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August 12, 2020 Edition

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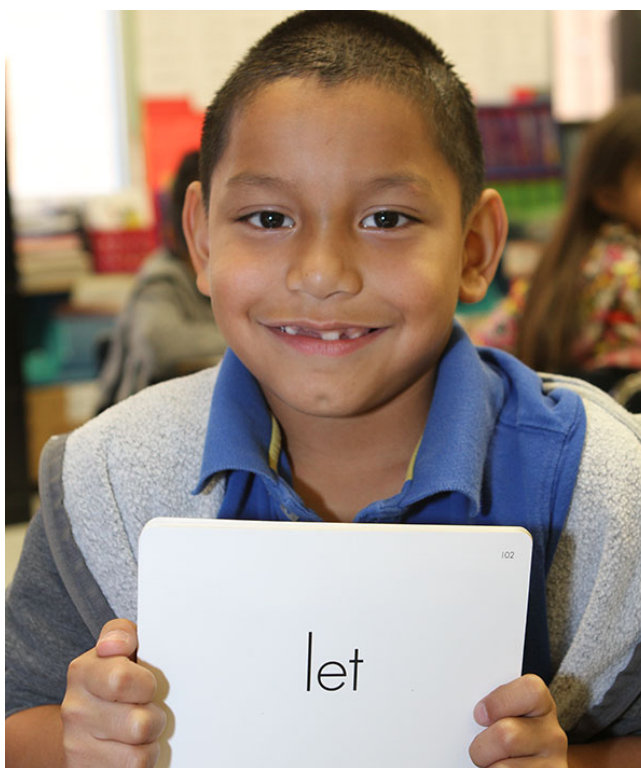
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Free Webinars on Education for Immigrant Families



More resources and trainings for teachers, school administrators, families and communities are on our [Learning Goes On website](#). See [Spanish-language version](#) of this edition.

Policy Update

An Equity-focused Plan for Reopening Schools Safely

School reopening policies must be responsive to the needs of all families, students, teachers and schools. To ensure equity as schools reopen, IDRA makes the following policy recommendations to state, higher education, and school district leaders, including students and families. For a printable, sharable infographic, check out our equity checklist below. See our full list of recommendations to ensure equitable educational opportunities for students in the immediate- and long-term in our online guide, [Ensuring Education Equity During and After COVID-19](#).



1. Additional funds and resources should be channeled to face pandemic-related issues.

- * Funnel CARES Act and other federal stimulus funding toward the K-12 settings that serve high populations of marginalized students.
- * Invest in additional mental health professionals, including counselors and social workers. It is more important than ever to achieve recommended ratios and even go beyond in order to address the unique trauma and needs of students, families and school staff. Additional professionals can help to maintain contact with families during school closures.
- * Ensure emergency funds (state and federal) are used to address schools' virus-related needs that arise and supplement not supplant basic education funding. School districts that do not have additional resources to address unanticipated COVID-19 related needs should be not penalized with a subsequent funding shortage.

2. School districts should develop support systems for students' academic, social and emotional needs.

- * Develop small committees that include a counselor, social worker or family liaison who can ensure that the particular social circumstances of the family are taken into account in some way when determining the needs of the student.
- * Expand use of formative assessment systems (such as individual graduation committees in Texas). Formative assessments measure student progress over time and consider a variety of factors to determine course mastery.
- * Involve families and other stakeholders in decisions about uses of funds through surveys, meetings, etc. Use family support specialists for this purpose.
- * Encourage peer-to-peer mentoring and cross-age tutoring programs among students. These programs can encourage community bonds while using young adults' digital skills to build academic relationships. Programs can be monitored by teachers and other educational personnel.

3. Educators should maintain high academic expectations for students that prepare them for college admission, enrollment and success.

* Work together with K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to heighten college counseling and enrollment information for students and families. Schools should provide clear online information and communications about college admission requirements, instructions for obtaining transcripts and teacher letters of recommendation, COVID-19-related adjustments, and resources for seeking financial aid and scholarships.

* Develop, refine and maintain open platforms of communication with students and families to alleviate confusion and be responsive to emergent needs and concerns. Online platforms should be coupled with robust in-person outreach, particularly with families and students that districts have struggled to reach.

* Advise students to access rigorous college preparatory coursework in high school, provide compensatory services and summer learning opportunities, and enhance instructional support so that students can succeed in those courses.

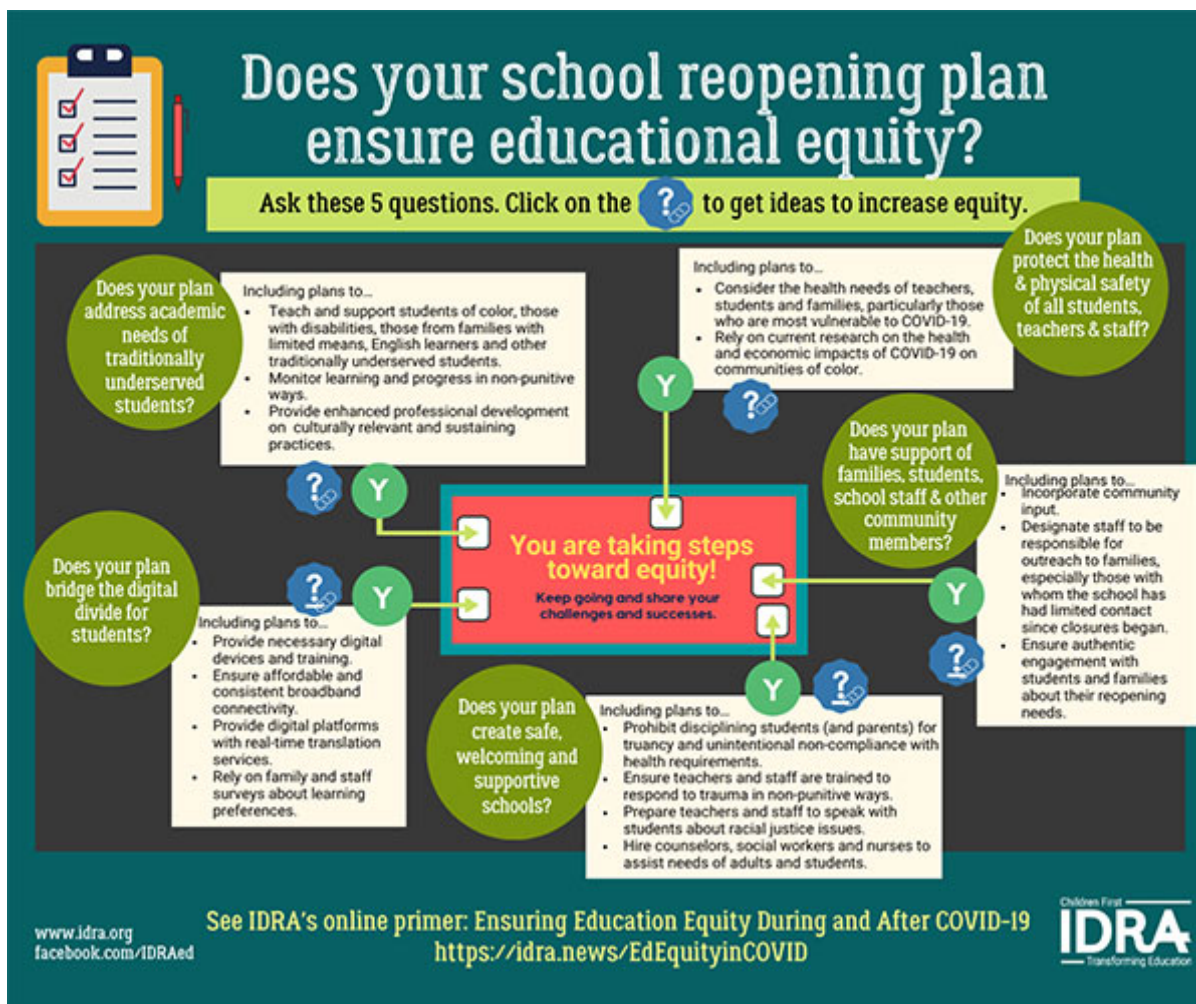
4. State agencies and educators should prioritize students' safety, privacy and well-being.

* Ensure supervisors of juvenile justice facilities and residential treatment centers - including county facilities, halfway houses and other residential arrangements for youth - provide students consistent and appropriate access to education plans, supports and devices.

* Establish state agency and educator protocols to perform periodic, comprehensive local needs assessments to assess the safety, privacy and well-being needs of local students and families.

* Manage and store student data carefully. Data uses that jeopardize student privacy or risk marginalizing students should be prohibited.

SEE GUIDE



SEE FULL SIZE BILINGUAL INFOGRAPHIC AND PRINTABLE PDF

Video: Facts in 3 Minutes

Video Spotlight on the Rules for Reopening Texas Schools

School reopening guidance from the Texas Education Agency and other state officials has changed rapidly, sometimes multiple times in a day. With the first day of school right around the corner, Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes and Ana Ramón, two members of IDRA's Policy, Advocacy and Community Engagement team, walk you through a breakdown of the latest state rules and guidance for Texas public schools.



**Video Spotlight on
the Rules for
Reopening Texas
Schools**

Facts in 3 minutes!

free webinar series

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Free Webinars on Equitable Practices for Online Learning

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



School Reopening Webinar Series
free webinars

<https://idra.news/WebinarSeries>

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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

Chief Science Officer Students Determined to Promote STEM Despite School Closures

Teaching Science in Virtual Learning Environments

How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide

Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively

Student Perspectives on a Changing School Climate

Nurturing Students' Hearts and Minds

* From Journaling and Personal Narratives to Letter Writing - ELAR Webinar Part 3

Partnering with Families to Reopen and Reimagine Schools

Getting Schools Ready to Support Students Facing a New World of Challenges

SEE WEBINAR HUB

Public Relief Funds Diverted Away from Public Schools

IDRA Analysis Shows U.S. Department of Education Rule Could Cost Texas Public Schools Millions

An IDRA analysis shows that a U.S. Department of Education rule could force some Texas school districts to reserve up to \$44.2 million of critical CARES Act funds for private schools.

School districts must typically reserve "equitable services" funds to provide services to private school students whose families have limited incomes. However, the new Department of Education rule requires some public school districts to reserve more CARES Act funds for private schools based on the total number of private school students within their district boundaries.

The new rule will cost Texas public school districts an additional \$38.7 million beyond what they would normally be required to set aside. This rule does not apply to Texas charter schools, which do not have to reserve their federal funds for private schools.

The Department's interpretation of the CARES Act is completely inconsistent with the law itself, but completely in line with some federal efforts to funnel money away from public schools toward private schools and individual families.

The new rule penalizes school districts that make districtwide spending decisions or that allocate resources to serve any students outside of their Title I schools to address COVID-19 needs. These resources could be used to purchase technology and personal protective equipment or to hire additional counselors, social workers, and nurses to respond to the needs of teachers, students and families.

Read IDRA's [full analysis](#), including the potential impact on 185 Texas school districts.



Cutting Public School Relief Funds to Subsidize Private Schools –

An Analysis of How the Department of Education's Equitable Services Rule Will Harm Texas Students and School Districts

By Morgan Craven, J.D.

This analysis uses data from 185 Texas school districts to determine the impact of a new rule from the U.S. Department of Education. The rule requires many public school districts across the country to spend more of their critical COVID-19 relief funds on "equitable services" for private schools, regardless of the financial need of the private school students.

The Department of Education's interpretation of the CARES Act will cost school districts in Texas more than \$38 million. This money could have been used to fund hundreds of counselors, social workers and nurses and to purchase equipment like computers, face masks or hand sanitizer. It could have been used to support remote learning needs and other critical services for students and teachers.

The rule will harm all students in public schools, particularly students of color, students from families with limited incomes, English learners, students with disabilities, and others who most need CARES Act funds. These students and their families have been denied access to excellent and equitable educational opportunities for generations. They have been subjected to discriminatory policies and practices that keep their schools underfunded, make them more likely to be pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline, and erect barriers to college. The Department of Education's rule funnels money away from the public schools that serve these students – even as they face additional challenges of educating and providing supports like meals and health services remotely – further entrenching the inequities exacerbated by the pandemic.

Based on its analysis, IDRA recommends the following:

- Families, students, educators and all other advocates who care about the needs of students in public schools should submit a comment to the Department of Education urging it to rescind the interim final rule that funnels more money away from public schools and toward private schools. Comments can be submitted online [here](#) and must be submitted by July 31, 2020.

Intercultural Development Research Association

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Virtual VOE Webinars

Free Webinars on Education for Immigrant Families

IDRA and the Consulate General of Mexico in San Antonio have been partnering to help Mexican and Mexican American families navigate the U.S. education system and learn about important educational opportunities in both countries.

Since the consulate is closed due to the COVID-19 crisis, IDRA's Ventanilla de Orientación Educativa (VOE) in San Antonio launched a portal with bilingual materials and videos for families. This resource is provided, in part, through the [IDRA EAC-South](#) and IDRA's [Re-energizing Leadership to Achieve Greater Student Success](#) project.



The Rights of Immigrant Students in PreK-12 Schools

This video describes the rights that immigrant children have to education which are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. (10 min.)

Navigating the U.S. K-12 Education System

This video describes the differences in education systems in Mexico and the United States to help families prepare registration documents and make sure their children graduate ready for college. (26 min.)

College Financial Aid Opportunities for Immigrant Students

This video outlines the many financial aid options that are available for college, particularly for first-generation college students. (15 min.)

Adult and Community Education Opportunities in Spanish

This video explains the adult education programs are available in the San Antonio area for adults. (14 min.)

Educational Opportunities in Mexico for Nationals Living in Both Countries

This video explains the education programs available for Spanish speakers living in the United States or returning to Mexico. (20 min.)

Watch VOE Videos in English or Spanish

Learn more about the IDRA VOE

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.