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IDRA Names 2016 José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow - Marialena Rivera

Research will focus on facilities funding across states

June 2, 2016

IDRA has named Marialena Rivera as the 2016 [José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow](#). The fellows program honors the memory of IDRA founder, [Dr. José Angel Cárdenas](#). The goal of the program is engage the nation's most promising researchers in investigating school finance solutions that secure equity and excellence for all public school students.

"Dr. José A. Cárdenas dedicated his life to improving educational opportunities for all children, leading decades-long efforts to achieve school finance equity," said Dr. María "Cuca" [Robledo Montecel](#), IDRA president. "We are so pleased to have named Marialena Rivera as our fellow to advance research that informs our work to assure fair funding and opportunity for all students across the country."

"It is an honor and a privilege to have been selected as the 2016 José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow to contribute to IDRA's tradition of conducting policy-relevant research to improve the equity of our educational system for all children and community stakeholders," Ms. Rivera said.



Marialena D. Rivera is a doctoral candidate at the University of California Berkeley's Graduate School of Education in the Policy, Organization, Measurement and Evaluation program. This fall, she will be an assistant professor in the educational leadership program at Texas State University. Her research focuses on the politics of education policy, privatization, school finance, and school leadership for school improvement. Her dissertation research explores school district debt financing and the politics of privatization. Ms. Rivera is from San Antonio and attended the University of Texas at Austin where she received a bachelor of business administration in the Business Honors Program and Marketing and a bachelor of arts in government. She earned a master of science for teachers at Pace University while teaching middle school in the Bronx, New York, and a master of public policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California Berkeley.

As IDRA's 2016 José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow, Marialena Rivera will analyze factors contributing to expanded state investment in traditional public school facilities through an equity framework. She will ultimately make policy recommendations for how successful approaches can be used to move states toward more equitable policies. IDRA has been at the forefront in supporting legislative and litigation efforts to address the insufficient funding for education, including equitable funding for instructional facilities.

IDRA's fellowship was established to focus on and fund school finance research that builds cross-disciplinary and inter-sector perspectives on equity. Fellows dedicate themselves to a period of intense study and writing in school finance, with the effort culminating in an annual symposium that includes release of the fellow's research. The paper and findings will be published in the symposium proceedings and disseminated to the education research and policymaker community throughout the country.

Dr. Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos, IDRA's inaugural José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow, presented his research findings on securing educational equity and excellence for English language learners in Texas secondary schools at IDRA's symposium held on February 2, 2015, and hosted by the Center for Mexican American Studies and Research at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio. The proceedings document is available online.

[See the ELL Symposium Proceedings Document](#)

IDRA's 2015 Annual Report - The Power of Possibility: How IDRA and Our Partners are Transforming Public Education



IDRA's 2015 Annual Report highlights the ways in which 2015 was a pivotal year for children both in terms of progress and deepening disparities. It shows how IDRA and our partners are valuing children of all backgrounds by keeping a sharp focus on educational quality and equity. We are producing research and analyses that matter and putting in place effective programs, strategies, policies and solutions to secure public education that works for all children.

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