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**Learning
Goes On**

A COVID-19 Resource for Education

June 12, 2020 Edition

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

Policy Update

**U.S. Department of Education Affirms Intent to
Exclude Undocumented Students from CARES Act
Relief Funds**

The U.S. Department of Education has just issued a rule prohibiting colleges and universities from distributing CARES Act relief funds to undocumented students, including DACA recipients. Originally, the Department issued guidance - a non-binding interpretation - excluding undocumented students from the critical funds. This guidance was met with pushback from lawmakers, students and other advocates. See IDRA President Celina Moreno's op-ed, [Not aiding DACA students merciless](#).

The guidance also confused colleges, which had already begun figuring out how to distribute the much-needed funds to students. The California Community Colleges system [sued the Department](#) over its interpretation of the CARES Act.

Though the Department acknowledged it did not have the authority to enforce its guidance, it has now doubled down on its harmful interpretation of the law. Last night, the [Department issued an interim final rule](#) limiting the distribution of CARES Act funds. Interim final rules are effective immediately, though they remain open for public comment for 30 days and may then be revised by the issuing department. Final rules carry the force and effect of law, meaning they can be enforced by the department.

The rule will open for a 30-day public comment period, beginning this Monday, June 15, 2020. You can exercise your right to engage in the rule-making process and [submit a comment online](#). Watch IDRA's social media for the direct link.

COVID-19 Federal Guidance Documents Impact Schools and Communities

As students, educators and families adjust to life with COVID-19, state and local education agencies are making important decisions that impact school budgets and operating procedures.

The U.S. Department of Education has used its power to distribute critical COVID-19 emergency relief funds to influence those decisions through federal guidance documents. The Department's guidance documents include the memoranda, policy statements and other resources. They do not create new laws. Their purpose is to clarify existing laws and regulations and guide state and local education agencies to ensure their compliance. And they indicate how government agencies will interpret and enforce federal law, including civil rights protections for students. Because executive department heads, like the U.S. Secretary of Education, are appointed by the President, each new administration rescinds, changes and creates guidance documents.

This spring, the U.S. Department of Education [issued guidance](#) on states' responsibilities to students and families regarding COVID-19 responses. Some state education agencies elected not to follow federal guidance that conflicts with their own efforts to provide equitable educational opportunities for students. For example, several states, [including Mississippi](#), advised their public school districts not to follow federal guidance to increase the portion of federal COVID-19 relief funds provided to private schools within their district boundaries.

What You Can Do

A key first step for advocates, families, students and educators is to learn about important federal guidance and state and local laws and rules that impact your community. And you can connect with others in community-based coalitions to proactively engage local and state

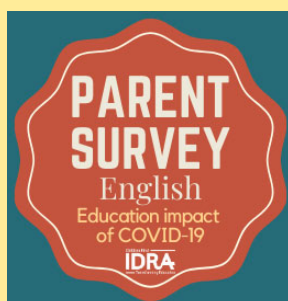
leaders to ensure they protect the rights guaranteed to all students. This community engagement is a critical part of ensuring educational equity, including in the distribution of emergency relief funds, school reopening procedures and access to digital learning materials.

For more information about how you can advocate equitable educational opportunities for students during the pandemic, see IDRA's COVID-19 [policy news and analyses](#), [online resources and training](#), and [guides to family leadership in education](#).

And, to help ensure policymakers at every level hear the voices of families, students, teachers and others, please complete IDRA's survey (below) about COVID-19 needs and responses.

Last Chance! Survey Closes Monday!

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



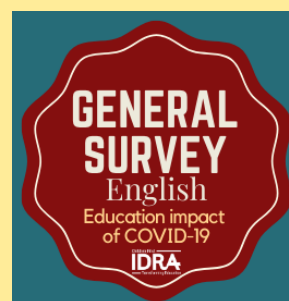
Parent Survey



Student Survey



Educator Survey



General Survey

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

SIGN UP FOR EMAILS

Free Educator Webinars

IDRA is launching a special webinar series on preparing schools to reopen this fall. The first three topics are open for registration.

Get details and other COVID-19 educator webinars:
<https://idra.news/WebinarSeries>



School Reopening Webinar Series
free webinars

Student Perspectives on a Changing School Climate
June 16, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

Nurturing Students' Hearts and Minds
June 23, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

Getting Schools Ready to Support Students Facing a New World of Challenges
June 30, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

<https://idra.news/WebinarSeries>



Student Perspectives on a Changing School Climate - School Reopening Webinar Series

June 16, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

Featuring: Student advocates for equity in public education

Moderator: Ana Ramón, IDRA Deputy Director of Advocacy

What does the future hold for school re-openings, mental health and student emotional well-being in the wake of a myriad of issues facing today's youth? Our student panelists will help us understand the needs of their peers on issues, such as COVID-19, school safety, immigration, and the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements.

REGISTER NOW

Nurturing Students' Hearts and Minds - School Reopening Webinar Series

June 23, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

Featuring:

- *Dr. Cherise Rohr-Allegrini, Licensed Epidemiologist*
- *Hon. Aicha Davis, State Board of Education*
- *Hon. Marisa Pérez-Díaz, State Board of Education*
- *Lisa Marie Gomez, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and My Brother's Keeper - San Antonio*
- *Gylon Jackson, Black Lives Matter - San Antonio*
- *La Juana Chambers Lawson, San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum*

Moderator: Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes, Deputy Director of Policy

What does the future hold for school re-openings, mental health and student emotional well-being in the wake of a myriad of issues facing today's youth? Our panel of advocates and practitioners will discuss the needs of students on issues such as COVID-19, school safety, immigration, and the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements.

REGISTER NOW

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

- School Reopening Webinar Series

June 30, 2020, at 2:00 to 3:30 cdt

Featuring:

- *Student advocates*
- *Hon. Marisa Pérez-Díaz, State Board of Education*
- *Gylon Jackson, Black Lives Matter - San Antonio*
- *La Juana Chambers Lawson, San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum*
- *(Others tba)*

Moderator: Dr. Paula Johnson, Director, IDRA EAC-South

Our panel of student advocates and educational leaders will provide policy recommendations to district decision-makers on re-opening schools in response to these uncertain times.

REGISTER NOW

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
- * How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide
- * Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively

SEE WEBINAR HUB

News

State Education Agencies Explore Family Engagement in a COVID-19 World

The COVID-19 pandemic and at-home-schooling caused families to engage with their students' education in new ways. At the same time, most schools had to pause their planned family engagement activities despite their heightened need to connect with families to support student learning.

In late May, the [IDRA EAC-South](#) held a virtual meeting with education agency leaders representing five states - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee - for a conversation about family engagement strategies during the pandemic.

We shared resources and strategies in equipping families as leaders and engaged members of the education system. We discussed resources, including [IDRA's Education CAFE model](#), as well as professional development and training for school leaders and local and state education agencies.

IDRA also presented preliminary findings from our survey of families, students, educators, and communities about their experiences with distance learning due to COVID-19. School closures created a myriad of new challenges that schools must address, including reaching disengaged students, serving families and students without internet access and online coursework, financial and economic stress upon parents and students, and providing important documents and resources in multiple languages.

The virtual convening concluded with commitments to ongoing communication and mutual learning to help state education agencies create innovative solutions to challenges that developed through the COVID-19 pandemic.

IDRA's Education CAFE model is an innovation for school-family-community collaboration. Education CAFEs are based in a community organization rather than in a single school, and their sole purpose is to collaborate with schools to improve the success of students in the community.

[LEARN MORE](#)



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.