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## This issue's focus: School District Health



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## School District Health

### Habits of a Healthy School District Where All Students Thrive

*by Celina Moreno, J.D., & Christie L. Goodman, APR*

Health is on everyone's mind today. COVID-19 has impacted our daily lives, our work, our recreation, our plans for the coming months. Health is a state of physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.



When applied to education, the same is true. School district health, for example, means more than grades or test scores. It means all students thrive.

Educators, families and communities care for each other to ensure the educational well-being of students. Education leaders want to proactively explore ways to improve the health and success of their schools. Based on research and almost five decades of experience in the field, IDRA developed a change model that helps school, community, family and business leaders chart and navigate school system change. This Quality Schools Action Framework serves as a roadmap to navigate school system change.



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### State Takeovers of School Districts Don't Work

*by Terrence Wilson, J.D., & Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.*

Promoting the health and function of school districts requires investment from educators and the community as well as a climate that prioritizes racial diversity and meets the needs of all its students.



When schools are struggling, state takeovers can jeopardize the health of the district. In fact, studies show that state takeovers do not lead to increased academic achievement and even further destabilize

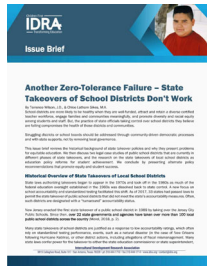
the school district. School districts governed by and serving a majority Black population are 11 times more likely to have the local school board abolished.

IDRA promotes family and community engagement, supportive funding, a diverse and certified teaching workforce, racial and socioeconomic integration, and culturally-relevant practices as critical components to school district and campus health. Revitalizing struggling schools should be a community-driven democratic process with state support.

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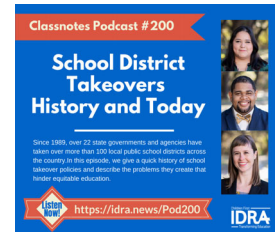
**Issue Brief:**

**Another Zero-Tolerance Failure - State Takeovers of School Districts Don't Work**  
[See PDF](#)



**Classnotes Podcast Episode 200:**

**School District Takeovers History and Today**  
[See Podcast Webpage](#)



## Implications of Texas SB 1882 Patchwork of Partnerships

by *Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D.*

Three years ago, The Texas legislature passed Senate Bill 1882 to incentivize school districts relinquishing local control over campus operations, governance and budgets to an external partner as a way to improve the campus. Eligible operating partners include charters, private schools, private childcare providers, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education.

Districts with even one campus with low accountability scores must choose to either suffer state sanctions or to hand local control to an outside entity. And the Texas law does not require SB 1882 partnerships to ensure specific levels of accountability and family engagement.



IDRA believes that public funds for public schools should remain publicly accountable. While the full implications of SB 1882 remain to be seen, it is clear that it has opened the door for public schools to be privately managed. IDRA recommends that schools positively change while remaining accountable by focusing on data-driven, community-based approaches, TEA offering support to districts with turnaround plans instead of sanctions, and replacing the A-F accountability system with opportunity-to-learn metrics that identify areas for support instead of punishment in a school district.

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## Meet Dr. Chloe Latham Sikes - IDRA Deputy Director of Policy

Chloe Latham Sikes, Ph.D., is IDRA's new deputy director of policy. She first worked with IDRA as a policy intern in 2017, and is overjoyed to have officially joined its Policy, Advocacy, and Community Engagement team this January.

She became inspired to pursue educational policy and advocacy in 2009, while working as a volunteer English teacher and nursery assistant at a center for young women and their children in Costa Rica. After graduating from Grinnell College with a degree in anthropology and global development studies, she worked with high school students applying to college as an AmeriCorps college coach, and later as a college admissions counselor. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with her doctorate in educational policy and planning in May 2020.

Chloe's main hobby is reading, which explains a lot about her. She wishes she were a Ravenclaw but consistently is sorted as a Hufflepuff.



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## 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,

**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


IDRA

**Elevate the Voices of Students in STEM at Your School**

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

<https://idra.news/CSOqaWebinar>



educators and community organizations. We would love for you to join the conversation and learn more about how to be a part of this incredible student-driven program.

**REGISTER NOW**

**SEE CSO FLIER**

## **IDRA Provides Bilingual Books to Young Learners to Diminish Digital Divide Effects Exacerbated by COVID-19**

IDRA has long worked with schools and communities to close the digital divide for the most vulnerable students. With assistance from the San Antonio Area Foundation and the United Way of San Antonio, IDRA is now providing its popular Semillitas de Aprendizaje bilingual storybooks to families who have no access to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic.



We know from our research on best practices in early childhood education that hard-copy books and interactive learning best build solid literacy foundations for young learners. IDRA is providing over 5,000 of its Semillitas de Aprendizaje bilingual books to families in the Southwest and Edgewood school districts through the districts' food distribution, communication and paper-lesson delivery systems. IDRA also will provide webinars, classroom sets and teacher's editions to districts for use with students once school commences in the fall.



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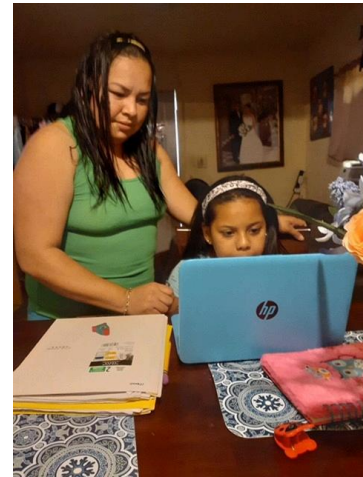
**Learn about IDRA's Semillitas de Aprendizaje curricular materials**

## **IDRA, Partners Provide South Texas Families Tech Support for Distance Learning During COVID-19**

# Crisis for Virtual Classrooms

In response to the profound learning crisis from the COVID-19 pandemic, IDRA launched a partnership with two community-based organizations in Texas Rio Grande Valley to help Spanish-speaking families navigate virtual classrooms while their schools are closed.

Mentors from the College Scholarship Leadership Access Program (CSLAP) provide tech support to members of ARISE, a grassroots organization promoting empowerment through education as part of IDRA's Education CAFE network. Each mentor holds office hours during which they provide support over Zoom or by phone.



To request free tech support assistance, families and students in the lower Rio Grande Valley of south Texas may contact Vicky Santana, ARISE education coordinator, at 830-719-7273.



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**Free Educator Webinars** **English Language Arts and Reading**  
 COVID-19 School Response Webinars

**REGISTER NOW!**

**Equitable Practices for Online Learning**  
*free webinar series*

**Part 1: Journal Writing About the Present for the Future**  
 Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at 2:00 PM (cdt)

**Part 2: From Journaling to Personal Narratives**  
 Wednesday, April 29, 2020, at 2:00 PM (cdt)

**Part 3: From Journaling & Personal Narratives to Letter Writing**  
 Thursday, April 30, 2020, at 2:00 PM (cdt)

<https://idra.news/WebinarSeries>

## Equitable Practices for Online Learning - Free Webinar Series

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Intercultural Development Research Association

**Learning Goes On**

**A COVID-19 Resource for Education**

## IDRA Launches "Learning Goes On."

Our COVID-19 Resource for Education includes a web hub, free webinar series and special weekly eNews policy update.

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May 28, 2020

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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.