



Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2011-12

Attrition Rate Decline Appears Promising – Though High Schools are Still Losing One in Four Students

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 an annual attrition study to track the number and percent of students in Texas who are lost from public school enrollment prior to graduation. The study builds on the series that began when IDRA conducted the first comprehensive study of school dropouts in Texas released in October 1986.

The study in 1986, entitled the *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 passing HB 1010 in 1987, which substantially increased state and local responsibilities for collecting and monitoring dropout data.

Over the 27-year period since then, Texas public schools have lost a cumulative total of more than 3.2 million students from high school enrollment – 3.2 million students without a high school diploma. The overall attrition rate in Texas has ranged from the current low of 26 percent in 2011-12 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

Report Highlights

Attrition rates have continued their slow decline in Texas public high schools in recent years. The overall attrition rate went down from 29 percent in 2009-10 to 27 percent in 2010-11 and 26 percent in 2011-12. For the third time in the history of reporting trends in dropout

“Excellent neighborhood public schools are the foundation of strong communities. The best way to strengthen public schools is to strengthen public schools – schools that are accountable to us all and that graduate all students ready for college and the world of work.”

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

Texas public schools are losing 1 out of 4 students



**It's taken 27 years to improve by 7 percentage points:
from 33 percent to 26 percent**

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

2008-09 and 2011-12 Enrollment, 2011-12 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	2008-09 9th Grade Enrollment	2011-12 12th Grade Enrollment	2008-09 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2011-12 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2011-12 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
Native	1,255	1,401	4,381	6,396	1,833	432	24
Male	674	718	2,277	3,343	990	272	27
Female	581	683	2,104	3,053	843	160	19
Asian/Pacific Islander	12,513	11,311	46,021	50,260	13,664	2,353	17
Male	6,616	5,931	23,823	25,903	7,194	1,263	18
Female	5,897	5,380	22,198	24,357	6,470	1,090	17
Black	56,327	38,169	185,206	173,662	52,844	14,675	28
Male	29,813	18,915	93,768	88,932	28,275	9,360	33
Female	26,514	19,254	91,438	84,730	24,569	5,315	22
White	130,648	103,672	482,667	444,393	120,287	16,615	14
Male	68,073	53,067	248,581	228,714	62,632	9,565	15
Female	62,575	50,605	234,086	215,679	57,655	7,050	12
Hispanic	177,011	130,860	551,901	623,266	199,925	69,065	35
Male	93,277	65,004	281,175	318,650	105,709	40,705	39
Female	83,734	65,856	270,726	304,616	94,216	28,360	30
Multiracial	NA	4,699	NA	21,134	4,699	NA	NA
Male	NA	2,260	NA	10,320	2,260	NA	NA
Female	NA	2,439	NA	10,814	2,439	NA	NA
All Groups	377,754	290,112	1,270,176	1,319,111	400,855	103,140	26
Male	198,453	145,895	649,624	675,862	211,401	61,165	29
Female	179,301	144,217	620,552	643,249	189,454	41,975	22

NA = Not Available

Notes: Figures calculated by IDRA from Texas Education Agency Fall Membership Survey data. IDRA's 2011-12 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 2008-09 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 2011-12. 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 2011-12 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).

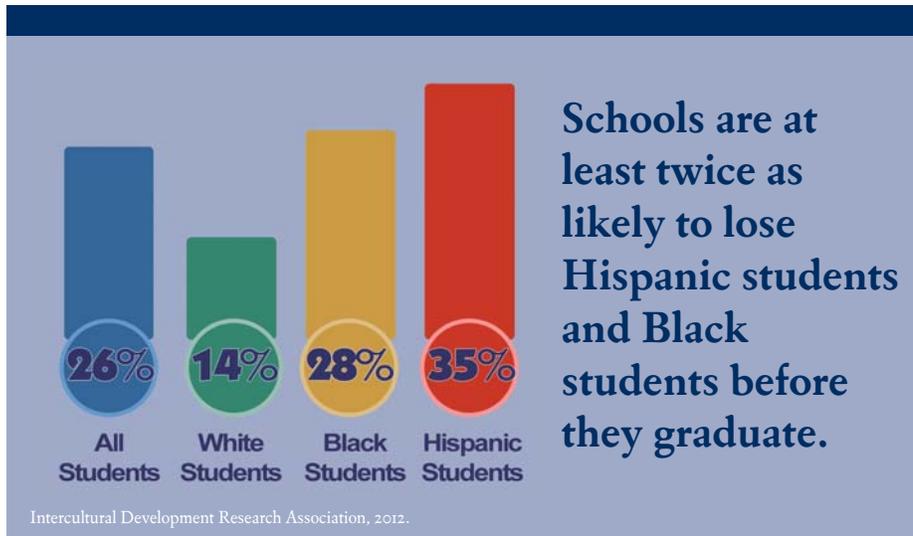
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

and attrition rates in Texas public schools, this latest study shows that fewer than 30 percent of students were lost from public enrollment prior to graduating with a high school diploma.

In its inaugural study in 1986, IDRA found that the attrition rate in Texas public high schools was 33 percent. Over the last decade, attrition

rates have been on a steady decline by one or two percentage points each year. Though this steady and gradual decline in attrition rates implies improvement in schools' abilities to hold on to their students until they graduate, long-term trend assessments suggest that it is not yet time to celebrate while gaps among racial and ethnic groups persist.

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 rates of White students and Black students are higher than 27 years ago.



Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools by Year 1985-86 to 2011-12

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
2011-12	28	14	35	26

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

35 percent to 29 percent) while the attrition rates of female students declined by 31 percent (from 32 percent to 22 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.

Beginning in 2010-11, TEA reported student enrollment data on race and ethnicity based on new federal standards that require 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

Between White students and Hispanic students, the attrition rate gap has increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 21 percentage points in 2011-12. The attrition gap between White students and Black students has doubled from 7 percentage points in 1985-86 to 14 percentage points in 2011-12.

The current statewide attrition rate of 26 percent is seven percentage points lower than the initial rate of 33 percent found in IDRA's landmark 1985-86 study. The attrition rate in Texas is 21 percent lower than the 1985-86 rate.

A supplemental analysis using linear regression models predicts that at the current pace 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 16.)

Key findings of the latest study include the following.

- The overall attrition rate declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 26 percent in 2011-12.
- The overall attrition rate was less than 30 percent in the last three study years: 29 percent in 2009-10, 27 percent in 2010-11, and 26 percent in 2011-12.
- At this rate, Texas will not reach universal high school education for another quarter of a century in 2037.
- About one out of every four students (26 percent) from the freshman class of 2008-09 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma – meaning, Texas public schools still are failing to graduate about one out of every four students.

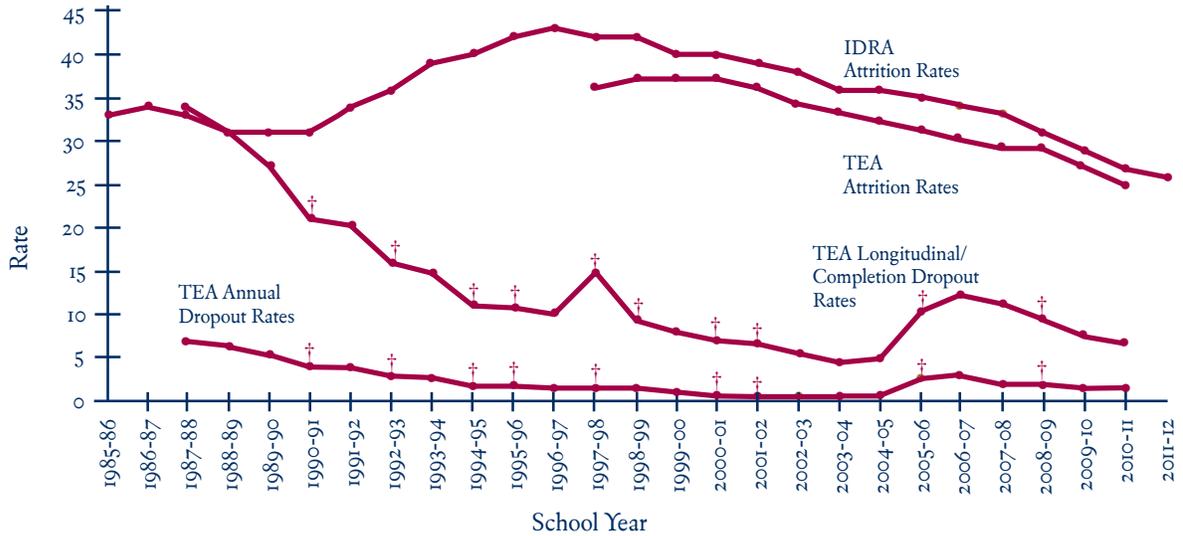
- Numerically, 103,140 students from the 2008-09 freshman class were lost from public high school enrollment in 2011-12 compared to 86,276 in 1985-86 (see box on Page 8).
- From 1985-86 to 2011-12, attrition rates of Hispanic students declined by 22 percent (from 45 percent to 35 percent). During this same period, the attrition rates of Black students declined by 18 percent (from 34 percent to 28 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 48 percent (from 27 percent to 14 percent).
- The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students and between White students and Black students are dramatically higher than 27 years ago. The attrition gap between White students and Hispanic students increased by 17 percent from 1985-86 to 2011-12, and the attrition gap between White students and Black students increased by 100 percent from 1985-86 to 2011-12.
- For the class of 2011-12, Hispanic students and Black students are about two times more likely to leave school without graduating than White students.
- Since 1986, Texas schools have lost a cumulative total of more than 3.2 million students from public high school enrollment prior to graduation.
- The attrition rates for males have been higher than those of females. In the class of 2011-12, males were 1.3 times more likely to leave school without graduating with a diploma than females.
- From 1985-86 to 2011-12, attrition rates of male students declined by 17 percent (from

Texas Student Enrollment, Grades 9-12, 2007-08 to 2011-12

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
2011-12					
Black or African American	52,807	45,440	42,738	39,371	180,356
Hispanic	196,580	165,255	149,874	135,357	647,066
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,915	1,672	1,669	1,464	6,720
White	121,994	115,622	111,185	105,829	454,630
Asian	13,688	12,823	12,150	11,159	49,820
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	521	434	433	413	1,801
Multiracial	6,048	5,652	5,168	4,786	21,654
Total	393,553	346,898	323,217	298,379	1,362,047

Source: Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2011-12, <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocprt/adste.html>

Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time



† 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, 2009-10, 2010-11.*

Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time

School Year	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	7.6***	1.7**
2010-11	27	25	7.1***	1.6**
2011-12	26			

* 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, 2012.

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 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 at grades nine through 12 increased from 1,347,324 in 2010-11 to 1,362,047 in 2011-12 (see box 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 ninth through 12th grade population reported as Black or African American declined from 13.5 percent to 13.2 percent, and the percentage reported as White declined from 34.2 percent to 33.4 percent (see box on Page 9).

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 14 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.

Spanning a period from 1985-86 through 2011-12, 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 sources for examining the magnitude of the dropout problem in Texas across almost three 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. IDRA adjusts the expected grade 12 enrollment based on increasing or declining enrollment in grades nine through 12. 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. Enrollment data from special school districts (military schools, state schools, private 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 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 (26 percent) from the freshman class of 2008-09 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma. For the class of 2011-12, 103,140 students were lost from public school enrollment between the 2008-09 and 2011-12 school years. (See box on Page 2.)

The statewide attrition rate declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 26 percent in 2011-12. Over the past two and a half decades, attrition rates have fluctuated between a low of 26 percent in 2011-12 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97. (See boxes on Pages 3 and 7.)

The overall attrition rate was less than 30 percent for the third time in 27 years. After 24 consecutive years of statewide attrition rates at 31 percent or higher, the statewide attrition rate of 27 percent in 2010-11 and 26 percent in 2011-12 are the lowest since the previous low of 31 percent in 1988-89, 1989-90, 1990-91 and 2008-09. (See boxes on Page 5.)

The attrition rates of Hispanic students and Black students are much higher than those of White students (see boxes on Pages 2 and 9). From 1985-86 to 2011-12, attrition rates of Hispanic

students declined by 22 percent (from 45 percent to 35 percent). During this same period, the attrition rates of Black students declined by 18 percent (from 34 percent to 28 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 48 percent (from 27 percent to 14 percent).

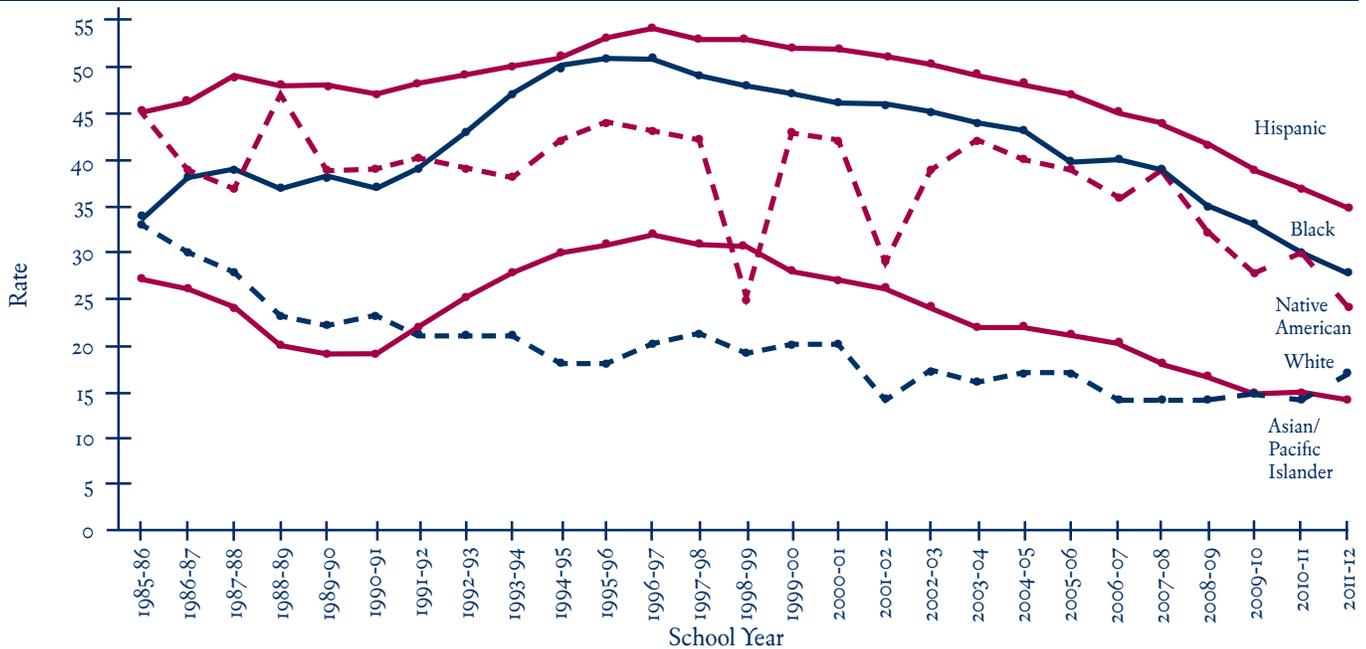
Native American students had a decline of 47 percent in their attrition rates (from 45 percent to 24 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 48 percent (from 33 percent to 17 percent).

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 and ethnic groups, while the rate for Hispanic students was the highest. (See box below.)

For the class of 2011-12, 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 White students and Black students and Hispanic students is higher than 27 years ago. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has doubled from 7 percentage

Longitudinal Attrition Rates by Race-Ethnicity in Texas Public Schools, 1985-86 to 2011-12



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools, 1985-86 to 2011-12

Group	Race-Ethnicity					Gender		Total
	Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black	White	Hispanic	Male	Female	
1985-86	45	33	34	27	45	35	32	33
1986-87	39	30	38	26	46	35	32	34
1987-88	37	28	39	24	49	35	31	33
1988-89	47	23	37	20	48	34	29	31
1989-90	39	22	38	19	48	34	29	31
1990-91	39	23	37	19	47	34	28	31
1991-92	40	21	39	22	48	37	30	34
1992-93	39	21	43	25	49	39	33	36
1993-94	38	21	47	28	50	41	36	39
1994-95	42	18	50	30	51	43	37	40
1995-96	44	18	51	31	53	45	39	42
1996-97	43	20	51	32	54	46	40	43
1997-98	42	21	49	31	53	45	38	42
1998-99	25	19	48	31	53	45	38	42
1999-00	43	20	47	28	52	44	36	40
2000-01	42	20	46	27	52	43	36	40
2001-02	29	14	46	26	51	43	35	39
2002-03	39	17	45	24	50	41	34	38
2003-04	42	16	44	22	49	40	33	36
2004-05	40	17	43	22	48	39	32	36
2005-06	39	17	40	21	47	38	31	35
2006-07	36	14	40	20	45	37	30	34
2007-08	38	14	38	18	44	36	29	33
2008-09	32	14	35	17	42	35	27	31
2009-10	28	15	33	15	39	33	25	29
2010-11	30	15	30	14	37	31	23	27
2011-12	24	17	28	14	35	29	22	26
Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 2011-12	-47	-48	-18	-48	-22	-17	-31	-21

* Rounded to nearest whole number.

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

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

points in 1985-86 to 14 percentage points in 2011-12. Similarly, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students has increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 21 percentage points in 2011-12. (See boxes on Page 10.)

The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Native American students has declined from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 10 percentage points in 2011-12. 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 3 percentage point in 2011-12.

In the last year, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students and Hispanic students declined from 2010-11 to 2011-

12. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students declined from 16 percentage points in 2010-11 to 14 percentage points in 2011-12. Similarly, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students declined from 23 percentage points in 2010-11 to 21 percentage points in 2011-12.

Historically, Hispanic students and Black students have comprised a large proportion of students lost by schools. For the period of 1985-86

Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition in Texas, School Years 1985-86 to 2011-12

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
2011-12	103,140	432	2,353	14,675	16,615	69,065	61,165	41,975
All Years	3,259,948	9,463	42,288	558,840	906,239	1,743,121	1,858,085	1,401,863

Figures calculated by IDRA from Texas Education Agency Fall Membership Survey data.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012

to 2011-12, students from ethnic minority groups account for nearly three-fourths (72.2 percent) of the estimated 3.2 million students lost from public high school enrollment.

Hispanic students account for 53.5 percent of the students lost to attrition. Black students account for 17.1 percent of all students lost from enrollment due to attrition over the years. White students account for 27.8 percent of students lost from high school enrollment over time. Attrition rates 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 2011-12, attrition rates of male students declined by 17 percent (from 35 percent to 29 percent). Attrition rates for females declined by 31 percent from 32 percent in 1985-86 to 22 percent in 2011-12. Longitudinally, males have accounted for 57.0 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 43.0 percent. In the class of 2011-12, 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 11) and on an attrition rate table on Pages

12-13. In addition, trend data by county are available on IDRA's website at www.idra.org (see box on Page 11). School district and high school-level data are available online as well through IDRA's OurSchool data portal, where simple attrition figures provided are from TEA databases (see box on Page 19).

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. (Also see story on Page 19.) Descriptions of different dropout counting and reporting methodologies are outlined on Page 14.

Texas Student Enrollment, Grades 9, 12 and 9-12, 2007-08 to 2011-12 (percent)

Race-Ethnicity	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
9th Grade Enrollment					
Black or African American	15.5	15.1	14.7	13.4	13.4
Hispanic	46.6	47.0	47.9	49.5	50.0
Native American (American Indian/Alaska Native)	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	3.3	3.5	—	—
White	34.6	34.3	33.5	31.6	31.0
Asian	—	—	—	3.4	3.5
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	—	—	—	0.1	0.1
Multiracial	—	—	—	1.5	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
12th Grade Enrollment					
Black or African American	14.2	14.3	14.2	13.5	13.2
Hispanic	39.3	40.9	42.4	44.5	45.4
Native American (American Indian/Alaska Native)	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.7	3.8	3.9	—	—
White	42.5	40.7	39.2	36.4	35.5
Asian	—	—	—	3.6	3.7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	—	—	—	0.1	0.1
Multiracial	—	—	—	1.4	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
9-12th Grade Enrollment					
Black or African American	14.8	14.7	14.6	13.5	13.2
Hispanic	42.6	43.6	44.7	46.7	47.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	—	—	—	0.5	0.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.0	3.3	3.5	—	—
White	38.8	37.7	36.6	34.2	33.4
Asian	—	—	—	3.5	3.7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	—	—	—	0.1	0.1
Multiracial	—	—	—	1.5	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2011-12, <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/adste.html>

Conclusions

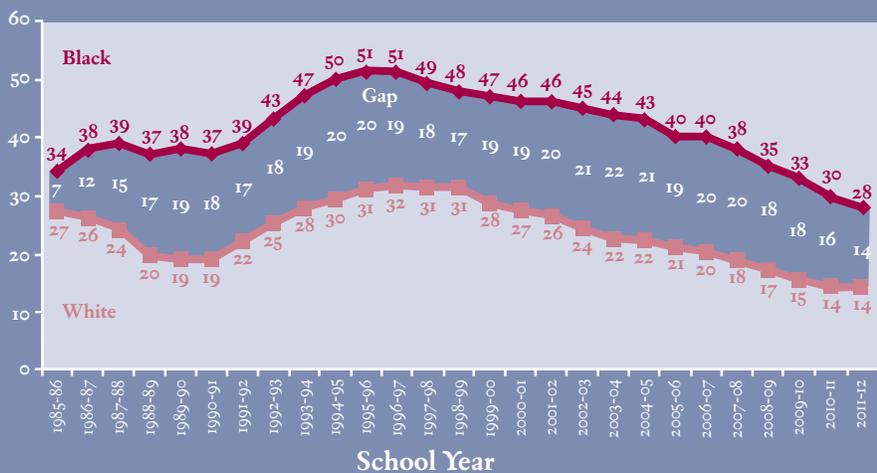
Attrition rates in Texas are on the decline. Despite the good news regarding the trend in declining attrition rates for the state overall and for each racial and ethnic group, the racial-ethnicity gaps and the fact that our schools are still losing one out of every four students suggest that the celebration be postponed.

IDRA President, Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, recently cautioned that some factors that likely have led to improved attrition rates across the state have been eliminated: “The state has taken steps to impede this progress by returning to student tracking and cutting funding for, and in some cases eliminating, programs designed to increase graduation rates. While all

school districts suffered from special program cuts, the state’s lowest property wealth districts suffered the most.” (2012)

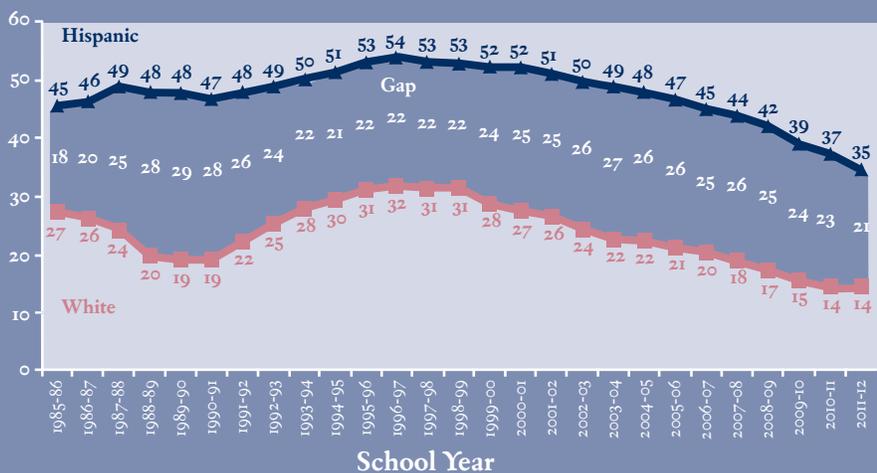
Further, IDRA and other researchers continue to point out that the school dropout problem is a significant education and economic issue for Texas and the nation. Researchers at Johns

Trend in Black-White Attrition Rates



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

Trend in Hispanic-White Attrition Rates



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

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)

Hopkins University report that Texas is home to a significant number of low performing high schools where fewer than 60 percent of freshmen progress to their senior year (Balfanz & Legters, 2004). The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that 135,100 Texas students in the class of 2010 dropped out of school and projects that cutting the number of dropouts in half would result in tremendous economic benefits to the state of Texas (2011a & 2011b).

Additional research is needed to address the specific reasons for the decline in overall attrition rates and the widening disparity in attrition rates between racial and ethnic groups. Dr. Robledo Montecel, adds, “We cannot meet our goals of educating Texas youngsters to compete

in a global economy without closing the racial-ethnic gaps in high school graduation and college completion rates” (2012).

Communities must be part of the solution. As with our recent campaign on fair funding (Fair Funding Now!) wherein IDRA engaged communities on the disparities in education funding and funding cuts, communities must come together to review issues surrounding school dropouts, and we must take action for the benefit of children and the future of Texas.

IDRA has developed a number of products to guide communities and schools in improving school holding power in schools in Texas and across the nation. In the book, *Courage to*

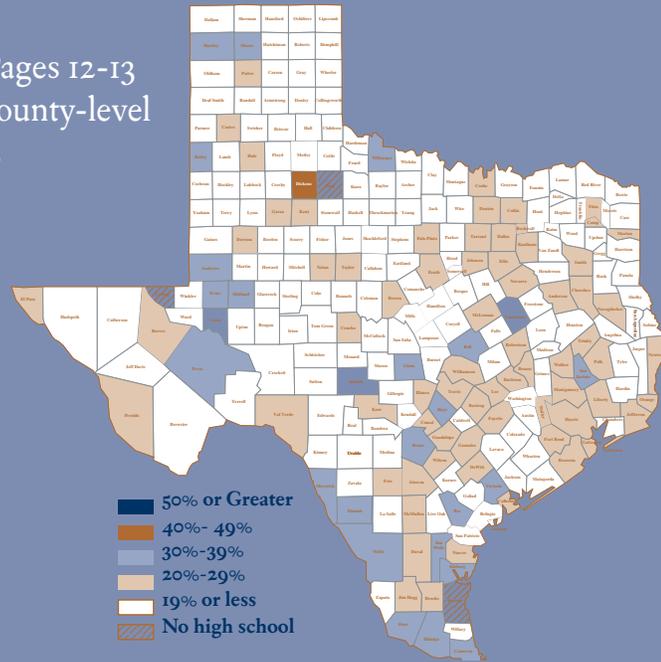
Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework™, IDRA shows how communities and schools can work together to strengthen school success in a number of areas, including graduation outcomes. The book's web page (www.idra.org/couragetconnect) provides a table of contents, excerpts, related podcasts and other resources. IDRA's online **OurSchool data portal** helps community and school partners examine their school data and plan joint actions to improve school holding power. The portal can be assessed free of charge at www.idra.org/OurSchool. IDRA's one-page **Quality School Holding Power Checklist** provides a set of criteria for assessing and selecting effective dropout prevention strategies.

Resources

- Alliance for Excellent Education. *Education and the Economy: Boosting Texas's Economy by Improving High School Graduation Rates* (Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education: November 2011).
- Alliance for Excellent Education, "The High Cost of High School Dropouts: What the Nation Pays for Inadequate High Schools," Issue Brief (Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education: November 2011).
- Balfanz, R., & J. Bridgeland, M. Bruce J. *Hornig Fox. Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenges in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic* (Washington, D.C.: Civic Enterprises, 2012).
- Balfanz, R., & N. Legters. *Locating the Dropout Crisis: Which High Schools Produce the Nation's Dropouts? Where Are They Located? Who Attends Them?* (Baltimore Md.: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk, September 2004).
- Cárdenas, J.A., & M. Robledo Montecel, J. Supik. *Texas Dropout Survey Project* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).
- Montes, F. *Slow Declining Pace Keeps Zero Attrition Date at 2037*, supplemental analysis published online only (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2012).
- Robledo Montecel, M. "Can't Wait to Celebrate 100% Graduation in Texas," statement (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural

Attrition Rates by Texas County, 2011-12

See Pages 12-13 for County-level Rates



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

Development Research Association, August 10, 2012).
 Texas Education Agency, Standard Reports, Enrollment Reports, 2007-08 to 2011-12 (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency).

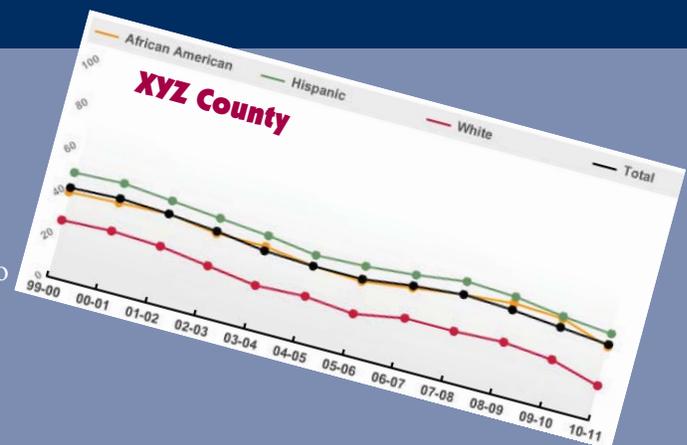
Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of IDRA Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org. Charles Cavazos, an IDRA education assistant, contributed to this analysis.

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/



Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools, By Texas County, By Race-Ethnicity, 2011-12

COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES ¹				COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES ¹			
	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL		BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
ANDERSON	32	21	33	26	DEWITT	34	7	43	25
ANDREWS	64	24	34	30	DICKENS	•	57	9	41
ANGELINA	19	17	24	19	DIMITT	33	2	35	34
ARANSAS	**	20	22	18	DONLEY	1	**	40	**
ARCHER	100	14	0	15	DUVAL	•	47	20	21
ARMSTRONG	•	**	55	2	EASTLAND	61	8	25	12
ATASCOSA	5	5	26	20	ECTOR	17	14	40	32
AUSTIN	2	10	24	13	EDWARDS	•	**	6	**
BAILEY	•	35	30	31	ELLIS	20	15	33	22
BANDERA	33	11	12	12	EL PASO	26	13	28	27
BASTROP	15	14	28	20	ERATH	50	15	35	23
BAYLOR	•	**	48	**	FALLS	**	**	29	1
BEE	27	8	41	33	FANNIN	**	8	13	8
BELL	30	25	39	31	FAYETTE	33	16	37	25
BEXAR	33	16	36	32	FISHER	100	7	**	**
BLANCO	**	22	24	20	FLOYD	25	**	27	19
BORDEN	•	**	100	10	FOARD	0	**	2	**
BOSQUE	37	6	30	13	FORT BEND	24	7	36	21
BOWIE	11	9	22	11	FRANKLIN	**	5	19	6
BRAZORIA	19	21	36	26	FREESTONE	**	13	41	16
BRAZOS	38	12	47	30	FRIO	**	8	22	21
BREWSTER	100	**	25	10	GAINES	25	13	8	10
BRISCOE	•	30	**	7	GALVESTON	26	15	32	21
BROOKS	•	30	21	21	GARZA	45	**	35	25
BROWN	38	20	30	23	GILLESPIE	**	9	23	13
BURLESON	32	15	41	26	GLASSCOCK	•	**	3	**
BURNET	13	13	34	19	GOLIAD	**	7	24	14
CALDWELL	2	3	12	9	GONZALES	2	10	29	21
CALHOUN	23	15	28	23	GRAY	37	**	29	7
CALLAHAN	40	10	13	10	GRAYSON	24	9	31	14
CAMERON	48	10	39	38	GREGG	14	10	37	17
CAMP	21	23	40	29	GRIMES	0	9	27	13
CARSON	75	**	19	**	GUADALUPE	15	17	39	26
CASS	12	13	17	13	HALE	**	9	33	26
CASTRO	100	7	23	21	HALL	33	10	10	13
CHAMBERS	**	15	30	17	HAMILTON	**	**	0	**
CHEROKEE	19	26	24	25	HANSFORD	•	7	**	2
CHILDRESS	64	4	6	12	HARDEMAN	13	7	**	6
CLAY	**	2	10	1	HARDIN	12	17	27	17
COCHRAN	**	1	13	5	HARRIS	32	9	38	29
COKE	•	**	**	**	HARRISON	**	8	44	11
COLEMAN	**	2	17	5	HARTLEY	•	42	30	36
COLLIN	24	15	33	21	HASKELL	100	0	24	12
COLLINGSWORTH	**	**	7	**	HAYS	28	21	38	30
COLORADO	31	**	39	17	HEMPHILL	**	**	40	15
COMAL	17	18	39	26	HENDERSON	**	15	33	18
COMANCHE	•	7	20	13	HIDALGO	13	6	33	33
CONCHO	•	29	23	25	HILL	17	17	20	18
COOKE	**	9	52	21	HOCKLEY	20	**	12	6
CORYELL	20	18	25	19	HOOD	**	15	16	14
COTTLE	27	**	**	**	HOPKINS	28	11	31	17
CRANE	29	5	6	4	HOUSTON	**	17	31	13
CROCKETT	•	**	26	11	HOWARD	13	10	24	17
CROSBY	**	**	**	**	HUDSPETH	•	0	23	19
CULBERSON	•	**	**	**	HUNT	23	15	38	19
DALLAM	40	2	17	10	HUTCHINSON	**	15	14	15
DALLAS	29	7	39	29	IRION	100	5	2	9
DAWSON	4	**	31	20	JACK	13	19	**	13
DEAF SMITH	**	0	21	16	JACKSON	16	3	6	5
DELTA	**	10	**	8	JASPER	13	17	30	18
DENTON	28	22	38	27	JEFF DAVIS	•	**	12	**

¹Calculated 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 (o).

*** = 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, 2011-12 (continued)

COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES				COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES			
	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL		BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
JEFFERSON	25	10	36	23	RAINS	28	16	34	18
JIM HOGG	•	0	24	23	RANDALL	47	12	33	17
JIM WELLS	0	22	41	38	REAGAN	•	**	**	**
JOHNSON	43	26	39	29	REAL	50	**	35	14
JONES	4	**	23	6	RED RIVER	23	17	26	18
KARNES	51	3	10	8	REEVES	**	**	27	24
KAUFMAN	26	27	34	28	REFUGIO	37	**	**	**
KENDALL	7	10	34	17	ROBERTS	•	15	**	12
KENEDY	***	***	***	***	ROBERTSON	19	10	40	20
KENT	•	28	43	22	ROCKWALL	26	15	46	23
KERR	32	15	30	20	RUNNELS	**	8	22	15
KIMBLE	•	3	7	7	RUSK	**	11	29	10
KING	***	***	**	***	SABINE	45	20	6	17
KINNEY	•	**	17	7	SAN AUGUSTINE	7	3	**	0
KLEBERG	80	**	36	31	SAN JACINTO	28	33	50	33
KNOX	**	**	**	**	SAN PATRICIO	21	15	21	19
LAMAR	33	11	34	19	SAN SABA	•	2	29	9
LAMB	**	0	29	17	SCHLEICHER	•	34	1	10
LAMPASAS	26	15	21	18	SCURRY	31	10	19	14
LA SALLE	100	25	6	9	SHACKELFORD	100	8	**	1
LAVACA	25	**	28	5	SHELBY	4	13	46	17
LEE	1	21	38	25	SHERMAN	100	**	18	6
LEON	34	11	10	15	SMITH	29	19	45	29
LIBERTY	10	21	39	25	SOMERVELL	25	12	31	16
LIMESTONE	0	5	34	15	STARR	•	**	31	30
LIPSCOMB	•	2	10	2	STEPHENS	100	5	24	13
LIVE OAK	100	**	21	9	STERLING	•	0	**	**
LLANO	100	27	44	31	STONEWALL	0	22	11	11
LOVING	***	***	***	***	SUTTON	•	**	6	**
LUBBOCK	4	12	27	18	SWISHER	**	13	22	17
LYNN	46	22	6	14	TARRANT	36	15	41	29
MADISON	24	10	7	12	TAYLOR	33	9	37	21
MARION	16	32	25	25	TERRELL	•	**	5	**
MARTIN	•	**	20	6	TERRY	**	**	15	2
MASON	•	16	18	11	THROCKMORTON	•	**	45	**
MATAGORDA	**	4	22	13	TITUS	8	17	38	29
MAVERICK	**	**	30	29	TOM GREEN	**	0	14	7
MCCULLOCH	0	8	23	15	TRAVIS	19	7	35	23
MCLENNAN	36	16	36	27	TRINITY	**	27	29	21
MCMULLEN	•	17	35	24	TYLER	**	17	45	16
MEDINA	18	8	24	18	UPSHUR	16	12	25	13
MENARD	**	12	24	16	UPTON	100	**	0	7
MIDLAND	34	13	45	33	UVALDE	0	**	14	9
MILAM	7	1	12	6	VAL VERDE	8	17	23	22
MILLS	**	15	31	18	VAN ZANDT	23	12	37	16
MITCHELL	**	17	3	10	VICTORIA	38	14	39	31
MONTAGUE	100	10	1	11	WALKER	25	22	36	26
MONTGOMERY	29	23	39	27	WALLER	7	28	35	28
MOORE	17	**	37	34	WARD	49	21	20	19
MORRIS	8	23	**	15	WASHINGTON	29	1	36	14
MOTLEY	•	8	21	14	WEBB	9	4	27	27
NACOGDOCHES	32	10	44	26	WHARTON	5	**	26	13
NAVARRO	28	19	29	24	WHEELER	10	**	**	**
NEWTON	14	21	15	17	WICHITA	20	6	24	12
NOLAN	47	25	24	26	WILBARGER	74	16	44	31
NUECES	23	12	27	23	WILLACY	•	**	16	15
OCHILTREE	•	0	25	14	WILLIAMSON	24	17	32	22
OLDHAM	**	6	31	9	WILSON	12	19	27	22
ORANGE	28	21	22	22	WINKLER	0	9	15	14
PALO PINTO	30	17	26	20	WISE	4	7	29	13
PANOLA	12	17	38	17	WOOD	14	17	19	18
PARKER	17	15	23	16	YOAKUM	0	18	19	17
PARMER	**	**	23	16	YOUNG	**	9	28	13
PECOS	**	**	40	30	ZAPATA	•	100	11	11
POLK	9	24	26	24	ZAVALA	**	44	6	7
POTTER	21	10	29	21					
PRESIDIO	•	55	24	24	TOTAL	28	14	35	26

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

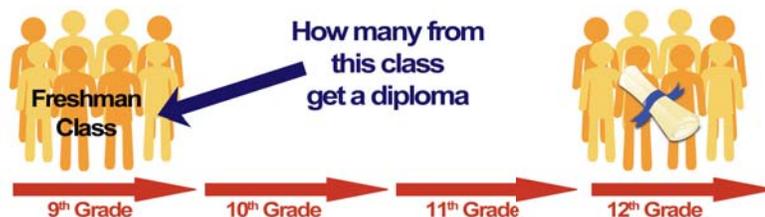
Types of Dropout Data Defined

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 stated below. 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. Different states use various measures. The Texas Education Agency reports an annual dropout rate; longitudinal graduation, completion and dropout rates and attrition rate.

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. Within these types of data are underlying questions of who is included in the data pool. For example, are students who drop out to earn a GED counted as dropouts? Are students who complete their coursework but are denied a diploma for failing to pass a state exit exam counted as dropouts?

Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate

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.



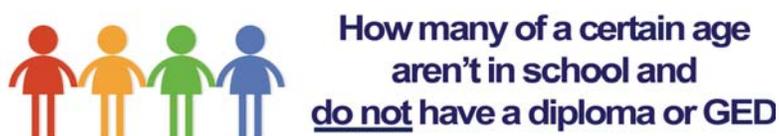
Event Dropout Rate (or Annual Dropout Rate)

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 Rate

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.)



Types of Dropout Data Defined (continued)

Status Completion Rate

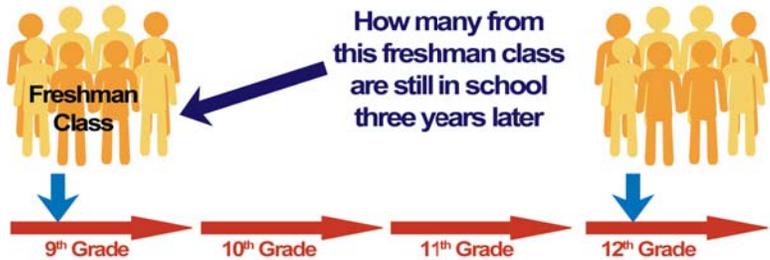
High school status completion rates describe the proportion of individuals in a given age range who are not in high school and who have earned a high school diploma or equivalency credential (namely the GED certificate), irrespective of when the credential was earned. (This rate also is referred to as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



How many of a certain age aren't in school and do have a diploma or GED

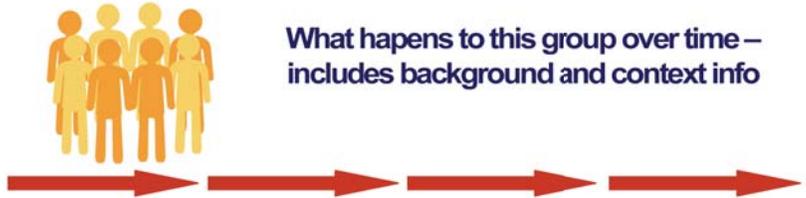
Attrition Rate

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. Each year for the state of Texas, TEA reports a simple attrition rates, while IDRA reports adjusted attrition rates (that account for fluctuations in school enrollment and in and out migration).



Cohort Rate

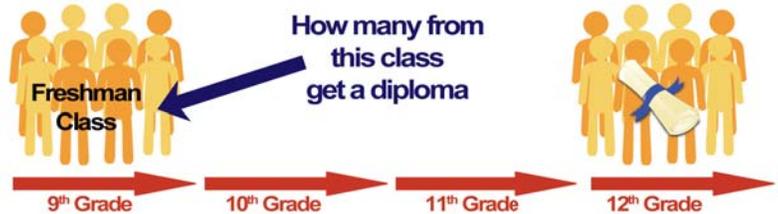
Cohort rates measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period of time. These rates provide repeated measures of a group of students starting at a specific grade level over time. These measures provide longitudinal data on a specific group of students, including background and contextual data.



What happens to this group over time – includes background and context info

Graduation Rate

Graduation rates measure the percentage of students from a class of beginning seventh or ninth graders who graduate with a high school diploma.



Slow Declining Pace Keeps Zero Attrition Date at 2037

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 at least 25 years away from reaching an attrition rate of zero.

In the previous analysis based on 27 years of data, a Texas attrition rate between 27 percent and 33 percent for school year 2011-12 was forecasted (Montes, 2011). Our current IDRA attrition study indicates that the actual attrition rate is 26 percent for 2011-12. This is the fourth year the actual attrition rate was below the estimated range, shifting the prediction models slightly downward accordingly, as shown in the illustration below.

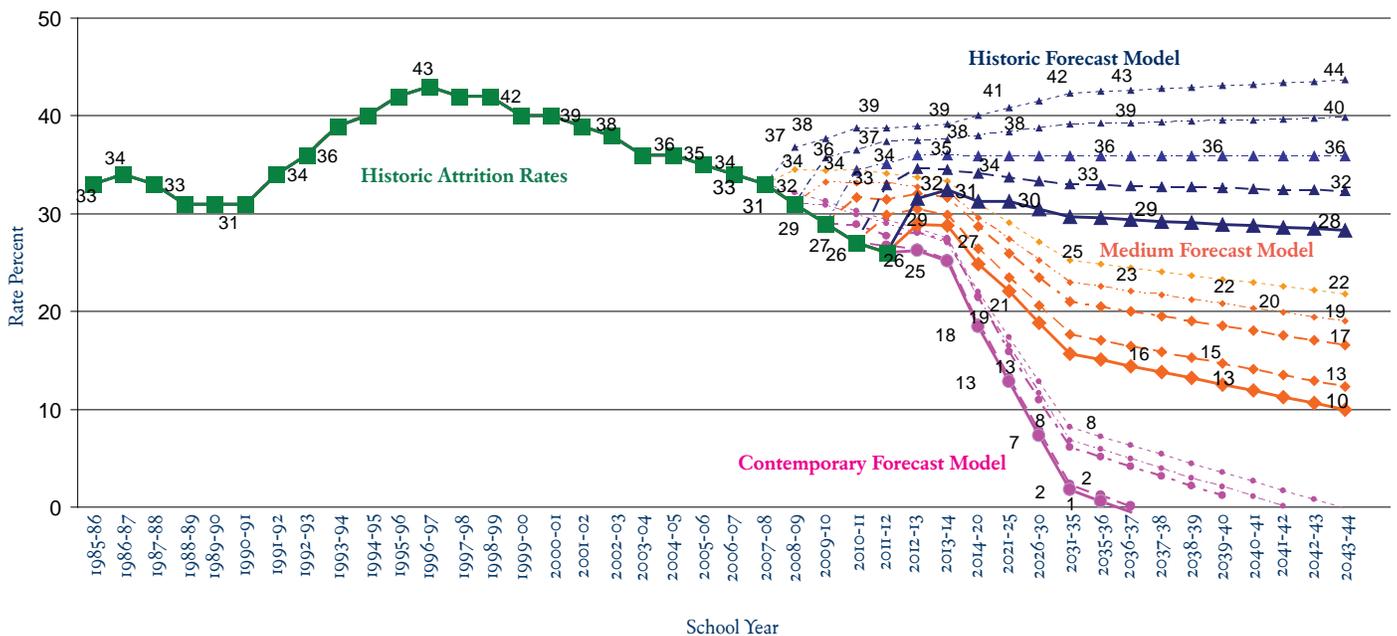
The new prediction presented here did not change the zero attrition date forecasted last year. That date is still the year 2037, closer than 2040 estimated two years ago (and 2044 estimated four years ago). The overall picture changed little, as evidenced by the similarity between the revised forecasting models. This is the result of the further slowing in the pace of an already sluggish dropout rate (from 29 percent to 27 percent to 26 percent).

Since 2008, IDRA has been using three linear 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. Four revisions, for school years 2009-10 and forward, 2010-11 and forward, 2011-12 and forward, and 2012-13 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 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 adjusted the predicted values lower to 36 percent for 2009-10, 34 percent for 2010-11, 33 percent for 2011-12, and now 32 percent for 2012-13. This model is depicted in blue below.

Actual and Forecasted Attrition Rates in Texas



Note: For convenience, the forecasted series are shown in five-year periods (2014-20, 2021-25, 2026-30, and 2031-35). 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. 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, 2012.

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 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** used the values corresponding to the school years 1996-97 to present, which represents the subsection of the historic series portraying the current downward trend. In this model, the predicted attrition rate was 27 percent this year (2011-12) and would continue to decrease until it reached zero around the year 2037. Once the actual attrition rate of 26 percent was fed to the algorithm, the model predicts a 26 percent attrition rate for next year (2012-13) and zero in the year 2037. That is, this model forecasts no change for the next year. This is the result of the slow pace of change of the actual attrition rate. 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 predicted attrition rates of 34 percent, 33 percent, 32 percent, 30 percent and 29 percent, for the school years 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13, respectively.

Forecasted Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition 2011 to 2037

Period	Historic	Contemporary	Medium
2013-15	398,493	356,181	313,869
2016-20	691,087	568,584	446,081
2021-25	707,678	524,051	340,424
2026-30	718,970	471,466	223,962
2031-35	728,687	412,691	96,696
2036-37	293,842	148,479	3,116
Total	3,538,757	2,481,453	1,424,148

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012

Contemporary Model was Closest

The Contemporary Model came within one percentage point of predicting the actual attrition rate (27 percent versus the actual rate of 26 percent) this year. Using this new value (26 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 26 percent to 32 percent for next year. The contemporary model forecasts an attrition value of 26 percent for 2012-13; the forecasted historic value is now 32 percent and the medium 29 percent.

As the figure on the previous page shows, the new attrition value (26 percent), the lowest value ever obtained by IDRA attrition calculation, shifted the three model lines slightly downward

for the fourth time. However the overall picture did not change significantly. Even under the most optimistic prediction, the attrition will not get in single digits until the late 2020s and early 1930s. The new prediction maintains the zero attrition date to the year 2037. Thus, even under the most optimistic prediction, we are still 25 years away from universal graduation.

Forecasted Student Losses

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

The historic forecast model predicts that more than 3.53 million students will be lost to attrition from 2013 to 2037. The contemporary model

Universal high school education is at least a quarter of a century away

Texas stands to lose another 3 million students.

Attrition Rate = 26%
Actual, 2011-12

Attrition Rate = 0%
Projected at Current Pace, 2036-37



Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012.

yielded a figure of more than 1.42 million, and the medium forecast model more than 2.48 million.

Conclusions

- If we take the full historic values as a guide, the student attrition rate should be expected to continue to increase for the next few years and then plateau to about 28 percent. Under this scenario more than 3.53 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 7 percent, and it will reach zero in the year 2037. However, from now to that point, we would have lost more than 1.42 million students to attrition.
- A more realistic model suggests that current rates will increase to 29 percent before resuming its downward trend. In this scenario, by the year 2037, attrition will still be at about 15 percent, and during the period 2013-2037,

we would have lost more than 2.48 million students.

Therefore, we should expect high attrition rates, in the range 26 to 30 percent, for the next few years. We should also expect to lose between 1.42 million and 3.53 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.

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Designed to help educators and community members find out how well their high school campus is preparing and graduating students, what factors may be weakening school holding power, and what they can do together to address them.

What's Included...

- Key data to help you determine whether high dropout rates and weak school holding power are a problem for your school.
- Actionable knowledge and key questions to spark conversations and action planning around: teaching quality, curriculum quality, attrition, college readiness, college access and college sending.
- Real-time data collection features via surveys (e.g., to measure parent engagement).
- Social networking features you can use to share data with others and attach charts or graphs, keep track of your own notes, or call a community-school meeting to work on a specific issue.
- Bilingual (Spanish/English) content.
- **Now Available!** Texas data on college persistence, developmental courses and success of Texas high school students.



www.idra.org/OurSchool

Texas School Completion and Dropout Data, 2010-11 State Report

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

In its latest dropout and school completion report, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that the number and percent of seventh through 12th grade students who left school prior to graduation with a high school diploma remained about the same from the previous year. In July 2012, TEA released its latest dropout and school completion report entitled, *Secondary School Completion*

and *Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2010-11*. This report as well the five previous reports use the dropout definition and calculation methods mandated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

This latest report shows a 1.6 percent **annual dropout rate** for grades 7-12, and a 2.4 percent

annual dropout rate for grades 9-12. The annual dropout rate is the percentage of students who drop out during a single year. In the previous year (2009-10), TEA reported a 1.7 percent annual dropout rate for grades 7-12, and a 2.4 percent annual dropout rate for grades 9-12. The annual dropout rate for grades 7-12 declined from 1.7 percent in 2009-10 to 1.6 in 2010-11, a decrease of

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
2010-11*	32,833	1,394,523	3.6	3.0	1.1	1.1	2.4

*The 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 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, 2010-11*, July 2012.

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
2010-11	34,363	2,122,414	2.5	2.1	0.8	0.8	1.6

*The 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 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, 2010-11*, July 2012.

5.9 percent or 0.1 percentage points.

TEA reports that the **number of school dropouts** for grades 7-12 declined from 34,907 in 2009-10 to 34,363 in 2010-11, a decrease of 1.6 percent (see table). TEA also reports a simple attrition rate (the percentage change in fall enroll-

ment between grades across years). The simple **attrition rate** for the class of 2011 (grades 9-12) was 24.9 percent – down from 28.6 percent for the class of 2010.

Since the use of the NCES dropout definition, the total number of dropouts reported by 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-

Exit Reasons for School Leavers, Grades 7-12, 2005-06 to 2010-11 Reported by the Texas Education Agency

Leaver Reasons (Code)	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
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	290,581
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	61
Moved to other educational setting						
Withdrew from/left school to enter college and is working toward an Associate's or Bachelor's degree (24)	439	712	748	763	651	673
Withdrew from/left school for home schooling (60)	16,811	20,716	22,622	20,948	20,214	20,876
Removed by CPS and the district has not been informed of the student's current status or enrollment (66)	282	287	294	194	232	702
Withdrew from/left school to enroll in a private school in Texas (81)	8,429	10,722	12,086	12,516	12,307	12,079
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	36,356
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 Diploma Program (87)	NA	94	272	214	252	262
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	253
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	505
Other reasons						
Died while enrolled in school or during the summer break after completing the prior school year (03)	719	733	601	611	603	546
Withdrew from/left school to return to family's home country (16)	14,932	15,985	16,601	15,319	14,446	13,816
Student was ordered by a court to attend a GED program and has not earned a GED certificate (88)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2,506
Student was incarcerated in a state jail or federal penitentiary as an adult or as a person certified to stand trial as an adult (89)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	516
Other (reason unknown or not listed above) (98)	52,595	55,485	45,888	40,972	34,949	31,367
All leaver reasons	393,730	392,489	392,262	395,363	403,355	411,140

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2005-06 to 2010-11*

05. The use of the NCES definition mandated by the 78th Texas Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 186 in 2003 continues to have a dramatic impact on the dropout count and dropout rate reported by TEA.

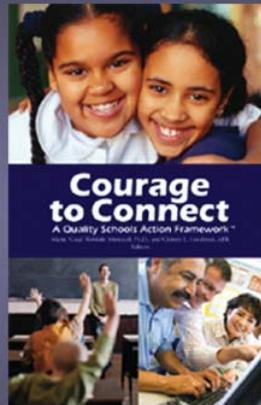
Of the 34,363 dropouts in the latest report, 1,530 were in grades 7-8, and 32,833 were in grades 9-12. The reported seventh through eighth grade dropout rate was 0.2 percent, while the ninth through 12th grade dropout rate was 2.4 percent. The annual dropout rates for African American students and Hispanic students in grades 9-12 were much higher than the rates for White students. The rate for African American students and Hispanic students was three times higher at grades 9-12. The reported 2010-11 dropout rate for African American students was 3.27 times higher than that of White students, and the rate for Hispanic students was 2.72 times higher than the rate for White students.

During the 2010-11 school year, TEA tracked school leaver reasons in 17 areas (see table on Page 21). For each reported school leaver, school districts were allowed to report one of these reasons as to why the student is not counted as a dropout. IDRA has long contended that the use of some leaver codes have served to undercount the number of school dropouts in Texas (Cortez, 2010).

Though the dropout and school completion rates reported by TEA prior to the 2005-06 school year 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).
- Johnson, R.L. *Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2011-12 – Attrition Rate Decline Appears Promising – Though High Schools are Still Losing One in Four Students* (San Antonio: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012).
- Texas Education Agency. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2010-11* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, July 2012).
- 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).



Courage to Connect A Quality Schools Action Framework™

Edited by María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.,
and Christie L. Goodman, APR

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– Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA President & CEO

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Communities and their neighborhood public schools can turn the tide. We can and must guarantee that every child graduates from high school ready for college and the world of work. Strategic action to address school holding power has two key elements:

Community-based action – that reclaims neighborhood public schools, strengthens schools through school-community partnerships and holds schools and stakeholders accountable for student success.

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See IDRA's **latest attrition study** online at: <http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/>

Get the attrition rate for **your county** over the last 10 years at:
<http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition>

Receive IDRA's **Graduation for All free monthly e-letter** (bilingual: Spanish/English) to get up-to-date information to make a difference in your school and community. Sign up online at: <http://www.idra.org>.

Listen to IDRA's **Classnotes podcast** to hear strategies for student success.

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Create a **community-school action team** to examine the factors that must be addressed to strengthen your school's holding power – its ability to hold on to students through to graduation. Use IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework™.

IDRA's book, **Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework™** shows how communities and schools can work together to be successful with all of their students. The book's web page (<http://www.idra.org/couragetocconnect>) has an excerpt, related podcasts, images of the framework and other resources.

Use IDRA's **OurSchool data website** (<http://www.idra.org/OurSchool>) to provide community-school partners with actionable knowledge on:

- Student Engagement
- Parent and Community Engagement
- Teaching Quality
- Curriculum Quality and Access
- Governance Efficacy
- Funding Equity

Get results

Use IDRA's one-page **School Holding Power Checklist** that has a set of criteria for assessing and selecting effective dropout prevention strategies and for making sure your school is a quality school. It is free online: <http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition>

Develop a **two-pronged strategy** that reaches students who are at immediate risk of dropping out and addresses the underlying factors that give rise to attrition in the first place. For a dropout prevention program to be successful, ensure that these components are in place:

- All students are valued.
- There is at least one educator in a student's life who is totally committed to the success of that student.
- Students, parents and teachers have extensive, consistent support that allows students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.
- Excellence is never achieved at the cost of equity.
- Solutions are institution-based with family and community participation and embrace the contributions that students and their families bring.

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Continuities: Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is available from IDRA or free online at www.idra.org.



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Strengthening schools to work for all children

What We Have Learned

Anchored in IDRA's experience, *Continuities: Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*, captures seven key lessons for improving the quality of education for all students. 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.



- 1. Valuing Youth Works.** If you provide young people with an opportunity to contribute – to themselves, their families, their communities – they will.
- 2. Local Ownership is Key.** To scale up and replicate success requires holding fast to essentials while adapting to local contexts.
- 3. School Leadership Sets the Tone.** To squarely take on attrition, school leaders must inspire innovation, embody engagement, and incorporate actionable knowledge.
- 4. Realizing the Power of One + One + One.** All students must have at least one caring adult in their lives at school and a reason to care.
- 5. Family and Community Engagement is Essential.** The school-family-community triad is at the heart of holding on to students and ensuring their success.
- 6. Success Demands Well-Defined Partnerships.** When roles are clear and each partner contributes from its unique strengths, a multi-sector collaboration can reap dramatic results.
- 7. Structure and Innovation Sustains Impact.** Transformative impact demands sustained structures, resources and a commitment to valuing all youth.

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IDRA is an independent, private non-profit organization, directed by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., dedicated to creating schools that work for all children. As a vanguard leadership development and research team for more than three decades, IDRA has worked with people to create self-renewing schools that value and empower all children, families and communities. IDRA conducts research and development activities, creates, implements and administers innovative education programs and provides teacher, administrator, and parent training and technical assistance. IDRA • 5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101 • San Antonio, Texas 78228 • 210-444-1710 • contact@idra.org • www.idra.org