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Meet IDRA's Inaugural Class of Education Policy Fellows

IDRA is changing the landscape of Texas education advocacy by training advocates to influence state law and lead a powerful network of impacted communities.

November 2, 2020

Today, IDRA begins its first Education Policy Fellows Program. Five fellows will gain real-world advocacy experience and training during the 2021 Texas legislative session, because we know state policymakers can make stronger education policy decisions by working with advocates who are connected to impacted communities.

"We are thrilled to introduce our inaugural class of IDRA Education Policy Fellows,



and we're so proud of the caliber of the incredibly talented applicant pool," said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "This legislative session will be particularly challenging because of the pandemic and economic downturn, so it is more critical than ever that voices of advocates and communities of color are centered."

Students of color make up most of the Texas public school population – about 72% – and Texas grows more diverse each year. Yet, advocates of color often are not present in the rooms where decisions about the lives and opportunities for students of color are made.

IDRA's ground-breaking program seeks to change that picture during the next legislative session. Our Education Policy Fellows will work with coalitions, students and families to craft a community-centered education policy agenda and join a network of advocates and policy influencers focused on improving racial equity in education policymaking spaces.

The IDRA Education Policy Fellows Program is generously supported by the Trellis Foundation and in partnership with the John Gardner Public Service Fellowship, facilitated by Stanford University's Haas Center for Public Service.

IDRA Education Policy Fellows



Dr. Altheria Caldera
IDRA Policy Fellow –
Preparation and Access to
College

Dr. Altheria Caldera is a scholar, writer and equity activist whose other identities include dog-lover, nature-enthusiast and college football fan. The Alabama native began her professional career as a middle school English teacher. Altheria



Araceli García
IDRA Policy Fellow – English
Learners and Immigrant
Student Education

Araceli Garcia grew up on the South Side of San Antonio and is the daughter and granddaughter of Mexican immigrants. She graduated from Stanford with a B.A. in Chicana/Latina studies and a minor in education. In addition to

earned her Ph.D. in education studies from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

As an IDRA Education Policy Fellow, she will identify and pursue advocacy opportunities to expand access to and ensure success in postsecondary education spaces, particularly for students of color.

 @AltheriaCaldera

her studies, Araceli has worked alongside detained immigrants fighting for their right to seek asylum. She plans to pursue a law degree.

As an IDRA Policy Fellow, Araceli will identify and pursue advocacy opportunities that ensure equitable and excellent schools for English learners and immigrant students.

 @chelicheesefry



Thomas Marshall III
IDRA Policy Fellow –
Digital Communications and
Community Engagement
Advocacy

Thomas Marshall III is a native of Columbia, South Carolina and received a B.A. in English with a minor in youth development studies from Clemson University. His research interests include the recruitment and retention rate of Black males at predominantly white institutions. He is a student in the master of education (higher education) program at the University of Houston.



Christina Muñoz
IDRA Policy Fellow –
Equitable Response to
COVID-19 in Schools

Christina Muñoz is a second-generation, Latina master's student studying quantitative methods in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Christina believes that voices from students and other advocates of color are grossly under-represented in the policymaking space.

As an IDRA Education Policy Fellow, she will identify and pursue advocacy opportunities that address both the new and

As an IDRA Education Policy Fellow, he will execute a strong digital communications and community engagement advocacy program for the Texas legislative session.

 @thomasmarshal26

the existing systemic needs that schools, students and families have due to COVID-19.

 @chrissy_tina9

Dr. Nino Rodríguez

IDRA Policy Fellow – Racial Justice and Stopping the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Dr. Nino Rodríguez received his Ph.D. in education policy, organization and leadership from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Nino seeks to use his knowledge, skills and abilities to liberate Black males of maladaptive notions of what it means to be a Black man in the United States.



As an IDRA Education Policy Fellow, Nino will identify and pursue advocacy opportunities that address the harms of school discipline and policing, which disproportionately impact Black students, students with disabilities and LGBTQ students in Texas.

 @R3volutioNino

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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.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.