

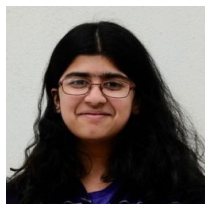
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Chief Science Officer Teens Get Creative to Promote STEM While Navigating School Closures

IDRA Texas CSOs serve as STEM ambassadors in their school communities

San Antonio, May 27, 2020 - IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer students shifted their work to create new ways to enrich a STEM culture despite school closures. This year, more than 100 teens in San Antonio and Houston served as their school's Chief Science Officers, learning leadership skills to carry out their own on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM. But school closures threatened to derail their plans. Innovative by nature, these students took up the challenge.



CSO Shreya, a 10th grader, created a Discord BellBot for her peers who are studying at home to alert them, as a school bell would, to transition to the next subject's coursework. It also gives them quick links to their teacher's online platforms and assignments and allows students to document each day's homework. Shreya attends Keystone School.



Eighth-grader CSO Elizabeth and her team at NEISD STEM Academy are **finalists in their digital inclusion project for SA Smart**: The Mayor's K-12 Smart City Challenge. The challenge asked for ideas to solve the city's 38% digital divide. Their idea is to increase the



sales tax to push funding to communities who need digital inclusion resources. Winners will be announced later this month.



CSO Ian's original action plan was to lead a STEMonstration for his youth group, which of course could not happen once COVID-19 closures began. Instead, he led a virtual STEMonstration via Zoom. He and a friend **created a DIY (do it yourself) water coagulation kit** using household materials to build a circuit board, creating an electric current that purifies polluted water. Ian is an eighth grader in Cornerstone Christian Schools Online.

In addition to her STEM work for school, **CSO Alicia** focused on her family by **teaching her little sister how to build and operate robots**. Alicia is a seventh grader at Dwight STEM Academy in South San Antonio ISD.



"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. "Our CSO program amplifies voices of underserved students as they advocate STEM in their schools."

The Chief Science Officer program empowers middle and high school students to enrich school STEM culture and career awareness by bringing STEM/STEAM-related opportunities to their schools and local communities. The Arizona-based SciTech Institute initiated this international CSO program in 2015. The Alamo STEM Ecosystem (a member of the International STEM Learning Ecosystem) brought it to San Antonio in 2018. IDRA manages the Texas expansion of the program, particularly into historically under-resourced schools and to serve low-income students, students of color and girls.

Typically, CSOs 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.

In 2019-20, the CSO program is in schools in the following school districts: **Edgewood ISD, Harlandale ISD, Houston ISD, Judson ISD, North East ISD, Northside ISD, San Antonio ISD, South San Antonio ISD and Southwest ISD.**

Learn more!

Webinar May 29: **Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School - We binar Q&A on Hosting the Texas Chief Science Officer Program** (see below)

Webinar recording: **Chief Science Officer Students Determined to Promote STEM Despite School Closures - COVID-19 School Response Webinar** - Three CSO students described how they keep innovating and creating during this time.



Student videos: **Collaborative showcase website shows CSO program highlights from this year.**

Website: **Texas Chief Science Officers Program.**

Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School -

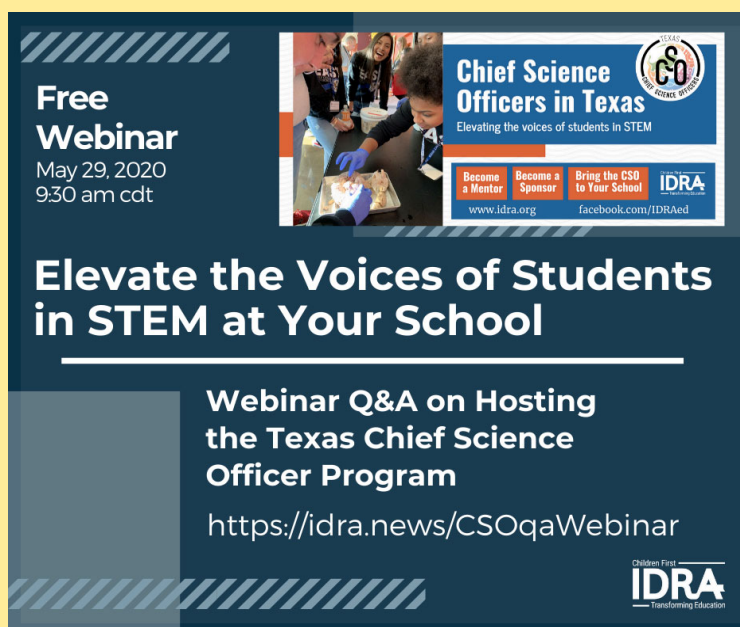
Webinar Q&A on Hosting the Texas Chief Science Officer Program

Friday, May 29, 2020 at
9:30 AM (cdt)

Are you interested to learn more about IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer Program? CSOs are students in grades 6-12 elected by their peers to be liaisons for STEM in their schools and communities. They learn leadership skills to implement on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM.

Join Dr. Stephanie Garcia, the Texas Regional Lead for the CSO Program, with your questions and coffee in hand! This is an open Q&A discussion for families, students, educators and community organizations. We would love for you to join the conversation and learn more about how to be a part of this incredible student-driven program.

REGISTER NOW



The graphic is a dark blue rectangular banner with white and yellow text. At the top left, it says 'Free Webinar' in large white font, followed by 'May 29, 2020 9:30 am cdt' in smaller white font. To the right is a small image of a student working on a project. Further right is a logo for 'Chief Science Officers in Texas' with the tagline 'Elevating the voices of students in STEM'. Below the logo are three orange buttons: 'Become a Mentor', 'Become a Sponsor', and 'Bring the CSO to Your School'. At the bottom right of the graphic is the IDRA logo with the tagline 'Children First IDRA Transforming Education'. The main title 'Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School' is written in large white font across the middle. Below the title, it says 'Webinar Q&A on Hosting the Texas Chief Science Officer Program' and provides the URL 'https://idra.news/CSOqaWebinar'.



Chief Science Officers in Texas

Elevating the voices of students in STEM



Students leading students in STEM!

CSOs are students in grades 6-12 elected by their peers to be liaisons for STEM in their schools and communities. They learn leadership skills to implement on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM.

The Arizona-based SciTech Institute initiated this international CSO program in 2015. The Alamo STEM Ecosystem (a member of the International STEM Learning Ecosystem) brought it to San Antonio in 2018. IDRA manages the Texas expansion of the program, particularly into historically under-resourced schools and to serve low-income students, students of color and girls.

Every CSO gets to experience...

Leadership Training Institute teaches networking, leadership development, verbal and written communication, and team building.

Cabinet Meetings and Community Events guide collaboration with business and civic leaders to address community challenges, improve communication and confidence, and share common experiences.

Mentorship training opportunities with STEM professionals – vetted regional leaders who help CSOs implement their ideas on campus and express their voice in the community.

Become a Mentor

Mentors serve as role models and help CSOs carry out their projects.

Become a Sponsor

Your donations help us bring the CSO program to schools and communities around the state.

Bring the Program to Your School

Support your students as they catalyze a culture of innovation!

Contact IDRA for more information: Dr. Stephanie Garcia
stephanie.garcia@idra.org • www.idra.org/services/chief-science-officers-program

With CSOs, you can...

- Enrich school STEM culture and career awareness.
- Increase student voice in STEM conversations in the community.
- Create a pipeline of diverse STEM student leaders.
- Foster communication and collaboration among students.



Powerful results!

- 87%** of CSOs reported progress in inspiring their peers with STEM.
- 95%** of CSOs expressed increased interest in a STEM career.
- 72%** of adults intend to share the program with their associates after meeting a CSO student.
- 90%** of CSOs expressed increased connection with the STEM community.



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Contact Dr. Stephanie Garcia, regional lead for the IDRA Texas CSO program, for more information about the program:
210-444-1710 * stephanie.garcia@idra.org

Curious about what bringing the CSO program to your school involves?

- ✓ Identify your school's **CSO advisor** to support CSO students and participate in monthly online meetings with the IDRA.
- ✓ Early in the school year, hold an **election for peers to select their CSOs** for the school year.
- ✓ Ensure your CSO students and advisors participate in the **Leadership Training Institute** (in September), **two cabinet meetings** during the academic year, and the **end-of-year celebration**.*
- ✓ Ensure your CSOs have access to **G-Suite tools** (Google Classroom, etc.) that are not limited to in-district communications.
- ✓ **Support CSOs with their action plan development and implementation** at your school. Ideas for action plans come from your CSO students and are led by them. Plans can include things like coordinating field trips, hosting science nights, starting STEM-related clubs, initiating student-led civic action projects, or bringing speakers from local industries to engage students in conversations about the STEM workforce.
- ✓ Provide **transportation** to and from CSO events as needed.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for **STEM professionals and CSO mentors** to visit your school.
- ✓ Ensure CSO students under the age of 18 are **supervised by an adult** at CSO events and activities.

We encourage principals to attend every CSO event, but it is not required.



Contact IDRA for more information: **Dr. Stephanie Garcia**
stephanie.garcia@idra.org • www.idra.org/services/chief-science-officers-program

Media contact: Christie L. Goodman, APR, IDRA Director of Communications,
christie.goodman@idra.org

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The Intercultural Development Research Association 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. 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.

We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.