB 7). IDRA provided technical assistance to policymakers and advocates on the impact of funding reforms and provided advice and analyses related to proposed litigation (Cortez, 1993; Cárdenas, 1997b). But disparities remained. In 1994, in *Edgewood IV*, equity advocates argued in court that the system did not go far enough to reduce gaps. IDRA provided technical assistance to assess school funding inequities left in the revised system and offered expert testimony in the case (Cortez, 1995). In 1995, the Texas Supreme Court ruled the Texas system of funding schools constitutional (Cárdenas, 1997a).

During the decade that followed, many schools began to reap the benefits from the state's work to equalize education funding for all of its children. Student achievement improved, taxpayers more equally shared the cost of paying for public schools, and businesses benefitted from better-prepared graduates. But in 2004 in the *West Orange-Cove* case, wealthy school districts challenged the "adequacy" of the existing funding system, leading legislators to back-track on their 1995 commitment to make the system equitable. IDRA provided technical assistance in assessing funding school inequities left in the revised system and provided expert testimony in the case (Cortez, 2006).

The Texas Supreme Court ruled in 2005 that the state of Texas did indeed provide funding for an adequate education since almost all systems managed to satisfy the state's accreditation requirements (overlooking the fact that, in Texas, if 50% of students in a grade level failed one or more of the state's assessments, a district could still be considered accredited). The court also ruled that once the state had met its minimum obligations to provide for a suitable education, local school systems could enrich their programs to a level approved by the state even if that meant a few school districts could obtain dramatically more money than most others.

The *West Orange-Cove* (2005) ruling required the state to modify the funding system to correct constitutional violations. The Legislature held a special session and passed HB I. Most

of the new funding was used for tax reductions and very little for actual increased spending. IDRA launched its Texans for Fair Funding initiative that showed how schools are funded, what was at stake, and what communities could do about it. The Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) co-led the website and initiative (Cortez, 2006).

In the early days of IDRA, advocates expected that once there was public knowledge about the alarming economic circumstances of hundreds of public school districts and hundreds of thousands of children, the Texas Legislature would do the right thing and close its funding gaps. Decades later, gaps between property-rich and -poor school districts have narrowed. But on the whole, inequities continue, augmented now by the state's reduced commitment to fund public education, its overreliance on local property tax revenue to fund schools, and its shift in funds to charter schools.

To make matters worse, in the spring of 2011, Texas lawmakers cut a whopping \$5.4 billion from public education. As a result, 12,000 teachers lost their jobs, class sizes swelled, and funding disparities ballooned. IDRA launched Fair Funding Now! with community roundtables in cities across the state. The initiative helped communities across the state get information and speak out against the state's funding cuts and stress their desire to guarantee that all children graduate ready for college and career (Robledo Montecel, 2011).

IDRA also conducted analyses and provided expert testimony in the largest school finance case in the state's history, *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Williams* (2014) consisting of over 600 public school districts and representing almost 4 million school children. IDRA provided research and expert testimony for the MALDEF lawsuit on the status of funding inequity and inadequate funding for poor and English learner students affecting all school districts (IDRA, 2015a; Cortez, 2012). IDRA also coordinated important amicus briefs on equity and why money matters.

While the district court ruled twice that Texas' inequitable school funding system was unconstitutional, the Texas Supreme Court in 2016 disagreed and said that, while the system was deeply flawed, it nevertheless passed constitutional muster. The court lowered legal standards of equity and adequacy. IDRA consulted with statewide groups and legislators, conducting analyses of the decision and its impact on the education of under-served children (IDRA, 2016b). By 2018, Texas had a funding gap of \$1,100 per student between the richest and poorest 5% of districts in Texas. That resource advantage translated to over \$1.1 million

for a school district serving 1,000 students. Dr. Marialena Rivera, the IDRA 2016 José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow, reported that Texas local school districts were responsible for funding over 90% of facilities with little or no state assistance (Rivera, 2017a; 2017b).

In 2018, the state's School Finance Commission held interim session hearings on school funding to inform the 2019 session. IDRA presented testimony on its research and analysis (Hinojosa, 2018). In 2019, the Texas legislature provided significant increases in school funding but left in place several features that perpetuate inequity (HB 3). IDRA collaborated with legislators and advocates, produced actionable data analyses and research briefs, and provided testimony related to the impact of HB 3 on English learners and students in school districts with low property wealth.

Policymakers adopted a new funding weight to increase funding for students in dual language programs, which serve English learners and non-English learners alike. However, only 20% of Texas' English learners are enrolled in dual language programs. The legislature did not increase the funding weight designated for educating the majority of English learners in other types of bilingual education or ESL programs. The state has not changed that weight since it was established in 1984 when, even then, research by IDRA and others showed the funding level was, at best, one-fourth of the level needed to ensure that English learners' educational civil rights were guaranteed.

In over four decades of litigation and legislation, the pendulum reached the height of school finance equity and balance in the early 1990s and then returned to a less equitable state of school finance in Texas (IDRA, 2019a; Cárdenas, 1994). This reflects a national swing in less political support for equitable public-school finance and a draining of the limited public monies to non-public schools. The path for fair funding has been a winding road with hills and valleys in Texas as it has in states across the country. The 2018 edition of *Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card*, released by the Education Law Center, again showed that public school funding in most states is unfair and inequitable, depriving millions of U.S. students the opportunity to succeed in school (Baker, Farrie, & Sciarra, 2018). A growing body of research shows that increased funding leads to better outcomes for students. Increases in spending in low-income districts in particular result in improved student achievement and narrow achievement gaps. Studies show that these benefits last into adulthood in the form of greater educational attainment, higher earnings, and lower rates of adult poverty.

The Path to Sound Educational Practices

Undereducation and inequities are clearly deeper than insufficient funds. While focusing on fair funding, IDRA also established multiple approaches to increase school compatibility with economic needs, culture, language, mobility, and societal perceptions of children and families. Rather than blaming students and families and expecting them to adapt to the school system, IDRA recognizes their assets. Adults, in schools and in public decision-making positions, are responsible for transforming school practices and policies so that all students have the opportunity to learn. Poor children and families do not cause schools to be poor. Rather, poor schools are caused by poor policies, poor educational practices, and inadequate investments (Bojorquez, 2019; Cárdenas & Cárdenas, 1977; Robledo Montecel & Goodman, 2010; Robledo Montecel, 2007).

Quality teaching must include “the logical acts of teaching (defining, demonstrating, modeling, explaining, correcting, etc.); the psychological acts of teaching (caring, motivating, encouraging, rewarding, punishing, planning, evaluating, etc.); and the moral acts of teaching (showing honesty, courage, tolerance, compassion, respect, fairness, etc.)” (Berliner, 2005; Cárdenas, 1995). Quality teaching uses sound educational practices with the support of transformational leaders at their schools and school districts. IDRA defines *transformational leaders* as those who support, articulate and advocate student rights and respect for cultural and linguistic differences. Leaders must first establish operational norms that are asset based and grounded in a philosophy like IDRA’s that “all students are valuable; none is expendable” (Avilés, 2018).

The relationship between high expectations and non-cognitive factors lies in (1) the assertion that all students are college material, and that (2) institutions must have the grit themselves to provide supports for all students instead of sending some down remediation pathways or non-college tracks (Bojorquez, 2014). When institutions rise up with high expectations to serve students, students rise to the challenge (Bojorquez, 2018).

Across all IDRA work and services, the asset or valuing lens permeates and provides singular focus (Avilés & Bojorquez, 2018). For example, in a major study about Latino students in a large urban area in the 1980s, IDRA discovered that if at least one adult in the school has the big picture of the student in mind and acts as mentor and counselor, that student will complete high school (Robledo Montecel, Cortez & Penny-Velasquez, 1989). And in 1986 when

Texas commissioned IDRA to conduct the state's first dropout study, IDRA provided more than numbers, although the numbers themselves were staggering. Up until 1986, Texas schools had not collected or reported any data related to high school dropouts. No one knew the reasons they left school, what it cost the state or what schools could do about it. IDRA was the first to answer those questions. IDRA found that in that year, 86,000 students had dropped out, costing \$17 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues and increased job training, unemployment, welfare, and criminal justice costs (Cárdenas, del Refugio Robledo, & Supik, 1986).

By 2018, time-series data indicated that Texas public schools had lost a cumulative total of more than 3.8 million students before high school graduation. Racial and ethnic gaps continue unabated. In 2017, Texas schools were still twice as likely to lose Latino students and Black students before they graduated compared to White students (Johnson, 2018). IDRA's first report identified existing dropout prevention programs, reviewed their effectiveness, and outlined policy reform recommendations. IDRA worked with policymakers and advocates in drafting policy reforms needed to address the study's findings. As a consequence, the state adopted HB 1010, which mandated counting and reporting of dropouts and implementation of dropout prevention efforts.

As a national resource, IDRA has set standards in the design, analysis, and application of timely and useful research involving diverse populations. IDRA's research and evaluation has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education, state education agencies, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, The Coca-Cola Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Houston Endowment, the Lilly Endowment, the National Science Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the U.S. Department of Justice, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This research informs IDRA's work with educators through training, technical assistance and evaluation in ways that further thinking and practice in the areas of bilingual teacher preparation, immigrant education, early childhood learning, educational policy, family and community engagement, and equity in education for all students.

For example, in 1999, IDRA led an Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) national study of effective programs serving English learner students around the United States (Robledo Montecel & Cortez, 2002). With the analysis and school

observations, IDRA identified 25 common characteristics and criteria that contribute to the success of students served by bilingual education programs, namely school indicators, student outcomes, leadership, support, and programmatic and instructional practices. That research led to IDRA's *Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English* rubric that is still used by schools around the country to help guide development or refinement of instructional programs for English learners in a variety of settings (Robledo Montecel, J. D. Cortez, A. Cortez, & Villarreal, 2002).

As the only organization in the country to operate an equity assistance center (EAC) for more than 40 years, IDRA has developed an in-depth understanding of the needs of special populations from preschool through college. For much of its history, IDRA served a five-state region in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity through its progression of federally funded desegregation and equity assistance centers rooted in the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Today, the IDRA EAC-South helps school districts in 11 states build capacity to confront educational problems occasioned by race, national origin, sex and gender, and religion. Through this center IDRA provides free or low-cost technical assistance to schools in federal Region II: Washington, D.C., Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The region includes 2,329 school districts, 28,628 schools, 2.2 million educators and 17.3 million students.

IDRA developed a school-based change approach on three planes—comprehensive, focused and general assistance—that have stood the test of time and remain in place today.

- The management of innovation requires an approach for training and technical assistance (comprehensive) that is labor intensive and designed to facilitate a multi-year process for school districts desiring broad transformation.
- Another assistance approach (focused) involves a campus-level, professional, or curriculum development process that is site-based and sustained over several school years.
- The third approach (general assistance), while consisting of one or a few days, is direct and on-site, giving information and also a taste for the highly participatory and adult-learning-based workshops that became the standard for the most effective IDRA professional development events.

In this work, IDRA developed the Six Goals of Educational Equity (Scott, 2002) to provide school personnel and communities a yardstick to measure their progress and galvanize meaningful change:

- Goal 1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes;
- Goal 2: Equitable access and inclusion;
- Goal 3: Equitable treatment;
- Goal 4: Equitable opportunity to learn;
- Goal 5: Equitable resources; and
- Goal 6: Accountability.

Drawing from its work in research and education policy reform, IDRA guided thousands of school districts to focus on educational opportunity as a fundamental responsibility and civil right for which all schools and districts are accountable. IDRA's professional development for teachers and principals builds leadership capacity that is sustainable. IDRA tailors its assistance to address each school's unique needs, including assessment, coaching and mentoring, classroom observations and demonstrations, online communities of practitioners, and collaborations with universities across the nation to improve teacher preparation.

IDRA has worked with thousands of classroom teachers to improve teaching quality in content areas, strengthen early childhood education, implement best practices for English learner instruction at all grades, reduce disproportionate school discipline, and integrate ethnic studies curriculum into content courses to name a few.

IDRA also provides coaching and mentoring support for district and campus leadership teams to help them polish their own skillsets that lead to effective delivery of high-quality deeper learning and evidence-based instruction. Principals examine their leadership skills, develop competencies, and take practical steps to raise student academic achievement through reflective practices. The driving factor in all of IDRA's work with educators, researchers and policymakers is the students and what is best for them and their opportunities to have an excellent and equitable education.

The Path of Valuing Students

Student engagement—a student's intellectual, social, and emotional connection to school—is a prerequisite to learning. The valued student experiences full participation in the school community. Teacher's high expectations of students to be intelligent and with potential

to go to college are self-fulfilling prophecies. Conversely, when students lack a sense of connection to teachers, school, and what they learn, students may feel there is little reason to remain (Jensen, 2003). That is especially true at key transition points or when students are struggling to stay on track. All too often, when students are struggling, schools give up on them. Valuing youth, without exception, turns this tendency on its head. Such a precept is critical in every classroom, every principal's office, and every statehouse. Fundamentally, public policy must be structured in ways that ensure equal access to education for all students.

IDRA advocates that schools and communities examine policies and practices to identify when they are beneficial and supportive for all children's learning and participation and when they are not. As policies change, IDRA works with schools and communities to examine the implications and impact. Often, they identify elements that need further attention by a legislature, governmental agencies or the courts.

A new era began in 1965, when Congress passed the most encompassing national education policy ever adopted: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Congress has reauthorized that law several times since then. The 2007 reauthorization, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), was particularly significant. IDRA presented testimony to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor about dropout prevention and student engagement strategies under consideration (Scott, 2002).

NCLB installed accountability measures that went far beyond previous acts with a focus on testing. The policy increased requirements for schools to engage with families with greater accountability for schools to inform families of their children's academic progress in schools receiving federal funds. Since that policy made data available on the progress of students in disaggregated categories (by race/ethnicity, gender, language status, etc.), communities had a new a means to hold their schools accountable for the success of every student.

The Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015 succeeded NCLB and advanced additional civil rights protections. IDRA identified key issues in the ESEA reauthorization that are vital to ensuring high quality education for all students (IDRA, 2015b) and worked with family and community organizations to provide input into their state's newly required equity plans. The education of some student groups required court action. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) that a school district violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by denying non-English speaking students a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public

school system. Schools must take measures to ensure that teachers adapt instruction to address children's linguistic characteristics.

In the *U.S. v. Texas* (1980) motion to enforce regarding evident inadequate education of English learners in Texas led the federal court to rule that Texas needed to adopt bilingual education and ESL programs for public school students. IDRA provided expert testimony in the case on the poor quality of programs for Texas' English learners (IDRA, 1981).

In the 1982, *Doe v. Plyler* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that denial of a free public education to undocumented children or children of undocumented parents violates the U.S. Constitution. IDRA provided expert testimony in the case and every year since then publicizes the ruling to schools, immigrant communities and education and immigrants' rights advocacy organizations. IDRA also works with policymakers and advocates to fend off efforts to adopt policies designed to discourage immigrant student enrollment (Cortez & Sepúlveda-Hassell, 1982; IDRA, 1981).

IDRA's concern with the treatment of immigrant children continued in a study at the T. Don Hutto Family Detention Center in 2009. The American Civil Liberties Union contracted with IDRA to conduct a thorough review of the education records for all plaintiffs, analyze teaching credentials of the detention center's instructional staff, review additional documents, and observe the classrooms of the detention center (IDRA, 2007). Findings showed that learning conditions were inappropriate to the minors' level of development, basic academic competencies were not adequately taught, and English learner curriculum was not in compliance with Texas state requirements. The conditions at Hutto were found to be in violation of *Flores vs. Meese* (1997), and the federal government ended family detention at Hutto in 2009.

Understanding the need for a strong network of advocacy, IDRA convened a group of organizations and individuals to establish the Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC) in 2001. Representing thousands of Texans, founding member organizations included: IDRA, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Texas NAACP, Mexican American School Board Members Association, and the League of United Latin American Citizens, among many others. In 2019, the coalition changed its name to Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition to reflect the goals of its diverse member organizations and the shared belief that factors like race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and

immigration status should not determine the quality of students' education opportunities. The coalition continues as a strong, collaborative network for advocacy.

Policy changes both increased and decreased the possibility of college preparation, access and success for the most vulnerable and underserved students. On the positive side, Texas HB 588 established the Top 10 Percent Plan in 1997. The Texas legislature adopted the Top 10 Percent Plan initially as a means to avoid the stipulations from the *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) appeals court case banning the use of affirmative action. IDRA conducted research on implications of the proposals and provided technical assistance to policymakers and advocates. In 2009, Texas policymakers made changes to the Texas Top Ten Percent Plan that slightly limited automatic admissions beginning in the fall of 2011 to the University of Texas at Austin only. IDRA provided analysis on the impact of proposals and engaged in a community education effort to clarify the changes (IDRA, 2019b; IDRA, 2019c).

On the negative side, provisions in Texas' HB 5 weakened the default high school graduation requirements in 2013. The state ended its standard 4x4 requirement (that is, four math, four science, four English, and four social studies courses) that it previously established to prepare all students for college. Instead, HB 5 set up a form of tracking that threaten to relegate poor and rural students and students of color into non-college paths. IDRA and community organizations informed families, convened meetings and studied the policy's impact. IDRA also provided testimony before the legislature and State Board of Education, convened community groups to clarify the new policy, and conducted training on the key issues for families (Cortez, 2013).

The HB 5 policy essentially lowered expectations of Texas students. Rather than valuing them and their future, state law said it was ok for some students to give up on the promise of college and some families to expect less of their schools. But IDRA and communities, families and educators say otherwise. Family and community groups conducted one-to-one outreach to make sure others knew how to make sure their children were on college-preparatory paths. Some school districts, in response to the advocacy by IDRA and others, re-established the 4x4 and broader access to higher level courses in their district default graduation plans.

IDRA's extensive research clearly shows that for an education program to be successful, the following components must be in place (Robledo Montecel, 2004):

- All students must be valued.

- There must be at least one educator in a student's life who is totally committed to the success of that student.
- Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.
- Equity and excellence in schools contribute to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.
- The solutions sought must be institution-based with family and community participation and must embrace the strengths and contributions that students and their families bring.

With this grounding, IDRA designed and developed the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership (VYP) program (formerly called the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program) nationally and beyond. The program personifies IDRA's view and expectations of students. The same student a school may consider "in danger of dropping out" or "at risk," IDRA sees as a potential tutor of little ones. (Cantú, 2009)

To date, VYP has positively impacted three quarters of a million students, families and educators, and it has become an internationally recognized cross-age dropout prevention and leadership development program with a unique twist. The program works by identifying middle and high school students who are thought to be in "at risk" situations and enlisting them as tutors. It has kept 98% of Valued Youth tutors in school, young people who were previously considered at risk of dropping out (Robledo Montecel, 2009).

Through the VYP program, IDRA demonstrated:

When students are placed in responsible roles and are supported in their efforts, powerful changes occur. Valued youth tutors stay in school, improve their literacy and thinking skills, develop self-esteem, feel they belong in school, and attend class more regularly. And schools shift to a practice of valuing youth considered at risk. (Robledo Montecel, 2009)

VYP, IDRA's flagship program that illustrates the dramatic shift for students when schools value them and treat them as competent tutors of little ones, is only one way of using an asset-based approach. IDRA, for instance, nurtured a group of youth, self-labeled as "Youth Tekies" and associated with community centers in south Texas and in San Antonio, who become the technology facilitators and teachers of adults.

IDRA's typical work with teachers is to create student-centered approaches, such as project-based learning. Student assets and the riches of family traditions and culture undergird IDRA's teacher development and coaching.

The Path of Valuing Educators

For students, the face of education is the face of their teacher. And to do a good job educating children, teachers need preparation to build their skills and knowledge. Like those in other professions, they need opportunities for continued professional growth. IDRA's valuing philosophy encompasses respect for the knowledge and skills of the teachers, principals and others to model continually how educators can identify assets and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.

Professional development for teachers and administrators is a key element in IDRA's work with schools. Early on, staff studied the nature of the adult learner. In contrast to the "expert" trainer who merely lectures and brings an ideal one-size-fits-all program, IDRA did it differently, applying effective principles of andragogy. IDRA tailored workshops and presentations to the situation and made them participatory, drawing on the experiences of the participants and encouraging critical dialogue (Johnson, 2015).

IDRA's training-of-trainers model reflected in the WOW Workshop on Workshops includes a set of assumptions about the adult learner (Montemayor, 1994). These assumptions are: (1) Participants learn most when they have responsibility for what they learn and are uniquely qualified to take that responsibility; (2) They bring a rich background of, and want to be valued for, personal experiences and resources that pertain to the subject at hand; (3) They want to be treated as autonomous individual beings; and (4) Adult learners, such as the educators with whom IDRA works, want experiences that build on positive issues and success and minimize limitations.

IDRA developed integrated, research-based professional development experiences to assure that educators have access to innovative strategies in order to solve problems, create solutions, and use best practices to educate all students to high standards. One of the goals was to capture in new ways IDRA's valuing approach to integrated professional development for a 21st century generation of principal and teacher leadership.

IDRA's valuing professional development model focuses on personalized learning experiences that develop teachers' knowledge and instructional practice in order to positively

impact student learning and the long-term academic success of all students (Hill, 2009). A national concern for research during the last decade focused on the complexities and technical issues that go into teaching and what teaching quality looks like. IDRA's work in defining teaching quality exceeds simply determining quality by what credentials a teacher has. Rather, teaching quality involves teacher perspectives and use of effective instructional practices. IDRA also places it in the context of a supportive organizational school and community structure.

IDRA's assistance takes many forms, including technical assistance, teacher professional development in all content areas, principal coaching, school strategic planning, curriculum development, classroom demonstrations, innovative mentorship for new teachers, professional learning communities, and collaborations with universities across the country to improve teacher preparation. From *Amanecer* ("the beginning of a new day") developed in the 1970s to the current *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* (a bilingual set of early childhood curriculum), IDRA filled a gap of bilingual early childhood materials and teaching strategies (IDRA, 2016a).

IDRA's Transition to Teaching programs prepared over 800 teachers through college or university coursework and IDRA's professional development. They gained skills and insight to serve in high-need schools in bilingual education and STEM areas, with ESL or special education supplemental certification. Partner colleges refined their accelerated teacher preparation programs to better serve a rapidly changing student population (IDRA, 2017). Working with educators already working in schools, IDRA developed a unique model for school improvement that focuses on cohesive, meaningful change for struggling schools through mentoring and supporting campus leadership. The model's elements include building a strong teaching team with a student advocacy commitment, preparation to teach diverse student groups, student asset-based thinking, collaborative spirit, and a consciousness of accountability.

This work in one school district also involved securing organizational efficacy and effectiveness in delivering personalized services (culturally responsive and differentiated curriculum, instructional practices, and other student support services) to diverse student groups that strengthens the administrative support that teachers need to deliver quality instruction to all students. As a result, all of the participating schools moved up from receiving the state's "improvement required" rating to becoming fully accredited.

This success would not be possible if IDRA approached the educators as needing to be "fixed" or "shaken up." IDRA bases its valuing philosophy in the truth that, in this case,

teachers, principals and other administrators are professionals with important skills and knowledge. The same is true for the families IDRA works with.

The Path of Valuing Families

From the families who have supported students to protest the inequities and biases in schools in the 1960s and 1970s to the families who examine data and meet with school leaders today to insist on college-ready curricula, IDRA celebrates how critical families are in creating neighborhood public schools that provide the excellent education they desire. Many came from neighborhoods where IDRA heard, oft repeated, “*Edúcate para que no sufras lo que sufrí yo*” [Get an education so you don’t suffer what I have suffered]. Their hopes and plans are the fuel for the engagement and leadership IDRA embraces and catalyzes.

Throughout the years, IDRA convened people across race and gender, sector, geography and educational role to build coalitions for ensuring educational opportunity. Community-based organizations with authentic family engagement and respect for the culture, language, and traditions of the families became the best soil for planting the seeds of powerful family leadership in education.

Even with the ever-present call for parent involvement, IDRA assessed the traditional paths of parent involvement and found them wanting. Most programs did not lead to family influence on school policies and practices—not those of traditional parent organizations that stressed volunteerism and fundraising, nor those that pushed GED certificates, ESL for adults, parenting skills, or self-development classes.

Instead, IDRA instituted an approach that supports family voice and influence, nurtured by actionable data, and that grants full and equal partnership to families in relationship to the schools their children attend. The current embodiment of the approach, Education CAFE (Community Action Forums for Excellence), grew from many years of effective school-family-community partnerships into a statewide network in Texas.

The IDRA Family Leadership in Education Model began to take shape in the early 1980s. With support from the then Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, IDRA held training institutes in Texas for parents of children in bilingual education (Montemayor, 2011). For 12 years, IDRA managed a Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) that serviced the state of Texas with training, technical assistance, development, and dissemination of bilingual materials and direct services to administrators, educators, family liaison staff and

families through community organizations. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Education published, *Engaging Parents in Education: Lessons from Five Parental Information and Resource Centers* (U.S. Department of Education, 2007), which featured the IDRA Texas PIRC work based on IDRA's Family Leadership in Education Model, giving it national recognition.

IDRA and ARISE (A Resource in Serving Equality) in the Texas Rio Grande Valley forged a strong relationship because of their interest in developing family leadership in education, especially among families that are poor, recent immigrant, and whose home language is Spanish. ARISE had embraced the *promotora* (outreach worker) practice (named 'animadora' by ARISE) by conducting weekly home visits with direct communication and in a meaningful relationship with each family. ARISE founder, Sr. Gerrie Naughton, invited IDRA to become partners in leadership development as IDRA's family engagement model drew in part from this *promotora* method (Chavkin, 2017).

Under the leadership of Lourdes Flores, ARISE became IDRA's first family-school-community partnership called a PTA Comunitario in the nation. A group formally part of PTA that was based in a community organization rather than a school, conducted its meetings in Spanish, and focused on influencing education policy and practice. The U.S. Department of Education Investment in Innovation (i3) funded IDRA to establish more PTA Comunitarios across the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas (Montemayor, 2013) that would connect with the Equal Voice Education Working Group, a network of organizations centered on the Marguerite Casey Foundation-funded projects but a larger collaboration through allied groups with similar goals.

As the family engagement model evolved and spread, IDRA renamed the PTA Comunitario initiative to Education CAFE. Funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation supported IDRA as it established a network of Education CAFEs across Texas, and through the IDRA EAC-South, Education CAFEs are now forming across the U.S. South.

The Education CAFE approach emphasizes the diversity of communities engaged in impacting their public schools. By establishing Education CAFEs in community-based organizations, communities leverage existing local assets and networks to foster a sustainable base of family engagement from kindergarten through high school. Three components are central to the Education CAFE approach as follows (Montemayor, 2017a):

- Community-based, Distributive Leadership – Education CAFEs are based in their communities. They are connected to a local organization that commits to focus on education (among its other mission areas).
- School Partnerships – Education CAFE members come together and partner with schools in their neighborhood to ensure student success. Collaboration includes co-planning and sharing responsibility for outreach and ongoing activities that improve education policy and practice in their neighborhood public schools.
- Education Projects – Education CAFEs carry out education projects using actionable data. For example, they bring families together to examine education policies and their implications for children’s access to advanced placement, dual credit and pre-algebra courses; the state’s education budget; and college readiness strategies. They also meet with school administrators to dialogue about shared concerns.

Hundreds of Education CAFE families in multiple areas now work with school leaders to monitor the academic success of their children and other neighborhood children. Each Education CAFE has its own unique characteristics and family leadership in education projects, but they all are connected and collaborate in area-wide projects. Some group projects included campus visitations to introduce the new organization, holding open hearings with school board candidates, convening large public events to protest cuts to the state education budget, and conducting surveys about how schools are implementing the state’s revised graduation plans and their impact on economically disadvantaged students and students of color (Cortez, 2015; Montemayor, 2019; Montemayor, 2017b; Montemayor, 2012).

The dreams and aspirations for the education of all children are the driving force for these groups. Having access to actionable school data deepens their understanding and informs their actions. Through their collective leadership and initiatives like the Education CAFE Network, families are changing and transforming schools for the better. That is precisely the type of family and community engagement that leads to systems change.

The Path of Systems Change

Based on this empirical evidence and IDRA’s 46 years of experience in the field, IDRA developed a change model, the Quality Schools Action Framework (Robledo Montecel & Goodman, 2010), that helps school, community, family, and business leaders assure that critical features are in place. The framework draws from existing theories that suggest that, because

schools operate as complex, dynamic ecosystems, lasting systems change depends on sustained action within and outside of those systems.

Research on best practices of high-performing schools, for example, has examined the links among a constellation of indicators (e.g.: teaching quality and effective school governance; parent engagement and student success). Less examined, however, are the contextual and moderating factors that may impede or accelerate school system change. The Quality Schools Action Framework bridges that gap.

The framework offers a way to assess school conditions and outcomes, identifying leverage points for improvement and informing action. In essence, the framework poses five key questions:

- What do we need?
- How do we make change happen?
- Which fundamentals must be secured?
- Where do we focus systems change? and
- What outcomes will result?

The Quality Schools Action Framework draws on current research and knowledge of the field. It also reflects common sense. For example, research and experience recognize that students are far more likely to succeed when: they have the chance to work with highly qualified, committed teachers who use effective, accessible curricula; their parents and communities engage in their education; and students, themselves, engage in their learning. We also know that effective schools depend on good governance to guide their success and on fair funding to effectively serve all of their students each school day.

The framework focuses actionable knowledge on transforming educational systems. Like ecosystems in the natural world and many successful business ecosystems, educational ecosystems have inputs, throughputs and outputs (Morgan, 2015). Layers and levels are integrated to form a complete ecosystem. With this framework, IDRA makes the case for metrics that measure not only outputs, but also inputs and throughputs. Simply focusing on the educational outputs of student scores, for example, without giving focused attention to the inputs, such as fair funding and efficacious governance, and the throughputs of teaching quality and curriculum rigor, will not lead to transformation or the successful education of all children. Neither will excusing school failure based on characteristics of the students in the school.

If your flower garden stops blooming, you check the soil to see if it needs more or less water. Similarly, for classrooms, measuring outputs alone denies school leaders and communities the opportunity to know the reasons behind their results and hinders their ability to effectively focus efforts on substantial improvement. As in networked knowledge systems utilized in business, “Organizational knowledge resides in a complex network of individuals, systems and procedures, both inside and outside the organization” (Homa & Evans, 2010). States must not only issue grades for school districts and campuses but must link those grades to fair funding and availability of resources, student engagement, and curriculum offerings and rigor, among other factors.

Adaptable ecosystems also require core technologies that provide substance knowledge about the system. In this regard, IDRA’s experiences with technology and data have included evaluating the pedagogical and administrative value of large comprehensive programs. Critical thinking requires critical dialogue that does not replace the teacher with a piece of software. Yet, educators must adapt and extend their practice to include the media and instruments accessible to all children and to use technology to provide knowledge about educational inputs, throughputs, and outputs in schools, districts, and states.

IDRA brings together communities of educators through online forums, such as IDRA’s Equity Connection, where participants learn new strategies and share feedback and advice with each other (www.idra.org/equity-connection). A complex network is part of the education ecosystems in different contexts. Actionable knowledge has been a focus of IDRA-sponsored and -designed conferences and strategic convenings over the years.

IDRA’s work has seen the interplay and inter-relationship of policy, research, practice, and engagement. IDRA experienced each informing and impacting the others. All too often, officials enact public education policy and practice without the benefit of research; education systems isolate breakthrough practices to individual classrooms; and reforms either mute or marginalize the power of intergenerational family leadership in school transformation.

IDRA conducts research, keeps up with relevant strategic findings in the field, and questions research that is flawed due to deficit questions and approaches. IDRA adopts border-crossing strategies that bridge the divides from research to practice and school to community. Through this cross-cutting approach, IDRA works to secure sustainable solutions for schools and districts across states and nationally.

For Each and Every Student

Fifty years after the 1968 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hearings on the status of Mexican Americans in the Southwest, San Antonio hosted an anniversary event to reflect on all that has occurred since then. The educational equity and social justice issues highlighted then still apply today. A number of still-powerful civil rights-focused organizations originated in that era 45 to 50 years ago. IDRA was among them. Thousands of classroom teachers, principals, other educators, families, policymakers, community leaders, researchers and, of course, students themselves, have played important roles in the IDRA story. As a result, together we have impacted millions of students' lives by dramatically improving educational opportunities for all children.

IDRA experiences and research show that the blueprint for quality education requires engaging students in learning, with a relevant and rigorous curriculum, a cadre of caring and qualified teachers and support staff, an inclusive program of curricular and extracurricular activities that provide students the opportunity to develop their talents, and strong partnerships with families and communities. We have seen the excitement and pride of educators, parents, communities and students when they work together successfully. Cory, one of IDRA's Valued Youth Partnership program tutors, wrote: "I want to feel that I'm somebody. Somebody that my mother can be proud of. And I want the teacher and children to see that I can help them."

Effective schools are those where all students are valued and where all students count. The task is to transform systems, so schools embrace the characteristics of all students and celebrate the strengths they bring. Over four decades ago, IDRA thought that, in a few years, IDRA would do what was needed to meet the challenges for children to have access to excellent public schools. Today, we celebrate the progress we have achieved by working together and taking a stand when others would not. Much work remains. The following is IDRA's promise to children (Robledo Montecel, 2017):

Dear Children,

We see you. We value you. We cherish you.

We promise to provide you an opportunity to learn in your own neighborhood with caring and qualified teachers. We promise you a curriculum that truly prepares you for college, in an environment that respects you and values you and your background. We promise to engage

you—not only academically—but as an active part of the community and life of school. And we promise to support the commitment of your parents to high quality education.

We promise to your families and communities... unwaveringly, we stand with you. Together, IDRA will work fiercely to assure that youth, families and communities are heard—not as problems—but as partners in creating strong and vibrant schools. We promise to work with teachers and principals and superintendents and school boards to prepare all students so that we can all live in an America that keeps its promises to justice and opportunity. And we promise to tell the truth. We will share what we see honestly—to promote good and just public policy. We are still here because we haven't achieved those goals. We won't stop until we have.

References

- Avilés, N. (2018, September). School leaders improve English learner literacy with focus on inferencing. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/school-leaders-improve-english-learner-literacy-with-focus-on-inferencing/>
- Avilés, N., & Bojorquez, H. (2018, January). Integrating the assets of social justice principles to transform schools. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/integrating-assets-social-justice-principles-transform-schools/>
- Baker, B. D., Farrie, D., & Sciarra, D. (2018). *Is school funding fair? A national report card*. Newark, NJ: Education Law Center. Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1BTajZuqOs8pEGWW6oUBotb6omVw1hUJl>
- Berliner, D. C. (2005). "The near impossibility of testing for teacher quality." *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(3), 205-213. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/7821166/The_Near_Impossibility_of_Testing_for_Teacher_Quality
- Bernal, J. (1984, August). Highlights of the Education Reform Bill Passed by the 68th Texas Legislature, Second Called Session June 4-July 2, 1984. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Highlights-of-the-Education-Reform-Bill-Passed-by-the-68th-Texas-Legislature-Aug-1984.pdf>
- Bojorquez, H. (2014). *College bound and determined*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/IDRA-College-Bound-and-Determined-sm.pdf>
- Bojorquez, H. (2018, April). The link between institutional grit and non-cognitive skills. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-link-between-institutional-grit-and-non-cognitive-skills/>
- Bojorquez, H. (2019, April). Fixing asset-based early childhood education. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/fixing-asset-based-early-childhood-education/>
- Brischetto, R. (1973). Fiscal inequalities in Texas school finance: An empirical analysis of who is injured. IDRA: TEE File Supplement No. 3. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Fiscal-Inequities-in-Texas-School-Finance-An-Empirical-Analysis-of-Who-is-Injured-by-Robert-Brischetto.pdf>
- Cantú, L. (2009, May 14). Student voices on being valued, classnotes podcast, Episode 54. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/student-voices-on-being-valued/>
- Cárdenas, J. A., & Cárdenas, B. (1977). *The theory of incompatibilities: A conceptual framework for responding to the educational needs of Mexican American children*. San Antonio, TX, Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Cárdenas, J. A., del Refugio Robledo, M., & Supik, J. D. (1986). *Texas school dropout survey project: A summary of findings*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.

- Cárdenas, J. A. (1991, February). *Supreme Court Narrows Finance Reform Parameter*. IDRA Newsletter. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Supreme-Court-Narrows-Finance-Reform-Parameter-Feb-1991.pdf>
- Cárdenas, J. A. (1994, May). The fifty most memorable quotes in school finance. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-fifty-most-memorable-quotes-in-school-finance/>
- Cárdenas, J. A. (1995). *Multicultural education – a generation of advocacy*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Cárdenas, J. A. (1997a). *Texas School Finance Reform – An IDRA Perspective*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Cárdenas, J. A. (1997b, March). School finance reform and intra-district equity: An excerpt. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/school-finance-reform-and-intra-district-equity-an-excerpt/>
- Chavkin, N. F. (2017). *Family engagement with schools: Strategies for school social workers and educators*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cortez, A. (1977, August). Senate Bill I Revises Distribution of State Aid. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Senate-Bill-I-revises-distribution-of-state-aid-Aug-1977.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (1984, June). Constitutionality of Texas school finance system challenged. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Constitutionality-of-Texas-School-Finance-System-Challenged-June-1984.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (1991, June). Wealthy districts file suit challenging constitutionality of Senate Bill 351. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Wealthy-Districts-File-Suit-Challenging-Constitutionality-of-Senate-Bill-351-Jan-1991.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (1993, July). School finance update: Senate Bill 7 is legislators' latest attempt at equity. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/School-Finance-Update-june-july-1993.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (1995, March). The Texas Supreme Court's decision in Edgewood IV: Findings, implications, and next steps. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Texas-Supreme-Courts-Decision-in-Edgewood-IV-Findings-Implications-and-Next-Steps-March-1995.pdf>
- Cortez, A. (2004, February). Insufficient funding for bilingual education in Texas. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/insufficient-funding-for-bilingual-education-in-texas/>
- Cortez, A. (2006, December). Upcoming 2007 Texas legislative session – Key issues and expectations. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/upcoming-2007-texas-legislative-session/>
- Cortez, A. (2012, December 5). *Analysis shows wide funding disparities – Educational opportunity in Texas depends on where you live, testimony*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development

- Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/dr-albert-cortez-testifies-in-school-finance-case/>
- Cortez, A. (2013, August). A post session assessment of Texas education policy changes considered, adopted and rejected in 2013. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/a-post-session-assessment/>
- Cortez, J. D. (2015, June-July). ¿Y ahora qué? And now what? – Community groups in South Texas work together to improve education. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/y-ahora-que/>
- Cortez, A., & Sepúlveda-Hassell, S. (1982, August). Supreme court rules in favor of undocumented children. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Supreme-Court-Rules-in-Favor-of-Undocumented-Children-Aug-1982.pdf>
- Doe v. Plyler*, 458 F. Supp. 569 (E.D. Tex. 1978). https://tarltonapps.law.utexas.edu/exhibits/ww_justice/documents_2/Plyler_opinion_2_1980.pdf
- Flores v. Meese*, 681 F. Supp. 665 (C.D. Cal. 1988). <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp/681/665/1800754/>
- Foxworth, A. M. (2000, July). Bridging the gap between schools and families: A family friendly approach. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/bridging-the-gap-between-schools-and-families/>
- Hill, H. C. (2009, March). Fixing teacher professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 90(7), 470-476.
- Hinojosa, D. (2018, April 4). *What the research says on expanding high quality educational opportunities for all students, testimony presented for the senate education committee*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/what-the-research-says-on-expanding-high-quality-educational-opportunities-for-all-students/>
- Homa, B. J., & Evans, S. (2010). *Super-flexibility for knowledge enterprises: A toolkit for dynamic adaptation*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg.
- Hopwood v. Texas*, 78 F.3d 932 (5th Cir. 1996). <https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/F3/78/932/504514/>
- IDRA. (1981, January). Court Rules in U.S. vs. Texas. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Court-Rules-in-US-v-Texas-Jan-1981.pdf>
- IDRA. (1984, August). A decade of school finance reform. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/A-Decade-of-School-Finance-Reform-Aug-1984.pdf>
- IDRA. (2007). Tools for action – enlightened public policy. *IDRA Newsletter*. <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/tools-for-action-enlightened-public-policy/>

- IDRA. (2015a, September). Court can end neglect of millions of school children – Texas supreme court school finance hearing held. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/court-can-end-neglect-of-millions-of-school-children/>
- IDRA. (2015b, December 15). *The new Every Student Succeeds Act – Progress and promise of retreat and surrender*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <http://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/IDRA-Policy-Note-Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-2015.pdf>
- IDRA. (2016a). *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* supplemental early childhood curriculum, website. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.semillitasdeaprendizaje.com>
- IDRA. (2016b, May 13). *Fair funding is nonnegotiable – Texans must have excellent schools for all – the Texas Supreme Court ruling does not excuse state policymakers from putting Texas children first, statement*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://idra.createsend1.com/t/ViewEmail/r/D42441ABD4FBD0912540EF23F30FEDED>
- IDRA. (2017). *IDRA transition to teaching program: 15-year synthesis*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Transition-to-Teaching-Report-IDRA-Sept-2018.pdf>
- IDRA. (2019a). *Timeline – A history of IDRA policy work to secure excellent and equitable schooling for all children*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <http://b.link/IDRApolicyTimeline>
- IDRA. (2019b, March 20). *The Texas top ten percent plan’s legacy in supporting equal access to college – Policy brief*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-texas-top-ten-percent-plans-legacy-in-supporting-equal-access-to-college-policy-brief/>
- IDRA. (2019c, May). *7 Things to ensure school finance equity in Texas – Infographic*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/7-things-to-ensure-school-finance-equity-in-texas-infographic/>
- Jensen, E. (2003). *Tools for engagement: Managing emotional states for learner success*. San Diego, CA: The Brain Store, Inc.
- Johnson, P. (2015, March). Valuing teachers – IDRA’s approach to professional development. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/valuing-teachers-idras-approach-to-professional-development/>
- Johnson, R. L. (2018, October). Texas public school attrition study, 2018-19 – High school attrition improves by two points. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/texas-public-school-attrition-study-2016-17-high-school-attrition-returns-24-percent-one-year-bump/>
- Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563. (1974). U.S. Supreme Court. <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/414/563/#tab-opinion-1950565>

- Lester, S. (1977, August). SBI rewards superintendents; Steps 11, 12 & 13 aid teachers. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <http://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SBI-rewards-superintendents-steps-11-12-13-aid-teachers-Aug-1977.pdf>
- Meatto, K. (2019, May 2). Still separate, still unequal: Teaching about school segregation and educational inequality. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/learning/lesson-plans/still-separate-still-unequal-teaching-about-school-segregation-and-educational-inequality.html>
- Michael Williams, Commissioner of Education et al. v. The Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition et al. Texas Supreme Court*, No. 14-0776 (2016).
<http://search.txcourts.gov/Case.aspx?cn=14-0776&coa=cossup>
- Montemayor, A. M. (1994). *WOW! Workshops on workshops*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Montemayor, A. M. (1996, September). Families united for education conversations with parents and friends, editorial. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/families-united-for-education-conversations-with-parents-and-friends/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2011, June-July). Family leadership in the field- lasting community leadership in education. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/family-leadership-in-the-field/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2012, February). Hosting superintendents, quizzing candidates and marking maps – A fully engaged PTA Comunitario. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/hosting-superintendents-quizzing-candidates-and-marking-maps/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2013, March). PTA Comunitario as a Family Leadership Model – An “Investing in Innovation I3 Project.” *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/pta-comunitario-as-a-family-leadership-model/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2017a, May). IDRA Education CAFE – A structure for families transforming schools in their communities. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/idra-education-cafe-structure-families-transforming-schools-communities/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2017b, January). Families transforming public schools – Gathering data, informing policy and practice. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/families-transforming-public-schools-gathering-data-informing-policy-practice/>
- Montemayor, A. M. (2019, January). Family leadership in education projects... and the data that drives them. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/family-leadership-in-education-projects-and-the-data-that-drives-them/>
- Morgan, J. (2015, August 12). The innovation ecosystem for the future of work. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2015/08/12/innovation-ecosystem-future-of-work/#75d791592eec>

- Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., & Ayscue, J. B. (2019). *Harming our common future: America's segregated schools 65 years after Brown*. The Civil Rights Project. Retrieved from <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/harming-our-common-future-americas-segregated-schools-65-years-after-brown>
- Rivera, M. (2017a). *What about the schools? Factors contributing to expanded state investment in school facilities – Full report*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <http://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Executive-Summary-IDRA-School-Facilities-Report-2017.pdf>
- Rivera, M. (2017b). *What about the schools? Factors contributing to expanded state investment in school facilities – Case study state highlights #1: Texas*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <http://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Texas-IDRA-School-Facilities-Report-2017.pdf>
- Robledo Montecel, M. (2004, April). From dropping out to holding on – Seven lessons from Texas. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/from-dropping-out-to-holding-on-2004/>
- Robledo Montecel, M. (2007, January). Framing Systems Change for Student Success. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/framing-systems-change-for-student-success-2/>
- Robledo Montecel, M. (2009). *Continuities – Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/valued-youth/continuities/>
- Robledo Montecel, M. (2011, December). Fair Funding is Essential to Having Excellent Schools for All Texas Students. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/fair-funding-is-essential-to-having-excellent-schools-for-all-texas-students/>
- Robledo Montecel, M. (2017). *IDRA 2016 Annual Report – Keeping the Promise; Putting Children First*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IDRA-Annual-Report-2016.pdf>
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Cortez, J. D. (2002). “Successful bilingual education programs: Development and the dissemination of criteria to identify promising and exemplary practices in bilingual education at the national level.” *Bilingual Research Journal*, 26(1).
- Robledo Montecel, M., Cortez, J. D., Cortez, A., & Villarreal, A. (2002). *Good schools and classrooms for children learning English: A guide*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Robledo Montecel, M., Cortez, A., & Penny-Velasquez, M. (1989). *The answer: Valuing youth in schools and families: A report on Hispanic dropouts in the Dallas Independent School District*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association.
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Goodman, C. L. (Eds). (2010). *Courage to connect – A quality schools action framework*. San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/change-model/courage-to-connect/>

- Robledo Montecel, M., & Montemayor, A. M. (2018, June-July). Beginning with the end in mind to establish equitable, excellent education. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/beginning-with-the-end-in-mind-to-establish-equitable-excellent-education/>
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Montemayor, A. M. (2018, June-July). Valuing youth and assuring that all youth count. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/valuing-youth-and-assuring-that-all-youth-count/>
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Montemayor, A. M. (2018, June-July). InterAction with the ecosystem – The IDRA quality schools action framework. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/interaction-with-the-ecosystem-the-idra-quality-schools-action-framework/>
- Romero, A. A. (2001, September). Destined to Get an Equitable System of School Funding. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/destined-to-get-an-equitable-system-of-school-funding/>
- San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodríguez, 411 U.S. 1. No. 71-1332 (1973).
- Scott, B. (2002, May). Who's Responsible, Who's to Blame? *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/whos-responsible-whos-to-blame/>
- Shirley Neeley, Texas Commissioner of Education, et al. v. West Orange-Cove Consolidated Indep. Sch. Dist, et al. No. 04-1144 (2005).
- Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition et al. vs. Michael Williams, Commissioner of Education et al.* (August 28, 2014). Final judgment and findings of fact, conclusions of law (No. D-1-GN-11-003130). <http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/archive/2014/24917.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Engaging parents in education: Lessons from five parental information and resource centers*. Washington, DC: Office of Innovation and Improvement. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/comm/parents/parentinvolve/engagingparents.pdf>
- United States v. Texas*, 680 F.2d 356. (1982). U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit. <https://casetext.com/case/united-states-v-states-of-tex>
- Villarreal, A., & Cárdenas, D. (1981, July). Third major piece of legislation affecting bilingual education. *IDRA Newsletter*. Retrieved from <https://www.idra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Third-Major-Piece-of-Legislation-Affecting-Bilingual-Education-July-1981.pdf>