



Community Conversations about Math Learning and Teaching

**by Kristin Grayson, M.Ed.,
and Aurelio M. Montemayor,
M.Ed.**

We all continue to hear critiques about the state of mathematics learning and teaching:

- “Math Crisis? Students Don’t Get It. If improving science and math education is a national priority, someone apparently forgot to tell the parents and the students” (Associated Press, 2006).
- “U.S. 15-year-olds[are]outperformed by other nations in mathematics, problem-solving” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).
- “In our K-12 we were doing okay at the fourth-grade level, we were doing middle-of-the-road in the eighth grade, and by 12th grade we were hovering near the bottom in international tests related to math,” states Tracy Koon, Intel’s Director of Corporate Affairs (Friedman, 2005).

Schools are under immense pressure to improve student math achievement scores. Many schools and teachers are under the added pressure of district, state and federal scrutiny

because of their adequate yearly progress (AYP) status for math under the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

So, how can parents and students be brought into this conversation?

There are ways that schools can use the support of their parents to make a difference in student math achievement. Parents are a critical piece to the solution. This article describes several specific activities that schools and parents have done together to address this challenge.

School Data Math Conversations

Alan H. Schoenfeld, of the University of California, Berkeley states, “To fail children in mathematics, or to let mathematics fail them, is to close off an important means of access to society’s resources” (2002).

One of the essential features of parent involvement is to *have meaningful conversations about the knowledge that schools and parents possess*. Schools have data from many sources that they can share with parents, such as past and current math achievement scores on district

Inside this Issue:

- ✦ **Introducing... IDRA Newsletter Plus**
- ✦ **Using the School Holding Power Portal**
- ✦ **Early childhood educators institute coming in February**

IDRA has a new address



benchmark tests, mandated state test results, percentage of students enrolled in higher level math, percentage of students taking advanced placement and college entrance tests, percentage of students repeating required algebra (known as the gate-keeper course for graduation), and how the district or school compares with others.

IDRA has just launched an interactive School Holding Power Portal that the public can access that puts these types of data and other data together in a coherent way for the state of Texas (see article on Page 3).

This sharing of information can be the springboard to the posing of the question: “What does the data mean?” This can generate lots of fruitful conversation.

In several school districts, IDRA trainers have done just this. And parents critically examined the data, pointed out where the numbers of an ethnic group were not adequate to make generalizations, and asked for clarification about the many types of data that were reported (“What test was

On Shortchanging Children

“Mathematics education is a civil rights issue,” says civil rights leader Robert Moses, who argues that children who are not quantitatively literate may be doomed to second-class economic status in our increasingly technological society. The data have been clear for decades: poor children and children of color are consistently shortchanged when it comes to mathematics. More broadly, the type of mathematical sophistication championed in recent reform documents, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ (2000) *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*, can be seen as a core component of intelligent decision making in everyday life, in the workplace and in our democratic society. To fail children in mathematics, or to let mathematics fail them, is to close off an important means of access to society’s resources.

– Excerpted from Alan H. Schoenfeld, University of California, Berkeley in “Making Mathematics Work for All Children: Issues of Standards, Testing, and Equity”

this?” “What was this test compared to in order to get that ranking?” etc.).

Parent Conversations About Everyday Math

Brainstorming a list of ways that parents use math in everyday life is another way that deep conversations about math can be initiated. In sessions with IDRA, parents listed keeping a budget, calculating needs for food and

gas and tracking cell phone minutes. Talking about these specific examples acknowledges that we all use math every day and are capable of doing advanced calculations even without formal education or the language of the school.

This also models how parents can encourage their children to think about mathematical concepts just by having

Community Conversations – continued on Page 6

In This Issue...

3 Knowledge for Action

6 Tools for Action

8 Newsletter Plus

9 Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

11 Early Childhood Educators Institute

12 Classnotes Podcast Episodes 23-26

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

The *IDRA Newsletter* (ISSN 1069-5672, © 2008) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

Permission to reproduce material contained herein is granted provided the article or item is reprinted in its entirety and proper credit is given to IDRA and the author. Please send a copy of the material in its reprinted form to the *IDRA Newsletter* production offices. Editorial submissions, news releases, subscription requests, and change-of-address data should be submitted in writing to the *IDRA Newsletter* production editor. The *IDRA Newsletter* staff welcomes your comments on editorial material.

Portions of the contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the federal government should not be assumed.

Publication offices:

5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78228
210/444-1710; Fax 210/444-1714
www.idra.org contact@idra.org

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.
IDRA Executive Director
Newsletter Executive Editor

Christie L. Goodman, APR
IDRA Communications Manager
Newsletter Production Editor

Sarah H. Aleman
Secretary
Newsletter Typesetter



Knowledge for Action Organizing School-Community Partnerships Around Quality Data

by Laurie Posner, M.P.A., and Hector Bojorquez

Without accessible data on school success, parents and communities often remain disengaged or rely on solutions driven by supposition and anecdote. Schools are mandated to send accountability report cards to parents. Yet there are few mechanisms for helping parents interpret data on school performance. There are even fewer resources to guide authentic parent-school collaboration and engagement resulting from analysis of the data. This article encourages these joint efforts and introduces a dynamic web-based tool – IDRA’s School Holding Power Portal (www.idra.org/portal) – to support them.

A Gateway to Action

IDRA’s School Holding Power Portal is structured around IDRA’s Quality Schools Action Framework. Grounded in research and years of experience in the field, the framework proposes that because schools (like other public organizations) are complex, multi-faceted entities, they rarely benefit from patchwork, silver bullet or short-term solutions.

Instead, what is needed to strengthen schools is a systems-level approach that engages the commitment and leadership of school, family and

Families and communities can offer extraordinary human capital to school reform. But good information is key to meaningful engagement.

community partners around high quality actionable data. Quality schools emerge, the framework suggests, through enlightened policymaking, accountable leadership, equitable funding and an engaged public. Quality schools reflect quality teaching, student engagement, parent and community engagement, and quality curricula. (Robledo Montecel, 2005)

By providing data on these key indicators of quality schooling, IDRA’s School Holding Power Portal helps schools and communities gather information as a backdrop to partnerships that can leverage their distinct roles and shared strengths. In this way, this online portal has been developed around three premises: (1) that public schools *can* provide an excellent education for every student; (2) that school-community-family partnerships are fundamental to this success; and (3) that quality data about

schools is indispensable in identifying areas of strength and need, leading change in the right direction and assessing whether or not changes are making a difference.

Although the portal is intended to help school-community partners work together on complex challenges, it invites partners to begin this work around a shared vision that can be – though profound – quite straightforward and simple. One school district in South Texas described its shared vision this way: that each and every student, bar none, achieves academic success.

Value of Partnerships

It is clear from research, direct experience and common sense that parent and community engagement in public education matters. In their meta-analysis of 51 studies, Henderson and Mapp found a “positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement” (2002).

Payne and Kaba also found that recognizing parents and community members as assets to the process of raising student achievement can predict the quality of a school (2001).

IDRA’s Texas Parent Information
Knowledge for Action – continued on Page 4

and Resource Center, recently featured in the U.S. Department of Education’s *Engaging Parents in Education* guide, affirms through years of partnerships with parents that “parents are powerful advocates of excellent schools as peer teachers, spokespersons, catalysts, problem solvers and resource linkers” (IDRA, 2008).

Parent Involvement Often Stymied

While community and parent involvement is pivotal to school success, significant barriers prevent meaningful engagement. These obstacles often have included language, cultural, and logistical barriers, as well as “deficit-based” interactions that suggest to parents that they are either irrelevant to school reform or the principal cause of student failure.

Parents naturally are not compelled to engage an institution that does not value their contributions or that simply sees them as part of the

problem. Where logistical and language barriers are addressed, many schools still struggle to create meaningful relationships among schools, families and communities or to provide access to the kind of information that spurs joint action to strengthen schools.

Dearth of Data for Engagement

Newer, user-friendly education databases, produced by the independent sector, have substantially improved public information about school performance. However, these databases typically resemble a consumer’s guide (“buyer beware”) approach to education as opposed to facilitating collaboration among parents and schools. Much of the school accountability data available tends to rely solely on *No Child Left Behind Act* testing measures to rate schools.

For many parents and communities, this is simply not enough to gauge success beyond school halls. College access and success rates are

rarely part of any state agency databases. By design, NCLB does not hold schools accountable for how well they prepare students for higher education. Yet, parents and communities hold college going rates at a higher premium than just scoring well on a state-mandated test that does not guarantee success beyond high school.

Families and communities can offer extraordinary human capital to school reform. But good information is key to meaningful engagement.

A Place for Collaboration and Transparency

IDRA’s School Holding Power Portal is a web-based resource designed to provide school, community, family, student and business leaders in Texas with key information to assess school holding power and student preparation and, where needed, to develop a school-community action plan to improve outcomes.

In conjunction with a school district’s internal use of the School Holding Power Portal and other research tools and products for professional development, school leaders can use the portal as part of an effort to engage families and communities in:

- Analyzing school data, conducting needs assessments and targeting the most effective approaches to reducing dropout rates and increasing college readiness.
- Convening solution-oriented community-school forums that bring various stakeholders together around a shared vision of student success and quality data.
- Designing a plan that is informed by research-based best practices, builds on school-community strengths, is aligned with the current school improvement plan and engages stakeholders in ownership, accountability and success.
- Identifying and implementing

Knowledge for Action – continued on Page 5

IDRA creating schools that work for all children
Intercultural Development Research Association

About | Register | Login | Contact us |

Select any Texas county, school district and public school

County [Atascosa County] District [CHARLOTTE ISD] Campus [ATASCOSA CO ALTER]

Home
Home
Logout
Look up Schools

Attrition Data
Texas Data

Resources
Parents

My Account
My Profile

Manage my schools

School with notes
MEMORIAL H S
BEL AIR H S

Schools you've added
BANDERA H S
MULESHOE H S

School Holding Power
How well does a school keep and graduate students?
1
Here, you'll find data on how many students are lost from school enrollment before they graduate (student disappearance rates), and how this compares to Texas as a whole and to other schools.
Find out more...

School Success
How well does this school prepare students to achieve academically?
2
Here, you'll find data on how students are doing on TAKS tests and if they are college-ready.
Find out about AYP status
Find out more...

College Preparation
How well does this school prepare students for college?
3
Here, you'll find data on how well a school prepared students for SAT and ACT tests.
Find out more...

College Access for Success
How well does this school perform in getting students into college?
4
Here, you'll find data on how many high school seniors are attending college, and how many are attending two- vs. four-year institutions.
Find out more...

www.idra.org/portal

models with proven success and providing tailored professional development and training.

The portal provides easy-to-access data and helps school-community partners explore questions like:

- *How well does the school keep and graduate students?* The portal provides data on how many students are lost from school enrollment before they graduate (student disappearance rates) and how this compares to Texas as a whole and to other schools.
- *How well does the school prepare students to achieve academically?* The portal provides data on how students are doing on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills tests and if they are college-ready.
- *How well does the school prepare students for college?* The portal provides data on how well a school prepares students for SAT and ACT tests.
- *How well does the school perform in getting students into college?* The portal provides data on how many high school seniors are attending college and how many are attending two- vs. four-year institutions.

Getting Started

When embarking on community-school partnerships, schools and educators can use the IDRA School Holding Power Portal to guide them through a three-step process.

1. Disseminate comprehensible data – *Create opportunities for parents to use the portal in groups to galvanize discussions about strengths and weaknesses.* This portal can be used by anyone at any time. It is an easy-to-use tool that is available at no cost. The power of the tool, however, can best be harnessed by groups. Educational institutions can create opportunities for using the portal with parents and community members.

A lone parent viewing a school's

AYP status, or ACT/SAT scores, or college-going rates may feel discouraged. A group of parents viewing the same scores in a school lab, surrounded by the instructors or administrators are more likely to feel empowered. Why? A by-product of transparency is trust. When a school opens its doors and welcomes parents regardless of poor or mediocre test results or less-than-stellar college preparation rates, the message is clear: "This is our responsibility, and we welcome your help."

Having schools create opportunities for data dissemination and discussion does not have to be difficult. School leaders can plan a schedule of gatherings throughout the year with parent teacher organizations, local community-based organizations and faith-based communities. They can use Title I funds designated for parent education and leverage all resources, such as parent volunteers and parent liaisons.

2. Facilitate community and parent networks – *The portal facilitates information dissemination to informal networks through simple tools.* The IDRA portal gives users the ability to navigate to any high school and receive simple graphs about a school's general performance and capacity to produce satisfactory results for children. Users can go a step further and take notes online about their own ideas, observations and recommendations about the school. These notes can be saved for later use, printed out and shared with other parents or e-mailed directly to other community members.

Parents are empowered by this simple ability to receive information and disseminate it to all parties concerned with educational institutions. This simple, easy-to-use feature can help bring more parents and community members into a school. The results lead to schools and communities working in partnership.

3. Set shared goals – *As groups gather and grow, weaknesses and strengths can be identified with input by the community stakeholders that a school serves.* Educational data generally have been used in two ways: (1) as diagnostic tools to help institutions inform their decisions, and (2) as a means to increase accountability through public dissemination to communities. Unfortunately, either through inadequate standards or narrow focus, school achievement remains stagnant regardless of data-driven decision making or public awareness.

The IDRA School Holding Power Portal can serve both of those ends but through purposeful community-school use. The data can help institutions and parents identify problems and seek solutions not previously seen through the narrow lens of single measure standards.

Simply, when schools and communities look at the data together and have frank discussions, they can set shared goals that address a range of issues from inadequate funding and classroom size to pedagogy and school-home ties.

Get more online at IDRA Newsletter Plus

- Virtual tour of the IDRA School Holding Power Portal
- Related articles
- Podcasts
- IDRA's Family Leadership Principles
- Links to other sites

See Page 8 for details

Resources

Henderson, A.T., and K.L. Mapp. *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* (Austin, Texas: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002).

Intercultural Development Research
Knowledge for Action – continued on Page 9

conversations about daily activities.

As the conversations about math scores and daily math activities continue, parents can be encouraged to engage their children in discussions about mathematical concepts. Even if they have never taken a particular math course, parents can ask their children to explain a concept or relate it to something in real life.

Math Survey – Parent Initiated

At a school district in West Texas, a group of parents decided to create a student math survey. They distributed it through the schools' math departments to all math students. The survey was short, bilingual and included several items that students were to rate on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5.

Statements included: "I usually get good grades in mathematics" and "When I don't understand a concept, I am encouraged to ask questions in class."

Open-ended statements also were included on the survey, such as "The most important thing that school can do to help a student learn math is..." and "The biggest block in school for a student to learn math is..."

At an urban school district, after collecting the student feedback from the same survey, parents first predicted how they thought their teenagers had responded to the questions. Then they compared their predictions to the actual survey results.

This generated deep conversation about the comments. (See sample facilitator questions on Page 8.) From the discussion, it was apparent that there were things teachers, families and communities could do to improve math achievement.

There is an equivalent survey that parents can complete about their children's math education that can then be used for meaningful conversation.

Tools for

Parent and Community Engagement

IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework is designed to help identify where the systems change needs to occur for any particular school system. In determining how to make the change happen, one of the three strategies outlined is community capacity building. "Community oversight is a critical missing ingredient in effective and accountable dropout prevention efforts at the local level," states IDRA executive director, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel. "Schools and communities working together have the capacity to craft and carry out effective solutions that will make a difference for students."

A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing

Developing leaders – IDRA's Family Leaders Engaged in Children's Academic Success (FLEChAS) project is a comprehensive, multicultural, bilingual project that is strengthening school-family partnerships in a San Antonio school district. IDRA is working with schools, families and community-based organizations to promote academic success for students through an array of capacity-building activities, technology and technical assistance, information dissemination and model development. FLEChAS is strengthening the voice and leadership role of families by working with parents, students, school personnel and community-based organizations to recognize, honor and value family, culture and community as assets to teaching and learning from pre-k through higher education.

Conducting research – Through IDRA's highly successful dropout prevention program, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, tutors in one south Texas school district recently participated in a college awareness day at the University of Texas at Pan American. The students participated in hands-on activities that explored college options and aspects of college, such as what courses are needed in high school to prepare for college, names of colleges (both local and outside of their community), and cost of college tuition. Students also participated in a college tour. A former tutor from the same school district who is now attending the university spoke to the students and encouraged them to consider college in their future.

Informing policy – The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity recently hosted its annual focus group and work session on educational equity. The regional focus group supports parents' options under the *No Child Left Behind Act*. This meeting specifically focused on services to magnet and charter schools. One of the charter schools represented at the meeting provides a rich alternative setting for African American and Latino students. Representatives

Tools for Action continued on next page

Action

from magnet schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas participated. New Mexico sent a district representative who oversees the implementation of charter schools for the state.

Engaging communities – Through a new project, *Cartitas (Valorizando el Compromiso entre la Familia y la Escuela/Valuing the Family-School Connection and Commitment: Letters Home Series)*, IDRA is developing early childhood education materials that strengthen family-school connections for early literacy. The goal of *Cartitas* is to address the need for authentic, bilingual materials that value the diverse, cultural and linguistic traditions of families and strengthen the family-school learning partnership. Participants include teachers and families in San Antonio school districts, early childhood Head Start centers, non-profit agencies from the predominantly Latino, Westside San Antonio neighborhoods, and 150 families and teachers participating in the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute.

What You Can Do

Get informed. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has released a Kids Count working paper, *States Ranked on the Basis of Child Well-Being for Children in Low-Income Families*, that ranks all 50 states in terms of the condition of children living in low-income families. This new information is an important look at a target population that is often the focus of public policies to improve the lives of children. For a copy of the working paper, visit <http://www.aecf.org/upload/PublicationFiles/lowincomewellbeing.pdf>.

Get involved. In San Antonio, a group of parents gathered to learn how to read their school's data through the newly released Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report, which provides comprehensive data on each Texas school district and campus. These reports provide vast information on the performance of students in each school district in Texas annually. To view the 2006-07 report, visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2007/index.html>.

Get results. The Education Trust in Washington, D.C., has developed an easy guide to collecting and analyzing school data in order to improve student achievement. *Making Data Work: A Parent and Community Guide* is designed to help parents and community members learn how to understand and use data to improve their community schools. Community advocates, school counselors, parents, policymakers and educators can use this guide to focus their efforts to change their schools for the better. To get your guide, visit <http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/images/dataguidefinal.pdf>.

Community Conversations – continued from Page 6

Using What is Learned

The final step of the parent conversations involved creating a graphic organizer that illustrated the ideas parents had shared about the specific suggestions for improving math achievement. Some of the ideas generated by one school district in Texas included finding ways for more men to serve as role models in the community, placing a suggestion box in each math classroom, and having more conversations related to math in families. A sample of this parent-generated organizer is available online at www.idra.org.



The parent organizer was shared with the math teaching staff at a school departmental meeting, which generated another fruitful conversation.

Having meaningful communication among the three critical groups of parents, students and teachers is one of the beneficial outcomes of parent involvement in math discussions. Other benefits include increasing parent awareness of campus data and accountability issues and awareness of specific things parents can do on a daily basis.

These are all critical components for supporting students and their proficiency and achievement in mathematics.

Get more online at IDRA Newsletter Plus

Math activities for families, students and educators.

Sample surveys for parents and students.

Sample parent-generated graphic organizer

See Page 8 for details

Community Conversations – continued on Page 8

Introducing...

IDRA Newsletter +++ PLUS +++

Go online to IDRA's new web-based supplement to the IDRA Newsletter. View videos, hear podcasts and get resources related to articles in each issue of the IDRA Newsletter in 2008 – free!

The IDRA Newsletter Plus is exclusively for our newsletter readers. Go to the web site and create your own user name and password to explore.

<http://www.idra.org/newsletterplus>

Community Conversations – continued from Page 7

Resources

Associated Press. "Math Crisis? Students Don't Get It Improving Science, Math is a U.S. Priority, But Many See No Problem," *CBS News* (February 14, 2006).

Brown, K. "Making Math Real for Students," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, March 2006).

Dieckmann, J., and A.M. Montemayor. "Can Everyone Master Mathematics?," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 2004).

Friedman, T. *The World Is Flat* (New York, N.Y.: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

Schoenfeld, A.H. "Making Mathematics Work for All Children: Issues of Standards, Testing, and Equity," *Educational Researcher* (January-February 2002). http://www.noycefdn.org/documents/Making_Math_Work-Schoenfeld.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. "Pisa Results Show Need for High School Reform," *Extra Credit* (December 7, 2004). <http://www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/extracredit/2004/12/1207.html>

Kristin Grayson, M.Ed., is an IDRA education associate. Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed. is an IDRA senior education associate and director of the Texas IDRA Parent Information and

Resource Center. He also serves on the national board of PTA. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Math Survey – Facilitator Questions

As parents review responses to their survey, facilitators guided the conversation with the questions below in brown.

1. My children have high grades in math.

How do you know this? With whom, other than your children, have you had a conversation about your children's academic achievement in mathematics?

2. Students are encouraged to ask questions.

Why is this important information? What are other students' responses beyond what your own children say?

3. When students don't understand a concept, different ways are used to teach it.

Why is it important that math be taught in a variety of ways? What happens when only one way of teaching is used?

4. The supplementary educational services, such as tutoring, help the students to succeed in their classes.

How should tutoring differ from regular class instruction? What is most helpful to students in afterschool tutoring? What are some things about tutoring that are not helpful or motivating to students?

5. The most important thing that school can do to help a student learn math is...

Why is it important to ask this question of students? What should we do about the answers students give?

6. The biggest block in school for a student to learn math is...

Why is it important to ask this question of students? What should we do about the answers students give?

IDRA has a new address

**Please note our new address:
5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78228**

**Our phone, e-mails and web site
addresses remain the same:
210-444-1710
contact@idra.org
www.idra.org**

Association. "Texas IDRA PIRC Valuing Assumptions," IDRA web site (current 2008).

Payne, C.M., and M. Kaba. "So Much Reform, So Little Change: Building-level Obstacles to Urban School Reform," *Journal of Negro Education* (2001) 2(1), 1-16.

Robledo Montecel, M. "A Quality Schools Action Framework – Framing Systems Change for Student Success," IDRA Newsletter (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2005).

Laurie Posner, M.P.A., is an IDRA education associate. Hector Bojorquez is an IDRA education associate. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In October, IDRA worked with **5,219** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **43** training and technical assistance activities and **71** program sites in **11** states plus Brazil. Topics included:

- ◆ Family Dialogues:
Understanding U.S. Schools
- ◆ From Excellent Parent to
Excellent Parent Leader
- ◆ Professional Learning
Communities: Using Language
Implication and Objectives
- ◆ Reading Strategies for Teacher
Assistants

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia
- ◆ Denton Independent School
District (ISD), Texas
- ◆ Lake Hamilton Schools,
Arkansas
- ◆ Raymondville ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

After being found in violation of the law related to racial harassment, one district faced having \$250,000 in federal funds withheld from it. The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity provided technical assistance to the district in board policy development and training in prejudice reduction for the board, staff, students and parents. A model was developed and refined for use with other districts experiencing similar problems. The South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas to provide equitable school settings that ensure full inclusion and participation by all students and their parents regardless of race, sex or national origin.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ◆ public school teachers
- ◆ parents
- ◆ administrators
- ◆ other decision makers in public
education

Services include:

- ◆ training and technical
assistance
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ serving as expert witnesses in
policy settings and court cases
- ◆ publishing research and
professional papers, books,
videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710.



15th Annual IDRA

La Semana del Niño

Early Childhood Educators Institute™

February 18-21, 2008 • San Antonio, Texas • Embassy Suites – International Airport

Designed for early childhood educators, administrators, parents and parent educators and liaisons to inspire children's creativity and inquiry in science and mathematics. The Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute offers a valuable series of information-packed sessions by excellent presenters known for their expert knowledge and experience working with English language learners. Furthermore, these sessions are customized to value and respond appropriately to the linguistic and cultural assets of a diverse student population.

You will...

- ◆ Learn about federal and state regulations that govern effective early childhood education programs.
- ◆ Learn how to create dynamic learning environments that promote inquiry and literacy.
- ◆ Examine the importance of early literacy, mathematics and science for English language learners.
- ◆ Explore research-based effective practices in early childhood education.
- ◆ Visit effective bilingual preschool programs in San Antonio.

Early Bird Registration Fee – Before January 18, 2008

\$75 Pre-conference Institute, February 18, 2008

\$175 Three-day Institute, February 19-21, 2008

Registration Fee – After January 18, 2008

\$100 Pre-conference Institute, February 18, 2008

\$200 Three-day Institute, February 19-21, 2008

Hotel Accommodation

The institute will be held at the Embassy Suites – International Airport (7750 Briaridge) in San Antonio. The hotel is offering a special rate of \$129 per night for a single and \$139 per night for a double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is January 17, 2008. Call 1-800-362-2779 to make reservations. Be sure to reference the **IDRA Early Childhood Institute** in order to qualify for the special rate.

For more information visit www.idra.org or call Carol Chavez at 210-444-1710

Pre-Conference Institute

Monday, February 18, 2008

This special pre-conference institute is a trainer-of-trainers session for early childhood trainers, lead early childhood teachers and program directors. The session will be built on IDRA's unique training of trainers model, *WOW (Workshop on Workshops)*. The model uses research about adult learners and defines the trainer's role based on those assumptions. It includes principles of training, a process for planning a workshop including assessment needs, setting objectives, designing activities and structuring the workshop as a whole, and workshop evaluation. This pre-conference institute is designed to give you an extensive eight-hour training session in the skills to train others to build the foundation for preschool literacy.

Registration details are online at www.idra.org. Eight hours of CEU credit is available.

Free!



This podcast series for teachers and administrators explores issues facing U.S. education today and strategies to better serve every student.

Online Now



Episode 26: “Dropout Prevention for Students with Special Needs” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Lee Ramos talk about the impact of a pilot project that adapted the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program to serve students with special needs.



Episode 24: “Coaching and Mentoring New Teachers” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Dr. Linda Cantu and Dr. Adela Solís, developers of IDRA’s coaching and mentoring model, discuss how coaching and mentoring programs can give new teachers the peer support and trusted advice they need to succeed from day one.



Episode 25: “Professional Learning Communities in Schools” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Dr. Juanita García join Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., to describe a successful professional learning community in a middle school in south Texas.



Episode 23: “The Watch on Racism Cannot Stop” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Dr. Shirley Nash Weber, former chair of the Department of Africana Studies and Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University, presents a keynote on the challenge African American women face in balancing gender and equity.

www.idra.org/podcasts

A podcast is an audio file that can be downloaded to your computer for listening immediately or at a later time. Podcasts may be listened to directly from your computer by downloading them onto a Mp3 player (like an iPod) for listening at a later date. The IDRA Classnotes podcasts are available at no charge through the IDRA web site and through the Apple iTunes Music Store. You can also subscribe to Classnotes through iTunes or other podcast directories to automatically receive each new podcast in the series when it is released. Classnotes is free of charge.



5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, TX 78228

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Permit No. 3192
San Antonio, TX 78228



*Creating schools that work for all children,
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination*