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Transforming Education by Putting Kids First



IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: Student Voice

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How Can We Address a Problem that We Can't Even Discuss in School?

Excerpt from Testimony Against SB 3 Presented to the Texas Senate State Affairs Committee

by Santiago Hernandez

Last month, Santiago Hernandez traveled to Austin to deliver his testimony against Senate Bill 3, which was proposed as a companion to the classroom censorship bill, HB 3979, that was passed in the spring. He implores the Texas Senate to vote no on SB3 to allow future generations of young Texans to have open and honest discussions about the country's history.



"All students deserve to have discussions around race, gender discrimination and current events as they learn what it means to be a member of our democracy."

– Santiago Hernandez

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Don't Crush Our Craving to Talk about Our Ancestors

Excerpt from Testimony Against SB 3 Presented to the Texas Senate State Affairs Committee

by Alison Fernandez

Alison Fernandez provided her testimony against Senate Bill 3 as well, emphasizing that students of color want to see themselves



reflected in the curriculum and to deepen the knowledge of their roots within U.S. history. Prohibiting teachers from speaking the truth only perpetuates an environment of division and racism that leaves historical conflicts and injustices unsolved and forgotten.

"I ask you all not to let history repeat itself, to no longer crush our craving to talk about our ancestors, and to simply let students be independent, critical thinkers. We can't change the past, but we can rewrite the future."

– Alison Fernandez

Keep Reading



Students testify against the classroom censorship bill (SB 3)

"Our Cultures Should Not be Forgotten"

"Every Student Deserves to be Part of Texas History"

"Repressed Knowledge Does Not Empower Texas Students"

See Videos

<https://idra.news/StTestimonySB3>

IDRA www.idra.org @IDRAedu

See our video gallery of students testifying against classroom censorship

See Video Gallery

Get information on the Texas HB 3979 law, the proposed SB 3 and advocacy tools

Student Researchers Report on Struggles their Peers Face During COVID-19

by Jacqueline Campos, Monica Cruz, Alejo Peña Soto, Fatimah Rasul & Ana Ramón

During the summer and fall semesters of 2020, four high school and college students led a participatory action research project to collect insights from their peers on the impact of COVID-19 and how it worsened or changed the challenges young students face.



Key findings indicate that three out of four students were struggling with mental wellness issues as the 2020-21 school year began. Students also carried additional burdens due to virtual learning, and they faced pressure

to maintain their education while attending to responsibilities outside of the classroom.



"I am excited to be a part of this initiative, as I believe it will allow for student-led change within our community."

– Jacqueline Campos

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Chief Science Officers Encourage STEM and a Healthy State of Mind

by Owen Balagia & Reagan Lindsey

This article describes the experiences of Owen Balagia and Reagan Lindsey, two Chief Science Officers (CSOs) during the COVID-19 pandemic. CSOs are students in grades 6-12 who serve as liaisons for STEM in their schools and communities. In addition to providing STEM education to their peers in the form of videos, Owen and Reagan also prioritized talking about strategies for mental wellness and coping during this separation from the classroom.



"We learned that STEM career fields are full of amazing people who are out there saving lives and making the world a safer place."

– Owen Balagia & Reagan Lindsey

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Leading a STEMonstraton on Water Purification

by Landon Villarreal

Chief Science Officer Landon Villarreal describes his experience with remote learning while providing a lesson in water purification through the use of electrocoagulation. Even though some students were attending school virtually due to COVID-19, Landon's CSO project to encourage STEM made it possible for students to experience the process of electrocoagulation in a fun and interactive way.



"When deciding how to present our STEMonstration, the main challenge we faced was trying to ensure that all students could be reached in our activity due to a large portion being virtual at the time."

– Landon Villarreal

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Learn More about the Texas Chief Science Officer Program & How to Bring it to Your School



Our Experiences Make Us Who We Are

by *Santiago Sosa*

Santiago Sosa describes his commitment to education developed through his participation in the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership program. His strong desire to read was supported by his third-grade teacher at a time when he thought his dyslexia would hold him back, and as a tutor it is his mission to encourage his tutee to succeed despite setbacks and frustration.



"I learned that teachers are the ones who can help you see your true value. It also prepared me to work with my tutee, to show him that there are people who care, and that's what is important in life."

– Santiago Sosa

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Bring the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership to your school!

Now more than ever, reconnecting with students is critical. IDRA can help!

The IDRA Valued Youth Partnership provides leadership experiences for students across the country. It increases students' connectedness, academic achievement, self-efficacy and self-esteem by placing students in leadership positions.



During this new year, the Valued Youth Partnership's key philosophy of valuing youth's gifts and developing social skills can provide leadership experiences for students who most need engagement as schools adapt.

See this powerful dropout prevention & youth leadership program in action!

www.idra.org/valued-youth



Proven Strategies for Re-engaging Students Who Need You the Most

See eBook

Recent News

Media Coverage in early August

[Texas Senate committee advances bill aimed at tackling 'critical race theory,'](#) by Talia Richman, Dallas Morning-News, August 10, 2021

[Critical Race Theory](#), Nightline, August 9, 2021

Op-ed: GW should explore blended classroom models, by Evan Wolf, The GW Hatchet, August 6, 2021

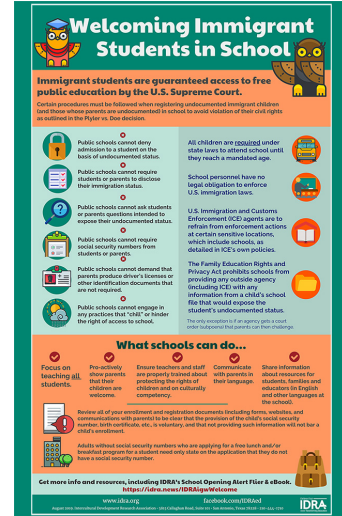
Consultant for Fund Georgia’s Future, by Alex Welch, Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, August 2, 2021

Other News

School Opening Alert – Immigrant Students’ Rights to Attend Public Schools – Welcoming Immigrant Students • (Español), August 19, 2021

Ambassador of Mexico, IDRA Celebrate Donation of Over 100 Laptops to San Antonio Students • (Español), August 18, 2021

Bring the Texas Chief Science Officers Program to Your School!, August 15, 2021



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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.

