

September 30, 2023



Transforming Education by
Putting Children First

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IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus:

Cultural Connections in Schooling

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**Join Us for An Extraordinary Evening to
Celebrate IDRA's 50th Anniversary!**

Mark your calendar for November 2 in San Antonio. We want you with us as we celebrate the legacy of the IDRA community and look toward the next 50 years of supporting students and public schools across the country.

Catch up with old friends and new ones during our cocktail reception on the lawn. Enjoy fine dining and be inspired by our program featuring special guests touched by IDRA's work.

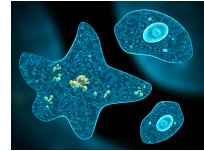
Keep reading and learn more about tickets and sponsorship opportunities



The poster for the IDRA 50th Anniversary Gala features a collage of photos of students and staff. The text includes: "IDRA 50th Anniversary Gala", "Bold Legacy Bright Future", "50th Anniversary IDRA", "Featured Speaker Dolores Huerta", "November 2, 2023", "The Red Berry Estate San Antonio", "6 pm Cocktails - 7 pm Program", "Registration & Sponsorship Info", "www.idra.org/50th", and "Presenting Sponsor WILLIAM & FLORA Hewlett Foundation". A large circular portrait of Dolores Huerta is prominent on the right side.

A Defining Moment for IDRA's Founder

A defining moment for Dr. José Angel Cárdenas occurred in the 1960s in response to a scientific breakthrough with amoebas - of all things. He relays the story of how the incident contributed to his pledge to defend all children and their right to an excellent, equitable education. IDRA would become that vehicle with Dr. Cárdenas at the helm, proceeded by Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel to today with Celina Moreno, J.D.



IDRA has become a high-powered, independent organization with consistency of purpose, commitment, principles and courage.

Keep reading A Defining Moment article

Students Advocate and Influence Culturally-rich Education in their Schools

by Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

Student leadership and action in San Antonio and Houston schools led to remarkable gains. This article tells two stories about the importance of courses that reinforce the culture and heritage of diverse students.

In San Antonio, students took steps to get a Mexican American Studies (MAS) class re-established in their school. They were able to show the high level of interest and determination of students to learn about the histories and contributions of various cultural groups that shape the United States. In Houston, a different group of students organized to reverse the cancellation of a mariachi class.



The stories demonstrate that young individuals are capable of not only identifying gaps in their education but also taking proactive steps to bridge those gaps.

Keep reading Students Advocate article

IDRA School Resource Hub Provides Tools for Teaching About Race and Gender

by *Christie L. Goodman, APR, Fellow PRSA*

IDRA's award-winning *We All Belong – School Resource Hub* was designed to help educators feel supported in their work in today's climate of classroom censorship that has made it difficult for educators to provide an accurate and inclusive education for all their students.



In the midst of Hispanic Heritage Month, a group of ethnic studies teachers and advocates reviewed a lesson available through the hub, "Jovita Idar – Educator, Journalist, Suffragist & Civil Rights Activist" by Unladylike2020.

IDRA developed the hub by listening to teachers and students who want lessons on history and current events about race and gender to help provide context to the discrimination they experienced. Today, the hub features over 120 lesson plans, instructional best practices and historical resources. Highlights include lessons on Mexican American Studies and the new "American Is Me" (AIM) framework for teaching intercultural skills useful across all academic areas.

Keep reading [School Resource Hub article](#)

IDRA We All Belong School Resource Hub

IDRA's award-winning hub of resources is designed for educators, families and policy advocates, particularly in the U.S. South, who want to make sure students receive a strong, truthful education in our public schools.

- ✓ Get lesson plans & teaching tools
- ✓ Search by topic, grade, etc.
- ✓ See guides for teaching intercultural skills

www.idraseen.org/hub



Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates prosperity, power and progress. IDRA's *We All Belong – School Resource Hub* provides free lesson plans for culturally sustaining instruction and healthy classroom conversations about this nation's past and present. Here are samples to highlight during Hispanic Heritage Month...

- **Yes, She Can: Justice Sonia Sotomayor** (by IDRA)
- **Ynés Mexía – Accomplished Latina Botanist** (by Unladylike2020)
- **Jovita Idar – Educator, Journalist, Suffragist & Civil Rights Activist** (by Unladylike2020)
- **Justice for My People: The Dr. Hector P. García Story** (by South Texas Public Broadcasting)
- **Organizing the Farm Worker Movement** (by PBS)
- **Latinos and the Fourteenth Amendment: A Primary Document Activity** (by Learning for Justice)
- **Rio Grande Valley Civil War Trail: 40 Lesson Plans** (by CHAPS Program at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley)
- **And many more!**



Visit the Hub



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Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition Policy and Advocacy in 2023

by Rebekah Skelton

The Texas Legislative Education Equity Coalition (TLEEC) is a collaborative of more than 30 organizations and individuals working to improve the quality of public education for all children, with a focus on racial justice. IDRA founded the coalition in 2001 and has co-led TLEEC with Every Texan and fellow founding member MALDEF for more than 20 years.



During this spring's legislative session, TLEEC's two main policy priorities were protecting and increasing funding for schools and promoting inclusive P-20+ school climates.

TLEEC members and partner organizations successfully mounted a strong campaign against private school vouchers. But as vouchers will re-emerge as a top priority for the governor and legislators in a third expected session beginning October 9, the coalition remains unwavering in its stance that public funds should remain in public schools.

[Keep reading TLEEC article](#)



Call for Applications – School Finance Research

IDRA invites research applications for the IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program. The goal of the program is to engage the nation's most promising researchers and practitioners in investigating school finance solutions that secure equity and excellence for all public school students. The program focuses on and funds school finance research that builds cross-disciplinary and inter-sector perspectives on equity. [Learn More](#)

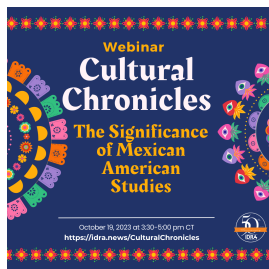


Webinar: AI in Education

Leveraging AI in Education Research and in the Classroom

October 3, 2023 • 9:30 am - 10:30 am CT

Learn different ways to use artificial intelligence tools and resources to improve the classroom experience and advance education research. Panelists will discuss the ethical implications of using AI in education and ideas for classroom use. [Register](#)



Webinar: Cultural Chronicles

The Significance of Mexican American Studies

October 19, 2023 • 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm CT

Join us for an interactive 90-minute panel of educators, researchers and community leaders that delves into the transformative influence of ethnic studies on students and their families. Discover how these programs empower students to connect with their heritage, challenge stereotypes and develop critical thinking skills. [Learn More](#)

Recent News

Media Coverage

Latinas in Education, ¡SALUD!, KLRN-TV, September 28, 2023

2023 Student Rights Laws, CROWN Act Protects Black Students from Having to Cut off Hair – IDRA Wants Families to Know These Laws, (Page 8) San Antonio Observer, September 13, 2023

Roxane Gay, Tim O'Brien Join Texas Book Festival Lineup – Full author roster revealed for November fest, by Kimberley Jones, The Austin Chronicle, September 13, 2023

\$262.5 million invested in higher ed to cultivate diverse agriculture professionals, by Bre Holbert, Ag Daily, August 30, 2023

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

Other IDRA News

September 26, 2023 – **Knowledge is Power: Book banning laws, Impact of Banning African American Studies** (English) • (Español)

September 22, 2023 – **Upcoming Events: AI in Education webinar; Cultural Chronicles webinar; IDRA's 50th Anniversary Gala!**

September 13, 2023 – **Call for Applications – IDRA José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program**

September 13, 2023 – **Registration is Open for IDRA's 50th Anniversary Gala – Special guest: Dolores Huerta**

August 31, 2023 – **August 2023 Issue of the IDRA Newsletter – Supporting Diverse Students**

[See these eNews with links on our website.](#)



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.

[Reach Out To Us](#)

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