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May 1, 2020 Edition



Across the country, elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools have closed as part of the effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Each week, IDRA issues an update on the impact of COVID-19-related policies on schools, students and families.

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

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## Policy Update

### **Family and Community Input Needed for COVID-19 Relief Funds**

**Please fill out our survey below on student and family needs!**

Family and community input on COVID-19 CARES Act relief funds is not only needed so the federal government spends taxpayer dollars on those who need it most, such input is required by law. States and districts receiving these funds are required\* to provide opportunities for families to participate in the planning for and operation of federally-funded programs.

The U.S. Department of Education grant applications through the **Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund** and the **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund** require that states sign assurances that they are meeting requirements to gather community input. However, the department does not require applicants to describe how this will occur.

Federal law requiring community input codifies what we have long known: families possess knowledge about the needs of their communities and the solutions that best address those needs. They must have a role in crafting the educational policies, programs and practices that impact their schools, especially during this time when emergency needs must be addressed quickly and efficiently.

In particular, we must ensure authentic engagement and participation of families of color, families whose home language is not English, those living in poverty or experiencing homelessness, families of students with disabilities, and others disproportionately impacted by educational inequities.

**IDRA and partner organizations have urged**, and will continue to urge, local and state agencies to convene regular stakeholder meetings to ensure families, advocates and others are involved in planning immediate- and long-term responses to the educational inequities exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic.

Community-based organizations, schools and families that want to learn more about IDRA's evidence-based approach to family leadership in education can find information on web-based technical assistance on the IDRA website.

**We need your help! To ensure strong community partnership in our work, please take a moment to fill out a survey, linked below.**



**Parent Survey**

**Student Survey**

**Educator Survey**

**General Survey**

\*The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) governs how certain federal funds can be spent. This includes the federal COVID-19 CARES Act relief funds that the U.S. Department of Education is distributing to states and other entities. GEPA outlines key requirements for agencies that receive

federal funds, including rules for monitoring and accounting for use of funds, investing in best practices, and ensuring equitable participation in programming.

GEPA also requires that education agencies provide opportunities for organizations, interest groups and impacted individuals - including families - to participate in the planning and operation of federally-funded programs. Specifically, the law requires states and education agencies to "provide reasonable opportunities" for interested and impacted organizations, individuals and institutions to participate in the "planning for and operation of each program."

## Higher Education News



### Colleges Plan for Fall Classes

Today is Decision Day in Texas when schools recognize and celebrate students for their college plans. But those celebrations will be different this year due to COVID-19, and some students may delay their decisions due to uncertainty about whether their college choice will be open in the fall for in-class instruction and on-campus residence.

"The celebration of GenTX Virtual Decision Day is especially important now, because the economic recovery and future competitiveness of Texas will depend on skilled and educated Texans," said Commissioner of Texas Higher Education Harrison Keller. "We should celebrate our students' hard work, accomplishments and commitments to pursue higher education. Completing high-quality postsecondary credentials will help these students unlock their potential, help them provide for their families, and pursue their dreams."

KVUE-TV (Austin) is keeping a [running list](#) of many Texas colleges and universities and their plans for the fall based on public announcements. The list indicates that the following schools plan to open their campuses - with COVID-19 health precautions - for the fall semester:

- \* Baylor University
- \* Concordia University
- \* Sam Houston State University
- \* Southern Methodist University
- \* Texas A&M University
- \* Texas Tech University
- \* University of North Texas
- \* University of Texas at Austin

Other colleges will likely make their announcements soon to encourage students to plan to begin or return to their coursework.

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# Free Webinars

## Equitable Practices for Online Learning Webinars

**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**



WATCH NOW



## Chief Science Officer Students Determined to Promote STEM Despite School Closures

Webinar: Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at 4:00 PM (cdt)

**Featuring...**

Dr. Stephanie Garcia, director of IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer program, with special guest students:

- \* CSO Isela, 12th Grade, McCollum High School, Harlandale ISD
- \* CSO Shreya, 10th Grade, Keystone School
- \* CSO Elizabeth, 8th Grade, Northeast ISD STEM Academy (Nimitz MS)

IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer students have an inspirational message to share about how they have been coping with COVID-19 challenges and distance learning. These youth STEM ambassadors have not stopped their work to enrich a STEM culture despite their school and community closures. Instead, they have insightful perspectives on how they have been navigating these challenges, how they have stayed connected, and how they keep innovating and creating during this time. Join us as we elevate student voices and hear their student success stories.

**REGISTER NOW**

Learn about the international [Chief Science Officers program](#) .

**We welcome donations to support education during this COVID-19 crisis.**



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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.

