

IDRA Transition to Teaching Program 15-Year Synthesis

2001 – 2017

August 23, 2018

Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Principal Investigator, 2001-2017

Dr. Abelardo Villarreal, Program Manager, 2001-2017

Dr. Linda Cantu, Program Director, 2001-2015

Dr. Felix Montes, Program Director, 2015-2017

Intercultural Development Research Association

Mission: The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

Functions:

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

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

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

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

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

IDRA pro-actively disseminates innovative information to educators, administrators, decision- and policymakers, parents and community leaders.

Family and Community Engagement – IDRA's family and community engagement creates partnerships based on respect and a shared goal of academic success and integrating parents and community members into the decision-making processes of the school. Our goal is bigger than parent involvement in education, rather it is family leadership. This model is a vision of all families as advocates of excellent neighborhood public schools.

Contents

Introduction	1
Teacher Shortage	3
IDRA Transition to Teaching Contributions	6
IDRA Accelerated Teacher Certification Model	7
Value Added	11
Diversity Added	11
Effectiveness Added	14
Transformation Added	15
Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs	17
Value and Practice Diversity	17
Include All Stakeholders	18
Expand Intervention Models	18
Conclusions	20
Districts Where IDRA Program Teachers Were Placed	21
Case Studies	24
Works Cited	33

IDRA Transition to Teaching Program: 15-Year Synthesis October 1, 2001 – September 30, 2017

Cover picture: Top, left to right: Ms. Elvia Rosie Alaniz and Ms. Sheila Lozano-Vela, IDRA TTT Program teachers who participated in the program case studies. Bottom: Mr. David Soria (former business person), IDRA TTT Program bilingual teacher, Harris Elementary School, Houston.

Copyright © 2018 by the Intercultural Development Research Association.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or by the publisher.

Requests for such permission will be most generously handled by: Intercultural Development Research Association; 5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101; San Antonio, Texas 78228; Ph. 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; E-mail: contact@idra.org; www.idra.org.

Permission to copy the text and graphics in this publication is granted to the referenced institution. Appropriate acknowledgements should be provided to the Intercultural Development Research Association.

This document was prepared with funds in part provided by the U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education and no endorsement should be inferred.

No ISBN. Distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association. Manufactured in the United States.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 First Edition

Introduction

The Intercultural Development Research Association's Transition to Teaching program prepared and certified teachers to work in high-need Texas districts and campuses for a 15-year period. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, IDRA carried out six projects:

- **Bilingual Education Collaborating Alliance** (BECA) – prepared bilingual education and ESL teachers in Texas
- **Teacher Excellence for All Students** (T-TE_{AS}) – prepared bilingual and ESL teachers in Texas districts with high numbers of English learners
- **Accelerated Teacher Certification** (Transitions) – prepared and helped certify recent graduates and mid-career professionals to become bilingual/ESL elementary teachers.
- **Math and Science Smart** (MASS) – prepared and placed middle and high school math and science teachers with ESL supplemental endorsement in 10 high-need Texas school districts.
- **Accelerated Teacher Preparation for Texas** (Caminos) – prepared teachers with a combined bilingual/ESL and special education certification to teach in high-need school districts.
- **Teachers for Today & Tomorrow** (T³) – prepared and placed teachers in multicultural settings in bilingual/ESL and STEM subjects.

As a whole, the IDRA Transition to Teaching program positively impacted English learners, special education children, and low-income and minority students in Texas.

The program operated during the 2001-02 to 2017-18 school years. Each project built on past successes with prior IDRA Transition to Teaching projects, collaborating with Texas local education agencies (LEAs) in statewide accelerated route certification efforts, and IDRA's now 45-year experience with Pre-K-20 education. The program included a consortium of IDRA, high-need Texas school districts and universities to effectively certify and place, in mostly Latino communities, teachers prepared in bilingual, English as a second language (ESL), special education, and essential STEM subjects through IDRA's accelerated teacher preparation model.

The consortium recruited, prepared, placed and retained a critical mass of highly qualified mid-career professionals, recent graduates and paraprofessionals as teachers in high-need Texas school districts with EC-12 bilingual/ESL, special education, and STEM subject certifications. These teacher candidates participated in a teacher preparation program supplemented by extensive personalized and online mentoring and support – two critical elements that contributed to the projects' success in certifying, placing and retaining competent teachers who had a passion for teaching and making a difference in multicultural settings.

The projects included rural and urban high-need LEAs in Texas. Some of the rural school districts were Carrizo Springs CISD, Crystal City ISD, Donna ISD, Edcouch Elsa ISD and others. Urban school districts included Dallas ISD, Harlandale ISD, Houston ISD, McAllen ISD, San Antonio ISD, South San Antonio ISD and others. In addition, several San Antonio academies (George Gervin Academy, Bexar County Academy and Higgs Carter King Charter School) participated in the projects. A complete list is provided on Page 21.

IDRA partnered with important teacher preparation institutions, including:

- Dallas ISD,
- Houston ISD,
- Alamo Colleges,
- South Texas College, and
- Texas A&M University at San Antonio.

Other institutions that collaborated with IDRA's projects were:

- Our Lady of the Lake University,
- South Texas College,
- St. Thomas University,
- Tarleton State University,
- Texas State University and
- Texas Tech University.

Dallas ISD and Houston ISD have their own teacher preparation programs, which worked with IDRA to prepare and place IDRA Transition to Teaching program graduates in their own high-need schools. In this sense, their partnerships were different from those with institutions of higher education (IHEs), which required school districts with high-need schools as partners.

It was important to collaborate with these institutions to leverage the strength of each partner. Each provided important theoretical foundations through formal university-level coursework. IDRA provided a suite of personalized professional development, as well as mentoring and coaching to participants. IDRA's coaching and mentoring model begins with an asset-based approach that acknowledges the individual experiences and backgrounds of each teacher candidate. This integrated process incorporates both on-site and online professional learning experiences designed to support participants in implementing their district-selected curricula while increasing instructional capacity and delivery that resulted in increased student engagement and success.

In addition, once placed in the classroom, teachers received observations, feedback and

individual support. This partnership produced a model pathway for prospective professionals committed to serve in high-need schools with a diverse population. The valued-added model exceeded all expectations and avoided the justifiable concerns about so-called certification mills, which do not prepare teachers at all.

This document is a summary of a more extensive report detailing aspects of each of the IDRA Transition to Teaching projects, as well as their combined performance. This summary explains the rationale behind this initiative as a response to the teacher shortage in Texas, the program contributions, the model on which it is based, the long-term outcomes, and recommendations for teacher preparation programs. At the end of this report, we include a list of the 55 school districts that benefited from this program along with two case studies that illustrate the effects the program has had on the participants' lives.



Ms. Ivy Juarez, former obstetrician, IDRA Transition to Teaching bilingual teacher, Villas Elementary School,

Teacher Shortage

Teachers come to school with certain assumptions about the students. Those assumptions often amount to what a typical middle-class student might be like. However, a growing number of students do not conform to those expectations, and teacher preparation programs are often unprepared to respond to this reality. Part of the problem is the acute shortage of properly prepared teachers in areas that directly impact these minority and poor students. Every year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) submits a list of teacher shortage areas by subject matter to the U.S. Department of Education. The exhibit below shows a compilation of this information for the last six years.

Teacher Shortage Areas for 2013-14 to 2018-19 School Years (Top Items)						
Shortage Areas	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Bilingual/English as a Second Language	√	√	√	√	√	√
Computer Science/Technology Applications	√	√	√	√	√	√
Mathematics	√	√	√	√	√	√
Science	√	√	√	√	√	√
Special Education	√	√	√	√	√	√
Career and Technical Education		√	√	√	√	√

Teacher Shortage Areas for 2013-14 to 2018-19 School Years (Top Items)

Shortage Areas	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
----------------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2013 to 2018

The list shows remarkable consistency, leading the IDRA Transition to Teaching projects to concentrate efforts in those areas of high need: bilingual/ESL education, STEM (mathematics and science), and special education. Most of the other certifications (i.e., generalist) were state or district required for their elected fields.

In September 2016, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) issued a research brief, “A Coming Crisis in Education? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortage in the U.S.” Using data from various U.S. Department of Education databases, the report estimated a widening gap between teacher hire demand and supply. While their values were similar in 2005, at about 250,000 teachers each, the supply was estimated to decrease to about 200,000 teachers in 2017, and the demand to increase to 260,000. By the year 2021, the deficit is expected to reach 100,000 teachers (demand: 300,000; supply: 200,000).

At about the same time, before and after the report, National Public Radio (NPR) produced several news items with suggestive titles, such as: “Where Have all The Teachers Gone?”; “Teacher Shortage? Or Teacher Pipeline Problem?”; “After 25 Years, This Teacher Says It’s All the Paperwork that Made Him Quit”; “Frustration. Burnout. Attrition. It’s Time to Address the National Teacher Shortage”; “What are the Main Reasons Teachers Call It Quits?”; and “Increasing Salaries so Teachers Don’t Have to Become Principals.” This body of work pointed to the following reasons for teacher turnover and the increasing teacher shortage:

- Lack of resources in some schools;
- Excessive paperwork;
- Shift for teachers toward standardizing lesson planning (time consuming and unproductive for teachers or students);
- Disconnect between training and district needs;
- The accountability obsession and paperwork drive some good veteran teachers away;
- Low salaries: good teachers see becoming principals as the only way to improve their salaries;
- Fewer teachers are being trained due to decreasing enrollment in training programs: the pipeline problem (imbalance between supply and demand);
- Low/deficient teacher preparation;
- Schools run through a business model: eroded emphasis on the craft of teaching and seeing students as individuals; and
- Mismatch in supply: Overproducing certain kinds of teachers school districts aren’t looking for and underproducing other types of teachers that schools actually need.

Two statistics relevant to this synthesis support some of these reasons. First, the enrollment in teacher preparation programs has fallen some 35 percent over the past five years nationwide, representing a potential decrease of 240,000 teachers (LPI, 2016). Second, the greatest shortages are in mathematics, science, bilingual education and special education (Westervelt, 2016).

The U.S. Department of Education compiled state shortage lists and produced a national report titled *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing 1990-1991 through 2016-2017*, in August 2016 (Cross, 2016). The publication listed data similar to that in the exhibit on the previous page for most states. In addition, it produced a global list of high-need fields in schools that serve low-income students, including:

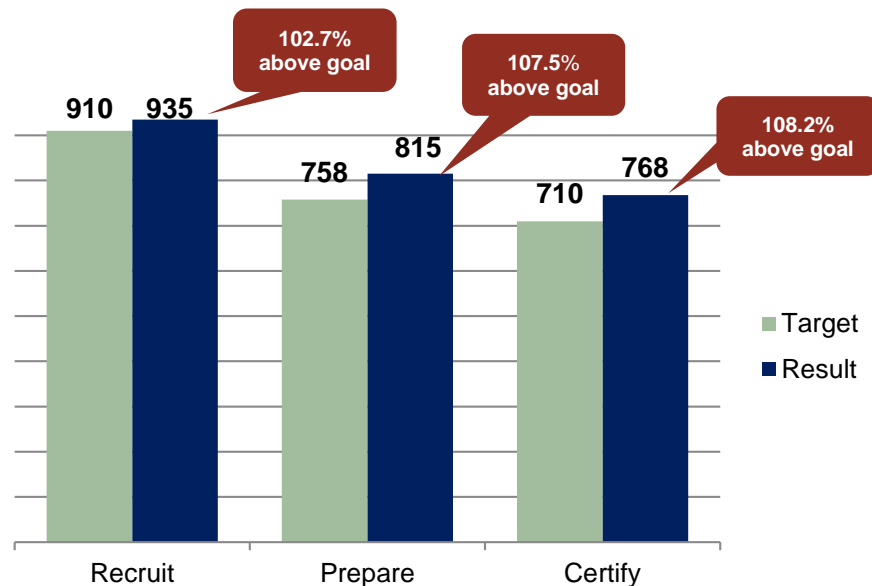
- Bilingual education and English language acquisition
- Foreign language
- Mathematics
- Reading specialist
- Science
- Special education

As TEA and the U.S. Department of Education data show, the shortage of teachers to teach high-need students is endemic both in Texas and across the country. This suggests that the IDRA Transition to Teaching model can potentially be applicable nationwide. So, who is teaching those students? And more importantly, what can be done better? IDRA's program targeted those needs directly and primarily, thereby contributing to answer the first question, and the model constitutes a potential answer to the second question.

IDRA Transition to Teaching Contributions

During the 15 years of the program, IDRA's Transition to Teaching projects proposed to identify and recruit a combined total of 910 second-career professionals, recent college graduates, and paraprofessionals and to provide pre-service training for certification and support to ensure that candidates become fully qualified to teach in high-need schools. Of the 910 program participants, we expected 758 (83 percent) to complete the certification program. And of those 758 participants completing the program, we expected 710 (94 percent) to become fully certified in bilingual education, mathematics, science or other high-need areas, many with ESL or special education supplemental certifications.

The actual outcomes are illustrated in the chart below. IDRA **recruited and selected 935** teacher candidates (102.7 percent of the goal). We **prepared 815** teacher candidates in college or university coursework and professional development by IDRA that provided methodology and pedagogy to equip teachers to work in high-need schools (107.5 percent of goal). And out of those, **768 teacher candidates became fully certified** in the required subjects (108.2 percent of goal). The program exceeded its goals.



The IDRA Transition to Teaching Program Exceeded its Three Main Implementation Targets

IDRA's program operated as one of many alternative certification programs. In fact, there are approximately 200 approved alternative teacher certification programs in Texas. Alternative certification constitutes an increasingly important way of meeting the shortage of teachers in the state, as the exhibit below shows. Statewide, the percentage of teachers employed who were prepared through an alternative certification program increased from 26 percent in the 2011-12 school year to 29.7 percent in 2015-16 school year. Thus, the number of teachers prepared through accelerated preparation programs is fast approaching one third of the entire teacher workforce in the state – a fact that underscores the importance of the quality of those preparation programs for the academic success of our children.

Teachers Employed in Texas Prepared Through an Alternative Certification Route					
Year	All Teachers	Alternative Certification (All)		Alternative Certification (New)	
	Total Teachers	Number	Percent	Number	Per Program
2015-16	328,844	97,792	30	12,553	63
2014-15	324,851	92,534	29	12,061	60
2013-14	320,342	88,151	28	10,606	53
2012-13	317,621	85,209	27	8,671	43
2011-12	317,821	84,041	26	7,314	37
Average				10,241	51

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2011 to 2016

The exhibit above also shows that an average of 10,241 teachers certified through an alternative certification program were added annually in five years. This represents about 51 teachers per alternative certification program. This is in line with the contributions made by IDRA's program, which also is about 51 per year ($768/15 = 51$). The unique contribution by our program is in the model used to prepare the teachers, which resulted in important additions to the bare numbers, as explained in the following sections.

IDRA Accelerated Teacher Certification Model

IDRA developed a rigorous and unique model that provided teacher candidates with an accelerated certification pathway as well as extensive personalized mentoring and support to improve their efficacy and increase the likelihood that they would remain in the school. The program provided teacher candidates with a collegial and supportive environment for enhancing their competence to specifically address the special needs of English learners, low-income and minority students.

The model starts with six elements that frame the program's sequential processes: Recruitment, Selection, Preparation, Certification, Placement and Retention.

Recruitment was informative and motivational. The presentations, fliers and personal appeals to recruits made the case for the need to have effective teachers in schools with high-need students and provided details of the content of the program (the course contents and training they would receive through the project). It elicited a sense of commitment and purpose (making a difference in society and in children's lives), rather than one of economics or convenience.

Selection involved verifying that participants met their eligibility requirements for acceptance into their alternative certification program and their commitment to the goals of the program, including:

- Meet targeted, required expectations of high-need schools;
- Be successful in teaching English learners, low-income and minority students; and
- Develop instructional capacity and strategies through professional development experiences, and virtual and onsite coaching and mentoring.

The **preparation** assured that participants were pedagogically ready to be placed in high-need classrooms, through IDRA professional development and the partners' coursework. Participants were expected to:

- Attend face-to-face professional development sessions exploring key topics, such as diverse student populations, technology integration, building relationships, addressing behavior and student management, substantive student conversations, differentiated instruction, critical questioning, and higher order thinking and problem-solving skills;
- Actively participate in an online community of practice for a minimum of six hours per semester;
- Submit various productive activities, including examples of teacher-designed lessons and student work; and
- Interact for a minimum number of hours in both onsite and online activities. The combined hours were the basis for providing stipends to the project participants.

Certification involved supporting the teachers in meeting the official requirements needed to work in the classroom, including testing preparation support.

In the **placement** stage, IDRA provided personalized support for participants to be employed in the high-need school, including interview preparation and resume writing.

In **retention**, the in-service training involved IDRA's on-site asset-based mentoring and coaching; classroom observation, feedback and individual support; on-site and online experiences to support/extend implementing the district-selected curriculum; and IDRA *platicas* (interactive workshops) so teachers could discuss issues and reinforcement around specific

topics, such as discipline, parent involvement and cultural diversity.

A critical element of the model, particularly throughout the preparation, certification, placement and retention components, is the on-site and asset-based nature of the various professional development activities, including the mentoring and coaching. Many activities were project-based with content area specific assignments initiated during onsite sessions and continued via the social network or community of educators program site.

Participants worked in groups created specifically for that content area. Each group shared ideas,

discussed topics of interest, and clarified statements for developing and completing assignments. This interactivity and openness contributed to the continuous adaptation of the support to the actual needs of participants.



Ms. María Mantilla, recent English graduate, IDRA Transition to Teaching bilingual kindergarten teacher, Golfcrest Elementary School, Houston

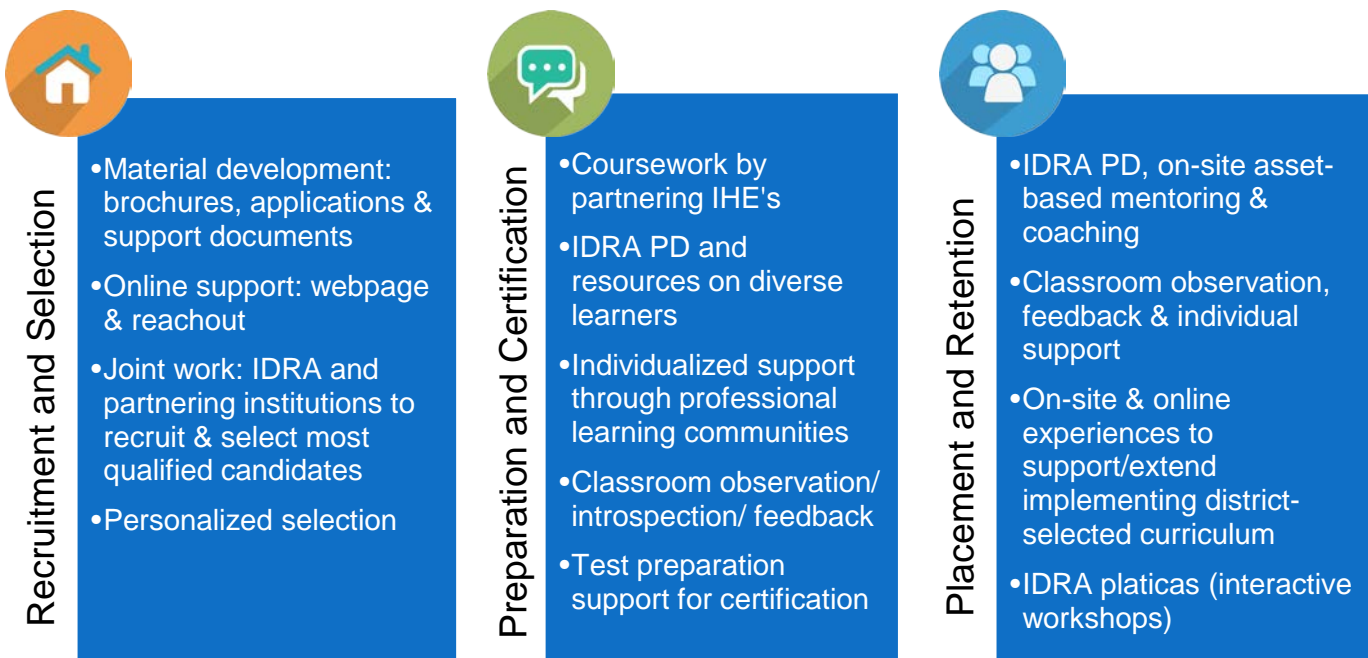
Four **parameters** guided the program model: (1) participating teachers needed to have high skills and commitment to work in high-need schools; (2) IDRA partnered with high-need school districts where participants were placed and IHEs with well-established teacher preparation programs (ACPs) to provide a quality accelerated teacher preparation program for the teacher candidates; (3) participants in the program were highly qualified mid-career professionals, recent graduates and paraprofessionals who were recruited, prepared, placed and retained in (4) high-need school districts to ameliorate the critical shortage of teachers in classrooms with bilingual/ESL, special education, and STEM subject for minority students. The following exhibit shows the model schematically.

IDRA Accelerated Teacher Certification Model

Program Elements



Program Activities



Program Parameters

Philosophy	Teachers with Skills & Commitment to Work in Minority Classrooms		
Partners	High-Need School Districts	Institutions of Higher Education w/ACP	
Participants	Mid-career Professionals	Recent Graduates	Paraprofessionals
Populations	Low Income – Minority – English Learner – Special Education		

Thus far, this report has synthesized the program implementation and primary goals. The rest of this document presents some of the most relevant findings and recommendations.

Value Added

One important value added by the program was that it created a greater awareness about the educational needs of traditionally underrepresented student groups, such as English learners (ELs) and, particularly, EL students with disabilities. Teachers prepared through IDRA's accelerated teacher preparation projects learned to integrate parents' input and engagement. Preparation focused on developing culturally-proficient educators who could be successful in classrooms with diverse student populations. IDRA collaborated with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide teacher preparation and certification for IDRA's Transition to Teaching program participants and, as such, worked closely to define or redefine the teacher preparation program. Because of this collaboration, many IHEs have refined their accelerated teacher preparation programs to address the needs of Texas' rapidly changing student population.

Diversity Added

Overall, the program had at least three important impacts in schools: (1) There was a substantial inflow of minority teachers into the school system; (2) there was a substantial inflow of teachers prepared to teach students in multicultural settings, including bilingual, ESL and special education classrooms; and (3) there was substantial inflow of teachers prepared to teach STEM-oriented areas in the context of multicultural, minority student settings.

The importance of diversity was highlighted in the publication, *Our Stories, Our Struggles, Our Strengths: Perspectives and Reflections from Latino Teachers* (Griffin, 2018):

"If there ever was a time for educators to understand the experiences of Latino students, that time is now. Increases in anti-immigration expressions and sentiments and the very real rollback of federal protections have created an unsafe and unsettling environment in our nation and in our schools. One of the greatest resources to help educators and school leaders help students navigate these times are Latino teachers. Whether they are first-generation immigrants or their families have been in the U.S. for generations, Latino teachers pull from personal experience and a rich and diverse culture to connect with and inspire their students." (pg. 1)

A diverse classroom faculty brings much richness to the student's educational experience. In the case of Latino teachers, Griffin's report outlines the following assets they bring to the classroom:

- They become "cultural guardians," motivated to advocate for students, parents and families with similar background and challenges. (pg. 1)

- They are a diverse group, with different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, that not only differ from other “teachers of color” but also from each other. (pg. 1)
- They can connect with diverse student populations, including recent immigrants and deeply relate to the entire immigration experience. As they build relationships with students, knocking down barriers to trust, they become role models, showing students the possibilities life has to offer by highlighting their own success. (pg. 6)
- They become a communication resource for the entire school and the community it serves. They often engage in negotiating relationships between parents, students and school staff. As bilingual intercessors, teachers who speak Spanish often feel a need to go above and beyond their professional duties to provide educational resources for Latino children and their parents. (pg. 9)

The IDRA Transition to Teaching program recruited participants with the following characteristics: 68 percent female; 59 percent Hispanic, 29 percent White, and 8 percent African American; 39 percent were recent graduates, 53 percent were mid-career professionals, and 8 percent were paraprofessionals; 23 percent were 25 years of age or younger, 44 percent were between 26 and 35 years old, 22 percent were between 36 and 45 years old, and 11 percent were above 45. This demonstrates that the projects recruited participants from its priority groups (more than 60 percent mid-career professionals or paraprofessional); in addition, the projects participants were diverse, with the potential to have a long-term impact (67.5 percent were younger than 36 years old).



Ms. Ana Garza Martínez, IDRA Transition to Teaching bilingual kindergarten teacher, Burke Elementary School, San Antonio

Two differences that can be easily quantified between the program participants and the current teacher distribution employed in Texas were (a) program teachers showed a more balanced gender distribution (68 percent among program participants were female versus 76 percent in the state), and (b) the program showed a greater proportion of minorities, particularly Hispanics with 59 percent in the program versus 26 percent in the entire state, a difference of 33 percentage points. To test the hypothesis that the distributions by gender and ethnicity in the IDRA Transition to Teaching program and the total teacher distribution employed in Texas were significantly different, IDRA performed a chi square analysis. The table on next page shows the results.

Chi Square Analysis of Gender and Ethnic Distributions			
Variable	Category	IDRA Programs	Texas
Gender	Female	102 (68%)	269,453 (76%)
	Male	48 (32%)	83,179 (24%)
	Chi Square Results	$X^2 = 6$	$P = 0.0153$
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic	89 (59%)	91,422 (26%)
	White (Non-Hispanic)	43 (29%)	214,881 (61%)
	African American	12 (8%)	35,263 (10%)
	Asian American	3 (2%)	5,198 (2%)
	Other	3 (2%)	5,868 (2%)
	Chi Square Results	$X^2 = 91$	$P = 0.0000$

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2018

The analysis shows that the gender distribution in the IDRA Transition to Teaching program was significantly different from that of the state at $p < 0.05$. IDRA placed more males (32 percent) than the state (24 percent). The analysis also shows that the distributions by ethnicity were significantly different at $p < 0.001$. IDRA placed significantly more students of color (71 percent) than the state as a whole (39 percent). These results confirm that program participants increased the gender and ethnic diversity in the pool of teachers employed.

In addition to their qualifications, this finding should have a positive effect over time, since the IDRA Transition to Teaching program distributions are closer to those of the student populations in the schools where they serve. TEA reported the student profile illustrated in the last column of the table below. It shows both gender and ethnic distributions closer to the IDRA Transition to Teaching program than to the Texas employed teacher distribution (Total enrollment: 5,359,127 students, June 2017). TEA also reported that 59 of the students were economically disadvantaged, 50 percent were designated as students in at-risk situations and 19 percent were enrolled in bilingual or ESL programs – student population prioritized by the IDRA Transition to Teaching program.

Demographic Profiles: IDRA Transition to Teaching Programs				
Variable	Category	Teachers in Texas	IDRA Programs	Students in Texas
Gender	Female	76%	68%	49%
	Male	24%	32%	51%
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic	26%	59%	52%
	White (Non-Hispanic)	62%	29%	28%
	African American	10%	8%	13%
	Asian American	2%	2%	4%
	Other	2%	2%	3%

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2018

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the magnitude of the effect, considering that the entire IDRA Transition to Teaching program certified 768 teachers (placed in 55 school districts)

to a pool of more than 350,000 teachers (in 1,031 public school districts) in the state. However, the program demonstrated a way in which a difference can be made.

Effectiveness Added

In a sample of participating teachers surveyed online, 95 percent of teachers indicated that the program accomplished its goals and objectives. They provided many reasons to support this assessment. One of them was: “Districts needed knowledgeable, capable teachers to help students succeed in high-need subject areas – mathematics, science, [and] language arts. IDRA assured that all teachers selected met the requirements to be selected to enroll and complete project requirements, successfully passed state test requirements and were placed in high-need campuses.”

The most effective recruitment strategies were working in collaboration with the teacher preparation institutions and school districts to identify and select highly-qualified teacher candidates. This included referring candidates who had contacted IDRA and were pre-screened as highly-qualified candidates to the partner institutions. Partner institutions also had potential candidates fill out program applications and forwarded them to IDRA program staff for review.

More than 93 percent of teachers felt that the program was *highly* or *partially* effective at training them to work effectively in diverse classrooms. One teacher said: “My preparation was completely accurate. I work in a school in which 99 percent are at-risk students.”

On-site mentoring and coaching were the most successful way to support teachers of record. One teacher indicated: “My mentor highlighted what we should expect in the classroom and [how to] handle ourselves outside.”

In the most recent IDRA Transition to Teaching project (T³, N=150), participants received a Texas Educator Certificate in 258 categories, or an average of two per teacher, classified in three general areas: (1) 43 percent for promoting linguistic competency; (2) 22 percent for promoting STEM education; and (3) 35 percent as required by the state to get a certification or other certificates. This showed that participants were highly committed to the program goals, and the program was highly effective in supporting participants achieve their certifications.

Program candidates typically took 12 to 18 months to receive their standard Texas Educator Certificates. The average number of months for program candidates to obtain their certificates was 14.6 months. The teachers of record were placed in 55 districts across Texas; 26 of them were urban and the other 29 were rural districts.

From the teachers' point of view, the program's main strength was that it presented an opportunity for them to (A) obtain the required training to function efficiently in a multicultural, minority setting; (B) facilitate their transition to move from classroom of learning (theory) to actual teaching (practice) by supporting their interaction with the district and school staff; (C) focus on

student success by emphasizing high expectations for all students; and (D) realize all of this training in an interactive, friendly environment where they could learn from each other and were free to ask program staff for help whenever they needed it.

Regarding the program's effectiveness, about 70 percent of the teachers (69 percent) felt that this program was better at achieving its goals than similar programs. The remaining 30 percent were uncertain, which probably meant that they were unfamiliar with other programs they could use to make the comparison. In one of the case studies, when asked to compare this program to other similar programs, a teacher said: "I don't know any other program that helps teachers to get the certification. In fact, I told about this program to one of my friends that wants to be a teacher. I told her that my certification was paid for and they looked for grants or help, and so far, nobody had gotten something like I got in this program."

Transformation Added

Regarding the program impact, teachers gave the highest rate (92 percent) to the statement, "Because of this project, my minority students improved their performance." This is significant because that was the main reason to implement this program in the first place. They also felt that the program helped them improve their confidence and efficacy as teachers (81 percent).

More than 85 percent of teachers (85.7 percent) felt that the program met and exceeded their expectations. As one teacher put it: "It was a great experience that allowed me to learn from people with many types of perspectives. I was given confidence to try, and if I made a mistake, I learned and gave it another try through another approach."

Another teacher added, "Without this program, I would have to have returned to college for another two-plus years and who knows if I would have wanted to finish or even consider that time, but with this certification process it was much faster and more personalized."

And yet another stated: "Very important for the challenges I had to overcome throughout the year, especially because at the end of the year, one student said he wished I would've been his father. That year, he felt [I was the] male role model support that he hadn't experienced at home."

Finally, two case studies, included fully at the end this report, illustrate how the program transformed the lives of participants. First, Ms. Elvia Rosie Alaniz, a mid-career professional (accounting), was inspired to become a teacher after watching and helping her daughters learn. The magic of children's learning touched her deeply and convinced her that helping in that process was her real mission in life. She found the IDRA Transition to Teaching program ideal because she wanted children to be bilingual from the beginning, and bilingual, multicultural education was a goal of the program. She continues to fulfill her dream as a director of her own daycare center after four years in a high-need elementary school.

Second, Ms. Sheila Lozano-Vela, a paraprofessional (Educational Aide I), was already working

at an elementary school as a teacher's assistant. IDRA's program gave her an opportunity to advance her career within the educational system. It also helped the school by providing a much-needed bilingual teacher and someone who had already demonstrated professionalism in her duties. This was an example of the IDRA Transition to Teaching program's "grow your own" method. After three years in the elementary school, Ms. Lozano moved to a middle school, where she continued working with minority students and has been chosen by her school to be the teacher coordinator for the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program because of her experience with minority students and commitment with the program's main goal, keeping students who are at risk in the school, learning and succeeding.

Recommendations for Teacher Preparation Programs

Based on these findings and the entire experience implementing the IDRA Transition to Teaching program, this section of the report outlines lessons learned, best practices and implications for future quality teaching efforts are presented. They are outlined in three general recommendations: (1) value and practice diversity, (2) include all stakeholders, and (3) expand intervention models.

Value and Practice Diversity

- ▶ Schools of education must place a high value on teacher education for a diverse student population and support their work across areas of discipline. This should be expressed both in formal coursework and in practice in the field by having students experience diverse classrooms as part of their preparation. Cultural diversity training should accompany this exposition to ameliorate implicit and explicit biases right from the beginning.
- ▶ Universities and other educational institutions should share successful approaches for recruiting and retaining bilingual and more diverse teachers in high growth states. For example, IDRA added more mentors to the bilingual/ESL classrooms to assure that teachers of record received the quality time needed to become successful teachers. Some of those teachers needed more content language development, support in test preparation, classroom management techniques, and guidance on establishing a trusting and working relationship with students and parents.
- ▶ There is still a shortage of high-qualified teachers with diversity training. For example, in Texas, TEA's list of shortage areas for the 2018-19 school year were: bilingual/ESL, career and technical education, computer science/technology applications, mathematics and special education. Across the country, in the Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing by the U.S. Department of Education (Cross, 2016), the high-need fields (in schools that serve low-income students) are: bilingual education and English language acquisition, foreign language, mathematics, reading specialist, science and special education. Both lists are correlated, indicating high needs in these areas in Texas and nationwide.
- ▶ A comprehensive set of policies, practices and programs that enhance the preparation of educators who teach English learners should be compiled. Given the high need in this area, this comprehensive set can be a valuable resource for both regular preparation programs and accelerated preparation programs.

- ▶ Schools of education should hire faculty who are experienced, well-prepared and knowledgeable about effective strategies for diverse students, including competencies that emphasize all aspects of developing minority student self-esteem.

Include All Stakeholders

- ▶ The body of research and knowledge needs to be expanded about effective teacher preparation with other key stakeholders in education. Universities and districts tend to isolate themselves from their communities. Non-profits and community-based organizations can provide a link with the wider society, particularly with minority communities. The IDRA Transition to Teaching program was a good example in this regard.
- ▶ Schools of education need to create innovative and meaningful partnerships between schools, communities and universities to support teacher recruitment, preparation and placement. Most communities have untapped human resources that can contribute to fill many of the current high needs in the schools. Such partnerships would bring up aspects, such as parent and family involvement and emphasis on diverse students, as integral parts of teaching preparation that are usually neglected in traditional preparation programs.

Expand Intervention Models

- ▶ Holistic assessment and support programs must be developed for educators that rely primarily on the demonstration of knowledge and performance in the classroom. Currently, most of the assessment is test based. In IDRA's program, principal recommendation and successful completion of one-year internship were part of the assessment and support strategies, as an example. These strategies contributed to their preparation as well as their retention.
- ▶ Schools of education are more effective when they provide consistent and long-term support for individuals when they enter teacher education programs to complete all requirements for certification and work in the classroom. The IDRA Transition to Teaching program used an asset-based coaching and mentoring model that acknowledged the individual experiences and backgrounds of each teacher candidate. This integrated process incorporated both on-site and online professional learning experiences designed to support participants in implementing their district-selected curriculum, while increasing their instructional capacity and delivery throughout their years in the program.
- ▶ Effective strategies should support teaching throughout and beyond the certification process by allowing prospective teachers to study theory and practice during their training while they apply prior experience. Co-teaching, group planning and similar collaborative strategies used in the IDRA Transition to Teaching program model, can be valuable in this regard. Teaching does not have to be a lonely endeavor; teachers can support each other to facilitate their work and improve their growth. For example, one of the program teachers, many years later, continued applying the model, as she explained in one of the case studies:

“We meet every other week – all the Spanish teachers from middle schools in the district – and we create and agree to do similar lesson plans. When some teachers do something different, they would tell us, ‘Hey, this is working for me. Maybe you can try it too.’ In this way, we enrich the lessons and test new ideas, while keeping a common plan developed collaboratively.”

Conclusions

The IDRA Transition to Teaching projects met and often exceeded their goals. The program completed 103 percent of its recruitment and selection goal. It prepared 815 teachers through college or university coursework and IDRA professional development to perform well in high-need schools (108 percent of goal). Out of those, 768 teacher candidates became fully certified in bilingual education and essential STEM areas, including mathematics and science, with ESL or special education supplemental certification (108 percent of goal). The program recruited participants to meet its goals and achieve diversity: 32 percent are male (compared to 24 percent currently employed in the entire state); 59 percent are Hispanic (compared to 26 percent in Texas), 29 percent are White (compared to 61 percent in Texas), and 8 percent are African American; 39 percent were recent graduates, 53 percent were mid-career professionals, and 8 percent were paraprofessionals. In addition, with most of the teachers below 36 years of age (68 percent), they were likely to have a longer-lasting effect on the schools where they teach.

The professional development provided by IDRA was a strong source of instructional support; the mentoring and support were effective; and administrators considered the program teachers as highly qualified.

Finally, the program created a greater awareness of the educational needs of traditionally underrepresented student groups, such as English learner students and particularly those with disabilities. Preparation focused on developing culturally-proficient educators to be successful in classrooms with diverse student populations. Because of this collaboration, many IHEs refined their accelerated teacher preparation programs to address the needs of Texas' rapidly changing student population. All of this has resulted in more qualified teachers in a multicultural environment, which is particularly important given that, in Texas, most students are now racial-ethnic minorities – a fact that some IHEs and LEAs consider challenging to prepare for.

Districts Where IDRA Program Teachers Were Placed

The teachers of record were placed in 55 school districts across Texas; 26 of them were urban and the other 29 were rural districts, as illustrated in the exhibit below.

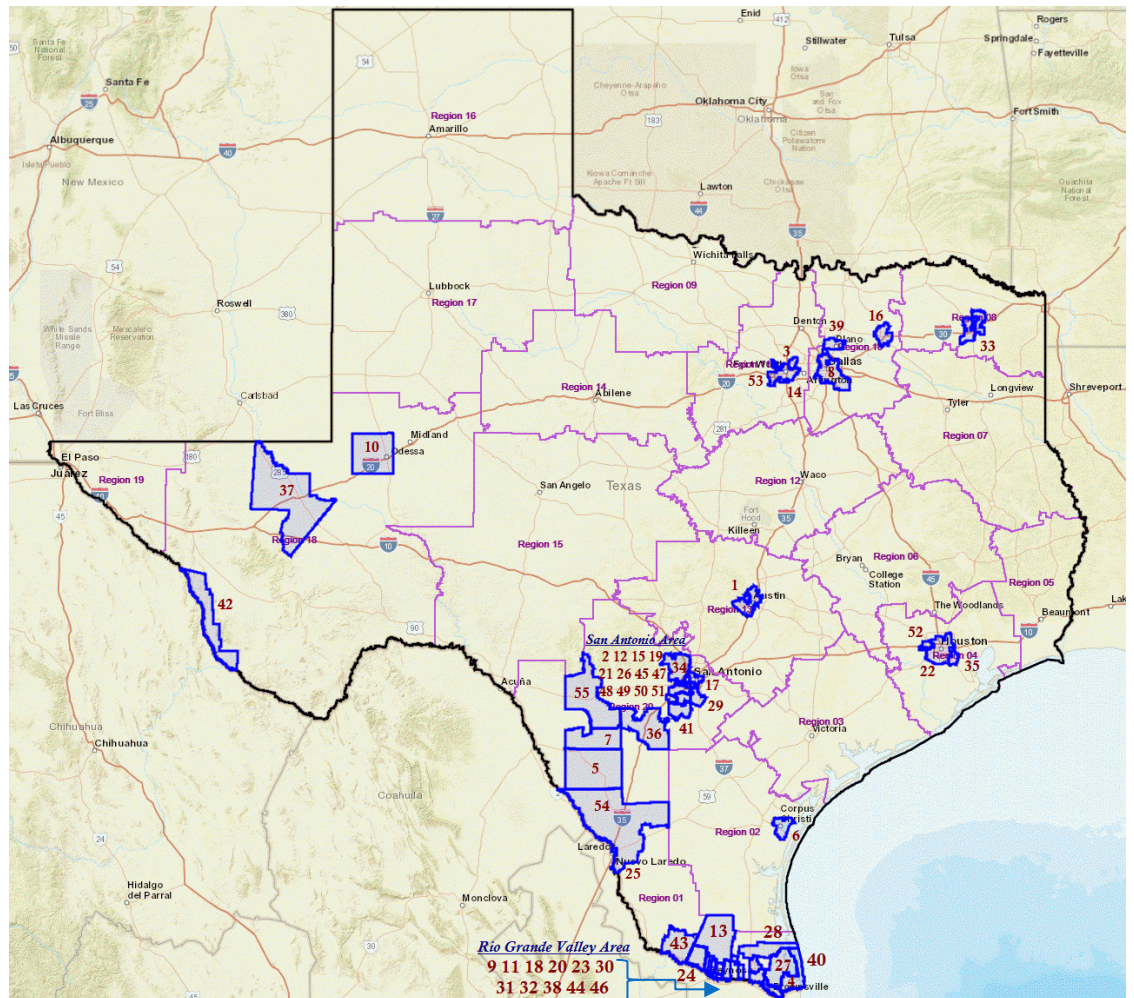
Districts in Alphabetic Order Where Teachers of Record Were Placed			
No	District	Main Cities	Type
1	Austin ISD	Austin	Urban
2	Bexar County Academy Charter School	San Antonio	Urban
3	Birdville ISD	Haltom City, Fort Worth, Dallas	Urban
4	Brownsville ISD	Brownsville	Urban
5	Carrizo Springs Consolidated ISD	Carrizo Springs	Rural
6	Corpus Christie ISD	Corpus Christi	Urban
7	Crystal City ISD	Crystal City	Rural
8	Dallas ISD	Dallas	Urban
9	Donna ISD	Donna	Rural
10	Ector County ISD	Odessa	Rural
11	Edcouch-Elsa ISD	Elsa, Edcouch	Rural
12	Edgewood ISD	San Antonio	Urban
13	Edinburg Consolidated ISD	Edinburg	Rural
14	Fort Worth ISD	Fort Worth	Urban
15	George Gervin Academy (Charter)	San Antonio	Urban
16	Greenville ISD	Greenville	Rural
17	Harlandale ISD	San Antonio	Urban
18	Harlingen Consolidated ISD	Harlingen	Rural
19	Henry Ford Academy (Charter)	San Antonio	Urban
20	Hidalgo ISD	Hidalgo	Rural
21	Higgs Carter King Charter School	San Antonio	Urban
22	Houston ISD	Houston	Urban
23	Ignite Public Schools (Charter)	Weslaco, Rio Grande Valley Area	Rural
24	La Joya ISD	La Joya	Rural
25	Laredo ISD	Laredo	Urban
26	Lighthouse Charter School	San Antonio	Urban
27	Los Fresnos CISD	Los Fresnos	Rural
28	Lyford Consolidated ISD	Lyford	Rural
29	Lytle ISD	Lytle	Rural
30	McAllen ISD	McAllen	Rural
31	Mercedes ISD	Mercedes	Rural
32	Mission Consolidated ISD	Mission	Rural
33	Mount Pleasant ISD	Mount Pleasant	Rural
34	Northside ISD	San Antonio	Urban
35	Pasadena ISD	Pasadena	Urban
36	Pearsall ISD	Pearsall	Rural
37	Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD	Toyah, Pecos, Barstow	Rural
38	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	Pharr, San Juan, Alamo	Rural

Districts in Alphabetic Order Where Teachers of Record Were Placed			
No	District	Main Cities	Type
39	Plano ISD	Plano	Urban
40	Point Isabel ISD	Port Isabel	Rural
41	Poteet ISD	Poteet	Rural
42	Presidio ISD	Presidio	Rural
43	Rio Grande City Consolidated ISD	Rio Grande City	Rural
44	Rio Grande Valley ISD	Rio Grande Valley Area	Rural
45	San Antonio ISD	San Antonio	Urban
46	San Benito Consolidated ISD	San Benito	Rural
47	School of Excellence in Education (Charter)	San Antonio	Urban
48	Somerset ISD	Somerset	Rural
49	South San Antonio ISD	San Antonio	Urban
50	Southside ISD	San Antonio	Urban
51	Southwest ISD	San Antonio	Urban
52	Spring Branch ISD	Spring Branch	Urban
53	TMATE (Fort Worth ISD, Tarleton)	Fort Worth, Dallas, Stephenville	Urban
54	United ISD	Laredo	Urban
55	Uvalde Consolidated ISD	Uvalde	Rural

Source: Program Records

Using TEA district locator web page, we plotted each of these districts to their geographic locations and created the map on next page. We added the numbers in the exhibit above to identify each district on the map. The locations demonstrate that the program operated in areas of great needs, in central and south Texas, rural and border communities, and around the state largest cities (Dallas-Fort Worth metro complex, Houston and San Antonio).

Districts Where Teachers of Record Were Placed



“

Districts needed knowledgeable, capable teachers to help students succeed in high-need subject areas – mathematics, science, language arts. IDRA assured that all teachers selected met the requirements to be selected to enroll and complete program’s requirements, successfully passed state test requirements and were placed in high-need campuses.

”

– IDRA Transition to Teaching program administrator

Case Studies



Case Study # 1

Ms. Elvia Rosie Alaniz

Mid-Career Professional: Accountant (Prior)

Ms. Alaniz was inspired to become a teacher after watching her daughters learn in school. The magic of children's learning touched her deeply and convinced her that helping in that process was her real mission in life.

She found IDRA Transition to Teaching program ideal because she wants children to be bilingual from the beginning, and supporting bilingual multicultural education was a goal of that program. She continues to fulfill her dream as a director of her own daycare center.

Ms. Alaniz enrolled in the IDRA Transition to Teaching Program in August 2013 and obtained her certificate in July 2014. Her certificate was in Generalist EC-6 with Bilingual Education Supplemental-Spanish EC-6. She completed the program through the collaboration between IDRA and South Texas College (STC). Ms. Alaniz taught first grade in Castro Elementary School in Mission CISD, a rural school district in south Texas.

In 2017, Ms. Alaniz opened an educational daycare center called Kiddie Academy. She started with 18 children and expects to get up to 115 children as the community learns about this facility. She used what she learned in the IDRA Transition to Teaching Program to open this center.

Ms. Alaniz was a mid-career professional who dreamed of becoming a bilingual teacher. IDRA's program offered that opportunity. After working for 13 years in accounting, she decided to become a teacher, in part because of her daughters. When her first daughter started going to Pre-K, she observed the way she was learning the letters. She loved to see her girl learning and felt a desire to be a teacher. However, she continued working as an accountant and then her second girl arrived, *"And the same thing happened to me when she started going to Pre-K. She started learning so fast that I was, again, [thinking] it's so exciting seeing how the kids learn. I wanted to be a teacher. When I was working with them, doing the homework, I felt like I was a teacher. So again, my desire to be a teacher was renewed."*

"And then I found the [IDRA] alternative certification program to become a teacher; and moreover, I found out it was bilingual. And since my main language is Spanish, I [thought], 'This is perfect for me.' I found that I could transfer some of my previous college work."

"After completing the program, I took the tests and went into a probation situation in the classroom. I had a mentor in the classroom who was another teacher in the next classroom. The program was like a scholarship, where we received some workshops with other teachers, and

we exchanged experiences about our classrooms. We were learning from each other, because we all were experiencing new things as new teachers.”

When asked about how she learned about the program, she said: “My sister-in-law told me about it. She said, ‘You go to STC. You take your transcript, and they’re going to tell you what else you need to become a teacher.’ I did that, and the university people were very helpful. Then I took the classes, which I loved. So, I continued even [while] pregnant with my third girl.”

Regarding the workshops she received, Ms. Alaniz remembered that the ones about class organization and team building were very helpful because they addressed how to do this or that in the classroom directly and practically: “I was very pregnant, and they told me that I would be excused. But I really wanted to be there and complete the program.” She did so in early 2014, and her third daughter was born a few weeks later.

When asked about the process of getting her certification, Ms. Alaniz said: “First, I had my probationary certification for that year, 2013. And then as soon as I finished my probationary teaching year, a requirement for the school to hire me, they hired me. Another requirement was the observations from the STC. They needed to see what I was doing, which happened through walkthroughs and the observations, which they did and approved. So, I met that requirement as well. After that I got my certification and completed my second year at the school.”

“I remember I did an example of my class for science showing how I work with the kids using technology, using manipulatives and everything. At that time, I chose science and did plants I remember. We had a lot of support from them. They were first telling us how to do it. And they were always waiting for us to ask, ‘Do you have any questions? You have any trouble teaching?’ We had a lot of support from them, indeed.”

Ms. Alaniz remained in the school for four years, until she started this new venture. “I was so excited to come and work over here in my new center. However, I want to tell you that I was crying the last day of school, because I got very involved with all my kids, especially those who were 6 years old. When I told them, ‘This is going to be my last day,’ I started crying, and they were crying with me. I try not to think about them. I told them, ‘I’m going to be keeping in touch with your new teacher.’”

“I worked there, as a first-grade teacher, for four years. The principal told me that she had to ask how long she would have to wait to re-hire me, because she would like to have me back. And they said that she had to wait for two years for me to go back, because I was the one who was resigning. My plans are to be here. But you never know. But the thing is, I have the doors open over there if I wanted to go back.”

Regarding other accelerated teaching programs, she didn’t know any other like this one. She added, “I know that a local university here has a four-year program, which I wouldn’t do.”

When asked about the impact that her preparation had on her students, she said: “Most of the years that I taught, at the end of the year, when talking about what they wanted to be when grown up, most of them, the girls especially, would say that they want to be teachers. They would say, ‘I want to be like you Ms. Alaniz. I want to be a teacher.’ And then some of the boys would say,

'I want to be a teacher, too.' So, I started this first year, I would start calling them, Mr. Valdes, Mr. Ramírez, and so on. I would tell them that they were my Mini-Me, because all of them were saying that they were teachers. When I was assigning them the groups, I would say: 'You're going to be the team leader,' 'You're going to be like a teacher,' 'You're going to have to help me with the kids in your team.' And then they would say, 'When I grow up, I want to be a teacher.' Some of them said that they wanted also to be principals."



"Every time we talked about particular jobs, I would tell them: 'You have to study, because if you study, you're going to get a big house. You're going to have whatever you want, because you need to study, you need to learn, and then you're going to become anything you want to be.' A few kids would say they wanted to be a policeman and things like that. So, they already knew that they had to come to school in order to be someone else better in the future. But when we were talking about jobs and what kind of jobs they want, most of them loved teachers. They wanted to be teachers. So, I think that I had an impact to my students."

Regarding the strengths of the program, she indicated that during the probation year a strong support was through the mentor teachers assigned to them and also through the other teachers. Every Monday, they had time to ask questions and receive additional tools. Through this program, they could use their professional background to help with their teaching. In addition, the program gave her confidence: "Because they were giving us advisers on how to act, how to do different things to teach the kids. When my confidence was low, they would give me comfort and support to go to the school and work and teach what I knew. And if we don't know something, we could come to them, ask them, and they would guide us, 'Okay, for this, you can do that. You can do it in this way or that way.'"

Regarding something that the program could have done better, Ms. Alaniz didn't think anything needed changing, but she referred to one aspect of the program that she really liked: "I remember that we used to be online, and we had conversations. Other teachers would post pictures, and I loved it. It was a network for people in the program. Beside pictures, they would post questions. And sometimes we had assignments, things to read and things to ask. And I really loved that because other teachers were there in San Antonio and all around Texas, and we had friends and some of us were going to STC on Mondays. And this network extended our connectivity. We could send messages and ask them things like: 'Did you remember you were saying this in class? Can you please remind me what you were saying?' And we used to have that. It was like a Facebook, but it was an [private] page. I really loved that."

“We also had assignments through that system. When IDRA staff were coming from San Antonio, they would recommend some reading and send us materials through the system. And we had a chance to discuss things through that network before and after the visit. I really loved it.”

Ms. Alaniz said that, thanks to this program and because of its bilingual orientation, she was implementing a dual language program in the new center that she and her husband created (pictured on previous page). She said: “Because of the program and my years teaching, I can work here as the director of this center. If I didn’t have the experience of teaching, I couldn’t be the director here. So, it was very helpful to have become first a teacher and then to open this center.”

“Also, when the parents come, and I tell them: ‘We’re doing the dual language program. They’re learning to read, and write, and grammar in Spanish. And they’re going to be receiving math and science in English. And I have the experience as a teacher,’ And they would say, ‘Oh, you are a teacher? Oh, that’s much better.’ They realize I know how to work with kids. Also, the people we’re hiring are teachers. They prefer to work here. And because I have experience preparing bilingual education class plans, I can help the teachers. In addition, as I was telling my husband, right now we have three teachers: one for the babies, and two for the 3-year-olds and the 4-year-olds. So, I think we’re missing one for the 2-year-olds. I told him, ‘I can be that teacher while we get more kids,’ because of my experience as a teacher. I really love being bilingual.”

One last question was whether or not the program met or exceeded her expectations and how. She responded: “Yes, it exceeded my expectations. By giving us advisers and telling us how to do the things in real situations. You have to deal with kids in different situations. All kids are different. So, what we learned during the program, taking the courses, for example, was: ‘If the kids do this, you’re going to do that; and you’re going to teach them this way.’ But not all the kids learn in the same way, so they give us examples: ‘You’re going to have these kind of kids, these kind of kids, and these kind of kids, and this is how you’re going to work, and this is how you’re going to make the groups with diverse kind of students, and this is how they’re going to be learning from each other. But first, they’re going to learn from you.’ So, we had a lot of examples.”

“Yes, they met and exceeded my expectations, because they gave us a lot of support. It was very practical, down-to-earth. It was dealing with real people, with real kids. Not just what the book said, because the books present the ideal student, the ideal school, the ideal teacher. They don’t exist. Once you went to the school, you’ll find out that they don’t exist. So, they were giving us real examples, real people, and they do exist.”

We asked, “Anything else?” she said: “No. I just want you to tell you, thank you for that wonderful program! Thank you for everything that you all do at IDRA!”



Case Study # 2

Ms. Sheila Lozano-Vela

Paraprofessional: Educational Aide I (Prior)

Ms. Lozano-Vela was already working at an elementary school as a teacher's assistant. The IDRA Transition to Teaching program gave her an opportunity to advance her career within the educational system. It also helped the school by providing a much-needed bilingual teacher and someone who had already demonstrated great professionalism in her current duties – an example of the grow-your-own strategy.

After three years in the elementary school, Ms. Lozano moved to a middle school, where she continued working with minority students and has been chosen to be the teacher coordinator for the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program because of her experience with minority students and commitment with the program goal, keeping students who are at risk in the school, learning and succeeding academically.

Ms. Lozano-Vela enrolled in the IDRA Transition to Teaching program in August 2013 and obtained her certificate in November 2014. Her certificate was in Generalist EC-6 with Bilingual Education Supplemental-Spanish EC-12 and Languages other than English-Spanish EC-12. She completed the program through the collaboration between IDRA and South Texas College (STC). Ms. Lozano taught first grade in Castro Elementary School in Mission CISD, a rural school district in south Texas.

Before entering the program, Ms. Lozano was a paraprofessional (Educational Aide I) working as a teacher's assistant in the elementary school. She said the program was very helpful because it [“guided us in how to work with diverse students, like bilingual students; that was the population that I was working with at that time as an assistant in the elementary school.”](#) Ms. Lozano is originally from Mexico, where she earned a bachelor's degree in international business. Thus, she was already transitioning toward a teaching career, and the program served as a conduit to complete that process.

Regarding the goal of the program, she said: [“Number one, for us, it was like they encouraged us to pursue this career about teaching. We had different degrees \[from education\]. So, they were very helpful because we didn't know so many things about teaching. They explained to us the essence of education and how to be better teachers. We were not like the regular teachers who you can see in a regular classroom. So, they taught us how to be better and how to work with bilingual students or recent immigrant students.”](#)

She remembered that the enrollment process involved submitting an application with several documents. She eventually received a letter of acceptance. The process was friendly and the staff at the university (STC) were very helpful. She said: [“They explained everything, like why we](#)

needed to observe teachers in their classrooms and always emphasized that the goal was to help improve the knowledge of the students and their academic performance. They answered all our questions and were excellent guides for us at all times.”

Ms. Lozano felt that she was selected because she is bilingual, and she was already an assistant in a school working with economically disadvantaged students and English learners. Therefore, she thought she fit the profile of future teachers that could be helpful for those students. In fact, bilingual applicants received extra points in the selection process.

Regarding the training, she remembered that it was very interactive. Sessions addressed different topics, such as classroom management and grouping strategies. For example, in one class: “They chose some topics and separated us into groups, and we had to create a lesson plan for a class with one of those topics. Then, we had to explain to the rest of our peers the class plan we had prepared. It was fun. In another class, the IDRA staff modeled a class for us. We learned a lot from that.”

She said she had to take many classes, including classroom management, generalist courses, bilingual courses, and some other courses to help with the state tests. In addition, there was an internship for the first year. During that time, every Monday, she had college classes, and sometimes she had to go on Saturdays for IDRA’s workshops and to provide feedback about how her month or her week was going. In addition, she had a mentor when she was a first-year teacher.

“They prepared me to take my tests. The most important was the bilingual one, because to get a job in this school, you had to be bilingual certified. So, they helped me with that. And [they helped] with the classroom management, because you had to be trained in classroom management, as well. For example, we could be working with special education students, with different kind of students, and that helped us a lot.”

The training was very important to Ms. Lozano. One thing she remembers were the cases: “They used to give us cases. For example, this child is 12 years old, and he’s coming from Mexico, with very little schooling. He doesn’t know English at all, etc. ‘How can you place him in a bilingual program? How can you start teaching him a second language?’ It was very helpful. For me, it had a really special value because I live and work here in the border, so I receive students coming from Mexico with little schooling and no English at all.”

In addition to the training: “I did one year of internship, and then I started my teaching career. To get this scholarship from IDRA, I committed to stay in the school for at least three years serving bilingual students, and right now it’s almost my fifth year working with bilingual students. But this is my fifth year as a teacher. I also was an assistant for two years, working with students coming from Mexico.”

The placement process was both easy and difficulty for her because, as she said: “I was already

working in a school at that time. My principal was waiting for me to finish classes at STC and get my certification for her to hire me. For that, I needed to take and pass all the required tests. At a certain point I thought, 'No, I can't do it.' It was very difficult for me to take all those tests. Initially, I failed, and I was really, really sad. But eventually, I passed them with the help of the program. I took the bilingual test by itself without the generalist, and I passed it right away, and then I took the generalist, and I passed it too. The principal told me, 'I have a position for you, so you need to take the rest of the tests to get that position.' So, in one week I took all the remaining tests and I received all my results, and I passed all of them. I was really, really happy."

After she was hired, the program support continued. She said, "They continued with the Monday classes, but the topics were different. Because we worked in the classroom, it was everything about the classroom, how to provide the lesson for our students, planning the lessons carefully before going to class, and so on."

She said she has kept that discipline as much as possible long after the program was over for her. "Currently, during my planning time in the afternoon and my conference time in the morning, I plan for my classes. I am a Spanish teacher, and I [teach] different levels. In my last period, I have my eighth graders. They are more advanced than my sixth and seventh graders. So, I'm always planning different activities for them to be [engaged] and to be focused on what they are learning. After school, I'll stay to plan for my sixth-grade students since I have them in the morning. Therefore, as soon as I get here in the morning, I already have everything set up for that class."

She also kept the collaborative model used during the program. She explained it as follows: "We meet every other week – all the Spanish teachers from middle schools in the district – and we create and agree to do similar lesson plans. When some teachers do something different, they would tell us, 'Hey, this is working for me. Maybe you can try it too.' In this way, we enrich the lessons and test new ideas, while keeping a common plan developed collaboratively."

When asked to compare this program to other similar programs, she said: "I don't know any other program that helps teachers to get the certification. In fact, I told about this program to one of my friends who wants to be a teacher. I told her that my certification was paid for and they looked for grants or help, and so far, nobody had gotten something like I got in this program."

Regarding the program preparation, she said it was very good because it was focused on the type of students she was getting, bilingual or EL, economically disadvantaged students, and she was able to use the appropriate background to connect with those students.

She believes that the program also helped her confidence. "I was afraid to speak in front of people because of my strong accent. In the program, I *had* to do it. I had to explain my lesson in front of my peers. I was very nervous at that time, but I had to do it, and I got used to it. So, it helped me a lot. It helped me also with my interviews. When I interviewed for this position [at the middle school], and for the position in the elementary school, they helped me a lot."

When asked about possible improvements to the program, she said, “I don’t think that improvements are needed, but I think that they need to offer it again because I know people that are very smart. They are engineers. They have degrees. But they really don’t have the money to enter a pay program because they have all their bills. And they are working in something else but want to teach.”

Regarding that comment, we asked her, from the school perspective, do you feel that school needs that kind of people coming in to be teachers? She said: “Yes, I do. I have seen so many teachers who went to an education program at a university, but they are not motivated to teach. At the same time, I know so many people who have degrees in different careers, and they would love to teach. I know they can do it well. I’m an example. My bachelor’s degree was in international business, and I think that I’m doing a great job where I am right now. My principal gives high appraisal about me. All my principals have told me, ‘You are very good, etc.’ That’s why they hired me here right away, even though it’s very difficult to get a position in Spanish here in the [Texas] Valley.”

Regarding the program meeting or exceeding her expectations, she said: “I didn’t know that they were going to pay; I thought it was just to help us with our certification. We even got checks to go to the classes. It was amazing because, at that time, some of us didn’t have a job. Imagine going to get your mail and seeing a check that we are receiving for going to school. It was really amazing!”

In addition to her teaching duties, Ms. Lozano is the teacher coordinator for the IDRA Cola-Cola Valued Youth Program in Lorenzo De Zavala Middle School in La Joya ISD, a rural school district in south Texas. Created by IDRA, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an effective dropout prevention program for students in at-risk situations, with an average 98 percent retention rate. The power of the program is in the valuing of all students that teachers like Ms. Lozano learned in the IDRA Transition to Teaching program.

In essence, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a youth leadership development program designed to help to graduate students with the most need for support. In the program, secondary students are placed as tutors of elementary students, enabling them to make a difference in the younger students’ lives. The picture at right shows Ms. Lozano’s tutors boarding the bus to go to the elementary school to meet their tutees. Because of this new academic responsibility role, the Valued Youth tutors bolster their self-discipline and self-esteem. Schools shift to the philosophy and practice of valuing students, moving from negative thinking to positive expectations. The program involves all stakeholders in the youth education, including parents, teachers, administrators and community. In addition to rekindling students’ involvement in the school, the program evaluation has found



that it (a) enhanced basic academic skills and life skills; (b) strengthened perceptions of self and school (98 percent of tutors stay in school); (c) reduced disciplinary action referrals and absenteeism; and (d) strengthened school-home-community partnerships.

Ms. Lozano has been chosen to be the teacher coordinator for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in this school because of her experience teaching disadvantaged students and her personal commitment with the goals of the program.

Works Cited

- Cantu, L. (September 2015). "The Win-Win of Quality Accelerated Teacher Certification," *IDRA Newsletter*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. <http://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-win-win-of-quality/>
- Cross, F. (August 2016). *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing 1990-1991 through 2016-2017*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.pdf>
- Griffin, A. (2018). "Our Stories, Our Struggles, Our Strengths: Perspectives and Reflections from Latino Teachers," Washington, D.C.: The Education Trust. https://edtrust.org/press_release/latino-teachers-reflections-perspectives-teaching
- Rodríguez, R., & Cantu, L. (November-December 2010). "Building Teaching Quality from the Start – New Skills for New Teachers," *IDRA Newsletter*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. <http://www.idra.org/resource-center/building-teaching-quality-from-the-start/>
- Solis, A. (June-July 2004). "The Role of Mentoring in Teacher Quality and Retention," *IDRA Newsletter*. San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association. <http://www.idra.org/resource-center/the-role-of-mentoring-in-teacher-quality-and-retention/>
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.*, Research Brief. Palo Alto, Calif.: Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/A_Coming_Crisis_in_Teaching_BRIEF.pdf
- Texas Education Agency. (March 2017). Certified, Employed Teachers by Preparation Route 2012-2016. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. <https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=51539614236&libID=51539614236>
- Texas Education Agency. (March 2017). Certified Teacher Demographics by Preparation Route 2012-2016. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. <https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=51539614235&libID=51539614235>
- Texas Education Agency. (June 2017). Enrollment in Texas Public Schools, 2016-17. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/acctres/enroll_index.html
- Texas Education Agency. (June 28, 2013). 2013-2014 Teacher Shortage Areas, letter. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/2013-2014_Teacher_Shortage_Areas/
- Texas Education Agency. (July 30, 2014). 2014-2015 Teacher Shortage Areas, letter. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/2014-2015_Teacher_Shortage_Areas/
- Texas Education Agency. (August 17, 2015). 2015-2016 Teacher Shortage Areas, letter. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/2015-2016_Teacher_Shortage_Areas_and_Loan_Forgiveness_Programs/
- Texas Education Agency. (July 6, 2016). 2016-2017 Teacher Shortage Areas, letter. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/2016-2017_Teacher_Shortage_Areas_and_Loan_Forgiveness_Programs/
- Texas Education Agency. (July 13, 2018). 2018-2019 Teacher Shortage Areas, letter. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/2018-2019_Teacher_Shortage_Areas_and_Loan_Forgiveness_Programs/
- Texas Education Agency. (March 2017). Employed Teacher Demographics 2012-2016. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. <http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=51539614238&libID=51539614238>
- Texas Education Agency. Student Loan Forgiveness for Teachers, 2017-2018 Teacher Shortage Areas, web page. Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Educators/Educator_Initiatives_and_Performance/Student_Loan_Forgiveness_for_Teachers/
- Westervelt, E. (September 15, 2016) "Frustration. Burnout. Attrition. It's Time to Address the National Teacher Shortage," NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/15/493808213/frustration-burnout-attrition-its-time-to-address-the-national-teacher-shortage>



CHAIR OF THE BOARD
Mr. Juventino Guerra, Jr.
San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Ricardo Fernández
Washington, D.C.

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Mr. Othón Medina
El Paso, Texas

Mrs. Rosalinda González
Mission, Texas

SECRETARY
Dr. Sally J. Andrade
El Paso, Texas

Mr. Jessie Rangel
Lubbock, Texas

Dr. David Benson
Houston, Texas

Mr. Jesse Treviño
McAllen, Texas

Dr. Max Castillo
Houston, Texas

Mr. Leo Zuñiga
San Antonio, Texas

María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.
President & CEO

The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, private non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.