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¡YA! Es Tiempo • www.idra.org • August 2010

"¡YA! Es tiempo. It is time to close the unacceptable gaps in equity and in opportunity that hinder our children on their way to completing the great education that they deserve." - Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO, Opening Remarks, ¡YA! Es Tiempo, July 13, 2010

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Schools and Communities in Action

In communities along the U.S.-Mexico border, at the southernmost edge of Texas, more than forty percent of students are lost to attrition and nine out of ten students taking the SAT/ACT are not considered college ready. But a growing contingent of school, family, youth, and community leaders is taking action to turn this around.

"President Obama has issued a challenge to young people to go forward into the world and we want President Obama to know that we in South Texas are prepared to meet that challenge" - Mr. Joe Medrano, Chair, Education Working Group, Equal Voice Network, Rio Grande Valley, Community Panel, ¡YA! Es Tiempo



¡YA! Es Tiempo. On July 13, 2010, IDRA invited over 140 of these partners to gather as part of ¡YA! Es Tiempo, a cross-sector call to action to secure educational excellence and equity for all students in the Rio Grande Valley. On that hot summer day, there was standing room only in the freshly-waxed Gus Guerra Elementary School library, where public school parents, middle and high school students, and community and school leaders, gathered to examine school data and strengthen partnerships for action. The event was held in collaboration with Equal Voice - Rio Grande Valley, a network of community- and faith-based organizations who, with the support of the Marguerite Casey Foundation, are preparing for a 2011 regional summit on education. Mr. Juan Sepúlveda, Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, joined the meeting via Skype, to describe national programs designed to support school-community partnership for school change.

At ¡YA! Es Tiempo, IDRA released a set of new materials and resources that can help you organize a local cross-sector partnership to improve education in your community: the first is *Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework*, edited by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D. and Christie L. Goodman, APR. The second is the "web 2.0" version of IDRA's School Holding Power Portal - you'll find details in the Toolbox, below.

"Our Texas valley is the key to the future of the state. It is a laboratory for resolving problems that will confront the state in the future. Together we can get this done and the time is now." - Dr. Daniel P. King, Superintendent, PSJA ISD, Community Panel, ¡YA! Es Tiempo

[To learn more about ¡YA! Es Tiempo and get resources to promote school-community-family collaboration in your community.](#)

Toolbox

***Courage to Connect* - New Book Frames School-Community Action.** At a time when public education makes a world of difference to our students, communities and economic success, many are looking for strategies that will work for them and that will last. *Courage to*

Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework shows how communities and schools can work together to strengthen their capacity to be successful with all of their students.

[To learn more or to order a copy.](#)

[For a selection of podcasts on the Quality Schools Action Framework from IDRA's award-winning Classnotes podcast series](#)

School-Community Data Portal "2.0." Community, family and school leaders need high quality, accessible data to assess how schools are doing and develop a plan to improve them. This updated IDRA data portal provides key data for all Texas school districts. Data includes: attrition rates by campus, outcomes on ACT/SAT tests, college-sending rates, and teacher certification rates.

Designed around IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework, the portal also provides key questions to promote community conversations and a framework that local, cross-sector partners can use to develop and assess action plans. With 2.0 interactivity, the portal allows visitors to keep a "my schools" portfolio, conduct surveys and share results with local partners and policymakers.

Visit the portal online in English and Spanish.

www.idra.org/portal/ (English)

www.idra.org/portalsp/ (Spanish)

New Book: *Community Organizing for Stronger Schools* (Mediratta et al., Harvard Education Press) shares findings from a six-year national study on how community organizing effects education. "Across the sites in our study," the authors report, "we found strong and consistent evidence that effective community organizing efforts are helping to increase equity within school districts, build new forms of capacity in schools, and improve student educational outcomes."

[To learn more about how communities in the eight study sites led efforts to improve educational access, quality and equity.](#)

Pathways to Respecting American Indian Civil Rights and Community Engagement A new series on Community Engagement for Educators was shared by IDRA's South Central Collaborative for Equity at Pathways to Respecting American Indian Civil Rights this month. Designed as an exchange of information among American Indians, Pueblo, and Tribal entities, federal agencies, and educational and other service providers, the conference took place August 10 - 11 in Albuquerque. The event, hosted by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Denver and Kansas City Offices and the Equity Assistance Centers for Regions 6,7,8,9 also honored the vision and work of Wilma Mankiller.

[To learn more about the life and legacy of Wilma Pearl Mankiller.](#)

[For more information on the conference.](#)

[For more information or to order the Engagement Series for Educators.](#)

[To visit the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and learn more about its work in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.](#)

School Opening Alert - Defend the Right of All Students. In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* that children of undocumented workers have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Each year, IDRA publishes the School Opening Alert (developed by the National Coalition of Advocates for Students) to help you defend the educational rights of all children.

[To download, copy and print the School Opening Alert.](#)

Youth Voices

"I'm not really here to talk about me because I am one of those students that graduated from high school...I'm here because our dropout rates here in the Valley are really high. There are a lot of dropouts. It's not hard for me to put myself in their shoes." - Ms. Sylvia Gabriela Tovar, Donna High School graduate, 2010, Community Panel, ¡YA! Es Tiempo

The [Intercultural Development Research Association](#) is an independent, private non-profit organization whose mission is to create schools that work for all children.

Let us hear from you! Have a story of school-community partnership that's raising



graduation rates? We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions at gradforall@idra.org.

Forward to a Friend! [Feel free to share Grad4All with anyone who shares your passion for every student's success.](#)

Thanks for reading!

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