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## Focus: Change Strategies

# The Power of Leadership in Schools

by Bradley Scott, Ph.D.

We are in an era of great reform in public schools. We are all called to do more, to be more, and to reach for more to create great schools for every learner, whoever he or she may be and regardless of their defining characteristics.

We need great leaders in schools who understand the demands of the day for education that prepares all diverse learners for higher and higher levels of schooling, for college going and completion, and for life success. We need great teachers and we need powerful principals who know how to lead a school to academic excellence and high student performance.

This article speaks briefly to the need for dynamic principals who can exercise powerful leadership on school campuses to move all students to high academic outcomes, college completion and successful lives.

What kind of leadership is required to do this?

Jody Spiro of the Wallace Foundation (2013) offers five lessons about what makes for effective principals. Effective principals...

- Shape a vision of academic success for all students;
- Create a climate hospitable to education;
- Cultivate leadership in others;
- Elevate and improve instruction; and
- Manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

Similarly, Jackson & McDermott (2012) assert that leadership must be *fearless* rather than *fearful* to transform schools to high performance.

Robyn Jackson (2013) is unequivocal in her view that almost any teacher can become a master teacher under the right instructional leader, provided the leader can pass the real test, which is to get people to follow him or her as the leader works through other people to accomplish the vision and goals of the school.

Both the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2013) note that good principals...

- Attract, support and retain a high-quality teaching staff;
- Manage their personal time and priorities to focus on the right "stuff";
- Spend considerable time and energy becoming instructional leaders; and
- Provide a stable, predictable and supportive foundation for a high performing school.

For Douglas Reeves (2009), leaders must be willing to confront the myths about how change should be led in school, how commitment needs to be built and how real leaders get results. Reeves asserts that all of the right leadership qualities do not exist in one person – although that one

(cont. on Page 2)

*“Three change strategies help schools, as systems, hold on to all students and secure their success: building community capacity to strengthen schools; creating coalitions that amplify parent and community voices and impact; and building school capacity to ensure that every child receives an excellent education.”*

– Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

(The Power of Leadership in Schools, continued from Page 1)

person (the principal leader) is absolutely necessary – but rather in a team that exhibits the traits of leadership and exercises the leadership responsibility as part of a leadership community.

Ash & D'Auria (2013) similarly identify four drivers to build a blueprint for a learning system:

- Build trust;
- Collaborate in all directions to build teamwork;
- Provide capacity-building for all educators; and
- Create leaders at all levels.

The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity has spent considerable time developing a set of qualities, characteristics and capacities identified in the literature to describe powerful leadership needed by effective principal leaders. These individuals should serve as models for other leaders to emulate and should inspire teachers and other stakeholders including students to aspire to excellence, high achievement, competence, and productivity in a college-going culture that leads to high school graduation, college going and completion, and successful engagement in professional work and community life in a globally-focused and competitive world. These leaders are:

1. Ready
2. Agile
3. Tenacious
4. Deliberate
5. Persuasive
6. Competent
7. Current
8. Connected
9. Exemplary
10. Inclusive
11. Demanding

12. Deeply committed
13. Clear
14. Uncompromising
15. Of high integrity and principled
16. Change agents
17. Courageous
18. Focused
19. Culturally responsive
20. Disciplined
21. Affirming
22. Optimizing
23. Opportunistic
24. Visionary
25. Resourceful

They must reflect these characteristics in their leadership practice.

The SCCE has begun to document and share examples of such powerful leaders on the SCCE Equity Hub in the IDRA website. These principal leaders possess these leadership characteristics and capacities. Their leadership is making a difference for the students and families they serve. It is important to see powerful leadership in action and indifferent contexts.

The SCCE Principal Leadership portion of the SCCE Equity Hub provides actual examples of dynamic leadership that is making a difference in schools across the region. We hope that you will use these leaders as a resource to inspire you and to encourage you to exercise your own leadership as you continue to impact the lives of your students.

Visit the SCCE Equity Hub and see the power of leadership in action as we post dynamic examples of principals in action making a difference for students and families.



## Resources

- Ash, P.B., & J. D'Auria. "Blueprint for a Learning System: Create One Larger, More Flexible Team That Encourages Collaboration in All Directions," *JSD –The Learning Forward Journal* (2013) 34, No. 3 42-46.
- Jackson, Y., & V. McDermott. *Aim High, Achieve More: How to Transform Urban Schools through Fearless Leadership* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2012). Vol. Pp. 13-102.
- Jackson, R.R. *Never Underestimate Your Teachers: Instructional Leadership for Excellence in Every Classroom* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2013).
- National Association of Secondary School Principals, and National Association of Elementary School Principals. *Leadership Matters – What Research Says About the Importance of Principal Leadership* (Alexandria, Va.: NASSP & NAESP, 2013).
- Reeves, D.B. *Leading Change in Your School: How to Conquer Myths, Build Commitment, and Get Results* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2009). Vol. Pp. 41-84.
- Spiro, J.D. "Effective Principals in Action," *Phi Delta Kappan* (2013) 94., No. 8 27-31.

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## IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity

For more information about the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity or to request technical assistance, contact us at 210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org).

Additional resources are available online at [http://www.idra.org/South\\_Central\\_Collaborative\\_for\\_Equity/](http://www.idra.org/South_Central_Collaborative_for_Equity/)

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# School Discipline Gone South – The Call for Restoration

by Laurie Posner, MPA

## Three Strikes

The third strike that would bring about the boy's referral to an alternative school occurred in P.E. class. The students had been asked to take turns kicking a ball once. But Jake had started playing soccer, and he kicked the ball two or three times in a row. The disruption proved to be a tipping point for school staff. They wrote him up.

And this had followed the second strike, which also took place outside. The children were learning about plants and trees. Jake's dad, who had a military background and was on the road often for work, had taught him about military airplanes. So when a VC-25 roared overhead, instead of focusing exclusively on the plants, he pointed it out to his classmates. This was exactly the kind of airplane his dad talked about! Second strike.

Jake's first strike had occurred in class. He had a habit of tapping his pencil on the desk when the teacher led the class in group reading. She asked him to stop, but he had continued: tap. tap. tap. tap. Strike.

All in all, the disruptions had added up. In just 47 days, Jake netted a referral to a disciplinary alternative program. And he was only 5 years old.

Receiving the referral by email, his parents immediately felt that something had gone seriously awry with the school's disciplinary system for Jake.

Research shows that he is not alone.

## National Data Sets Reveal Discriminatory Punitive Practices

New national data on school disciplinary practices show that millions of children are being removed from classrooms for increasingly minor behavioral issues. Estimates from the 2009-10 school year suggest that no less than 10 percent of all students in middle school and high school were suspended at least once (Morgan, et al., 2014).

Research on punitive practices in Texas showed that less than 3 percent of cases, removal from school – through suspension or expulsion – was legally required.

In the vast majority of instances, students are suspended or expelled for a minor violation of a school's code of conduct and are carried out at the sole discretion of school officials.

That discretion turns out to be laden with race and cultural bias. The latest national data on school discipline shows that in preschool, Black children represent 18 percent of enrollment but 48 percent of children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension (OCR, 2014).

Preschool-age boys, even younger than Jake, make up just over half (54 percent) of enrollment but 82 percent of children suspended multiple times (OCR, 2014). At the middle and high school levels, Black, Latino and American Indian students are both over-represented in suspensions and expulsions and more likely to receive harsher punishment than their White peers for the same offenses (Morgan, et al., 2014).

Girls of color also face disparate disciplinary treatment: Black girls receive suspensions at higher rates than "girls of any other race and most boys," according to data from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) (2014).

Youth identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are far more likely – up to three times more likely – to receive harsh disciplinary treatment than their heterosexual peers (Morgan, et al., 2014).

Types of discipline that are administered vary by student characteristics. While youth with disabilities, for example, represent just 12 percent of the student population, they are among 75 percent of children who are physically restrained at school and among one quarter of students who are arrested and referred to law enforcement.

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*If we look at the stained history of disciplinary practices in America, it is clear that restoration is widely needed.*

*Alternative practices exist, are shown to be more effective and can keep children safe, sound and learning. We owe it to them to get this right.*

(School Discipline Gone South – The Call for Restoration, continued from Page 3)

And research shows that among all children, African American students are more likely to receive harsher discipline for the same offenses as their White peers.

### School Discipline in Texas and the South

The new national findings echo earlier research conducted by IDRA on the emergence and expansion of disciplinary alternative educational programs (DAEPs) in Texas. The program was established in 1995 to address violations of state criminal codes, such as bringing firearms or drugs to school.

But by 1997, the policy was dramatically expanded to allow local schools to refer students to DAEPs for violations of local codes of conduct (Cortez & Cortez, 2009). As a result, nearly 73,000 students were removed from classrooms by 1996-97, and three quarters of DAEP referrals were for violations of local school codes of conduct rather than major offenses, according to IDRA research (IDRA, 1999).

African American and Latino youth, youth with disabilities, and low-income students in Texas are disproportionately represented in DAEP referrals, according to IDRA research, as is true with OCR's latest findings on trends for the nation.

In 2011, in the same legislative session in which Texas cut \$4 billion in formulae funding and \$1.2 billion in supplemental funding for education, the Texas legislature affirmed the rights of school districts to allow corporal punishment unless a student's parent or guardian submits a previously-signed statement prohibiting its use (Cortez, 2011; Texas Education Code, 2013).

This is a pattern that largely holds across the southern states. While corporal punishment has been banned in 31 states, the practice remains legal in 19 states, the vast majority of which are in the middle and deep South (Center for Effective Discipline, 2010).

Through the intersection of policy and practice, the region that serves our nation's largest number of minority and economically-disadvantaged students is also the most likely to suspend, expel or physically discipline youth.

### U.S. Supreme Court Opinions Out of Sync with International Consensus

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the legality of these practices, despite evidence that they perpetuate violence and in some cases cause injury; they discourage children from attending school; they increase the risk of students dropping out (Balfanz, et al., 2013); and they are disproportionately used on children of color, low-income children, children with disabilities, LGBT youth, and boys (Center for Effective Discipline, 2010; Global Initiative, 2011; Morgan, et al., 2014).

In sanctioning corporal punishment in schools, the Supreme Court has denied the rights to children that are generally accorded prisoners, military personnel and patients and that are accorded to children in 117 United Nations member states.

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child, which "puts an obligation on governments to take 'all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence'" (article 19(1)), has been ratified by all United Nations member states except the United States and Somalia (Global Initiative, 2011).

### Family and Community Leaders Taking Action

Family leaders, community organizations, children's advocacy, and youth across the South are speaking out and taking action to bring a halt to punitive practices that they recognize as ineffective, unfair and unsafe.

Southern Echo, a nonprofit that focuses on intergenerational organizing in the African American community and members of the Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable produced a Model Student Parent Handbook with input from youth, parents, activists and local education officials to promote new policies and practices (2012).

The handbook calls for educators to separate students from the educational process as a last resort, only when (1) their conduct is so disruptive of a properly managed classroom that it cannot be any other way and is the only viable solution, or (2) they are clearly a danger to themselves or others and separation is necessary to the health and safety of students, faculty and staff (Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable, 2012). As Joyce Parker, board chair and the founder and director of Concerned Citizens for a Better Greenville, has said, corporal punishment "symbolizes a 'legacy we're trying to outlive.'"

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## Serving Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

The number of unaccompanied immigrant children arriving from Central America has caused a flurry of media attention, protests, calls for assistance, and political posturing. Unfortunately, much of the attention has been driven by misinformation and rumor. One fact is certain, as stated in the school opening alert on the next page, all school-age immigrant children must have access to educational services as required under *Doe vs. Plyer*. And all means all – regardless of immigration, refugee or asylum status.

Despite the unique facets of the latest group of recent arrivals, delivery of educational services for these children is required. Moreover, while unique circumstances are driving this migration from certain Central American communities, it may be that such students will be considered as refugees like their counterparts from other countries in recent years.

Costs associated with providing required educational services should not serve as a basis for failing to provide education. Educational services should be aligned with the needs of immigrant students and provided in regular school environments, such as newcomer centers and holistic support services (academic and specialized counseling and social support services) that respond to the unique needs of this vulnerable student population.

In Texas, for example, the Texas Education Agency issues an annual letter to school administrators that restates the requirement that all children between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school. The letter provides proof of residency procedures and provisions for homeless students, and states that "a student's immigration status is not a permissible basis for denying admission to a public school." IDRA has set up a web page with links to this letter, IDRA's bilingual flier, and other resources at [www.idra.org/immigrant\\_ed](http://www.idra.org/immigrant_ed).

# Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools – School Opening Alert

This alert is a reminder that public schools, by law, must serve all children. The education of undocumented students is guaranteed by the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision, and certain procedures must be followed when registering immigrant children in school to avoid violation of their civil rights.

The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education published in May 2014 a letter advising school officials that activities that deny or discourage students to attend school are unlawful. The letter begins, "Under federal law, state and local educational agencies are required to provide all children with equal access to public education at the elementary and secondary level."

In *Plyler vs. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that children of undocumented workers have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other students, children of undocumented workers in fact are required under state laws to attend school until they reach a mandated age.

School personnel – especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities – should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

The Supreme Court arrived at this decision because such practices that deny or discourage immigrant children and families from public schooling:

**Victimize innocent children** – Children of undocumented workers do not choose the conditions under which they enter the United States. They should not be punished for circumstances they do not control. Children have the right to learn and be useful members of society.

**Are counterproductive for the country** – Denying children access to education does not eliminate illegal immigration. Instead, it ensures the creation of an underclass. Without public education for children, illiteracy rates will increase and opportunities for workforce and community participation will decrease. Research has proven that for every \$1 spent on the education of children, at least \$9 is returned.

**Waste valuable time while losing sight of principal goals of public education** – Rather

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than teaching students, school officials would spend their time asking our millions of school children about their citizenship status. States would be forced to spend millions of dollars to do the work of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.

**Promote misinformation** – Incorrect assumptions and inappropriate figures have been used to blame immigrants and their children for economic problems.

**Encourage racism and discrimination** – In turbulent, financially troubled times, immigration often becomes a focal point of public discourse. Many consider a preoccupation with the immigration status of children of undocumented workers to be a form of discrimination and racism.

As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools may not:

- deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status;
- treat a student differently to determine residency;
- engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access to school;
- require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status;
- make inquiries of students or parents intended to expose their undocumented status; or
- require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status.

Students without a social security number should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program for a student need only state on the application that they do not have a social security number.

The *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act* prohibits schools from providing any outside agency – including the ICE agency – with any information from a child's school file that would expose the

student's undocumented status. The only exception is if an agency gets a court order (subpoena) that parents can then challenge. Schools should note that even requesting such permission from parents might act to "chill" a student's *Plyler* rights.

At IDRA, we are working to strengthen schools to work for all children, families and communities. Help us make this goal a reality for every child; we simply cannot afford the alternatives. Denying children of undocumented workers access to an education is unconstitutional and against the law.

You can also visit IDRA's website for a printable flier in English and Spanish as well as a copy of the letter from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education (May 2014).

## More Information

For help in ensuring that your programs comply with federal law, contact the Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section at 877-292-3804 or [education@usdoj.gov](mailto:education@usdoj.gov), or the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights at 800-421-3481 or [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov). You also can contact the OCR enforcement office that serves your area.

**For more information or to report incidents of school exclusion or delay, call:**

META (Nationwide) 617-628-2226

MALDEF (Los Angeles) 213-629-2512

MALDEF (San Antonio) 210-224-5476

NY Immigration Hotline  
(Nationwide) 212-419-3737

MALDEF (Chicago) 312-427-0701

MALDEF (Washington, D.C.)  
202-293-2828



Listen to IDRA's Classnotes Podcast episode on "Immigrant Children's Rights to Attend Public Schools"

[www.idra.org/Podcasts](http://www.idra.org/Podcasts) & iTunes

(School Discipline Gone South – The Call for Restoration, continued from Page 4)

The Arkansas Cradle to Prison Pipeline Initiative is working with a network of volunteers across the state to dismantle the norms, policies and practices that pave a road to incarceration – rather than educational opportunity and excellence – for Latino and African American boys. With co-sponsorship by IDRA's South Central Collaborative for Equity and the City of Little Rock Community Programs and the Children's Defense Fund Southern Regional Office, they convened the Little Rock Parent Summit to bring together African American and Latino family leaders to focus on family- and community-led action to dismantle the pipeline.

In California Fix School Discipline, a project of the pro-bono law firm Public Council, has partnered with youth-led civil rights, crime prevention, and community and children's advocacy organizations to develop a toolkit for educators for recognizing problems with current disciplinary practices and adopting effective disciplinary alternatives. This work includes study examples and the listing of a diverse network of people who stand ready to help educators and policymakers who seek to transform these practices in public schools.

One such alternative is for schools to adopt restorative practices, including restorative justice. Restorative practices are aimed at building relationships and the sense of community that helps students and adults to prevent and navigate conflict. Restorative justice focuses not on meting out punishments but teaching students to take responsibility for their actions and repair harm to others and themselves. Each considers separation from school to be a last resort.

To restore community is to build meaningful respectful relationships. To restore justice is to recognize, take responsibility for and make things right where there has been harm.

If we look at the stained history of disciplinary practices in America, it is clear that restoration is widely needed. Alternative practices exist, are shown to be more effective and can keep children safe, sound and learning. We owe it to them.

## Resources

Balfanz, R., & V. Byrnes, J. Fox. *Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade* (Los Angeles, Calif.: The Civil Rights Project, December 21, 2012).

Center for Effective Discipline. U.S.: Corporal Punish-

# National PTA Visits Comunitario PTAs in the Rio Grande Valley

National PTA President, Otha Thornton, visited the lower Rio Grande Valley in May to see first-hand IDRA's Comunitario PTA effort that is spreading all over the lower Rio Grande Valley. He was invited by Lourdes Flores, co-founder of the first Comunitario PTA at ARISE. A Comunitario PTA is a community organization-based-PTA that gathers family leaders in Texas' poorest communities to engage them on education policies and educational opportunities for their children. Unlike traditional PTAs, which play auxiliary or fundraising roles in schools, IDRA's Comunitario PTA is a community-based parent teacher organization whose sole purpose is to collaborate with schools and Spanish-speaking, Hispanic, working-class families to improve children's academic outcomes. With the support a federal i3 grant, IDRA's Comunitario PTA approach to family engagement is spreading to develop parent leadership in education through community engagement, supporting college access and success for all students, especially those learning English.



Front (L-R): Ludivina Escalante; Martha Rodriguez, ARISE South Tower Comunitario PTA president for 2014-15; Faviola Santana, ARISE Cesar Chavez Comunitario PTA president; Lisa Holbrook, Texas PTA president-elect; Ana Maria Gonzalez, ARISE South Tower Comunitario PTA president; Lourdes Flores, ARISE South Tower Comunitario PTA co-founder; Eva Carranza, ARISE South Tower Comunitario PTA, first president. Back (L-R): Barbara Guerra, Texas PTA field service representative; Cecilia Ortiz, Texas PTA multicultural specialist; Otha Thornton, National PTA president; Lee Guerra, Texas PTA director-at-large

## Comunitario PTAs Awarded by National PTA President

At the National PTA Convention this summer, Otha Thornton, presented a Presidential Exceptional Community PTA Award to the Cesar Chavez ARISE Comunitario PTA for their work in the Spanish-speaking communities of south Texas and to all the other Comunitario PTAs. He stated: "They are doing a marvelous job of creating new PTAs and bringing in new members. They are a model to follow."



ment and Paddling Statistics by State and Race, webpage (Canal Winchester, Ohio: Center for Effective Discipline, 2010).

Cortez, A., & J.D. Cortez. *Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in Texas – A 2009 Update* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009).

Cortez, A. "Texas: Turning its Back on the Future – An Assessment of Major Education Policy Reforms Considered by the 82nd Texas Legislature," *IDRA Newsletter* (August 2011).

Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. *PROHIBITING ALL CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS: GLOBAL REPORT 2011* (London: Global Initiative, 2011).

IDRA. *Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs in Texas – What is Known; What is Needed* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1999).

Milne, E. *Corporal Punishment: A Barrier to Education for*

*Children with Disabilities* (London: Global Initiative, 2013).

Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable. *Model Student and Parent Handbook, Version #8 – To Build a Quality, Healthy School District* (The Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable, 2012).

Morgan, E., & N. Salomon, M. Plotkin, R. Cohen. *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2014).

Office for Civil Rights. *Civil Rights Data Collection – Data Snapshot: School Discipline* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

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# The Right to Inclusion and Success in Education is Reaffirmed

*Statement by Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO, on the Fifth Circuit Decision in Fisher vs. University of Texas at Austin on the University of Texas’ Holistic Admissions Program – July 16, 2014*

In July, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals issued its ruling in the *Fisher vs. University of Texas* that upheld University of Texas’ holistic admissions program. The Fifth Circuit’s decision affirms the importance of striving for diversity in all state colleges and universities, stating “Universities may use race as part of a holistic admissions program where it cannot otherwise achieve diversity.” The ruling acknowledges that the Top Ten Percent Plan has contributed to improving access to Texas’ premier higher education institutions but that other factors with varying criteria including race can be used as well to improve broad representation of students from different geographic areas, family backgrounds and educational experiences. UT-Austin’s holistic admissions plan includes race as just one small factor in a complex set of admission criteria.

The Fifth Circuit’s ruling demonstrates once again that it is possible and constitutional to develop approaches that use race and ethnicity in a narrowly-tailored admissions process designed to increase student diversity. IDRA applauds the ruling and all those involved in the effort to ensure more equitable access to all students from prekindergarten through college.

With this ruling, Texas colleges and universities can and should continue to take steps to ensure that there is equitable access to all state-funded colleges and universities for all students, resulting in enrollments that reflect the diverse populations of the state.

**Also, while ensuring access to diverse students, institutions of higher education working with state policymakers should focus on both access and success for all students.** This must include ensuring that all students are prepared for college from pre-K through high school, that resources are provided equitably to pre-K-12 public schools,

that support systems are in place for successful high school to college transitions, and that there are sufficient needs-based financial aid programs available to students. These are all integral parts of a holistic approach to ensuring student success up to and through graduation as shown in IDRA’s Quality Schools Action Framework™.

If we are to achieve a vision of inclusion and success, all students of all backgrounds and financial circumstances must be prepared to enter and graduate from college. And our colleges and universities must adapt to welcome students and provide the supports needed for them to graduate. Our nation’s future depends on getting this right.

*While ensuring access to diverse students, institutions of higher education working with state policymakers should focus on both access and success for all students.*

## Dr. Robledo Montecel Receives San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Award



*Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, with St. Mary’s University law professor Al Kauffman, who introduced her at the awards event.*

In July at its business awards event, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce honored IDRA President and CEO, Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, with its Advocacy Award. Upon receiving the award, she noted that the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber recently joined IDRA, MALDEF, PRESENTE! and others to advocate for a San Antonio City Council resolution establishing college readiness as the gold-standard city-wide: “The resolution, adopted unanimously, signals that our city sees economic competitiveness and educational quality as inseparable.”

She added: “Research tells us that schools that focus on college readiness for all their students are best at reducing high school dropout rates. Education is, in fact, an indispensable economic strategy.”



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- Letter from the U.S. Dept. of Justice and the U.S. Dept. of Education regarding education of immigrant students
- SCCE Equity Hub, with stories and video interviews of principal leadership
- Tools for reframing school discipline
- Resources on the Supreme Court ruling in the *Fisher* case
- IDRA Research for Change Strategies
- Video highlights from the National PTA president's visit to Comunitario PTAs in south Texas
- OurSchool portal

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### 2014 Martha A. Hernández Scholarship Winner Announced

Ms. Lea Amber Borrego has been selected as this year's Martha A. Hernández Scholarship recipient. During her life and in her work at IDRA, Ms. Hernández distinguished herself for exceptional professionalism, service and care of others. In her honor, IDRA set up a scholarship in her name through the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame. This year, all scholarships awarded by the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame were directed to graduating seniors at the Young Women's Leadership Academy of San Antonio ISD. IDRA commends Ms. Borrego for reflecting these same characteristics in her scholarship application and wish her success in college and in life.



Photo caption: 2014 Martha A. Hernández Scholarship recipient Lea Amber Borrego, with Ms. Hernández' sons, Heriberto "Eddie" Hernández (far left) and Hector Hernández (center) and IDRA's Mr. Rey Flores (far right)



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