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## Meet Our New Staff Members!

September 13, 2021

We're excited to introduce you to four new IDRA staff members! We also have some positions and consultancies open. Scroll down for details.

### **Lizdelia Piñón, Ed.D.**

#### **Education Associate**

**Lizdelia Piñón, Ed.D.**, brings more than 20 years of experience in bilingual and ESL education in both K-12 as well as higher education. She has worked as a bilingual/ESL teacher, university instructor and graduate research assistant in education. Her areas of expertise include bilingual education, ESL (both K-12 and adult learning) programs and educational implementation.

Liz earned her doctorate of education in educational leadership from Texas Christian University. Her dissertation focused on implementation of translanguaging. While at TCU, she was an instructor for

undergraduate courses in the College of Education and the Intensive English Program. In this role, she trained in-service and pre-service teachers to implement equitable teaching and learning practices within TESOL curriculum and instruction.

At IDRA, Liz provides professional development and technical assistance to schools across the nation on effective bilingual education for all students. She designs and delivers interactive training that gives teachers tools for increasing student achievement in bilingual education. She also coordinates service delivery to schools across the U.S. South to ensure all students receive an excellent and equitable education, regardless of their national origin, native language or immigration status.



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## Thomas Marshall III

### Policy Communications Strategist

**Thomas Marshall III** first joined the IDRA team as part of the inaugural cohort of IDRA Education Policy Fellows. During his fellowship in the fall of 2020 through summer 2021, he worked on digital communications, broadband Internet access for students, and student and family engagement. In IDRA's new policy communications strategist position, he helps coordinate IDRA's Southern Education Equity Network communications, legislative and coalition communications, as well as media relations.

Thomas has a bachelor of arts in English with a minor in youth development studies. He is a second-year master's student in the University of Houston Education and Policy Studies program, studying higher education. His master's thesis will explore the perceptions of student loan debt for Black students.

Thomas' education journey began in the predominantly Black Title I schools of Columbia, South Carolina, where he is originally from. At Clemson University, he worked with a college access program with young men of color ranging from first-year students to seniors in high school, led Black student equity initiatives, and served as a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation intern in Washington, D.C. He also served as a congressional intern for Rep. Val Demings, where he researched education issues extensively within her district.



Connect with Thomas on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn!](#)

## Irene Gómez, Ed.M.

### Research Engagement Strategist

**Ms. Irene Gómez** first joined the IDRA team as a research fellow while completing her master's degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. During her fellowship and graduate studies, she worked to center Black communities in K-12 Mexican American and Latino Studies and across curricula.

As a full-time staff member at IDRA, Irene is excited to continue supporting young people through student-led and student-centered research to foster the collective futures of which they dream. She coordinates research initiatives across the organization. Key parts of her portfolio include youth-led movements and education justice in the U.S. South, as she leads IDRA's training and development for K-12 ethnic studies and LGBTQ student support.



At the University of Texas at Austin, Irene collaborated closely with immigrant, refugee and asylee communities, Title I schools and first-in-family college students as a bilingual writing coach and volunteer coordinator. As a research assistant for three university-affiliated centers, she contributed to and conducted mixed-method studies on ethnic and racial equity measures in education. After graduating from the University of Texas with a bachelor's in sociology, Irene's time as a congressional fellow and education professional deepened her commitment to supporting critically conscious and culturally-sustaining classrooms.

## Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz, M.Ed.

### Research Analyst

**Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz, M.Ed.**, previously served with IDRA as an executive research and evaluation intern and as an Education Policy Fellow. She now designs and conducts quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation that inform educational practice and policy. She works cross-functionally to deliver timely formative and summative evaluations of education and demographic data to support the work of IDRA and our projects and initiatives.

Christina is currently a doctoral student in applied demography at the University of Texas at San Antonio, where she conducts research on educational inequities and health disparities. She earned her master's in educational psychology, with a specialization in quantitative methods, from the University of Texas at Austin in 2021. Prior to coming to IDRA, Christina worked in education for six years as a university-level peer mentor, student tutor, substitute teacher



with Northside ISD and graduate teaching assistant in statistics at the University of Texas at Austin.

As a fellow in the inaugural cohort of IDRA's Education Policy Fellows program, Christina led mixed-methods research on the digital divide in Texas – a longstanding, systemic issue that made a dramatic impact on schools' engagement of students and their families during the COVID-19-pandemic.

Connect with Christina on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!

## Available Positions

IDRA also has positions and consultancies open. Learn more below.

- [Chief Legal Analyst](#)
- [IDRA EAC-South Consultants](#)
- [Grant Writer Consultant](#)
- [Georgia Education Policy Fellow 2021](#) - Application deadline: September 30, 2021

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IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

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