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Nov-Dec 2017 IDRA Newsletter

This month's focus: Principal Leadership



"IDRA research and work with schools has demonstrated that the principal is the nucleus of a school's instructional leadership team. The current shortage of principals in urban and rural districts serving diverse students, highlights the importance of excellent principal preparation." - Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

Researchers are identifying an empirical link between school leadership and improved student achievement, with the central role resting with the school principal. Effective principal

leadership builds a school culture that is dedicated to equity and excellence for the success of all students.

This issue of the IDRA Newsletter has stories on

- The Power of Partnerships in the Pursuit of Leadership Development to Transform Schools
- How Transformational Leaders Develop a Growth Mindset for Student Success
- Leadership for ESL Teacher Recruitment and Retention
- What People are Saying about IDRA's STAARS Leaders Project
- IDRA Establishes Scholarship Endowment in Honor of Dr. Ricardo R. Fernández, Lehman College President Emeritus
- Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute - April 6, 2018

Principal Leadership

The Power of Partnerships in the Pursuit of Leadership Development to Transform Schools

by Nilka Avilés, Ed.D., Joanela De León, Ed.D., and Jesse Jay McNeil, Ed.D.

Leadership effectiveness is second only to instructional effectiveness in defining a school's ability to increase student performance in culturally-diverse settings. In the pursuit of increasing leadership effectiveness in partnership with the San



Antonio ISD, IDRA is implementing its School Turnaround and Reenergizing for Success (STAARS) Leaders project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Over a period of two years, this school transformational initiative has supported low performing campuses by providing differentiated and comprehensive professional development and technical assistance for a set of campuses in the district.

IDRA provided school leaders with coaches who are former principals and have demonstrated leadership skills and a record of success in turning around low performing campuses. And in collaboration with the McNeil Foundation, the project recruits and prepares motivated, self-reflective, and culturally-proficient aspiring principals from within the ranks in the district to acquire state certification to become effective school leaders.

This program for preparing aspiring principals is designed to achieve three major objectives.

- [Keep reading](#)

**Listen to our two-part Classnotes Podcast interview with a STAARS Leaders principal:
[A Principal on Leadership for a Turnaround](#)**



How Transformational Leaders Develop a Growth Mindset for Student Success

by Nilka Avilés, Ed.D., Gerald Sharp, M.A., and Kristin Grayson, Ph.D.

We live in an era of accountability where success or failure is measured primarily through test scores and intelligence tests. This can lead to an undermining fixed mindset that believes some students can learn while others cannot.

But successful schools, such as turnaround campuses, share one important practice: they operate within a growth mindset, knowing that all students can and will learn. Intelligence is malleable and can be bolstered; the mind is always growing.



Educators benefit when they understand how students' brains learn. The same is true for teachers of students who are learning English. They are no different from other students who already own many ideas and are endowed with thinking processes, experiences, and a growing vocabulary that enable them to be proficient learners.

Teachers can empower their students to tap into what they already know and what they already can do through classroom experiences, collaborations and assessments . - [Keep reading](#)

Leadership for ESL Teacher Recruitment and Retention

by Kristin Grayson, Ph.D.

As the numbers of English learners continue to rise in U.S. schools, the need also rises for schools and districts to increase the number of qualified (content and pedagogically proficient), culturally competent, and credentialed teachers prepared to teach them. Schools often face difficulty in recruiting, hiring and retaining quality teachers for English learners (ELs). However, with an intentional approach, schools and districts can have the best teachers in place to provide them an equitable education.

Nationwide, English learners account for roughly one out of every 10 students, ranging from 22 percent of the student population in California to 1 percent in West Virginia



(McFarland, et al., 2017). Yet, large achievement and opportunity gaps between ELs and non-ELs continue to exist (Quintero, & Hansen, 2017).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), integrates for the first time, English language proficiency and academic achievement fully into school and district accountability systems, with the potential of ensuring that their needs are fully considered by educational systems . -

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Bilingual Parent Institute * April 6, 2018

Special event for families, community groups and educators

This annual institute offers families, school district personnel and community groups from across the country the opportunity to network, obtain resources and information, and receive training and bilingual materials on IDRA's nationally-recognized research based model for parent leadership in education. This institute is interactive and participatory. All presentations are bilingual (English-Spanish).

Highlights coming in 2018

- Bilingual presentations on successful family engagement
- Roundtable educational presentations
- Parent interviews
- Breakout sessions on education topics
- Refreshments and lunch
- Exhibitors, including service providers, college and universities and non-profit agencies

"The fact that everybody was engaged, was participating; this is something I don't see in any other conference. [In other conferences], people just go and listen. Here people come to participate to be engaged - that was impressive!"

- previous participant

[Learn More](#)

What People are Saying about IDRA's STAARS Leaders Project

IDRA's School TurnAround and Reenergizing for Success (STAARS) Leaders project is a unique model for school improvement that focuses on cohesive, meaningful change for struggling schools through mentoring and supporting campus leadership. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is operating in the San Antonio ISD. The goal of the project is to enhance student academic success by empowering school leaders to build a culture dedicated to equity and excellence for all students. IDRA's STAARS Leaders model is especially unique because of its focus on helping educational communities who teach English learners. Below are thoughts shared by participating leaders.



"I've been honored to have Dr. Avilés (IDRA) as one of my principal coaches. With our efforts, we were able to focus on student achievement at Ball Academy. Through her work and my team's effort, we were able to move out of "Improvement Required" status to "Acceptable" status in one year by closing the achievement gaps. What we are most proud of is the improvement our ELs have made, which is an emphasis of IDRA. We were able to close the gap completely in math, and in other areas we have made gains of 12 to 15 points on the state assessments. With IDRA, we were able to build capacity among our leaders and teachers, and we focus on parent engagement, as well. It has been a great partnership for Ball Academy and for our students and community."

- Gregory Rivers, Principal of Ball Academy

"The STAARS Leaders program has provided me a scholarship and opened doors for me that I never believed were possible. - [Keep reading](#)

IDRA Establishes Scholarship Endowment in Honor of Dr. Ricardo R. Fernández, Lehman College President Emeritus

In recognition of Dr. Ricardo R. Fernández's service on the IDRA board of directors and to higher education, IDRA has established a scholarship endowment at Lehman College in his honor. Dr. Fernández has served on the IDRA board for 16 years and is president emeritus of Lehman College.



Dr. Fernández became the second president of Lehman College in 1990 and served both the college and its home borough of the Bronx with distinction for 26 years. Throughout his tenure, he expanded the college's commitment to excellence and increased access to higher education for students who are

economically disadvantaged. In addition to his service to IDRA, Dr. Fernández's leadership positions in education have included the American Council of Education, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and the National Association for Bilingual Education.

Dr. Ricardo R. Fernández Scholarship Endowment Fund is designated for students pursuing a degrees in education who are committed to a career in the New York City public schools or in an urban school district. - [See online](#)

Classnotes Podcasts on Principal Leadership

The Family Friendly Principal - 56

Principal on Creating a College Going Culture - 86

A Principal on Setting Expectations for College - 126

A Principal on the Core Elements of School Transformation - 127

A Principal on Supporting Teachers for Student College Readiness - 128

How Principals Can Support their Teachers- 164



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November-December 2017

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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. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.