



## New Research on Securing Educational Equity & Excellence for English Language Learners in Texas Secondary Schools



**IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program  
Symposium ~ February 2, 2015**



**8:00 am Registration**

**8:30 am Symposium Opening**

### Introductions

María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., President & CEO, IDRA  
Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP, Ph.D., President, Our Lady of the Lake University  
Special Presentation, Laura Tobin Cárdenas  
The Honorable State Senator José Rodríguez

**9:00 am Research Presentation**

### Overview of the Day

Bradley Scott, Ph.D., Director, South Central Collaborative for Equity, IDRA

### Significance of the Research

Albert Cortez, Ph.D., Director of Policy, IDRA  
Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos, Ph.D., 2014 José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow, Associate  
Professor in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University

**10:15 am Break**

**10:30 am Discussants**

Albert Kauffman, J.D., Professor of Law, St. Mary's University (moderator)  
Martha Alonso, M.B.A., ELL Transition Coach, John Paul Stevens High School, San Antonio  
Veronica Alvarez, M.A., Bilingual/ESL/GT/LOTE Coordinator, Bilingual Department, Harlandale ISD, San Antonio  
Rogelio Sáenz, Ph.D., Dean, College of Public Policy & Peter Flawn Professor of Demography, University of Texas at San Antonio  
Abelardo Saavedra, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, South San Antonio ISD  
Julian Vasquez Heilig, Ph.D., Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Director of the Doctorate in Educational Leadership at California State Sacramento

This symposium is being streamed live by NOWcastSA. The video will be available for viewing after the event as well.



<http://budurl.com/IDRAncJ15>

**Share your ideas and reflections about the education of ELLs  
and connect with us online.**

Photos from today's event will be posted on our Flickr page.



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**Hashtags: #IDRAresearch #ELL #ESL #txed**

Noon

## Luncheon and Roundtable Discussions

### Roundtable Leaders

Nilka Avilés, Ed.D., Senior Education Associate, IDRA

Rebeca Barrera, M.A., Director Latino Initiatives, Scholastic

David G. Hinojosa, J.D., Southwest Regional Counsel, MALDEF

Albert Kauffman, J.D., Professor of Law, St. Mary's University

Frances Guzmán, M.Ed., IDRA Consultant

Celina Moreno, J.D., Legislative Staff Attorney, MALDEF

Ezequiel Peña, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Director, Center for Mexican American Studies & Research at Our Lady of the Lake University

Erika Prosper, M.A., Director of Consumer Insights, H-E-B Corporation

Gerardo Rojas, Civil Rights Staff Attorney, Office for Civil Rights, Dallas

Adela Solís Ph.D., IDRA Consultant

1:30 p.m.

## Roundtable Leader Panel

### Panel Discussion

### Parting Words

Student Guest: Raquel Mijares, President, Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO) at Our Lady of the Lake University

2:30 p.m.

End

## IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program

The José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program was established by IDRA to honor the memory of IDRA founder, Dr. José Angel Cárdenas. The goal of the program is to engage the nation's most promising researchers in investigating school finance solutions that secure equity and excellence for all public school students. Under the leadership of Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO, the José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program focuses on and funds school finance research that builds cross-disciplinary and inter-sector perspectives on equity.

Dr. Cárdenas was actively involved in the school finance reform efforts since the early days of the *Rodríguez vs. San Antonio ISD* litigation when he was superintendent of Edgewood ISD. Following the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court reversal of the *Rodríguez* decision that found the Texas system of school finance unconstitutional, he resigned from Edgewood ISD to establish IDRA to advocate for school finance reform and improved educational opportunities for all children. He led decades-long efforts to achieve school

finance equity and was instrumental in the *Edgewood* court cases. His research, articles and books provided a blueprint for those interested in bringing about future reform in schools and other social institutions.

In the foreword of Dr. Cárdenas' book, *Texas School Finance Reform: An IDRA Perspective*, Dr. James A. Kelly stated: "He worked hard, he played hard. And in doing so, never lost sight of his goal. Because, for José, school finance reform was never really an end in itself. It remained a means to a larger end: to improve teaching and learning for all children; in particular, to improve the life chances of the poor and dispossessed."



**"Every child has the right to a quality education."  
"Todo niño tiene el derecho a una educación de primera clase."**



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## 2014 IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow



### Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos, Ph.D.

Associate Professor in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University

Dr. Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos is an Associate Professor in Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University. He has published extensively in the area of K-12 education finance, policy and parent engagement and its impact on opportunity, equity and outcomes in low-income ethnically and linguistically diverse communities. His work has been published in leading academic

journals such as *Review of Educational Research*, *Journal of Education Finance*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, *Educational Considerations*, and *Journal of Latinos and Education*. He co-edited *Bicultural Parent Engagement: Empowerment and Advocacy* (2011), published by Teachers College Press. This book received a 2012 AESA Critics Choice Award. He is co-editor of the *Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE) Journal*.

Dr. Jimenez-Castellanos is a 2014 School Finance Fellow with the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and a 2012 Ford Postdoctoral Fellow administered by the National Research Council of the National Academies. He was bestowed the honor of a Fulton Professor in 2011 and served as Arizona's acting director of the University Research Council (URC) in Education.

In addition, Dr. Jimenez-Castellanos actively teaches, recruits and mentors graduate students in M.A., Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs focused on educational policy and evaluation. He hopes to develop a pipeline of effective teachers, administrators, policy researchers and academics to help improve our educational system to better serve all students and communities. He is a former migrant student, first-generation college graduate and K-12 educator. He received his M.A. in policy studies from San Diego State University and Ph.D. in education from Claremont Graduate University and San Diego State University.

## IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program - 2014 Advisory Committee

Mr. David G. Hinojosa, J.D., Regional Counsel, MALDEF

Ms. Celina Moreno, J.D., Legislative Staff Attorney, MALDEF

Mr. Al Kauffman, J.D., Professor of Law, St Mary's University School of Law

Ms. Norma Cantu, J.D., Professor of Education; Professor of Law, University of Texas School of Law



### María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

President & CEO, IDRA

Dr. Robledo Montecel's lifetime concern with youth has provided inspiration and vision for many communities across the country. Going against the current deficit model approaches in schools, she champions the value, integrity and possibilities of all children. A nationally-recognized expert on the prevention and recovery of dropouts, Dr. Robledo Montecel directed the first statewide study of dropouts in Texas. In the 1990s, she served as principal investigator in an OBEMLA national study of effective programs serving ELLs around the United States and identification of the critical program elements determined to be essential to delivery of effective instructional services to ELLs. Dr. Robledo Montecel serves on the advisory board for the Univision Education Campaign, *Es el Momento*. She was an invited expert on the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and was invited to present testimony before the federal Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a doctorate in research and evaluation from the Urban Education program at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. She was named a Women and Minorities Research Fellow by the National Institute of Education.



### Sister Jane Ann Slater, CDP, Ph.D.

President, Our Lady of the Lake University

Sister Slater, a member of the Congregation of Divine Providence, was named president of Our Lady of the Lake University in March 2013. Slater has served the university and the Congregation in a variety of roles throughout her career. She taught as a member of the OLLU chemistry faculty from 1970-1981, was the dean of students in 1974 and was the chairperson of the Academic Affairs Committee in 1972. Most recently, she served on the board of trustees from 1987-1993 and again from 2005-2011 while she was Superior General of the Congregation. She is the eighth president in OLLU history and the second member of the Congregation to serve in this capacity. A native of Texarkana, Ark., President Slater joined the Congregation of Divine Providence more than 50 years ago. She earned a Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from the University of Colorado and a bachelor of arts in chemistry from OLLU. In July of 2015, President Slater will step down and accept the position of Chancellor of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. She will be the first woman to hold that position.



## **The Honorable Senator José Rodríguez**

### **Texas State Senator, District 29**

Sen. Rodríguez represents Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Sen. Rodríguez currently serves as the chairman of the Senate Hispanic Caucus, vice chairman of the Senate Jurisprudence Committee, and a member of the Senate Committees on Criminal Justice, Veteran Affairs and Military Installations, and Government Organization. Sen. Rodríguez graduated from Pan American University in 1971 and received his law degree from the National Law Center at George Washington University in 1974. Prior to his election to the Texas Senate, Sen. Rodríguez served as the El Paso County Attorney for 17 years. As a state senator, he is a staunch advocate for those in need. He has advocated for increased funding for our schools; fought to ensure equal access to the justice system; helped stop anti-immigrant, anti-Hispanic legislation; and authored a number of state laws to protect workers' rights, to increase transparency and accountability of local governments and school districts, and to establish a new health sciences university in El Paso. Sen. Rodríguez also has filed bills to increase access to health care by expanding Medicaid and shoring up funding for our safety net hospitals, to promote equality by repealing the state's unconstitutional anti-gay laws, and to grow and develop the renewable energy industry.



## **Albert Cortez, Ph.D.**

### **Director of Policy, IDRA**

Dr. Albert Cortez is a nationally-recognized expert in school finance, education of ELLs and recent immigrant students, and student assessment. Since 1975, his continuous work in these areas provides him with an extraordinary command of the issues and solutions. At IDRA since 1975, he has served in various capacities ranging from trainer, evaluator, program director, research and evaluation division director, and as the organization's policy director. For over three decades, Dr. Cortez has stood for children's rights, as an expert witness in landmark cases, such as *Alien Education Litigation*, *Edgewood vs. Kirby I*; *Edgewood vs. Kirby II*; *Edgewood vs. Kirby III*; *Edgewood vs. Kirby IV* and *Edgewood V*, and before select education committees, including those of the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives, and a U.S. Senate Education and Labor subcommittee hearing on public school finance. He also was an expert witness in the *West Orange-Cove vs. Neeley* case in 2005 and the current *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Michael Williams, et al.*, case. Dr. Cortez received a doctorate in cultural foundations of education with a support area in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin.



## **Bradley Scott, Ph.D.**

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

Dr. Scott directs the IDRA equity assistance center, the South Central Collaborative for Equity. The center works with school districts in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. He leads technical assistance and training to public school districts, school personnel, students in those schools, parents and community members in the development and implementation plans to cope with educational issues emerging from the desegregation, unitary status, and settlement agreement processes and the effort to create educational equity and excellence for all learners in public schools regardless of their race, gender or national origin. Dr. Scott served as assistant director and teacher in a child development center, working extensively with Head Start programs throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, and providing instructional leadership and training to administration and staff. Dr. Scott earned his doctor of philosophy with a concentration in educational administration from the University of Texas at Austin.

## **Symposium Panelists**



## **Albert Kauffman, J.D.**

### **Professor of Law, St. Mary's University**

Mr. Kauffman is a Professor of Law at St. Mary's School of Law in San Antonio teaching courses on education, state and federal procedure, constitutional law and complex litigation, and directing the Practice Credit Program. Since leaving MALDEF in 2002, Mr. Kauffman has worked at Harvard and Berkeley as a researcher on education civil rights. He also was a lecturer on law at Harvard Law School. He was a civil rights litigator for 28 years, specializing in the education, voting, and employment rights of Latinos. As a MALDEF attorney, Mr. Kauffman was the lead attorney for plaintiffs in the Texas school finance cases, for Latino plaintiffs in the Texas higher education system finance and desegregation case and in litigation challenging Texas's use of the TAAS test for graduation from Texas high schools. He has also litigated affirmative action cases, local and state voting rights, employment discrimination cases, immigration and hospital admission policy cases. Mr. Kauffman has been an advocate on civil rights issues and was one of a small team of experts involved with passing Texas' Top 10 Percent Plan for admission to universities and Texas' recent changes to its admissions and scholarship criteria for public graduate and professional schools. He was selected in 2010 as one of the "The 25 Greatest Texas Lawyers of the Past Quarter-Century" by Texas Lawyer. In 2013, he received the "Drum Major for Justice Award" from the American Association for Affirmative Action and the Maria A. Berriozabal Visionary Leadership Award from Our Lady of the Lake University.





**Martha Alonso, M.B.A.**  
**ELL Transition Coach, John Paul**  
**Stevens High School, San Antonio**

Ms. Alonso has been in the education field for five years. She taught sixth through eighth grade ESL for three years at Rhodes Middle School in San Antonio ISD. As the only ESL teacher at Rhodes MS, she served all 60 ELL students on campus, connecting with core content teachers and her students' families, and tutoring her students in math and science before and after school. During the last two years, she has been with Northside ISD. Currently, she is the ELL Transition Coach at Stevens High School. Ms. Alonso participated in IDRA's Transition to Teaching program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. She also is a doctoral student at the University of the Incarnate Word, pursuing a Ph.D. in education with a concentration in organizational leadership.



**Dr. Abelardo Savaadra, Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools,**  
**South San Antonio ISD**

On August 31, 2009, Dr. Abelardo Saavedra completed a 36-year career in public education when he retired from the position of superintendent of schools for the Houston ISD. Dr. Saavedra has served as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, deputy superintendent and superintendent of schools. During his tenure in Corpus Christi as superintendent, the district received state and national recognition for its "Real World Academic Standards" in all grade levels. While superintendent in Houston ISD, the district developed and implemented the largest pay for performance program in the country. Academic performance increased dramatically, and there was a substantial closure of the achievement gap by minority students and children of poverty. Since his retirement, Dr. Saavedra has remained involved in several non-profit boards. After serving in the role of interim superintendent for South San Antonio ISD beginning December 2013, he was asked and agreed to accept a five-year contract as superintendent and devotes his time and energy, with the support of the school board, to transforming the district. Dr. Saavedra holds bachelor of science and master of science degrees from Texas A&M University in Kingsville, Texas, and a doctorate in school administration from the University of Michigan.



**Veronica Alvarez, M.A.**  
**Bilingual/ESL/GT/LOTE Coordinator,**  
**Bilingual Department, Harlandale ISD**

Mrs. Alvarez has worked with bilingual-dual language programs for more than 15 years as a teacher, regional educational specialist and currently as the bilingual/ESL coordinator for Harlandale ISD. She holds a master of arts in educational leadership and bachelor of arts in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in bilingual and early childhood programs. She has worked to support school districts in implementing and evaluating bilingual-dual language programs, provided various training sessions and coordinated the regional dual language conference in San Antonio. She has collaborated in a variety of state educational projects and focus groups. Currently Mrs. Alvarez facilitates the operation of the bilingual/ESL programs in preK3-12 grades.



**Julian Vasquez Heilig, Ph.D.**  
**Professor of Educational Leadership and**  
**Policy Studies and the Director of the**  
**Doctorate in Educational Leadership at**  
**California State Sacramento**

Dr. Vasquez Heilig is an award-winning researcher and teacher. He has held a variety of research and practitioner positions in organizations from Boston to Beijing. These experiences have provided formative professional perspectives to bridge research, theory, and practice. His current research includes quantitatively and qualitatively examining how high-stakes testing and accountability-based reforms and market reforms impact urban minority students. His research interests also include issues of access, diversity, and equity in higher education. His work has been cited by the New York Times, Washington Post, Associated Press, USA Today, Education Week, Huffington Post and other print and electronic media outlets. He has also appeared on local and national radio and TV including PBS, NBC, NBLatino, NPR, Univision, Al Jazeera and MSNBC. He obtained his Ph.D. in education administration and policy analysis and a masters in sociology from Stanford University. He also holds a masters of higher education and a bachelor's of history and psychology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He blogs at *Cloaking Inequity*, consistently rated one of the top 50 education websites in the world by Teach100. Follow him on Twitter @ProfessorJVH.



**Rogelio Sáenz, Ph.D.**  
**University of Texas at San Antonio and**  
**Dean, College of Public Policy & Peter**  
**Flawn Professor of Demography**

Dr. Sáenz is dean of the College of Public Policy and Peter Flawn Professor of Demography at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is also a policy fellow of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Sáenz has written extensively in the areas of demography, Latina/os, race and ethnic relations, inequality, immigration, and human rights. He is co-editor of *Latina/os in the United States: Changing the Face of América*, co-author of *Latino Issues: A Reference Handbook*, and author of the Population Reference Bureau's Population Bulletin Update titled *Latinos in the United States 2010*. Dr. Sáenz is president of the Southwestern Social Science Association and is past chair of the council of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan.

## Roundtable Leaders



**Nilka Avilés, Ed.D.**  
**Senior Education Associate, IDRA**

Dr. Avilés has worked in the governmental sector in Puerto Rico, serving as a teacher, personnel director assistant, and director of a cultural and recreational center. She later taught science in the Edgewood ISD in San Antonio along with teaching ESL and GED prep to adult learners. She later served as academic dean and then principal. In 2004, she became the director of the Early College High School, a pioneer program in the state of Texas and of the University of Texas at San Antonio P-20 Initiatives Office. At IDRA, she focuses on teacher professional development in college readiness and science, particularly, in serving ELLs. She also is a site coordinator for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in New York City. Dr. Avilés earned an Ed.D. in education in educational leadership from the University of Texas at San Antonio and is a graduate college instructor for UTSA as well.



**David G. Hinojosa, J.D.**  
**Southwest Regional Counsel,  
Mexican American Legal Defense and  
Educational Fund (MALDEF)**

Mr. Hinojosa is MALDEF's Southwest Regional Counsel, directing the office's litigation and policy work. Since joining MALDEF in 2003, He has become a leading litigator and advocate in the area of civil rights, with an emphasis in education. He has spearheaded several education impact cases, including school finance/educational opportunity cases in New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Mr. Hinojosa has testified before local and state governments, lectured at universities and law schools, served as an expert panelist at several local, state and national conferences, and written two book chapters on school finance litigation that are pending publication. A proud graduate of Edgewood High School, Mr. Hinojosa received his bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University and his J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.



**Rebeca Barrera, M.A.**  
**Director Latino Initiatives, Scholastic**

Ms. Barrera is the director of Hispanic Initiatives at Scholastic, managing its partnerships with Latino organizations and creating new opportunities for interaction in the Latino market. Understanding the emerging trends and issues of Latino communities, she strives to extend the power of literacy and education to these communities. Her position was an outgrowth of the 13 years during which she served on Scholastic's board of directors. Prior to joining Scholastic, Barrera was president of the National Latino Children's Institute, an organization she founded to create a voice for young Latinos, and seven years as executive director of the Corporate Child Development Fund for Texas. Loyal to her cultural heritage, she also is owner and designer of Tres Rebecas, a Latino cultural arts design studio that features fashion accessories from the Borderlands region and Latin America. Ms. Barrera has an M.A. in bilingual early childhood education from the University of Texas at San Antonio.



**Celina Moreno, J.D.**  
**Legislative Staff Attorney, Mexican  
American Legal Defense and  
Educational Fund (MALDEF)**

Ms. Moreno is the legislative staff attorney for MALDEF's Southwest Regional Office in San Antonio. She analyzes legislation and advocates for the protection and promotion of Latino civil rights in the areas of political access, education, immigration, employment and access to justice for the region. Ms. Moreno has testified in numerous state legislative hearings on issues ranging from public school finance reform to immigrant rights. Prior to joining MALDEF, Ms. Moreno served as an attorney and Equal Justice Works Fellow at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA), where she directed the organization's School-to-Prison Pipeline Project, seeking to obstruct the forces channeling students from schools into the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Ms. Moreno received a bachelor's of journalism from the University of Texas at Austin, a law degree from the University of Houston, and a master's of public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.



**Frances Guzmán, M.Ed.**  
**IDRA Consultant**

Ms. Guzmán, M.Ed., has four decades of experience in the field of education, including teaching at the pre-kindergarten, primary, secondary and college levels; serving as the director of professional development for a major metropolitan school district in Texas; working in administration, supervision and evaluation of elementary campuses and districtwide Title VII programs; and research and curriculum development for IDRA, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Scott Foreman and DDL book publishers. At IDRA, Ms. Guzmán led early childhood activities for the IDRA Texas Parent Information and



**Ezequiel Peña, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor of Psychology,**  
**Director, Center for Mexican American**  
**Studies & Research at Our Lady of the**  
**Lake University**

Dr. Peña is associate professor of psychology and director of the Center for Mexican American Studies and Research (CMASR) at Our Lady of the Lake University. He oversees Higher Education for a New America's La Cosecha—The Harvest Funding Initiatives; Transnational Health Study Abroad and Exchange Efforts; Campus-Community Partnership Building; CMASR Research Collections Curating Efforts; and cultural and academic programming events. Previously, he served as director for the OLLU Counseling Psychology Doctoral Program and the Psychological Services for Spanish-Speaking Populations bilingual therapy certificate program. Dr. Peña earned his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Texas at Austin. His scholarly and clinical interests are in Latina/o and multicultural psychology; the reduction of mental health disparities for Spanish-speaking communities; Spanish-English bilingual therapy, training, and supervision; increasing equity and access for first-generation Latina/o university students; and the intersections of Latina/o identity, class, gender, sexual orientation, spirituality, and individual voice.



**Gerardo Rojas**  
**Civil Rights Staff Attorney, Office for**  
**Civil Rights, Dallas**

Mr. Rojas is originally from Brownsville, Texas, and has been living in Dallas for 21 years. He received a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from Baylor University, and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Mr. Rojas has been an attorney in the private and public sectors over the last 21 years. He has been a staff attorney with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) for approximately 10 years. In that position, he provides legal guidance and conducts complaint investigations and participates in compliance reviews, pro-active enforcement activities and provision of technical assistance as related to the laws enforced by OCR that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability and discrimination against any group officially covered by the *Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act* of 2001.



**Erika Prosper, M.A.**  
**Director of Consumer Insights, H-E-B**  
**Corporation**

Mrs. Prosper has carved a career focused on gaining a greater understanding of the key drivers that can persuade people to change their behaviors. Currently, she leads a team that captures, measures and evaluates the influences of the company's efforts on its customers. The knowledge gained through her team's work in research and analyses is used to develop and put into action H-E-B's strategic vision. Before

HEB, Mrs. Prosper served as the director of strategic planning and research for Garcia 360° in San Antonio. Some of her clients included: KB Home, Papa John's Pizza, Anheuser-Busch, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Minute Maid, Dial Corp., Fannie Mae Corp., Audi USA, The Home Depot, Infinity Insurance, Simon Malls, Hispanic Scholarship Fund, New York life Insurance, the State of Tamaulipas, Mexico, Las Vegas Convention and Visitor Authority, Harrah's Entertainment, and Blue Cross Blue Shield. Growing up as a migrant in the Rio Grande Valley, Mrs. Prosper holds a masters in communication from the University of Pennsylvania, and a bachelor's degree in Plan II liberal arts and second bachelor's of science in advertising from the University of Texas at Austin. She and her husband, San Antonio Councilman District 8, Ron Nirenberg, have one son, Jonah.

**Adela Solís Ph.D.**  
**IDRA Consultant**



Dr. Solís has more than 25 years of experience as a professional development and evaluation research specialist in the field of ESL/bilingual education, much of that time with IDRA. Throughout her career she has been dedicated to work that promotes excellence in the education of minority students. She has worked with school districts and universities in Texas and throughout the United States. Dr. Solís has a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Southwest Texas University, a master of arts degree in bilingual-bicultural studies and teacher education from the University of Texas San Antonio, and a Ph.D. in education and applied linguistics from George Mason University.

**Parting Words**



**Raquel Mijares**  
**President, Bilingual Education Student**  
**Organization (BESO) at Our Lady of the**  
**Lake University**

Ms. Mijares is a senior at Our Lady of the Lake University. She will be graduating in December 2015 with a bachelor of science in interdisciplinary studies early childhood through sixth grade with a concentration in bilingual education. Raquel is an active member of OLLU's Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO) holding leadership positions for the last two years. She is a member of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education and has presented for the past two years at the National Association for Bilingual Education conference. Raquel volunteers for her local community and is active in her church. Her goal is to become a local bilingual education teacher and give back to the community that has supported her. She hopes to go on to pursue a master's degree and provide leadership to other bilingual students.



# In Texas, some children are considered more valuable than others

Texas schools in 2013 have an estimated

**\$1,098 gap** per student in how much money they have to spend to educate our children

**\$5,617**  
PER STUDENT

Poorest 100 school districts

**\$6,715**  
PER STUDENT

Richest 100 school districts

The richest school districts still have about **\$27,450 more** to spend **per classroom** on teachers, curriculum, books, technology tools and supplies

**\$140,425**  
PER CLASSROOM

Poorest 100 school districts

**\$167,875**  
PER CLASSROOM

Richest 100 school districts

**It doesn't have to be this way**  
**[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)**

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January 2014. Figures based on average estimated 2013 revenue per weighted student at districts' adopted tax rates for 2012-13.  
Calculated by IDRA. Data source: Texas Attorney General's Office, October 2013.



## Education of English Language Learners

### ELLs are the fastest-growing segment of the student population.

4.7 million students in the United States = 10% of the student population

The highest percentages of ELL students are in: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Texas.

863,974 students in Texas = 17% of the student population

200,000 of those are in middle school and high school

### A diverse group of students with varying instructional needs

The ELL student population is composed of several subgroups...

**Long-term ELLs** have been classified as LEP for at least seven years and are typically found in grades 6-12. They make up 50% to 70% of secondary ELLs. They often are fluent conversationally, while their academic language needs go unnoticed or under served.

**Reclassified ELLs** have received language support services and are now in mainstream classrooms. Academic performance varies based on the quality of services they received, timing of the end of services, segregation within schools, and access to high quality programs.

**Newcomer ELLs** are new or recent immigrants. These first-generation immigrants tend to perform better than their peers, though they lag in graduation rates. This is a small subset of the larger ELL population.

### Many schools are failing to effectively serve ELLs

ELL students are among the most likely to drop out. The Texas four-year longitudinal dropout rate for ELLs (Gr 9-12) is 38% compared to 12% for the state.

Only 1.5% (10 of 613) of secondary schools had a high proportion of ELL students passing all end-of-course exams.

Only 8% of ELL students were considered college-ready (in math & ELA) compared to 56% for all students.

A majority of ELL students are served in bilingual programs for a few years and are then transitioned to regular all-English curricula and instruction. But a portion are never provided appropriate program services and are underserved.

### Schools are ill equipped to serve ELLs

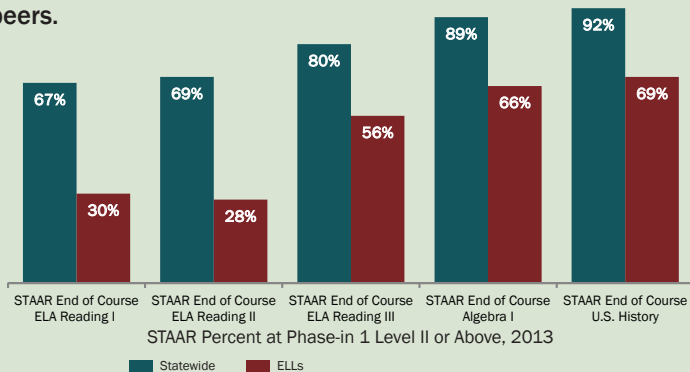
40% of elementary bilingual or ESL teachers and 35% of secondary ESL teachers in Texas are less than fully certified.

Texas provides only a 10% add-on funding for its bilingual and ESL programs. Since the adoption of the 10% add-on weights for bilingual and ESL programs in 1984, no change in those original weights has been adopted.

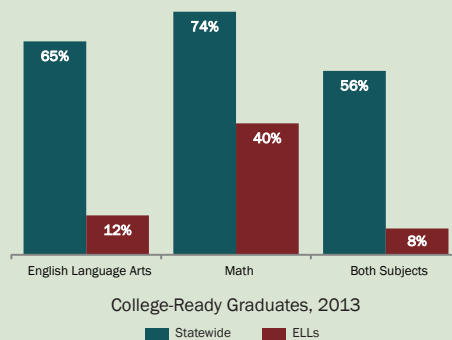
Schools with high concentrations of ELLs tend to have higher enrollments, higher student-to-teacher ratios, and are more likely to be Title I schools.

The first intensive federal monitoring of No Child Left Behind Act waivers shows states struggling help English learners adjust to new standards.

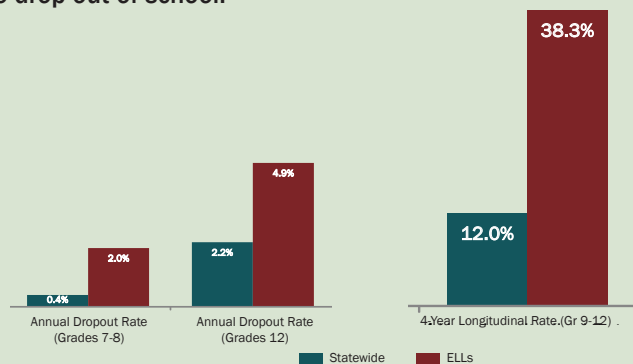
Secondary ELL students have significantly lower scores on STAAR end-of-course exams than their peers.



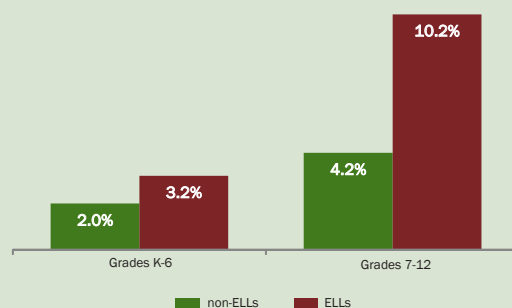
Dramatically fewer secondary ELL students meet college-readiness standards than their peers.



ELL students are more than twice as likely as their peers to drop out of school.

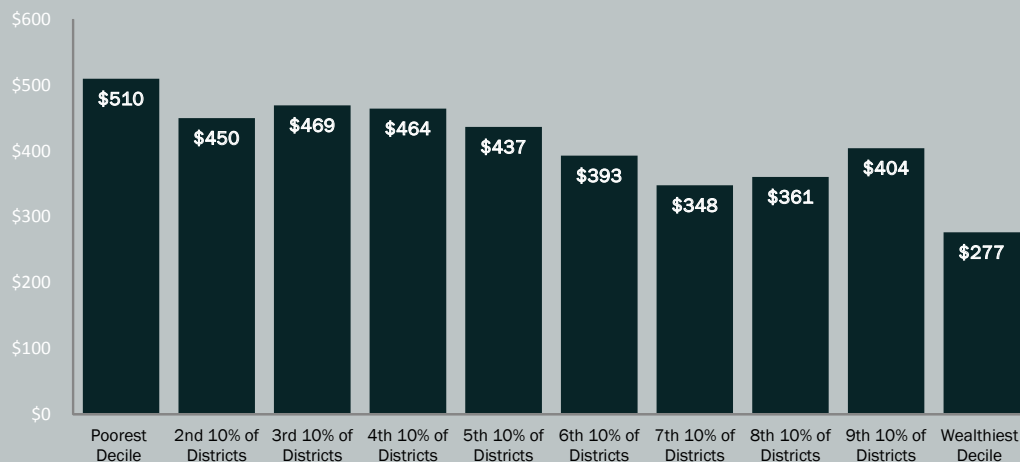


Secondary ELL students are more than twice as likely as their peers to be retained in grade.



\* Source: 2014 Comprehensive Biennial Report on Texas Public Schools, Texas Education Agency

IDRA's expert report presented in the *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Michael Williams, et al.*, case found that, if compensatory education & bilingual/ESL funding weights were increased to a 40% add-on, school districts would receive significant additional revenue per student (per WADA).



Report of the Intercultural Development Research Association Related to the Extent of Equity in the Texas School Finance System and Its Impact on Selected Student Related Issues  
Prepared for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, August 2012