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Learning Goes On

A COVID-19 Resource for Education

September 9, 2020 Edition

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More resources and trainings for teachers, school administrators, families and communities are on our [Learning Goes On website](#). See [Spanish-language version](#) of this edition.

Policy Update

Federal Court Strikes Down Department of Education Rule Requiring Public School Districts to Give More Relief Funds to Private Schools

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia struck down last Friday a U.S. Department of Education rule that required many public school districts to give away more of their CARES Act emergency relief funds to private schools. The Court found that the Department's interpretation of the CARES Act "equitable services" provision "conflicts with the unambiguous text of the statute" and is, therefore, void.

The decision in [*NAACP v. DeVos*](#) applies to schools nationwide. The plaintiffs are both school districts and families, including Broward County Public Schools, Fla.; DeKalb County School District, Ga.; Denver County School District, Colo.; Pasadena Unified School District, Calif.; and Stamford Public Schools, Conn., and families with children enrolled in public schools in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.

In a [statement hailing the Court's decision](#), attorneys for the plaintiffs noted the Department's rule would have funneled "scarce public resources to private education, to the detriment of our highest need students in public schools across the country."



Cutting Public School Relief Funds to Subsidize Private Schools –

An Analysis of How the Department of Education's Equitable Services Rule Will Harm Texas Students and School Districts

By Morgan Cowen, J.D., & Roy L. Johnson, M.A.

This analysis uses data from 185 Texas school districts to determine the impact of a new rule from the U.S. Department of Education. The rule requires many public school districts across the country to spend more of their federal COVID-19 relief funds on "equitable services" for private schools, regardless of the financial need of the private school students.

The Department of Education's interpretation of the CARES Act will cost school districts in Texas more than \$38 million. This money could have been used to fund hundreds of counselors, social workers and nurses and to purchase equipment like computers, text readers or hand sanitizers. It could have been used to support remote learning needs and other critical services for students and teachers.

The rule will harm all students in public schools, particularly students of color, students from families with limited incomes, English learners, students with disabilities, and others who most need CARES Act funds. These students and their families have been denied access to essential and equitable educational opportunities for generations. They have been impacted by discriminatory policies and practices that keep their schools underfunded. More than half of the money sent to the public schools that serve these students – even as they face additional challenges of educating and providing supports for the needs and health services necessary – further exacerbates the inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic.

Based on its analysis, IDRA recommends the following:

- Families, students, educators and all other advocates who care about the needs of students in public schools should submit a comment to the Department of Education urging it to rescind the rule that requires more money away from public schools and toward private schools. Comments can be submitted online [here](#) and must be submitted by July 22, 2020.

Interfaith Development Research Association

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A coalition of Texas-focused educational equity organizations submitted an amicus brief in the lawsuit, citing IDRA's research: [Cutting Public School Funds to Subsidize Private Schools](#). The amicus brief stresses that the Department's rule would divert those much-needed resources to private schools, regardless of their students' family income. In Texas, the rule would have required 185 public school districts to set aside an additional \$38.7 million in relief funds to private schools within their district boundaries.

Public schools need those relief funds (and more) to ensure safe and supportive schools for all students. Schools, families and students across the country have identified numerous needs during COVID-19, including for resources to address learning loss during school closures, narrow the digital divide, and improve important connections between schools and communities.

Every bit of relief funding is particularly important in school districts that were already struggling to serve students in families, like in Texas, where a large portion of federal funds are not being used for new COVID-19 costs, but to replace a portion of the state's share of per-pupil attendance funds to which school districts are entitled. While many challenges to equitable funding

persist, the Court's decision last week ensures public school districts will be able to use more critical relief funds for their students.

[Look up how much money each Texas school district would have lost \(among those affected\).](#)

Big Give Ends Tomorrow Night!

GIVE
TO CHILDREN.

September 10, 2020



idra.news/BigGive2020



Instructional Strategies

Learner-Centered Digital Badging with Distance Learning

Digital badging represents a skill or accomplishment someone attains through formal or informal educational experiences. A teacher, for example, can create digital badges for students to earn in their class, and students can show off their badges as milestones they have achieved in their course.



In addition, museums can create digital badges for students to earn after they complete a series of activities or trainings the museum has designed. Outside of the classroom experience, digital badges can be displayed on a student's LinkedIn or Tallo profile so future employers, colleges and universities can view the students' skills and accomplishments (much like they would on a resume).

Recognition and Reward for Teachers and Students

Naturally, people tend to learn and perform when they are valued for what they do, their efforts are recognized and rewarded for their time and efforts. Digital badging in education enables the learner, whether it be an educator or a student, to learn and receive a badge for their achievements.

Digital badging in education has traditionally been district-led and teacher-centered, meaning district administrators determine the technology skills teachers should learn for effective technology classroom integration and then outline the digital tasks a teacher must complete to earn each badge. This has recently expanded to much broader uses and have been adapted for all 21st century learners.

Both teachers and students can benefit from digital badges, especially during this time. As the pandemic forces us to work online, we all must expand our working knowledge of multiple software applications and virtual learning platforms. Digital badging offers opportunities for both teachers and students to demonstrate ongoing development and share their accomplishments in a digital portfolio.

Digital badging, when done well, is a learner-centered endeavor. Students can pick and choose the resources they want to learn more about. This type of learner-centered approach enables them to pursue their interests. They can learn at their own pace while also creating a digital artifact that signifies that the learning has occurred.

Using Digital Badging During A Pandemic

Whether in or outside the classroom, educators can create meaningful and challenging experiences for students to engage in virtually. A great example is how the San Antonio STEAM Council is creating a citywide effort for all students to earn digital badges through a platform called FutureReadySA.org. The goal is for students to expand their skills online and earn badges from school districts, non-profit organizations and other institutions across the city. All San Antonio students can create a free account and begin earning digital badges by sharpening their workforce skills or diving deep into learning any content that interests them. (See [Future Ready SA's Digital Badging 101](#) flier created by Up Partnership).

How Teachers Can Earn Digital Badges

Most educators earn digital badges from a credentialing administrator, such as their school district curriculum or technology department; professional development institutions, such as TCEA (Texas Computer Education Association); education agency; local educational service center (in Texas); or actual software or application training sites. FlipGrid and other virtual

platforms, for example, may offer micro-credentialing and other professional development via digital badging.

How Students Can Earn Digital Badges

Educators do not need to rely on any outside organization to offer digital badges to their students. Teachers can easily create digital badges on Google Docs and upload these awards via Google Classroom or whichever learning management system they are using this school year. Students and teachers can also use Badgr.com, which is a free and easy to use digital badge creation tool.

Digital Badge Boards with ...



See this short tutorial on how to create a digital badge board in the context of a social studies class. (04:30 min)



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Webinars On-Demand



IDRA School Reopening Webinar Series
free webinars

<https://idra.news/WebinarSeries>

Free 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

Student Perspectives on a Changing School Climate

Nurturing Students' Hearts and Minds

Partnering with Families to Reopen and Reimagine Schools

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

Youth Tech Mentors Bridge Schools and Families - Creative Community Responses to COVID-19

The Power Schools Bring to the Last Days of the 2020 Census - How Schools Can Help their Communities Get Counted

[See Webinar Hub](#)

Free Webinars on Education for Immigrant Families

IDRA and the Consulate General of Mexico in San Antonio have been partnering to help Mexican and Mexican American families navigate the U.S. education system and learn about important educational opportunities in both countries.

But when the consulate closed due to the COVID-19 crisis, IDRA's Ventanilla de Orientación Educativa (VOE) in San Antonio launched a portal with bilingual materials and videos for families.



Topics in English

- Rights of Immigrant Students (PreK-12) (10 min.)
- Navigating the U.S. K-12 Education System (26 min.)
- College Financial Aid Opportunities for Immigrant Students (15 min.)
- Adult & Community Education Opportunities in Spanish (15 min.)
- Educational Opportunities in Mexico for Nationals Living in Both Countries (20 min.)

Topics in Spanish

- Derechos de los estudiantes inmigrantes (PreK-12) (11.5 minutos)
- Navegando por el sistema educativo de EE. UU. K-12 (31 minutos)
- Oportunidades de ayuda financiera universitaria para estudiantes inmigrantes (20 minutos)
- Oportunidades de educación comunitaria y para adultos en español (18 minutos)
- Oportunidades educativas en México para nacionales que viven en ambos países (22 minutos)

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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.

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.