

# A Community Action Guide

**Seven Actions to Fulfill the Promise of Brown and Mendez**

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*INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION*

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**Mission:** Creating schools that work for *all* children.

**Vision:** IDRA is a vanguard leadership development and research team working with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities.

**Functions:**

**POLICY AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** – IDRA policy and leadership development promotes accountability and responsibility. Using inclusive, cutting-edge and broad-based strategies, we develop leadership within communities, schools and policy-making bodies to create collaborative and enlightened educational policies that work for *all* children.

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION** – IDRA research and evaluation advance educational policies, programs and practices. Using collaborative and innovative methods, we investigate important questions and provide insights into compelling educational issues. As a national resource, we set standards in the design, analysis, and synthesis of timely and useful research involving diverse populations.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – IDRA professional development causes people across the country to take action that empowers others. We assist people to create educational solutions through innovative, participatory, and hands-on presentations, workshops, and technical assistance that promotes sustained growth and development.

Our assistance values the needs and cultures of our participants and acknowledges their experiences. We carefully craft training designs that include reflection and application. IDRA professional development causes participants to take a new look at persistent problems and equips them to take action that produces positive outcomes for *all* children.

**PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT** – IDRA programs and materials cause people across the country to improve education for *all* children. Our programs produce results. Our materials are useful and timely; attractive, cost-effective and intuitive; linguistically, culturally and developmentally appropriate.

IDRA pro-actively disseminates cutting-edge information to educators, administrators, decision- and policy-makers, parents and community leaders.

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**A Community Action Guide: Seven Actions to Fulfill the Promise of Brown and Mendez**

by Dr. Rosana G. Rodríguez, Dr. Bradley Scott, and Dr. Abelardo Villarreal

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## Every day, the promise of educational equity is not met...

According to the Harvard Civil Rights Project, public schools in the United States are resegregating. As we began the new millennium, 40 percent of Black students attended schools that were 90 percent to 100 percent Black. This is up from 32 percent in 1988. In nine out of 10 of these schools the majority of children were poor.

*This is not the promise of Brown and Mendez.*

Latino children are the most segregated, and they attend the poorest schools. They receive the poorest preparation by the least trained teachers and have little access to rigorous curriculum that would prepare them for college.

*This is not the promise of Brown and Mendez.*

Seventy-five percent of the 4.5 million students who speak a language other than English have a seat in the classroom but are left out of the class because of English-only policies that are concerned with politics instead of learning.

*This is not the promise we have made to children.*

– Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel,  
October 2003



More than 50 years ago, in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that sending children to separate schools solely on the basis of race was unconstitutional. Seven years prior, the Supreme Court ruled in *Mendez vs. Westminster and the California Board of Education* that Mexican American children could not be denied access to public schools or a quality education because they were Mexican American. While these two decisions transformed the nature of U.S. public education, their objectives have not been fully met.

Now, more than ever before, the importance of equity and excellence in education for all children is of paramount importance. Now, more than ever before, it is critical that our communities come together in order to foster lasting and meaningful educational impact. Mechanisms for engagement with African American and Latino families and communities need to be firmly embedded in the mission, vision and central activities of our educational institutions from preschool through higher education. A culture of shared vision and shared action between races needs to be fostered that ultimately will have lasting impact on student access and success. Although difficult to achieve, these partnerships are an important investment in the future of our young people and will have a positive impact on the future of our nation.

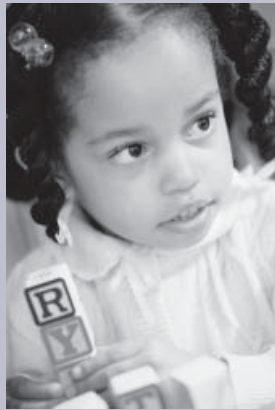
The Intercultural Development Research Association is pleased to share this action booklet as a tool for community members who join us in their commitment and in the shared vision to create greater equity, excellence and access for *all* students in education. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez have both emphasized, the end of education must be service to community, as we are inextricably linked in a web of mutuality. We hope these materials are useful to your communities as we join together in making the promise of *Brown* and *Mendez* a reality for our children.

*María Robledo Montecel*

Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel  
Executive Director  
Intercultural Development Research Association

# Fulfill the Promise

## 7 Actions



### 1

#### Protect Civil Rights

as the foundation of a viable, healthy democracy, framed in the Declaration of Independence, guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution and codified by civil rights legislation.



### 2

#### Engage Community

to protect the civil rights of *all* children by holding states and schools accountable for excellence and equity in education for all children.



### 3

#### Demand Fair Funding

so that every child receives a quality education through fair and equitable distribution of resources.

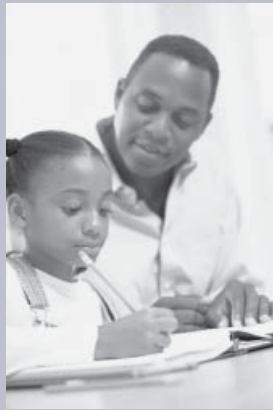
# of Brown & Mendez



## 4

### Hold Schools Accountable

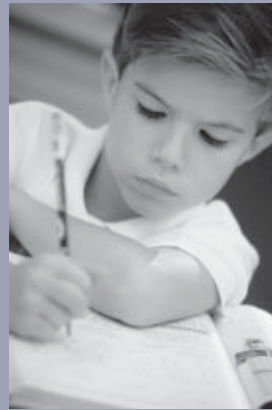
for the high achievement of *all* students, through fair and equitable practices that ensure their success and do not hurt kids.



## 5

### Strengthen School Holding Power

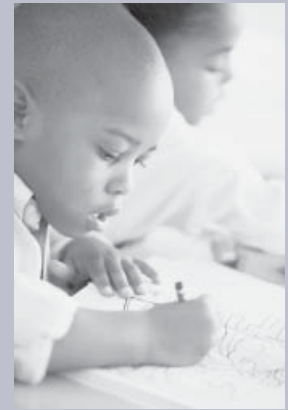
from pre-kindergarten to college completion, ensuring that every student is valued, graduates from high school with a diploma, and is prepared for college, work and civic engagement.



## 6

### Require Teaching Quality

so that every student benefits from teachers who are certified, teach in their content area, and meet or exceed high standards of excellence.



## 7

### Ensure Access and Inclusion

so that every child, regardless of race, color, national origin, home language, gender, economic circumstance or disability, attends a good school, has opportunities to learn and appropriate support to reach his or her highest potential.

See Page 27 for a list of resources to help you fulfill the promise of *Brown* and *Mendez* in your community.

# Protect Civil Rights

as the foundation of a viable, healthy democracy, framed in the Declaration of Independence, guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution and codified by civil rights legislation.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Where all students are fully empowered to develop their fullest potential.
- Where students have complete access to the resources and supports they need for high achievement.
- Where all children realize the possibility of the American dream for themselves as fully educated and empowered citizens contributing to their communities.

### Imagine communities...

- That benefit from skilled, educated, responsible citizens who are effective problem solvers and decision-makers who contribute to and benefit from the democratic process.
- That produce a diverse and creative workforce poised to interact effectively in a global society.
- Where social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and cultural capital is unleashed for the common good.
- Where differences are not feared, rather they are cherished as a national resource, to the extent that policy and practice does not restrict it but gives it space to be nurtured, celebrated and expressed.
- Where prejudice and the abuse of power is not tolerated, and every individual is ensured his or her inalienable right to seek whatever opportunities he or she chooses.

### Imagine states...

- Where the notion of equity under the law is so powerfully embraced that to deny anyone proper treatment would be unthinkable.
- Where the need for civil rights legislation no longer exists.



## But Currently...

Although policies have been in place since 1954, the promise of equity and excellence is unfulfilled for many children, particularly African American and Latino youth in the poorest areas. Data reveal that these students are the most segregated, attend the poorest schools with the least resources and are educated by the least qualified teachers, falling behind the mainstream with the highest dropout rates in the nation.

Data also show that, because of practices that reflect bias and prejudice, these students are the ones most likely to be over-represented in special education courses, under-represented in gifted and talented programs, and suspended and expelled from schools and programs disproportionate to their numbers in the population. They are least likely to enter and complete college and thus have significantly lower incomes and access to a quality life.

## What must be done...

Information is power, so first, there must be general awareness in education regarding the laws for civil rights for educators, administrators, and all school personnel as well as parents and community in all sectors. Beyond the letter of the law, we also must understand and embrace the spirit of the law. With *Brown* and *Mendez*, the spirit of the law indicates that no child should be separated or segregated because of his or her identifying characteristics. That same philosophy must exist in policies and practices in schools as they seek to educate all children to their highest potential. There must also be ongoing monitoring of what is occurring and how various students are faring regarding policies, practices in all programs.

Second, we must monitor how these policies are impacting students.

Third, there need to be corrective strategies in place to mitigate the negative impact that policies and practices may be having on children. We must act with integrity to align policies and practices in order to go beyond the letter of the law, not merely to comply, but to embrace the spirit of the law that seeks to nurture and elevate all learners to their highest level of excellence.



## What we can do together...

- Report civil rights violations to the appropriate school authorities or directly to the Office for Civil Rights. All notices should be posted in a visible place, in English and Spanish, or in the languages of the communities each school serves.
- Seek information on civil rights matters, attend meetings and ask questions when suspected violations occur. Speak up and speak out.
- Ask your school officials about procedures for reporting complaints and violations. Inquire about appeals processes regarding student placement concerns, disciplinary actions and general treatment of students. The law requires that these processes be posted.
- Know your rights and the rights of children.
- Examine your own biases, embrace the philosophy that the rights of all children are sacred, inviolate and of importance to the health of the whole community.
- Be willing to reach out to others in your community for support across racial and ethnic communities to build groups and coalitions to secure civil rights for all children.

# Engage Community

to protect the civil rights of *all* children by holding states and schools accountable for excellence and equity in education.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- As the heartbeat of communities, centers of discussion, and shared decision-making that value the diversity of all citizens.
- That pro-actively reach out to parents and diverse citizens and community, tapping into their funds of knowledge, wisdom and experience as valuable resources to the learning process at every level.
- Where all families are welcomed, are valued and feel at home.
- That recognize that their primary role is to serve the local community and that recognize that their primary service is to the community for everyone's benefit.

### Imagine communities...

- Working together with schools for shared accountability to ensure that every child succeeds, graduates, completes higher education and has all the supports needed to be a fully engaged and productive citizen.
- That pro-actively engage with schools at all levels, pre-kindergarten through college.
- Whose sense of ownership of their public schools and their proper operation is so powerful that the public insists on being engaged at every level of the school's operation.



## But Currently...

Often, the voices of parents and other stakeholders in education are not heard when important educational decisions are being made. Parents and community members are made to feel inadequate and unwelcome in many school settings, especially parents whose culture, home language or economic status is not mainstream. Critical educational decisions are not always communicated with parents in a language they understand, nor is there shared decision-making or a process by which community and schools work together to resolve problems for their mutual benefit.



## What must be done...

Schools and communities must see their present and future well-being as inextricably linked. Community members and parents must be valued, served and incorporated by the school as important resources in the teaching and learning process. Engagement is based on mutual interest and mutual gain. Schools must apply their resources to problems that matter to the community. School faculty must work in conjunction with students and residents to identify and address problems of mutual interest and engage in shared accountability for student success.

## What we can do together...

- Ensure that important school meetings are planned to accommodate parents' schedules of work.
- Provide transportation and child care for parents attending meetings.
- Ensure that translators are available to assist in meetings where all decisions are being made or problems discussed, as well as meetings to review general student progress.
- Require that all correspondence and documents be translated into the language(s) of the community being served.
- Require that home-school liaisons be in place to assist parents and communities in engaging fully.



# Demand Fair Funding

so that every child receives a quality education through fair and equitable distribution of resources.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Where fair funding is a given and is seen as the inalienable right of every child.
- Where every school – regardless of location or student population – has excellent resources, facilities and programs to provide the highest level of education possible for its students.
- Where assignment of funds and other resources for equity and excellence in public schools are distributed in an appropriate manner to enable all diverse learners to achieve high academic standards.
- Appropriating all the necessary resources and commitment to ensure that every student excels and is supported at every juncture of the educational pipeline.
- That reflect state and local policies that promote equity and excellence through fair funding.

### Imagine communities...

- Where fair funding is viewed by the state, citizens and communities as the priority for our future.
- Where an investment in public education is aligned with the recognition that schools are central to democracy and that schools belong to community.

### Imagine states...

- Where excellence is not a benefit of the rich but a right of everyone.
- Where leaders and decision-making bodies in educational policy reflect the diversity of the people they serve.

## But currently...

Great disparity exists among school districts across the nation to the detriment of children and communities. The disparities that occur take many forms, including inequity in the qualification of staff, the quality of facilities, range in depth of course offerings, and quality of materials and technological supports for learning. The poorest districts, often with minority and poor children, are suffering the most. Huge disparities in per pupil expenditures range into the thousands of dollars. Minority and majority communities have not come together to address funding inequities. School funding has not been viewed as an investment in the health and prosperity of the whole community and has not received the attention it deserves.

Fair funding of schools as an issue is not just a matter for poor and minority communities, it is linked to the overall health of all communities and of the nation. School finance has divided communities across race and economics, resulting in minority communities fighting one another for inadequate and dwindling resources. What is needed is the entire community fighting together so that all children have appropriate resources to support excellence in achievement.





## What must be done...

Fair funding must be ensured for *all* schools across the nation. There must be a groundswell of local and state action to secure funding for public schools that is not tied to property tax wealth. Priorities for funding education must be established from the national level throughout states and local governments to ensure that all children have access to the highest quality resources and support to prepare them for college and life. Funds must be in place to secure education at the highest level for every student. Funding systems must be reviewed from preschool through graduate education. It is not acceptable that qualified, prepared youth cannot enter or complete college in this country due to lack of financial support. Education is a matter of national security, important to our standing as a global leader.

## What we can do together...

- Accept that fair funding is the responsibility of every group in a community.
- De-mystify the complexities of school finance so that every member of the community fully understands the issues and decisions to be made.
- Seek information and get involved in discussions around funding and inquire about how your schools are funded in comparison to others locally and in the state.
- Encourage legislators to support appropriate measures to support fair funding at the state and local levels.
- Be pro-active in monitoring and correcting the inadequacies that arise as a result of funding inequities.
- Look at your schools and find out how monies are being spent.
- Advocate for appropriate resources for all youth.
- Insist on comparability in resource allocations for staffing, facilities, curriculum and materials.

# Hold Schools Accountable

for the high achievement of *all* students, through fair and equitable practices that ensure their success.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Taking responsibility for the success of every student from preschool through college.
- That actively and routinely review their performance and willingly change their practices to make adjustments that more appropriately serve their students.
- That are transparent about and seek community input to correct what does not work for the students they serve.
- That foster articulation between systems to support student success.
- Where accountability is such a fact of life, so institutionalized that when students do not succeed, the system stops to fix the problem immediately in the students' best interest.

### Imagine communities...

- That make plans for seven generations to come and do not write-off a generation of children.
- That accept no excuse for failure, because they adopt the philosophy that all children can learn and they do whatever it takes to make that happen.
- That demand multiple measures rather than a single test to assess student performance.
- That engage parents in making decisions about their children's lives.

### Imagine states...

- That hold themselves accountable for supporting the high achievement of all students at the local level.

## But Currently...

Too often, children and their parents are blamed for schools that are not working. Schools measure their accountability based on how students perform on single standardized tests. This limited view of accountability misses the point about what schools should be doing to prepare students for college completion and success in life. Competent, responsible citizens are more than just test takers. High-stakes, single measure indicators hurt children.





## What must be done...

Accountability is good but should be based on multiple measures, rather than a single test. We must reject the use of any one test score or single measure as the primary basis for making high-stakes decisions about students. Multiple measures, including grade point averages, teacher opinions and parent judgments could all be used to complete the picture about each student's progress.

The ideal model for school accountability is one that embraces shared accountability and shared action. Schools should abandon the expensive and inefficient practice of testing all students, and instead, utilize a process of randomly selecting a sample of students to test. This approach would yield the same important information on school quality and performance and would cost a fraction of the current multi-million-dollar price.

## What we can do together...

- Advocate for multiple measures to describe student success and to make decisions about a child's schooling and college options.
- Advocate for a broader definition of accountability to include measures beyond test scores.
- Let school officials know that you object to the expensive method of testing all students and that the same information about the schools' performance can be obtained from testing a sample of students from each school.
- When working across racial groups and sectors, ensure that accountability discussions do not focus on blaming parents, students, or communities, but rather, focus on shared responsibility for collaboration and action.

# Strengthen School Holding Power

from pre-kindergarten to college completion, ensuring that every student is valued, graduates from high school with a diploma, and is prepared for college, work and civic engagement.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Where all students graduate with a diploma.
- Where there is articulation among all levels from preschool through graduate school to support students moving along the educational pipeline.
- Where no student is ever “lost” in the system.
- Where there is seamless support for students moving from one school level to another, regardless of state or location.

### Imagine communities...

- Where expectations for each subsequent grade or level are clearly shared with parents and students in planning for success and school completion.

### Imagine states...

- Where preparing students for college success and completion becomes a shared goal beginning in preschool.
- Where graduation from high school is not viewed as the end of education, but rather a vital stepping stone to college and graduate school completion.



## But currently...

Many children are “lost” and not accounted for, particularly minority and poor children. Across our nation, definitions of who is a “dropout” are neither clear nor consistent. This adds to the general confusion about which children have left school before completing school with a diploma. Schools do not report this information to parents and communities on a regular basis in ways that are timely and understandable. Schools vary in correctly reporting their attrition rates because it negatively impacts their funding. Schools fail to assess and address those “push out” factors in counseling and curriculum and environment that cause students to leave before graduating.

Additionally, systems are not in place that account for and support the success of each child from one grade to another. Transitions are not smooth from preschool to kindergarten, from early elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, or from high school to two-year colleges or universities. Furthermore, schools do not talk to one another about students transferring from one location or state to another. Systems fail to help students anticipate what is required for success at the next grade or level. For students considering college, information about required courses from middle school through graduation is often not provided to them or their parents in order to plan appropriately for college entry and completion.

## What must be done...

A more consistent national definition of what constitutes a “school dropout” is needed. Schools need to be more transparent with communities about factors that cause students to leave school early before graduation.

There also needs to be a more seamless system for documenting student’s mobility, particularly for those who move across districts and states. Sustained support systems for transitions from grade to grade are needed to assist students in succeeding at each grade level.

Parents and communities need access to current information that is readily available and understandable regarding school holding power. And schools need the voices of parents and communities to ensure that their input is central to a school’s index of effectiveness.

Schools and communities must work together to address systemic factors that lead to students dropping out of school.

## What we can do together...

- Expect ongoing information from your local schools about what they are doing to support students staying in school and graduating.
- Continually monitor the progress of schools in holding students through a community-based school holding power index or similar instrument.
- Create ongoing dialogues between educators and communities to increase school holding power with actions from home and school.
- Involve student voices in seeking effective strategies for staying in school and support for relevance and graduation.
- Set up a taskforce of school and community leaders to focus on systemic issues to increase school holding power locally.



# Require Teaching Quality

so that every student benefits from teachers who are certified, teach in their content area(s), and meet or exceed high standards of excellence.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Where all teachers value the diversity of the student population and are cross-culturally competent to support their diversity.
- Where the diversity of student and community populations served is viewed as an integral asset to the curriculum.
- Where each teacher is qualified and prepared with the skills to create student success coupled with cutting-edge technology and resources for student success.
- That demand each teacher successfully demonstrate the highest expectations for every student to be successful.

### Imagine communities...

- Where universities and schools work closely together to ensure that there is an abundance of certified teachers in each content area.
- That expect every teacher to have the will, commitment and vocation to use his or her skills and competencies in teaching every student.
- That truly value their teachers, and the teaching profession, as leaders and shapers of our children's future.
- That support a learning community of teachers in each school dedicated to continuous professional renewal and development.

### Imagine states...

- That enforce all teaching quality requirements including teacher preparation, certification and placement.
- That support effective teacher preparation programs – that equip teachers to work in diverse settings – at colleges and universities.

## But currently...

There is a critical shortage of teachers in key core content areas. Adding to the problem, there is poor distribution of qualified teachers to areas where the need for high quality instruction is the greatest. At the college and university level, there are no powerful recruiting efforts to attract, place, retain and retrain quality teachers to serve a growing diverse student population. At all levels, many teachers are teaching outside of their qualifications and certifications to the detriment of learning.

In addition, there is a disconnect between teacher preparation at the university level and what is required at the school district level. In many districts, communities are not included in teacher recruitment or retention efforts, and teachers are not prepared to link with parents and communities.







## What must be done...

Colleges, schools and communities must work together more closely to identify, prepare and support quality teachers for a changing student body. Transfer and recruitment processes need to be improved for teachers between institutions of higher education. Together, we must strategically identify candidate pools and establish cross-sector and intrastate linkages to improve the quality of candidates to work effectively with a diverse student population.

Institutions of higher education need to be committed to maintaining cutting-edge, relevant and recent content and pedagogy that reflects a multicultural perspective and draws upon resources within communities. Colleges and universities must ensure that multi-level support systems are in place to monitor and mentor quality teachers throughout the certification process and beyond. Within universities, the teacher preparation agenda should be at the center of institutions and should include a common vision that includes a well-integrated curriculum from multiple departments.

At the public school level, schools should continually upgrade teachers' professional competence and skills through professional development, on the job coaching and mentoring, and collegial supports.

## What we can do together...

- Expect to be part of the process to recruit and select qualified teachers who will educate your children.
- Advocate for schools to invite community, parent and student input in assessing teacher effectiveness.
- Solicit colleges to provide courses on parent and community engagement as part of their teacher preparation programs.
- Create local community groups or organizations to partner with schools.
- Advocate that National Council for the Administration of Teacher Education standards be fully embraced and reflected in local practices to effectively serve a diverse student body.



# Ensure Access and Inclusion

so that every child, regardless of race, color, national origin, home language, gender, economic circumstance or disability, attends good school, and has opportunities to learn and appropriate support for success.

## Imagine...

### Imagine schools...

- Where policies and practices advance full access and opportunities for all students.
- That view all language as a national treasure and expression of culture that must be embraced within a curriculum, rather than a “problem” to be solved, fixed or eliminated.
- That foster multilingualism as a means to increase one’s access to and success in a global community.
- Where boys and girls advance without restriction in core areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

### Imagine communities...

- In which every student has equitable access to good schools, quality instruction and excellent education.
- That recognize that our differences are our strength as a nation and that value the contribution of all members of society in the learning process.
- That realize that multiple languages are keys to success in a global society.
- That expect full access and shared planning, decision-making and inclusion in every aspect of the school’s functions.

### Imagine states...

- That uphold both the letter and the spirit of the law.
- That are held accountable for enforcing non-discrimination and unobstructed access for all students.



## But currently...

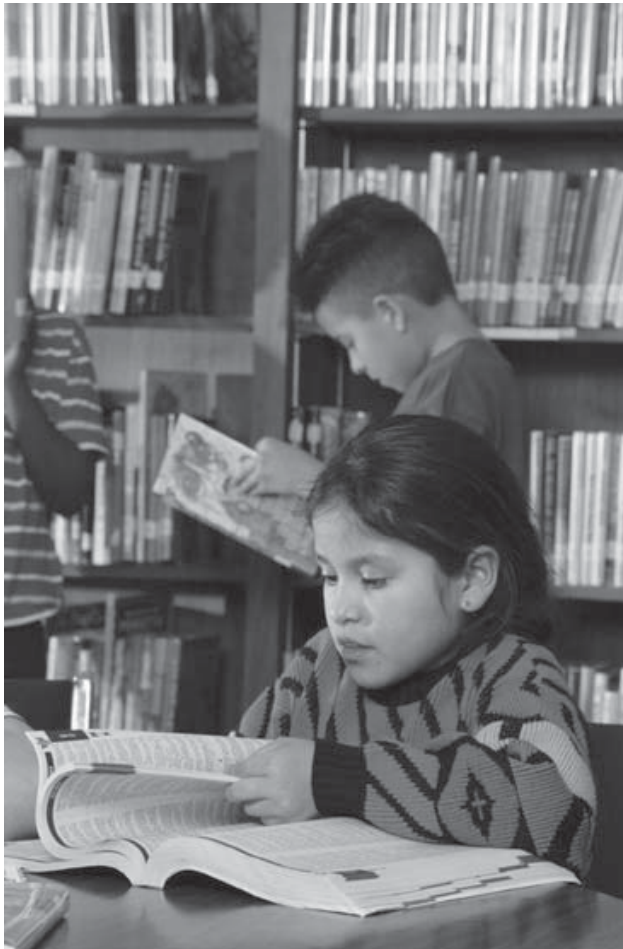
In many instances, minority families and children still are denied full access and inclusion to quality schools and programs. This is evidenced by high dropout rates across the nation, under-representation of minorities and linguistically diverse learners in gifted and talented programs, and their over-inclusion in special education programs and disciplinary actions in schools. These same populations do not access the same programs for post-secondary education, including college and university attendance and involvement in professional schools.

Furthermore, low-income and linguistically diverse parents continue to lack access to information and decision-making and representation in the business and operation of schools that impact their children’s success. Schools continue to fail to communicate to communities and parents in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways that deny or diminish access.

And finally, the sociocultural context of most schools’ operating experiences do not properly account for nor accommodate the diversity of the communities being served.

## What must be done...

Schools must respect the history, culture, knowledge and wisdom of communities they serve and incorporate this into their curriculum. Structures must be created to generate greater inclusivity so that the schools and communities use a variety of methods to communicate with each other effectively. In order to accomplish this, schools must employ practices and policies that value and promote diversity. Schools, coupled with communities, need to examine practices and policies that foster inclusivity for all students. Schools must ensure that they monitor practices and policies in order to fully adhere to the letter and spirit of the law regarding non-discrimination and increased access and inclusion for diverse students and their parents.



## What we can do together...

- Hold schools accountable to respect, implement and enforce all laws regarding non-discrimination.
- Partner and collaborate with local civil rights groups and organizations to support greater access and inclusion across groups.
- Conduct local community-school audits to ensure the highest level of access and inclusion of diverse families.
- Recommend appropriate changes in policy and practices to break down local barriers to access and success for all students.
- Host and participate in local dialogues and meetings that value diversity and promote working across groups to create access and inclusion for all children and families.
- Examine your personal biases and practices and those of your family and children that are preventing access, inclusion or valuing of differences.
- Embrace a belief about valuing the importance of others that disallows the exclusion of others for any reason.
- Demand that your schools adopt and use curricula that is equitable, inclusive and non-biased.
- Encourage teachers and administrators to pursue diversity training and implement practices that reflect that training.

50 years' desegregation

a promise to fulfill

# The Legacy of Mendez and Brown

- Overview
- Virtual Tour
- Ideas for Fulfilling the Promise
- Resources

Pursuit for Excellence and Equity

## Visit IDRA's Web Site

- Learn more about the promise of *Brown* and *Mendez* online
- Keep a record of the blueprint for action your community develops online
- Discuss your progress and issues you face
- Get resources

[www.idra.org/mendezbrown](http://www.idra.org/mendezbrown)

# Creating a Blueprint for Local Action

Use the following section to meet with local community members and construct blueprints for action around these key issues.

## Visioning...

**If our schools worked for all of our children, what would they look like?**

- For students...
- For communities...
- For teachers...
- For interactions across groups...
- For parents and community...

**If our community worked together to support equity and excellence in education for all children, what would it be like?**

- For students...
- For communities...
- For teachers...
- For interactions across groups...
- For parents and community...

# Creating a Shared Vision

**What is our shared vision for access and inclusion across sectors and across racial and ethnic groups in our area?**

**What are the challenges to overcome for access and success for all students in our area across race and sector?**

**What opportunities can we seize to accomplish this goal across race and sector?**

# Identifying Stakeholders for Planning

What segments of our community are impacted and should be a part of this discussion?

What are the greatest challenges to access and inclusion that we must overcome?

What community resources and strengths can we draw upon?

What opportunities are available for effective action?

# Taking Stock

**What is the current status of education in our community?**

How we work together across communities to support equity and excellence in education?

How do we, as leaders from different sectors and races, collaborate to create excellent schools?

What information or data do we need to describe our current education system?  
(Example: In civil rights, number of complaints; in fair funding: property wealth, equity assessment)



# Checklist for Effective Action

## Working Across Racial Groups

1. We have experience working together across racial groups.
2. Working across groups has been successful in our community.
3. Working together across groups has had positive impact on access and inclusion for all children.
4. People recognize the benefit of working across racial groups.
5. People are willing to work together across racial groups to reap the benefits for all children.
6. There is readiness in our community to work across racial groups for all children.

Not Evident    Somewhat Evident    Evident    Very Evident    Extremely Evident

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## Civil Rights

7. Discrimination is still a concern in our community.
8. Communities are aware of their civil rights in education.
9. There have been incidents of community disruption due to violation of civil rights.
10. Our school system monitors civil rights in education.

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## Public Engagement

11. Our schools engage parents and community at all levels of the educational system.
12. Schools have a mechanism in place to make policies and practices more understandable to the community.
13. Schools and community honor the knowledge, language and resources of the other.
14. All segments of the community feel valued and welcomed into schools.
15. The community and the school work together to resolve problems for their mutual benefit.
16. Schools and colleges actively reach out to parents and community.

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## Fair Funding

17. Our schools are funded equitably across our communities.
18. Our schools have the funding needed for excellence.
19. Our schools look alike in terms of conditions and resources across our communities.
20. All of our children, regardless of where they live, have access to an excellent education.
21. All schools receive enough money for effective teaching and learning.

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## Accountable Schools

22. Policies and practices at state and local levels foster equity and excellence.
23. Our community has ways of knowing school and student progress without hurting children.
24. Schools and states collect, use and share data to improve instruction rather than to penalize learners.
25. Accountability for teaching and learning is placed on the school rather than on the child.

Not Evident	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident	Extremely Evident
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

## School Holding Power

26. Our school has a system of monitoring student success so that no child is lost.
27. All of our students graduate from high school with a diploma.
28. All of our students graduate from high school with requirements for college success.
29. There is support for every student to enter and complete college.
30. Schools make sure all students stay in school and graduate.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

## Quality Teaching

31. Teachers have all the qualifications and certifications needed for what they teach.
32. All of our teachers teach in their areas of certification.
33. We have sufficient certified and qualified teachers in each core content area.
34. Teachers regularly update their certifications and qualifications as well as their skills and competencies.
35. Teachers regularly demonstrate their highest expectations for all students to succeed.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

## Access and Inclusion

36. School-community partnerships foster access and meaningful engagements for parents and community in the creation of excellent education.
37. Schools regularly monitor their policies and practices to ensure the greatest access for all students.
38. Schools regularly present a report card to the community measuring progress toward established benchmarks for access and inclusion.
39. School assessment practices ensure the greatest inclusion of diverse learners in all aspects of curricular and programmatic offerings.
40. School and community decision-making bodies and leadership reflect the diversity of our community.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

# Constructing Blueprints for Action...

**Vision: Access and success for all students**

**Action Steps:** What local actions across race and sector are needed to fulfill the promise of *Mendez* and *Brown* for all students?

Action Steps	Tools, Resources, Opportunities to Leverage	Accountability
1. Working Across Groups		
2. Civil Rights		
3. Public Engagement		
4. Fair Funding		

Action Steps	Tools, Resources, Opportunities to Leverage	Accountability
5. Accountable Schools		
6. School Holding Power		
7. Quality Teaching		
8. Access and Inclusion		

# Resources

## **Brown vs. Board of Education 50th Anniversary Commission**

U.S. Department of Education  
PO Box 8617  
Kansas City, Missouri 64114-5802  
Phone: 202-205-8162  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/brownvboard50th/>

## **Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research**

785-235-3939  
[brownfound@juno.com](mailto:brownfound@juno.com)

## **Equity Assistance Centers Network**

<http://www.equitycenters.org>

## **Foundation for the Mid-South**

134 East Amite Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201  
Phone: 601-355-8167  
<http://www.fndmidsouth.org>

## **Intercultural Development Research Association**

5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  
Phone: 210-444-1710  
Fax: 210-444-1714  
[contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)  
[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)

## **League of United Latin American Citizens**

National Office  
2000 L Street NW, Suite 610  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202-833-6130  
Fax: 202-833-6135  
[www.lulac.org](http://www.lulac.org)

## **Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund**

140 E. Houston Street #300  
San Antonio, Texas 78205  
Phone: 210-224-5476  
<http://www.maldef.org>



## **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People**

National Headquarters  
4805 Mt. Hope Drive  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215  
Toll Free: 877-NAACP-98  
<http://www.naacp.org>

## **National Council of La Raza**

Headquarters Office  
1126 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202-785-1670  
<http://www.nclr.org>

## **South Central Collaborative for Equity, IDRA**

210-444-1017  
[contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)  
<http://www.idra.org/scce>

## **Southern Poverty Law Center**

400 Washington Avenue  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104  
Phone: 334-956-8200  
<http://www.splcenter.org>

## **Texans for Fair Funding**

<http://www.texans4fairfunding.org>

# About the Cases

## **Brown vs. Board of Education**

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that compulsory segregation of races in public schools was unconstitutional. The court held that separate facilities for Black and White students were "inherently unequal," and in 1955, ordered states with segregated schools to open them to all races.

*Outcome* – This ruling struck down the "separate but equal doctrine," declared separation of Black and White students unconstitutional and ordered desegregation of schools with "all deliberate speed."

## **Mendez vs. Westminster and the California Board of Education**

In March of 1945, Latino parents in Orange County, California confronted the segregation of their children into "Mexican Schools." Gonzalo Mendez, William Guzmán, Frank Palomino, Thomas Estrada and Lorenzo Ramírez, with the help of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), sued four local school districts for segregating their children.

*Outcome* – In February of 1946, this landmark case ended segregation in California school districts. Governor Earl Warren signed legislation prohibiting segregation in California, giving equal rights to all students. The Mendez case foreshadowed *Brown vs. Board of Education*. The Mendez case included the judicious use of social science research, the application of the 14th Amendment and the involvement of Thurgood Marshall, co-author of the amicus brief filed by the NAACP.



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