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May 15, 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

COVID-19 Does Not Change Civil Rights Protections for Students

IDRA and a number of educational equity advocates across the country issued a [joint statement](#) and [open letter](#) to federal, state and school district leaders to clarify that they must continue to protect student civil rights, even when making adjustments to respond to COVID-19 closures and precautions. The documents focus on the rights of students most impacted by educational inequities, including students of color, English learners, students from immigrant families, and students experiencing homelessness, among others. Following are some highlights.

* **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act** protects the rights of individuals, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color or national origin. State and local education agencies and schools, including charter schools, must comply with Title VI requirements if they receive federal financial assistance, [including CARES Act](#) emergency relief funds. These civil rights protections **cannot be waived**, even during emergencies.

Among many other protections, Title VI prohibits discrimination in the provision of services, including digital learning and school meals; prohibits discrimination against immigrant students and families (*Plyler v. Doe*); and prohibits discrimination against English learners (*Lau v. Nichols*). ([See IDRA's resources on the rights of immigrant students.](#))

* The **Equal Educational Opportunities Act** also protects the rights of English learners. This law requires equal educational opportunities for all students and prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex and English proficiency. It requires education agencies to remove barriers that prevent English learners from participating fully in education programs, including at-home learning programs due to COVID-19.

* Schools must ensure educational services to students with disabilities under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**. These laws prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantee educational access to programs that receive federal funds. These protections are still applicable during COVID-19 school closures.

* The rights of students experiencing homelessness are protected by the **McKinney-Vento Act**. The law requires education agencies to appoint a liaison to identify and remove barriers to educational services and supports to students, including those who are experiencing homelessness due to COVID-19.

* **Federal and state constitutions** protect students' rights to due process and equal protection under the law. These protections require the equitable provision of educational resources and services. Additionally, state constitutions require that elementary and

secondary schools serve students for the full school year. Therefore, states may not allow local education agencies to end the school year early or to stop or limit educational services due to COVID-19.

Contact Morgan Craven, J.D., IDRA's national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement at morgan.craven@idra.org should you have questions.

IDRA Joins Counselors in Calling for COVID-19 Responses that Include Trauma-Informed Support

In just a few weeks, the COVID-19 global pandemic has radically transformed the landscape of U.S. education. School closures, restrictions on social contact and online at-home learning methods present new challenges to protecting students.

With IDRA and Texas Appleseed, nine organizations [issued an open letter today](#) calling for school measures to protect students' safety and wellbeing during this unprecedented time, including privacy rights, non-punitive strategies and trauma-informed support. The letter has recommendations for Texas policymakers, officials and administrators. Joining IDRA and Texas Appleseed in issuing the letter are the Texas Counseling Association, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter, Southern Coalition for Social Justice, Southern Education Foundation, and Texans Care for Children.

Students and families should not have to fear punishment or inordinate disciplinary consequences as they face the multitude of social, academic, financial and emotional challenges presented by COVID-19.

We urge educational leaders and state officials to consider the detrimental effects of disciplinary procedures on youth, especially as they grapple with the effects of the pandemic, and to develop responses that promote educational justice for youth.

News

Not aiding DACA students merciless - Op-ed by Celina Moreno

ANOTHER VIEW

Not aiding DACA students merciless

By Celina Moreno
FOR THE EXPRESS-NEWS



The current national crisis commands unified support for all Texans. Those most likely to face the worst of the economic and social consequences caused by the coronavirus especially need protection. So the recent decision by the Trump administration to exclude undocumented college students from receiving federal higher education relief funds is divisive and merciless.

The federal CARES Act requires colleges and universities to distribute 50 percent of the \$4 billion Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund directly to students. Texas stands to receive more than \$1.02 billion. Under normal circumstances, students rely on colleges and universities to provide housing, daily meal services, work opportunities, medical and mental health care,

closure began, 75 percent of working students have had their jobs canceled, delayed or made remote, and half are experiencing mental health challenges. Undocumented students are not only experiencing these same disruptions to their schooling, work and lives, their families are among the hardest hit by the economic and public health crisis. Immigrant families have lower median incomes, are more likely to lack health insurance, and are more likely to work at businesses that offer essential services where they risk infection. The Trump administration's exclusion of many immigrants from CARES Act higher education funding adds to the slate of recent policies that marginalize working immigrant communities from legal public supports.

If these students are not supported, entire communities suffer. If they are not able to pursue

Laredo Morning Times file photo
DACA college students pay taxes, yet they cannot access federal aid during this crisis.

A new op-ed by Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA President & CEO, was published by the San Antonio Express-News on the exclusion of DACA students from federal COVID-19 emergency stimulus relief to colleges and universities.

"If these students are not supported, entire communities suffer. If they are not able to pursue their education and meet their life needs now, there will be tragic long-term consequences for their families, the economy and our collective ability to rebound from the global pandemic."

SEE OP-ED

Free Educator Webinars

How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide

Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 2:00 PM (cdt)

Hear how San Antonio ISD faced the digital divide to ensure learning continued for their students during COVID-19.

Eva Mendoza, executive director of information technology, will describe the work that San Antonio ISD performed to bridge the digital divide in her district. She will discuss the challenges, successes and what's next.

Also, Clarissa Ramon from Google Fiber will share how funders can support your district when immediate needs arise.

REGISTER NOW

Free Educator Webinar **How a School District Tackled the Digital Divide**

REGISTER NOW!

Equitable Practices for Online Learning
free webinar series

<https://idra.news/TDD>
COVID-19 School Response Webinar

Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively

Tuesday, May 26, 2020, at 2:00 PM (cdt)

Most people know that Google Classroom is a free online classroom management system, developed by Google for schools. But being a powerful and popular tool doesn't necessarily keep teachers from experiencing bumps along the way in.

In this webinar, get tips on how to use Google Classroom more effectively from the perspectives of a teacher, parent and student.

REGISTER NOW

Free Educator Webinar **Teacher, Parent and Student Perspectives on Using Google Classroom Effectively**

REGISTER NOW!

Equitable Practices for Online Learning
free webinar series

<https://idra.news/TPSP>
COVID-19 School Response Webinar

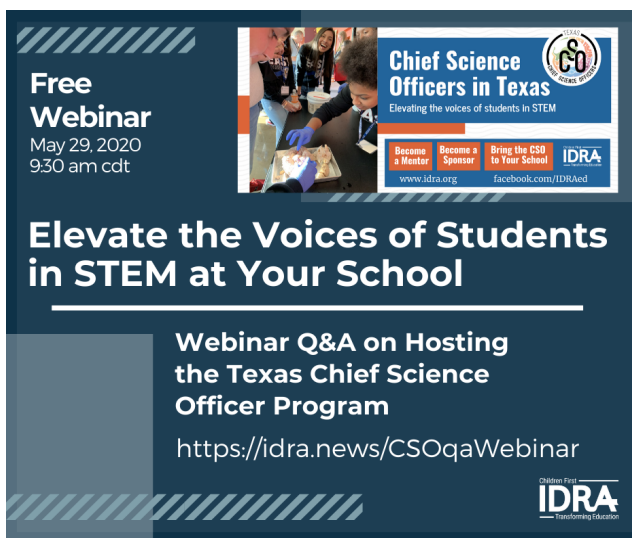
Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School - Webinar Q&A on Hosting the Texas Chief Science Officer Program

Friday, May 29, 2020 at
9:30 AM (cdt)

Are you interested to learn more about IDRA's Texas Chief Science Officer Program? CSOs are students in grades 6-12 elected by their peers to be liaisons for STEM in their schools and communities. They learn leadership skills to implement on-campus projects and advocate for student voice in STEM.

Join Dr. Stephanie Garcia, the Texas Regional Lead for the CSO Program, with your questions and coffee in hand!

This is an open Q&A discussion for families, students, educators and community organizations. We would love for you to join the conversation and learn more about how to join or champion this incredible student-driven program.



Free Webinar
May 29, 2020
9:30 am cdt

Chief Science Officers in Texas
Elevating the voices of students in STEM

Become a Mentor | Become a Sponsor | Bring the CSO to Your School

www.idra.org | facebook.com/IDRAed

Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School

Webinar Q&A on Hosting the Texas Chief Science Officer Program

<https://idra.news/CSOqaWebinar>

IDRA
Improving Education

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More Webinars on Equitable Practices for Online Learning

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
- * Chief Science Officer Students Determined to Promote STEM Despite School Closures

New! Teaching Science in Virtual Learning Environments

SEE WEBINAR HUB

Surveys

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



See our [survey site](#) for the surveys in Spanish and for printable versions for dissemination of paper copies.

[SIGN UP FOR EMAILS](#)

News

IDRA, Partners Provide South Texas Families Tech Support for Distance Learning During COVID-19 Crisis for Virtual Classroom

IDRA launched a partnership with two community-based organizations in the Texas Rio Grande Valley to help Spanish-speaking families navigate virtual classrooms while schools are closed due to COVID-19.

Mentors from the College Scholarship Leadership Access Program (CSLAP) provide tech support to members of ARISE, a grassroots organization that promotes empowerment through education and part of IDRA's Education CAFE network. ARISE volunteers connect families with CSLAP mentors, who are graduates of PSJA ISD with computer, software and technical expertise on online learning platforms. Each mentor holds office hours during which they provide support over Zoom or by phone.



"We are proud that ARISE - the very first IDRA Education CAFÉ - is again innovating to help close the digital divide in a region facing some of the most troubling challenges with access to internet and computer devices," said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "Education CAFEs support the leadership of parents, grandparents, siblings and neighbors - all of whom are critical custodians of children's academic success."

To request free tech support assistance, families and students in the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas may contact...

KEEP READING (In English or Español)

Free Webinars on Education for Immigrant Families IDRA Launches Bilingual Online Portal to Continue Assistance with the Mexican Consulate in San Antonio During COVID-19 Closures

Through its Ventanilla de Orientación Educativa (Window to Education), IDRA launched a portal this month with bilingual materials and videos for families. The materials provide information on the civil rights of immigrant and English learner students, local educational services, and resources on how to access and succeed in college.



IDRA and the Consulate General of Mexico in San Antonio began a partnership in mid-2019 and in the last year helped over 3,000 Mexican and Mexican American families navigate the U.S. education system and learn about important educational opportunities in both countries. Since schools and the Consulate closed due to the COVID-19 crisis, families cannot currently access the information in person.

"Our new Virtual VOE connects families with vital information about educational resources that are more needed than ever," said IDRA President & CEO Celina Moreno. "When families have the key information they need, they not only take steps for their own families, they support others as well."

KEEP READING (In English or Español)

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.