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- ✦ **A different kind of parent involvement**
- ✦ **Response to Intervention**



# **Authentic Consultation**

## **NCLB Outreach Leadership and Dialogues for Parents, Students and Teachers**

**by Aurelio M. Montemayor,  
M.Ed.**

### **A Snapshot of a Dialogue**

*The Setting:* High School Library. Students, parents and teachers grouped around a table at an evening school meeting are asked to answer a question as part of their introductions. The questions, in English and Spanish, are to be answered by each in turn as the group self monitors the conversation allowing everyone to share during the allotted time. The opening questions are:

- Student: What is a talent or skill you have (something you are good at doing) that most students and teachers are not aware of?
- Parent: What is something you have done as a parent in rearing your child that you are proud of or that you think you have done well?
- Teacher: What is something you have done as a teacher that you are proud of or that you think you have done well?

After three rounds of questions, each group has a parent-student pair report to the group at large. Because some of the parents do not speak

English and some of the teachers do not speak Spanish, students and bilingual adults translate back and forth ensuring everyone understands.

*Results:* Witness dialogues among parents, teachers and students as authentic consultation in the spirit of school accountability. Observe NCLB in action – alive, real and personally fulfilling. Parents, teachers and students giving each other quality time.

### **Parent-Student-Teacher Dialogues**

Parent-student-teacher dialogues like this can provide an accountability forum for a high school campus that has not been making adequate yearly progress. The catalyst is the campus report that highlights the student scores revealing that the school is not achieving adequate progress. The goal is to create a greater consciousness among all with important implications for everyone.

In these dialogues, the students report on their classroom experiences, whether succeeding or not, in the targeted subjects. The parents discuss their role and challenges while seeking advice on how to support their children.

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The teachers give insight into how their job feels and how they are attempting to teach under the current pressures and focus.

No one is blamed or attacked. No quick answers are sought, nor is anyone expected to defend their position. It is an organized conversation where each can hear the other out. The meeting is the confluence of three important goals: effective outreach, new parent leadership and participatory meetings.

### **Sending Information to Families – To What End?**

Federal law requires schools that receive Title I money (for serving low-income students) to communicate with families about the status of their students. A school that is not achieving adequate yearly progress is required to inform parents of the status of student achievement.

But sending a letter by mail, with a student or by e-mail is not up to the challenge. Holding a meeting solely to inform parents of the status is better but

## **Parent-student-teacher dialogues can provide an accountability forum for a high school campus that has not been making adequate yearly progress.**

still insufficient. Lecturing the students or berating teachers is inappropriate and counter-productive. Commonly used, seemingly efficient, modes of communication checked off as “done” in the checklist of requirements, rarely achieve the intended outcome of having informed families who can do something about helping their children. The usual ways information is transmitted to parents does little good, and student achievement and school success do not accelerate and improve.

### **Reaching Out Effectively – Informed Families with Actionable Data**

Effective outreach must be a more personal matter, a more qualitative, labor-intensive process and approach.

This kind of outreach follows a unique path. Effective outreach is personal and includes phone calls and one-on-one

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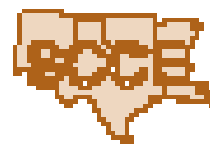
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# Our Power is Now

## Joint African American and Latino Leadership in Education

by **Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D.,** and **Bradley Scott, Ph.D.**

Inspiration calls us to be who we are. IDRA's cross-sector and cross-race leadership development work has spanned several years of issuing a call and offering inspiration and support for leaders within communities to take up the charge of strengthening their public schools.

In 1999, inspired by the national One America initiative to engage the nation in moving toward a stronger, more just and united country, offering opportunity and fairness for all people, a collaborative was created between IDRA and several organizations in the San Antonio community. In an effort to engage individuals and organizations in dialogue about issues related to race and ethnicity, the goals of the One America initiative were to promote a vision of a unified community, engage in constructive dialogue to work through the issues of race and identity, and develop solutions in critical areas, such as education, economic opportunity and health care.

More recently, with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and with support from the U.S. Department of Education-funded South Central Collaborative for Equity, IDRA

**More than ever, what is needed is broad and deep engagement of diverse racial communities acting together in building strong and responsive public schools that value and support Latino, African American and other minority children.**

launched its Blueprints for Action initiative, a series of community dialogues aimed at fostering cross-race, joint African American and Latino leadership in education. In 2006, IDRA hosted three "Blueprints for Action" community dialogues in Dallas, Houston and Tyler, Texas. In 2007, with encouragement and support from a national consultative group of civil rights leaders, IDRA expanded the dialogues to Albuquerque and Little Rock. This year and next, with continued Annie E. Casey Foundation funding and additional support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, IDRA is hosting dialogues in four more states: Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

### **A Cross-Sector Multi-Racial Approach**

The dialogues use a cross-sector multi-racial approach for gathering educators, parents, business and community representatives, and state educational leaders to engage in the tough work of joint planning and action in tackling their communities' persistent problems in education: equitable funding, quality schooling, high school graduation and access to higher education. Building on past dialogues and incorporating the voices of participants, IDRA uses a three-part process to support joint leadership at the pre-event, event and post-event levels.

Student voices are a critical component to the process. For example, in Albuquerque, students presented a photo gallery of their perspectives within their school district about the fulfillment of the promise of equity made by the court rulings in *Brown vs. Board of Education* and *Mendez vs. Westminster*. These powerful images and stories became the center of discussions on what remains to be done.

In Little Rock, students gave oral presentations and wrote articles about equity and access to quality education within the historic Central High School. Working in teams, students identified eight concerns and issued a call to

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action. An article by student, Brandon Love (printed in the April 2007 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*) riveted the community in discussions that are continuing today.

The dialogue process is building momentum and having lasting impact. Beyond just talk, communities are taking up the charge through action after these events take place. For example, in Dallas, participants created the South Dallas Consortium involving five communities, including school districts, chambers of commerce and institutions of higher education. Their goal is to ensure that minority students graduate from high school and go on to college. This group has created a five-year strategic plan to accomplish this with assistance from the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity.

In Little Rock, participants have become part of two key taskforces for their school district, one of which works on increasing student achievement for all learners based on a new legislative initiative. They are using the dialogue documents as part of their foundation for the taskforce work and are creating recommendations to address the state-level mandate for educational improvement. The other taskforce is investigating school environmental and policy issues.

The action planning process is an effective prototype for inspiring local leaders from all walks of life to tackle hard issues, set aside differences that have kept them apart and build a strong common vision for success for their children. Together, local leaders...

- Build cross-sector and cross-race alliances as advocates in education to catalyze local action;
- Create a common discourse on the proper ends of education, based on what forms a good and just society that supports and prepares all children for graduation, college and civic engagement;
- Begin to build policy agendas

## A Community Action Guide – Seven Actions to Fulfill the Promise of Brown and Mendez

By Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D., Bradley Scott, Ph.D., and Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D.

This booklet details seven critical actions community members can take to help fulfill the promise of *Brown vs. Board of Education* and *Mendez vs. Westminster* in the education of African American and Latino students.



This booklet also includes a step-by-step tool for developing a blueprint for action in a local community. It presents an action planning process that navigates local participants through vision building, focused planning, local environmental scanning and constructing the actual blueprint for local action.

It also provides a community assessment instrument that, when used as a foundation for discussion and action, generates a clear direction local stakeholders can embrace to bring about real action to fulfill the promise of *Brown and Mendez*.

**\$12.50 or free online at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)**

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and action blueprints on dropout prevention for improved graduation rates;

- Create a legacy of shared leadership, accountability and joint action around education issues for minority children; and
- Leverage and complement work underway to address the education needs of all youth.

IDRA is leveraging its work through technology enhancements that are underway to help prepare and orient participants prior to and after their dialogues and to encourage the exchange of information. Web site enhancements are being designed to facilitate a sustained engagement process beyond the dialogues that will help connect communities across states and regions.

Through these enhancements, information is available about the two historic *Brown* and *Mendez* cases that undergird this work. Both cases concluded that the obligation of public schools to provide access to non-segregated and quality educational experiences is a matter of equal protection of rights under the U.S. Constitution.

### The Challenge of Brown and Mendez

Every year, more than 1.2 million children are “lost” or drop out prior to their high school graduation. One student is lost from public school enrollment every two minutes. This tragic loss is felt in families, communities and at the national level.

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We must maintain uncompromising efforts in our expectation for graduating *all* students. As such, IDRA's president and CEO, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel has issued a call to immediate action to address these issues. The key principle in her call to action is that *all* students should be expected and supported to graduate from high school.

We are at a critical juncture in our nation's history with the upcoming reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Most of us would agree that our children deserve to be nurtured and supported to become the powerful creators of their future they are born to be. Each generation merits our support throughout their schooling, from pre-K through college, to be, do and have all they can dream in this lifetime.

But how can our society build confident young leaders for the future when divisions among our groups continue to persist and erode the very social capital our diversity represents? More than ever, what is needed is broad and deep engagement of diverse racial communities acting together in building strong and responsive public schools that value and support Latino, African American and other minority children.

The challenge that lies before us is to create new networks of collective action built on trust and a shared vision of success for *all* youth. In cultivating a just and civil society, we must mitigate our differences and forge new alliances to create a blueprint for access, equity and excellence in education that will ensure the fulfillment of the *Brown* and *Mendez* rulings for every child.

This is our national imperative: increase support for public schools and the communities they serve to ensure that diverse learners are not denied access to an excellent education that will facilitate college success and lead to a full and productive life. The blueprints for change – while critical

for the success of minority students, whose achievement lags well below their Anglo counterparts in all indices of well-being, including education, health and college attendance – are vitally important for *all* children.

Will our diverse communities and sectors pull together and concentrate on building a better educational future? IDRA believes that communities and public schools, given equitable and appropriate support, are the hope for the future for all children. Unleashing the potential of joint leadership in action has power to transcend differences and build upon the cultural, linguistic and racial strength of this nation that is reflected in our diversity.

In his dissenting opinion in the *Parents Involved in Community Schools vs. Seattle School District No.1* case, Justice Breyer wrote: "For much of this nation's history, the races remained divided. It was not long ago that people of different races drank from separate fountains, rode on separate busses and studied in separate schools. In this court's finest hour, *Brown vs. Board of Education* challenged this history and helped to change it. For *Brown* held out a promise... It was the promise of true racial equality – not as a matter of fine words on paper, but as a matter of everyday life in the nation's cities and schools. It was about the nature of a democracy that must work for all Americans." (2007)

The challenge lies before us in the decisions we make and the actions we take, together. Let us not turn our backs on so many minority children who continue to be trapped in a mire of tragic inequity, with under resourced schools and less than excellent teaching. This nation was built on the premise that our public schools are the bedrock of democracy, the great equalizing factor in preparing citizens for the future.

Julian Bond said: "We must persevere... only with renewed commitment can our country become the nation it should be. Only with

renewed commitment will we fulfill the promise of *Brown*." (2007)

Together, we can create that reality. The moment for joint leadership is long overdue. Our power is in our *now*.

## Resources

- Bond, J. "We Must Persevere," *Teaching Tolerance* (Fall, 2007) pg. 19.
- Breyer, S. *Parents Involved in Community Schools vs. Seattle School District No.1*, dissenting opinion (Supreme Court of the United States, June 28, 2007). <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/opinions/06pdf/05-908.pdf>
- Love, B. "A Tale of Two Centrals," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 2007).
- Rodríguez, R.G., and B. Scott. "Expanding Blueprints for Action—Children's Outcomes, Access, Treatment, Learning, Resources, Accountability," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, May 2007).
- Robledo Montecel, M. "Fulfilling the Promise of *Brown vs. Board of Education*," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2003).

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Civil rights resources

Student presentations in video

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

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conversations with parents when they are bringing students to school or are on campus for any reason.

Using selective home visits as a means of establishing direct communication, building trust, inviting and mapping the assets and strengths that exist in the school community are all opportunities to listen to families' opinions about the school and their children's education.

This approach seems slow and not able to reach most of the families in a school community, yet there are benefits that generate larger numbers. One such benefit is new, revisited, parent leadership.

### **Re-defining Parent Leadership**

Beyond informing families about the academic status of the school and inviting them to school events, effective outreach is a search for potential parent leaders. The criteria for identifying leaders differ from most common models. Rather than seeking a traditional volunteer or even an assertive one, this new kind of outreach worker looks for an interest in engaging other families.

The potential parent leader wants to talk with, invite and bring other parents to participate in activities that focus on the academic achievement of all students. This kind of parent leader is deeply compassionate of peers, understands child-rearing responsibilities and wants to support other families in connecting with schools. This leader wants families to become strong allies in support of academic excellence for all children.

These leaders' "merit badges" attest to the time and effort they have put in to creating a school-community that supports excellent neighborhood public schools. Rather than holding bake sales for stage curtains, for example, they organize campaigns to create a public

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# Tools for

## **Parent and Community Engagement**

Neighborhood public schools belong to their communities. The strength and vitality of any community is, in part, dependent upon the strength of its schools. And the reverse is true. Schools are more successful when they engage with families and others in their community. Even though the process of forming partnerships through engagement can be challenging, doing so can yield significant results for all stakeholders in the education system.

### **A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing**

**Developing leaders** – More than 200 parents gathered at IDRA's Annual Bilingual Parent Institute in San Antonio. Parents of school-age children and parent educators examined current educational issues, observed parents who presented on what they have done during their leadership sessions in their districts, explored technology avenues to assist in advocacy, and networked with other parents. The institute fully incorporated IDRA's model of valuing parents as leaders. To listen to an IDRA Classnotes Podcast episode about parent engagement, go to <http://www.idra.org/Podcasts> and scroll down to "Valuing Families in Children's Education."

**Conducting research** – With funding from The Marguerite Casey Foundation, IDRA is working with 13 of the foundation's grantee organizations in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. During this 18-month effort, IDRA is providing guidance and technical assistance to the grantees so that each organization (a) develops a plan for an integrated progress monitoring system that is informed by an in-depth assessment of their current capacity and context, and (b) develops and uses an integrated system of data collection and analysis that informs and guides their work, reaching the capacity needed for sustaining impact.

**Informing policy** – Eight of 20 regions in Texas have higher high school attrition rates than they did 22 years ago. Overall, Texas schools are losing one-third of their students. IDRA has just released detailed findings showing that regional attrition rates range from a low of 20 percent to a high of 46 percent. In 2006-07, attrition rates ranged from a low of 20 percent in ESC 17 (Lubbock) to a high of 46 percent in ESC Region 1 (Edinburg), compared to the state average of 34 percent. To see the study, go to <http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/>.

**Engaging communities** – A growing body of research has found that professional learning communities in schools, combined with mentoring, result

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# Action

in clear improvements in outcomes for staff and students. IDRA's Professional Learning Community and Mentoring Model, a planned variation of IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, has been implemented in a Texas middle school for the past three years, and each of the teachers mentored, advocated for and championed three students who needed an educator in their lives who believes in them and their capacity for learning and success. The first-year results for students and participants was so successful that the model was expanded to a second team of participants for the second year and all eighth grade middle school teachers for the third year of implementation. Results included greater instructional competencies for learning community teachers (through linked courses) and increased academic achievement for tutors with teachers. To find out how a south Texas middle school is transforming teaching and learning through a new learning community, listen to IDRA Podcast Episode 25 at [http://www.idra.org/Podcasts/Resources/Professional\\_Learning\\_Communities\\_in\\_Schools/](http://www.idra.org/Podcasts/Resources/Professional_Learning_Communities_in_Schools/).

## What You Can Do

**Get informed.** Developed by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) with the help of parents and principals, "10 Partnering Tips for a Strong Community" is part of an overall strategy for building relationships with principals to improve student achievement ([http://www.pta.org/archive\\_article\\_details\\_1118700977312.html](http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1118700977312.html)). Visit the National PTA's web site to view this resource and many others!

**Get involved.** *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* examines key issues in the field of family and community connections with schools. It is a synthesis of studies about the impact of family and community involvement on student achievement, and effective strategies to connect schools, families and community. Get the PDF version at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>.

**Get results.** Janice Petrovich of the Ford Foundation recently published, *A Foundation Returns to School: Strategies for Improving Public Education*. This publication reviews the activities and lessons of the Ford Foundation's 13-year initiative to help communities realize changes in schools through constituency and coalition-building, policy research and evaluation, strategic communication, and networking. To view this publication, visit [http://www.fordfound.org/pdfs/impact/strategies\\_improving\\_public\\_education.pdf](http://www.fordfound.org/pdfs/impact/strategies_improving_public_education.pdf).

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will to fund all schools fully so that all children have the schools and resources that they deserve. These parent leaders make the labor-intensive, qualitative outreach by school personnel cost-effective because they increase the family connections geometrically and multiply the number of parents-inviting-parents exponentially.

## Focused Conversations

The outreach worker – or Title I liaison – is measured by the quality of the relationships established with families and how skillfully he or she has supported family networks in extending circles.

Parallel to effective outreach, the liaison is concerned with the processes of the meeting. The information must be presented in a manner and language that the families comprehend. The style of the meeting becomes participatory and allows for peer sharing and problem-solving.

The organizer makes sure that the information is relevant and that participants leave energized and wanting to tell other families about the meeting, the information, etc. Food and door prizes for meetings are low on the list of priorities. Participation, dialogue and problem-solving are high.

## Language of the Meeting

Meetings are conducted bilingually or multi-lingually if possible, depending on the language groups available and the human resources. Separating people by language group or using translation equipment is a signal that the information presented is the most important piece of the meeting. But while switching languages back and forth (code-switching) feels messy and participants get anxious when they do not understand some of the language use, it is preferable to the other options. The goal of the meetings should be for families, students and educators to com-

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municate across language groups, and the students and bilingual adults are the bridges to attain this. It is not true that a meeting will last twice as long if there is ongoing translation. Even if that were true, it is better to cover half the content and to have a closer community of families emerge from the meeting than to simply make sure that the information has been transmitted clearly in the languages present, regardless of how meaningful it is to the participants.



### Outcomes of Parent-Student-Teacher Dialogues

All participants benefit from these meetings. During a meeting, parents benefit from talking, listening and being heard by students and teachers. Students are listened to as equals by adults. Teachers and educators present their successes and their challenges. Administrators are provided with dialogues of their school community akin to a doctor taking the pulse of a patient.

Eventually these can become Study Circles as modeled by Everyday Democracy (<http://www.everyday-democracy.org>). The Montgomery County Public Schools and PTA have used this approach to great benefit. The IDRA Newsletter Plus online has more information.

Beyond the dialogues, the ripples in the natural networks of the participants extend the impact. Students tell other students about the conversations. Parents take the information to their neighbors and replicate these conversations in their homes, places of worship and neighborhood haunts. Teachers learn more about what helps and hinders students' learning, forming alliances with families for children's success and seeking other ways to help students learn. Administrators identify key needs in teaching and learning.

The

# Ohtli Encuentro

Women of Color Share Pathways to Leadership  
A unique book that shares the wisdom of African American, Latina and Native American leaders

The book cover features a central illustration of a woman in traditional dress standing next to a large, stylized sun or circular pattern. The title and subtitle are prominently displayed above the illustration. At the bottom, it mentions it is a publication of the Intercultural Development Research Association.

This beautiful book presents the voices of 30 African American, Latina and Native American women who share their leadership journeys. IDRA brought together these women leaders to capture, honor and share their inspiring stories of leadership. This book highlights their moving stories. Four dimensions, or pathways, of leadership were shared by the women as they told their personal stories: (1) history, language and culture; (2) community engagement; (3) vision, spirit and values; and (4) social change and institutional transformation.

The book is accompanied with analytic reflections that present a brief review of the literature on women's leadership and discusses common themes that arose from the women's interactions in a multicultural, multi-generational gathering designed to explore leadership in women of color. The word "ohtli" means "pathway" in the Nahuatl (Mexican indigenous) language. (ISBN# 0-9740243-8-4; 112 Pages; Boerne, Texas: Sor Juana Press 2005) \$15

"From a Native perspective, I have come to know the difference between leadership that is earned and leadership that is appointed. It is about what people stand for. Character is the foundation of a leader. The skills are learned and develop over time."  
– Gabrielle Strong, Ohtli participant

"As an African American who happens to be a woman, I already had two strikes against me. It was never enough just to 'get by.' Through both word and deed, I learned the art of 'wearing the mask'; mastering and embracing the culture which was not mine, all the while holding on to and never giving up on the one which welcomed my birth."  
– Kenya Eddings, Ohtli participant

"Any time you get people fighting over crumbs you don't get the cake. You get the crumbs. Multi- and cross-cultural work is what is going to make us politically strong. If we are divided, we will be weak. Women have to stand together. We are the bearers of the future."  
– Dolores Huerta, Ohtli participant

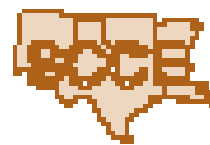
Supplemental educational services are looked at more carefully, and professional development for teachers is informed by the feedback from the

dialogues.

Just as busy parents need to find quality time to spend with their

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# Response to Intervention: An Equity Perspective

## The Equity Assistance Centers Identify Civil Rights Concerns with the Implementation of Response to Intervention – An Excerpt

**Bradley Scott, Ph.D.**

The 10 regional equity assistance centers have been in conversation for more than a year about the reauthorization of *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and the Response to Intervention (RTI) process that is offered in the legislation as one of the ways to address the connection between general education and special education in public schools. The RTI process is clearly intended to be a strategy used in general education to provide evidenced-based interventions to learners in a three- or four-tiered system to serve those learners who present a greater challenge regarding school learning success before they become identified for placement in special education.

Implementation of RTI is intended to ensure that learners are not placed in special education before all possible resources are used in a focused way in general education to properly serve them and appropriately address their learning needs and characteristics. The inability of general education to provide such focused educational strategies, in part, accounts for the continued persistent inappropriate over-representation of minorities in special education.

The equity assistance centers began to identify some concerns about

the strategy and its implementation and requested that I, as director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas), bring the concerns together in a white paper capturing precautions they felt should be considered as states and school districts implement RTI.

The RTI movement is now in full force. States and school districts are beginning to implement the process with varying levels of capacity to do so properly. The equity assistance centers see this as a possible problem that may have an unfair and potentially discriminatory impact upon students.

This article represents an abbreviated form of the white paper. Its content has been presented and vetted through the U.S. Department of Education, the Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) and all of the technical assistance centers connected with the U.S. Department of Education, including the regional comprehensive centers, the regional parent centers, and the OSEP technical assistance and dissemination providers, for review, comment and feedback. Their input has been integrated, and the excerpt provided here is the result of that effort. The entire document can be accessed through the IDRA SCCE web site ([http://www.idra.org/South\\_Central\\_Collaborative\\_for\\_Equity](http://www.idra.org/South_Central_Collaborative_for_Equity))

and in Newsletter Plus for local use, including training. Readers should feel free to call upon the IDRA SCCE for technical assistance and training on the principles and precautions described in the document.

### Excerpt Introduction

The nation's 10 equity assistance centers (EACs) are committed to the successful implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) frame at the state and local levels. It is clear to us that successful implementation of RTI will require an approach that is other than "business as usual." The EACs believe that business as usual historically has led to the over-representation of minorities in special education, the persistence of the achievement gap, the continuance of various systemic and individual acts of discrimination, and the impact of de facto segregation of students resulting from certain educational policies and practices that are still evident in our nation's public schools.

It is clear to us that business as usual cannot and should not continue to go on. The Response to Intervention process is intended to change business as usual.

We offer 11 conditions we believe must be in place for RTI to be successful. To that end, we list and discuss these conditions as recommendations and

*An Equity Perspective – continued on Page 10*

precautions that must receive attention to ensure that RTI does not become an ineffective response to a serious education concern for thousands of learners in our nation's schools.

**Recommendation 1 – Ensure the Creation and Implementation of an Equity Context.**

*Precaution:* Institutions must work to create an equity context in order to produce new regularities out of which may arise new practices. If the old context has produced achievement gaps, disproportionality, discrimination and segregation, one should not expect new practices to come from these old contexts and habits.

**Recommendation 2 – Commit to High Achievement for All Learners Regardless of Race, Gender and National Origin.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement a goal of equitable outcomes for all learners, including minority, linguistically different, male/female, low-income and disabled learners, and adherence to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics will only produce more of the same.

**Recommendation 3 – Commit to Real Access and Inclusion.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement a goal of equitable access and inclusion for all learners will only produce more of the same. Schools must commit to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics.

**Recommendation 4 – Commit to Equitable Treatment.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement a goal of equitable treatment for all learners, including minority, linguistically different, male/female, low-income and disabled learners, and adherence to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics will only produce more of the same.

**Recommendation 5 – Commit to a Real Opportunity to Learn for Every Student.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement an equitable opportunity to learn for all learners, including minority, linguistically different, male/female and low-income learners, and adherence to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics will only produce more of the same.

**Recommendation 6 – Commit to Rethink and Redirect Resources to Support Students' Continual Learning Improvement at Each Tier.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement an equitable distribution of resources for all learners, including minority, linguistically different, male/female, low-income and disabled learners and adherence to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics will only produce more of the same.

**Recommendation 7 – Ensure All Stakeholders are Jointly Accountable for the Appropriate Implementation of RTI and the Continual Learning Improvement of All Learners.**

*Precaution:* Failure to implement an equitable, shared accountability regarding the success of all learners, including minority, linguistically different, male/female, low-income and disabled learners and adherence to a principle of educational responsiveness to different characteristics will only produce more of the same.

**Recommendation 8 – Create Criteria and Set Interventions at the Right Tier Level to Avoid Confusion.**

*Precaution:* Failure to establish and ensure that teachers and other professionals know what truly constitutes a Tier I, II or III evidenced-based intervention is critical. Otherwise, professionals may label an intervention

Tier II when it is nothing more than regular instruction provided with a different instructional strategy rather than a different level of intervention.

**Recommendation 9 – Provide Special and Immediate Professional Development to Prepare General Education Teachers to Properly Implement RTI Interventions.**

*Precaution:* Failure to significantly train and prepare general education teachers for the RTI implementation will seriously decrease the likelihood that the innovation will stick, be efficacious or produce the desired result. Teachers will engage students out of their habit and that habit in many respects has created the current situation for diverse populations.

**Recommendation 10 – Take Immediate Steps to Properly Certify Teachers to Serve English Language Learners and Ensure the Use of Scientific, Research-based Interventions Identified for English Language Learners.**

*Precaution:* Failure of districts to ensure the proper preparation of general education teachers, including their bilingual certification or English as a second language (ESL) endorsement, particularly for core content teachers, reading specialists and other educators working with English language learners, could easily produce the effect of teachers being unable and unqualified to give English language learners the proper support they need to succeed.

**Recommendation 11 – Inform and Engage Parents in Every Aspect of the RTI Implementation Process and Sustain Transparency Regarding the Interventions.**

*Precaution:* Failure to attend to parent engagement, involvement and participation in the RTI process at every level in communicative ways that

*An Equity Perspective – continued from Page 10*

parents and guardians can understand will disenfranchise parents, truncate their right and authority to protect their children's rights to a fair and equitable education, and jeopardize the success of RTI implementation.

To see the full document, "Issues Paper – Response to Intervention: An Equity Perspective," visit [http://www.idra.org/South\\_Central\\_Collaborative\\_for\\_Equity/RTI](http://www.idra.org/South_Central_Collaborative_for_Equity/RTI).

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*Authentic Consultation – continued from Page 8*

children, people in the school and community must spend quality time with each other. It bears repeating: effective outreach, re-defined parent leadership and participatory meetings can help all children succeed.

## Resources

Grayson, K., and A. Montemayor. "Community Conversations about Math Learning and Teaching," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, January 2008).

Montemayor, A. "Student and Parent Math Conversations," IDRA Classnotes Podcast, Episode 33 (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 29, 2008).

Montemayor, A. "Latino Parent Engagement

in High School Math" IDRA Classnotes Podcast, Episode 31 (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 3, 2008).

Montemayor, A. "Engagement Sounds Sparks and Movements," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, March 2007).

Quinonez, B. "Working to Address Racial and Ethnic Barriers in Schools: Schools Work to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Barriers," *The Sentinel* (Montgomery County, Maryland, May 7, 2008).

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# Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In March, IDRA worked with **6,750** teachers, administrators, parents and higher education personnel through **68** training and technical assistance **97** activities and program sites in **13** states plus Brazil. Topics included:

- ◆ Engagement-Based Sheltered Instruction for Math
- ◆ 100 Ways Parents Can be Involved in the Education of Their Children
- ◆ *La Cultura en la Escuela: Valuing Our Children's Values and Beliefs*

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ Mesa Public Schools, Arizona
- ◆ Philadelphia City School District, Pennsylvania
- ◆ Raymondville Independent School District, Texas
- ◆ Santa Monica/Malibu Unified School District, California

## Activity Snapshot

Through a series of mathematics institutes, IDRA delivered professional development training to secondary teachers based on (1) adequate yearly progress reports and accountability ratings, (2) closing the gaps, and (3) increasing student achievement in secondary mathematics. These institutes integrated real-time data collection devices such as Texas Instruments CBL2s, CBRs, graphing calculators and Pasco Probeware; dynamic learning tools such as Geometer's Sketchpad, Fathom, and online java applets; and computer laptops for demonstrating the integration of computers into mathematics curricula that makes content accessible to all students. Technology integration shifted from integrating technology on a periodic basis, as was often the case according to teacher surveys, to one of integration as an ongoing basis so that mathematics success and access, enrollment and completion of higher-level mathematics courses become a reality for all students.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ◆ public school teachers
- ◆ parents
- ◆ administrators
- ◆ other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- ◆ training and technical assistance
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- ◆ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

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**Episode 35: “Communities Using Data to Improve their Schools”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Anna Alicia Romero and Hector Bojorquez describe components of IDRA’s School Holding Power

Portal, challenges families and others face in accessing useful data, and how communities are using data to improve their schools.



**Episode 33: “Student and Parent Math Conversations”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., director of the IDRA Texas Parent Information and Resource Center, shares how students who have not been succeeding in math have opened a powerful collaborative dialog with parents and educators.



**Episode 34: “Teaching Opportunities through Discovery in Science”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Veronica Betancourt, M.A., an IDRA education associate and developer of IDRA’s Science Smart! model, discusses how letting students of all ages facilitate their own learning through discovery makes science more meaningful to them.



**Episode 32: “Early Literacy Development for English Language Learners”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast – José L. Rodríguez, M.A., an early childhood expert at IDRA, describes the essential components of reading instruction and how they relate to young English language learners.

**[www.idra.org/podcasts](http://www.idra.org/podcasts)**

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