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May 29, 2020 Edition



Across the country, elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools have closed as part of the effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Each week, IDRA issues an update on the impact of COVID-19-related policies on schools, students and families.

More resources and trainings for teachers, school administrators, families and communities are on our [Learning Goes On](#)

[website](#). See the [Spanish version](#) of this edition.

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Policy Update

What We are Hearing from Families, Students and Educators: Part II

The experiences and needs of students, families, educators and other community leaders help to shape IDRA's policy and educational practice work. Their critical perspectives must guide policymakers as they respond to the immediate and long-term needs of students, communities and schools in the time of COVID-19.

Community engagement is especially critical as state education agencies distribute federal CARES Act funds to school districts in the coming weeks. Texas , Louisiana , Mississippi , Alabama , Georgia , South Carolina and Virginia have released guidance on the proper use of emergency relief funds. IDRA is analyzing how each state is interpreting the CARES Act and encouraging districts to use the funds.

State agencies and local districts must be held accountable and work with families and other advocates to ensure the equitable and effective distribution, use and tracking of these funds.

Here is what we are hearing from families who have responded to IDRA's community engagement survey:

"I feel that the school staff are doing their best to bridge the gap, but for households like mine where I am a single parent, working from home and doing my best to support my child's continuous engagement, distant learning is a challenge."

"I don't know how much instructional time is necessary. I think that my child could be doing schoolwork for 10+ hours/day and not run out of content, based on what the district has provided. I wish there were more opportunities for synchronous instruction, perhaps in small groups, perhaps across school sites if necessary."

"Nothing compares to the quality of face-to-face. Even though I'm a former teacher myself and know how to continue educating my kids, I simply don't have the time to do it best."

"We have also lost daycare for our 4 year old. I am worried that my daughter will not be ready for preschool in 2020-21. I also fear both my children returning to school and catching COVID."

Responses like these inform IDRA's COVID-19 policy recommendations and education practice support. We need your support to gather more information from families, students and teachers. Please fill out IDRA's survey, available in English and Spanish below, and share widely to ensure communities are centered in educational equity conversations. Thank you!

We especially need help reaching families who cannot complete the form online. We've created PDF versions that can be printed and shared.

Find more state COVID-19 updates and related educational equity news on IDRA's COVID-19 dashboard and special webpage, Learning Goes On.

Surveys

We need your help! To ensure strong community partnership in our work, please take a moment to fill out a survey, linked below.



Parent Survey

Student Survey

Educator Survey

General Survey

See our [survey site](#) for the surveys in Spanish and for printable versions for dissemination of paper copies.

New Podcast Episode

A blue banner for a podcast episode. At the top, a red ribbon contains the text 'Classnotes Podcast #201' in white. Below this, the title 'STEM Students Describe Life in a COVID-19 World' is written in large white letters. To the right of the title are three small square portraits of students. At the bottom left, there is a 'Listen Now!' button with a play icon. To its right is a red ribbon containing the URL 'https://idra.news/Pod201'. At the bottom right is the IDRA logo with the tagline 'Transforming Education'.

New Podcast Episode! Those most impacted by the sudden shift to distance learning clearly are the students themselves. In this podcast episode, we brought together students to share how they have been navigating the new challenges brought on by COVID-19 and distance learning. Ana Ramón talks with three Chief Science Officer students as they describe how they have stayed connected and keep innovating during this time. Our special guest students are: CSO Isela, 12th Grade, McCollum High School, Harlandale ISD; CSO Shreya, 10th Grade, Keystone School; and CSO Elizabeth, 8th Grade, Northeast ISD STEM Academy (Nimitz MS).

Students in IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer program are in grades 6-12 elected by their peers to be liaisons for STEM in their schools and communities. They learn leadership skills

to implement on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM. See our Texas Chief Science Officer webpage for details.

These youth STEM ambassadors have not stopped their work to enrich a STEM culture despite their school and community closures.

LISTEN NOW

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Free Educator Webinars

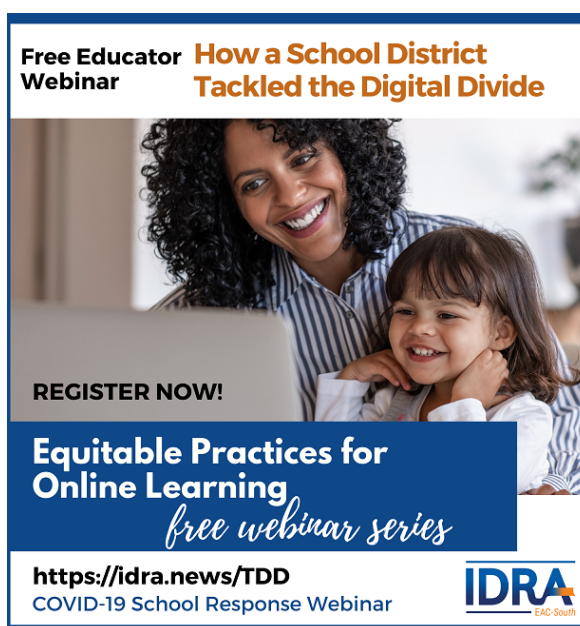
How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide

Webinar Recording Available

Hear how San Antonio ISD faced the digital divide to ensure learning continued for their students during COVID-19.

Eva Mendoza, executive director of information technology, described the work that San Antonio ISD performed to bridge the digital divide in her district. She discussed the challenges, successes and what's next.

Also, Clarissa Ramon from Google Fiber shared how funders can support your district when immediate needs arise.



Free Educator Webinar **How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide**

REGISTER NOW!

Equitable Practices for Online Learning
free webinar series

<https://idra.news/TDD>
COVID-19 School Response Webinar

IDRA
CIC-South

SEE WEBINAR

Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively

Webinar Recording Available

Most educators know that Google Classroom is a free online classroom management system, developed by Google for schools. But being a powerful and popular tool doesn't necessarily keep teachers from experiencing bumps along the way in.

In this webinar, get tips on how to use Google Classroom more effectively from the

perspectives of a teacher, parent and student.

[SEE WEBINAR](#)

Free Educator Webinar
Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively



REGISTER NOW!

Equitable Practices for Online Learning
free webinar series

<https://idra.news/TPSP>
 COVID-19 School Response Webinar



More Webinars on Equitable Practices for Online Learning

These free webinar recordings are available for viewing at your convenience.

- * Equitable Practices for Teaching Online
- * Digital Divide: Connectivity, Infrastructure and Devices
- * Tools & Tips to Alleviate the Homework Gap
- * Facilitating Online Math Sessions
- * PBL at Home & Across the Curriculum
- * ELAR Series
 - * Journal Writing About the Present for the Future - ELAR Webinar Part 1
 - * From Journaling to Personal Narratives - ELAR Webinar Part 2
 - * From Journaling and Personal Narratives to Letter Writing - ELAR Webinar Part 3
- * Chief Science Officer Students Determined to Promote STEM Despite School Closures
- * Teaching Science in Virtual Learning Environments

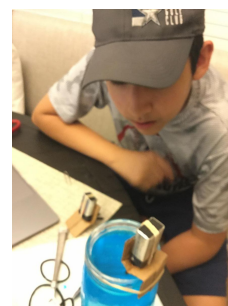
[SEE WEBINAR HUB](#)

News

Chief Science Officer Teens Get Creative to Promote STEM While Navigating School Closures

IDRA Texas CSOs serve as STEM ambassadors in their school communities

IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer students shifted their work to create new ways to enrich a STEM culture despite school closures. This year, more than 100 teens in San Antonio and Houston served as their school's Chief Science Officers, learning leadership skills to carry out their own on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM. But school closures threatened to derail their plans. Innovative by nature, these students took up the challenge.



KEEP READING

We welcome donations to support education during this COVID-19 crisis.



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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring educational opportunity for every child. 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.