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IDRA Launches Chief Science Officer™ Program in Texas

50 San Antonio students will serve as ambassadors to the science and innovation community



"We are going to open up new opportunities for new kids who maybe never thought they could make it this far. We are going to show them: 'You are somebody, and you will make a great impact on our future.'"

— Middle school Chief Science Officer, Alicia DeHoyos, Dwight STEM Academy, South San Antonio ISD



San Antonio, June 19, 2019 — At a gathering of technology industry and community leaders, IDRA and the Alamo STEM Ecosystem formally launched the Chief Science Officers program in San Antonio and will expand it across Texas.

The program empowers middle and school high school students to enrich school STEM culture and career awareness by bringing STEM/STEAM-related opportunities to their schools and local communities.

Following a pilot period during the 2018-19 school year, the 50 Chief Science Officers for 2019-20 will be selected or elected by their peers to serve as liaisons for STEM in their schools and in their communities.

“We’re proud to foster students’ discovery of STEM pathways and make an important global program available to Texas students,” said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. “IDRA’s research shows women and people of color are underrepresented in STEM fields. Our CSO program will amplify voices of underserved students as they advocate STEM in their schools.”

The event was held at San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT).



"Students must have a seat at the table to inform the direction of STEM initiatives that impact their families and the broader community. The CSO program is designed explicitly to accomplish this – to elevate the voices of students in STEM, especially those who do not typically have access to those opportunities."



– Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO

CSOs will support STEM programming on campuses by helping to plan field trips, host science nights, start STEM-related clubs, initiate student-led civic action projects, and bring speakers from local industries to engage students in conversations about the STEM workforce.

To prepare for the upcoming school year, IDRA is building a circle of support among local business, civic and community organizations. Opportunities include individual STEM mentors, field trip locations, meeting spaces and sponsorships. IDRA will announce the participating schools in September with a particular focus on school, student and economic diversity.

Business, community and other partners can help by providing mentors, field trip spots and funding so we can operate and expand the CSO program in Texas.



To the CSO students:

"The aptitude you have in technology is something that nobody can ever take away from you. You are leaders in your generation of what this whole city is going to look like. "

– Diane S. Sánchez,
President & CEO, San Antonio
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

To the CSO students:

"I want to thank the Chief Science Officers in this program. You are doing more than you know. You are advocates for science and technology among your peers and classmates. You are showing your classmates that they can do it too."

– Frank Almaraz, CPS Energy Chief Administrative & Business Development Officer



"Nearly 80% of future careers will require some sort of STEM skills. Employers want students who are logical thinkers, who can investigate complex issues and who are technologically, scientifically and mathematically literate. That is why the work that IDRA is doing with the CSO program is so very important."

– Dr. Raul (Rudy) A. Reyna, Alamo STEM Ecosystem Lead

The CSO program was initiated in 2015 by Arizona-based [SciTech Institute](#) and brought to San Antonio in 2018 by the Alamo STEM Ecosystem, a member of the International STEM Learning Ecosystem. The program now exists in countries from Kuwait to Mexico. CSOs in Texas will form a statewide "cabinet" to connect with peers across the state, nation and globe.

"The CSO program represents an outstanding opportunity to more formally engage students as advocates for STEM education in our community," said Dr. Raul "Rudy" A. Reyna, co-lead for the Alamo STEM Ecosystem. "This collaboration would not have happened without the STEM Learning Ecosystems, which brings together communities of practice from around the world."

With support from the SciTech Institute and the Alamo STEM Ecosystem, IDRA will train CSOs to create action plans tied to their passions, foster students' meaningful interaction with colleges and community leaders, and enable local industries to connect with students interested in STEM careers.

[See Brochure PDF](#)[Learn More at Our CSO Website](#)

The [Alamo STEM Learning Ecosystem](#) (SLE), a member of the International SLE, acts as a connector and catalyst for STEM opportunities and collaborates with industry partners in schools, science centers, libraries and beyond.

The [Intercultural Development Research Association](#) (IDRA) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to succeed in college.

[SciTech Institute](#), based in Arizona, is a conduit for collaboration among tech-oriented nonprofits, industry and academia that supports students across the globe to seek STEM-related education and career paths.