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Honoring Black Lives and Contributions During Black History Month

Resources for Supporting Black students

February is Black History Month! While we must celebrate the lives of Black people every day, we believe it is important to also take time during Black History Month to recognize the rich and complex history, hard-won triumphs, and persistent challenges faced by Black people.

We especially want to highlight ways to support Black students, who continue to face systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing excellent and equitable schools.

Rooted in the nation's second generation of civil rights almost five decades ago, IDRA has remained committed to achieving excellent, equitable schooling

for diverse students in our pioneering style that intersects research, policy, practice and community engagement. We're happy to share news and resources with you as we kick off this special month.

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New Resource:

Understanding and Addressing Racial Trauma and Supporting Black Students in Schools

Students, teachers, school staff and families can all experience trauma related to a long history of racial injustice in the United States and our education system. Recent events, including violence against and the mistreatment of Black communities, protests against such violence and mistreatment, and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, can highlight and exacerbate the effects of systemic discrimination.

It is critical for schools to prepare adults to recognize, understand and address racial trauma in a healthy and non-punitive way. Our new resource explains the particular history of racial trauma in the Black community, how this trauma may show up in schools, and how schools must prepare to support all students and adults in their community.

[Understanding and Addressing Racial Trauma and Supporting Black Students in Schools](#) was developed in collaboration with the [Excellence and Advancement](#)



Understanding and Addressing Racial Trauma and Supporting Black Students in Schools

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It is critical for schools to prepare adults to recognize, understand and address racial trauma in a healthy and non-punitive way. This document explains the particular history of racial trauma in the Black community, how this trauma may show up in schools, and how schools must prepare to support all students and adults in their community.

These resources were developed in collaboration with the [Excellence and Advancement Foundation](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming how communities combat the school-to-prison pipeline in central Texas. For more information about training and supports for schools, school districts and other groups please check out and contact the [IDRA BlackStars](#).

A History of Collective Racial Trauma

The term "collective racial trauma" describes the large-scale traumatic impact of a history of discriminatory treatment of communities of color. Many Black people in the United States see and feel the impacts of systemic racism and trauma in their communities and schools every day.

The brutal process of capturing free Africans, transporting them to Europe, the United States, South and Central America, the West Indies and other countries to enslave them through the transatlantic slave trade is regarded as one of the greatest forms of human trauma. The captured Africans were bound and crammed together for weeks covered in their own

"Teachers are quick to discipline - a lunch detention for talking back when I say I wasn't the one talking. I wasn't talking White kids do it, and they get a warning. It's easier for teachers to have bias because it isn't much diversity. It causes a lot of frustration."
- 14-year-old student

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EXCELLENCE
& ADVANCEMENT
FOUNDATION

Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming how communities combat the school-to-prison pipeline. The organization assists schools, justice systems, organizations and corporations with critical, transformative and restorative solutions to culture, race, school discipline and incarceration.

For more information about training and supports for schools, school districts and other groups contact the [IDRA EAC-South](#).

See Policy Brief (PDF)

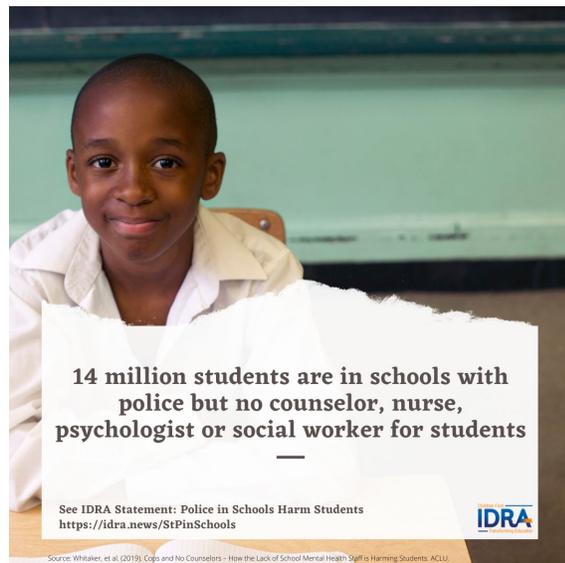
New IDRA Statement

Police in Schools Harm Students

IDRA Condemns Excessive Police Violence in Osceola County, Florida, and Calls for Supporting Black Students in Schools

Like others, IDRA staff watched in horror and revulsion the video of yet [another student experiencing violence at the hands of police](#), this time in Osceola County, Florida. Unfortunately, these incidents are far too common in schools, and often Black students are on the receiving end of these despicable acts.

IDRA condemns in the strongest possible terms the police actions depicted in the Osceola County video. All officers involved in this incident should be removed from their positions and barred from working with students in the future.



Further, we condemn all police violence that occurs against young people, including against Black children, across the country. One of the most recent events involved a [9-year-old girl who was in crisis and was then handcuffed and pepper-sprayed by police officers](#) in Rochester, New York. This violence is symptomatic of larger, systemic racial justice issues that manifest in communities, including in schools.

When asked about the student's well-being by reporters at the news conference about the incident, Osceola County Sheriff Marcos López stated that the "juvenile is fine." We refuse to believe that this is true, for this student and for all Black students who are brutalized by police at school. Black students are not "fine" when thrown to the ground with their hands behind their back and their heads bouncing off concrete. Black students are not "fine" when

witnessing their peers brutalized while they are forced to stand by powerless and watch. Black students are not “fine” when their schools are over-policed and over-surveilled in contrast to schools in non-Black neighborhoods.

None of this can remotely be characterized as “fine.”

Therefore, IDRA calls on education leaders everywhere to prevent these traumatic experiences from occurring by radically shifting the relationship that schools have with law enforcement.

Keep Reading



Culturally-Sustaining Curriculum

This year, the [IDRA EAC-South](#) assisted the [Virginia Commission on African American History Education](#) as it prepared to revise curriculum standards and teacher training to the state’s history courses better reflect the contributions of Black people.

We also [testified](#) as the Texas State Board of Education considered (and approved) the first African American Studies course in the state curriculum. IDRA provides [training and customized technical assistance](#) that supports educators in offering African American Studies courses in public schools.

See our [video gallery](#) featuring student testimony for African American Studies presented before the Texas State Board of Education.



Testimony Highlights by Multiple Students



Testimony by Earl Williams



Testimony by Quardasha Mitchell

New Resource:

A Black Student-Focused Policy Agenda for States

While the policy recommendations in this agenda would certainly be beneficial for all students, they are designed in this brief to focus on the policies and practices that limit or expand opportunities for Black students in particular. See our policy agenda for guidance in the following areas:

- Strategies for Building Safe and Welcoming Schools Free from Harmful Discipline and Policing Practices
- Protecting Funding for Schools During and After COVID-19
- Expanding Access for Emergent Bilingual Students and Bilingual Education
- Building School District Health
- Ensuring Access and Success in College

For more information about implementing these changes, contact Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement at morgan.craven@idra.org or Terrence Wilson, J.D., IDRA regional director of policy and community engagement at terrence.wilson@idra.org.



Policy Recommendations to Improve Schools for Black Students

While the policy recommendations below would certainly be beneficial for all students, they are designed to target the policies and practices that limit or expand opportunities for Black students in particular. For more information about implementing these changes, contact Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement at morgan.craven@idra.org or Terrence Wilson, J.D., IDRA regional director of policy and community engagement at terrence.wilson@idra.org.

Strategies for Building Safe and Welcoming Schools Free from Harmful Discipline and Policing Practices

Prohibit the presence of police officers inside school buildings. Police officers do not create safer environments in schools and actually make many students and teachers feel less safe. Yet, they are still allowed inside school buildings, exposing students to potentially harmful interactions. This is especially true for Black students and students with disabilities, who are disproportionately arrested, ticketed and referred to juvenile probation for school-based behaviors. State laws must prohibit the presence of police officers in schools, and school districts should instead invest resources in the people and practices that are proven to help to create safe and supportive school climates.

Prohibit the use of tasers, pepper spray and other harmful use of force tactics in schools. Even though these weapons are prohibited in many other spaces, they can still be used in schools and are used disproportionately against Black students. Students, including bystanders, are harmed in many ways when these weapons are used.

Require that schools meet the recommended student-to-mental health professional ratios (including counselors and social workers). Diverse, well-trained mental and behavioral health professionals can help to create safe, supportive schools where the underlying needs of students and adults are addressed, rather than punished. This is especially critical as students and adults are returning to classrooms having endured trauma during and after the pandemic.

Adopt the CROWN Act and include prohibitions on punishments (like suspensions) for dress code violations, which can disproportionately target Black students and girls and push them out of their classrooms.

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[See Recommendations \(PDF\)](#)

Every Sunday in February!

Altheria's Read-Alouds

IDRA's Education Policy Fellow,
Dr. Altheria Caldera will read
some of her favorite Black
history-related children's books!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

EVERY SUNDAY IN FEB | NOON-1 CST

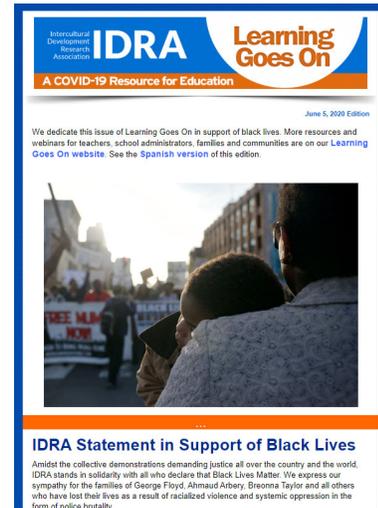
Children and families are welcome to listen as IDRA Education Policy Fellow, Dr. Altheria Caldera will read some of her favorite Black history-related children's books!

Email her at altheriacaldera@icloud.com for the Zoom link.

IDRA Statement in Support of Black Lives

See IDRA's [statement](#) released in a special June 2020 issue of Learning Goes On dedicated in support of Black lives ([en Español](#)).

"Amidst the collective demonstrations demanding justice all over the country and the world, IDRA stands in solidarity with all who declare that Black Lives Matter. We express our sympathy for the families of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and all others who have lost their lives as a result of racialized violence and systemic oppression in the form of police brutality."



IDRA offers [resources online to assist school districts](#) that choose to invest in strategies that create safe and supportive schools for all students and move away from school policing and other harmful approaches.



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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.