

# MAS for Our Schools

**A Youth Participatory Action Research Project on the Status of Mexican American Studies in San Antonio**



Research Report by the Students:

- Marcela Hernández
- Jonas Lokensgard
- Hannah Rosales

And the IDRA Mentors:

- Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.
- Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz, M.Ed.

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Children First  
**IDRA**  
— Transforming Education

## Meet the Student Research Team

IDRA's youth research team included Marcela Hernández, Jonas Lokensgard and Hannah Rosales. They conducted the MAS for Our Schools youth action research project during the summer and fall of 2023. Marcela is a senior at John Marshall Law and Medical Services High School. Jonas and Hannah are seniors at John Marshall High School. Both schools are in Northside ISD, San Antonio.

The students also are members of the student-led Mexican American Studies Student Association (MASSA). MASSA is an independent student organization that advocates and recruits students for Mexican American Studies (MAS) at Marshall High School. The school has one of the strongest MAS programs in the large school district with the most extensive student participation. Hannah and Marcela share how MAS has made them feel closer to their heritage, and Jonas often describes how participating in MAS as someone with a non-Mexican American identity has helped him feel more connected to his peers and the broader community.

The team was convened in the spring of 2023 by IDRA Senior Education Associate Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., and IDRA Research Analyst Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz, M.Ed., who served as youth mentors to student researchers leading the MAS for Our Schools project. As part of their involvement in this project, Aurelio and Christina delivered critical training on the basics of survey research, the fundamentals of youth participatory action research, and qualitative data analysis. MAS for Our Schools researchers also received guidance from Anthony Gonzales, MAS teacher at Marshall High School.



*[l-r] Hannah Rosales, Marcela Hernández, Jonas Lokensgard*

## Acknowledgments

IDRA and the student research team extend sincere gratitude to the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) for its generous support in making the MAS for Our Schools youth research project possible.

Anthony Gonzales, or Mr. G as we call him, initiated the teaching of MAS at Marshall High School in San Antonio. He has been the lead teacher of the class, now in its fifth year. Mr. G nurtured and supported students' development of the MASSA, which has become a pivotal force in recruiting students to take the class at our campus. Our research team was recruited through his efforts in providing access to his classes and MASSA.

# Introduction

The MAS for Our Schools project-based learning, youth action initiative evolved from several important issues surrounding the implementation of Mexican American Studies (MAS) courses in Texas schools. MAS is a course that delves deeply into the history of the United States and the contributions of Mexican Americans and other diverse ethnic groups, whose voices are historically silenced.

The relatively new MAS elective course offered by schools in Texas has faced challenges in being offered and taught by teachers skilled in both the content and in teaching ethnic studies courses. When available, a course may not have sufficient students enrolled to make a class for a full school year, despite student interest.

Data and research examining the reasons behind these trends and related concerns are limited. State data available through the Texas Education Agency on ethnic studies courses like MAS are based on self-reports from schools offering the course. But there is little to no information on who teaches the class or the total number of students enrolled. This means there is little insight into the actual context and numbers within a school district.

IDRA's MAS for Our Schools student-led project aimed to shed light on such gaps in research to understand how successful MAS programs continue to grow student and teacher interest in ethnic studies courses, learn what strategies are sustainable in strengthening MAS and other ethnic studies programs in Texas public schools, and gain insight from community members and students plugged into the local MAS ecosystem about the importance of advocating for more equitable access to culturally diverse curriculum in all schools.

The MAS for Our Schools youth action research project focused on the intra-school district inequities related to student access to MAS high school classes. The main research question guiding this project asked: *What is the status of Mexican American Studies in San Antonio?*

To address this question, student researchers conducted a small-scale, mixed-methods study, involving a student experience survey and focus group interviews with key community members who helped paint a vibrant picture of the status of MAS in one San Antonio school district. The team aimed to understand the health, development and growth of MAS across their district. Through their exploration of the status of MAS in Northside ISD, student researchers shed light on the course's critical significance in schools and the pressing need for equitable access to ethnic studies. Northside ISD is the largest school district in the city and the fourth largest in the state serving 102,000 students.

MAS for Our Schools took a unique approach to examining its broad question from the perspectives of high school students, like us, as student researchers. While research is usually carried out by academics, educators, or policy advocates, our project took a youth-participatory action approach that enabled us to design and conduct our research around key issues that were relevant to the experiences of students and teachers in our school district and city.

**“The goal that this project presented was to spread the awareness of MAS and hopefully get that seed planted and get other schools to implement a MAS class.”**  
– *Marcela Hernández*

Students are typically subjects of studies like ours, but not the ones who are initiators and conductors of the research. Yet, students are some of the most knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction (besides teachers) and thus have critical experience and points of view that can improve, enhance and accelerate the growth of the ethnic studies discipline, and very specifically, MAS. In conducting our project from this framework, we were also able to identify key community members who could inform our research more authentically and be part of the recommendations we developed from our findings.

Our team received training from IDRA research staff in the basics of survey research, delving into research questions and analyzing the study they would conduct. IDRA staff prepared us to design, develop and execute mixed-methods research, which supported both our collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information.

Our findings emphasize the importance of inclusive education, particularly in the form of ethnic studies, as such culturally relevant courses enrich students' knowledge by delving into the histories and cultures of diverse ethnic communities.

However, the findings underscore the reality that only a limited number of schools offer MAS courses, thus restricting access for many students and posing a major equity issue with respect to students' exposure to inclusive curriculum. The impact of the educational gaps extend far beyond the classroom, affecting not only students but also the broader community.

Amid this challenging landscape, this project is a culmination of the inspiring efforts of students who have become advocates of MAS, showcasing how their determination and organization have influenced their peers.

This report delves into the impact of the MAS for Our Schools project on our team of student researchers, who gained powerful experience in advocacy and community-building centered on MAS, through honing research skills and sharing insights with the broader MAS community in San Antonio. We explored the role student organizing and advocacy play in promoting MAS in our schools. Our conversations with peers, teachers and community advocates demonstrate the amplification of student voices in the research and advocacy space, particularly serving as a source of inspiration for our peers.

**Students are typically subjects of studies like ours, but not the ones who are initiators and conductors of the research. Yet, students are some of the most knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction (besides teachers) and thus have critical experience and points of view that can improve, enhance and accelerate the growth of the ethnic studies discipline, and very specifically, MAS.**

## Context:

# IDRA's Youth Engagement Initiatives

The youth participatory action research framework provided the ideal structure for this project because it has proven successful in past experiences and activities. Literature and research exist but what has been most generative for IDRA has been our long experiences with creating projects that highlight and support the inherent intelligence, motivation, and drive in students to take on interesting and projects that make clear relevant educational and social challenges.

IDRA supports student leadership in education with a variety of projects. Student-led projects like MAS for Our Schools help challenge adultist notions through actions that spotlight the intelligence, leadership, and maturity of students, from middle school through high school. In its rich, 51-year history, IDRA has focused on empowering students who are labeled at-risk of dropping out, considered not college material, and are economically disadvantaged, of color, emergent bilingual, or recent immigrants. Some examples of youth-centered programs and initiatives include the following.

IDRA supported students who conducted a technical study through the **ARISE Adelante environmental justice project in colonias** (unincorporated communities) of south Texas. A team of students took on a study in some very poor neighborhoods, inquiring rigorously about the presence of open sewage sites by their homes. The team succeeded in making technical presentations to municipal and county officials that led to major grants acquired by those bodies to create healthier waste treatment plants.

Additional programmatic examples include the following.

**IDRA Valued Youth Partnership** – For 40 years, VYP has modeled the concept of truly valuing students as critical assets in schools by positioning students considered “at-risk” of dropping out as school tutors for elementary school peers.

**IDRA VisionCoders** – This eighth-grade computer science course invites middle school students considered “at-risk” to become coders and tech mentors to early childhood students. By creating and demonstrating digital games and facilitating the use of these resources, students learn about the power of near-peer mentorship.

**IDRA Youth Advisory Board** – Students selected to serve on the youth board provide IDRA actionable recommendations to ensure our work reflects the needs of youth, their peers and their families. These high school students expand their education policy knowledge and are equipped with critical research, policy and advocacy skills that help them to continue to activate meaningful change in their schools and communities.

Through our partnership with grassroots organizations, such as ARISE Adelante in south Texas, we have a two-decade history of collaborating in youth and intergenerational projects where youth initiatives and leadership continue to benefit their communities. IDRA is working with ARISE Adelante high school youth teams through our **Digital Ambassadors** program, a project designed to train youth activists as digital experts who can provide peer and family training to ultimately close the digital divide in Texas.

(Get more info on IDRA's Student Programs at [www.idra.org/support/student-programs](http://www.idra.org/support/student-programs)).

Another reason for supporting MAS for Our School is to increase youth presence in the MAS community of practice, which meets through periodic convenings called, Cafecito y MAS. These meetings were initially established by MAS educators in collaboration with IDRA to establish and support a citywide network of ethnic studies practitioners and advocates. The long-term goal was to expand the efforts beyond a teacher-sharing and peer support effort to one that is community-wide and intergenerational.

Through IDRA's support and encouragement, high school and college students have become participants, as well as community advocates who are not educators. The process evolved and now students are co-planners, co-leaders and co-facilitators of the Cafecito y MAS meetings. This network provides a body for a student research team to access and ultimately report their findings of the status of MAS in their school district.

## A Note from the Project Mentors

IDRA mentors for this and other youth participatory studies draw on an inherent view of the assets and possibilities of the young researcher. Critical dialogue flows in the meetings, organized by carefully prepared agendas with critical questions. Mentors provide information as requested and needed, without the lecture being the prime means of giving information. The primary role of the mentor is to facilitate inquiry.

As mentors in this project, our focus was to guide our research team through a series of activities focused on students' independent thinking and decision-making. For example, during the recruitment process, we made several visits to MASSA to collaborate with members on the broader goals of this project so the research team could arrive at a deep understanding of the project and their role in the matter. During these visits, we engaged students in a rich dialogue around the greater need for MAS and ethnic studies in mainstream curriculum.

We invited the research team to workshop critical research questions to guide the MAS for Our Schools project. They:

- Created a project description for use in the study;
- Discussed and agreed upon the survey questions and the process to conduct the surveys and assigned individual roles and tasks;

- Conducted the surveys;
- Prepared focus group questions and carried out the focus group interviews;
- Called for and co-led Cafecito y MAS meetings to further their study;
- Engaged in critical dialogue to ensure consistency in the evaluation of critical themes uncovered from focus groups;
- Analyzed and documented survey and interview reliability and results;
- Presented to a summer MAS Teacher Academy; and
- Wrote this report.

And as part of the students' culminating reflection on their project, the team produced an article for the *IDRA Newsletter* that highlighted key aspects of successful youth-adult collaborations, such as adults' respect for their ideas, being treated as independent thinkers with respect for their opinions, feeling as equals in contrast to a typical teacher-student relationship, being challenged to exercise their listening, communication, and critical thinking skills, and being exposed to important experiences in preparation for college.

We are incredibly proud of this student research team and their tenacity, creativity, leadership and passion!

# Methodology

## Data Collection

Our study began with the deployment of surveys via Qualtrics to assess the prevalence of MAS courses in Northside ISD high schools and the general attitudes toward MAS and other ethnic studies courses. At the same time, our team conducted in-depth interviews with peers, teachers currently teaching MAS, and other educator-advocates part of the Cafecito y MAS community of practice to uncover common ideas about the challenges in implementing MAS courses and ideas for responding to the growing interest of students and teachers in the availability of MAS and other ethnic studies courses in schools.

Our team developed a focus group facilitation guide that included questions about attitudes toward MAS classroom instruction and materials, perspectives and experiences with taking or teaching a MAS course, and visions for expanding MAS in the school district. The objective of the questions was to stimulate conversation and enable participants to share anecdotal stories, opinions, and ways they see change can be made.

Our team planned, designed and carried out all research materials and project deliverables, with guidance from our IDRA project facilitators.

We recruited nine peers to participate in a voluntary, 60-minute focus group Zoom interview outside of regular school hours. In addition, we recruited 12 teachers and 10 members of the MAS community of practice to participate in separate focus groups. In total, our team conducted four focus groups: two student focus groups that included a total of 10 peers, one focus group with two MAS educators, and one focus group with the MAS community of practice. In addition, we facilitated a one-on-one interview with a previous MAS educator.

## Student Experience Survey

Before beginning the survey-building process, we learned about the research process, practiced developing sound research questions, and learned about survey design. While IDRA project facilitators helped to formulate key themes guiding the project's research questions, we crafted all survey items included in the student experience survey distributed to our peers.

Additionally, we spearheaded the data collection process distributing our survey from May through October 2023 through our networks, such as classmates, MASSA, and social media channels and securing student consent and parent permission where applicable. Before dissemination, our team created and tested our online survey form to ensure that collected responses reflected accurate and meaningful information about students' perspectives and experiences.

Our team recruited high school students who were currently participating in MAS during the 2022-23 school year and those who were not from campuses within our school district to take our online survey developed in Qualtrics. In total, our team generated more than 150 surveys from peers with respondents ranging from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders attending Marshall High School.

For our survey, respondents rated 14 statements using a 5-point Likert scale with the following assigned values: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

In total, we surveyed 37 students enrolled in the MAS course at Marshall High School (MAS students) and 41 students not enrolled in MAS (non-MAS students) (N = 78). After removing four records containing missing data, we had a total sample size of 74 high school students. Non-MAS students represented three different campuses in Northside ISD. The charts below show the student demographic information of our sample. (See the Appendix for the survey questions.)

## Focus Group Interviews

In addition to the online survey, our team facilitated focus groups and individual interviews that helped us collect valuable qualitative information from peers, teachers, other MAS practitioners, and advocates about the value of MAS, for the report and recommendations. Of the survey respondents, we recruited a subsample of students to participate in a voluntary focus group interview on Zoom during the summer before the 2023-24 school year.

Additionally, we recruited educators from within the MAS community of practice to participate in focus group interviews to learn why MAS is or is not successful on their campus. In total, our team conducted two focus groups of 10 peers, one focus group with the MAS community of practice, one focus group with MAS educators, and one individual interview with a previous MAS educator.

Both the survey and interview guide included key questions about general interests and attitudes toward MAS, the perceived value of ethnic studies and MAS in schools, and mechanisms in which knowledge of MAS spread throughout students' respective campuses.

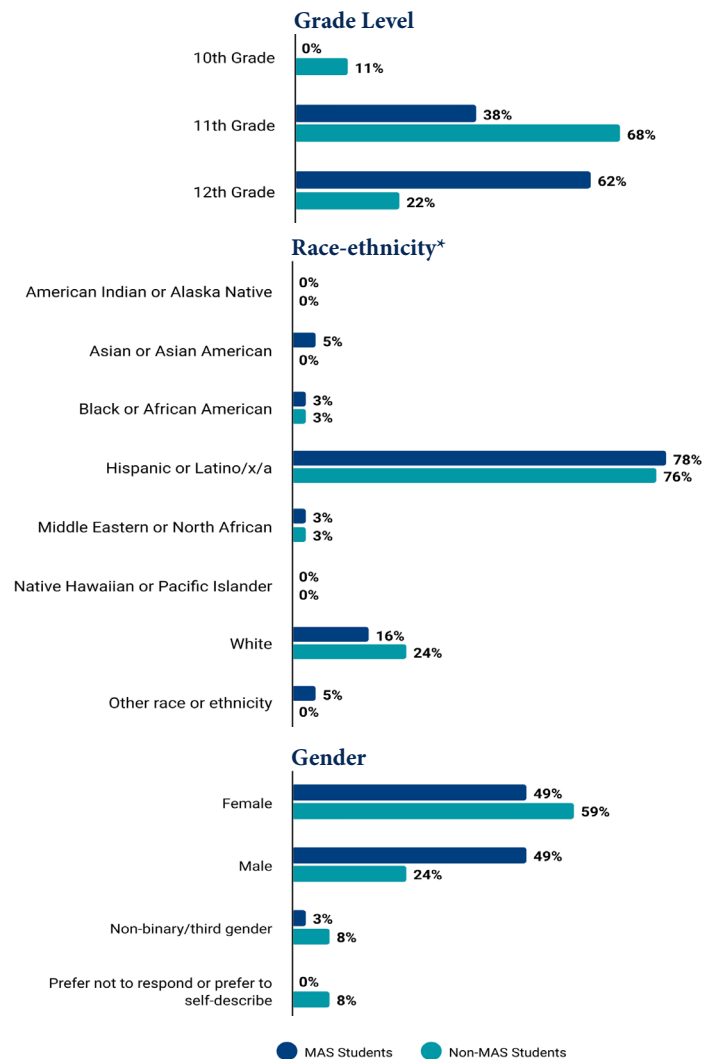
## Data Confidentiality

All participation in this study was voluntary, and all students who completed a survey via Qualtrics remained anonymous. No identifying data were included in the survey or in the data collected through focus group interviews. IDRA securely stored all records from this research study and kept information confidential.

## Data Analysis

Our team analyzed student and teacher focus group interviews to identify thematic areas focused on addressing our research question.

## Survey Respondent Demographics



\* Some respondents selected more than one racial-ethnic category, thus the total percentage for this characteristic may exceed 100%.



# Findings

Respondents rated the statements below using a 5-point Likert scale with the following assigned values: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

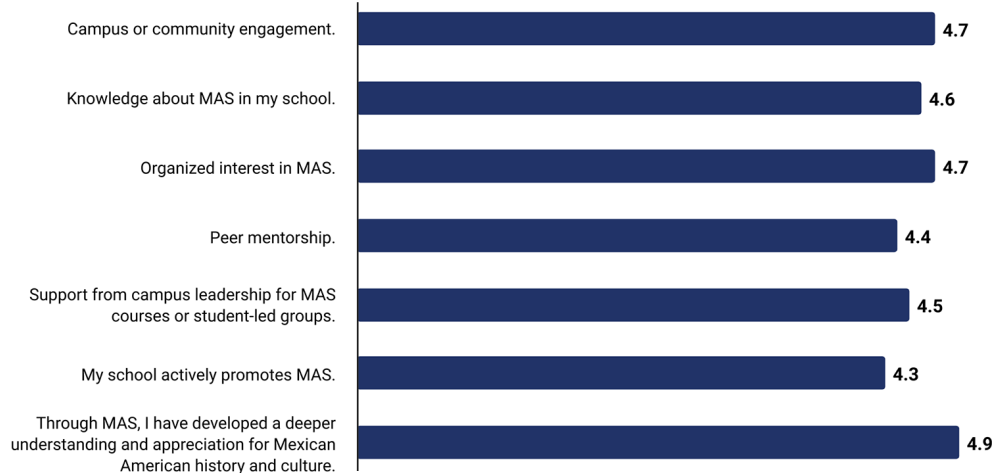
## Students Enrolled in Mexican American Studies



## MAS is important in our schools for...



## My school's independent, student-led MAS organization has promoted...



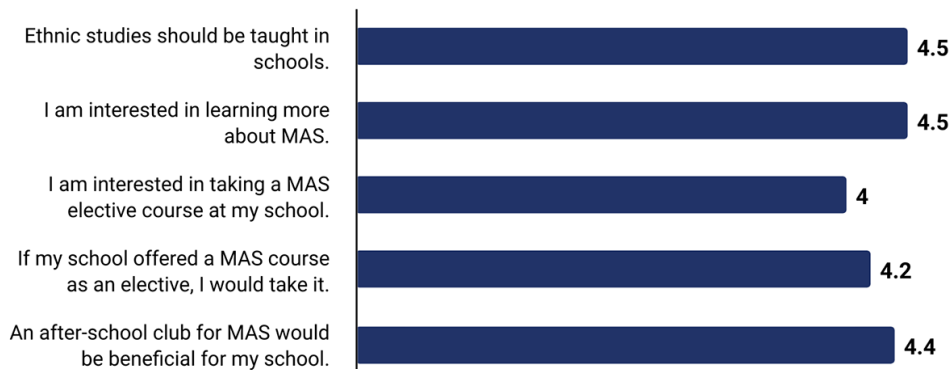
**MAS Student Experience Survey Results –  
Students Enrolled in Mexican American Studies**

Statement	Average Response	Standard Deviation
Ethnic studies should be taught in schools.	4.7	1.0
I feel engaged in MAS when we learn about both current and past Mexican American leaders/events.	4.8	0.7
I have benefitted academically from MAS.	4.6	0.8
I would recommend MAS to other students in my school.	4.8	0.8
<b>MAS is important in our schools for:</b>		
For engaging students academically.	4.5	0.9
Enhancing my understanding of Mexican American culture and history.	4.9	0.7
Promoting connection and unity among peers.	4.6	0.8
<b>My school's independent, student-led MAS organization has promoted:</b>		
Campus or community engagement.	4.7	0.7
Knowledge about MAS in my school.	4.6	0.8
Organized interest in MAS.	4.7	0.8
Peer mentorship.	4.4	0.9
Support from campus leadership for MAS courses or student-led groups.	4.5	0.9
My school actively promotes MAS.	4.3	1.1
Through MAS, I have developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for Mexican American history and culture.	4.9	0.7

Source: IDRA, 2024

Respondents rated the statements below using a 5-point Likert scale with the following assigned values: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Somewhat agree, and 5 = Strongly agree.

## Students Not Enrolled in Mexican American Studies



### MAS Student Experience Survey Results – Students Not Enrolled in Mexican American Studies

Statement	Average Response	Standard Deviation
Ethnic studies should be taught in schools.	4.5	0.9
I am interested in learning more about MAS.	4.5	1.1
I am interested in taking a MAS elective course at my school.	4	1.2
If my school offered a MAS course as an elective, I would take it.	4.2	1.2
An after-school club for MAS would be beneficial for my school.	4.4	1
<b>Having a MAS after-school club would:</b>		
Engage students more.	4.3	1.1
Engage the community more.	4.5	1.1
Be of little value to my school.	2.2	1.6
<i>Source: IDRA, 2024</i>		

# Findings



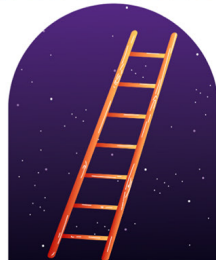
**Mexican American Studies promotes students' exploration of self-identity.**



**Mexican American Studies fosters community.**



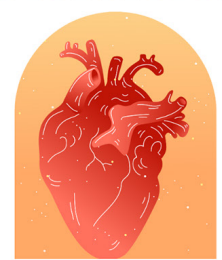
**Mexican American Studies enriches students' learning of U.S. history.**



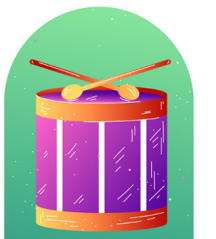
**Mexican American Studies creates cultural resonance among diverse student populations.**



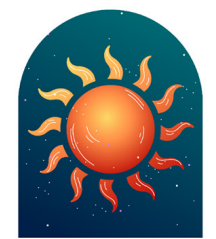
**Mexican American Studies cultivates students' and teachers' social responsibility and political agency.**



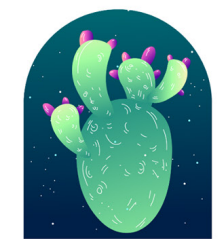
**Despite interest in Mexican American Studies, students may not be able to take the course.**



**Peer recruitment is a critical strategy for increasing student interest in Mexican American Studies.**



**Despite its significance in students' educational experience, Mexican American Studies is not a qualified history or social studies course.**



**Teachers face critical challenges with implementing Mexican American Studies at their schools.**



## Mexican American Studies promotes students' exploration of self-identity

Most students explained that they are not in tune with their respective cultures or feel connected to it due to how they may have grown up. One student shared that they were not raised to be immersed in their culture, which leads them to feel “lost in that sense.”

Along those lines, students also discussed the need for connection within their culture because it is a continuation of their ancestors' lives and knowledge. Further, another student mentioned how they were not of Mexican descent but had a step sibling who was and felt disconnected in that they did not understand certain jokes or parts of their culture.

MAS has many benefits for developing and growing student learning in the classroom, which include building and finding identity, self-esteem, self-awareness, open-mindedness, empathy, social responsibility and relieving shame from the past.

Self-awareness and open-mindedness are important attributes in today's society, and MAS enables students to acquire them by reminding us about the past, more specifically, the past that is suppressed in normal history classes. Building identity is one of the most important aspects of MAS, and when this occurs, it also enables students to help others to find their identity.

A Northside ISD teacher interviewed provides a beautiful analogy for this idea: “MAS is a mirror. And I feel MAS is slowly cleaning this mirror so their image of themselves becomes much clearer to them. And eventually, they take that mirror, and they show that mirror to someone else who needs to kind of see their own image.” While MAS is formally a history elective, it is so much more than that.

An idea that was reflected through qualitative interviews was that MAS motivated students to come to school. “Even just little conversations make some see significance in coming to school, which I know is a very big issue at [my high school].”

**“Even just little conversations make some see significance in coming to school, which I know is a very big issue.”**

*– student*



## Mexican American Studies fosters community

Students believe MAS enables inclusion within schools and provides students with the opportunity to learn about the culture. One way that ethnic studies classes cultivate this sense of connection and belonging for students is through curricula that integrates family involvement and culturally relevant pedagogy.

For example, a common experience for students enrolled in MAS or other ethnic studies is to learn more about their family history, heritage and cultural customs through the creation of a family tree. By inviting students and their families to connect to classroom instruction, MAS and ethnic studies facilitate a deeper personal and educational engagement, which further strengthens the community fabric within the educational setting.

Another important theme we uncovered from speaking to our peers and teachers is that students from both Mexican American and non-Mexican American backgrounds have a chance to be heard in these settings. One of our team members often describes how participating in MAS as someone with a non-Mexican American identity has helped them feel more connected to their peers and the broader San Antonio community. People of all backgrounds should have their cultures learned about and shared with others, which strengthens community bonds and fosters social cohesion and empathy.

Community interest in the MAS class most directly showed up in the Cafecito y MAS meetings and the participants who gave much support to the MAS for Our Schools research team. During one Cafecito y MAS session co-led by high school students, a mother and an aunt of a student spokesperson from another school spoke up about their pride and their history and suggested that more of this kind of information and conversation should be encouraged in schools across all classes, from English to social studies and the fine arts.

In another intergenerational project, a student-initiated and -led mariachi in a high school in Houston ISD brought together families and friends as supporters. They showed the broad community interest at a June 2023 MAS Teachers' Academy event and joined our student researchers on a panel about intergenerational leadership in support of MAS.

Thus, from communities of practice to teacher learning events, the community can participate, give testimony and give further energy to having ethnic studies and the information gathered integrated into the school curriculum in all grades. As one grandmother stated at one of the meetings, "It's about time our history and culture be honored by our schools."

**One way that ethnic studies classes cultivate this sense of connection and belonging for students is through curriculum that integrates family involvement and culturally relevant pedagogy.**



## MAS enriches students' learning of U.S. history

Along with personal benefits students gain, there are also specific benefits of MAS that help to enrich students' understanding of history and academia as a whole. Students we talked with frequently brought up the injustices that Mexican Americans faced that are not brought up in most history classes, like the lynchings of Mexican Americans on the border.

One student pointed out something paramount when considering the importance of a MAS class: "It's a part of our history. That's all it is. We weren't the first people here. [There were] many people before us."

To further illustrate the point, Mexican American history is U.S. history. Leaving it out is telling an incomplete story. Another student brought up some of the single stories or incomplete narratives: "Learning about the good aspects instead of the bad aspects that's on the news that people tell you because really the most known facts are the bad aspects."

The importance of eliminating the single story is emphasized in MAS. Along with the benefits of MAS, students discussed the erasure that happens in most history classes that are brought up in MAS. One student described the sugarcoating that some textbooks do when discussing the murders done to people of color by white people.

Figures who contributed to the world are sometimes undervalued in history books because of their background. A student stated, "They don't talk about anything that the contributions that Indigenous people have made." MAS enriches students' understanding of U.S. history by providing crucial information about the interconnected histories of people from diverse backgrounds when examining our nation's history.

MAS can aid in bridging the gap with the information students learn about the contributions of Mexican Americans and their ancestors. Bringing attention to their accomplishments teaches students that this group discovered the concept of zero and were capable of engaging in complex math, for example, before the Greeks or Romans did. A MAS teacher stated, "We're all constantly hearing about Western philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. MAS changes the misconceptions about Mexican Americans and the belief that their ancestors were not knowledgeable enough to write poetry or philosophy in the same scope as Aristotle."

MAS enriches students' understanding of history by highlighting underrepresented narratives and contributions of Mexican Americans and Indigenous peoples, thereby offering a more complete and inclusive portrayal of U.S. history.

**"Learning about the good aspects instead of the bad aspects that's on the news that people tell you because really the most known facts are the bad aspects."**  
- student



## Mexican American Studies creates cultural resonance among diverse student populations

Student input about MAS is vital to its growth, yet this can also work in reverse. Students in MAS expressed things they were grateful for in the class, like learning about Mexican American roots (their roots), getting the other side of history, and widening their perspective.

Students with Mexican American backgrounds spoke passionately about their new-found knowledge of their culture because they could get a full picture that their family was unable to provide.

A student stated that learning about Mexican American culture in MAS enables them to educate not only themselves but also the people around them. Students' benefits from the class are heavily tied to culture and history.

A distinction between MAS motivation and appreciation is made to highlight the reasons students joined the class in the first place and why students enjoy the class now. These reasons can be very similar but not always.

**A student stated that learning about Mexican American culture in MAS enables them to educate not only themselves but also the people around them.**





## MAS cultivates students' and teachers' social responsibility and political agency

As a whole, MAS contributes to social responsibility in students and teachers due to the racism and political history covered within the course. As students' attention is being brought to challenges – racial and discriminatory – experienced by the Mexican American community throughout history, they are developing a critical consciousness. This in turn leads them to have a political voice and become contributing members within the community at large.

MAS aids in developing empathy toward others. For example, a teacher explained how learning about the struggles and triumphs of Mexican Americans can help students develop better empathy for people of diverse identities.

Teachers also foster the idea of why commitment to social change is important. This is especially important for people of non-Mexican ethnicity because remaining ignorant of the past of the people around you is limiting to your point of view. This ignorance can also stem from the idea of a single story, which is a stereotype that forms from an incomplete or wrong narrative. MAS challenges one to “think critically about oneself and the community,” which builds open-mindedness in the individual.

Something that came with students' newfound social responsibility was a form of shame among non-Mexican American students, specifically white students. For example, this shame manifested as discomfort, such as in the confrontation of white supremacy, understanding some students have benefits that others do not, and internalization of what their ancestors may have done to people of color. MAS is not meant to shame white students for what white people have done, and still do, to other groups, but to encourage them to step forward and fight against it. Changing the world needs the help not just of Mexican Americans, it needs everyone.

Overall, students from all backgrounds are wanted within a MAS class because it sharpens students' idea of agency within the community and helps those of other cultures understand the idea of empathy.

One teacher shared, “If we're only targeting MAS toward students in our community, I think it can become an incomplete project.”

**MAS is not meant to shame white students... students from all backgrounds are wanted within a MAS class because it sharpens students' idea of agency within the community and helps those of other cultures understand the idea of empathy.**



## Despite interest in Mexican American Studies, students may not be able to take the course

One of the biggest challenges that affects a student's ability to take MAS is the devaluation this course faces in our current political atmosphere. Because other ethnic studies courses have been banned in places like Florida, it has already been proven that people have designated a course like MAS to be of little value.

In an interview at a high school, a student expressed their opinion on this topic, "They [policymakers] don't think that it's that important." This sentiment of deeming ethnic studies courses to be of little or no value negatively impacts students in other areas. MAS has a significant impact on the lives of students and therefore should not be excluded from their education.

However, if schools do offer a MAS course, that does not guarantee that every student who is interested in taking this class is able to. This is due to a lack of room in class schedules for most students, for example, who are in a magnet program. One student expressed: "Unfortunately, given my LMS [law and medical services] class, I had nowhere in my schedule."

Students are limited to the number of electives they are allowed to take, particularly due to their magnet classes, which take up the space of two out of the three electives they are allowed. At Marshall High School, the MAS elective is only available to upperclassmen. According to a student, this is because of the understanding that "as juniors and seniors, you're able to really grasp the information."

Another student expressed: "When you get older, you begin to realize the importance of your time. And I think if you spend it doing the things you're passionate about, you put even more effort into it." This shows the interest students have toward MAS and how it has a lasting impact on them.

As referenced earlier, one of the convening bodies our project is connected to is Cafecito y MAS. This San Antonio group, which functions as a community of practice group, includes teachers, professors, families and students from elementary school to college. The Cafecito y MAS was instrumental in providing interviewees for teacher and student surveys and focus group interviews. One of the spokespersons and co-facilitator of some of the Cafecito y MAS sessions is a fifth grader whose peers in elementary grades support MAS and are members of an after-school group mentored by his mother who is a resource teacher at a middle school.

**At some schools, the MAS elective is only available to upperclassmen.**

Even though there has been a special focus in this study on the high school elective MAS class usually offered to upperclassmen, the broader community efforts include teachers who are integrating MAS and other ethnic studies content and activities in the elementary and middle school grades. At Cafecito y MAS meetings, teachers have modeled how they integrate MAS themes at all grade levels and in language arts, fine arts, and other content areas that are not history or social sciences.

The lack of awareness of MAS is also affected by the lack of knowledge counselors have of this class, which affects students when it is time to choose their schedules for the upcoming school year. To thrive, MAS courses need structural support because they hold more value than a regular history class. MAS provides Mexican American students with the opportunity to learn about their ancestors in a way that is rarely reflected in a U.S. history class.

**Some mistakenly believe that MAS is only relevant to students from Mexican American backgrounds.**



## Peer recruitment is a critical strategy for increasing student interest in Mexican American Studies

Students had a multitude of ideas for how MAS could be expanded within their schools to increase interest among other students. Some of the first ideas mentioned were to hold more events on campus led by MAS and the student-led after-school MASSA club. These should be promoted more so that a higher number of students would know about the club or class offered.

The most agreed upon and suggested idea was having students who are involved with MAS or MASSA come to classrooms to speak to other students. The students interviewed mentioned how having others come to talk to them about the organization sparked their interest and led them to sign up for the class or attend meetings.

Two of the main ways students found out about MAS in Marshall High School were through word-of-mouth or recruitment done during history classes. These seem to be the most effective ways of getting students to find out about the class. Another important reason people joined was they wanted to know more about their own culture.

**The most agreed upon and suggested idea was having students who are involved with MAS come to classrooms to speak to other students.**



## Despite its significance in students' educational experience, Mexican American Studies is not a qualified history or social science course

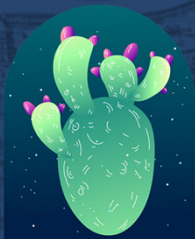
Getting MAS to be a core history or social studies credit can depend on the population of the school. At our school, MAS is considered an elective credit, even though the course is about the history of Mexican Americans.

One student expressed, "It's not counted as a history credit, even though it should be," a feeling that is shared within the student body. Mexico played a significant role in Texas history, and those who descended from these groups are still present today, which is why people argue for MAS to be considered a history credit.

MAS delves deeper into the history of Mexican Americans, explaining in depth about their culture and contributions, something that is not commonly seen in a standard history course.

**"It's not counted as a [core] history credit, even though it should be."**

*- student*



## Teachers face critical challenges with implementing MAS at their schools

Unlike other subjects, MAS educators have to seek outside guidance because there is no MAS curriculum that is standard. These teachers have the added obstacle of gathering materials themselves, along with advocating for their class. Through these challenges, however, MAS educators can commit to their own self-learning.

A MAS professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) said: “For me, it was really important to dig into that history. You know, ‘What’s the history of MAS?’ Because this class reaches deeper than a standard history class, the teachers who are willing to teach MAS end up learning more about themselves. As a result, they are able to be vulnerable with their students and create a closer understanding in the classroom.”

Vulnerability, openness and open-mindedness are very important for a MAS teacher to have. When teachers are vulnerable, they are able to form a better connection with their students, but this is no easy task. Being vulnerable with students is emotionally heavy.

MAS is a very special class with countless benefits for students, but if you do not have the right teacher, it can affect the benefits students get out of the class. Something vital for a MAS teacher to have is *ganas*! *Ganas* is the passion, will and desire for something. A MAS teacher needs those qualities. It’s a daunting task because you’re not sure how students are going to react to this information. Having *ganas* also requires courage because changing the status quo is a job against the odds.

Also, support from the community affects attitudes toward MAS courses. In the MAS community, gaining support from the school administration plays a significant role in the access students have to a class like MAS. Administrators have the authority to implement and promote MAS classes in their schools, but the exposure to MAS often is limited.

A MAS professor from UTSA stated, “They [UTSA] don’t promote *our* program [MAS].” This lack of promotion devalues MAS and undermines the significance that this class holds.

There is limited knowledge surrounding MAS and this limits students’ ability to take a class like this. A high school teacher said, “Institutional support is something that’s a big challenge.”

A big challenge new or experienced MAS teachers face is the lack of support from school administration. If those in charge do not support the class or see the value it has in students’ lives, teachers are faced with the burden of their class being put on the back burner.

**“The teachers who are willing to teach MAS end up learning more about themselves. As a result, they are able to be vulnerable with their students and create a closer understanding in the classroom.”**

*– professor*

One of the teachers interviewed shared an experience with faculty devaluing their class, which caused a student to drop the class and take another: “‘They took me out of your class. I just want you to know this is a great course, and you’re an amazing teacher. And I’m sorry.’ And then he left.” The teacher continued, “My week was just ruined because, even though the course is not just about that student, that student was part of the course.”

Other challenges include preparing potential MAS teachers for the course since there are no textbooks or concrete ways to teach the curriculum; having the right people teach the course (*i.e.*, teachers who are willing to put the work into self-teaching and finding resources); systemic racism attributing to the classes’ failure because MAS is undermined compared to traditional core classes and in turn intimidating MAS teachers; and going against the belief that MAS is only relevant to students from Mexican American backgrounds.

**One challenge is preparing potential MAS teachers for the course since there are no textbooks or concrete ways to teach the curriculum.**

**“MAS is not just this little class that is offered at a school. It’s much deeper than that. Many people feel deep connections to it and are passionate about it. And that’s why there’s such a push for it.”**

*– Hannah Rosales*

# Recommendations

Based on insightful findings from our interviews with teachers, peers and allies within the MAS community of practice regarding the impact and value MAS in our district, we propose the following recommendations for the promotion, success and expansion of MAS programs in Texas and beyond.

**Recognize MAS as a core history or social studies credit for graduation.**

**Ensure MAS is recognized as a core history or social studies credit for graduation**, which would increase accessibility of the course for students interested in pursuing ethnic studies. Ethnic studies in general are highly influential on students and their development as young adults due to the skills they learn on an emotional level. High schools should offer their students the opportunity to join the class and, should a student show interest in the course to an administrator, allow the student to share the class with other students to get others involved and reach the required number of students for a course.

**Develop MAS curriculum.**

**Develop a standardized, comprehensive MAS curriculum** that aligns with state educational standards while reflecting the diversity of Mexican American culture and history.

**Promote MAS through peer recruitment at the campus level.**

**Enhance the visibility and awareness of MAS through peer recruitment at the campus level.** A large part of the MAS experience and class is community. To have more students join, they need to know about what is being offered. One way is for students to get together and present to other classes so they learn about other courses they could take. Another way to get more students is to put posters up for them to see or even have someone speak over the announcements.

**Support MAS teachers to do their job.**

**Ensure teachers have the necessary support for successfully teaching MAS by advocating for administrative and district-level support that prioritizes the offering of MAS courses.** This should include securing classroom resources and necessary training for educators interested in teaching MAS or ethnic studies courses to effectively deliver curricula that meets state standards.

**Establish partnerships.**

**Establish partnerships with local organizations**, such as those represented in the MAS community of practice to help provide students and teachers with enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom setting.

**Tell success stories.**

**Continue to elevate success stories and best practices demonstrated by successful MAS programs in public forums**, including school board meetings, educational practice conferences, and media to highlight the importance of MAS and the benefits for students inside and outside of the classroom.



# Conclusion

The MAS for Our Schools project presents a rich and valid occasion for student voice and leadership through an assessment of the status of ethnic studies, MAS in this case, in our home district. Our team of three high school students refined and established our study through the rigorous development of the key questions included on our survey forms and to guide our focus group interviews with peers and educators. Additionally, we carried out the distribution, presentation and collection of the surveys, and also introduced, recruited for and carried out the focus group interviews of students, teachers and other adults.

While our team was successful in gathering and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data for the project, some challenges prevented us from recruiting and accessing more respondents – students and teachers overall – to participate in our study who could broaden our findings. For example, many of our training sessions, research meetings, and focus group interviews were conducted online via Zoom to overcome challenges with transportation. Our team strategized to make special arrangements to conduct physical, face-to-face meetings outside of school hours as we found in-person communication effective and ideal for building trust among interviewees and researchers. A huge reason for the success of this project was in part due to these opportunities to meet in person and engage authentically with our various communities.

Another challenge presented in our study was incentivizing students to participate in the study during the recruitment process. Recruiting students to participate in the study succeeded best in our home school where we had direct connection and contact with our peers. Expectations of building an online community of students through Instagram and other social media programs gave limited results.

Yet even with the challenges, our project resulted in useful results. Findings from our research reinforce the validity and importance of MAS for all students and make important recommendations, not just for their own school districts but all districts across the community and the state.

Given how rarely student opinion is sought in the development of curriculum and the high school course offering, this project and this report should be given special attention and notice. As scholar-advocates, young people represent the consumers, the customers and the recipients of the kind of culturally relevant curriculum classes like MAS and other ethnic studies courses schools must provide in order to provide the kind of dynamic education that supports students' growth and sense of belonging in schools.



**“Before I got involved in this project, I had decided to join the MASSA club, thinking ‘I’m going to go to a club (MASSA) in a room full of people that I do not know, and I’m going to try to have fun.’ And I mean, look where it’s gotten me. I was able to be a part of this project and meet some wonderful people.”**

**– Jonas Lokensgard**

# Resources

Hernández, M., Lokensgard, J., & Rosales, H. (February 2024). Mexican American Studies – A Deep Look by High School Students. IDRA Newsletter. <https://idra.news/nlFeb24a>

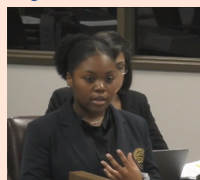
Montemayor, A.M. (March 2023). MAS Springs Youthfully – Teacher and Student Advocacy of Mexican American Studies. IDRA Newsletter. <https://idra.news/nlMar23c>

Montemayor, A.M., Márquez, B.Y., Guadalupe Guzmán, A., & Castro, L. (March 2017). Community Projects, Youths and Academic Learning – Student Voice in Solutions to Challenging Problems. IDRA Newsletter. <https://www.idra.org/resource-center/community-projects-youths-academic-learning-student-voice-solutions-challenging-problems>

## IDRA Resources for Ethnic Studies

Ethnic studies courses benefit all students. Culturally-sustaining curriculum has a positive impact on students' academic and community engagement. IDRA has a number of resources and provides training and customized technical assistance that supports educators in offering ethnic studies courses in public schools.

- 🌀 **Articles and research**
- 🌀 **Videos of students testifying for ethnic studies**
- 🌀 **Webinars**
- 🌀 **IDRA training and assistance to schools**
- 🌀 **Infographics, like**
  - Ethnic Studies Can be Life Changing
  - Teaching Cultural & Ethnic Studies in Georgia



Plus, IDRA's **Ethnic Studies Online Technical Assistance Toolkit** that provides educators tools and resources for implementing ethnic studies in K-12 schools. It includes a literature review, webinar sessions, articles, podcasts and other resources.

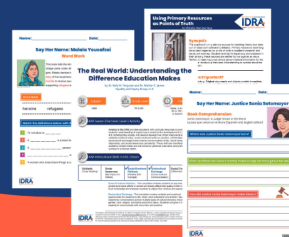
<https://idra.news/EthnicStudies>

## IDRA SEEN School Resource Hub



### Free Lesson Plans for Teachers!

- ★ Lessons for elementary, middle and high school
- ★ Over 120 lesson plans, best practices and historical resources to support teachers in delivering culturally-sustaining classroom lessons.
- ★ Informed by students, families & educators
- ★ Lessons for bilingual classrooms



<https://idrasedn/hub>

# Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey for Students Enrolled in MAS MAS for Our Schools Research Survey

MAS for Our Schools: The Status of Mexican American Studies in San Antonio

Thank you for participating in our study! This study is being conducted by the IDRA youth participatory action research (YPAR) team. IDRA is a non-profit organization focused on education justice for K-12 students. We support public schools through our research, policy advocacy, educator support, and family & student collaboration on issues like school funding, bilingual education, restorative practices, and curriculum diversity.

Your responses to this survey will be utilized to inform our team's research and analysis on the status of Mexican American Studies (MAS) in Northside Independent School District. These questions are entirely confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of research purposes.

## Participant Consent

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Review, sign, and submit this study consent form. Minors interested in participating must get consent from a parent or guardian prior to submitting their signed consent form.

Once you submit informed consent, you will complete an online Qualtrics survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

After completing your survey, you will have the option to provide the student research team your contact information to be invited to participate in optional virtual focus group discussions.

## Content Questions

Are you enrolled in a Mexican American Studies (MAS) course at school?

- Yes
- No

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Ethnic studies should be taught in schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have benefited academically from MAS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Through MAS I have developed a deeper understanding and appreciation for Mexican American history and culture.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel engaged in MAS when we learn about both current and past Mexican American leaders/events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school actively promotes MAS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend MAS to other students in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Following the questionnaire, there is an optional demographic section meant to better inform our research. Please feel free to skip this section if you do not feel comfortable filling out this section. You are not obligated to complete this section.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our YPAR student research liaison Hannah Rosales at (email) or IDRA's research analyst Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz at (email).

Thank you for your time and cooperation!  
- IDRA Youth Participatory Action Research Team

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to not answer any questions. You can stop this survey at any time without consequence.

Are you 18 years or older?  
 Yes  
 No

Please have your parent or caretaker sign below to give permission for your participation in this study:

Do you consent to completing this survey?  
 Yes  
 No [Skip To: End of Survey]

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statement: MAS is important in our schools for:

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree

Enhancing my understanding of Mexican American culture and history.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promoting connection and unity among peers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging students academically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What extra strategies or resources would make you feel comfortable or welcome in a MAS class or club environment? (optional)

What are some strategies/resources being implemented in your MAS class that promote student engagement? (optional)

How did you find out about the MAS course(s) at your school? (select all that apply)

- Classmates
- Teachers
- School counselors
- Online
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How is MAS being promoted in your school? (select all that apply)

- Social media
- Campus promotion (by teachers and school administration)
- Course selection (by school counselors or other school staff)
- Word of mouth/peers
- Independent student association or club
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Not at all

My school has an independent student association or club for MAS:

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statement: My school's independent, student-led MAS organization has promoted:

Strongly disagree    Somewhat disagree    Neither agree nor disagree    Somewhat agree    Strongly agree

Peer mentorship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus or community engagement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowledge about MAS in my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organized interest in MAS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support from campus leadership for MAS courses or student-led groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would the MAS course(s) at your school benefit from an independent, outside-of-class student association or club?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Why or why not? (optional)

## Demographic Questions

This is an optional demographic section. Please feel free to skip this section if you do not feel comfortable filling out this section. You are not obligated to complete this section. There will also be a space for you to provide your contact information. This is an optional section that will allow the research team to reach out to survey respondents interested in participating in additional virtual focus groups.

What school do you attend in Northside ISD? \_\_\_\_\_

What grade level are you currently?

- 9th grade (Freshman)
- 10th grade (Sophomore)
- 11th grade (Junior)
- 12th grade (Senior)

- How would you describe your race or ethnicity?
- Hispanic or Latino/x/a
  - Black or African American
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian or Asian American
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - Middle Eastern or North African
  - White
  - Another race or ethnicity not listed above: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to respond

- How would you describe your gender?
- Male
  - Female
  - Non-binary / third-gender
  - Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Prefer not to say

### Follow Up Questions

In addition to our survey, the research team is selecting people for focus group interviews. This is another method of obtaining more data through personal stories and experiences. By filling out the contact information below you are consenting to be reached out to for potential virtual focus groups and interviews. Thank you again for your participation!

- Would you like to be contacted following this survey to participate in a group interview?
- Yes
  - No

- Are you available and willing to participate in a group interview during the summer?
- Yes
  - No

- What is your preference for meeting for a group interview? (select all that apply)
- Virtual/online (via Zoom)
  - In-person
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your contact information to be connected with a focus group interview:

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Qualtrics Survey for Students Not in MAS MAS for Our Schools Research Survey

MAS for Our Schools: The Status of Mexican American Studies in San Antonio

Thank you for participating in our study! This study is being conducted by the IDRA youth participatory action research (YPAR) team. IDRA is a non-profit organization focused on education justice for K-12 students. We support public schools through our research, policy advocacy, educator support, and family & student collaboration on issues like school funding, bilingual education, restorative practices, and curriculum diversity.

Your responses to this survey will be utilized to inform our team's research and analysis on the status of Mexican American Studies (or MAS) in San Antonio. These questions are entirely confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of research purposes.

Mexican American Studies is a course that provides students with knowledge about Mexican American history and focuses on their origins.

Following the questionnaire, there is an optional demographic section meant to better inform our research. Please feel free to skip this section if you do not feel comfortable filling out this section. You are not obligated to complete this section.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our YPAR student research liaison Hannah Rosales at (email) or IDRA's research analyst Christina Quintanilla-Muñoz at (email).

Thank you for your time and cooperation!  
IDRA Youth Participatory Action Research Team

## Participant Consent Form

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Review, sign, and submit this study consent form. Minors interested in participating must get consent from a parent or guardian prior to submitting their signed consent form.

Once you submit informed consent, you will complete an online Qualtrics survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

After completing your survey, you will have the option to provide the student research team your contact information to be invited to participate in optional virtual focus group discussions.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to not answer any questions. You can stop this survey at any time without consequence.

Are you 18 years or older?

Yes

No

Please have your parent or caretaker sign below to give permission for your participation in this study:

Do you consent to completing this survey?

Yes

No [Skip To: End of Survey]

## Content Questions

What do you think a MAS course is about? (Please respond with 2-3 sentences)

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Ethnic studies should be taught in schools	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please elaborate your answer to the previous questions with 2-3 sentences.

Have you heard about MAS at your schools before?

Yes

No, this survey is my first time learning about MAS

No, but I have heard about MAS somewhere else

If your answer was yes to the previous questions, please answer the following: If you have heard about MAS, how did you find out? (Check all that apply)

Peers

Teachers

Schools counselors

Online

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I am interested in learning more about MAS.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I am interested in taking a MAS elective course at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Does your school offer MAS as an elective course?

Yes

No

I don't know

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
If my school offered a MAS course as an elective, I would take it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An after-school club for MAS would be beneficial for my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale of 1-5 (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Moderately disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Moderately agree, 5. Strongly agree), please rate the level to which you agree with the following statement: Having a MAS after-school club would:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Engage students more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engage the community more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Be of little value to my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you're interested in learning more about MAS, how would you like to learn about it? (Check all that apply)

- Classroom setting
- After-school club
- Within the community
- Independently
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Demographic Questions

This is an optional demographic section. Please feel free to skip this section if you do not feel comfortable filling out this section. You are not obligated to complete this section. There will also be a space for you to provide your contact information. This is an optional section that will allow the research team to reach out to survey respondents interested in participating in additional virtual focus groups.

What school do you attend in Northside ISD?

\_\_\_\_\_

What grade level are you currently?

- 9th grade (Freshman)
- 10th grade (Sophomore)
- 11th grade (Junior)
- 12th grade (Senior)

How would you describe your race or ethnicity?

- Hispanic or Latino/x/a
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern or North African
- White
- Another race or ethnicity not listed above: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to respond

How would you describe your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third-gender
- Prefer to self-describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

### Follow Up Questions

In addition to our survey, the research team is selecting people for focus group interviews. This is another method of obtaining more data through personal stories and experiences. By filling out the contact information below you are consenting to be reached out to for potential virtual focus groups and interviews. Thank you again for your participation!

Would you like to be contacted following this survey to participate in a group interview?

- Yes
- No

Are you available and willing to participate in a group interview during the summer?

- Yes
- No

What is your preference for meeting for a group interview? (select all that apply)




- Virtual/online (via Zoom)
- In-person
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your contact information to be connected with a focus group interview:

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_



IDRA is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college.

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