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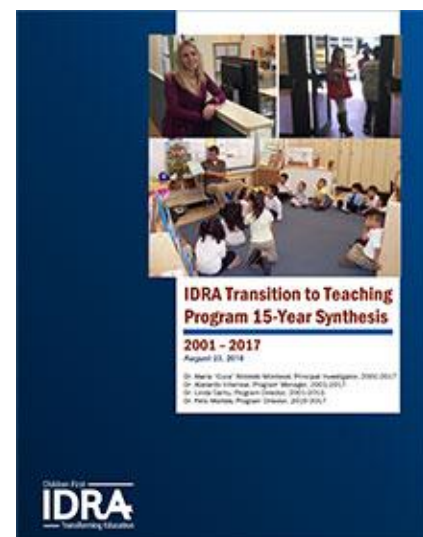


## Teachers Prepared to Serve Today's Classrooms

### Report Provides 15-Year Synthesis of IDRA's "Transition to Teaching" Program

(September 27, 2018) A report released today outlines the contributions of IDRA's 15 years in teacher preparation through six multi-year Transition to Teaching grants, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. IDRA partnered with universities and more than 55 school districts across Texas to prepare a new generation of skilled, effective teachers to lead and innovate in schools that need them most.

The projects recruited over 800 recent graduates and mid-career professionals who were working in fields other than teaching. These new teachers participated in university coursework and intense professional development while in a first-year paid teaching internship. They committed to working in high-need school districts for a set number of years.



"What set these projects apart from other accelerated teacher certification models was our

emphasis on preparing teachers to work in diverse school settings, recognizing and building on their students' academic, cultural and linguistic strengths," said Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO. "We also ensured participants had university instruction and direct classroom experience, blending the theoretical with the practical."

IDRA focused on key teacher shortage areas identified by the Texas Education Agency, including math, science, bilingual/ESL and special education fields. And through coaching, mentoring, in-person and online networks, IDRA built the kinds of professional communities that nurture classroom success and campus leadership. Educators were able to connect with one another across the state, exchange best practices, learn about research, and continue professional development online.

IDRA's model comprises six elements that frame the program's sequential processes: recruitment, selection, preparation, certification, placement and retention.

Regarding the program impact, teachers gave the highest rating (92 percent) to the statement, "Because of this project, my minority students improved their performance."

More than 85 percent of teachers felt that the program met and exceeded their expectations. As one teacher described: "It was a great experience that allowed me to learn from people with many types of perspectives. I was given confidence to try, and if I made a mistake, I learned and gave it another try through another approach."

Another teacher stated: "My preparation was completely accurate. I work in a school in which 99 percent are at-risk students."

The new report outlines lessons learned, best practices and implications for future quality teaching efforts in line with IDRA's recommendations: (1) value and practice diversity, (2) include all stakeholders, and (3) expand intervention models.

[See Report \(PDF\)](#)

[See & Share Infographic](#)

## What Participants Had to Say about IDRA's Program

## IDRA'S TRANSITION TO TEACHING PROJECTS: **LEADERSHIP IN ACTION**

**"ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS IS SEEING THE PRIDE IN THEIR FACES."**

Louanne Rintala



**"I WANTED TO HELP STUDENTS MAKE A CONNECTION**

**FROM REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS TO TAUGHT CONCEPTS. I KNEW MATH COULD BE FUN AND EXCITING, AND I WANTED TO HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THAT AS WELL. THIS PROGRAM HAS EQUIPPED ME WITH THE TOOLS NEEDED TO TEACH ALL STUDENTS."**

Kerry L. Arrington



**"MY CHILDHOOD DREAM HAD ALWAYS BEEN TO BECOME A TEACHER."**

Martha Alonso



**"THIS PROGRAM HAS HELPED EQUIP ME FURTHER BY BUILDING A MORE DIVERSE 'KIT' BAG. EACH SESSION GIFTED ME AND MY STUDENTS WITH BETTER IDEAS, CALMER SOLUTIONS AND A GREATER ABILITY TO RELATE MATHEMATICAL CONTENT."**



Chris Thelan

**"I FEEL LIKE I AM REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MY STUDENTS' LIVES, NOT ONLY ACADEMICALLY BUT ALSO TEACHING AND MOTIVATING THEM TO SEE THAT THEY CAN BE SUCCESSFUL. I WAS RAISED IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, SO I CAN RELATE TO MY STUDENTS."**

Marlene Alonso



Louanne Rintala, a graphic designer who worked in advertising for 11 years joined the TTT program because she wanted to make a difference. Today, as a bilingual teacher, she is combining creativity and commitment to second graders at San Antonio

ISD's Beacon Hill Elementary. **Kerry L. Arrington** is pursuing a general education and LEP certification through Dallas ISD and combining her training with a love of learning and a commitment to all students' success. **Chris Thelan**, who is working to become a teacher with Dallas ISD, following five years of active military service, is committed to learning as that fulfills the potential of every child in his classroom. He is proud to bring the kind of leadership and respect for people of all backgrounds to work on behalf of children that not only connects them to math but also to a world of possibility. Sisters **Marlene** and **Martha Alonso** had both originally set off on different career paths. Marlene earned an MBA and had gone to work in the banking industry. Martha earned a degree in accounting and became an internal auditor for San Antonio ISD. But with a true passion for teaching, both decided to leave their earlier careers and pursue certification through IDRA's TTT program. Today, Marlene Alonso is a fourth grade bilingual teacher at Bowden Elementary in San Antonio ISD, Campus Lead Bilingual Teacher and chair of the Community Involvement Committee at her school. Martha Alonso is in her third year at Rhodes Middle School in San Antonio ISD teaching sixth through eighth grade ESL. As the only ESL teacher at Rhodes MS, she serves all 60 ELL students on campus, connecting with core content teachers and her students' families, and tutoring her students in math and science before and after school. But she is not stopping there. Next up is a PhD in organizational leadership at the University of the Incarnate Word. (2012)

## Report Highlights





# Preparing Teachers to Serve Today's Classrooms

## IDRA Accelerated Teacher Certification Model



With schools facing teacher shortages in math, science, bilingual/ESL and special education fields, IDRA created a new model for reaching potential teachers and preparing them to work in high-need schools. The results of IDRA's 15 years of teacher preparation through six multi-year Transition to Teaching grants, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, were significant. IDRA's projects in Texas recruited over 800 recent graduates and mid-career professionals who had been working in fields other than teaching. These new teachers participated in intense professional development while in a first-year paid teaching internship. They committed to working in high-need school districts for a set number of years.

## What Made This Model Stand Out?

1



### Recruitment & Selection

**Participants were actively recruited and carefully selected among minority community professionals who want to make a difference, and among recent graduates committed to work in diverse classrooms.**

- Recruitment was informative and motivational, eliciting a sense of commitment and purpose, rather than one of economics or convenience.
- Selection involved verifying that participants met their eligibility requirements and their commitment to the goals of the program.

2



### Preparation & Certification

**Participants were prepared through regular coursework at partnering colleges and universities and through individualized training via online and on-site professional development, so they could excel in diverse classrooms and obtain their certification.**

- The preparation assured that participants were pedagogically ready to be placed in high-need classrooms, through IDRA professional development that was both face-to-face and in online peer groups, along with coursework at the partner college.
- Certification involved supporting the teachers in meeting the official requirements needed to work in the classroom, including test preparation support.

3



### Placement & Retention

**Participants were placed in classrooms, initially as interns and eventually as teachers of record.**

- In the placement stage, IDRA provided personalized support for participants to be employed in the high-need school, including interview preparation and resume writing.
- For retention, the in-service training involved IDRA's on-site asset-based mentoring and coaching; classroom observation, feedback and individual support; on-site and online experiences to support/extend implementing the district-selected curriculum; and IDRA pláticas (interactive workshops) so teachers could discuss issues and reinforcement around specific topics, such as discipline, parent involvement and cultural diversity.





## IDRA Recommendations

- 1 Value & Practice Diversity**  
 All teacher education programs should include formal coursework in cultural diversity and have students experience diverse classrooms as part of their preparation.
- 2 Include All Stakeholders**  
 Schools of education need to create innovative and meaningful partnerships between schools, communities and universities to support teacher recruitment, preparation and placement.
- 3 Expand Intervention Models**  
 Schools of education are more effective when they provide consistent and long-term support for individuals as they enter teacher education programs to complete all requirements for certification and work in the classroom.

More recommendations and findings are available in the report,  
 "IDRA Transition to Teaching Program 15-Year Synthesis, 2001 – 2017"  
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Intercultural Development Research Association • 5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101 • San Antonio, Texas 78228 • 210-444-1710

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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.