

IDRA Youth Advisory Board

Ten High School Students Served in 2022 as Advisors for Education Equity Initiatives While Learning New Skills

Ten high school students from across Texas provided their insights about equity in education and advocacy. Since our founding 50 years ago, IDRA has remained committed to prioritizing students in our decision-making. We selected the following 10 student leaders who now form IDRA's inaugural 2022 Youth Advisory Board. Our Youth Advisory Board provided a more focused way to engage with students to center their communities' expertise, needs and dreams in our work. Youth Advisory Board members...

- Learned to analyze education policies and research
- Built student networks with other groups of young advocates
- Hosted a [youth summit](#)
- Created social media content to engage community members

With the generous support of the Schusterman Family Foundation and Arnold Ventures, IDRA provided board members with training on research, advocacy and community engagement strategies to sharpen students' relationship-building and presentation skills. Throughout 2022, this group of 10th- to 12th grade students gave IDRA actionable recommendations to ensure our initiatives continue centering the expertise, needs and dreams of young people and their families. Board members were compensated for their work as well.



Abraham Vidal

Born and raised in Venezuela, Abraham is a freshman at the University of Texas at Austin studying his lifelong passion, filmmaking. Outside of high school, Abraham has been heavily involved in his school district's student strategic design team representing the interests of students. Always looking for ways to express himself and his community, he aspires to blend creativity and consciousness through film and considers IDRA's Youth Advisory Board a great opportunity to continue to represent Latinx immigrants and promote more resources for bilingual students.

- Member of the IDRA Youth Advisory Board Communications Team



Hawaii Guerin

Born and raised in Fort Worth, Hawaii is enrolled in a Gold Seal Program of Choice at her high school, where she gets hands-on instruction in journalism and media tech. She hopes to one day work in journalism, graphics, physical therapy or law. The issues of racial equity for Black people and protection of queer people and women are topics that she is passionate about. She aims to create spaces and changes with the goal that marginalized folks feel their positive influence on the people and cultures around them. Hawaii is a high school senior.

- Co-led presentation about classroom censorship advocacy with the Texas Freedom Network coalition.
- Wrote article: [School Safety Requires Listening](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022



Alyssa Garza

Alyssa is a high school junior in San Antonio who was born and raised in Corpus Christi with her cousins. Alyssa is excited to join and contribute to IDRA because she has gone through situations that she truly doesn't want to happen to other people. She shares: "I want to be able to be there for people. I want to be able to help people love themselves, regardless of the things that are said around them, about them." Alyssa's hobbies include reading; watching anime, vintage cartoons/movies; and watching musicals. Alyssa's social justice interests include gender and social equality and poverty.



Josué Peralta de Jesús

A high school senior in San Antonio, Josué looks forward to working with IDRA and his fellow participants to provide average students with a greater learning experience and easier access to bright futures. Though the future is full of various paths, Josué knows that eventually he is destined to become a teacher. Josué credits his teachers for playing a gigantic role in his life, allowing him to succeed and reach his fullest potential. He hopes by using the skills he learns with IDRA, he will be able to give his future students similar opportunities, specifically by advocating equitable access to college and career readiness resources and individualization of a student's needs and goals.

- Currently participating in the Youth Advisory Board's original youth participatory action research project.
- Emceed IDRA's Cafecito y MAS – a community dialogue focused on ethnic studies and social justice.
- Wrote article: [Mexican American Studies is American History](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022
- Organized a petition with 100 signatures to ensure Mexican American Studies was taught at his high school
- Created engaging social media content for IDRA National Youth Summit



Adam Shelburn

Adam, a high school junior in Mansfield, has been interested in advocacy from an early age. Ever since his younger sister was born, he has watched his mom fight for her to be able to use accommodations in a classroom setting. His sister was later diagnosed with a JPA brain tumor when she was 8. Adam joined the Youth Advisory Board to learn how to better help his sister, himself and others fight against an unjust and unfair school system. He is especially interested in mental health advocacy and policies that support LGBTQ+ students, students of color, families of lower income, and families with disabled children.

- Created content for IDRA's TikTok account
- Wrote article: [Dress Codes: A Racist, Sexist History and Why They Must be Changed](#), by IDRA Newsletter, October 2022
- Created engaging social media content for IDRA National Youth Summit



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Kennedy Moore

Kennedy is a high school senior in Frisco. She enjoys watching classic black-and-white shows, such as *The Andy Griffin Show*, studying classical music, and co-leading her school chapter of Diversify Our Narrative. Inspired by the efforts of her grandparents to fight racism, Kennedy has found interest in educational equity issues, specifically involving equitable teaching practices in history and English classrooms. Her goal on the board, was to learn more about the interworking of government systems and how she can contribute to addressing issues and making changes to the Texas legislature.

- Currently participating in the Youth Advisory Board's original youth participatory action research project.
- Co-led presentation about classroom censorship advocacy with the Texas Freedom Network coalition. Learned academic research and technical writing skills for a STEM literature review.
- Webinar panelist: Community Discussion about Equity and Attendance, hosted by IDRA & Student Engagement and Attendance Center.
- Wrote article: [We Need a Well-Rounded Education – An Open Letter to Lawmakers](#), by IDRA Newsletter, October 2022



Shreya Selvaraju

Shreya, a high school junior in Austin, is excited to be a part of the Youth Advisory Board because it enables her to learn more about the education system while working toward reform. Shreya is interested in ensuring folks have equal access to education and healthcare. In her free time, she enjoys reading, oil painting, watching movies and trying every possible way to have boba. After high school, she plans to continue her education and pursuing a degree in neuroscience or psychology.

- Currently participating in the Youth Advisory Board's original youth participatory action research project.
- Learned academic research and technical writing skills for a STEM literature review.
- Wrote article: [School Support Systems Help Students Succeed](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022



Manav Lund

Manav Lund is a high school senior in Austin. She is interested in developing skills in quantitative research pertaining to socioeconomic equity in education, particularly early childhood education, attrition and college access. She is also interested in advocacy surrounding legislative threats to educational equity, such as classroom censorship. Manav is an Advanced Academic Ambassador for Round Rock ISD and is an officer in her school's HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) chapter. She loves performing and listening to music and competing in medical and pure science events, and she hopes to pursue a career in medicine.

- Currently participating in the Youth Advisory Board's original youth participatory action research project.
- Learned academic research and technical writing skills for a STEM literature review.
- Wrote article: [LGBTQ+ Inclusive Education is Not Dangerous, Nor is it a Difficult Feat](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022



Tatiana Martínez Alvarez

Ten minutes away from their dad's home country of Mexico, Tati sends greetings from the Rio Grande Valley! Tati is the first in their family to be born in the United States. Their parents pushed them to work hard and made them the person they are today. Tati's mom, an ethnic studies professor, sparked Tati's passion to fight for an education system that aids and creates opportunities for Latino and LGBTQ+ communities. Tati is excited for the opportunity to join the Youth Advisory Board as their first official job to enhance their research and communication skills at an organization like IDRA that caters to education justice and fairness. Tati's hobbies include sports and art, like dance, painting or photography. Tatiana is a high school junior.

- Won award for film in collaboration with IDRA partner Thomas Ray Garcia
- Wrote article: [Equip Schools to Support Student Mental Health](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022
- Media interview: ['Unsafe, unwelcoming': LGBTQ students report facing hostility at school – More than 80% of LGBTQ students say they faced harassment or assault](#), by Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat, October 25, 2022



Ryan Cyrus

Ryan Cyrus, a high school senior, was born and raised in McKinney and is the youngest member of his family. Ryan is excited to join the Youth Advisory Board to learn about being an advocate and understanding the intricacies of the education system, specifically policies around higher and special education. His hobbies include cooking and playing music. Ryan plays the saxophone, flute, piccolo and clarinet. After school, he hopes to pursue cardiothoracic surgery and study genetics at Howard University.

- Wrote article: [Policing Students Through Dress Codes Needs to Stop](#), IDRA Newsletter, October 2022

