Rodríguez v. San Antonio
50th Anniversary Commemoration

The Fight for Fair School Funding

Equity: Past, Present and Future

March 22, 2023
Agenda

Reception
Music provided by the John F. Kennedy Jazz Band
Hors d’oeuvres provided by the Memorial Cutting Edge Cafe

Welcome & Introductions
Phil Chavez, Edgewood ISD, Deputy Superintendent
Enrique Alemán, Jr., Ph.D., Trinity University

The History of Rodríguez and Its Impact On Our Present and Future
Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA, President & CEO; former Interim Southwest Regional Counsel at MALDEF (moderator)
Chandra Kring Villanueva, Every Texan, Director of Policy & Advocacy
Al Kauffman, J.D., Professor of Law, St. Mary’s University; former Senior Litigating Attorney at MALDEF
Albert Cortez, Ph.D., Former Director of Policy IDRA - Retired; Edgewood ISD Alumni

Rodríguez’s Legacy of Activism and Struggle
Enrique Alemán, Jr., Ph.D., Trinity University, Professor (moderator)
Roy Soto, Former Trustee Edgewood ISD
Patricia Rodríguez, Edgewood ISD Teacher & Daughter of Demetrio Rodríguez
Alejandra López, President, San Antonio Alliance

A Call to Community Action for Equitable and Adequate Funding
Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA National Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement
Diana Long, IDRA Policy Fellow & UT Austin Educational Policy graduate student; Edgewood ISD Alumni
Joanna D. Sánchez, Ph.D., IDRA, Senior Policy Researcher

Closing Remarks
Welcome ~ Bienvenidos

San Antonio is the place where the battle for fair funding of schools in Texas was born with the Rodríguez vs. San Antonio ISD case and the series of Edgewood cases that followed. This community was at the front of what turned out to be a hard and often bitter fight that has continued for decades – the fight to assure that children in this and other communities like it would not continue to suffer under a bad and unjust system of financing schools.

On the 50th anniversary of this momentous ruling, IDRA, Trinity University and its Center for Education Leadership, Edgewood ISD and the National Coalition on School Diversity are hosting a commemorative event to reflect on the case, its impact, and its legacy of struggle and activism.

Court Case Timeline & Aftermath

May 16, 1968  Edgewood students held a walkout to protest such issues as crumbling facilities, inequitable funding, and lack of qualified teachers. Other student walkouts occurred in Texas that year through 1970.

June 30, 1968  Edgewood District Concerned Parents Association files Rodríguez vs. San Antonio ISD lawsuit.

December 9-14, 1968  U.S. Commission on Civil Rights’ six-day hearing in San Antonio on the civil rights issues of Mexican Americans in the southwestern United States.

December 23, 1971  Three-judge federal court declared the Texas system of school finance unconstitutional.

March 21, 1973  U.S. Supreme Court issues a 5-4 ruling that, despite the fact that the Texas system was chaotic and unjust, it did not violate the U.S. Constitution. Thus, it was up to states to determine if their public schools were fairly funded.

May 23, 1984  Edgewood ISD v. Kirby filed by MALDEF on behalf of Edgewood ISD and seven other districts and 21 parents. Later, 67 other school districts and more parents and students join the case.

June 1, 1987  State district court ruling in Edgewood ISD v. Kirby finds Texas school finance system unconstitutional.

October 2, 1989  After an appeal reversed Edgewood ISD v. Kirby, the Texas Supreme Court rules unanimously that the Texas system is unconstitutional and orders the state to resolve the inequities.

*It would take numerous legislative attempts and additional cases to get Texas where it is today, which is better, but still inequitable and underfunded.*

Sources: IDRA “A History of IDRA Policy Work to Secure Excellent and Equitable Schooling for All Children” and MALDEF’s “Chronology of Edgewood ISD v. Kirby Timeline.”
Enrique Alemán, Jr., Ph.D.
Trinity University

Dr. Enrique Alemán, Jr., is the Lillian Radford Endowed Professor in Education at Trinity University in San Antonio. In addition to serving as a faculty member, Dr. Alemán has appointments as the Director of the Trinity Tomorrow’s Leaders Program and as the Director of the Center for Educational Leadership. Between 2015 and 2020, he was Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Dr. Alemán started his academic career at the University of Utah in 2004, where he first served as an Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership and Policy prior to earning tenure and being promoted to Associate Professor. Between 2012 and 2014, Dr. Alemán served as an Assistant Vice President for Student Equity and Diversity where he continued creating pathways to higher education and designed and implemented more equitable institutional policies.

A native of Kingsville in South Texas and a first-generation college student, Dr. Alemán melds his personal and professional interests with research that has the potential to address the racialized and institutionalized inequities that have historically underserved students and communities of color. His research agenda includes studying the impact of educational policies on Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x students and communities, the utilization of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/Critical Theory (LatCrit) frameworks in educational research, and the application of community-based research methods as a way of informing the creation of pathways to higher education. In late 2014, he executive produced and co-wrote Stolen Education, a documentary about the forgotten history of a little-known federal desegregation court case from the 1950s, Hernandez et al. v. Driscoll Consolidated School District (1957). Stolen Education has been screened at universities and colleges, public libraries and public schools and was selected for screening at the Ruby Mountain Film Festival in Nevada and the CineSol Film Festival in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Dr. Alemán earned his Ph.D. in Educational Administration, with a concentration in Educational Policy and Planning, from the University of Texas at Austin. While at UT-Austin he also completed a doctoral certification in Mexican American Studies. He has an undergraduate degree from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, and a master’s degree from Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs in New York.

Phil Chavez
Edgewood ISD Deputy Superintendent

The Deputy Superintendent’s Role is to assist the Superintendent substantially and effectively in the task of providing leadership to the district in developing, achieving, and maintaining the best possible educational programs and services. Responsible for the overall operation of administration and instructional programs and schools including direct line responsibility for the following areas: Academic Services, College, Career & Military Readiness (CCMR) / CATE, School Leadership, Transformation & Innovation Office, Operations Department, and Technology Department. Serves as the district’s expert on innovative school models and new approaches to teaching and learning.

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.
Former Director of Policy IDRA - Retired; Edgewood ISD Alumni

Dr. Albert Cortez has worked at the forefront of Texas policymaking. An expert on education policy, he served as a technical advisor and resource authority for more than three decades of legislative action, advising such committees as the Texas Mexican American Legislative Caucus and the Senate Hispanic Caucus. He came to IDRA soon after its 1973 founding where he led evaluation and national policy until his retirement in 2014.

Dr. Cortez advised members of both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate in the formulation of the state’s Bilingual Education Act in 1981 and was extensively involved in the development of school finance reform, dropout prevention, immigrant education, student discipline, state assessment and expanding higher education access policies. In 2012, Dr. Cortez presented testimony in the Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Michael Williams, et al., school funding trial in Austin.
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Dr. Cortez received a doctorate in cultural foundations of education with a support area in educational administration and his master’s degree in cultural foundations of education from the University of Texas at Austin. As director of policy at IDRA, Dr. Cortez coordinated activities to support the integration and coordination of national, state and local policy reform efforts impacting the education of all students, with special emphasis on students of color, students in families with low incomes, emergent bilingual students and recent immigrant populations.

Dr. Cortez worked with Dr. José A. Cárdenas to pioneer school finance reform in Texas. Having authored numerous publications on the subject, he has also served as a technical expert and advisor to attorneys in numerous school-related court cases including U.S. vs. Texas and the series of Edgewood litigation cases from 1976 to 2013. Dr. Cortez also directed IDRA’s School Finance Reform Project, conducting an extensive analysis of financial and program implications of Texas education legislation and state board policies. He has been instrumental in raising public awareness concerning school finance issues and in coordinating advocacy activities, including strategy development, the preparation and presentation of training materials, organization of school funding reform coalitions, and the creation and dissemination of position papers.

Morgan Craven, J.D.
IDRA National Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement

Morgan Craven, J.D., is IDRA’s National Director of Policy, Advocacy and Community Engagement. She supports the integration and coordination of national and state policy reform efforts impacting school finance, school discipline and safety, education for emergent bilingual students, preparation and access to higher education, and community-led, culturally-sustaining schools. In addition to crafting community-centered policy positions and advocacy strategies, Morgan spearheads IDRA’s critical work to expand access to policymaking spaces for impacted communities, particularly for students and families of color, families with limited incomes, and recent immigrant populations. She presented expert testimony in a hearing by the U.S. House Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Subcommittee on banning corporal punishment. She also provided invited expert testimony on school safety before the U.S. Congressional Children’s Caucus in its listening session on federal relief for children, teachers and parents in Uvalde.

Morgan received a bachelor’s degree in International Relations from Stanford University, with a secondary focus in African and African American Studies. She received a law degree from Harvard Law School. Previously, Morgan directed Texas Appleseed’s School-to-Prison Pipeline Project. In that role, she led and supported local- and statewide campaigns to address the practices and systems that push young people out of school and into the justice system. She has presented research and data to policymakers, collaborated with community-based, state, and national advocacy organizations, and developed policies related to school discipline, school policing, and school climate. Prior to her work at Texas Appleseed, Morgan served as a briefing attorney for Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson at the Supreme Court of Texas and as a staff attorney at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, where she represented students with disabilities in school discipline and court cases, and individuals and families in housing and public benefits cases.

Al Kauffman, J.D.
Professor of Law, St. Mary’s University; former MALDEF Senior Litigating Attorney

Al Kauffman is a professor of law at St. Mary’s University School of Law teaching courses in constitutional law, education law, voting rights law and state and federal procedure courses. Kauffman has been a civil rights litigator specializing in the education, voting and employment rights of Latinos. For nearly 20 years, Kauffman was the senior litigating attorney for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in San Antonio. As a MALDEF attorney, Kauffman was the lead attorney for plaintiffs in the Texas school finance cases, for Latino plaintiffs in the Texas Higher Education System finance and desegregation case and in litigation challenging the state’s use of the TAAS test for graduation from Texas high schools. He has also litigated affirmative action cases, local and state voting rights, employment discrimination cases, immigration and hospital admission policy cases.

After MALDEF, he served as a Senior Legal and Policy Advocate Associate for the Civil Rights Project at Harvard Law School and was a lecturer on law at Harvard Law School While there, he wrote about civil rights issues such as voting rights, No Child Left Behind, affirmative action, and public schools’ student assignment systems. Kauffman was part of a small team of experts involved with passing both Texas top 10 percent rule for admission to public universities and recent changes to admission and scholarship criteria for public graduate and professional schools. Texas Lawyer selected Kauffman as one of the 25 greatest lawyers for the 25-year period of 1985 to 2010.
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Celina Moreno, J.D.
IDRA President & CEO; former Interim Southwest Regional Counsel at MALDEF

Celina Moreno, J.D., is the president and CEO of IDRA, a national non-profit organization dedicated to equity and excellence in education. She previously directed policy and litigation for the Southwest Regional Office for MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), the nation’s leading Latino legal civil rights organization. At MALDEF, she successfully represented DREAMers to defend DACA and against a separate lawsuit that would have invalidated the Texas DREAM Act.

Ms. Moreno also served as trial and appellate co-counsel in the challenge against the inequity and inadequacy of the Texas school finance system. She represented Bexar County and the cities of San Antonio, El Paso and others against Texas’ anti-immigrant Senate Bill 4 (2017).

She served as co-counsel in the Texas redistricting case seeking to protect the rights of Latino voters, in a case challenging the conditions and the detention of an asylum-seeking woman at the Hutto Residential Center, and in a case representing the American GI Forum to reverse a "whites-only" cemetery policy. She also co-authored MALDEF’s amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of over 20 Latino organizations to support the University of Texas at Austin’s race-conscious admissions plan. Ms. Moreno chaired the Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEEC) and the joint Education Task Force of the Texas Senate Hispanic Caucus and Mexican American Legislative Caucus. She also served as co-chair of the statewide TRUST Coalition – a group of business, faith, civil rights and law enforcement leaders focused on immigrants’ rights – and the Texas Election Reform Coalition, a statewide voting rights coalition. Before joining MALDEF, Ms. Moreno directed Texas RioGrande Legal Aid’s School-to-Prison Pipeline Project. Ms. Moreno received a master’s degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School, a bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin, and a law degree from the University of Houston. Ms. Moreno served as an invited member of the Texas 2036 Advisory Committee on Maximizing Education Resources for Texas 2036’s Education Resource Project.

Diana Long
IDRA Policy Fellow & UT Austin Educational Policy Graduate Student; Edgewood ISD Alumni

Diana Long grew up on the West Side of San Antonio and is the daughter of Mexican immigrants. She is a proud Edgewood ISD alumna and first-generation college student. Diana is pursuing a master’s degree in educational leadership and policy at the University of Texas at Austin. She earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology from Trinity University in San Antonio, where she served in several leadership positions on campus. During her undergraduate career, she was a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and worked alongside well-renowned scholars in the field of education and educational leadership. Her inquisitiveness and general concern for inequitable education motivated her to design and publish a thesis that highlighted the processes in which the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequities in education, specifically in low-income districts in San Antonio. Before her fellowship with IDRA, Diana was selected as a Summer 2022 Graduate Archer Fellow. As an Archer Fellow, she served as a research intern at Excelencia in Education, a national not-for-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., working to accelerate higher education success for Latino students. In this role, she completed a comprehensive data verification project to craft recommendations that utilize data to inform practices that intentionally serve Latino students in institutions of higher education.

Patricia Rodríguez
Edgewood ISD Teacher & Daughter of Demetrio Rodríguez

Patricia D. Rodríguez is a Dyslexia Intervention Teacher and 504 Co-Coordinator at Winston Elementary. She has worked with Edgewood ISD since 1995 in various roles. She is a product of Edgewood ISD, having attended Perales Elementary, Brentwood Middle School and graduating from John F. Kennedy High School. She attended Our Lady of the Lake University and has a master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Reading. Patricia is also a certified Master Reading Teacher. As a dyslexia intervention teacher, she identifies dyslexic students by administering and interpreting diagnostic tests and instructing students with dyslexia. She successfully provides students with the skills and strategies that enable them to further their reading abilities.
Joanna D. Sánchez, Ph.D.
IDRA Senior Policy Researcher

Joanna D. Sánchez, Ph.D., is IDRA’s senior policy researcher. In this role, she collaborates with the policy and research teams to develop relevant and timely data analyses, visualizations and research studies that support IDRA’s mission. Previously, Joanna served as the chief of staff and vice president for research at Excelencia in Education. In these roles, she contributed to the organization’s mission of accelerating Latino student success in higher education.

Joanna earned her doctoral degree in the educational policy and planning program at the University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation examined the engagement of Latino working-class parents in a South Texas district’s parent academy. Her other research interests include GIS and spatial analysis in education policy, school-family-community partnerships and STEM education. Following her graduation from UT Austin, Joanna completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at Howard University funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) investigating how a collaboration between STEM educators and engineers impacts underserved youth’s participation in engineering design. Her work has been published in education policy analysis archives, Urban Education, AERA Open and The Urban Review. Joanna is originally from Pharr, Texas, and earned a bachelor’s degree in geosciences from Trinity University. She also holds a master’s of science degree in geographic information systems (GIS) from the University of Denver. She is a first-generation college graduate and Gates Millennium Scholar. In her free time, Joanna enjoys running, traveling, and spending time with her husband and daughter.

Roy Soto
Former Trustee Edgewood ISD

Mr. Soto attended elementary, junior high and high school in the Edgewood School District. In high school, was in the National Honor Society at John F. Kennedy, Class of 1974 and participated in numerous clubs & organizations and was a class officer. Mr. Soto played and lettered in the following sports: football, basketball & baseball. He also set a city passing record my senior year and received the following honors: Player of the Year, All-District, All City, All-State Honorable Mention, Express-News Top Ten Teenagers of San Antonio.

Education, professional background and recognition and community roles include: Texas Lutheran University - B.A. Finance & Marketing, 1982; Service in the U.S. Air Force & National Guard; Business Owner - five retail franchise stores; Knights of Columbus - Fourth Degree, Treasurer, multiple years; Chair of the Finance Council of St Ann Parish - 2005 to present; Current Chair of the National Advisory Board for the Premier Companies; Dealer of the Year Award, 2009; Top Achiever Award each year for 11 years; Industry-Wide Dealer of the Year 2012; and testified before Congress in support of industry legislation 2012.

Chandra Kring Villanueva
Director of Policy & Advocacy at Every Texan

Chandra Villanueva oversees Every Texan’s policy and advocacy work. She joined Every Texan in 2010 and focuses on school finance. Prior to joining Every Texan, Chandra was the manager of Advocacy and Public Policy with the Women’s Prison Association (WPA) in New York City. At WPA, she educated formerly incarcerated women on the legislative process and researched options for pregnant women in the criminal justice system. Chandra has also served as a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center with placements in Tucson, Arizona and Washington, D.C. Chandra earned a Master of Public Administration from New York University’s Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, and a Bachelor of Arts from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington.

Alejandra López
President, San Antonio Alliance

Alejandra López is an educator, organizer, and president of the San Antonio Alliance of Teachers. Alejandra attended San Antonio public schools K-12, earned her bachelor’s degree from Stanford University and her master’s degree in Educational Leadership and Policy studies as a member of the Urban School Leaders Collaborative at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She has been involved in social justice movement work in Europe and the United States for over 15 years with focuses in immigration, racial, and economic justice and has worked in education for over 10 years as an elementary teacher. Alejandra believes that our public schools are the heart of our communities and continues to organize for greater worker, student, parent and caregiver, and community voice in district decision making.
Trinity University is a transformational liberal arts and sciences university with selected professional and pre-professional programs.

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) in the Department of Education at Trinity University promotes broader systemic change in education by providing thought leadership, innovative programming, and equity-focused research for practice. The CEL focuses on developing culturally-responsive and transformative leaders who aspire to work with youth, family members, educators and community leaders in the building of empowering educational institutions, and on facilitating meaningful and sustainable partnerships that promote educational justice across school and community settings.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to achieving equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by leading policy analyses and advocacy; dynamic teacher training and principal coaching; useful research, evaluation and frameworks for action; and innovative student, family and community engagement.

Edgewood ISD provides an exceptional learning experience that engages, empowers, and prepares students to compete and reach their highest potential in an ever-changing world.

The National Coalition on School Diversity (NCSD) is a national network supporting a diverse group of constituents to advocate for and create experiences, practices, models, and policies that promote school diversity/integration and reduce racial and economic isolation in K-12 education. NCSD is supported and staffed by the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, a civil rights and policy organization based in Washington, D.C.

Special Acknowledgement
To the students who staged walkouts in Edgewood and other communities and to the families, particularly the Edgewood Concerned Parents Association, whose commitment to equitable and excellent education created a powerful legacy that impacted every public school student from the 1960s through today and beyond.

If you are an alumni of the Edgewood ISD student walkout in 1968 and members of the Edgewood Concerned Parents during and leading up to the Rodriguez v. San Antonio court case, please scan this code (or go to https://idra.news/HistoricalForm) to provide your name and info.