IDRA REPORT

Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2010-11

High School Attrition Continues Downward Trend – Universal High School Graduation is Still a Quarter of a Century Away

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

This report presents results of long-term trend assessments of attrition data in Texas public high schools. Since 1986, IDRA has conducted annual attrition studies to track the number and percent of students in Texas who are lost from public school enrollment prior to graduation from high school.

IDRA conducted the first comprehensive study of school dropouts in Texas when it released its initial study in October 1986 and has continued to report attrition rates each year since then. The study in 1986, entitled *Texas School Dropout Survey Project*, was conducted under contract with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the then Texas Department of Community Affairs. That first study found that 86,276 students had not graduated from Texas public schools, costing the state $17 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs (Cárdenas, Robledo & Supik, 1986). The

69th Legislature responded by the passing HB 1010 in 1987 through which the state and local responsibilities for collecting and monitoring dropout data were substantially increased (TEA, July 2011).

Over the 26-year study period, Texas public schools have lost a cumulative total of more than 3.1 million students from high school enrollment – 3.1 million students without a high school diploma. And the attrition rate has ranged from a low of 27 percent in 2010-11 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

Report Highlights

Long-term trend assessments of attrition data in Texas show mixed results for school holding power. Attrition rates continue to decline in Texas public high schools, but the pace is slow and persistent gaps among racial and ethnic groups statewide remain greater than in 1986.

"We are seeing the benefits of innovative work in some schools and communities across Texas. But what will happen next as students face the effects of the state's disinvestment in education? What will happen next as the state returns to student tracking? Texas cannot compete in the global marketplace if we do not get serious about creating top quality schooling for all students."

– Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

Since 1986, Texas high schools have lost

3.1 million students.

This is the equivalent of losing

Houston, Austin, Weslaco and Lubbock

over the course of two and half decades.
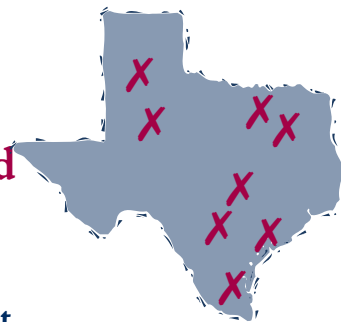
At the current pace, we could be looking at losing as many as

3 million more **students – or the entire populations of**

San Antonio, Dallas, Amarillo **and** Denton

over the next three decades.

2007-08 and 2010-11 Enrollment, 2010-11 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	2007-08 9th Grade Enrollment	2010-11 12th Grade Enrollment	2007-08 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2010-11 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2010-11 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
Native American	**1,373**	**1,408**	**4,488**	**6,563**	**2,009**	**601**	**30**
Male	722	683	2,291	3,428	1,080	397	37
Female	651	725	2,197	3,135	929	204	22
Asian/Pacific Islander	**11,806**	**10,971**	**43,632**	**47,753**	**12,922**	**1,951**	**15**
Male	6,105	5,580	22,506	24,650	6,687	1,107	17
Female	5,701	5,391	21,126	23,103	6,235	844	14
Black	**58,926**	**39,081**	**184,999**	**175,601**	**55,961**	**16,880**	**30**
Male	30,878	19,048	93,177	89,557	29,678	10,630	36
Female	28,048	20,033	91,822	86,044	26,283	6,250	24
White	**134,970**	**106,092**	**494,848**	**450,440**	**122,863**	**16,771**	**14**
Male	70,680	54,549	254,580	232,266	64,485	9,936	15
Female	64,290	51,543	240,268	218,174	58,378	6,835	12
Hispanic	**179,631**	**128,413**	**537,476**	**607,322**	**203,014**	**74,601**	**37**
Male	94,627	63,575	273,391	310,549	107,488	43,913	41
Female	85,004	64,838	264,085	296,773	95,526	30,688	32
Multiracial	**NA**	**4,086**	**NA**	**19,980**	**6,106**	**NA**	**NA**
Male	NA	1,983	NA	9,759	3,067	NA	NA
Female	NA	2,103	NA	10,221	3,031	NA	NA
All Groups	**386,706**	**290,051**	**1,265,443**	**1,307,659**	**400,855**	**110,804**	**27**
Male	203,012	145,418	645,945	670,209	211,401	65,983	31
Female	183,694	144,633	619,498	637,450	189,454	44,821	23

NA = Not Available

Notes: Figures calculated by IDRA from Texas Education Agency Fall Membership Survey data. IDRA's 2010-11 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 2007-08 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 2010-11. This period represents the time span when ninth grade students would be enrolled in school prior to graduation. The enrollment data for special school districts (military schools, state schools and charter schools) were excluded from the analyses since they are likely to have unstable enrollments and/or lack a tax base to support school programs. School districts with masked student enrollment data were also excluded from the analysis. For the 2010-11 school year, TEA collected enrollment data for race and ethnicity separately in compliance with new federal standards. For the purposes of analysis, IDRA continued to combined the Asian and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander categories. Attrition rates were not calculated for students classified as having two or more races (multiracial).

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

For the second time in its 26-year history of reporting trends in dropout and attrition rates in Texas public schools, IDRA's latest study shows that less than 30 percent of students were lost from public school enrollment prior to graduation with a high school diploma. IDRA found that 27 percent of the freshman class of 2007-08 left school prior to graduating in the 2010-11 school year. This is six percentage points lower than the initial rate of 33 percent found in IDRA's landmark 1985-86 study.

For each racial and ethnic group, the study found that current attrition rates were lower than rates found in the 1985-86 study. However, the gaps between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students and between the rates of White students and Black students are higher than 26 years ago. Between White students and Hispanic students, the attrition rate gap has increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 23 percentage points in 2010-11. The attrition rate gap between White students and Black students has increased from 7 percentage points in 1985-

86 to 16 percentage points in 2010-11. Additional research is needed to address the reasons for the decline in overall attrition rates and the widened disparity in attrition rates between racial and ethnic groups.

A supplemental analysis using linear regression models predicts that Texas will reach an attrition rate of zero in the year 2037. At this pace, the state will lose an additional 1.6 million to 4.1 million students. (See analysis on Page 14.)

Key findings of the latest study include the following:

- The overall attrition rate declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to **27 percent in** 2010-11.

- Texas public schools are failing to graduate more than **one out of every four students**.

- At this rate, Texas will not reach universal high school education for another **quarter of a century** in 2037.

- Numerically, **110,804 students** were lost from public high school enrollment in 2010-11 compared to 86,276 in 1985-86.

- Since 1986, Texas schools have lost a cumulative total of more than **3.1 million students** from our public high schools.

- Since the first study, attrition rates of **Hispanic students** declined by 18 percent (from 45 percent to 37 percent). Attrition rates of Black students declined by 12 percent (from 34 percent to 30 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 48 percent (from 27 percent to 14 percent).

- The **racial-ethnic gaps** are dramatically higher than 26 years ago. The gap between White students and Hispanic students increased by 28 percent. The gap between White students and Black students increased by 129 percent.

- For the class of 2010-11, Hispanic students and Black students are about **two times more likely to leave** school without graduating than White students.

- The attrition rates of males have been higher than those of females. In the class of 2010-11, **males were 1.3 times more likely to leave** school without graduating with a diploma than females.

- From 1985-86 to 2010-11, attrition rates of **male students** declined by 11 percent (from 35 percent to 31 percent), while the attrition rates of **female students** declined by 28 percent

(from 32 percent to 23 percent).

Data Collection

IDRA uses data on public school enrollment from the Texas Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Fall Membership Survey. During the fall of each year, school districts are required to report information to TEA via the PEIMS for all public school students and grade levels.

In 2010-11, TEA reported student enrollment data on race and ethnicity based on new federal standards that required data on race and ethnicity to be collected separately using a specific two-part question – (1) Is the person Hispanic/Latino? and (2) What is the person's race? Prior to the new standard, TEA allowed school districts to report a student's race or ethnicity in one of five categories: American Indian or Alaska Native (Native American); Asian or Pacific Islander; Black or African American (not of Hispanic origin); Hispanic/Latino; or White (not of Hispanic origin). Under the new standards, TEA now requires school districts to report a student's race or ethnicity in one of seven categories: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; White; or Multiracial (two or more races).

Student enrollment data at grades nine through 12 increased from 1,327,815 in 2009-10 to 1,347,324 in 2010-11 (see boxes on Page 4). Hispanic students had the largest numerical increase, while Black students and White students had declines in enrollment, likely due in part to the new multiracial category. The percentage of the nineth through 12th grade population reported as Black or African American declined from 14.6 percent to 13.5 percent, and the percentage reported as White declined from 36.6 percent to 34.2 percent (see box on Page 8).

Methods

Attrition rates are an indicator of a school's holding power or ability to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. Along with other dropout measures, attrition rates are useful in studying the magnitude of the dropout problem and the success of schools in keeping students in school (see Page 13 for dropout indicators). Attrition, in its simplest form, is the rate of shrinkage in size or number. Therefore, an attrition rate is the percent change in grade level enrollment between a base year and an end year.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools by Year 1985-86 to 2010-11

Year	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
1985-86	34	27	45	33
1986-87	38	26	46	34
1987-88	39	24	49	33
1988-89	37	20	48	31
1989-90	38	19	48	31
1990-91	37	19	47	31
1991-92	39	22	48	34
1992-93	43	25	49	36
1993-94	47	28	50	39
1994-95	50	30	51	40
1995-96	51	31	53	42
1996-97	51	32	54	43
1997-98	49	31	53	42
1998-99	48	31	53	42
1999-00	47	28	52	40
2000-01	46	27	52	40
2001-02	46	26	51	39
2002-03	45	24	50	38
2003-04	44	22	49	36
2004-05	43	22	48	36
2005-06	40	21	47	35
2006-07	40	20	45	34
2007-08	38	18	44	33
2008-09	35	17	42	31
2009-10	33	15	39	29
2010-11	30	14	37	27

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

Texas Student Enrollment, Grades 9-12, 2007-08 to 2010-11

Race-Ethnicity	Enrollment by Grade				
	9	10	11	12	9-12
2007-08					
Black or African American	61,355	49,195	42,847	38,880	192,277
Hispanic	185,008	142,059	118,742	107,405	553,214
Native American	1,415	1,179	1,069	964	4,627
Asian/Pacific Islander	11,970	11,330	10,696	10,132	44,128
White	137,337	128,254	121,068	116,225	502,884
Total	**397,085**	**332,017**	**294,422**	**273,606**	**1,297,130**
2008-09					
Black or African American	58,631	49,647	43,976	39,991	192,245
Hispanic	182,259	145,028	126,454	114,518	568,259
Native American	1,327	1,224	1,068	988	4,607
Asian/Pacific Islander	12,727	11,907	11,439	10,676	46,749
White	133,007	124,295	120,330	113,871	491,503
Total	**387,951**	**332,101**	**303,267**	**280,044**	**1,303,363**
2009-10					
Black or African American	57,721	49,325	45,190	41,316	193,552
Hispanic	187,776	149,012	133,668	123,209	593,665
Native American	1,529	1,266	1,173	1,097	5,065
Asian/Pacific Islander	13,534	12,510	11,971	11,307	49,322
White	131,480	122,710	118,068	113,953	486,211
Total	**392,040**	**334,823**	**310,070**	**290,882**	**1,327,815**
2010-11					
Black or African American	52,479	46,634	42,469	40,236	181,818
Hispanic	193,305	160,564	142,196	132,586	628,651
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,959	1,850	1,582	1,467	6,858
White	123,392	116,999	111,865	108,477	460,733
Asian	13,127	12,059	11,208	10,789	47,183
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	458	427	447	411	1,743
Multiracial	5,945	5,288	4,943	4,162	20,338
Total	**390,665**	**343,821**	**314,710**	**298,128**	**1,347,324**

Source: Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2010-11, http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/adste.html

Spanning a period from 1985-86 through 2010-11, the IDRA attrition studies have provided time series data, using a consistent methodology, on the number and percent of Texas public school students who leave school prior to graduation. These studies are the only source for examining the magnitude of the dropout problem in Texas across more than two decades using consistent methods. They provide information on the effectiveness and success of Texas public high schools in keeping students engaged in school until they graduate with a high school diploma.

IDRA's attrition studies involve an analysis of ninth-grade enrollment figures and 12th-grade enrollment figures three years later. This period represents the time span during which a student would be enrolled in high school.
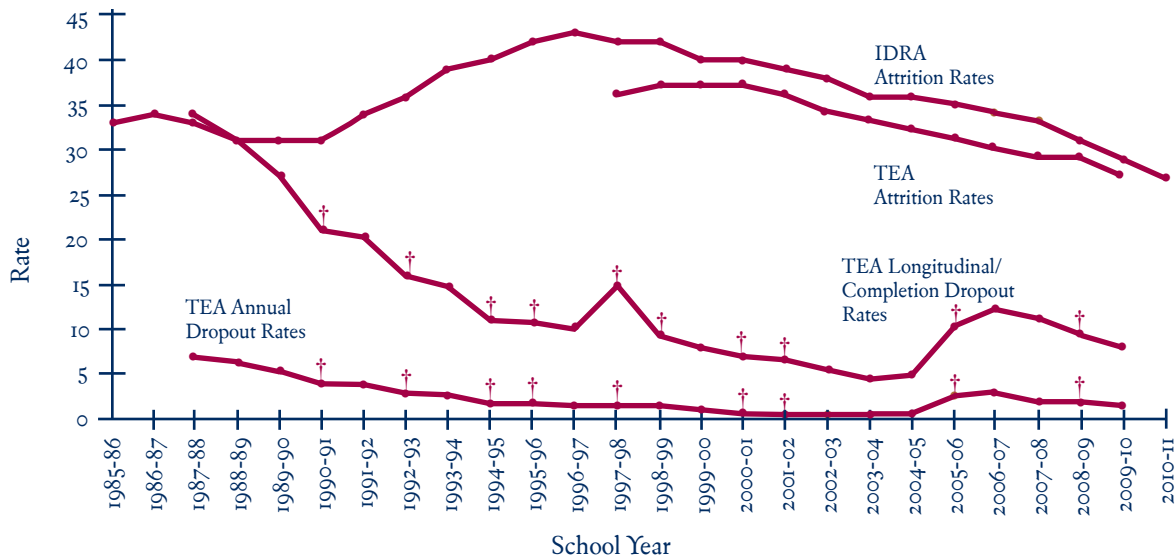
IDRA collects and uses high school enrollment data from the TEA Fall Membership Survey to compute countywide and statewide attrition rates by race-ethnicity and gender (see box on Page 7). Enrollment data from special school districts (military schools, state schools, charter schools) are excluded from the analyses because they are

likely to have unstable enrollments or lack a tax base for school programs.

For the purposes of its attrition reporting, IDRA continued to use the term Native American in place of American Indian or Alaska Native. Additionally, IDRA combined the categories of Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and continued to use the term Asian/Pacific Islander in place of the separate terms of Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Enrollment data for the new multiracial category were provided, but the calculation of

Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time

IDRA Attrition Rates

TEA Attrition Rates

TEA Longitudinal/ Completion Dropout Rates

TEA Annual Dropout Rates

Rate

School Year

† Change in TEA dropout definition or data processing procedures

Sources: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010. Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09.*

Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time

	IDRA Attrition Rates	TEA Attrition Rates	TEA Long. Dropout Rates	TEA Annual Dropout Rates
1985-86	33		--	--
1986-87	34		--	--
1987-88	33		34.0	6.7
1988-89	31		31.3	6.1
1989-90	31		27.2	5.1
1990-91	31		21.4	3.9
1991-92	34		20.7	3.8
1992-93	36		15.8	2.8
1993-94	39		14.4	2.6
1994-95	40		10.6	1.8
1995-96	42		10.1	1.8
1996-97	43		9.1	1.6
1997-98	42	36	14.7	1.6
1998-99	42	37	9.0*	1.6
1999-00	40	37	7.7*	1.3
2000-01	40	37	6.8*	1.0
2001-02	39	36	5.6*	0.9
2002-03	38	34	4.9*	0.9
2003-04	36	33	4.2*	0.9
2004-05	36	32	4.6*	0.9
2005-06	35	31	9.1***	2.6**
2006-07	34	30	11.6***	2.7**
2007-08	33	29	10.7***	2.2**
2008-09	31	29	9.5***	2.0**
2009-10	29	27	7.3***	1.7**
2010-11	27			

*   Longitudinal completion rate (Grades 7-12)
**   Annual dropout rate using NCES definition (Grades 7-12)
*** Longitudinal dropout rate using NCES definition (Grades 7-12)

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

an attrition rate could not be achieved without corresponding first-year categories.

TEA masked some data with aggregates less than five students in order to comply with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA). Where data were masked, it was necessary to exclude some district- and/or county-level data from the total student enrollment counts.

Latest Study Results

About one of every four students (27 percent) from the freshman class of 2007-08 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma. For the class of 2010-11, 110,804 students were lost from public school enrollment between the 2007-08 and 2010-11 school years. (See box on Page 2.)

The overall attrition rate declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 27 percent in 2010-11. Over the past two and a half decades, attrition rates have fluctuated between a low of 27 percent in 2010-11 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97. (See box on Page 3.)

The overall attrition rate was less than 30 percent for the second time in 26 years. After 24 consecutive years of overall statewide attrition rates at 31 percent or higher, the overall statewide attrition rate of 29 percent in 2009-10 and 27 percent in 2010-11 are the lowest since the previous low of 31 percent in 1988-89,

1989-90, 1990-91 and 2008-09. (See boxes at left and above.)

The attrition rates of Hispanic students and Black students are much higher than those of White students. From 1985-86 to 2010-11, attrition rates of Hispanic students declined by 18 percent (from 45 percent to 37 percent). During this same period, the attrition rates of Black students declined by 12 percent (from 34 percent to 30 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 48 percent (from 27 percent to 14 percent).

Native American students had a decline of 33 percent in their attrition rates (from 45 percent to 30 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 55 percent (from 33 percent to 15 percent).

Hispanic students have higher attrition rates than either White students or Black students. The attrition rate of Asian/Pacific Islander students was the lowest among the racial/ethnic groups, while the rate for Hispanic students was the highest. (See boxse on Page 6.)

For the class of 2010-11, Black students and Hispanic students are about two times more likely to leave school without graduating with a diploma than White students.

The gap between the attrition rates of

# Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools, 1985-86 to 2010-11

Group	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 2010-11
Race-Ethnicity																											
Native American	45	39	37	47	39	39	40	39	38	42	44	43	42	25	43	42	29	39	42	40	39	36	38	32	28	30	-33
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	30	28	23	22	23	21	21	21	18	18	20	21	19	20	20	14	17	16	17	17	14	14	14	15	15	-55
Black	34	38	39	37	38	37	39	43	47	50	51	51	49	48	47	46	46	45	44	43	40	40	38	35	33	30	-12
White	27	26	24	20	19	19	22	25	28	30	31	32	31	31	28	27	26	24	22	22	21	20	18	17	15	14	-48
Hispanic	45	46	49	48	48	47	48	49	50	51	53	54	53	53	52	52	51	50	49	48	47	45	44	42	39	37	-18
Gender																											
Male	35	35	35	34	34	34	37	39	41	43	45	46	45	45	44	43	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	33	31	-11
Female	32	32	31	29	29	28	30	33	36	37	39	40	38	38	36	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	27	25	23	-28
Total	**33**	**34**	**33**	**31**	**31**	**31**	**34**	**36**	**39**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**42**	**40**	**40**	**39**	**38**	**36**	**36**	**35**	**34**	**33**	**31**	**29**	**27**	**-18**

* Rounded to nearest whole number.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

Figures calculated by IDRA from Texas Education Agency Fall Membership Survey data.

Longitudinal Attrition Rates by Race-Ethnicity in Texas Public Schools, 1985-86 to 2010-11
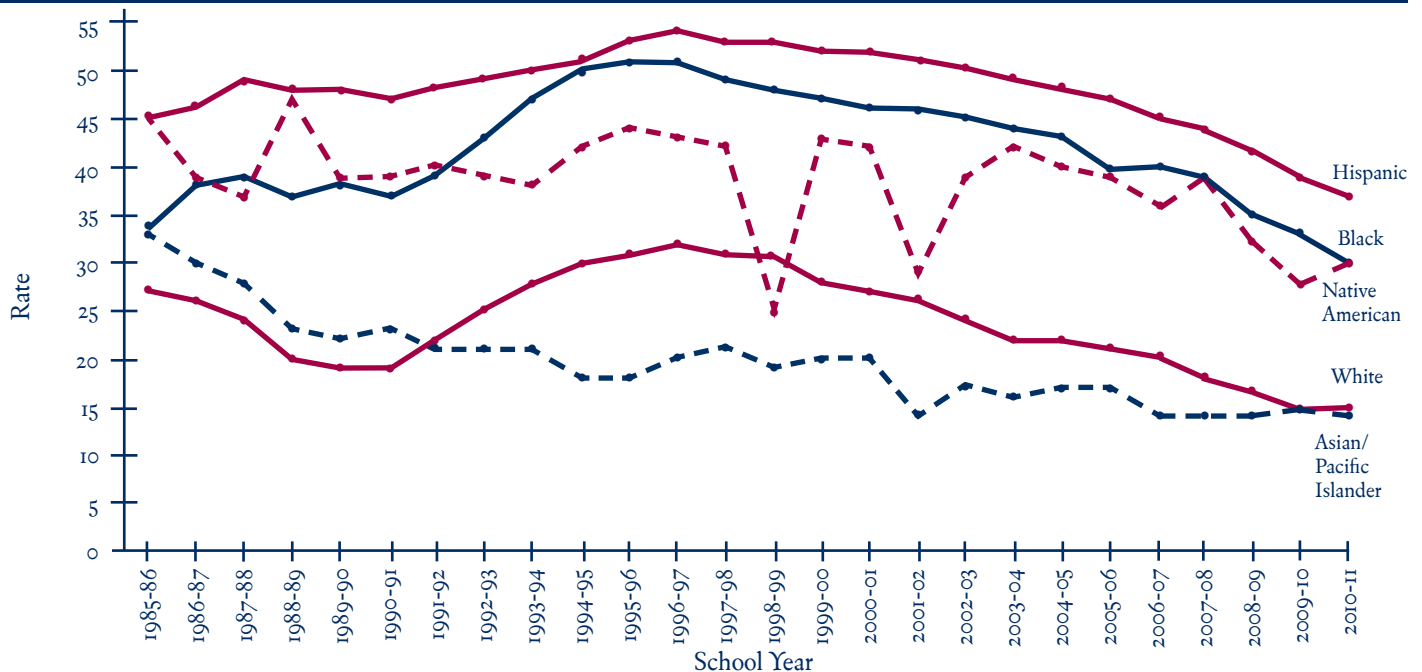
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition in Texas, School Years 1985-86 to 2010-11

School Year	Total	Race-Ethnicity					Gender	
		Native American	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	White	Hispanic	Male	Female
1985-86	86,276	185	1,523	12,268	38,717	33,583	46,603	39,673
1986-87	90,317	152	1,406	14,416	38,848	35,495	48,912	41,405
1987-88	92,213	159	1,447	15,273	34,889	40,435	50,595	41,618
1988-89	88,538	252	1,189	15,474	28,309	43,314	49,049	39,489
1989-90	86,160	196	1,214	15,423	24,510	44,817	48,665	37,495
1990-91	83,718	207	1,324	14,133	23,229	44,825	47,723	35,995
1991-92	91,424	215	1,196	15,016	27,055	47,942	51,937	39,487
1992-93	101,358	248	1,307	17,032	32,611	50,160	57,332	44,026
1993-94	113,061	245	1,472	19,735	37,377	54,232	63,557	49,504
1994-95	123,200	296	1,226	22,856	41,648	57,174	68,725	54,475
1995-96	135,438	350	1,303	25,078	45,302	63,405	75,854	59,584
1996-97	147,313	327	1,486	27,004	48,586	69,910	82,442	64,871
1997-98	150,965	352	1,730	26,938	49,135	72,810	85,585	65,380
1998-99	151,779	299	1,680	25,526	48,178	76,096	86,438	65,341
1999-00	146,714	406	1,771	25,097	44,275	75,165	83,976	62,738
2000-01	144,241	413	1,794	24,515	41,734	75,785	82,845	61,396
2001-02	143,175	237	1,244	25,017	39,953	76,724	82,762	60,413
2002-03	143,280	436	1,611	25,066	36,948	79,219	82,621	60,659
2003-04	139,413	495	1,575	24,728	33,104	79,511	80,485	58,928
2004-05	137,424	490	1,789	24,373	31,378	79,394	78,858	58,566
2005-06	137,162	512	1,876	24,366	29,903	80,505	78,298	58,864
2006-07	134,676	500	1,547	23,845	28,339	80,445	76,965	57,711
2007-08	132,815	581	1,635	23,036	25,923	81,640	76,532	56,283
2008-09	125,508	450	1,685	21,019	22,476	79,878	73,572	51,936
2009-10	119,836	427	1,951	20,051	20,416	76,991	70,606	49,230
2010-11	110,804	601	1,951	16,880	16,771	74,601	65,983	44,821
All Years	**3,156,808**	**9,031**	**39,932**	**544,165**	**889,624**	**1,674,056**	**1,796,940**	**1,359,888**

Figures calculated by IDRA from Texas Education Agency Fall Membership Survey data.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

White students and of Black students and Hispanic students is higher than 26 years ago. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has increased from 7 percentage points in 1985-86 to 16 percentage points in 2010-11. Similarly, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students has increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 23 percentage points in 2010-11. (See boxes on Page 9.)

The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Native American students has declined from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 16 percentage points in 2010-11. Asian/Pacific Islander students exhibited the greatest positive trend in the reduction of the gap in attrition rates compared to White students. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students has declined from 6 percentage points in 1985-86 to 1 percentage point in 2010-11.

The gap between the attrition rates of White students and of Black students and Hispanic students declined from 2009-10 to 2010-11. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students declined from 18 percentage points in 2009-10 to 16 percentage points in 2010-11. Similarly, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students declined from 24 percentage points in 2009-10 to 23 percentage points in 2010-11.

Historically, Hispanic students and Black students have comprised a large proportion of students lost by schools. For the period of 1985-86 to 2010-11, students from ethnic minority groups account for nearly three-fourths (71.8 percent) of the estimated 3.1 million students lost from public high school enrollment.

Hispanic students account for 53.0 percent of the students lost to attrition. Black students account for 17.2 percent of all students lost from enrollment due to attrition over the years. White students account for 28.2 percent of students lost from high school enrollment over time. Attrition rates

Texas Student Enrollment, Grades 9, 12 and 9-12, 2007-08 to 2010-11 (Percent)

Race-Ethnicity	2007-08	2008-09	200-10	2010-11
9th Grade Enrollment				
Black or African American	15.5	15.1	14.7	13.4
Hispanic	46.6	47.0	47.9	49.5
Native American (American Indian/Alaska Native)	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	3.3	3.5	–
White	34.6	34.3	33.5	31.6
Asian	–	–	–	3.4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	–	–	–	0.1
Multiracial	–	–	–	1.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
12th Grade Enrollment				
Black or African American	14.2	14.3	14.2	13.5
Hispanic	39.3	40.9	42.4	44.5
Native American (American Indian/Alaska Native)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.7	3.8	3.9	–
White	42.5	40.7	39.2	36.4
Asian	–	–	–	3.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	–	–	–	0.1
Multiracial	–	–	–	1.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
9-12th Grade Enrollment				
Black or African American	14.8	14.7	14.6	13.5
Hispanic	42.6	43.6	44.7	46.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	–	–	–	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	3.3	3.5	–
White	38.8	37.7	36.6	34.2
Asian	–	–	–	3.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	–	–	–	0.1
Multiracial	–	–	–	1.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2010-11, http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/adste.html

for White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students have been typically lower than the overall attrition rates.

The attrition rates for males have been higher than those of females. From 1985-86 to 2010-11, attrition rates of male students declined by 11 percent (from 35 percent to 31 percent). Attrition rates for females declined by 28 percent from 32 percent in 1985-86 to 23 percent in 2010-11. Longitudinally, males have accounted for 56.9 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 43.1 percent. In the class of 2010-11, males were 1.3 times more likely to leave school without graduating with a diploma than females.

County-level data are provided on the map (on Page 12) and on an attrition rate table on Pages 10-11. In addition, trend data by county are available on IDRA's website at www.idra.org (see box on Page 12). School district and high school-level data are available online as well through IDRA's OurSchool data portal, where the attrition figures provided are from TEA databases (see box on Page 18).

The graph and table on Page 5 show attrition and dropout rates in Texas over time as reported in IDRA's attrition studies and TEA dropout reports. Descriptions of different dropout counting and reporting methodologies are outlined on Page 13.

Conclusions

Texas public schools are failing to graduate one out of every four students. Attrition rates as an indicator in a school holding power index show that the rate was 27 percent overall and near 40 percent for Black students and Hispanic students. The overall attrition rate has declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 27 percent in 2010-11, but
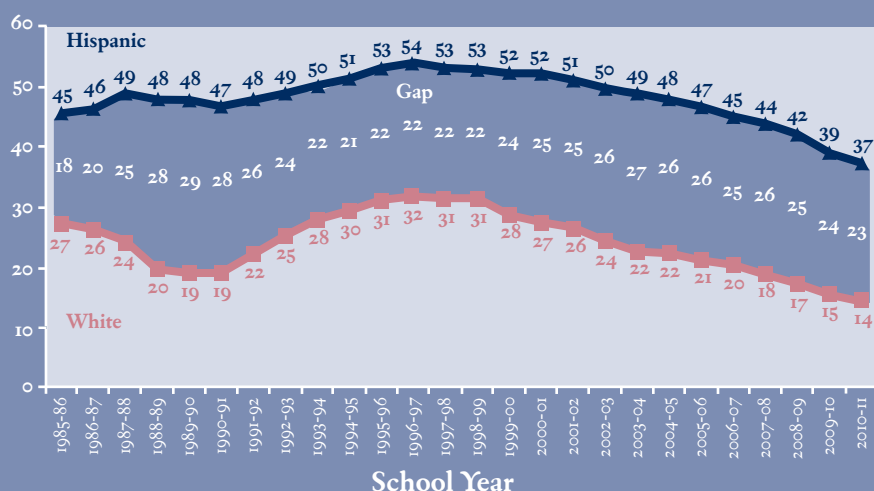
Trend in Black-White Attrition Rates

Black
Gap
White

School Year
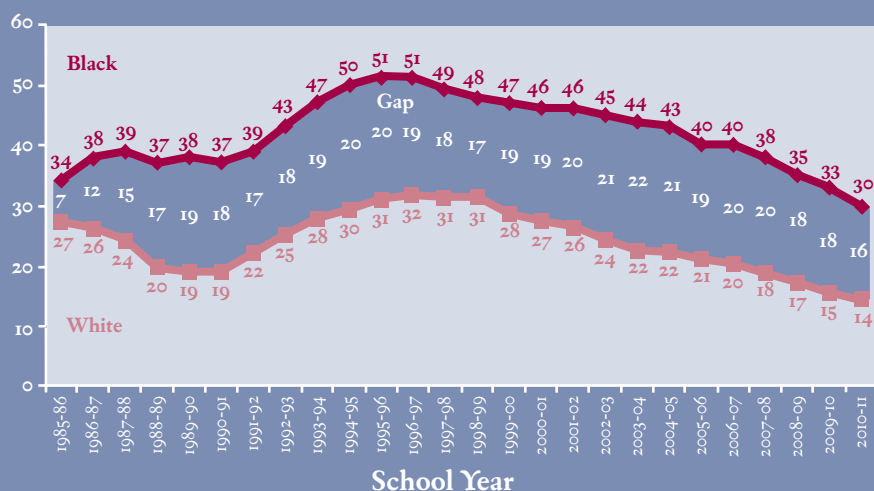
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

Trend in Hispanic-White Attrition Rates

Hispanic
Gap
White

School Year

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

"Our research and decades of experience show clearly that students are far more likely to succeed and graduate when they have the chance to work with highly qualified, committed teachers, using effective, accessible curricula, when schools partner with parents and communities, and when students themselves feel engaged."

— Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

the gap or disparity in attrition rates has not improved between racial-ethnic groups. The disparity in dropout rates must garner additional attention and resources in order to achieve equity and excellence in our schools.

Trends in Texas and national dropout and graduation rates show snail-paced improvement. At this pace, millions of students will leave school before graduation with a high school diploma thereby diminishing their opportunities for post-secondary education and a livable wage. The number of students lost from public school enrollment is significant, and the social and economic costs to society are enormous, not to speak of the tremendous impact on students themselves.

The good news is that it appears that some schools are taking steps to improving their school holding power, and the investment into dropout prevention programs and college readiness initiatives is beginning to show some sign of promise. IDRA has profiled some of these successes in its Courageous Connections website and series of interviews in the *IDRA Newsletter* and Classnotes Podcast. Courageous Connections highlights how communities and schools are able to spark and sustain changes, demonstrating IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework™ in action. See IDRA's book, *Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework*, for more information.

The big question today is whether or not such

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools, By Texas County, By Race-Ethnicity, 2010-11

County Name	Attrition Rates[1]				County Name	Attrition Rates[1]			
	Black	White	Hispanic	Total		Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Anderson	36	11	44	23	DeWitt	31	5	46	26
Andrews	22	10	27	21	Dickens	**	**	18	4
Angelina	2	13	34	17	Dimmit	0	30	37	36
Aransas	**	16	37	21	Donley	38	4	33	12
Archer	•	6	**	4	Duval	100	35	19	21
Armstrong	0	22	52	24	Eastland	**	4	20	8
Atascosa	**	0	22	15	Ector	18	13	34	27
Austin	26	17	33	23	Edwards	**	2	29	15
Bailey	**	**	34	27	Ellis	18	15	31	20
Bandera	100	7	28	14	El Paso	29	24	28	28
Bastrop	10	25	36	28	Erath	68	16	36	24
Baylor	•	**	**	**	Falls	6	**	43	15
Bee	36	24	40	35	Fannin	**	**	27	2
Bell	38	26	45	35	Fayette	12	7	43	17
Bexar	34	16	40	35	Fisher	**	10	13	7
Blanco	100	8	31	15	Floyd	1	**	22	15
Borden	•	**	17	0	Foard	0	4	**	**
Bosque	25	8	19	11	Fort Bend	28	8	37	23
Bowie	22	8	25	15	Franklin	**	20	7	15
Brazoria	28	16	40	27	Freestone	**	14	39	15
Brazos	33	11	42	26	Frio	100	31	25	26
Brewster	100	**	15	6	Gaines	**	10	0	3
Briscoe	***	***	***	***	Galveston	26	20	36	24
Brooks	•	2	26	26	Garza	51	14	63	40
Brown	34	21	34	25	Gillespie	**	2	27	9
Burleson	35	19	37	27	Glasscock	•	2	**	**
Burnet	27	17	22	19	Goliad	50	5	23	12
Caldwell	**	3	13	8	Gonzales	20	18	37	29
Calhoun	47	12	33	23	Gray	7	**	32	9
Callahan	100	9	**	7	Grayson	22	9	24	12
Cameron	53	19	42	41	Gregg	19	8	40	18
Camp	9	10	33	17	Grimes	12	5	38	17
Carson	•	1	44	4	Guadalupe	15	21	37	27
Cass	3	14	40	12	Hale	12	**	35	26
Castro	78	**	16	7	Hall	**	**	2	**
Chambers	14	10	19	14	Hamilton	**	**	**	**
Cherokee	12	25	29	24	Hansford	•	3	**	2
Childress	25	**	**	**	Hardeman	14	9	21	13
Clay	•	9	24	10	Hardin	7	18	24	17
Cochran	**	**	7	**	Harris	35	7	40	30
Coke	•	7	**	**	Harrison	5	16	43	16
Coleman	**	**	5	**	Hartley	•	38	**	32
Collin	26	13	35	20	Haskell	25	2	**	0
Collingsworth	•	**	9	**	Hays	47	22	39	32
Colorado	11	**	24	10	Hemphill	100	**	45	18
Comal	34	16	38	25	Henderson	14	16	36	20
Comanche	•	11	5	11	Hidalgo	9	16	36	35
Concho	•	31	**	**	Hill	4	18	23	18
Cooke	**	11	55	21	Hockley	**	**	11	5
Coryell	31	24	28	26	Hood	1	20	24	21
Cottle	**	**	**	**	Hopkins	49	15	24	19
Crane	20	7	37	25	Houston	0	13	20	10
Crockett	100	**	20	10	Howard	41	16	34	26
Crosby	**	**	0	**	Hudspeth	•	47	30	30
Culberson	•	**	**	**	Hunt	39	12	36	20
Dallam	100	15	26	21	Hutchinson	14	3	7	6
Dallas	31	5	43	32	Irion	**	0	29	10
Dawson	0	**	41	28	Jack	100	19	8	14
Deaf Smith	56	**	20	16	Jackson	22	**	12	6
Delta	**	6	**	**	Jasper	10	19	42	19
Denton	34	23	43	29	Jeff Davis	•	**	**	**

[1] Calculated by: (1) dividing the high school enrollment in the end year by the high school enrollment in the base year; (2) multiplying the results from Calculation 1 by the ninth grade enrollment in the base year; (3) subtracting the results from Calculation 2 from the 12th grade enrollment in the end year; and (4) dividing the results of Calculation 3 by the result of Calculation 2. The attrition rate results (percentages) were rounded to the nearest whole number.

** = Attrition rate is less than zero (0).
*** = No high school.

• = The necessary data are unavailable to calculate the attrition rate.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools, By Texas County, By Race-Ethnicity, 2010-11 (continued)

County Name	Black	White	Hispanic	Total	County Name	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Jefferson	31	12	45	27	Rains	79	21	60	29
Jim Hogg	•	46	0	3	Randall	44	10	35	16
Jim Wells	60	20	38	35	Reagan	•	9	15	9
Johnson	45	19	36	25	Real	•	**	42	**
Jones	7	3	26	11	Red River	18	**	3	5
Karnes	47	**	6	1	Reeves	**	18	30	28
Kaufman	35	26	45	31	Refugio	27	**	**	**
Kendall	28	8	16	10	Roberts	•	**	13	**
Kenedy	***	***	***	***	Robertson	**	13	19	9
Kent	•	20	17	19	Rockwall	18	20	36	23
Kerr	47	16	34	24	Runnels	**	**	15	0
Kimble	•	23	32	27	Rusk	10	9	27	13
King	***	***	***	***	Sabine	**	21	49	16
Kinney	100	**	15	2	San Augustine	20	22	25	22
Kleberg	62	17	48	44	San Jacinto	5	35	49	33
Knox	21	5	1	5	San Patricio	36	15	26	23
Lamar	33	10	34	18	San Saba	**	15	15	15
Lamb	3	5	22	16	Schleicher	•	7	16	13
Lampasas	3	2	20	8	Scurry	**	2	25	14
La Salle	•	**	13	11	Shackelford	25	9	**	4
Lavaca	20	0	48	10	Shelby	12	18	45	22
Lee	4	20	39	24	Sherman	•	21	23	22
Leon	26	5	18	9	Smith	33	20	43	29
Liberty	19	26	45	30	Somervell	0	20	19	18
Limestone	18	7	48	23	Starr	•	23	33	33
Lipscomb	•	**	12	4	Stephens	**	17	38	24
Live Oak	0	2	12	8	Sterling	•	**	**	**
Llano	•	18	41	24	Stonewall	•	**	38	0
Loving	***	***	***	***	Sutton	•	**	23	12
Lubbock	20	8	26	18	Swisher	**	**	15	3
Lynn	62	**	**	**	Tarrant	33	15	41	28
Madison	23	7	21	14	Taylor	39	12	45	25
Marion	23	37	50	30	Terrell	•	**	**	**
Martin	•	**	17	6	Terry	**	**	**	**
Mason	•	8	24	15	Throckmorton	•	0	37	8
Matagorda	4	2	24	13	Titus	25	18	41	31
Maverick	**	48	32	33	Tom Green	**	**	14	5
McCulloch	**	17	15	15	Travis	24	8	39	26
McClennan	34	15	36	26	Trinity	**	19	26	16
Mcmullen	•	3	**	**	Tyler	9	18	44	18
Medina	54	14	26	22	Upshur	5	15	32	16
Menard	**	5	**	**	Upton	•	8	**	**
Midland	33	7	39	26	Uvalde	44	**	14	11
Milam	34	5	34	19	Val Verde	**	2	15	13
Mills	42	22	24	24	Van Zandt	**	18	30	20
Mitchell	**	4	16	7	Victoria	47	16	49	39
Montague	•	18	14	16	Walker	27	26	43	29
Montgomery	32	24	42	29	Waller	18	19	38	28
Moore	25	**	23	19	Ward	51	19	31	26
Morris	8	19	10	14	Washington	30	5	47	18
Motley	•	21	23	19	Webb	**	28	32	32
Nacogdoches	38	12	42	26	Wharton	4	3	23	12
Navarro	38	19	34	28	Wheeler	100	9	**	1
Newton	6	29	55	24	Wichita	23	10	25	15
Nolan	51	19	25	22	Wilbarger	47	25	37	33
Nueces	25	7	31	26	Willacy	•	**	18	17
Ochiltree	•	4	49	32	Williamson	28	15	36	23
Oldham	**	24	39	24	Wilson	22	19	27	22
Orange	33	19	27	22	Winkler	33	1	**	**
Palo Pinto	33	14	31	20	Wise	42	10	24	14
Panola	2	16	46	15	Wood	19	23	28	24
Parker	16	17	30	19	Yoakum	100	1	27	18
Parmer	**	5	11	10	Young	**	4	26	9
Pecos	42	**	35	29	Zapata	•	100	4	4
Polk	17	30	19	27	Zavala	100	0	25	25
Potter	25	14	29	21					
Presidio	•	**	29	28	Total	30	14	37	27

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

Attrition Rates by Texas County, 2010-11

See Pages 10-11
for County-level
Rates

Legend:
- 50% or Greater
- 40%- 49%
- 30%-39%
- 20%-29%
- 19% or less
- No high school
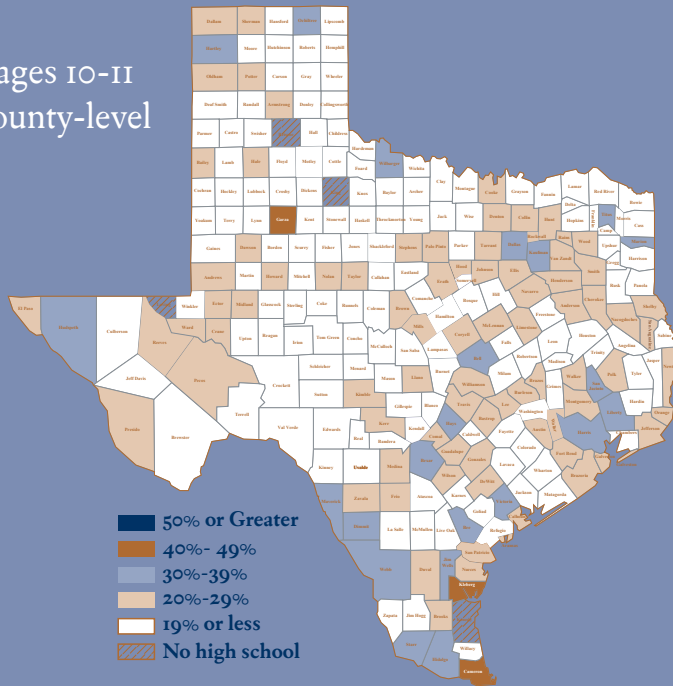
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010.

Johnson, R. *More than 3 Million Students Have Been Lost from Texas High Schools Since 1986*, published online only (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2010).

Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2010-11 (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency). http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/adste.html

efforts will be able to continue and thrive. "What will happen next as students face the effects of the state's disinvestment in education? What will happen next as the state returns to student tracking?" asks IDRA president, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel. "Texas cannot compete in the global marketplace if we do not get serious about creating top quality schooling for all students."

IDRA is happy to see a downward trend in attrition rates. But it is hard to celebrate when public schools in Texas are losing one out of every four students, and the state won't likely achieve universal high school education for another quarter of a century.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A., M. Robledo Montecel, and J. Supik. *Texas Dropout Survey Project* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

Look Up Your Texas County

IDRA is providing dropout trend data at your fingertips.

Go to the IDRA website to see a graph of high school attrition in your county over the last 10 years. You'll also see the numbers of students by race-ethnicity who have been lost from enrollment in your county.

www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/
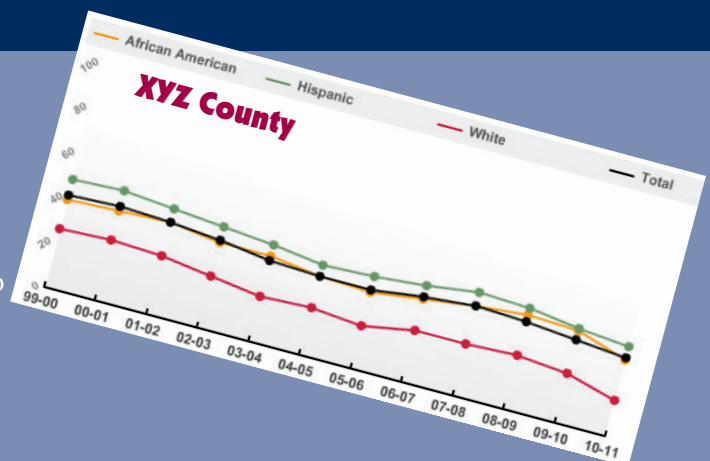
Types of Dropout Data Defined

The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the principal federal agency responsible for the collection, analysis and reporting of data on the condition of education in the United States. Dropout data from NCES examines rates within racial and ethnic groups, across gender groups, and across states and geographical regions. NCES defines the various types of dropout rates as follows.

- **Averaged freshman graduation rates** describe the proportion of high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma four years after starting ninth grade. This rate measures the extent to which schools are graduating students on time. The first school year for which NCES provides averaged freshman graduation rates is 2001-02.

- **Event dropout rates** describe the percentage of private and public high school students who left high school in a particular year (between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next) without earning a high school diploma or its equivalent. This rate is also referred to as an "annual dropout rate." The Texas Education Agency reports the event rate (in addition to other rates). Definitions for TEA rates can be found on the TEA website.

- **Status dropout rates** provide cumulative data on dropouts among young adults within a specified age range (usually: 15 to 24 years of age, 16 to 24 years of age, or 18 to 24 years of age). They measure the percentage of individuals who are not in school and have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency, irrespective of when they dropped out. These rates, which are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts, reveal the extent of the dropout problem in the population. (This rate focuses on an overall age group or cohort rather than on individuals.)

- **High school status** completion rates describe the proportion of individuals in a given age range who are not in high school and who have earned a high school diploma or equivalency credential (namely the GED certificate), irrespective of when the credential was earned. (This rate also is referred to as the "school completion rate" as the positive way of expressing the status dropout rate.)

Other types of measures include the following.

- **Attrition rates** measure the number of students lost from enrollment between two points in time (e.g., ninth grade and 12th grade enrollment four years later). Attrition data are similar to cohort data. IDRA releases adjusted attrition rates each year for the state of Texas.

- **Cohort rates** measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period of time. These rates provide repeated measures of a group of students starting at a specific grade level over time. These measures provide longitudinal data on a specific group of students, including background and contextual data.

The four NCES rates (the averaged freshman graduation rate, the event dropout rate, the status dropout rate, and the status school completion rate) and along with other traditional measures, such as the attrition rate and cohort dropout rates, provide unique information about high school dropouts, completers and graduates.

Though each rate has different meaning and calculation methods, each provides unique information that is important for assessing schools' quality of education and school holding power.

Additional Resources Online

- Look Up Your County – See attrition rates and numbers over the last 10 years

- Tool – Quality School Holding Power Checklist

- OurSchool data portal – see district- and high school-level data (in English and Spanish)

- Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework

- Overview of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, which keeps 98 percent of students in school

- Ideas and Strategies for Action

- Set of principles for policymakers and school leaders

- Classnotes Podcasts: on Dropout Prevention and College-Readiness

- Graduation for All E-letter (English/Spanish)

- Frequently Asked Questions

www.idra.org

Also see www.delicious.com/IDRA for related articles and studies (keyword: dropouts)

Despite Rate Decline, at Least a Quarter of a Century Still Separates Texas from Zero Attrition Rate

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

In recent years, IDRA has conducted a supplemental analysis to our Texas High School attrition study. This analysis uses linear regression models to predict when the state is likely to reach universal high school education. Each year, we update the models with the most recent attrition figures. IDRA's latest analysis shows that, while attrition rates have been declining, we are still a quarter of a century away from reaching an attrition rate of zero.

In a previous analysis based on multi-year data, IDRA forecasted that, for 2010-11 school year, the Texas attrition rate would range between 29 percent and 34 percent (Montes, 2010). Our current IDRA attrition study indicates that the actual attrition rate is 27 percent for 2010-11. This is the third year the attrition rate was below the estimated range, shifting the prediction models slightly downward accordingly, as shown in the line graph below.

The new prediction presented here moves the zero attrition date to the year 2037, from 2040 estimated last year (and 2044 estimated three years ago). However, the overall picture did not change significantly, as evidenced by the similarity between the revised forecasting models.

Since 2008, IDRA has been using three lineal regression models to estimate when the attrition rate would diminish to negligible values. The original values, for the school years 2008-09 and forward, derived from these models are depicted by the lightest dotted lines in the figure below. Three revisions, for school years 2009-10 and forward, 2010-11 and forward, and 2011-12 and forward, are portrayed in progressively heavier and more contiguous lines.

The first model, called **Historic Forecast Model**, takes into account all known attrition values, from

1986 to the present, as determined by the annual IDRA longitudinal attrition study. This model assumes that each past rate has equal weight over future rates. For this model, all future attrition values within the model horizon would be higher than the current value, since the model constructs the current downward trend as a cyclical bottom within the long-term upward progression of the curve. In this formulation, the initial predicted attrition rate was 37 percent for 2008-09. As new actual lower attrition rates have occurred, the algorithm adjusts the predicted values lower to 36 percent for 2009-10, 34 percent for 2010-11, and now 33 percent for 2011-12. This model is depicted in blue in the chart below.

The second model assumes that the downward trend that started in 1996-97 is a more reasonable predictor of future attrition values. The fact that these are

Actual and Forecasted Attrition Rates in Texas
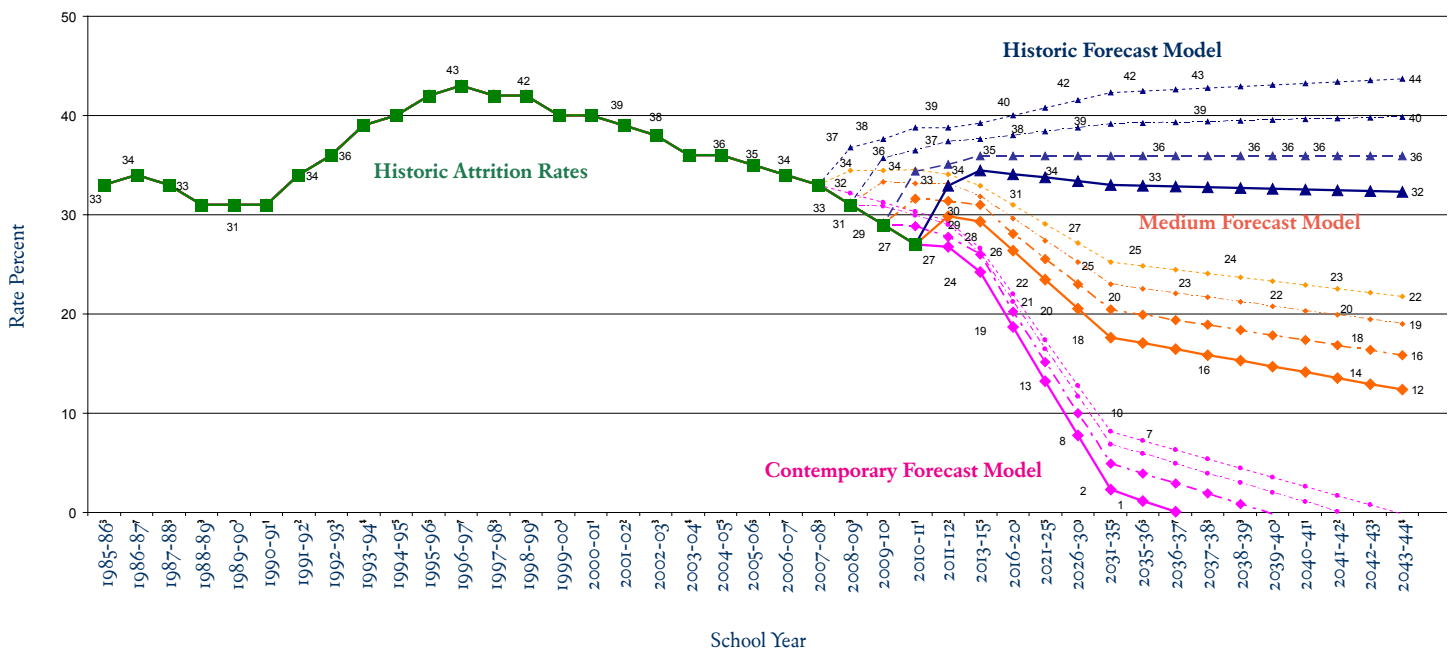
Note: For convenience, the forecasted series are shown in five-year periods (2015, 2020, 2025, 2030, and 2035). This makes the curves more abrupt than they really are. If all values were included, the curves would be smoother, but it would be a long graphic. Notice also that for the last few forecasted years, the axes reverts to annual values (2036 thru 2044) to more clearly show the distinctions between the models for those final years. Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011.

chronologically the most recent values supports this assumption. The recent past is usually more relevant to the present than the distant past. Consequently, this **Contemporary Forecast Model** uses the values corresponding to the school years 1996-97 to present, which represent the subsection of the historic series portraying the current downward trend. In this model, the predicted attrition rate is 29 percent for this year (2010-11) and will continue to decrease until it reaches zero around the year 2040. Once the actual attrition rate of 27 percent was feed to the algorithm, the model predicts a 27 percent attrition rate for next year (2011-12) and zero in the year 2037. This model is depicted in pink in the chart on the previous page.

The third model takes a centrist view between the historic and contemporary forecast models. Mathematically, this **Medium Forecast Model** is formed applying the means between the pairs of corresponding two model values within the models time horizon. Because of the strong influence of past history, this model predicts attrition rates to first increase slightly and then to resume their downward trend the subsequent years. This model predicts attrition rates of 34 percent, 33 percent, 32 percent and 30 percent, for the school years 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12, respectively.

Contemporary Model was Closest

The Contemporary Model came within two percentage points of predicting the actual attrition rate (29 percent versus the actual rate of 27 percent) this year. Using this new value (27 percent), we re-ran the three models and obtained the continuous heavy lines in the figure on the previous page representing the new adjusted models. This time, the models predict a range of 27 percent to 33 percent for next year. The contemporary model forecasts an attrition value of 27 percent for 2011-12; the forecasted historic value is now 33 percent and the medium 30 percent.

As the figure shows, the new statewide attrition value (27 percent) – the lowest value ever obtained by IDRA attrition calculation – shifted the three model lines slightly downward for the third time. However, the overall picture did not change significantly. Even under the most optimistic prediction, the attrition will not reach single digits until the late 2020s or early 2030s. The new prediction moves the zero attrition date to the year 2037 from the 2040 estimated last year.

Thus, even under the most optimistic prediction, we are still 25 years away from achieving a zero attrition rate.

Forecasted Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition 2011 to 2037

Period	Historic	Contemporary	Medium
2012-15	570,300	428,508	499,404
2016-20	746,551	455,738	601,145
2021-25	773,433	352,021	562,732
2026-30	799,585	237,019	518,302
2031-35	824,976	110,732	467,854
2036-37	336,932	6,405	171,668
Total	**4,051,786**	**1,590,423**	**2,821,105**

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2011

Forecasted Student Losses

To understand the severity of the situation, we used the updated three forecast models to estimate the number of students that will be lost to attrition during the time horizon under consideration (see table above).

The historic forecast model predicts that more than 4.05 millions students will be lost to attrition from 2012 to 2037. The contemporary model yields a figure of more than 1.59 million, and the medium forecast model more than 2.82 million.

Conclusions

- If we take the full historic values as a guide, the student dropout rate should be expected to continue to increase for the next few years and then plateau to about 32 percent. Under this scenario more than 4.05 million additional students will be lost to attrition by the year 2037.

- If we assume that the current downward trend is real – the result of systemic changes – the attrition rate will reach single digit values in the late 2020s. By 2030, the attrition rate will be about 8 percent and will reach zero in the year 2037. However, from now to that point, we will have lost more than 1.59 million students to attrition.

- A more realistic model suggests that current rates will increase to 30 percent before resuming a downward trend. In this scenario, by the year 2037, attrition will still be at about 12 percent, and during the period 2011 to 2037, we will have lost more than 2.82 million students.

Therefore, we should expect high attrition rates,

in the range 27 percent to 33 percent, for the next few years. We should also expect to lose between 1.59 million and 4.05 million additional students to attrition before we reach a zero attrition rate forecasted under the most optimistic scenario, unless this issue is considered seriously by policymakers and systemic changes implemented to ameliorate the problem.

Resources

Montes, F. *Sluggish Attrition Rate Descent Means 1.9 Million to 3.5 Million More Texas Students May be Lost,* IDRA supplemental analysis (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2010).

Felix Montes, Ph.D., is a research associate in IDRA's Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

A Look at the Texas Education Agency's Latest Dropout Report
Texas School Completion and Dropout Data, 2009-10

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

According to its latest dropout and school completion report, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) shows a decrease in the number and percent of students in grades seven through 12 who are leaving school prior to graduation with a high school diploma. In July 2011, TEA released its latest dropout and school completion report entitled, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2009-10*. This report as well the four previous ones use the dropout definition and calculation methods mandated by the National Center for Education

Statistics (NCES) (see Page 13).

This latest report shows a 1.7 percent annual dropout rate for grades seven through 12, and a 2.4 percent annual dropout rate for grades nine through 12. TEA reports that the *number* of school dropouts for grades seven through 12 declined from 40,923 in 2008-09 to 34,907 in 2009-10, a decrease of 14.7 percent (see table below). The *annual dropout rate* for grades seven through 12 declined from 2.0 percent in 2008-09 to 1.7 in 2009-10, a decrease of

15.0 percent or 0.3 percentage points. The *attrition rate* reported by TEA for the class of 2010 (grades nine through 12) was 26.6 percent – down from 28.6 percent for the class of 2009 (see boxes on Page 5).

Use of the NCES definition was mandated by the 78th Texas Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 186 in 2003. It has had a dramatic impact on the dropout count and dropout rate reported by TEA. Since then, the total number of dropouts reported by

Texas Annual Dropout Rates – High School, Reported by the Texas Education Agency

School Year	Dropouts	Students	Annual Dropout Rate (%) By Group, Grades 9-12				
			African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
1994-95	26,499	1,058,191	3.3	3.6	1.6	1.5	2.5
1995-96	24,574	1,085,859	2.8	3.2	1.4	1.2	2.2
1996-97	24,414	1,124,991	2.9	3.1	1.3	1.4	2.2
1997-98	24,886	1,145,910	3.3	3.1	1.2	1.2	2.2
1998-99	27,592	1,773,117	2.3	2.3	0.8	0.9	1.6
1999-00	21,439	1,163,883	2.6	2.7	1.0	1.0	1.8
2000-01	16,003	1,180,252	1.8	2.0	0.8	0.7	1.4
2001-02	15,117	1,202,108	1.8	1.9	0.6	0.7	1.3
2002-03	15,665	1,230,483	1.7	1.9	0.6	0.6	1.3
2003-04	15,160	1,252,016	1.4	1.9	0.6	0.6	1.2
2004-05	17,056	1,273,950	1.7	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.3
2005-06*	48,803	1,317,993	5.4	5.2	1.8	1.5	3.7
2006-07*	52,418	1,333,837	5.8	5.4	1.9	1.5	3.9
2007-08*	43,808	1,350,921	5.0	4.4	1.5	1.2	3.2
2008-09	38,720	1,356,249	4.4	3.8	1.3	1.1	2.9
2009-10*	33,235	1,377,330	3.9	3.1	1.1	1.2	2.4

*The 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 dropout rate was calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics dropout definition. Using the NCES definition, a dropout is defined as "a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Education Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die." In order to implement the legislative requirements for the computation of dropout rates, TEA had to make changes in some dates affecting dropout status and some changes in groups of students who had not been considered dropouts previously.

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2009-10*, July 2011.

Texas Annual Dropout Rates – Middle and High School, Reported by the Texas Education Agency

School Year	Dropouts	Students	Annual Dropout Rate (%) By Group, Grades 7-12				
			African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
1987-88	91,307	1,363,198	8.4	8.8	5.1	6.1	6.7
1988-89	82,325	1,360,115	7.5	8.1	4.5	4.9	6.1
1989-90	70,040	1,361,494	6.7	7.2	3.5	4.3	5.1
1990-91	53,965	1,372,738	4.8	5.6	2.7	3.1	3.9
1991-92	53,420	1,406,838	4.8	5.5	2.5	2.9	3.8
1992-93	43,402	1,533,197	3.6	4.2	1.7	2.0	2.8
1993-94	40,211	1,576,015	3.2	3.9	1.5	1.7	2.6
1994-95	29,918	1,617,522	2.3	2.7	1.2	1.1	1.8
1995-96	29,207	1,662,578	2.3	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.8
1996-97	26,901	1,705,972	2.0	2.3	1.0	0.9	1.6
1997-98	27,550	1,743,139	2.1	2.3	0.9	1.1	1.6
1998-99	27,592	1,773,117	2.3	2.3	0.8	0.9	1.6
1999-00	23,457	1,794,521	1.8	1.9	0.7	0.7	1.3
2000-01	17,563	1,818,940	1.3	1.4	0.5	0.5	1.0
2001-02	16,622	1,849,680	1.3	1.3	0.4	0.5	0.9
2002-03	17,151	1,891,361	1.2	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.9
2003-04	16,434	1,924,717	1.0	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.9
2004-05	18,290	1,954,752	1.2	1.4	0.5	0.4	0.9
2005-06*	51,841	2,016,470	3.8	3.5	1.3	1.1	2.6
2006-07*	55,306	2,023,570	4.1	3.7	1.3	1.1	2.7
2007-08*	45,796	2,042,203	3.5	3.0	1.1	0.9	2.2
2008-09	40,923	2,060,701	3.1	2.6	0.9	0.8	2.0
2009-10*	34,907	2,091,390	2.7	2.1	0.8	0.8	1.7

*The 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 AND 2009-10 dropout rate was calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics dropout definition. Using the NCES definition, a dropout is defined as "a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, received a General Education Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die." In order to implement the legislative requirements for the computation of dropout rates, TEA had to make changes in some dates affecting dropout status and some changes in groups of students who had not been considered dropouts previously.

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2009-10*, July 2011.

TEA increased from 18,290 in 2004-05 to 51,841 in 2005-06 and to 55,306 in 2006-07, but declined to 45,796 in 2007-08, 40,923 in 2008-09, and 34,907 in 2009-10. From 2004-05 to 2009-10, the number of dropouts increased by 16,617 students or by 90.9 percent. The dropout count was 1.91 times higher in 2009-10 than in 2004-05.

Of the 34,907 dropouts in the latest report, 1,672 were in grades seven and eight, and 33,235 were in grades nine through 12. The reported seventh through eighth grade dropout rate was 0.2 percent, while the ninth through 12th grade dropout rate was 2.4 percent.

The annual dropout rates for African American students and Hispanic students in grades nine through 12 were much higher than the rates for White students, three times higher. The reported 2009-10 dropout rate for African American students was 3.55 times higher than that of White students,

and the rate for Hispanic students was 2.82 times higher than the rate for White students.

During the 2009-10 school year, TEA tracked school leaver reasons in 14 areas (see the table on next page). For each reported school leaver, school districts were allowed to report one of these reasons as to why a student is not counted as a dropout. IDRA and others have long contended that the use of some leaver codes have served to undercount the number of school dropouts in Texas (Cortez, 2010). This stems from the fact that some codes make implications of a student's status but are not verified. Examples include claims that a student has re-enrolled in another school or has withdrawn to be homeschooled.

Though TEA indicates that the dropout and school completion rates reported prior to the 2005-06 are not comparable to the present, it is clearly apparent that the use of the national dropout definition exposes the fallacies of dropout counting and reporting in Texas. Schools and our communities at large must be provided accurate and understandable information to improve school holding power in Texas and our nation.

Resources

Cortez, A. "Graduates, Dropouts and Leaver Codes in Texas." *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2010). Available online.

Texas Education Agency. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2009-10* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, July 2011).

Texas Education Agency. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency).

Roy Johnson, M.S. is the director of IDRAs Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Exit Reasons for School Leavers, Grades 7-12, 2005-06 to 2009-10 Reported by the Texas Education Agency

Leaver Reasons (Code)	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Graduated or received an out-of-state GED					
Graduated from a campus in this district or charter (01)	240,485	241,193	252,121	264,275	280,520
Graduated outside Texas before entering Texas public school, entered a Texas public school, and left again (85)	318	160	85	42	76
Completed GED outside Texas (86)	139	136	147	104	107
Moved to other educational setting					
Withdrew from/left school to enter college and is working towards an Associate's or Bachelor's degree (24)	439	712	748	763	651
Withdrew from/left school for home schooling (60)	16,811	20,716	22,622	20,948	20,214
Removed by CPS and the district has not been informed of the student's current status or enrollment (66)	282	287	294	194	232
Withdrew from/left school to enroll in a private school in Texas (81)	8,429	10,722	12,086	12,516	12,307
Withdrew from/left school to enroll in a public or private school outside Texas (82)	55,266	43,145	38,937	37,718	37,642
Withdrew from/left school to enroll in the Texas Tech University ISD High School Diploma Program or the University of Texas at Austin High School Program (87)	NA	94	272	214	252
Withdrawn by district					
Expelled under the provisions of the Texas Education Code §37.007 and cannot return to school (78)	591	585	481	526	637
Withdrawn by district when the district discovered that the student was not a resident at the time of enrollment, had falsified enrollment information, or had not provided proof of identification of immunization records (83)	2,724	2,536	1,379	1,161	719
Other reasons					
Died while enrolled in school or during the summer break after completing the prior school year (03)	719	733	601	611	603
Withdrew from/left school to return to family's home country (16)	14,932	15,985	16,601	15,319	14,446
Other (reason unknown or not listed above) (98)	52,595	55,485	45,888	40,972	34,949
All leaver reasons	**393,730**	**392,489**	**392,262**	**395,363**	**403,355**

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools*, 2005-06 to 2009-10

NCES Report Shows Lackluster Gains in On-Time Graduation Nationally and in Texas

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

In 2008-09, Texas ranked 28th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in on-time graduation from public high schools – the percentage of public high school students who graduate with a regular high school diploma four years after starting ninth grade. That year, Texas had an on-time graduation rate of 75.4 percent compared to 75.5 percent for the nation as a whole.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, released the 2008-09 averaged freshman graduation rates (AFGR) in October 2011. The newest among the NCES indicators of high school dropouts and completers, the AFGR provides an estimate of the percentage of high school students starting in ninth grade who graduate on time with a regular diploma. Data for this measure were drawn from counts of enrollment by grade and graduates in the Common Core of Data (CCD) State Non-fiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education. In order to calculate the rate, aggregate student enrollment data are used to estimate the size of the incoming freshman class and aggregate counts of the number of diplomas awarded four years later.

The 50 states and the District of Columbia reported counts of high school graduates in 2006-07 and 2008-09, while 48 states reported graduate counts for 2005-06, and 47 states and the District of Columbia reported counts of high school graduates in 2007-08 (see table on next page for rates by state and rank orders by state). The data were reported by state education agencies for high school graduates between the period of October 1 and September 30 of each applicable school year.

Methods

The averaged freshman graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates with regular diplomas by the size of the incoming freshman class four years earlier and is expressed as a percent. Aggregate student enrollment data and aggregate counts of the number of diplomas awarded are used to estimate the percent of students who graduate on time.

Major Findings

Major findings of the latest NCES study on averaged freshman graduation rate include the following (also see table).

- About three-fourths of freshmen in the United States graduated from high school on time in the four years of data reported.

- The averaged freshman graduation rate in the United States increased from 73.2 percent in 2005-06 to 73.9 percent in 2006-07, to 74.7 percent in 2007-08, and to 75.5 percent in 2008-09.

- **In 2005-06, Texas ranked 34th** among the 48 states with a rate of 72.5 percent. For the class of 2005-06, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public high schools ranged from a low of 55.8 percent in Nevada to a high of 87.5 percent in Wisconsin.

  o Thirty-one states had rates equal to or higher than the national average of 73.2 percent.

  o Seventeen states had rates lower than the overall average of 73.2 percent – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas and Washington.

  o Fourteen states had rates 80.0 percent or higher – Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

- **In 2006-07, Texas ranked 36th** among the 50 states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 71.9 percent. For the class of 2006-07, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public high schools ranged from a low of 54.2 percent in the Nevada to a high of 88.6 percent in Vermont.

  o Thirty-three states had rates equal to or higher than the national average of 73.9 percent.

- Seventeen states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 73.9 percent – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas.

  o Sixteen states had rates 80.0 percent or higher – Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

- **In 2007-08, Texas ranked 35th** among the 49 states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 73.1 percent. For the class of 2007-08, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public high schools ranged from a low of 56.0 percent in the District of Columbia to a high of 89.6 percent in Wisconsin.

  o Thirty-one states had rates equal to or higher than the national average of 74.7 percent.

  o Nineteen states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 74.7 percent – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Washington.

  o Seventeen states had rates 80.0 percent or higher – Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

- **In 2008-09, Texas ranked 28th** among the 50 states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 75.4 percent. For the class of 2008-09, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public high schools ranged from a low of 56.3 percent in the Nevada to a high of 90.7 percent in Wisconsin.

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates, by State
School Years 2005-06, 2006-97, 2007-08, and 2008-09

State or Jurisdiction	2005-06 Rate	2005-06 Rank	2006-07 Rate	2006-07 Rank	2007-08 Rate	2007-08 Rank	2008-09 Rate	2008-09 Rank
United States	**73.2**		**73.9**		**74.7**		**75.5**	
Alabama	66.2	43	67.1	43	69.0	43	69.9	43
Alaska	66.5	42	69.1	40	69.1	42	72.6	40
Arizona	70.5	38	69.6	39	70.7	41	72.5	41
Arkansas	80.4	14	74.4	32	76.4	25	74.0	36
California	69.2	39	70.7	38	71.2	39	71.0	42
Colorado	75.5	28	76.6	25	75.4	30	77.6	22
Connecticut	80.9	12	81.8	11	82.2	12	75.4	28
Delaware	76.3	25	71.9	36	72.1	37	73.7	37
District of Columbia	‡	‡	54.9	50	56.0	51	62.4	49
Florida	63.6	44	65.0	44	66.9	44	68.9	44
Georgia	62.4	46	64.1	45	65.4	46	67.8	45
Hawaii	75.5	28	75.4	30	76.0	28	75.3	30
Idaho	80.5	13	80.4	15	80.1	17	80.6	13
Illinois	79.7	16	79.5	17	80.4	15	77.7	21
Indiana	73.3	31	73.9	33	74.1	34	75.2	33
Iowa	86.9	3	86.5	3	86.4	3	85.7	5
Kansas	77.6	22	78.9	18	79.1	18	80.2	15
Kentucky	77.2	23	76.4	27	74.4	32	77.6	22
Louisiana	59.5	47	61.3	47	63.5	48	67.3	46
Maine	76.3	25	78.5	20	79.1	18	79.9	17
Maryland	79.9	15	80.0	16	80.4	15	80.1	16
Massachusetts	79.5	17	80.8	14	81.5	14	83.3	8
Michigan	72.2	35	77.0	24	76.3	27	75.3	30
Minnesota	86.2	4	86.5	3	86.4	3	87.4	3
Mississippi	63.5	45	63.6	46	63.9	47	62.0	50
Missouri	81.0	11	81.9	10	82.4	11	83.1	9
Montana	81.9	9	81.5	13	82.0	13	82.0	11
Nebraska	87.0	2	86.3	5	83.8	7	82.9	10
Nevada	55.8	48	52.0	51	51.3	49	56.3	51
New Hampshire	81.1	10	81.7	12	83.4	9	84.3	7
New Jersey	84.8	5	84.4	6	84.6	5	85.3	6
New Mexico	67.3	41	59.1	48	66.8	45	64.8	48
New York	67.4	40	68.8	41	70.8	40	73.5	39
North Carolina	71.8	36	68.6	42	72.8	36	75.1	35
North Dakota	82.1	8	83.1	7	83.8	7	87.4	3
Ohio	79.2	18	78.7	19	79.0	20	79.6	18
Oklahoma	77.8	20	77.8	23	78.0	21	77.3	25
Oregon	73.0	32	73.8	34	76.7	24	76.5	27
Pennsylvania	—	—	83.0	8	82.7	10	80.5	14
Rhode Island	77.8	20	78.4	21	76.4	25	75.3	30
South Carolina	—	—	58.9	49	—	—	66.0	47
South Dakota	84.5	6	82.5	9	84.4	6	81.7	12
Tennessee	70.6	37	72.6	35	74.9	31	77.4	24
Texas	72.5	34	71.9	36	73.1	35	75.4	28
Utah	78.6	19	76.6	25	74.3	33	79.4	19
Vermont	82.3	7	88.6	1	89.3	2	89.6	2
Virginia	74.5	30	75.5	29	77.0	23	78.4	20
Washington	72.9	33	74.8	31	71.9	38	73.7	37
West Virginia	76.9	24	78.2	22	77.3	22	77.0	26
Wisconsin	87.5	1	88.5	2	89.6	1	90.7	1
Wyoming	76.1	27	75.8	28	76.0	28	75.2	33

— Not available. ‡ Reporting standards not met. (Too few cases for a reliable estimate.)
Source: Center for Education Statistics, Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2009 Compendium Report (October 2011).

o Twenty-seven states had rates equal to or higher than the national average of 75.5 percent.

o Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 75.5 percent – Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington and Wyoming.

o Sixteen states had rates 80.0 percent or higher – Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin.

• From 2005-06 to 2008-09, 35 of the 48 reporting states or jurisdictions had an increase in their averaged freshman graduation rates, and 13 experienced declines in rates. Two states (Pennsylvania and South Carolina) and the District of Columbia did not have data in each reporting year.

Nationally and in Texas about three-fourths of students who enter a freshman class graduate with a regular diploma within four years. Mathematically, the AFGR indicator shows modest gains in on-time graduation, but this result does not appear to be educationally significant in this global society. Vigorous efforts to increase high school graduation rates must continue to be taken and escalated.

Resources

National Center for Education Statistics. *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2009 Compendium Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, October 2011).

Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of IDRA Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Continuities –
Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

This publication vividly captures seven key lessons for improving the quality of education for all students. It presents the voices of youth, teachers, family members and program leaders and the reasons valuing youth is at the heart of school transformation. It was released on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and in celebration of its success in keeping tens of thousands of students in school and positively impacting more than half a million children, families and educators on three continents.

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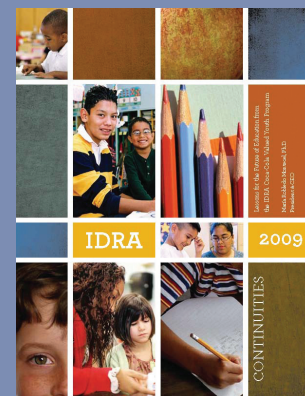
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