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Focus: Teaching Quality

Using Project-Based Learning and STEAM to Engage Students During the Pandemic

Highlights of IDRA EAC-South Assistance to Metro Nashville Public Schools

by Paula N. Johnson, Ph.D.

It all began with a spark! Metro Nashville Public Schools (PS) in Tennessee is home to over 160 schools and more than 85,000 students. Its mission is to "deliver a great public education to every student, every day." There is a growing group of elementary teachers moving from a spark to a flame. They are ready to light the way for others.

In November 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the IDRA EAC-South expanded its technical assistance partnership with Metro Nashville PS by launching a book study on project-based learning (PBL) for a small cohort of teachers. This article provides a glimpse into a year-long journey that transformed classrooms and instruction through project-based learning.

The Power of Magnets

Not that kind of magnet. Time for a short history lesson on the role of magnet schools in the U.S. education system. Following the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the U.S. Department of Education established the Magnet School Assistance Program (MSAP) in the late 1960s as an approach to school desegregation. The program was designed to provide students of color improved educational conditions, quality academic programming and marketable vocational skills.

The Department of Education continues to provide funding through a highly-competitive grant process to public schools that wish to establish magnet programs. The program focuses on de-

signing innovative public school programs that promote diversity and strengthen students' content knowledge.

Metro Nashville PS was awarded one of these five-year grants in 2017. The funding provided the opportunity to transform five elementary schools into STEAM magnets. Magnet schools offer students increased program choices and strengthened academic achievement. Metro Nashville PS uses STEAM education as a means "to desegregate schools by supporting the elimination, reduction, and prevention of social and academic isolation" of students of color and to "improve academic achievement" (MNPS, 2021).

Program leadership focuses on improving academic achievement for students by providing dynamic and collaborative hands-on learning opportunities through real-world scenarios. The district is building a strong program and hopes to increase the number of white parents choosing magnet schools to bring more diversity.

The Power of STEAM

Each of the selected magnet schools chose its STEAM focus. Five unique themes emerged, including entrepreneurship, environmental sciences, integrated technology and biological sciences, arts, and environmental engineering. The campuses began using STEAM explorations to build student capacity in the 4 C's of 21st Century Skills (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, (cont. on Page 2)

Project-based learning has been a powerful instructional model for re-engaging students during the pandemic.

communication). Teachers developed innovative lessons with multiple opportunities for students to share ideas, thoughts, questions and solutions.

The Power of Project-based Learning

At the end of three years, however, the magnet school evaluations showed a lack of connection between content and each campus' chosen theme. As Year 4 planning began, the district's curriculum lead decided to explore project-based learning and asked IDRA to facilitate a book study on PBL practices, which is one of the strategies IDRA shares in our culturally responsive instruction professional development sessions. Teachers shift their instructional focus in ways that highly engage students. They move away from printed materials toward "authentic real-world situations where students think, analyze, reflect and create" (Avilés & Al-Gasem, 2016). Also, project-based learning enables students to investigate topics that are meaningful to them.

Lucas Education Research found recently that project-based learning has been a powerful instructional model for re-engaging students during the pandemic. Centering learners' interests in such projects increases their potential for learning gains across racial and ethnic groups, socio-economic status and reading ability levels compared to peers in traditional classes. (2021)

In asking for the book study, the district team envisioned an in-depth exploration of the PBL process for a small group of teachers over a long period of time. We designed an after-hours professional learning experience that would not interfere with the school day but at the same time would impact instruction.

The IDRA EAC-South designed and facilitated a five-week virtual book study using *Reinventing Project-Based Learning: Your Field Guide to Real-*

See how IDRA can work with your campus to design a PBL implementation plan and support it through professional development and coaching.



Infographic

8 Elements of PBL Lessons

Webinars

First Steps in Project-Based Learning
PBL at Home & Across the Curriculum

Podcast Episode

Taking Project Based Learning Schoolwide

<https://idra.news/PBLhelp>

World Projects in the Digital Age (Boss, Krauss & Conery, 2018) as the text. The first cohort included 16 teachers, representing each of the five campuses.

As facilitators, IDRA models readiness assessment as part of our instructional delivery process. Similar to how we establish prior knowledge before instruction with student learners, we want to determine how much background information our cohort members had regarding project-based learning. To accomplish this, we began our first meeting with a survey to gauge how familiar our group was with technology, online resources, project-based learning and presentation tools. Most had some idea of what project-based learning is. None felt they were ready to charge ahead without more information.

Weekly sessions included pre-work activities, guided professional development, collaboration, reflection questions and research. For the culminating exercise, each team developed a project-based learning STEAM lesson related to their

school's magnet focus. Teams presented their lessons, shared reflections on the process and identified implications for further implementation.

Kindergarten teacher Mary J. Hollingsworth stated: "The work I've been doing with IDRA and PBL has helped to enhance my knowledge of creating and implementing PBL successfully. My students love doing projects and expanding their knowledge. It has allowed them to take ownership of their learning. Yes, kindergarteners can take ownership of their learning, and they show great pride in all their work."

The showcase projects also were shared with all campuses during a winter MSAP Spark conference. Hearing about their peers' experiences and growth ignited interest among more teachers. The district team organized a second book study that began early 2021 with an additional 19 teachers. By midsemester, we had almost 40 teachers implementing PBL lessons that connected STEAM with their campus theme.

IDRA staff visited the entrepreneur STEAM campus during student showcases. You cannot imagine the delight of witnessing fourth graders presenting a project and marketing their product to classmates. Shark Tank has nothing on these young minds.

Fourth grade teacher Angela Phelps reflected: "Being part of a professional cohort that supports the implementation of PBL in a STEAM magnet school has helped me generate ideas and check for fidelity in the teaching and learning process, and it inspired me to implement innovative learning experiences for my students that support key concepts and 21st century skills. I am really excited for the students to develop their communication skills and see how math helps us understand the world."

(cont. on Page 4)

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. 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.

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Students Don't Need Old-Style Remediation – Accelerated Instruction Helps Students Both Reconnect and Excel

by Hector Bojorquez

As students came back to school this fall, a recurring theme in conversations taking place among teachers is how much catching up students need to do. Standardized testing data shows a definite decline in students' math and reading scores. Researchers across the country shared similar observations before the year began.

Anecdotally, we hear teacher stories about “learning losses,” like students saying: “I don't remember how to multiply” and “Which nouns are capitalized?” Teachers tell of students feeling overwhelmed with the simplest of writing assignments and anxiety about previously mastered material. The situation is even direr when we examine how Black students, Latino students and emergent bilingual students fare.

This has left many of us asking deep questions about resiliency of our institutions and the fragility of our equity efforts. There will be a time for reflection as to how we got into this situation. And the answer won't be COVID-19.

We will have to ask vital questions concerning equity and all its current challenges: funding, capacity building, teacher training, and the trend toward lowering expectations and providing even lower supports. We will have to ask difficult questions on the balkanization of districts that served the needs of shifting pockets of wealth created by gentrification. We will have to hold each other accountable about privatization practices that weaken community schools at little to no benefit for the majority of students (or to our democracy).

That time will come.

But at this moment, in fall 2021, we must focus on what we are doing *now* because there is no real-time data to help us gauge the success of current recovery and reconnection efforts. We have no frame of reference to guide us. No one can claim deep knowledge of best practices for schooling during a pandemic in today's conditions. So we must examine what is happening now in our

schools and classrooms. For this reason, this is exactly the right time to ask questions, like: Where are students educationally and emotionally? And what exactly are we doing in our efforts to mitigate learning challenges and missed instruction and content?

Our reflections should be guided by the ways we value our students and hold our communities as full partners. I recommend that educators look at the Learning Policy Institute's (LPI) *Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond* (Darling-Hammond, Schachner & Edgerton, 2020). This document covers a range of issues observed during the height of the pandemic in 2020 and recommendations for post-COVID-19 realities. In it, there are policy and practice recommendations that align with IDRA research and practice guidance, such as in our *Ensuring Education Equity During and After COVID-19* guide developed earlier.

We recommend that teachers, grade-level professional learning communities (PLCs) and academic deans reflect on the following topics found in the LPI document: student engagement, socio-emotional learning and non-cognitive factors, interventions and practices for so-called “learning loss,” and long-term skills planning. Each is vital to developing a successful reconnection plan. For the purposes of this article, I concentrate on the learning loss interventions portion. (*Learning loss* unfortunately has become the prevalent term. But it misdirects the problem onto students as if they forgot what they learned rather than describing the disruption to the instruction they could receive to meet benchmarks set for them pre-pandemic.)

Restarting and Reinventing School states: “While many districts and educators feel pressure to address learning loss through remedial instruction, research shows that grade retention and ‘down tracking’ actually have the opposite effect: Students who experience these deficit-oriented ap-
(cont. on Page 4)



See IDRA's eBook:
Ready – Reopen – Reconnect! Proven Strategies for Re-engaging Students Who Need You the Most

<https://idra.news/ReadyReopenReconnect>

(Students Don't Need Old-Style Remediation, continued from Page 3)

proaches are more likely to fall further behind their peers, as they are often prevented from engaging with rich curriculum opportunities and are subjected to stigma, which undermines their confidence, motivation and learning.” (Darling-Hammond, Schachner & Edgerton, 2020)

While the education effects of COVID-19 cannot be underestimated and while states and schools must be transparent in reporting missed benchmarks, we must not rush into remediation tactics that simply did not work before and will not magically work now. The problem is that it is too easy to fall into remediation traps.

IDRA's guide urges that educators maintain high academic expectations for students that prepare them for college admission, enrollment and success (2020). I encourage you to take the time to reflect on this issue. In your professional learning communities and grade-level meetings, ask yourselves, “Are we using the least challenging and least effective methods of remediation? How many skills ‘worksheets’ have we assigned? Have we sent students home with thick packets of math practice sheets?”

Reflect on the following example: If we know that students are experiencing challenges in classes that assume mastery over a sequence of

skills, such as Algebra II or pre-calculus, how is our response to this issue being framed? Are we asking students to attend tutoring that solely addresses mastery of a certain skill in isolation? For example, if a student is having trouble with polynomial multiplication, what kind of tutoring are we providing? Basic remediation would have a student simply (re)learn how to multiply a polynomial but without context. Accelerated instruction would have the student attend tutoring with a problem related to that task in the class they are taking. The tutoring in this case should be about understanding how to multiply polynomials to solve an Algebra II or pre-calculus problem.

Now that the school year is in full swing, reflect on what your campus is doing and see if there is overabundance of worksheets and skill-and-drill packets. Use them sparingly and consistently ask for student feedback.

We recommend that campus leaders and teachers spend time in frank discussions. You can shift your efforts into more holistic approaches, such as project-based learning. Take the time to have transparent conversations with your students. Rather than asking, “Are these worksheets helping you?” ask the big questions: “What are your college plans? What do you think you need to learn to succeed in the career of your dreams?” If

students are feeling hopeless about their learning, take their concerns and observations seriously. It may very well be that our well-intentioned efforts are backfiring.

IDRA's eBook *Ready – Reopen – Reconnect! Proven Strategies for Re-engaging Students Who Need You the Most* and related webinar provides strategies proven successful in the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership program for socio-emotional connections and helping students feel a sense of success day after day.

Remember, you are not alone as you work through this. Teachers across the nation are experiencing the same challenges. If you are interested in participating in IDRA's new community of practice on serving students following the COVID-19 disruption, fill out our form, and we will reach out to you: <https://idra.news/CofP>.

Resources

- Bojorquez, H. (2021). *Ready – Reopen – Reconnect! Proven Strategies for Re-engaging Students Who Need You the Most*. IDRA.
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- IDRA. (2020). *Ensuring Education Equity During and After COVID-19*. San Antonio: IDRA.

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(Using Project-Based Learning and STEAM, continued from Page 2)

All of the projects were different. Their creators were excited to share designs, advertising campaigns and profit margins with us. Students were able to articulate how multiple STEAM components contributed to their projects. No worksheet or exam could have accomplished this level of engagement and comprehension.

The Power of Partnerships

Schools everywhere benefit from community support. Parents, volunteers, businesses and organizations can all contribute to the success of their local schools. Whether they give of their time, talents and treasures, schools need support from all around. The Metro Nashville PS magnet schools recruit mentors and guest speakers related to their school's theme to demonstrate real-world connections for students and initiate dialogue on how the skills the students are developing can be used to make the world a better place. From learning how to grow food in community gardens to developing artistic talents, the schools are providing students with experiences

that will stay with them for years to come.

Teneice Renee Kirby (EE Grades K-4) stated: “For me, this journey has opened my eyes to all the connections that are already established within our school or even within our community. My students will learn, understand and execute certain skills that will equal becoming more involved in their larger community. This is an opportunity that they may not have had if this PBL cohort had not been offered.”

The IDRA EAC-South is privileged to work alongside educational partners across our 12-state region to address a broad range of educational concerns. As an equity assistance center, we are charged with providing technical assistance to public schools that address issues of inequity related to race, gender, national origin and religion. All of our efforts support districts in promoting diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environments where students of all ages can thrive and succeed. We hope this project encourages other

schools and districts to examine how project-based learning and a focus on STEAM can help uplift teachers' instructional practice and collaboration. These strategies have immense potential to increase academic engagement and achievement for all learners.

Resources

- Avilés, N., & Al-Gasem, N. (September 2016). Project Based Learning – Changing Learning Paradigms One Lesson at a Time. *IDRA Newsletter*.
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- MNPS. (2021). *STEAM Magnet: Purpose, Passion, & Innovation*, website: Metro Nashville Public Schools.

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Principal Checklist to Reduce Bullying and Harassment Supporting Safety and Learning for All

by Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Developing a safe and healthy school climate requires taking steps to prevent bullying and harassment in the school community. Principals should focus on connected, coordinated efforts and programs to train staff and engage students and communities for bullying prevention. The IDRA EAC-South will soon release an online technical assistance package with videos, literature reviews, and strategy guides for interrupting, dissuading and taking assertive steps in facing bullying and harassment. This article provides some categories for your checklist.

School Policy Regarding Bullying and Harassment

An important leadership role for principals is to develop, disseminate and support clear no-nonsense policy on all forms of discrimination. Policy statements help normalize safety and positive communication and describe the consequences of negative behavior and actions. Teachers and staff can support these policies and act accordingly. Following are sample elements of a school policy:

- We believe that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance.
- We will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. No student or staff shall intimidate, harass or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.
- We expect students and staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee. Staff who witness such acts will take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while travel-

ing to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, during the lunch period, whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

- To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, our school or district will provide staff development training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build each school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Communication

Administrators should listen with compassion to students targeted by bullying and harassment and give verbal and physical support to those who are hurt. They should not focus on characteristics that might have been the trigger for the bullying.

Below is a sample of guidance:

All parties involved should be interviewed and written statements should be taken. These statements should be obtained separately, and all possible steps should be taken to prevent retaliation. All interviews, regardless of whether they are with the victim, offender or witnesses, should follow local board adopted policy. The bullying prevention policy should be reviewed with all parties involved, as well as the investigation procedure. The investigator should be neutral of the incident. If the investigator is involved in the incident, a replacement investigator should conduct the investigation. (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2020)

Accepting Atmosphere

With administrative modeling and leading, school leaders signal that negative judgments and stigmatizing will not be supported or approved. The school community must accept cultural and religious traditions, habits, dress and hairstyles.

Below is an example for guidance in early childhood settings:

(cont. on Page 6)

School principals create safe and positive schools through setting clear policies, using effective and positive communication, modeling and expecting tolerance, being vigilant about safe physical and online environments, and supporting cross-cultural acceptance and understanding.

(Principal Checklist to Reduce Bullying and Harassment, continued from Page 5)

Creating a learning environment that respects diversity sets the scene for fostering children's positive self-concept and attitudes. Such an environment assists children in developing positive ideas about themselves and others, creates the conditions under which children initiate conversations about differences, and provides the setting for introducing activities about differences and creating fair and inclusive communities. Environments that provide opportunities to explore cultural diversity include baskets, pillows, jewelry made from a variety of materials, puppets, rugs, wall hangings, eating and cooking utensils, recordings of music in many languages and other objects that reflect the world's cultures. Children can explore diversity in family structure, gender roles, and abilities if their environment contains materials, such as dolls, books, dress-up clothes, puzzles, manipulatives, and dramatic play materials that depict a variety of family structures, gender roles, and people with a variety of disabilities. (Santora, 2012)

School practices should of course be appropriate for each grade level and not be relegated to awareness months and parties (See Paula Johnson's article, "Culturally Sustaining Instruction Requires Culturally Sustaining Leadership" for more information, 2021). At the secondary level, codes of conduct, and dress codes in particular, should focus on safety not on subjective ideas of cultural "appropriateness" (Latham Sikes, 2020; Carreón-Sánchez & Schlanger, 2018).

Positive Physical Environment

It is important to post and disseminate the positive values, assets and gifts of each identified group. Principals should ban images and words that are hurtful to any group or religion. Online spaces are critical for administrators and teachers to monitor.

Principals should make sure school staff understand the school district's policies for online communication, including social media, and procedures for responding to objectionable material posted by students and school employees.

Cross-cultural Unity

School leaders must actively support cross-cultural acceptance and understanding. They can lead in identifying and sharing the assets, gifts and contributions of each identified group in classrooms and across the school. Students learn in class and in school the deeper values and as-

Coming Soon! Toolkit for addressing bullying in schools

Bullying and harassment are two forms of relational violence that can interrupt the establishment of safe spaces in schools and undermine students' abilities to learn. This IDRA EAC-South Interrupting Bullying & Harassment in Schools online toolkit is designed to give educators and school leaders tools that they need to prevent bullying and harassment by fostering a positive school climate.

This free online toolkit includes three chapters, each with a video and supporting resources, infographics, articles & podcasts.

**IDRA EAC-South
Safe, Friendly & Learning Supportive Spaces -
Interrupting Bullying & Harassment in Schools
Online Assistance Package**

Bullying and harassment are two forms of relational violence that can interrupt the establishment of safe spaces in schools and undermine students' abilities to learn. This IDRA EAC-South Interrupting Bullying & Harassment in Schools online toolkit is designed to give educators and school leaders tools that they need to prevent bullying and harassment by fostering a positive school climate.

This free online toolkit includes three chapters, each with a video and supporting resources, infographics, articles & podcasts.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3
We Want Our Schools to Be Safe and Friendly	A Message to School Leaders about Bullying & Harassment	Teachers Are Essential to Providing Safety and Trust
Get an overview of interrupting bullying & harassment in schools.	Get tools for data collection and strategies for schools, communities and working with individuals.	Get strategies for teachers at the classroom level.
2:10 min.	1:21 min.	1:09 min.

<https://idra.news/webInterrupt>

The IDRA EAC-South is the equity assistance center that provides free or low-cost technical assistance to schools in the U.S. South. With roots in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the four federally-funded equity assistance centers help school districts build capacity to confront educational problems occasioned by race, national origin, sex and gender, and religion.

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sets of each group beyond food, dress and heroes. Harvard University's Graduate School of Education published a Systemic Improvement Map, stating:

A welcoming, inclusive school culture is a critical component of an integrated, equitable school. Culture is a key vehicle for supporting integrated schools as students are more likely to succeed academically when they feel valued and have a sense of belonging within the school setting. In spite of this, many schools inadvertently create a culture that implicitly rewards white, middle-class norms, while marginalizing other backgrounds. Culturally inclusive practices, such as staff-wide equity training, values-based behavior management and advisories, can create a culture of belonging for students of all racial backgrounds, which in turn can lead to higher academic gains and lower disciplinary challenges throughout the school. (HGSE, 2021)

School principals create safe and positive schools through setting clear policies, using effective and positive communication, modeling and expecting tolerance, being vigilant about safe physical and online environments, and supporting cross-

cultural acceptance and understanding. Everyone benefits, especially the students.

Resources

- Carreón-Sánchez, S., & Schlanger, P. (2018). Religion Equity and School Dress Codes. *IDRA Newsletter*.
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Texas is Not Financing College Readiness

IDRA Releases New Study on Inequitable Access to College Prep Math Courses

Texas policies and funding block students from graduating prepared for college, which includes having access to higher math, like Algebra II and calculus. Dr. Cristóbal Rodríguez, IDRA's José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow, presented his research findings on the relationship between school finance policy and students' access to college and career readiness in Texas at a virtual symposium last week.

"Texas boasts about its economic power and its investment in economic development, but it doesn't ensure that there are high standards for math and science," said Dr. Rodríguez. "It really does create a double standard when you start seeing there are more affluent, wealthy districts who are providing that access. The current system maintains privilege for some and sustains inequality, setting up some communities to fail."

Dr. Rodríguez is associate dean of equity, inclusion and community engagement at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College of Arizona State University. His study is one of the first to link school funding to college readiness.

While AP courses are a strong indicator of college readiness, the most reported and greatest indicator is completion of algebra in middle school and advanced math in high school. Dr. Rodríguez's analysis released by IDRA focused on calculus and found that calculus is not equally and fairly accessible in Texas public schools. Wealthier school districts have higher rates of students taking calculus. And school districts with higher proportions of students in families with low incomes have lower rates of students taking calculus.

"This new research pushes the conversation about what equitable access to college readiness really looks like," said Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO. "What is good for the children of the wealthiest districts in our state must be the expectation we set for all students and that requires strong standards and state investment."

The virtual symposium gathered education and community leaders along with a panel of experts who reflected on key themes and questions raised by the research. Panelists included Dr. Albert Cortez, retired IDRA Director of Policy and a national authority on school finance; Hon. Dr. Mary E. González, Texas State Representative and associate director for the Partnership for the Future of Learning; Lourdes Flores, executive director of ARISE Support Center that serves families in colonias in South Texas and a parent of three teens; Celina Moreno, J.D.; and Dr. Bricio Vasquez, IDRA education data scientist.

Texas ranks 40th among U.S. states with just 58% of high school graduates going directly to college in 2018. In fact, 15% of Texas high schools don't even offer Algebra II, which used to be a required course. But HB 5 in 2013 and the subsequent actions by the Texas State Board of Education changed that. Only about half of Texas high schools offer calculus, and only 3% of high school students take the course.

IDRA outlined a set of recommendations for schools and the state to improve college access.

- All students should have access to college-prep courses, including Algebra II and higher math classes, such as calculus and statistics.
- Schools should not steer any middle school students away from college options. Students need to take Algebra I in eighth grade and be prepared beforehand to be successful.
- The state should take steps to address longstanding teacher shortages in critical fields, such as math, science and bilingual education.
- All 8th-12th grade students should have access to college counselors who can advise them into advanced coursework that meets their college and career goals.
- Schools should practice authentic two-way family engagement so that students and their parents can make informed decisions about their college and career counseling options.

See the report and the related infographic and watch the symposium video.

<https://idra.news/MathSymposium>



- College readiness indicators for schools should be tied to outcomes and be decoupled from military readiness, which should have its own rigorous standards.
- The state should abolish the endorsement system for graduation requirements and return to the 4x4* plan that colleges prefer (Hinojosa, 2016). In the interim, the state should monitor the college and career outcomes to ensure students have equitable access to college success through any endorsements offered at their high school.

The IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program honors the memory of IDRA founder, Dr. José Angel Cárdenas. The goal of the program is to engage the nation's most promising researchers in investigating school finance solutions that secure equity and excellence for all public school students.

* 4x4 refers to four courses each in math, science, English and social studies.

Resources

Hinojosa, D. (2016). Testimony on HB 5 Implementation, 60x30 TX/Higher Education Alignment Joint Interim Charge (Texas Latino Education Coalition).

Focus: Teaching Quality

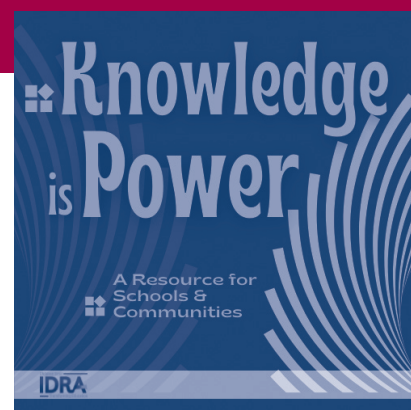
IDRA Launches Knowledge is Power to Combat Classroom Censorship

IDRA recently launched **Knowledge is Power**, a national resource for educators and advocates to help you do your work for equity and excellence in education in the midst of classroom censorship policies.

The pandemic reaffirmed that schools help bind our democracy and feed our minds and bodies. Yet, the inequities in our schools remain and our students' educational and emotional well-being remains at risk.

IDRA works to ensure students have the educational opportunities to go to college and pursue lives of purpose. We are committed to the idea that all young people – regardless of the languages they speak, where they live, where they came from, or the color of their skin – must receive an equitable and excellent education.

All students are valuable. None is expendable. All students are best served by culturally-sustaining schools that affirm their inherent value.



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*achieving equal educational opportunity for every child
through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college*