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**Transforming Education
By Putting Kids First**

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Honoring Black Lives and Contributions During Black History Month

Resources for Supporting Black students

February is Black History Month! While we must celebrate the lives of Black people every day, we believe it is important to also take time during Black History Month to recognize the rich and complex history, hard-won triumphs, and persistent challenges faced by Black people.

We especially want to highlight ways to support Black students, who continue to face systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing excellent and equitable schools.

For nearly five decades, IDRA has remained committed to achieving excellent, equitable schooling for diverse students in our pioneering style that intersects

research, policy, practice and community engagement. We're happy to share news and resources with you as we kick off this special month.

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Honoring the Arms that Lift Us – Southern Stories from Our Black Staff

This month, some of IDRA's Black staff members will share their experiences of how family, teachers and community, particularly Black women, have impacted their lives and sent them on a trajectory in working for justice and student opportunity in education.

Doing the Work of Love – A Letter to the Community who Raised Me

by Thomas Marshall III (he/him/his), IDRA policy communications strategist

Growing up Black in the South is my story and my song. Being involved in the policymaking space in Texas and the broader U.S. South has given me a unique lens into how I view education, and I constantly see myself within this work. I see a little Black boy who doesn't know it yet, but he is the product of Title I public schools and will grow up to advocate for students just like himself.

My educational journey began at Pine Grove Elementary school in Columbia, South Carolina, a small but growing city. My first teacher in kindergarten was Ms. Wilson. She was a Black woman who taught me more than just identifying months on a calendar or time on a clock. She instilled in me the value of hard work and service that I take with me today.

I come from a family of educators. Aunts, cousins and countless Black women within my family have taught in classrooms across the South. Though never living out her dreams of being a teacher, my mother taught me such valuable lessons about respect, faith and kindness.



When I think of the current attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion within our schools, I can't help but remember my first Black male teacher Mr. Gause showing us a documentary on Emmet Till in seventh-grade history class. It was the first time I heard about this horrific tragedy, yet his boldness in introducing this topic led me to think we must listen to these stories.

We cannot erase our history. We owe it to our brothers and sisters who stood before us to tell these stories authentically and equip the next Black generation with the truth. Our power comes from the truth we learn from our ancestors. The lessons that I have learned have allowed me to "do the work of love" for Black students, and I am the person I am today because of a generation of Black teachers, family members and the community who raised me.

Follow us on social media to see more reflections and share your own!



Students Speak Against Classroom Censorship

IDRA's video gallery showcases students who testified against classroom censorship bills in Georgia and Texas.

[See Video Gallery](#)



Resources for Learning

Unladylike 2020

The award-winning Unladylike 2020 series includes 26 short films and a one-hour documentary profiling diverse and little-known U.S. women from the turn of the 20th century, and contemporary women who follow in their footsteps. The 26 women featured include [seven Black women](#) and [free lesson plans](#) for middle and high school.



Charlotta Spears Bass

Newspaper editor, civil rights crusader and
first African American woman vice
presidential candidate
1888-1969



Meta Warrick Fuller

Trailblazing sculptor and first African
American woman recipient of Federal Art
Commission
1877-1968

Talking about Culturally Sustaining Schools

[**Culturally Sustaining Instruction Requires Culturally Sustaining Leadership**](#), by
Paula N. Johnson, Ph.D.

[**Anti-Racist Schooling for All Students of Color**](#), by Bricio Vasquez, Ph.D., & Altheria
Caldera, Ph.D.

[**Visions and Provisions – Planning for K-12 Ethnic Studies Implementation**](#), by Irene
Gómez, Ed.M.

[**What the Term “Culturally Sustaining Practices” Means for Education in Today’s
Classrooms**](#), by Altheria Caldera, Ph.D.

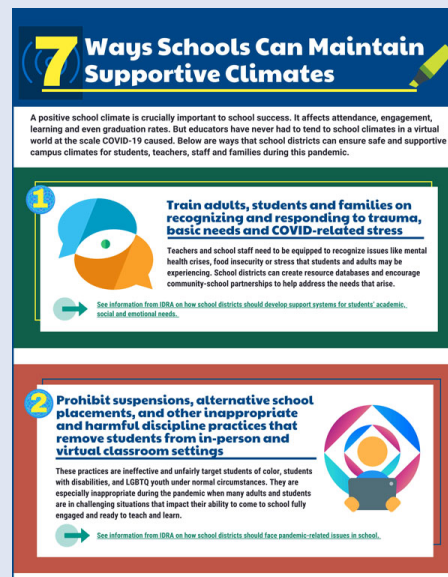
[**Fostering Culturally Diverse Learning Environments**](#), by Paula N. Johnson, Ph.D.

[**Skills Needed for Teaching in Diverse Classrooms**](#) – Podcast Episode 173

[**5 Strategies for College Readiness in Diverse Schools**](#) – Podcast Episode 175



Ethnic Studies Can be Life-Changing – Infographic



7 Ways Schools Can Maintain Supportive Climates – Infographic

Collection of Inspiration

How to Support Black Lives Matter, Wherever You Are

[Nine ways](#) to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Kids' Books about Race that Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion

Some [titles](#) for your shelf.

How to Talk About Race, Justice and Equality with Your Children

A [round-up](#) of age-appropriate books, videos and online resources.

Black Girls Do STEM

Provides [tools](#) for girls to explore various STEM careers across multiple industries and has a mentor directory.

16 Black History Month STEM Activities

[List of activities](#) to help youth learn about contributions of Black scientists and STEM professionals.

April Curriculum – Revolutionary Black Arts

K12 [curriculum](#) curated around the BLM principles.

Disability Justice Resources Sampler!

[Tools](#) for celebrating differences and understanding how the lessons from Black disabled organizers teach us how to build inclusive, accessible movements.

Black History Month Reading Circle

Sundays in February

7:00 pm (EST)

Dr. Altheria Caldera

Assistant Professor Reading/Language Arts at Howard University and a recent IDRA Education Policy Fellow

All ages welcome

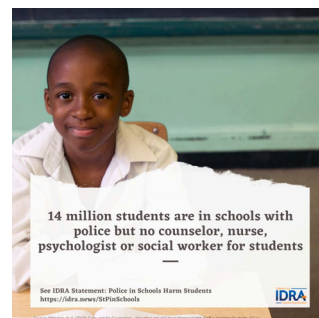
[RSVP by email](#)



Resources for Safe Schooling

Police in Schools Harm Students

Educators best ensure students' safety not through police and surveillance but by building trusting relationships, engaging academic curricula, and providing resources that support the totality of students' humanity by addressing their physical, mental and economic needs. IDRA offers [resources online](#) to assist school districts that choose to invest in strategies that create safe and supportive schools for all students and move away from school policing and other harmful approaches.



Understanding and Addressing Racial Trauma and Supporting Black Students in Schools

This [resource](#) explains the particular history of racial trauma in the Black community, how this trauma may show up in schools, and how schools must prepare to support all students and adults in their community. This resource was developed in collaboration with the [Excellence and Advancement Foundation](#).



For more information about training and supports for schools, school districts and other groups contact the [IDRA EAC-South](#).

February 15, 2021

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IDRA 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.

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