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Transforming Education
by Putting Kids First

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IDRA Newsletter – 50th Anniversary Edition

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Cover photo: In the gallery of the Texas Senate, when on March 1, 2023, the **Texas Senate recognized IDRA's 50 years of work** for education equity. (l-r) Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., deputy director of policy; Celina Moreno, J.D., IDRA president & CEO, with her baby, Yazmín Moreno Del Toro; Morgan Craven, J.D., national director of policy, advocacy and community engagement; Diana Long, education policy fellow; Thomas Marshall III, M.Ed., policy communications strategist; Paige Duggins-Clay, J.D., chief legal analyst; Steve Kemgang, education policy fellow; Alisha "Tuff" Tuff, education policy fellow.

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IDRA Milestones Across Five Decades to Fulfill the Promise of Education that Every Student Deserves

by *Celina Moreno, J.D., María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.*



While we are celebrating IDRA's 50th anniversary throughout 2023, our founders day is in April. We have compiled a few highlights of our milestone moments. But no highlights reel can ever convey the impact on students' lives or their families by those who joined us – from our partners and funders, coalitions, educators, public officials, staff and consultants, and community members, to families and students themselves – in a vision of diversity, equity, access, excellence, culture and inherent value that drives us to secure the promise for every student who steps foot into a classroom.

First Decade 1973

Following the seminal *Rodríguez v. San Antonio ISD* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, Texans for Educational Excellence (TEE) started with a \$95,000 grant to conduct school finance research and advocacy. Dr. José A. Cárdenas, former superintendent of Edgewood ISD of San Antonio who played a key role in the *Rodríguez* case, became executive director.

See a collection of photos from over the years.



[Keep reading IDRA Milestones Across Five Decades article](#)

One Mission, Many Paths – 50 Years of Transforming Education by Putting Children First

*by Celina Moreno, J.D., María “Cuca”
Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., Aurelio M.
Montemayor, M.Ed.*



As IDRA turns 50, we celebrate past wins in pursuit of education justice and recommit to our work to secure a high-quality education for all as an essential element of U.S.

democracy and the common good. In doing so, we choose radical hope and bridge-building, not fear and division. And we stay nimble to innovate for stronger public schools that nourish all students.

As an impact-focused organization, IDRA has provided expert testimony in key high court cases; published seminal research on Texas student attrition; developed groundbreaking bilingual legislation and early childhood curriculum and materials; modeled effective professional development; organized and led education coalitions, and innovated student leadership and authentic family engagement programs.

While many non-profits weaken or disappear within five years or upon the retirement of their founders, IDRA not only continued its existence but expanded its advocacy work and solidified its economic base and litigation support; policy advocacy reach; coalition building; and educator, school and community training and technical assistance.

[Keep reading One Mission, Many Paths article](#)



IDRA Paths and Bridges ~ Caminos y Puentes de IDRA

A poem by Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., IDRA's longest-serving staff member

Amidst the challenges of transforming public schools
IDRA builds bridges, with many paths and routes.
For public education excellence and equity, battling with effective
tools,
Our mission ensures defense of justice in all these bouts.

We march forward, through the halls of power,
Advocates of school children forgotten and ignored.
Demanding change and justice in every hour,
Our anthems always in tune with a justice chord.



[Keep reading IDRA Paths and Bridges poem](#)

50th Anniversary News & Goodies

[IDRA 50th Anniversary Highlights](#), including news about upcoming events

[Texas Senate Recognizes IDRA's 50 Years of Work for Education Equity](#)

[IDRA Quality Schools Action Framework](#)

[A History of IDRA Policy Work](#) – See our dynamic online timeline of IDRA's policy work secure excellent and equitable schooling for all children

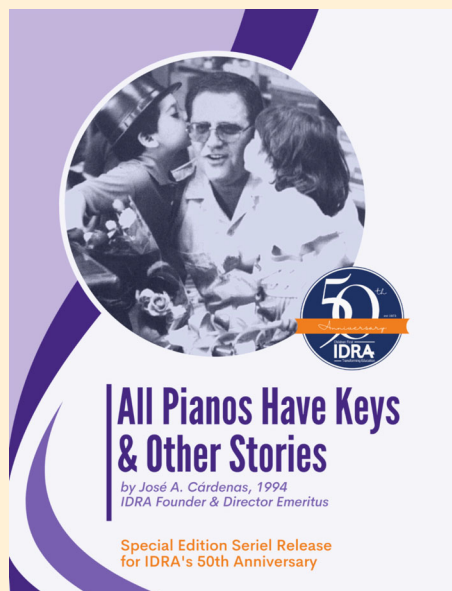




All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories – Series Re-release – We are re-releasing chapters from our founder’s popular memoir, *All Pianos Have Keys and Other Stories*, that is now out of print. Watch our social media accounts and [this webpage](#) for each new release.

Stories released to date:

- All Pianos Have Keys
- Silence of the Lambs
- The Epidemic that Never Was
- Jesus Christ Was Not Bilingual
- The Shape of the World
- One Minute of Silence
- Bilingual Onions
- My Side of the Story
- A Measure of Progress



Recent News

Recent Media Coverage

Texas Legislature proposes parental rights amendments, by Victoria Antram, Ballotpedia News, April 27, 2023

Proposed ban on corporal punishment in Texas schools fails again, by Pooja Salhotra, Texas Tribune, April 26, 2023

Texas education board could ban textbooks that discuss gender identity under proposed bill, by Brian Lopez, The Texas Tribune, April 25, 2023 (Also appeared in KERA, April 25, 2023 and KENS5, April 25, 2023)

DEI instruction quietly struck from state manual used by teachers, by Doug Richards, Alive, April 21, 2023

Stricter anti-bullying in schools rules ahead? Here’s what Texas lawmakers propose, by Keri Heath, Austin American-Statesman, April 19, 2023

House committee hears testimony from LCISD parents on anti-identity-based bullying bill, by Jaxie Pidgeon, Everything Lubbock, April 18, 2023

House committee hears testimony on anti-identity-based bullying bill, Everything Lubbock, YouTube video, April 18, 2023

Bullying victims from across Texas push for anti-bullying bill, KVUE ABC, video, April 17, 2023

\$10 million fund set up to address RGV's digital divide, by Dayna Reyes, Rio Grande Guardian, April 17, 2023

Texas lawmakers could make it easier to kick students out of class, by Talia Richman, Dallas Morning News, April 13, 2023 (Also appeared in Education Week, April 14, 2023)

Families could face steeper penalties for truancy under Texas bill up for debate, Talia Richman, Dallas Morning News, April 11, 2023

Legislature school choice fight stirs bitter memories of 1998 Edgewood ISD experiment, by Isaac Windes, San Antonio Report, April 9, 2023

Texas lawmakers' attempts to ban school library books deemed inappropriate for kids spur confusion — and concerns, by Alejandro Serrano, Texas Tribune, March 31, 2023

Lawmakers across U.S. push for harsher school discipline as safety fears rise, by Patrick Wall, Chalkbeat, March 28, 2023

[See these news stories and other recent media coverage with links on our website.](#)

Other IDRA News

May 1, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of May 1, 2023
([English](#)) • ([Español](#))

April 28, 2023 – [Time to End Corporal Punishment – April 30 is International Day to End Corporal Punishment of Children](#)

April 25, 2023 – [Texas Legislature Must Address Identity-based Bullying in Schools – See IDRA's new issue brief](#)

April 24, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of April 24, 2023 ([English](#)) • ([Español](#))

April 20, 2023 – [Georgia Education Policy Update: General Assembly Wrap Up – Find out what happened with education bills](#)

April 17, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News – Week of April 17, 2023 ([English](#)) • ([Español](#))

April 10, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News - Week of April 10, 2023 ([English](#))

April 3, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News - Week of April 3, 2023 ([English](#)) • ([Español](#))

March 27, 2023 – [March issue of the IDRA Newsletter – Equity Matters](#)

March 27, 2023 – Texas Education Policy Update – Advocacy News - Week of March 27, 2023 ([English](#)) • ([Español](#))

Public Testimony

In the last month, IDRA presented testimony on its [policy priorities](#) in Texas. [See video and written testimony.](#)

IDRA presented testimony related to our [Georgia policy priorities](#) in February and March. [See written testimony.](#)

Make sure you are subscribed to receive policy alerts for Texas, Georgia and federal news.

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IDRA 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.

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