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Transforming Education by Putting Kids First



IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: Fair & Effective Education Policy

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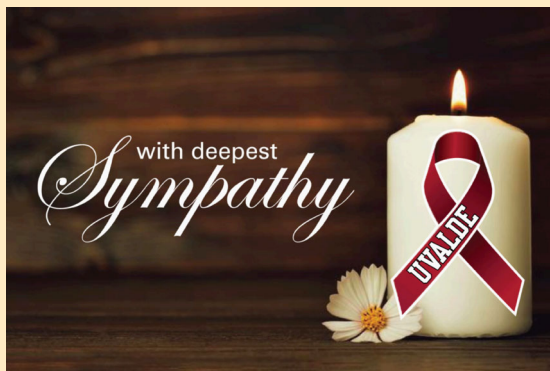
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Recent News, Videos & Podcasts

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Centering Community as We Mourn for Uvalde

The horrifying school shooting in Uvalde this week has shaken us all, in Texas and across the country. We are deeply saddened and angry for the young children, teachers, families and community whose lives have been changed in such a devastating way.



Yet again, in the wake of a tragic school shooting, some policymakers are quickly proposing strategies that we know do not make schools safer, including increasing the presence of school police, bringing more weapons into classrooms and “hardening” schools to the point that they feel more like prisons than learning environments.

We urge everyone to remember what school safety truly looks like and take meaningful steps to address gun violence across the country, ensure children and teachers have the resources and support they need in their schools and invest in strong, relationship-centered learning environments. IDRA's resources below focus on what it takes to build these environments, including after devastating violence.

[School Support in the Wake of Violence](#), webpage

IDRA's [Impact of Mass Shootings on Schools - Classnotes Podcast Episode](#) after El Paso, Parkland and Charlottesville

[Federal School Safety Commission Recommendations Could Lead to Less Safe Schools](#)

[Supporting Students in the Wake of Violence](#) – IDRA EAC-South Convening Panels in Broward County, Florida

- Communities Helping Communities – Resources and Models for Community and Student Support, featuring school leaders from the Parkland and Charlottesville communities (2 videos)
- Impact of Social Climate on Students in Schools, featuring the superintendent of an El Paso school district (1 video)

[Principles for School Safety, Privacy and Equity](#)

Support Families in Uvalde, Texas

Uvalde ISD is sharing the [Robb School Memorial Fund](#) at First State Bank of Uvalde for the families of Robb Elementary. Donations by check can be sent to 200 E Nopal Street, Uvalde, Texas 78801. Or send donations via Zelle to robbschoolmemorialfund@gmail.com.

Community Advocates Push Back as Georgia Legislature Targets Vulnerable Students

by Mikayla Arciaga, M.A.Ed.

This article provides as an overview of IDRA's work with policymakers and advocates and the results from Georgia's recent legislative session. This session saw tremendous engagement and participation among young people as they advocated for a broad, diverse curriculum. IDRA supported these students who traveled to Atlanta to testify and speak, many for the first time. IDRA also formed the Georgia Coalition Against Classroom Censorship to provide a collaborative space for all stakeholders and advocates to learn.



Though Georgia's leaders took some positive steps in the session to improving funding for public schools, the 2022 budget allocating the full amount of funds required by Georgia's Quality Basic Education formula is based on a 1985 estimate of what schools need. Additionally, legislators spent time proposing several bills to censor classroom and library materials under the guise of parental rights and transparency. The focus on these issues took time away from pertinent educational matters including a more diverse curriculum that includes African American history and policies improving education for the emergent bilingual student population.

Read: [Community Advocates Push Back as Georgia Legislature Targets Vulnerable Students](#)

Update on Texas Education Policy Priorities – What to Watch and Where to Engage for Educational Equity

by *Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., Monica Obregon, & Darlissa Villanueva*



Though the Texas Legislature convenes every other year, Texas leaders make policies that impact students all year long. This article reviews updates to four policies affecting education today.

Regarding **fair school funding**, Texas Governor Greg Abbot declared that he supports private school vouchers, signaling action in the next legislative session. These vouchers redirect public taxpayer dollars away from public schools and, despite claims that the vouchers are intended to help students with disabilities or in low-income schools, they instead widely benefit wealthy students with the resources to pay for expensive tuition.

For **college readiness and access for all students**, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recently released an updated strategic plan to address equity in postsecondary outcomes for Texas students that aims to equip 60% of Texans between the ages of 25 to 34 years old with a postsecondary credential.

In service to the issue of **excellent educational opportunities for emergent bilingual students**, the Texas Education Agency recently established a Teacher Vacancy Task Force to study and make recommendations to address teacher shortages.

Regarding the issue of **culturally-sustaining schools** and Senate Bill 3 that censors teacher and classroom conversations on racial justice, gender inclusivity and true accounts of history and current events, the Texas State Board of Education is reviewing social studies learning standards this year. Check out IDRA's [Knowledge is Power](#) eNews for updates.

[Read: Update on Texas Education Policy Priorities](#)

IDRA's Core Principles Influence Federal Advocacy

by *Morgan Craven, J.D.*

For almost 50 years, IDRA has been at the forefront of research, policy advocacy and educational training focused on building schools that center students' cultures and life experiences in teaching practices and materials. Despite significant progress, many schools still struggle, and



recent classroom censorship policies only reduce stakeholder efforts to support all students. These policies are part of larger campaigns targeting communities of color, LGBTQ+ communities, women and those with intersecting identities.

The attacks are not new: the beliefs and systems that allow for the current campaign against educational equity also shaped decades-old policies that have resulted in inequitable education in the first place.

Community-centered advocacy is central to addressing these inequities and IDRA relies on key principles of community-based advocacy that have shaped our policy recommendations at every level. These core principles include ensuring federal policymaking spaces belong to all people, listening to the valuable expertise and perspectives of students and families and that community-centered advocacy yields the best results.

Read: IDRA's Core Principles Influence Federal Advocacy

IDRA and ARISE Adelante Partner to Make Texas School Funding System More Clear to Families

by Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., & Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.



Families are strong advocates of their students' education and their public schools, but some of the most fundamental school policies exclude their input, especially because school finance policies are notably confusing and complex. To help pull back the curtain on Texas school finance, IDRA partnered with ARISE Adelante – a community-based organization that supports women and youth in the Texas Rio Grande Valley – to conduct a series of train-the-trainer sessions for volunteers.

This article describes how we worked together to make school finance information accessible and actionable. IDRA and ARISE Adelante also suggest five tips for school funding training for family advocates: use a train-the-trainer design, keep it clear and accessible, make it relatable, tell the story step-by-step, and center family advocates to guide the conversation.

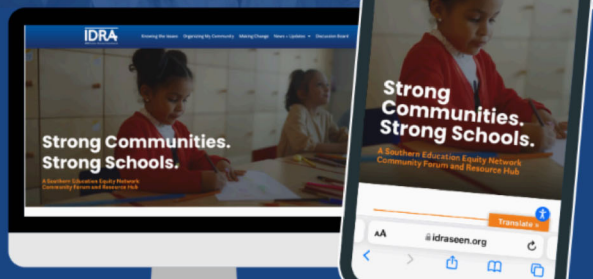
Read: IDRA and ARISE Adelante Partner to Make Texas School Funding System More Clear to Families

IDRA Southern Education Equity Network

A community forum and resource hub for advocates of strong inclusive public education

- ✓ Get advocacy how-to tools
- ✓ Share policy & action updates
- ✓ Plan actions with your group

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New Classnotes Podcast Episode



The Law in Education – Brown v Board of Ed Podcast Episode 223

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court confronted the institution of racial segregation in our public schools, and it ruled unanimously that **segregation was unconstitutional.**



Morgan Craven, J.D.



Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D.

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Recent Media Coverage

Laws restricting lessons on racism are making it hard for teachers to discuss the massacre in Buffalo, Mike Hixenbaugh, NBC News, May 18, 2022

‘It is an empty threat’ | Organization, local schools react to Gov. Abbott’s remarks on challenging Plyler v. Doe, Maria Aguilera, KVUE (ABC), May 11, 2022

High school student to serve on IDRA Youth Advisory Board, Texas Border Business, May 9, 2022

Fort Worth teachers exhausted by schools’ scattered approach to bilingual learning, Isaac Windes and Mariana Rivas, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, May 03, 2022

‘Spare the Kids’: SPLC and other advocates push to end corporal punishment in schools, Rhonda Sonnenberg, The Southern Poverty Law Center, April 29, 2022

Other News

May 26, 2022 – **IDRA Federal Education Policy – Inside! Dream Act, digital equity, youth leaders, banning corporal punishment**

May 20, 2022 – **Knowledge is Power: U.S. House Hearing Examines Political Attacks on Classroom Censorship; TX Board Considers Social Studies Standards (English) • (Español)**

May 19, 2022 – **Bilingual Literacy Materials Perfect for Summer School! Order your classroom set today!**

May 5, 2022 – **Knowledge is Power: Letters Demand Books Returned to Shelves, What is in Georgia’s Classroom Censorship Law, Student Testimony and more (English) • (Español)**

April 30, 2022 – **April 2022 Issue of the IDRA Newsletter – This edition’s focus: Culturally Sustaining Leadership**

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May 31, 2022