



## Quality School Holding Power Checklist

IDRA's Quality School Holding Power Checklist provides a set of criteria for assessing and selecting effective dropout prevention programs or models, as well as determining if your school is a quality school ready to ensure all students stay in school and succeed.

The Quality School Holding Power Checklist is based on a different paradigm for preventing dropouts. For years, researchers, educators and policymakers have generally focused on "fixing" students rather than on strengthening or changing the school systems that are accountable and responsible for ensuring that children and youth succeed throughout the educational system.

Since 1973, IDRA has worked to change the focus from a deficit perspective to a valuing of all children. IDRA has led the paradigm shift from dropouts to "school holding power" – the idea that schools must hold on to students because of their inherent value, their contributions and their potential significance to their communities and society, as a whole. This shift changes a school culture from "preventing dropouts" and finding students who are "at risk," to creating a quality school culture that seeks ways to hold on to students and develops a graduation plan for each and every student. To get more information on how to create quality schools, visit <http://budurl.com/IDRActc>.

The checklist here is based on significant research and evaluation conducted by IDRA and others. It takes into account important factors for schools deemed at risk of losing students. Total your score and see where there is work to be done to make your school a "Quality School" with strong school holding power.

### What does your score mean?

100-90	89-80	79 or lower
Strong	Moderate	Low

### Key Characteristics

#### Dropout Prevention Strategy...

1. Has clear and aligned mission, goals and objectives.
2. Is research- or evidence-based.
3. Has evidence that students stay in school.
4. Has evidence that students' academics (grades, achievement test scores) improve.
5. Is integrated into school rhythm and culture (not add-on program).
6. Implements rigorous evaluation used for ongoing decision-making.

#### Teaching Quality

7. Teachers expect all students will succeed.
8. Effective professional development is provided for all teachers.
9. Teachers collaborate across grade levels and content areas.
10. Teachers are certified and competent.
11. Teachers advocate for their students.
12. Teachers share accountability for student success.
13. Teachers have access to and use technology to enhance student achievement.

#### Student Engagement

14. Students are supported academically in effective ways.
15. Students are recognized for their contributions in ways that do not stigmatize.
16. Students are engaged in the school and feel they belong in ways that are appropriate to their interests and that demonstrate their intelligence and uniqueness.
17. Students have an expanded vision of their future.
18. Students have one educator in their life who is totally committed to their success.

#### Family and Community Involvement

19. Families are valued partners in their child's education.
20. Businesses and communities partner with schools in ongoing and meaningful ways.

#### Curriculum Quality and Access

21. Culturally and linguistically competent curriculum prepares all students for success, graduation, and college and career.
22. Individualized learning and support is provided when needed.

#### Accountable Leadership

23. School leaders are committed to all of their students' success.
24. School leaders support all of their teachers and staff in program implementation.
25. School environment is caring, supportive, predictable and safe.

Total \_\_\_\_\_

	Not at all	Minimal	Somewhat	Extensive
1	1	2	3	4
2	1	2	3	4
3	1	2	3	4
4	1	2	3	4
5	1	2	3	4
6	1	2	3	4
7	1	2	3	4
8	1	2	3	4
9	1	2	3	4
10	1	2	3	4
11	1	2	3	4
12	1	2	3	4
13	1	2	3	4
14	1	2	3	4
15	1	2	3	4
16	1	2	3	4
17	1	2	3	4
18	1	2	3	4
19	1	2	3	4
20	1	2	3	4
21	1	2	3	4
22	1	2	3	4
23	1	2	3	4
24	1	2	3	4
25	1	2	3	4



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# Taking Action to Hold on to Students

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.

**Statewide systems change** – to strengthen school holding power so all schools ensure that all children succeed and graduate. Each strategy must be informed by quality data about student outcomes and the factors that make up effective schools.

## Get informed

See IDRA's **latest attrition study** online at: <https://budurl.me/IDRAatrn17w>

Get the attrition rate for **your county** over the last seven years at: <https://budurl.me/IDRAlookTx>

Receive IDRA's **eNews free e-letter** to get up-to-date information to make a difference in your school and community. Sign up online at: <http://budurl.com/IDRAsubscribe>

Listen to IDRA's **Classnotes podcast** to hear strategies for student success: <https://budurl.me/Classnotes-iTunes> or <https://budurl.me/IDRApodcast>

## Get connected

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.

## 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. **See Page 41.**

See what happens when a school district raises expectations for students instead of lowering them. **College Bound and Determined**, shows how the Pharr-San Juan Alamo school district in south Texas transformed itself from low achievement and low expectations to planning for all students to graduate from high school and college. **College Bound & Determined** is available from IDRA for \$15 and is free online at: <http://budurl.com/IDRACbdw>

