



## Focus: School Holding Power

<i>Building Strong School Systems</i> .....	3
<i>An "Until Next Time"</i> .....	5
<i>13 Years of Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil</i> .....	7

### Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2011-12

## While Attrition Rates Continue their Decline in Texas, Schools Lost One in Four Students

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

Attrition rates have continued their slow decline in Texas public high schools according to the latest annual attrition study by IDRA. The overall attrition rate declined from 29 percent in 2009-10 to 27 percent in 2010-11 and 26 percent in 2011-12. For the third time in the 27-year history of reporting trends in dropout and attrition rates in Texas public schools, this latest study shows that less than 30 percent of students were lost from public enrollment prior to graduation with a high school diploma.

In its inaugural study in 1986, IDRA found that the attrition rate 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 implies improvement in schools' abilities to hold on to their students until they graduate, long-term trend assessments also suggest that it is not yet time to celebrate as the data show persistent gaps among racial and ethnic groups along with the fact that schools still are losing one out of every four students.

IDRA's latest annual attrition study builds on a series of studies that 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, which was released in October 1986 (Cárdenas, et al., 1986).

In the most recent annual attrition study that examines school holding power in Texas public high schools, IDRA found that 26 percent of

the freshman class of 2008-09 left school prior to graduating from a Texas public high school in the 2011-12 school year.

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. For each racial and ethnic group, the study found that current attrition rates were lower than in the first study. However, the gaps between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students and of White and Black students are higher than 27 years ago. 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 rate gap between White students and Black students has doubled from 7 percentage points in 1985-86 to 14 percentage points in 2011-12.

The full study is available on IDRA's web site at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) and includes methodology, historical statewide attrition rates and numbers of students lost to attrition categorized by race-ethnicity and by gender, a county-level data map, a county-level attrition rate table, trend data by county, and historical county-level numbers of students lost to attrition.

Key findings of the latest study include the following.

(cont. on Page 2)

*"Students are far more likely to succeed and graduate when they have the chance to work with highly qualified, committed teachers; when they are using effective, accessible curricula; when their parents and communities are engaged in their schools and learning; and when they themselves feel engaged."*

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

(Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2011-12, continued from Page 1)

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

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 1.4 million to 3.5 million students (Montes, 2012).

The trend in declining attrition rates for the state overall and for each racial and ethnic group is certainly good news. But the racial-ethnic gaps suggest that the celebration be postponed. 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 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 reasons for the decline in overall attrition rates and the widening disparity in attrition rates between racial and ethnic groups. 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*<sup>TM</sup>, 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](http://www.idra.org/couragetconnect)) provides 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 accessed free of charge at [www.idra.org/OurSchool](http://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: (cont. on Page 6)*

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

The IDRA Newsletter (ISSN 1069-5672, ©2012) serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children in Texas and across the United States.

Permission to reproduce material contained herein is granted provided the article or item is reprinted

[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)

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

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

Publication offices:  
5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  
210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714  
[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) | [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)

Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph. D.  
IDRA President and CEO  
Newsletter Executive Editor

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

Sarah H. Aleman  
Secretary  
Newsletter Layout



# Building Strong School Systems that Hold on to All Students

by Nilka Avilés, Ed.D.

The latest statistics in the United States show that around 25 percent of students drop out of schools (Duncan, 2010). IDRA's longitudinal attrition study (Johnson, 2012) found that Texas school attrition was 26 percent in 2011-12 (see article on Page 1), which means that we are losing 12 students per hour. The racial and ethnic gaps are dramatically higher than 27 years ago. This is economically, politically, socially and morally unacceptable. It is in the best interest of our country to redesign our educational approach to be more inclusive and globally competitive.

One step in the right direction is to ensure that all schools are staffed by quality teachers and that no school is victim to an inequitable school finance system. Students must be valued and engaged. The daily planning and use of effective instructional strategies that focus on keeping students connected in learning with proper and equitable resources is vital. Obviously this requires quality teacher preparation programs and intentional, effective professional development that supports exceptional teaching and learning outcomes. Financial resources need to pro-actively focus on dropout prevention programs that prepare students academically, socially and emotionally to be ready to enter and complete a college education.

Students enter schools full of dreams and energized to do well, but along the way many encounter barriers to having success in school. And many leave without finishing their secondary school education. Unfortunately, for many students dropping out of school is a result of the frustration of having to go through numerous academic struggles, taking wrong turns in their school career path, and lacking support for their family to engage with the school.

Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison (2006) indicate that reasons students drop out of school include being bored in the classroom, feeling a disconnect between their life and the academic program they have been exposed to, and simply not being challenged by educators who have low expectations of them. Many times, there are feelings of disconnect

between the students and their peers, students and teachers, and staff and administrators. Students feel pushed out the door as if nobody cares. Schools and their systems find themselves without human capital and resources to meet the complex academic, emotional and economic realities of vulnerable youth, particularly those in urban and poverty areas.

At all levels policymakers, educators, non-profit organizations, businesses, community members and their organizations must come together to catalyze efforts to transform and redesign our educational system. All of IDRA's work, as well as research by Avilés & Garza (2010) affirm that, most importantly, we must stop blaming the students and focus our energies on creating the means for students to demonstrate their potential and validate how they can be successful. We must be passionate and recognize that *all* students, given the right contexts, will succeed as they face the barriers that come their way.

During the start of this 21<sup>st</sup> century, specific initiatives have focused on investing in preschool programs, engaging parents as partners in education, building positive and caring relationships, monitoring the progress of the students early on, and developing effective intervention plans addressing their needs. These are critical elements, as is providing quality support systems that convert weaknesses into strengths, high expectations, a rigorous curriculum that is relevant and personalized classroom environments. A research study conducted by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2010) found that the above areas must be addressed to ensure all students succeed.

Some initiatives are addressing these challenges to reduce the number of dropouts and eliminate the achievement gap through the immersion of students in a college preparation program where they graduate from high school ready for college as they simultaneously accrue college credit hours and, in some cases, secure an associate's degree. These and other successful initiatives include (cont. on Page 4)

*Without effective reform structures, equitable finances, program implementation structures, and passionate and dedicated leadership, we resign ourselves to lip service; to prevent high dropout rates and close the achievement gap, well-planned actions must be in place.*

## IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity

For more information about the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity or to request technical assistance, contact us at 210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org).

Additional resources are available online at [http://www.idra.org/South\\_Central\\_Collaborative\\_for\\_Equity/](http://www.idra.org/South_Central_Collaborative_for_Equity/)

*funded by the U.S. Department of Education*



(Building Strong School Systems that Hold on to All Students, continued from Page 3)

Early College High Schools, STEM Academies, the PUENTE program, the AVID program, IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, along with many others as described by the Educational Policy Institute (EPI) and the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC).

These programs focus on students having quality teachers, counselors, staff and administrators, and parent and community leaders who are passionate and determined to make these programs successful. In collaboration, these programs have developed practical insights and proven solutions that systemically can be scaled up based on evidence, data analysis and evaluation across secondary schools and institutions of higher education.

Without a doubt, institutionalization and sustainability are crucial issues that need attention. Researchers have shown that innovative educational programs have the greatest impact when significant portions of the school culture are mobilized in conjunction with all stakeholders.

Researchers Watt, Huerta & Cossio (2004) explored the actions of school leaders in the implementation of the AVID program in secondary schools. Their findings reveal that school leaders in charge of an initiative must be knowledgeable and ensure that outcomes are successful. And they found that the planning process was one of the most important factors determining a program's success.

Every child is entitled to a quality education. IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework™, developed by IDRA President Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, is a guide for bringing about positive outcomes in school systems (Robledo Montecel & Goodman, 2010). It is based on the premise that 100 percent graduation and preparation for success should be our goals for all children and the measure of our success. And while it is critical that schools tend to students who are at immediate risk of dropping out, discrete dropout prevention programs cannot change the systems that give rise to risk in the first place. Through the collaborative efforts of engaged citizens and all school stakeholders, we can turn around schools to work for all students by preparing and empowering them for life.

Without effective reform structures, equitable finances, program implementation structures, and passionate and dedicated leadership, we resign ourselves to lip service; to prevent high dropout rates and close the achievement gap, well-planned

actions must be in place. Community leaders in the educational and political arenas must have a change of heart. Let's remember that students are not failing schools, but schools are failing students. We must strengthen education and its finance system and increase the holding power of schools and higher education institutions that validate students' assets. Systemic education reform must build culturally diverse excellent schools and higher education institutions.

### Resources

- Avilés, N., & E. Garza. "Early College High School: A Model of Success for High School Redesign," *International Journal of Urban Educational Leadership* (2010) 4(2), pp. 1-13.
- Bridgeland, J.M., & J.J. Dilulio, K.B. Morison. *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* (Washington, D.C.: Civic Enterprises, 2006).
- Center for Community College Student Engagement. *The Heart of Student Success: Teaching, Learning and College Completion, 2010 CCSE Findings* (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program, 2010).
- Duncan, A. "Education Secretary Arne Duncan says one-quarter of U.S. students drop out," *Tampa Bay Times* (August 30, 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, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012).
- Robledo Montecel, M., & Goodman, C.L. (eds). *Courage to Connect – A Quality Schools Action Framework* (San Antonio: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2010).
- Watt, K., & J. Huerta, G. Cossio. "Leadership and AVID Implementation Levels in Four South Texas Border Schools," *Catalyst for Change* (2004) 33(2), pp. 10-14.

Nilka Avilés, Ed.D., is a senior education associate in IDRA Field Services. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

## Get More Online at the IDRA Newsletter Plus

- Latest attrition study and other resources
- Video: Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil
- OurSchool data portal in English and Spanish
- *Courage to Connect – A Quality Schools Action Framework* book web site with the framework, detailed table of contents, book excerpt, podcasts and more
- Classnotes podcasts on dropout prevention
- Graphs showing attrition rates over time by Texas county

Visit [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) for more information.

## An “Until Next Time” from San Antonio – On the Occasion of Celebrating 13 Years of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil

by Maria “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

*Editor’s Note: The following was presented in Spanish at an event in Brazil marking the completion of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program there and marking the many success stories from the program during its 13 years in Brazil. The original Spanish-language version is available online at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) as is a video presentation with highlights of the program.*

It is my privilege and my pleasure to celebrate with you the success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil. During the last 13 years, we at IDRA have worked with the Brazilian team to assure a better future for the youth of that country. And we have achieved it. More than 36,500 Brazilian youths in 86 schools throughout 22 cities in nine states benefited from the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. I would like to extend our most sincere congratulations and thanks to each one of the students, teachers, school principals, and the parents of the families who made possible the successful accomplishment of the program mission.

When we developed the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, we did not know that it would grow and help so many youth from the United States, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom and Brazil – youth of all colors, social classes, skills, communities and languages.

The valuing of each student is the foundation of the program. This approach is based on our analysis of the reasons behind students’ leaving the school prematurely. Although there might be many and complex causes for students to drop out of school, fundamentally, the problem is that students are disconnected from school. When students are convinced that the school is not their place, leaving this seemingly hostile or inhospitable place appears to be the most logical decision. The goal of the program is to have students know that they belong in school.

And this is not achieved only with words, but also with actions. Through the program, participating students become leaders, serving as tutors, helping to educate younger children in the early grades. The



Marcos Didonet, Director of Environment, CIMA (second from left); Marco Simões, Vice-President of Communication and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Brazil (third from left); Maria Luisa Soares, former Marketing Director, Coca-Cola Brazil (fourth from left); Dr. Regina de Assis, former Secretary of Education, Rio de Janeiro (fifth from left, front); Cleia Aloise, Local Coordinator, CIMA (center front) are joined by staff from from the Coca-Cola Brazil, the Instituto Coca-Cola and the Center for Information and the Environment, who supported the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil, and some of the school principals and teachers who implemented it.

program helps to establish a school environment that values students so that they know they belong in school, giving the best of themselves. And so, through the program, the school becomes the place where they rediscover their capacity to contribute to themselves, to their families and to society as a whole. Many students have expressed this profound inner transformation through their own poetry. One of these poems, called “The Trail,” was read in one of the end-of-year events in Brazil.

Had I known that this trail was so simple  
Had I known I would have so much joy  
Had I known I would gain so much  
I would have traveled it sooner

But the moment came  
The right time was at hand  
The Program arrived  
And the trail widened

I learned new ways  
I walked trails never traveled before  
With full hands we arrived to the New!  
We grew together  
And now we can dream of a better future!

(cont. on Page 6)



Scan this code to see the video on Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil.

(An “Until Next Time” from San Antonio, continued from Page 5)

The statistics are revealing. More than 36,000 students were affected in this profound way by the program. According to their parents, many of these students were saved from the dangers of the streets, such as delinquency and drug abuse. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program helped them with their self-concept and discipline, transformed their emotional and academic lives, and enabled a more promising future for them through their continued focus on achieving their educational goals. We feel the same emotion expressed by that poem because we know that thousands of other students share it too.

I wish each of you the best. I wish Coca-Cola Brazil and the Instituto Coca-Cola success in their new initiatives. And I assure you that this experience of working together toward such a noble goal will always be in the heart of all at IDRA who were lucky enough to contribute to this project. *Obrigada. Gracias. Thank you.*

For information about the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in the United States, contact IDRA or visit our website ([http://www.idra.org/Coca-Cola\\_Valued\\_Youth\\_Program.html/](http://www.idra.org/Coca-Cola_Valued_Youth_Program.html/)).

Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., is IDRA's president and CEO. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

(Texas Public School Attrition Study, continued from Page 2)

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: A Summary of Findings* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

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, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2012).

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).

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](mailto: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. Available from IDRA for \$7.00, plus shipping, or free online at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org).



### What We Have Learned

- 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.

To find out more about the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and how you can bring the program to your school contact IDRA or visit: [http://www.idra.org/Coca-Cola\\_Valued\\_Youth\\_Program.html/](http://www.idra.org/Coca-Cola_Valued_Youth_Program.html/)





# 13 Years of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil – What Have We learned?

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

*Note: This is an overview of IDRA's analysis. A more extended version is available on the IDRA website.*

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a research-based dropout prevention program that since 1984 has been implemented in schools across the United States as well as Puerto Rico and the United Kingdom. As the program's 13-year presence in Brazil has recently come to a close, we reflect on its both its impact and legacy.

In May 1998, the leaders of IDRA, Coca-Cola Brazil, PANAMCO/Spal and the secretaries of education of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo met to consider the implementation of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil. As a result of that meeting, a successful pilot test was launched the next year. With the success of the pilot test, the program expanded from two schools in 1999 to a peak of 46 schools in 2007. During its 13 years, 36,536 students benefited directly from the program.

The dropout rate is the key statistic in a program of this nature. With a 13-year dropout rate of only 2.2 percent, the program was successful in keeping students in school in Brazil. This compares favorably with national averages of between 6.9 percent (official figure) and 13.5 percent (unofficial figure).

The evaluation of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was an integral component of the program implementation. The teacher coordinators evaluated the tutors at the beginning and end of each school year in three general areas: behavior, relationships and academics through 15 constructs, from self-concept to desire to graduate. The analysis showed that, each year, the ratings increased significantly in all areas after participation. This suggests that the students experienced profound changes in their lives as a result of their participation in the program. The tutors' parents confirmed this assessment. Clearly, the program represented a turning point for these tutors, their families and the schools.

As the program comes to a close in Brazil, it is

important to reflect on the lessons learned during these 13 years of implementation to inform future efforts in Brazil, in the United States and elsewhere. Here are some of the most relevant lessons.

- The heart of the program is the concept of valuing youth. The implementation in Brazil confirmed that this concept can be the fundamental core of any program designed to re-incorporate into the educational track students at risk of leaving the school, in a variety of national or cultural settings.
- The program's rigorous evaluation enabled understanding of its impact on participants objectively and provided guidance for program improvements.
- Although the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is made up of a relatively complex interplay of five instructional strategies with five support strategies, the implementation in Brazil demonstrated that each one of those strategies had a relevant role to play.
- Although Coca-Cola Brazil was the driving force behind the program implementation, local ownership also was important to its success.
- At the local level, perhaps the most important indicator of program success was school leadership.
- One dramatic demonstration of the need of this type of program was how the tutors' relationship with the teacher coordinator flourished. It was clear that these students needed an adult in the school setting that would listen to them, support their aspirations, and orient them when dealing with daily issues.
- Parent engagement is essential for student success. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program provided the context for this to happen.
- Can schools by themselves implement something similar to the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program? Yes, but they would first need to assimilate the concept of valuing youth and

keep renewing it, as it is easy to slip back to the prevalent deficit thinking.

- Finally, another requirement for us to answer "yes" to the question posed in the previous paragraph is that the school would need to be willing to create new structures that cut across the established isolated classroom structure to enrich the pedagogical experience of the students.

In summary, the program had a remarkable impact improving the educational environment in Brazil as it helped retain more youth in the school system and rekindled hope for a better society. Whether the schools will continue to have success in this area, as they attempt to implement some aspects of the program on their own, depends on their willingness to embrace the concept of valuing youth, expand the school into the community with significant partnerships, and re-invent internal structures that emphasize collaborations among teachers and other school personnel with the goal of helping the students in their psychological, intellectual and educational growth.

*For more information on the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program contact IDRA at 210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org) or visit [www.idra.org/Coca-Cola\\_Valued\\_Youth\\_Program.htm](http://www.idra.org/Coca-Cola_Valued_Youth_Program.htm).*

*Felix Montes, Ph.D., is an education associate in IDRA Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).*



**INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION**  
5815 CALLAGHAN ROAD, SUITE 101  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78228

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Permit No. 3192  
San Antonio, TX 78228

## Focus: School Holding Power

*“Our state can do better than 26 percent attrition. Texas must move from its low expectation that only some of our state’s students can successfully graduate to expecting and supporting all of our students to graduate college-ready”*

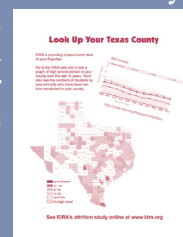
— Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo  
Montecel, IDRA President and CEO

## IDRA Attrition Study & Resources Online



**2012 Study:**  
Texas Public School  
Attrition Study, 2011-12

**Look Up Your County:**  
See attrition  
rates and  
numbers over  
the last 10 years



**Tool:**  
Quality School  
Holding Power  
Checklist



**Stay Connected:**  
Graduation for All  
e-Letter

Get ideas for taking action  
[www.idra.org/Research/Attrition](http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition)