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This month's focus: Student Voice



"Students must have a seat at the table to inform the direction of initiatives that impact them, their families and the broader community."

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

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Student Voice

Steps for Helping Students Become Activists - A Teen's Advice

by *Melivia Mujia*

Recent high school graduate Melivia Mujia shares her experience as a high school student and finding her own voice as an activist confronting institutional injustice.



When Melivia and her peers saw issues in their schools, such as LGBTQ mistreatment and student depression, they took it upon themselves to raise awareness of these matters and helped the adults in their schools confront their prejudices and improve conditions for the good of their students.

Through the efforts of passionate young student leaders like Melivia, real change can occur. Activism allows students to hone their academic skills and apply them in a real-life context where they see firsthand the positive impact of their efforts.

[See Infographic](#)

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Building a STEM Identity through the Chief Science Officer Program

by *Lexis Ratto & Kelly O'Kane*

Many young students let go of their STEM interests because they do not identify with the degrees and careers they see as associated with STEM fields. Though a student's STEM identity is fragile, the curiosity behind STEM pursuits has a much broader application centered around innovation.

The Chief Science Officer (CSO) program helps increase STEM interest for middle and high schoolers, especially those who are not involved in traditional STEM programs. High school students Lexis Ratto and Kelly O'Kane were San Antonio's first Chief Science Officers and were instrumental in bringing this program to San Antonio through the Alamo STEM Ecosystem.



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The Day I Taught My High School Peers

by *Alyssa Diaz*

Recent high school graduate Alyssa Diaz takes readers through her experience designing and teaching a lesson to fellow high school students during her senior year. She drew from her knowledge of Chicano literature and was excited to fill in the gaps she saw in the standard curriculum.

Through considerations of the content, her class, and the type of material that would engage them, Alyssa had a rewarding experience that solidified her belief that students want to engage with their own culture and heritage.



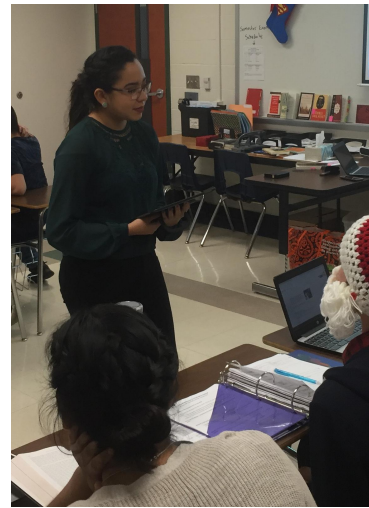
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How Student-Led Lessons Impacted My Understanding of School

by *Daniela Herrejon*

Recent graduate Daniela Herrejon provides insights from her own student-led lessons and how the experience greatly enhanced her investment in education. Being involved in a

learning community with teachers opened dialog about how she and her peers want to learn. This built greater trust between students and teachers and inspired Daniela's passion for learning and her new interest in teaching.



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High School Tutor Learns While Tutoring Others

by Anahi Ortiz

Anahi Ortiz details her experiences with IDRA's Valued Youth Partnership, changing how she viewed education and making connections with other points of views through her tutees. Through helping her tutee whose attitude toward learning was similar to her own as a child, Anahi was able to connect to her own history as a student and grew as both a tutor and lifelong learner.



Anahi Ortiz received first place in IDRA's Valued Youth Partnership essay contest. [See other winning essays online.](#)

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Students as Co-Collaborators in Teaching & Learning - Advice from the Field

Andres López, a teacher at Stevens High School in San Antonio and winner of the statewide 2019 Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award, offers advice to educators.

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Available now free!

The IDRA EAC-South's Family Engagement Web-based Technical Assistance Package is designed to provide educators tools for embracing what, for many, is a new vision for engaging with families and community members.

- **Five learning chapters with videos**
- **Literature review**
- **Articles**
- **Podcasts**



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Mexican American Studies - IDRA Services



IDRA provides training that supports educators in offering Mexican American Studies in public schools. Our professional development covers a range of topics for all grades.

Topics can include the teaching of content-specific MAS courses and/or tools educators can use to incorporate cultural sustainability into any curriculum.

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Infographics on Serving Immigrant Students and Families

10 Strategies
for How Schools Should Respond to
Help Children Impacted by ICE Raids

- 1 Provide trauma-informed care**
Provide trauma-informed care and services for students who experience or may experience trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Ensure educators and staff are appropriately trained to recognize and respond to students' needs.
- 2 Provide counseling support**
Have counselors, social workers and other professionals available to assist students, families and staff. These professionals can respond directly to individual needs and can help to create a safe and positive school climate for everyone in a campus community.
- 3 Provide waiting space**
Create a safe space, like a school gym, where students and families can wait if a parent is detained.
- 4 Identify bilingual liaisons**
Identify a bilingual parent liaison or family liaison to support students and families.
- 5 Connect with community**
Connect with local community-based organizations that have expertise and resources. Distribute and post IDRA's alert on immigrant student rights "Welcoming Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools."
- 6 Obstruct the school-to-deportation pipeline**
Obstruct - do not facilitate - the school-to-deportation pipeline. Ensure police officers are not present on campus unnecessarily in this case on immigrant students and discourage families from being on campus. Do not involve law enforcement routinely or enforce criminal penalties against students that might trigger ICE intervention. Review codes of conduct to ensure they do not contain penalties or disciplinary procedures related to immigration status or English proficiency.
- 7 Affirm safe spaces**
Affirmatively have and post a statement that makes it clear that the district is a safe space for families. Many school districts have reaffirmed their policies to protect students' rights in light of uncertainty regarding federal immigration enforcement activities in their schools. Some districts have issued statements affirming the district's mission to ensure all students have a safe and positive learning environment and affirming guidance to school personnel on how to, for example, respond to requests from ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents for data or access to their campus.
- 8 Help students who become homeless**
Have the district's " McKinney-Vento" policy ensure that any students who become homeless as a result of a raid are given supports and legal protections afforded by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- 9 Provide public resources**
Make general public resources available to families. For example, www.immigration.gov has information about non-profit legal service organizations by state.
- 10 Equip school staff**
Equip school staff with training, resources and supports. School leaders have an important role in actively affirming the welcoming environment they intend to maintain. All staff should understand and practice school policies and procedures for collecting student information, consented to by the communities they serve, and measures for communicating with students' families.

When U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) conducts raids in a community, students are deeply affected. Even the threat of a raid or news of one in another part of the country can have profound lasting effects. These 10 strategies help educators serving students affected by ICE raids.

Get more info and resources, including IDRA's School Opening Alert Flier & eBook >>>
• eBook on Immigrant Students' Rights >>>
• Infographic: "Welcoming Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools" >>>
www.idra.org/IDRAWelcome

Families should know:

- The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools from providing any outside agency including ICE with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status.
- ICE agents are to refrain from enforcement actions at certain sensitive locations, which include schools or districts in K-12 care settings.
- Schools should not ask for identifying status when enrolling students or interacting with families.
- All students, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to a free public education under U.S. Supreme Court precedent.

Many school districts have reaffirmed their policies to protect students' rights in light of uncertainty regarding federal immigration enforcement activities in their schools. Some districts have issued statements affirming the district's mission to ensure all students have a safe and positive learning environment and affirming guidance to school personnel on how to, for example, respond to requests from ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents for data or access to their campus.

See samples in IDRA's resource "School Districts Plan Resolutions on Responding to ICE" >>>
www.idra.org/IDRAWelcome

Education and other adults in the school need to search for students who are being harassed or isolated by other students because of their status or perceived immigration status or that of their family.

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SEE BILINGUAL INFOGRAPHIC

Welcoming Immigrant Students in School

Immigrant students are guaranteed access to free public education by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Certain procedures must be followed when registering undocumented immigrant children (and those whose parents are undocumented) in school to avoid violation of their civil rights as outlined in the Plyler vs. Doe decision.

- Public schools cannot deny admission to a student on the basis of undocumented status.
- Public schools cannot require students or parents to disclose their immigration status.
- Public schools cannot ask students or parents questions intended to expose their undocumented status.
- Public schools cannot require social security numbers from students or parents.
- Public schools cannot demand that parents produce driver's licenses or other identification documents that are not required.
- Public schools cannot engage in any practices that "chill" or hinder the right of access to school.

All children are **required** under state laws to attend school until they reach a mandated age.

School personnel have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents are to refrain from enforcement actions at certain sensitive locations, which include schools, as detailed in ICE's own policies.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act prohibits schools from providing any outside agency (including ICE) with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status.

The only exception is if an agency gets a court order (subpoena) that parents can then challenge.

What schools can do...

- Focus on teaching all students.
- Pro-actively show parents that their children are welcome.
- Ensure teachers and staff are properly trained about protecting the rights of children and on culturally competency.
- Communicate with parents in their language.
- Share information about resources for students, families and educators in English and other languages at the school.

Review all of your enrollment and registration documents (including forms, websites, and communications with parents) to be clear that the provision of the child's social security number, birth certificates, etc., is voluntary, and that not providing such information will not bar a child's enrollment.

Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program for a student need only state on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Get more info and resources, including IDRA's School Opening Alert Flier & eBook. <https://idra.news/IDRAWelcome>

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The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring educational opportunity for every child. 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.

