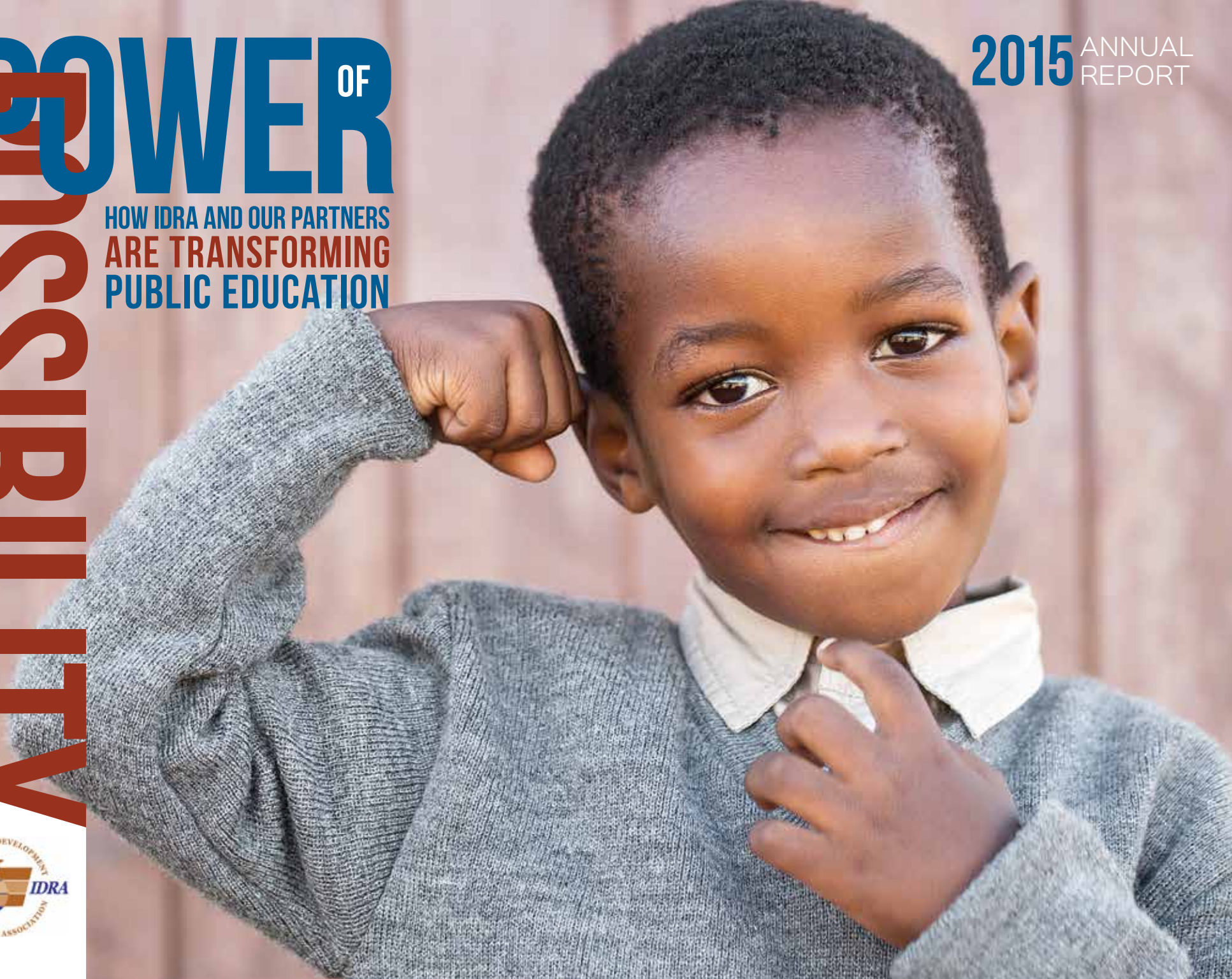


THE **POWER** OF

POSSIBILITY

HOW IDRA AND OUR PARTNERS
ARE TRANSFORMING
PUBLIC EDUCATION

2015 ANNUAL
REPORT



OUR YEAR: MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



2015 was a pivotal year for the nation's children.

The Supreme Court of the United States heard weighty cases—from university admissions to housing discrimination policy—that could impact educational opportunity for a generation. Congress took up the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), and the new law was signed by the President in December.

While overall high school graduation rates rose, disparities deepened. Students of color in 2015 were increasingly likely to attend highly segregated schools, with sharp divides in educational opportunity and outcomes from early education to higher education access and success. While gaps widened, in 2015 low-income students became a majority of children attending U.S. public schools.

The country became increasingly aware of the systemic divides—in safety, treatment, and opportunity—that impact low-income children and children of color as reports of shootings, threats, and unjust disciplinary actions on school campuses proliferated.

A new conversation arose about equity in 2015, with communities, foundations, policymakers and educators calling for change. All too often real solutions were sidelined by politics and children got lost in the equation. But at least the conversation has begun.

Equal educational opportunity is a vision we must realize for all children.

Recognizing the need for systemic transformation, IDRA and our partners continued to work at the forefront of efforts to advance educational opportunity. Together we served and spoke out as an unwavering voice for securing children's educational rights, for valuing youth without exception, and for realizing the transformational power of family-school-community leadership.

Grounded in IDRA's comprehensive, empirically-tested Quality Schools Action Framework, we raised central questions about what makes schools excellent and equitable, and developed new national solutions-oriented research on school funding equity, good governance, curriculum quality, teaching quality, student engagement, and family and community engagement.

Together, in 2015, we and our K-12, community college and university partners prepared and placed a new cadre of skilled bilingual teachers in classrooms where their strengths are most needed. New bilingual teachers like Elvia Rosie Alaniz are using their experience in IDRA's Teachers for Today & Tomorrow to make sure students "don't fall through the cracks."

In 2015, we and our community, family, and school partners developed and tested new strategies for authentic family engagement that achieves results from stronger early education to college readiness. We rolled out new multi-lingual curricula and resources, quality digital and print resources, apps, and web-based services that value and build on children's home language and culture.

And we helped state, school and community leaders in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas to desegregate opportunity. We and our partners expanded dropout prevention to serve students in Detroit, New York, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Chicago. The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was named a National Hispanic Education "Bright Spot" by the White House in 2015, thanks to these efforts and to the middle and high school tutors whose leadership is at the heart of this program.

It is our collaboration with schools, families, youth, community partners, and funders that make results like these possible. We are grateful to be able work together for the day that All Means All—and we can assure quality educational opportunity for every child.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "María Robledo Montecel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel
President & CEO

FUNDERS

WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE IDRA'S WORK POSSIBLE

Administration for Children, Youth and Families	The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	The National Coalition of Advocates for Students
Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc.	The National Endowment for the Humanities
The Annie E. Casey Foundation	National Education Association
ASPIRA of New York	National Institute of Mental Health
The AT&T Foundation	The National Science Foundation
The Carnegie Corporation	National Urban Coalition
The Challenge Foundation	The Primerica Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	The Rockefeller Foundation
The Children's Trust Fund of Texas	Southwestern Bell
Clemson University—NDPC	Texas Department of Community Affairs
The Coca-Cola Foundation*	Texas Education Agency
The Coca-Cola Company	Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation
The Danforth Foundation	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation	U.S. Department of Education*
The Edward Hazen Foundation	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	U.S. Department of Justice
The Ford Foundation	University of Houston
The General Sciences Foundation	The W.K. Kellogg Foundation*
George Washington University	Wachovia Foundation
Greater Texas Foundation*	Wells Fargo Foundation
The Houston Endowment, Inc.	The William Randolph Hearst Foundation
JP Morgan Chase Foundation	
The Kresge Foundation*	
The Lilly Endowment	
League of United Latin American Citizens	
Marguerite Casey Foundation*	

* Grants during current period.

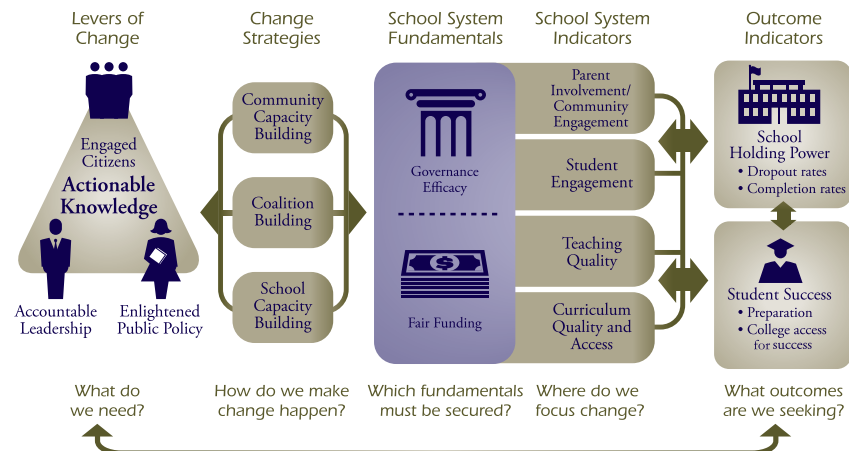
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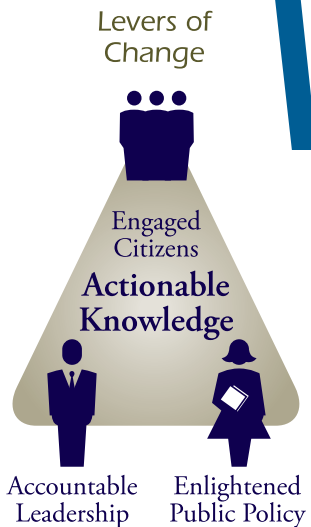
ALL WE DO IS BUILT ON A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework is a comprehensive action model for graduating and preparing all students for college. The framework (1) outlines the elements that must be in place to create schools that work for all children, (2) describes strategies that most often lead to change, and (3) shows how people can work together across sectors and around key information to leverage change.

Quality Schools Action Framework™

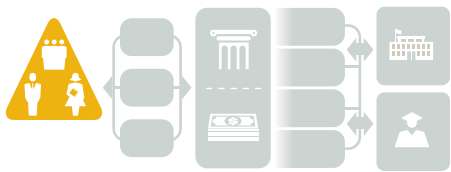


WHAT IS NEEDED?



“I use [the quote from Demetrio Rodriguez: “I want my great-grand children to have adequate schooling —IDRA 50 Most Memorable Quotes in School Finance”] to inspire me while we continue the fight for adequate and equitable school funding.”

Chandra Kring Villanueva
Policy Analyst, Center for Public Policy
Priorities, 2015



CREATING NEW KNOWLEDGE TO INFORM POLICY AND PRACTICE

IDRA and our partners are producing actionable knowledge that makes the case for educational equity and excellence with policymakers, the courts, education leaders, and the public.

On September 1, 2015, the Texas Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the largest school finance case in the state’s history, *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Williams*. The hearing came 369 days after the Texas District Court ruled that the state’s funding system is “constitutionally inadequate, unsuitable and financially inefficient.” IDRA provided expert analyses and testimony at the request of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, who represented Edgewood ISD Plaintiffs, finding that the school finance system is inequitable and fails to provide adequate levels of funding for educating English language learners and low-income students. Throughout the trial, IDRA’s School Finance Dashboard provided real-time updates and exchanges—aggregated via #txschoolfinance and #AllMeansAll—for community members, educators, coalitions, and the public on this historic case and its implications for children in Texas and other states.



ABOVE: Tedra Robertson, Equity Center; David Hinojosa, IDRA; Marisa Bono, MALDEF; Al Kauffman, St. Mary’s University School of Law; Dr. Albert Cortez, IDRA; and Chandra Villanueva, CPPP, as they head into the Texas Supreme Court.



#AllMeansAll: Keeping the Public in Public Education

In February 2015, IDRA launched the national multi-media campaign, #AllMeansAll, to shine a spotlight on the need to address persistent educational disparities, share effective strategies and solutions, and galvanize civic engagement for quality public education for all students. Through #AllMeansAll, we are providing actionable research and data, and amplifying the voice of diverse, cross-sector communities in calling for educational opportunity for all.

#ALLMEANSALL

2015 OPPORTUNITY MATTERS ROUNDTABLES

Through IDRA's Opportunity Matters Roundtable Series, convened under the office of IDRA's President and CEO, we highlighted leading-edge research and strategies to improve educational quality and equity. In 2015, we convened:

- **An Equity Literacy Approach to Poverty and Education** (February 17, 2015) featuring a conversation with scholar and equity activist, Dr. Paul C. Gorski.
- **New Research on Post-Secondary Access and Success** featuring a discussion with Greater Texas Foundation Fellows (June 16, 2015) with Leslie Gurrola, Dr. Melissa Y. Delgado, and Dr. Edna C. Alfaro on emerging research on post-secondary education for Mexican-American students.

In 2015, IDRA produced national research, analyses and testimony, including:

Amicus Brief in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (October 30, 2015), a case of national significance on university admissions, brought before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Statement on ESEA Reauthorization (HR 5, the Student Success Act), on the need to retain and uphold key civil rights protections for students of all backgrounds.

Expert testimony on Committee Substitute House Bill 1759 in the Texas House Public Education Committee Hearing (April 20, 2015) to inform legislators of the potential to increase funding inequity, while failing to ease tax burden for property poor districts.

Research, Trend Analyses and Forecasts on Attrition Rates in Texas (October 29, 2015)

—the only independent study, spanning 30 years of methodologically-consistent longitudinal data—shows that without accelerated action, Texas stands to lose over 2 million students before it achieves universal graduation. IDRA research has promoted continued attention and action to raise graduation rates in the state and reduce disparities and gaps.



For the Kresge Foundation, IDRA also convened Human Services Applied Research Grantees in 2015, which focused on cross-cutting opportunities for collaboration among researchers, service providers and community members, and promoting pathways for research-informed practice and practice-informed research. Senior Program Officer, Dr. Christine Robinson (pictured here), discussed the foundation's collaborative efforts to build national, regional and local networks that increase effectiveness and ultimately improve the quality of life and economic security of low-income individuals and families.

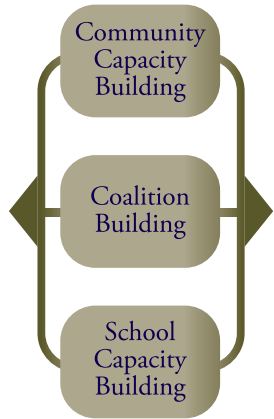
Evaluation Research that Informs the Field

IDRA is conducting a meta-evaluation of collaborative U.S. Department of Agriculture projects in 40 colleges and universities across the United States and Puerto Rico in STEM-related fields, that seek to increase participation of underserved students in post-secondary and graduate degree programs with Hispanic Serving Institutions.

IDRA also is producing evaluation research of Chapter I Regular and Migrant Programs, Bilingual Programs, Compensatory Education, Teacher Training and Retention, GEAR-UP, and St. Philips College NSF-funded Cyber Security First-Responder Program to help school district, university and community partners assess progress and results—and to course-correct when projects are missing the mark.

HOW DO WE MAKE CHANGE

Change Strategies



ADOPTING CHANGE STRATEGIES THAT BUILD CAPACITY FOR SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

IDRA and our partners are undertaking change strategies that build school, community, and coalition capacity to expand educational opportunity, quality and equity.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING AND COALITION BUILDING FOSTERS REGIONAL TRANSFORMATION

IDRA is partnering with family and community leaders in Houston, San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley to assure that parents and students have the information they need to navigate new high school graduation requirements in Texas and are able to enroll and succeed in college.



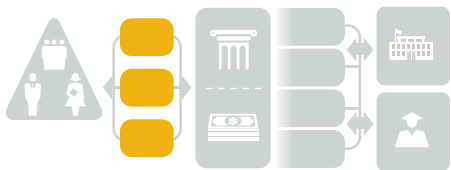
“We expect all our children to be prepared for college. All of them. We have not struggled this hard for our children to have less than that.”

Lourdes Flores

President, ARISE (pictured here) opening the second annual Mesa Comunitaria at South Texas College, August 23, 2015 with a vision for student success

MESA COMUNITARIA EDUCATIVA

Community groups, parents and students in South Texas came together on August 23, 2015, with 16 school superintendents from across the Rio Grande Valley to affirm their expectation that all students be put on a path to graduate highly prepared for college. At this second annual Mesa Comunitaria Educativa event, convened with South Texas College in Weslaco, Texas, community leaders of the Equal Voice Network RGV Education Working Group and the Comunitarios presented results from their survey of more than 1,600 parents about their knowledge about Texas’ curriculum policies and new graduation requirements. The community survey found that few parents across 24 school districts and 30 cities in the RGV have received enough information from their children’s schools. IDRA partnered with the network’s Education Working Group and Comunitario members in support of the convening, analyzed data from the community survey, and developed a report with the survey’s key findings, implications and recommended actions.



GE HAPPEN?



Funded by the Marguerite Casey Foundation, the Equal Voice Network – Rio Grande Valley is a network of community- and faith-based organizations working in severely economically distressed communities in South Texas. With a grant from the foundation, IDRA partnered with these community organizations to provide capacity-building support—from strategic planning and policy analysis, tools for evaluation and development of web-based networks and communications, to leadership development curricula. This growing, powerful network of community-based organizations has been building a movement of families and communities along the U.S.–Mexico border and partnering with schools to press for change.

From 2013–2015:

IDRA provided capacity-strengthening assistance to Marguerite Casey Foundation grantees in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas (ACLU of Texas, ARISE: A Resource in Serving Equality, Mano a Mano (Brownsville Community Health Center), La Raiz, La Union de Pueblo Entero (LUPE), Proyecto Azteca, Proyecto Juan Diego, Texas Rio Grande Valley Legal Aid, Inc., South Texas Civil Rights Project, Fuerza del Valle, and START Center), the EV-RGV Network, and six working groups (Health, Education, Jobs/Economic Security, Civic Engagement, Housing, and Immigration).

As a result of Mesa Comunitaria Educativa, family leaders—members of Comunitarios in the Texas Rio Grande Valley—are developing action plans to improve college preparation and access for students in the region by strengthening collaboration among educators, families,

students and the Comunitarios. Pictured above, ARISE South Tower and Cesar Chavez Comunitario officers met with Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Narciso García, Dual Language Coordinator, Mrs. Rosalva Silva and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD staff on December 8, 2015, in the superintendent’s conference room to plan a student- and family-led convening focused on college readiness.

“In its own way, the Equal Voice Valley community has created its own endorsement path—an intentional collaboration between parents, community leaders, students, teachers and administrators that will work to make college readiness an attainable goal for every single Rio Grande Valley child.”

Michael Seifert

Network Weaver for the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network, Rio Grande Guardian, August 23, 2015, “Community Capacity Building and Coalition Building Fosters Regional Transformation”

Working together, we:

- Promoted sustainable place-based transformation, energizing grassroots advocacy and connecting leaders to the national Equal Voice vision and movement;
- Expanded community leaders’ policy knowledge and ability to give voice to the concerns of families;
- Built leadership and train-the-trainer models, training 500 new youth and adult community leaders and 160 existing leaders and staff who will then train others using the Leadership Curricula developed by IDRA.



Building Knowledge of Effective Practices and Networks for Family Leadership

Fostering Latino Family Education Leadership April 9, 2015. IDRA convened panelists via webinar from six organizations from across the nation whose mission includes educational equity and access to

share the story of their leadership development programs that have proven successful with Latino families. Panelists represented: Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, Partners in Education; Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE); Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF); Parent School Partnership (PSP) Program; ASPIRA, Parents for Excellence (APEX); and IDRA's Family Leadership in Education. This conversation brought to light practices that are both authentic and also culturally and linguistically appropriate.

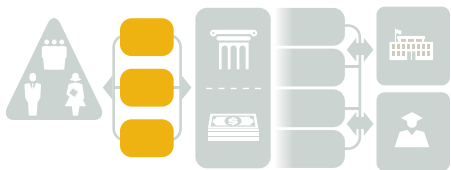
COALITION BUILDING

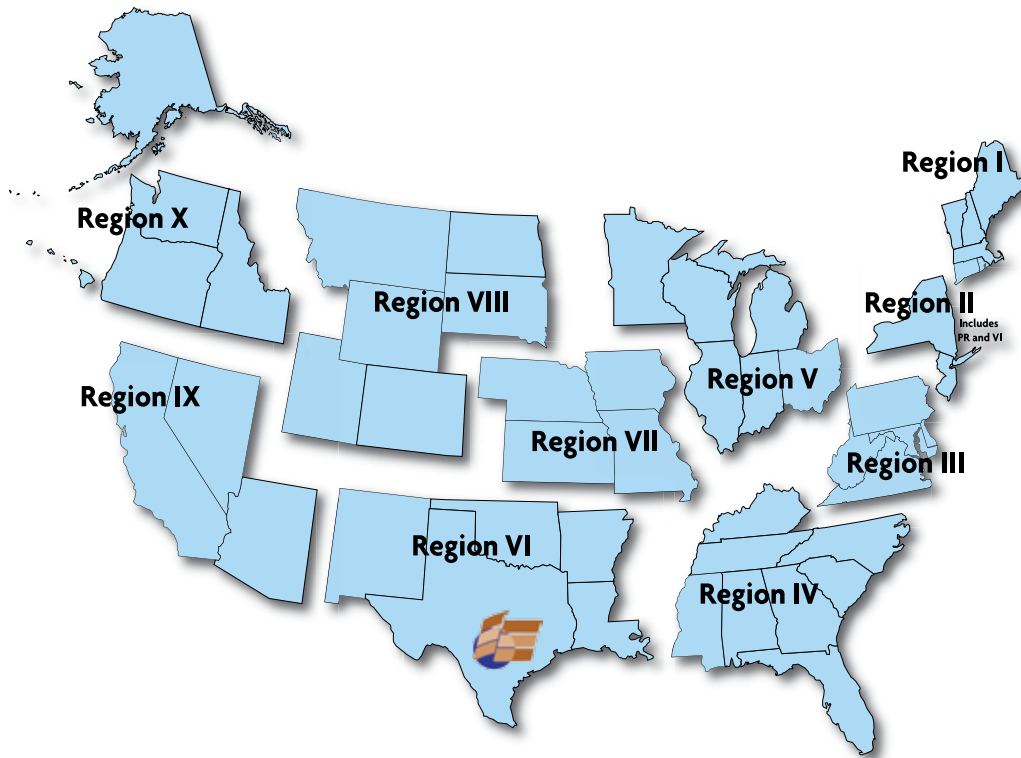
A founding member of the Texas Latino Education Coalition (TLEC), IDRA worked closely with the coalition in 2015 to advance its mission to improve public education for Latino children, which will impact the quality of education for all children, focusing specifically on fair funding, teaching quality, school holding power, and college access and success, and to advocate the rights of Latinos at the local, state and national levels. Members of TLEC include the Cesar E. Chavez Legacy and Educational Foundation, Dr. Hector P. Garcia G.I. Forum, La Fe Policy Research and Education Center, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA), National Council of La Raza (NCLR), ¡PRESENTE!, San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE), Texas Association for Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE), Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC), Texas Center for Education Policy, Texas Hispanics Organized for Political Education (HOPE), Texas League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and Texas NAACP.

SCHOOL CAPACITY BUILDING TO SECURE CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL AND CIVIL RIGHTS

From landmark rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court to civil rights legislation, the right of every child to receive an education free from discrimination is at the heart of our democracy. But realizing this right demands deep commitment and extensive collaboration. IDRA's South Central Collaborative for Equity, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, takes up the charge in partnership with school administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas (federal Region VI). The center has been at the forefront of efforts to protect every child's right to attend school, free from bias or discrimination, for more than three decades.

In 2015, the IDRA SCCE provided technical assistance and training to school districts and campuses in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, and nationally on desegregating educational opportunity in keeping with students'





IDRA Operates One of Ten Equity Assistance Centers Serving the Country

federally-protected educational and civil rights. In Oklahoma, for example, where schools serve students representing more than 70 language groups, IDRA partnered Oklahoma City Public Schools to develop a civil rights (“Lau”) plan to meet the needs of English learners, and with Tulsa Public Schools to improve ESL certification and teacher preparation for serving English learners. IDRA worked with state departments in Arkansas and Texas to strengthen each state’s teacher equity plan—the plan that assures that students of all backgrounds have access to highly effective teachers. Also, in Arkansas, we partnered with the Arkansas State Department of Education, the Arkansas United Community Coalition, the Arkansas Cradle to Prison Pipeline Initiative, and selected public schools across the state to help schools in Little Rock, McGee, Montecello, Jonesboro, Bentonville, Ft. Smith and DeQueen to strengthen home-school connections

and family engagement to better serve immigrant students. In East Texas, we provided training and guidance to school counselors, teachers and students in response to a racial-bullying incident.

In partnership with the 10 Equity Assistance Center regions, including state education agencies, departments of education, comprehensive centers, resource centers and other technical assistance providers, IDRA helped to extend knowledge, reach and impact of desegregation assistance through the annual Office for Civil Rights regional conference, Southern Minority Leadership Conference, Native American Civil Rights Conference, state bilingual/ESL and multicultural education conferences, and other gatherings of importance to the region. The IDRA SCCE brought resources, research, and best practices to thousands of educators across the region through collaboration on conferences, like the Annual Oklahoma Teacher Institute for Multicultural Education and the National Coalition on School Diversity Conference.

IDRA also developed technology-based tools and platforms to extend this reach. IDRA’s crowd-sourced Equity Hub shares resources, and enables educators across the region to share stories of success in improving equity policy and practice. And we assured that the direct voice and perspective of students informed this work, undertaking the creation, administration and analysis of a school climate survey to more than 1,400 students to improve inclusion, access and equity on campus.

The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, serves as a crucial resource to educators and agencies across Federal Region VI and nationally in addressing educational disparities and opportunity gaps and promoting full educational inclusion of all students, regardless of race, sex, gender, or national origin.



WHICH FUNDAMENTALS MATTER

SECURING SOUND GOVERNANCE AND FAIR FUNDING

IDRA and our partners are working to secure the school system fundamentals: effective school governance and school finance equity.

BUILDING A REPLICABLE MODEL OF GOVERNANCE EFFICACY

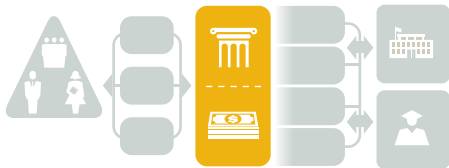
In addition to our work to strengthen school capacity across Federal Region VI, IDRA is partnering with the San Antonio ISD and the McNeil Educational Foundation to develop a leadership pipeline that selects, prepares, places, supports and retains school leaders and transformation teams through professional development of effective turnaround strategies for SIG-eligible schools in San Antonio. The School TurnAround and Reenergizing for Success (STAARS) Leaders project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, launched this year, will provide comprehensive professional development, focused on successful strategies for turnaround campuses with district administrators and support staff, and mentor coaches in the district. IDRA specialists will visit five targeted campuses; and provide differentiated professional development: school-based, job embedded, and customized to each campus with one-on-one, onsite dialogues, problem-solving sessions, and mentoring and coaching for school leaders.

FOSTERING NATIONAL RESEARCH ON SCHOOL FINANCE EQUITY

“There needs to be a transformation involving policymakers shifting the view of these children as ‘their children’ and to embrace these kids as ‘our children.’ There needs to be a view supported by resources and high expectations, that every English language learner, every Latino child, every African American child, is capable of excelling academically.”

Dr. Rogelio Sáenz

Dean of the College of Public Policy and Peter Flawn Professor of Demography at the University of Texas at San Antonio, panelist, IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program Symposium, New Research on Securing Educational Equity and Excellence for English Language Learners in Texas Secondary Schools, February 2, 2015

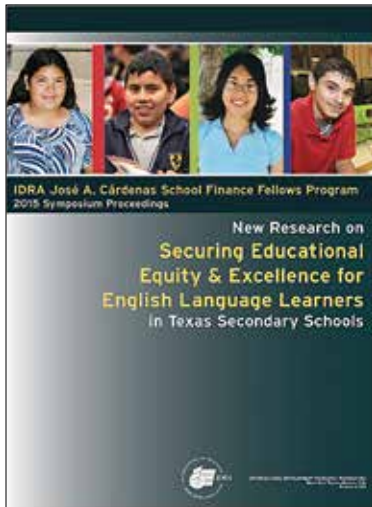


MUST BE SECURED?

The IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program was established in 2013 by IDRA to honor the memory of IDRA founder, Dr. José Angel Cárdenas.

The goal of the program is to engage the nation's most promising researchers in investigating school finance solutions and to assure that the nation continues to have a cadre of researchers with the experience and background to take up the most pressing state and national questions in school funding. Under the leadership of Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo

Montecel, IDRA President & CEO, the IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program focuses on and funds school finance research that builds cross-disciplinary and inter-sector perspectives on equity. IDRA selects one or more fellows per year who dedicate themselves to a period of intense study and writing in school finance. IDRA holds a biennial symposium that includes release of the fellows program paper. The paper and findings are published in the symposium proceedings and disseminated to the education research and policymaker community.



IDRA's inaugural symposium, New Research on Securing Educational Equity and Excellence for English Language Learners in Texas Secondary Schools, was convened on February 2, 2015, in partnership with the Office of the President and the Center on Mexican American Studies and Research at Our Lady of the Lake University. The event gathered 80 education and community leaders, and experts in law and education research around the critical question of how to improve secondary education quality and access

for English learners. We shared findings from new, original research on the status of education and funding equity for ELL students by Dr. Oscar Jimenez-Castellanos, IDRA's inaugural José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellow with participants in person and nationally, via webcast, in partnership with NowCast-SA.

Mariarena Rivera has been selected as the 2016 IDRA School Finance Fellow, and will study state investment in public school facilities and develop recommendations for policymakers on equitable and successful approaches to facilities funding, nationwide.



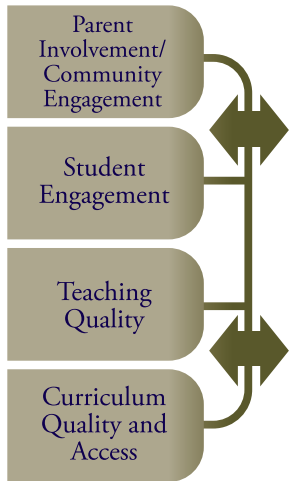
"Why do it now? It's the law. It's not something that is really a choice. Since the 1964 Civil Rights Act Title VI that said you have to grant children meaningful access to an education."

Gerardo Rojas

Civil Rights Staff Attorney, Office for Civil Rights, Dallas, panelist, IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Symposium, New Research on Securing Educational Equity and Excellence, February 2, 2015

WHERE DO WE FOCUS CHANGE?

School System Indicators



CONCENTRATING ON KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS ACROSS THE CONTINUUM: FROM EARLY EDUCATION TO COLLEGE READINESS

IDRA and our partners are focusing on four key elements: Parent Involvement and Community Engagement, Student Engagement, Teaching Quality, and Curriculum Quality and Access.

“The Intercultural Development Research Association developed a family-leadership-in-education model that brings parents together to talk and focus on how to improve the school. Instead of promoting a deficit view of families, this approach is participatory and honors the culture and language of the parent.”

Caralee J. Adams

Education Week, January 4, 2015



Maria Ludi Ortega, teacher coordinator, IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program at South San Antonio High School (center) with student tutors, Moises Ortega, Malarie Quiroga, and Desiree Salazar (left to right) as they listen to a NowCast-SA livestream of their presentation and student interviews at the 2015 Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute™—*Liderazgo familiar en pro del éxito estudiantil*... Families Engaging Each Other to Improve Schools.

PLACING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHANGE

In partnership with community-based organizations and public schools in South Texas, IDRA is undertaking a multi-year initiative, funded by a U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) grant, that examines how innovative family engagement practices improve educational opportunity, equity, and outcomes in high poverty schools and economically-distressed communities, where a large number of students are English language learners.



CHANGE?

“When Aurelio M. Montemayor of the Intercultural Development Research Association participated in an education town hall meeting in a Rio Grande Valley colonia, he asked parents if they want their child to go to college. Every hand went up.”

Steve Taylor

Rio Grande Guardian, November 6, 2015



The power of multi-generational leadership: Families gathered for the third annual Comunitario *Noche Familiar* (family evening) held in the backyard of the Arise South Tower community center in Hidalgo County, Texas, November 19, 2015. The meeting was opened by Eva Carranza, current and founding Comunitario president (photo, above). Youth at the event (pictured here from front left: Elias Melchor, Laura Escalante, Maricruz Azuara, Ashely Rodríguez, Linda Martínez, José Guzmán, Rey Guzmán, and Emanuel Rodríguez), with strong support from their families, are all on college track and working on issues in their community from housing, to health access, to education quality.



IDRA’s Principles for Family Leadership underlie our i3 research and Comunitario model and are aligned with the U.S. Department of Education’s Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships:

- **Linked to Learning:** Projects are about graduation requirements, preparation for college, etc.
- **Relational:** Created and sponsored by grassroots organizations with strong family connections and authentic outreach.
- **Developmental:** Families receive monthly training on educational issues and develop projects.
- **Collective/Collaborative:** Meetings are participatory with critical thinking resulting in projects that engage families.
- **Interactive:** Projects are leadership labs and practical application of the information.

In 2015, Comunitario family leaders across the South Texas colonias—from Rio Grande City, and San Benito, to La Joya, Brownsville, and Las Milpas, Texas—became increasingly involved in regional leadership to promote quality education for all students. Comunitario leaders met with new school administrators as part of their professional development at Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD at the invitation of Superintendent Dr. Daniel King; convened family nights to examine school data; conducted family-to-family surveys; promoted cross-generational leadership through youth education projects; and developed joint school-community strategies to improve graduation rates on college preparation. This family and community leadership model is demonstrating that school change from within, in collaboration and connection with families and with the broader community from without, can result in excellent education for all children. The project is producing empirical evidence of increased student achievement leading to high school graduation and college graduation of low-income, primarily Hispanic students, including English language learners, from the colonias of South Texas.



“I know firsthand what a difference this program can make.”

Rey A. Saldaña

San Antonio City Councilmember, welcoming school districts from around the country at the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Annual Institute, October 9, 2015. Councilmember Saldaña was himself a third grade tutee in the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program when he attended Olivarez Elementary, South San Antonio ISD.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: VALUING YOUTH WITHOUT EXCEPTION

A proven dropout prevention model born in San Antonio now serves youth in Northeastern, Midwestern, Southwestern and Western U.S. cities.

Since its inception in San Antonio in 1984, the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has kept 33,600 students in school, young people who were previously at risk of dropping out. The lives of more than 661,000 children, families and educators have been positively impacted by the program. Results show that tutors stay in school, improve academic performance and school attendance and are more likely to advance to higher education.

During the 2014–15 school year, with a grant from The Coca-Cola Foundation, IDRA teamed up with 19 secondary and 16 elementary schools in eight school districts to deliver the program to students in California, Illinois, Michigan, New York and Texas (Chicago Public Schools; Detroit Public Schools; Ector County CISD; La Joya ISD; Los Angeles USD; New York City PS; Sacramento City USD; and South San Antonio ISD). Together, we extended the reach and impact for youth, by opening doors to college and career through partnerships with colleges, universities and businesses, including: University of Texas – Pan American; University of Texas Permian Basin; University of California Long Beach; Washington, D.C., and World of Coke; Lehman College, Bronx, New York City; Palo Alto College – San Antonio.

White House Initiative names Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program a Hispanic Ed Bright Spot (September, 2015)

“There has been notable progress in Hispanic educational achievement, and it is due to the efforts of these Bright Spots in Hispanic Education, programs and organizations working throughout the country to help Hispanic students reach their full potential,” Alejandra Ceja, Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

As a Bright Spot, the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is part of a national online catalog of programs that invest in key education priorities for Hispanics. The announcement was made by Alejandra Ceja, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics at the launch of Hispanic Heritage Month and in honor of the initiative’s 25th anniversary in Washington, D.C. The White House initiative named these 230 Bright Spots to encourage collaboration in sharing data-driven approaches, promising practices, peer advice and effective partnerships, ultimately resulting in increased support for the educational attainment of the Hispanic community, from cradle-to-career.



WHAT STUDENTS SAY:

Because of you, I didn't give up. "I know my guys will grow to become great men because they have such a bright spirit. One of my goals in life is for someone to walk up to me and say, 'Because of you, I didn't give up.' That is what I'm trying to accomplish in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, so that maybe by motivating my kids now they will be able to say that to me in the future."—**Nathaniel Duarte**, 11th Grade, Odessa High School, Ector County ISD, Texas, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program—2015 Essay Contest Winner: High School First Place

"After getting to know each and every one of them, there is nothing in the world that will make you quit that program."—**Jerelie Márquez**, 12th Grade, Odessa High School, Ector County ISD, Texas, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winner: High School Second Place



"This program took me from being a D student to a B+ student. I thought that I was never going to become a leader, but God has given me the opportunity to experience what it feels like!"
—**José Rodríguez** (pictured here), 8th Grade, Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr. PS/MS279, New York City, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winner: Middle School Second Place

I want to be looked at as a role model, responsible student, and community leader. I get very excited when we take college tours as part of our field trips because I am now looking at a teaching career in my future. I would have never thought of becoming an educator and making a difference in the lives of others. Because of this program, my life has meaning and prospective future."—**Agustina García**, 7th Grade, Dr. Javier Saenz Middle School, La Joya ISD, Texas, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winner: Middle School First Place



At this year's Leadership Day at University of Texas - Permian Basin in Odessa (March 27, 2015), Odessa High School tutors at Ector County ISD toured the campus with college students, and UTPB offered each student a \$500 scholarship to the university when they graduate from high school. [Pictured here with Teacher Coordinator, Kerini Joy, an English III teacher and Bronchettes coach at OHS.] Students tutor at Goliad and Sam Houston elementary schools.

IDRA COCA-COLA VALUED YOUTH PROGRAM 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Commitment:** Spans 35 schools in five states: Chicago Public Schools; Detroit Public Schools; Ector County CISD; La Joya ISD; Los Angeles USD; New York City PS; Sacramento City USD; and South San Antonio ISD. Carried out in partnership with: University of Texas – Pan American; University of Texas Permian Basin; University of California Long Beach; Washington, D.C., and World of Coke; Lehman College, Bronx, New York City; Palo Alto College – San Antonio
- **Reach:** Since its founding, program benefits 646,000 children, youth, families and educators
- **Demographics:** 77.5 percent are Hispanic, 17.8 percent are African American, 3.4 percent are White, and 0.05 are Native American; 85.8 percent of students are economically disadvantaged
- **Awards:** White House Initiative, National Bright Spot; KLRN, American Graduate Champion
- **Impact:** 98 percent of tutors stay in school

GROWING A NEW GENERATION OF TEACHERS

Across the South, public schools need skilled, committed teachers, who are passionate about innovation and engaging all students. Through its Transition to Teaching programs, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, IDRA and its college, community and K–12 partners are not only meeting the demand for skilled bilingual teachers, but building a cadre of educators who are emerging leaders in meeting the needs of diverse learners and are an asset to their campuses and communities.

Through IDRA's Transition to Teaching programs, we are partnering with over 20 K–12 schools, colleges and universities to meet this need. Together, we are preparing a new generation of teachers in math, science, bilingual/ESL and special education. IDRA's Caminos project prepares mid-career professionals and recent graduates as teachers with EC-6 bilingual/ESL certification with an optional certification in special education. Through Math and Science Smart (MASS), we are preparing a critical mass of middle and high school math and science teachers with ESL supplemental endorsement for students in 10 high-need Texas school districts. Through Teachers for Today and Tomorrow (T³), IDRA is selecting, recruiting and retaining competent teachers in multicultural settings who have a passion for teaching and making a difference; developing a curriculum to certify teachers in bilingual/ESL and STEM subjects in mostly Latino communities; and providing a comprehensive online and personalized support system to retain teachers for a minimum of three years. T³ is also expanding the candidate pool to include paraprofessionals, a basic feature of a “grow your own” teacher recruitment approach.

Community of Educators

IDRA's online Community of Educators network complements in-person professional development sessions and coaching and mentoring. The network also provides teachers with new research and data, and encourages the exchange of lessons and experiences to support work in classrooms and on campuses. Three hundred and seventy members strong, this cross-disciplinary network of teachers earning certification in bilingual/ESL, STEM, mathematics and special education, is a place for exchanging resources, curricula, proven practices and stories of success.

2015 Partner School Districts, Colleges and Universities

- Dallas ISD, Donna ISD, Eagle Pass ISD, Ector County ISD, Edgewood ISD, Edinburg ISD, Fort Worth ISD, George Gervin Academy, Harlandale ISD, Higgs Carter King Charter School, Houston ISD, IDEA Public Schools, La Joya ISD, Lamesa ISD, Lubbock ISD, Lytle ISD, McAllen ISD, Mission ISD, Pasadena ISD, Pearsall ISD, Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, Plainview ISD, Poteet ISD, Presidio ISD, Rio Grande CCISD and additional high-need school districts in the San Antonio and Laredo area
- Alamo Colleges, Our Lady of the Lake University, South Texas College, St. Thomas University, Tarleton State University, Texas A&M University – San Antonio, Texas State University, Texas Woman's University and University of North Texas

Coaching and mentoring also is at the core of IDRA's Math Smart! model. Designed to help schools improve mathematics learning and close achievement gaps in highly diverse districts, Math Smart! builds on teachers' strengths to deepen their content knowledge and helps them to capitalize on the unique cultural and linguistic strengths that students bring to the classroom.



Through IDRA's T³ project (2011–2016), 111 teachers, to date, have been certified to teach in high-need schools. Across IDRA's Transition to Teaching programs, including BECA, T-Texas, Transition to Teaching, MASS, Caminos, and T³, 745 highly-qualified teachers have been certified to teach in high-need schools.

IDRA TRANSITION TO TEACHING PROGRAMS

— WHAT TEACHERS SAY:



“In addition to impacting my students, I was determined to impact my campus and peers as well. Regularly, I attended trainings and shared the knowledge I gained with fellow teachers. One training I found most informative—IDRA’s T³ ESL training. My excitement

regarding what IDRA facilitator, Paula Johnson, taught us motivated me to share with my campus mentors. They sensed my enthusiasm and asked me to train our grade level leads on campus and provide them the tools I was given.”—**Pamela Davis**, June, 2015, IDRA Teachers for Today & Tomorrow (T³) graduate with Alamo Colleges ACP, is now a kindergarten teacher with Heritage Elementary School—Southside ISD.

“I have often seen and heard of students who fall through the cracks and drop out of school because they could not identify with their teachers. My personal and educational experiences empower me to reach out to students and help them become educated, productive and successful. I’m so glad [programs like these] exist so that I can become a teacher and make my dreams come true”—**Elvia Rosie Alaniz**, June, 2015, a graduate of IDRA Teachers for Today & Tomorrow (T³) Program with South Texas College is a first grade bilingual teacher with Joaquin Castro Elementary School in Mission, Texas.



“These are the kinds of conversations we need to be having and encourage others to be having. That we bring high quality experiences to students a 21st century world. We need conversations about how we put good education in front of kids that prepares them for college and for life.”

Dr. Bradley Scott

(pictured above, third from right), Preparing a New Generation of Teachers, August, 13, 2015, at IDRA.

IDRA President & CEO, Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel hosted Dr. Kent McGuire, President of the Southern Education Foundation, for a visit in late summer of 2015 to look together with SEF at what must be in place to prepare a new generation of teachers across the American South. (Right to left: Dr. Kristin Grayson, IDRA; Laurie Posner, IDRA; Dr. Lorena Claeys, UTSA; Dr. Belinda Bustos Flores, UTSA; Dr. Kent McGuire, SEF; Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA; Dr. Bradley Scott, IDRA; Rosie Castro, community leader; David Hinojosa, IDRA).

PROMOTING CURRICULUM QUALITY AND ACCESS, FROM EARLY EDUCATION TO COLLEGE READINESS

Since its creation of one of the nation’s first bilingual early childhood education curricula (AMANECER – New Day multicultural framework), IDRA has designed and developed leading-edge research, curricula, professional development and family engagement strategies grounded in best practices for early learning. Through project READ, a research grant from the U.S. Department of Education, IDRA developed a Centers of Excellence model, which guides current early education (birth-8) initiatives. Centers of Excellence achieved profound results leading to transformation of teaching and learning, curriculum quality, effective classroom materials, the organization of classrooms, family engagement, and authentic home-school relationships for ethnically, racially, and diverse children, English language learners and low-income children. Through learning experiences in Centers of Excellence, IDRA’s research found that children are not only ready to learn, but eager to enter kindergarten and succeed.



“Thank you once again for having been such an important part of our first major Planting the Seeds event. The sessions were well received and the location was so accessible to our participants. We are truly grateful for our partnership with you and IDRA. We look forward to our continued partnership.”

Fred Cañenas

Manager, Early Childhood Well-Being, Family Service Association. Planting the SEEDS is a collaborative project with FSA, VOICES, IDRA, SAEYC and other partner organizations in San Antonio to build capacity for children’s advocacy in San Antonio and in Texas. IDRA collaborated on this initiative through its SEED project to host the Children’s Advocacy Training on October 15, 2015.

early education resource for early childhood educators, researchers, university professors, teachers and parents. IDRA also is digitizing the *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* content. We are capturing dramatic readings of the ten storybooks that leap off the page. Nine iPhone and Android mobile app prototypes have been published in app stores online. IDRA’s *Semillitas de*

Aprendizaje™ Storytelling & Storyreading Videos DVD is published, and IDRA has brought these to educators live and through online platforms. A storybook and translations of *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* also are being completed for the Otoe and Pawnee nations in Oklahoma.

Through IDRA’s Seeding Equity in Education through Dialogue (SEED) project, with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, IDRA is working with family, community, and K-12 and higher education leaders to strengthen policy and practice that improves family engagement and early learning for children, ages birth to 8, in San Antonio. In 2015, IDRA brought together local and regional family, youth and education leaders to focus on the role of family leadership in student success at the Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute.™ IDRA kicked off *Concilio Comunitario* – Community Council at the Institute and livestreamed the convening in collaboration with NowCast-SA, connecting family leaders participating in person and online through watch parties hosted with partners at ARISE, Proyecto Juan Diego, Desarrollo Humano, and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD. In addition,

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, IDRA’s *Semillitas de Aprendizaje™* books and resources are responding to the need for culturally and linguistically relevant early childhood materials that are bilingual for the more than a quarter million students in Texas and millions across the nation who are learning English as a first or second language. From bilingual big books to small readers, new curricula and a cartitas (“letters home”) series, *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* is designed to help teachers foster literacy, numeracy and social-emotional development, while valuing children’s home language and culture. In 2015, IDRA expanded the development of interactive *Semillitas de Aprendizaje* bilingual learning apps and the dissemination of educational materials, through the website

www.semillitasdeaprendizaje.com, bringing the bilingual books and supplemental curricula to a wider audience. The website, videos, podcasts and newsletter articles on effective pedagogy for English learners produced by IDRA provide a critical



IDRA collaborated with Univision to convene the second annual FERIA Educación Educativa, focused on family engagement in education; and with the San Antonio Jewish Community Center, local nonprofits and public agencies on Diversity Conference 2015 for more than 300 early educators. IDRA also partnered with business and community leaders to make the case for high quality early education, disseminating widely the *Impact of Education on Economic Development in Texas*—a white paper developed in 2014 with the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, for which IDRA served as a co-author with SAHCC and the University of Texas at San Antonio. IDRA's work on building data platforms and tools to support family leadership under SEED was featured at the 2015 Socrata Open Data Summit on October 27, 2015, in Washington, D.C.



AMPLIFYING VOICE: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TAKES CENTER STAGE AT THE ANNUAL IDRA LA SEMANA DEL NIÑO PARENT INSTITUTE

The Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute™ serves as the nation's premier gathering place for teachers, administrators and parents involved in early childhood bilingual education. Participants explore, assess, and reflect on research-based, effective practices that lead to children's success. They attend workshops about creating opportunities for children to develop a love for reading while they are learning mathematics,

art, music and science. But it is a conference with a nontraditional approach. At the institute, parent participants, instead of serving as the audience to educational specialists and “experts,” present sessions on the work they are undertaking in partnership with other family leaders, teachers and administrators that is proving transformational. The institute is designed to be a forum for parents to demonstrate their roles as decision-makers and as presenters, which are the two highest components of IDRA's family leadership model in education. Guadalupe Meneses with the Raul Yzaguirre School for Success (pictured, left) speaks out about the need for regional networking at launch of *Concilio Comunitario* at the 2015 parent institute.



Storyteller and author Oralia H. Lamas, pictured here, shares a dramatic reading from IDRA's Semillitas de Aprendizaje books at the second Annual FERIA de Educación. IDRA partnered with Univision in convening La FERIA on October 17, 2015, in San Antonio at San Antonio College's Scobee Education Center through its SEED and Semillitas projects.

“You need to celebrate the small steps and don't give up.”

Josette Saxton

Senior Policy Associate, Texans Care for Children, Panelist, Children's Advocacy at Planting the SEEDS, October 2015

RESEARCH ON COLLEGE READINESS CURRICULA

Nationally and locally, IDRA is examining policies and practices that impact secondary school curricula, to assure that all students have access to the courses and preparation they need to enroll and succeed in post-secondary education. With a grant from the Greater Texas Foundation, IDRA's Ready Texas: Stakeholder Convening is bringing together policymakers, researchers, educators, family, student, community leaders and youth advocates to gather input on the design of a statewide study how graduation plan changes in Texas impact college readiness.

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS



2015 Voices for Children Cam Messina Child Advocacy

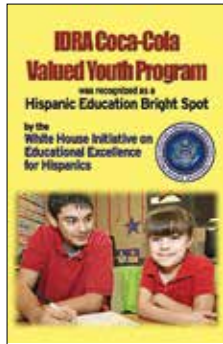
IDRA President & CEO, María Robledo Montecel and State Representative Ruth Jones-McClendon were recognized by Voices for Children San Antonio on May 13, 2015, with the 2015 Cam Messina Child Advocacy Award for leadership on behalf of children.



“When you think about Cuca, there are so many labels, CEO of IDRA, a mother, a researcher, a scholar, an incredible person in finding the best staff you could find anywhere. Over the years, IDRA has been an incredible place of innovation, and Cuca has been the chief strategist—pushing that strategy forward so that children are the beneficiaries.”

Rosie Castro

Voices for Children 2015 Cam Messina Child Advocacy Award event, May 13, 2015 (Pictured here (center) with Dr. Robledo Montecel and IDRA staff)



2015 National Hispanic Education “Bright Spot” by White House Initiative

The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was named a national Hispanic Education “Bright Spot” by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics in September 2015.



2015 KLRN American Graduate Champion

KLRN American Graduate Day celebrated Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Nick Longo and Graham Westin, and the Honorable Julián Castro, as 2015 American Graduate Champions, October 3, 2015.

“Congratulations to all the IDRA staff members, directors and CEO and Coca-Cola for funding this long valued productive program. I am proud for each of you for your part in producing, maintaining, and cheerleading the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program ... and their teachers and families.”

Judith R. Gates

President, ITEC of Sapient Solutions, September 17, 2015



COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Our Lady of the Lake University, May 7, 2015

Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel

President & CEO, Intercultural Development Research Association

It is a great honor to be invited to speak at this commencement. Our Lady of the Lake University is a place where I learned much and is a community to which I owe much. Back in 1970, Sister Jane Anne Slater, then a young faculty member in the chemistry department, became my work-study supervisor when I arrived at 411 S.W. 24th Street and moved into Providence Hall. My deepest gratitude and admiration go to Sister Jane Anne Slater as she steps down as the eighth president of Our Lady of the Lake University next month and steps up in August as the first woman Chancellor of the Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio. Let’s thank her and give her a round of applause.

And good evening, trustees. I had the unique privilege of serving Our Lady of the Lake as a three-term trustee, and I know some of the challenges and the opportunities that come with your service. Thank you.

Greetings also to faculty and staff. Your work and dedication is what makes this university, rooted in Providence, a place to grow, to graduate and to lead.

A todas las familias y amigos de los graduados, felicidades! Sin el amor, el apoyo y quizá algunos empujoncitos por parte de Uds., estos graduados no estarían aquí.

Members of the 2015 Graduating Class of Our Lady of the Lake University, please take a moment now to look behind you and around you to your family and friends and thank them: your mom, your dad, your brothers, your sisters, your primos, your abuelitos, your padrinos—those who are here today and those who are not. Your family and friends hold you up. And held by them, you are lifted to where you will go and to whom you will be. Your family and friends are the energy and the spirit of who you are and who you are becoming—the special *levadura*, the leavening, that makes you rise and be strong.

“So, be successful, live your lives, claim the world, change the narrative, and leave the world better than you found it.”



As you all realize, today's celebration marks the fact that one chapter of your life—the one with classes, study groups, homework, fun nights, long nights—is now written. This chapter in the story of your life is now part of the larger story of Our Lady of the Lake University, of your family, of your neighborhood, of the great and ongoing story that is being written about our world.

Some of you may know that, today, scientists and scholars in the fields of astronomy, evolutionary biology, history and theology have begun to recognize that the world we inhabit, our universe, is not so much like a machine, as Western thinkers once imagined, but more like a story.

The world is an always-unfolding narrative, an epic of ever-emerging complexity and creativity, bursting with fantastic characters, profound relationships, surprise twists, and joy as well as tragedy. Ours is a world in motion, a world of intimate connection—a world that is story.

This evening, in your very own way with an ingenuity that is identical to that of no one else, you have contributed one more chapter to that story. And, God willing, there are many chapters still to come, still left for you to write. This future is what I'd like to discuss with you today, and if you'll allow me, I'll start by telling you a piece of my own story.

Some of you grew up like me in families or in barrios where not many had the opportunity to go to school, much less to college. My parents, Ismael Robledo Martínez and Paula Benavides Robledo, crossed the Rio Grande into the Texas side of the river and made their lives as immigrants, with little schooling, in a new land, and in a new language. They settled into the northern banks of the Rio Grande on the U.S. side, close enough to Mexico that, on Mexican Independence Day, I could hear the music and the sounds that came from *las Fiestas Patrias*.

We visited my grandmother, my *abuelita* Albinita, on the Mexican side of the river every Sunday, and I grew up with *rancheras* and Mexican polkas and mariachi music and Spanish all around me. *Rancheras* and polkas and mariachis accompanied us on the radio on our long treks to Fresno and Selma California to pick grapes and peaches.

When my second grade teacher in Fresno decided that my name was Mary instead of María del Refugio and when she said that I was somewhat smart but too shy because I did not talk in class, nobody in my family paid any attention. After all, we were coming back to the borderlands of Texas where everyone knew that my name was not Mary and where being quiet was a sign of respect and not of shyness or lack of smarts.

At 17, I left my home at 307 S. Buena Vista in the barrio of El Chacon in Laredo, Texas. Laredo—or properly speaking Los Dos *Laredos* as these borderlands were called at the time—was what I knew. This was a time, by the way, before the narco-traffickers destroyed people and communities, and before ICE officials detained women and children seeking refuge. It was a different time, a different sort of place than now. And it was mine.

I came to San Antonio, and I was bewildered. The city seemed huge. Our Lady of the Lake University, where I had enrolled after judging other local universities to be cold and uninviting, became foreign to me. We were not allowed to cross the 24th Street bridge into the real West Side. It was dangerous, we were told. My classes, especially my English classes with Sr. Lora Ann, were harder than anything I had experienced. And the A's that I was used to were about to become C's. And most especially, I missed home. I missed my world.



“Wherever you find yourself, I urge you to lay claim to a new place in the world, in this world of great motion and intricate connections, because you are needed there—to serve others.”

A few weeks into the semester, a group of Mariachi’s came into the university cafeteria playing their violins and guitars and belting a song. I don’t remember what they played or why they were there, but I do remember this: Every emotion I had in my body welled up suddenly, and I exploded into tears. For a brief moment, I was home again. But the three-hour drive from Laredo to San Antonio seemed like crossing the world at that time, and I felt so far away, in such a strange place. I felt like I didn’t belong.

Eventually, of course, after time spent working, making friends, and building a sense of myself, I would discover that I did belong at the Lake. But I never stopped belonging to my borderland world, to my home and to my family.

In fact, looking on it now, I would describe my life as standing at the intersection of ever-expanding circles of “being home.” At any one time in the story of my life, I experience belonging in spaces that are known and those that are unknown, in the places where I am told that I belong and in the places where I am told that I do not.

As I have weaved my story by living it, there have been moments when, swept up in the motion and the power of interconnection, I was suddenly stopped in my tracks by a barrier, a category, that was meant to govern my place in the world.

Some person, some institution, or some convention would tell me, “No, Cuca, here you do not belong.” Or perhaps worse, I might be told: “Yes, Cuca, you have distinguished yourself, risen above that other place you come from. Now you belong here, and you cannot belong there.”

When a 17-year-old César Chávez joined the U.S. Navy in 1944, he found that the only job available for a Mexican American sailor was as a deck-hand or painter. He completed his military service, worked in the fields, organized communities and showed the world “*Si Se Puede*.”

Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history, was raised in the South Bronx, felt overwhelmed with the demands of Princeton University, claimed her belonging through Puerto Rican groups on campus that were her anchor in what she

describes as a “new and different world” and graduated summa cum laude from that Ivy League institution.

Shirley Ann Jackson was born into segregation but went on to become the first African American woman to earn a doctorate at MIT. She stayed at MIT to open doors for others and to work on elementary particle theory. She became the 18th president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Graduates, as some of you already know so painfully well, there will always be those who insist that what you wish to write is impossible or wrong, that you and yours do not belong, that you are “other.” But please do not believe it. Have courage and claim belonging.

Whatever life calls you to do, claim space for yourself and for others, claim new categories, new ways of seeing and being in the world. Always, claim your past, your present and your future. Wherever you land in this beautifully diverse world, I urge you to claim your belonging, even in places where you are told that you don’t belong.

You may be told that you don’t belong because you are a female in a male world, or because you are Latino in a White world, or because you are poor in a rich world, because you are

Muslim in a Christian world or vice versa, or because your parents didn't go to college, or because you are from the West Side or from a colonia, or you have an accent, or your skin is too dark, or you love differently than others, or you don't have papers.

You may be told that you are meant to work and not to think, or that you are too much of an activist or that you are too passionate or that you are an idealist and should be a realist.

Here's a handy insight to guide you as you face these charges: whatever they tell you is the reason that you don't belong is precisely the reason that you must belong.


It is the element of newness and the seed of change that you have to offer in places and spaces that seem foreign. Be this newness and seed of change not only for the sake of saying you accomplished something but in order to bring new possibilities into existence. Here's one example where change and new possibilities are needed now.

Texas towns used to display signs that read "Dogs and Mexicans Not Allowed." That these signs are no longer visible does not mean that opportunities are a fact in the lives of most Mexican Americans. Mexican Americans still have the worst access to early childhood education and healthcare and quality neighborhood schools and affordable colleges. Until we change this, that reality affects you and me, your families and mine, and those who will come after us.

Wherever you find yourself, I urge you to lay claim to a new place in the world, in this world of great motion and intricate connections, because you are needed there—to serve others.

So, be successful, live your lives, claim the world, change the narrative, and leave the world better than you found it.

Congratulations 2015 Graduating Class of Our Lady of the Lake University.

Que Dios los cuide y bendiga siempre. 

EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES: NEW TOOLS, RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS



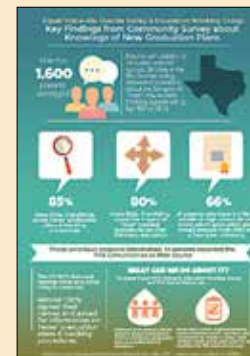
New Research on Education of English Learners in Middle School and High School

This proceedings report of the IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program symposium shares key insights from the robust discussion among the along with the research study by Dr. Jimenez-Castellanos. It also provides recommendations for policymakers, educators, community and business leaders, and parents.



Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ Storytelling & Storyreading Video DVD

Both storytelling and storyreading support learning in the classroom and provide different kinds of literacy experiences for students. This DVD is the newest feature of IDRA's bilingual supplemental early childhood curriculum. It contains the 10 Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ stories told in two styles: storyreading (in English) and storytelling (in Spanish). Each story in Spanish includes an opening gathering song and a closing song.



Community Survey about House Bill 5 Curriculum Tracking Plans—Key Findings

The Equal Voice-Rio Grande Valley Network surveyed more than 1,600 parents across 24 school districts and 30 cities about their knowledge about Texas' curriculum tracking policies and new graduation requirements. IDRA analyzed the survey data and developed a report with the survey's key findings, implications, and recommended next action steps for communities.

To learn more about these resources, please visit: <http://bit.ly/IDRAarResources>



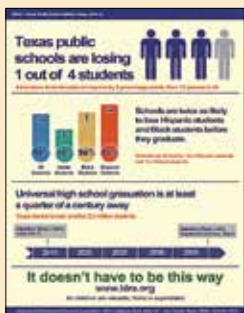
Amicus Brief for Equitable School Funding

This amicus brief was filed by the national Education Law Center along with several Texas organizations in support of low-income and ELL students urging the court to affirm the trial court's ruling. IDRA provided expert analysis and testimony finding that the system is inequitable and fails to provide adequate levels of funding for educating ELL and low-income students. Joining ELC on the amicus brief were the Center for Public Policy Priorities, Mexican American School Board Members Association (MASBA), San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Texas Appleseed, Texas Association for Bilingual Education, Texas HOPE, and Texas NAACP.



Supporting Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools

As schools opened their doors for a new school year, IDRA released a new eBook as a reminder that public schools, by law, must serve all children.



Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2014-15

This annual report of IDRA statewide research on attrition in Texas—the only independent study, using consistent methodology and spanning more than two decades of longitudinal data—includes statewide and county findings as well as disaggregated findings by student groups. In addition the interactive and searchable report are a supplemental analysis by region, maps, forecast analysis, overview of the state's report, rates for ELLs, and comparison of Texas data with other states.

IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute 2015 Videos

Set of five videos on YouTube from IDRA's institute connecting families, educators and community groups across Texas.

IDRA Opportunity Matters Roundtable with Dr. Paul Gorski, "An Equity Literacy Approach to Poverty and Education"

On-demand webinar with a presentation of Dr. Gorski's work, followed by discussion.

Texas Underfunds ELL Education; Impacts Student Achievement Videos

Set of five videos on YouTube from IDRA's ELL symposium held in person and via livecast.

Building Powerful Family Leadership for Educational Success

Presentation of IDRA's i3 model and research at the AERA conference by Aurelio Montemayor and Nancy F. Chavkin of Texas State University.

Tools for the Texas Supreme Court School Finance Hearing

Key resources and a social media dashboard automatically providing the latest news stories, live tweets, etc.

What Tutors Have to Say about the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

Pinterest board highlighting tutors' statements about their experiences in the program.

IDRA Semillitas de Aprendizaje™ Resources for Bilingual Early Childhood

eBook presenting components of the supplemental curriculum.

Amicus Brief in U.S. Supreme Court Case: Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin

Encourages U.S. Supreme Court to consider systemic challenges facing Latino and African American students.

Celebrating our 2014-15 IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Tutors

eBook with photos from the program sites in five U.S. regions.

IDRA Coca Cola Valued Youth Program Dropout Prevention that Works Video

Outlines the program's core components and provides guidance for campus and classroom implementation.

Bilingual Tool on the New Texas Graduation Requirements

Overview of the new state requirements to assist families in navigating endorsement options to select pathways that fit their goals.

Texas Can Fund Schools Equitably

Infographic from IDRA's analyses showing significant variation in funding levels in local, property-wealthy vs. property poor public school districts.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As of August 31, 2015

Assets

Total Current Assets	\$ 996,090
Assets Designated for Development and Research	14,638,479
Other Assets	155,126
Total Assets	15,789,695

Liabilities and Net Assets

Total current liabilities	142,375
Board Designated OPEB *	217,694
Net Assets-undesignated	284,048
Net Assets-designated for development and research	14,420,785
Net Assets-temporarily restricted	724,793
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 15,789,695

* Other post-employment benefits (OPEB) as designated by the IDRA Board of Directors.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year ended August 31, 2015

Support and Revenue

Foundations and governmental	\$ 3,234,292
Program Revenue	462,369
Investment Income	(87,693)
Total Support and Revenue	3,608,968

Expenses

Program Services	4,053,993
Management and General	83,883
Total Expenses	4,137,876

Change in net assets

Change in net assets from operating activities	(528,908)
Non-Operating (OPEB)	204,191
Total Change in net assets	(324,717)
Net Assets, beginning	15,754,343
Net Assets, ending	\$ 15,429,626

The Statement of Financial Position as of August 31, 2015 and the Statement of Activities for the year ended August 31, 2015 are part of IDRA's financial statements. The complete audited financial statements are available upon request to IDRA.

ABOUT IDRA

The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, private non-profit organization dedicated to assuring 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. Each year, IDRA works hand-in-hand with thousands of educators, community members and families. All of our work stems from an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.



MISSION

The Intercultural Development Research Association 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.

STRATEGY Be a leading national voice for action and change that catalyzes educational opportunity through integrated research, policy and practice.



IDRA Board of Directors

(left to right): Mr. Leo Zuñiga, Dr. Ricardo Fernandez, Mrs. Rosalinda González, Mr. Othón Medina (Vice Chair), Mr. Jesse Treviño, Mr. David Benson, Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel (President & CEO), Mr. William Acosta, Mr. Juventino Guerra, Jr. (Board Chair), Dr. Max Castillo, Dr. Sally J. Andrade (Secretary), and Mr. Jessie Rangel.

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Intercultural Development Research Association

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