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## **Defining Student Success in the Context of College Readiness**

**by Rosana G. Rodríguez,  
Ph.D.**

There is little question that student success for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must be viewed in light of college readiness and that it is linked to the type of leaders this nation will produce. We are uniquely poised at this moment in history to consider education as the civil rights issue of our century, which has been aptly identified by President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education, Arnie Duncan (2009).

Public schools are the bedrock of our democracy. For K-12 schools and colleges to be relevant and responsive in the future, teachers must be excellent in their content fields, culturally competent, and pedagogically equipped to serve a diverse student population. School leaders must have a strong vision of college readiness for all students.

In fact, our collaborative vision and commitment will need to evolve to create excellent public schools that are “centers of college readiness” for *all* children.

We can achieve this by fostering new forms of collaboration and

alliances among schools, colleges and communities. Through these alliances, we can create the positive changes needed in teacher preparation, school leadership programs and professional development that focus on college readiness. We cannot continue to recruit, select, place, support and reward teachers and principals the ways we have in the past if we don’t want the same results that perpetuate gaps in support to minority and English language learner students.

Current teacher preparation and educational leadership programs also typically fail to adequately prepare teachers and school leaders to value or engage parents and communities as meaningful partners in the teaching and learning process.

Action dialogues focused on college readiness, quality teaching and community engagement are needed among communities, higher education, schools and policymakers to implement actions that are relevant and sustainable in addressing college access, enrollment and persistence. This requires greater articulation between schools, community colleges and universities, with a comprehensive

review of policies and practices along the K-20 continuum, particularly at key transition points—middle to high school and high school to college.

Information linked to action must be readily accessible to families, communities and all stakeholders for making good decisions aimed at college preparedness (Posner & Bojorquez, 2008). Student voices also are indispensable in planning effective action. Schools need to continue to create avenues for student voices to be heard in the planning process.

What follows are several premises upon which to draw as a basis for action and reform as we consider the implications for creating centers of college readiness.

**1. College readiness both expands and changes the goal of high school graduation** from obtaining just minimum requirements, to creating a supportive college prep context upon which all students emerge with the social, emotional, intellectual and instructional background and experiences to ensure college success.

**Our future leaders will emerge from schools that are centers of college readiness, representing the sum of what they have been taught from preschool through higher education, reflecting the context of the families and communities from which they came.**

To do so mandates collaboration between high schools and colleges for shared planning, articulation agreements, and access to greatly expanded advanced placement courses and early college credit courses.

This also requires commitment to teach students requisite study skills and provide access to high level courses. Beyond the coursework, college prep requires problem solving skills, decision-making, time management, interpersonal and social competency, and cross cultural skills.

**2. College readiness for minority students and English language learners implies looking at structures, policies and practices within schools through an equity**

**lens.** In order to ensure that all students graduate fully prepared for college success, we must diligently eliminate all disproportionality in policies and practices within schools as they relate to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, language and disability. Ongoing and rigorous monitoring and implementation of the goals of equity outlined by the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (Scott 2000) and by key principles for English language learner education (Villarreal, 2009a&b) can help guide schools in organizing for college readiness.

**3. College readiness requires a deep examination of the curricular and instructional practices that**

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# Student Success

## Dear reader,

We are surrounded by big myths about education. For example, there is the myth that equal opportunity currently exists and that students, families and communities have only to take advantage of such opportunities. The truth is that students routinely experience dramatically different learning opportunities based on their race, ethnicity, language background, family background and neighborhood.



Another myth is the idea that college is not for everyone. Typical of this myth is the stereotype that minorities or children of the poor are not college material. The Texas Legislature made new policy this year based on this myth by creating differentiated high school curricula, many of which wash away students' chances to prepare for college.

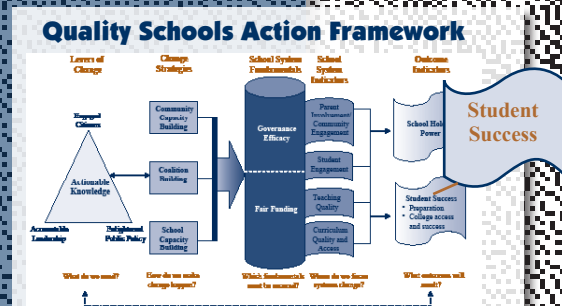
Instead of myths and actions based on those myths, we need a new commitment to high school graduation with a path to higher education for all – and “all” must mean “all.” This is, in fact, why our schools exist: to educate students to their highest potential. Our nation and our communities cannot afford anything less.

In this issue of the IDRA Newsletter, Dr. Rosana Rodriguez identifies six premises for creating school centers of college readiness in “Defining Student Success in the Context of College Readiness.” Dr. Abelardo Villarreal presents insights on the ineffectiveness and inequity behind zero tolerance policies in “Zero Tolerance ≠ College Prep.”

Access to quality teaching is critical to student success, but new teachers often struggle and leave the profession early. In “Mentoring New Teachers for First-Day, First-Year Success,” Dr. Adela Solis provides steps for mentoring new teachers effectively and for building cultural proficiency.

In “Five Supporting Reasons for the Success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Dropout Prevention,” Dr. Felix Montes continues his series that began last month by describing the five supporting strategies that have led to the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program’s 25 years of successful dropout prevention.

Half of our nation’s 20 fastest-growing occupations require not a high school diploma but an associate or bachelor’s degree just to get in the door. In this economy, in this global market, 100 percent graduation and college preparation is the only reasonable goal.



*Marie Roberts Montiel*



# Zero Tolerance $\neq$ College Prep

**Zero Tolerance + Instructional Quality < College Prep**

**Equity + Instructional Quality + Student Achievement  $\geq$  College Prep**

**by Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D.**

During a tutoring session with my grandson working on his algebra homework and being cognizant of the consequences if he failed to turn it in, I was struck by the appropriateness of using mathematical symbols of inequalities to title this article. The purpose of this article is to focus on the academic support services that help to level the playing field so that *all* students graduate, are college ready, and are equipped to exercise their option to continue their education at a college or university.

Let's start with two premises that define today's high schools: (1) all high schools must consider themselves college preparatory schools, and (2) all high schools are vehicles through which equity is achieved as demonstrated by high student achievement, high college readiness standards and no achievement gaps among various student groups.

Thus, the two major questions facing today's high schools are: (1) Do we need to increase the focus of our school as a student-caring and compassionate institution that is willing to do more to ensure that a higher percentage of students from the different student groups succeed and are college ready? and (2) Do we provide the necessary opportunities for all students to develop their academic

**The challenge of today's high schools is to find ways of reaching more students in more compassionate ways, teaching responsibility among the many other study skills within the required curriculum, and eliminating achievement gaps among student groups.**

readiness for college?

This article particularly addresses those schools that answer "yes" to the first question and "no" to the second one. And it may provide some useful insights for those schools that have shown consistently high academic performance of all student groups and a high percentage of these students enrolling and successfully completing a college education.

Two major challenges face the educator who is designing a student support services program. The first challenge is the dismal and high student attrition rates that range, in Texas for example, from 17 for White students to 42 percent for Hispanic students (Johnson, 2009).

The second challenge is to design a program of student support services amidst policies that are exclusionary, such as zero tolerance policies, both for

serious disciplinary offenses and for assigning grades that disproportionately and negatively impact minority student. These policies and the execution of these policies using punitive and educationally unsound practices have led to high achievement gaps among student groups and high dropout rates among minority students.

Much has been written about the negative impact on students and the ineffectiveness of zero tolerance in meeting its original intention. It is a serious distracter to equity and building opportunities for all student groups to stay and succeed in school. Zero tolerance has had devastating effects on keeping minority students in school. In fact, a zero tolerance grading system has become the illusory trademark of some college preparatory schools [zero tolerance  $\neq$  college prep].

Schools that continue to use a zero tolerance grading system but have ensured that the instructional program prepares students to address the problem solving and knowledge building competencies required for success in college have partially reached the goal of college prep [Zero Tolerance in Grading Practices + Instructional Quality < College Prep].

And schools that ensure instructional quality and access to all student groups and that employ instructional strategies that develop

*Zero Tolerance – continued on Page 5*



higher order thinking skills provide the necessary ingredients to student success for all [Equity + Instructional Quality + Student Achievement  $\geq$  College Prep].

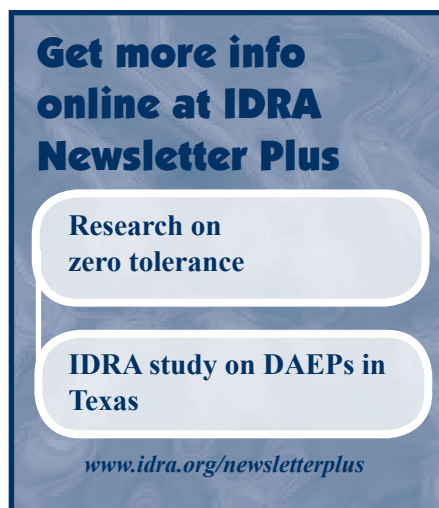
In essence, zero tolerance has become the “justifiable” tool that many schools use to address and redress unacceptable student behavior through expulsions. To make the effect permanent, schools have introduced a double whammy approach by employing zero tolerance in grading practices so that when a student comes back, he or she is never able catch up. These students have struggled throughout their school life and now are faced with an even more de-personalized system of instruction.

Zero tolerance in grading practices is a yardstick with zero as the value for defining student expectations. It is an example of a school’s low expectations that are totally unacceptable (Breux & Whitaker, 2006).

Reeves (nd) lists five commonalities of effective schools. He describes one of those commonalities as: “Frequent assessments are given to students. When they do poorly on an assessment, they are given multiple opportunities to succeed. They are not failures; they just need more time to reach the level of success. Student learning is the goal, not student grading.”

In spite of the research (Guskey, 2001; Marzano, 2006; O’Connor, 2009; Reeves, nd) that suggests zero tolerance in grading practices is both unsound and ineffective, many high schools continue to use it as a banner to demonstrate its “fitness” as a college preparatory school.

In summary, the student who most suffers the consequences of zero tolerance is the one who has been suspended and comes back to school to be faced with the consequences of zero tolerance grading system where the student will turn in missed work



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with some relief, even though the highest grade he or she can make on a missed assignment is a 60. The Civil Rights Project aptly states that these students “fall irretrievably behind, and there is a moderate to strong indication that they will eventually drop out of school” (2000).

The American Psychological Association (Skiba, et al., 2006) considered evidence for the ineffectiveness of zero tolerance and cites the incongruence of research on adolescents’ immaturity and actions inherent on a zero tolerance policy. Adolescents’ immaturity can be defined “in at least four areas: poor resistance to peer influence, attitudes toward and perception of risk, future orientation, and impulse control” (APA, 2006). Furthermore, the report stresses that secondary schools are “at odds with the developmental challenges of adolescence, which include the need for close peer relationships, autonomy, support from adults other than one’s parents, identity negotiation, and academic self-efficacy.” Any program of support services must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the development of adolescents. For student support services to have maximum impact on students, they must be shored up by equitable school policies that seek to be inclusive and student friendly.

A program of student support services in a high school campus covers a wide variety of activities ranging from crisis intervention to health services. For purposes of this article, academic student support services refer to those curricular/extracurricular, instructional, and personal development services that increase students’ readiness for college. For schools planning to enhance their services in this area, it is important to make note that research shows that success of these services will be greatly enhanced when student feedback (voices disaggregated by student group) is factored into the design of these services. It is imperative that, in the selection or configuration of services, student input be acquired either through surveys or student participation in task or planning committees. Furthermore, making and ensuring that these services are accessible to all students maximizes the impact of these activities on a school’s success.

Below is a description of two selected activities designed to offset the effects of zero tolerance and, furthermore, that schools can implement to facilitate the preparation of *all* students to be college ready when they graduate.

**Successful Schools Implement a Freshman Academy.** Research shows that freshmen face transition challenges, and high schools must provide personalized services to help freshmen address these challenges successfully (Kennelly & Mondrad, 2002). Research also shows that the vast majority of dropouts occur at this juncture and that recovery projections are low and alarming (Reents, 2002). This course combines “study skills, personal goal-setting and social group skills designed to prepare students more broadly for the demands of high school.” Personalization of services for freshmen becomes essential for a successful high school. Particular emphasis is made to ensure that

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# In Memoriam – Judge William Wayne Justice

## Justice... for All

As the year comes to a close, we at IDRA reflect on those who have made great contributions to education. “Fighting the good fight,” begins the forward in Dr. José A. Cárdenas’ chronicle on the battle to achieve Texas school finance equity. Like Dr. Cárdenas, IDRA’s founder and director emeritus, Judge William Wayne Justice was a figure who found himself thrust into the center of great issues and, in his case, harnessing the power of his court to improve the educational opportunities of millions of children in Texas and throughout the country. Judge Justice passed away in October.

IDRA’s history has long been interwoven with Judge Justice’s from our involvement, including providing testimony, in the work to integrate Texas schools, to the legal struggle to ensure that limited English speaking children had access to comprehensible instruction, and the battle to ensure that children of undocumented workers were not denied access to a basic public education. We have shared his vision and ideal that education should be fair, equitable and available for all children.

While most would have run away from the challenge of dismantling segregated schooling, Judge Justice issued historic rulings in *U.S. vs. Texas* and dragged Texas schools and state leaders kicking and screaming into a new era that acknowledged that as long as schools were separate, they could never be equal.

After that ruling, Judge Justice was asked to hear another historic case that challenged whether Texas public schools had eliminated the vestiges of discrimination against the state’s Hispanic student population. His 1981 ruling in that case required the state of Texas to adopt new bilingual education and ESL policies that would greatly improve the educational services provided to English language learners enrolled in Texas schools. Those policies provide the structural framework for state programs to this day.

Perhaps Judge Justice’s greatest contribution to education involved his ruling requiring children of

undocumented workers to be allowed to enroll in the Texas public schools – a ruling eventually upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court and applied to all public schools throughout the country.

Education is fairer and better – for all children – as a result of the actions of Judge Justice. Many will agree, he did not seek to be involved in these controversial issues, but when confronted with them, he acted with courage found only in those great leaders who see injustice and fight to correct it. He used the power of the law, and was always, always seeking justice, justice for all.

Peter Roos lead attorney in the *Doe vs. Plyler* case involving education of immigrant children noted: “Judge Justice was all that a judge should be: fully committed to justice – especially for those who could only receive it in the federal courts, scholarly and gracious. You could not ask for anything more.”

Roger Rice, who was involved in the bilingual education litigation, commented: “From the early days of the civil rights movement on forward there have been a small

handful of courageous federal judges who combined their knowledge of the law with a deep understanding of the lives of human beings and whose work made a difference for people. In Texas, William Wayne Justice, was such a judge. His life and his work made a difference.”

Albert Kauffman, former attorney with Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) stated: “We have lost a real champion and a rare Texan, indeed a rare American.”

David Hinojosa, current MALDEF attorney, added: “Judge Justice carried out the spirit of the law and the Constitution just as they were written and intended. His decisions not only opened schoolhouse doors to thousands of Latino children and others but also ensured that behind those doors quality educational programs were provided to those children. His presence will be sorely missed, but his legacy will undoubtedly live on.”

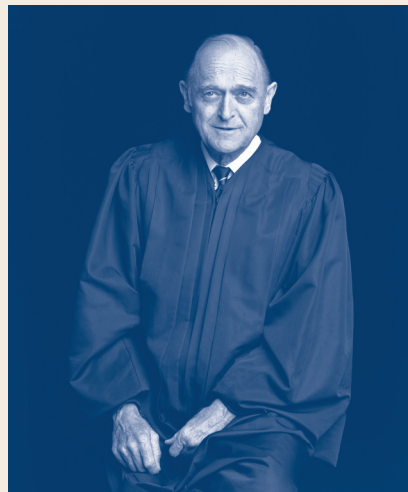
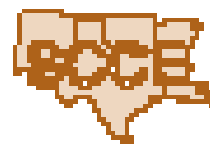


Photo Courtesy of John Katz



# Mentoring New Teachers for First-Day, First-Year Success

by Adela Solís, Ph.D.

A word commonly associated with the beginning teacher is *struggle*. That's because many teachers begin their careers struggling. The optimism and excitement typical of new professionals also is there, of course, but these feelings seem to dissipate faster in new teachers.

What is more common to see in the first day and first year of teaching is much anxiety and confusion (Wong & Wong, 2009) with little help in learning the ropes of teaching, which causes many to change schools or leave within the first four years (Baldacci & Moore Johnson, 2006). The mentoring and coaching provided to novice teachers in the early stages of their careers is critical to promoting teacher excellence, retention and student success.

Being a new teacher means being concerned, from day one, with testing and accountability, with teaching a learner-centered curriculum and, most importantly, with getting to know children and parents who in most parts of the country come from diverse culture and language backgrounds.

Throughout the year, many new teachers ask these questions: How do I build relationships with my students and my colleagues? If I teach to the test can I really reach all of my students? What if they don't speak English?

Being a mentor teacher, then, requires that the specific needs of new teachers be addressed thoroughly through strategies informed by national research, state guidelines and insights from fellow mentors. The mentoring suggestions in this article come precisely from these sources. They are incorporated into the mentoring for success training strategies employed by the IDRA professional development team that trains mentor teachers via its Coaching and Mentoring for Novice Teacher Model.

## Mentoring for Success Principles

Research on what works in schools informs the professional practice of mentoring and teaching. Several principles derived from the literature guide our work in preparing mentors to help beginning teachers succeed:

- Peer mentoring and coaching by experienced teachers is a powerful way to support beginning teachers (New Teacher Center, 2008; Kortman & Honaker, 2004).
- An experienced teacher does not necessarily make a good mentor (Daresh, 2003; New Teacher Center, 2008).
- The heart of mentoring is providing instructional support in the classroom (ASSIST Beginning Teachers,

2006a).

- The culture and belief system of the classroom and the school as a whole play an important role on the level of teacher success with diverse children (Villarreal, 2009).
- Highly qualified teachers teach all students to high standards (TEA, 2002).
- Teachers in diverse classrooms can teach for student success when they are empowered to become highly qualified culturally proficient teachers (Lindsey, et al., 2007; Michigan State University, 2007).

## Principles in Practice

Putting mentoring principles into practice involves taking strategic steps to ensure that mentors satisfy the new teacher's needs and as well as state expectations and pedagogical requirements. A mentor asking, *How can I be there for the new teacher on his or her first day and first year?*, can follow these selected important suggestions to put into practice strategies for mentoring success.

### 1. Be the Right Mentor

Mentoring for success must include a set of procedures for mentor selection (by the school), but it is even more essential that prospective mentors reflect on why they want to be mentors. Questions a teacher should

*Mentoring New Teachers – continued on Page 8*

ask before agreeing to be a mentor include: Should I be a mentor? What can I offer a beginning teacher? How can I be responsive to a beginning teacher's needs? How can I work with beginning teachers to foster their professional growth?

An important next step for new mentors is to assess the mentoring expectations set by the school or school district. Some desired characteristics for mentors in Texas classrooms are described in the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) and include the following: (a) having a wide repertoire of experiences and skills; (b) having the ability to provide different types of mentoring and support activities that are based on what new teachers want and need; and (c) being willing to participate in appropriate and rigorous training (Texas SBEC, 2005). A good source for more ideas on being the right mentor can be found at <http://www.assist.educ.msu.edu/ASSIST>.

## **2. Address the Beginning Teacher Teaching Standards**

A well-designed mentoring program promotes teaching excellence and in turn meets local and state teaching standards. To provide on-target mentoring and support, a mentor should be familiar with and use the teaching standards or expectations for new teachers.

In Texas, the standards are called the TxBESS Framework (Texas SBEC, 2005). This framework provides parameters for mentors to guide new teachers to plan and deliver instruction that is learner-centered in an environment that promotes excellence and equity.

## **3. Focus on What Beginning Teachers Need, Want and Value**

When new teachers feel valued and fulfilled and their students are successful, teachers will excel and

## **Five Steps of the Action Plan for Cultural Proficiency**

- Anticipate and be conscious of own emotional state and that of person being coached.
- Listen and look for verbal and nonverbal responses that elucidate cultural issues or content important to the person being coached.
- Respond thoughtfully using coaching skills, such as: pausing to allow thinking time, paraphrasing what is being said and inviting thinking through probing to get specifics of the situation.
- Monitor conversation for *zone of opportunity* (to shift thinking towards equity) by listening for level of awareness of culturally competent behavior and posing questions to prompt flexibility and new perspectives, and assessing your level of cultural competence.
- Determine your intention and choose appropriate actions: continuing the conversation as a coach, or offer support and resources as a consultant.

Source: *Culturally Proficient Coaching: Supporting Educators to Create Equitable Schools* by Lindsey, Martinez and Lindsey (2007) pp 151-152.

want to stay. An important role of the mentor teacher is to assess the needs of the new teacher in a timely and responsive manner. This initial assessment should keep in mind an important rule of thumb: if the new teacher says something is a need, then it is a need. For the sake of first-day survival, it is important for the mentor to listen and honor the requests of the new teacher. Later, the mentor may use his or her own expertise and insight to discern needs (Moir, 2004). For example, at mid-year, the new teacher may say that he's still struggling with discipline, when in reality creativity in lesson delivery is the underlying issue.

Discovering what new teachers need requires more than listening though. To build success throughout the first year, assessment must be systematic and integrated as much as possible with mentoring and coaching activities. The mentor can begin with a framework that organizes mentoring

into three types: emotional, technical and instructional (ASSIST Beginning Teachers, 2006b; Wong & Wong 2009).

Integrated mentoring and assessment may look like this: A mentor visits to help with classroom management and concurrently gives technical support in record-keeping and showing how the technology works. During a meeting to discuss a lesson, emotional support is provided by assuring the new teacher that students *do* like her and that she will be an important member of the grade level team. As the survival phases passes, the mentor can move into mentoring for instruction because instruction is a heart of mentoring and coaching. Many suggestions for addressing what diverse new teachers, need, want and value can be accessed online at <http://teachers.net> and <http://teachers.net/gazette/wordpress/october-2009/>.

Some tools that yield accurate

*Mentoring New Teachers – continued on Page 14*



# Five Supporting Reasons for the Success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Dropout Prevention

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has achieved its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. With its less than 2 percent annual dropout rate in schools with dropout rates often exceeding 40 percent, the program has been highly successful. In a previous article, I outlined the *instructional* strategies constituting the five primary reasons for this success (See October 2009 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*). This article explores the five *supporting* strategies that facilitate and improve the implementation of the instructional strategies.

Many extracurricular programs offer outstanding interventions. What is rarely found though is the kind of programmatic support that sustains the intervention that is integral to the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. This programmatic support has five components: evaluation, family involvement, staff enrichment, curriculum, and coordination. Each of these elements is critical and necessary for the success of the intervention (Cárdenas, et al., 1992). In the program literature (see IDRA, 1990), these five elements are often depicted as an outer circle supporting the inner circle made up of the five core elements comprising the intervention: tutoring, classes for tutors, student recognition, field trips, and role models.

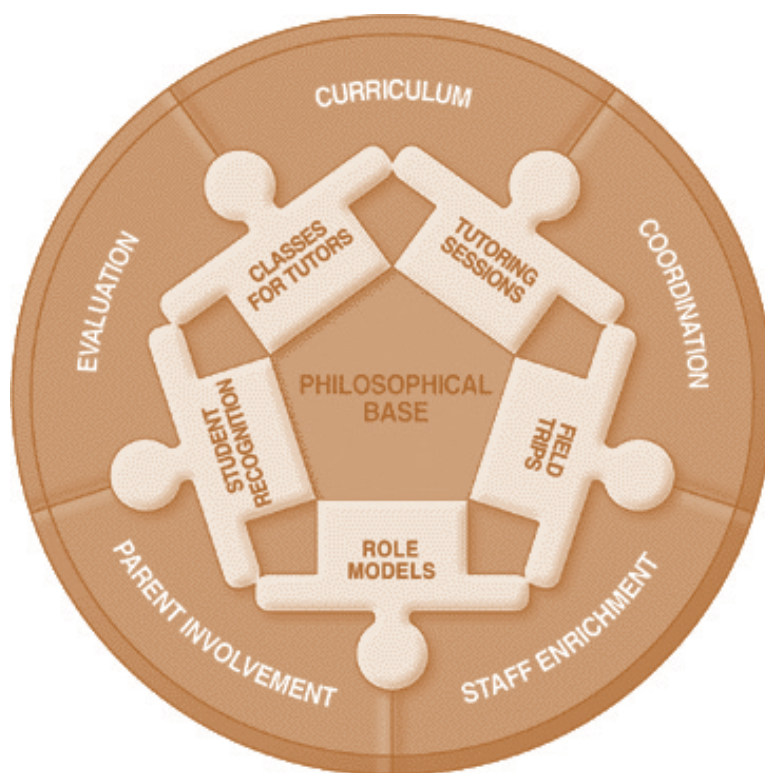
and role models – delineated in the prequel to this article.

*Evaluation* is perhaps the component that most surprises researchers. The surprise is not that there is an evaluation component, but the extent and thoroughness of the evaluation provided by IDRA. Every aspect of the intervention is evaluated. Field trips and role models are

evaluated by the tutors and the teacher coordinators. The implementation team uses these evaluations to improve both the way those activities are conducted and the selection of field trips and role models. Tutors also have an opportunity to evaluate these and all other aspects of the program in the post intervention instrument they complete at the end

*Dropout Prevention – continued on Page 10*

## Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Core and Support Components



of the year. There, they evaluate their tutoring, the classes for tutors, and the student recognition events. In that instrument, they provide feedback directly to the teacher coordinator, and they evaluate their relationships with the rest of the school staff, their friends and family. These evaluations provide an important window into how the tutors' perceptions have changed, as many of these aspects also are documented at the beginning of the year to establish a baseline.

Because tutoring is the heart of the intervention, it is evaluated through observations from different perspectives by the teacher coordinators, the elementary school tutee's teachers, and IDRA trainers. These observations are conducted several times throughout the year.

The program has specific

guidelines under which tutoring should happen. For example, tutoring occurs under adult supervision, often in the tutees' classroom itself, as part of the regular class period. Three tutees are assigned to a tutor. There is at least a four-year age difference between the tutees and the tutor. Tutors set a plan for their tutoring supported by the tutees' teacher. The observation constitutes a mechanism to monitor that these guidelines are followed, in addition to documenting the tutoring dynamics and providing recommendations for improvements.

Since the tutors are the principle subjects of the intervention, they are evaluated extensively. In addition to their own evaluation contributions, as indicated above, they are evaluated by the teacher coordinator and often by other relevant staff, including the tutees' teachers, on a pre-test and

post-test basis. These evaluations provide a good sense of how tutors change academically, behaviorally and socially. They show the extent to which tutors have improved their relationships with their families, their peers and school staff. They also document their improved outlook on life and their desire to graduate and to continue their education.

The table below illustrates this aspect of the evaluation for tutors in Brazil, for example, where the program operates in 44 schools in 20 cities (in eight states) throughout the country. The evaluation shows that the tutors had significant gains in all three domains: behavior, social and academic ( $p < 0.001$ ). In *behavior*, they had a 14.0 percent improvement overall, including gains in self-concept, school attendance, discipline, and

*Dropout Prevention – continued on Page 11*

## Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program - Brazil 2008 Academic Year Teacher Coordinator Tutor Evaluation

Construct	N	Pre-test Mean	SD	Post-test Mean	SD	Difference Mean	%	Significance t	p
Behavior	890	2.84	0.61	3.24	0.61	0.40	14.0		
Self-concept	896	2.91	0.59	3.23	0.66	0.32	11.0	11.16	0.001
Attendance	897	3.02	0.52	3.36	0.54	0.34	11.3	15.22	0.001
Discipline	893	2.74	0.66	3.14	0.64	0.40	14.6	15.69	0.001
Hygiene/Dress	875	2.70	0.67	3.22	0.58	0.52	19.3	20.41	0.001
Social	842	2.86	0.58	3.25	0.53	0.39	13.5		
School environment	884	2.93	0.51	3.27	0.51	0.34	11.6	14.77	0.001
Schoolmates	751	2.89	0.61	3.24	0.54	0.35	12.1	12.90	0.001
Teachers	727	2.89	0.59	3.25	0.54	0.36	12.5	12.91	0.001
Administrators	899	2.86	0.56	3.23	0.54	0.37	12.9	16.34	0.001
Parents	894	2.80	0.60	3.24	0.53	0.44	15.7	17.74	0.001
Siblings and extended family	896	2.79	0.62	3.24	0.54	0.45	16.1	18.07	0.001
Academics	835	2.78	0.60	3.18	0.60	0.41	14.7		
Achievement	773	2.91	0.58	3.29	0.54	0.38	13.1	14.45	0.001
Future goals	892	2.80	0.60	3.19	0.59	0.39	13.9	15.94	0.001
Interest in class	742	2.84	0.60	3.26	0.56	0.42	14.8	15.84	0.001
Interest in school	894	2.69	0.63	3.10	0.66	0.41	15.2	16.49	0.001
Desire to graduate	872	2.64	0.61	3.08	0.63	0.44	16.7	17.82	0.001
Global average	852	2.83	0.60	3.22	0.57	0.40	14.0		

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

hygiene/dress. In the *social* domain, the gain was 13.5 percent, which included improvements in relationships with the school environment, classmates, teachers, administrators, parents, siblings and extended family. The highest improvement was in *academics* (14.7 percent). The evaluators reported significant gains in academic achievement, future goals, renewed interest in their classes and school in general, and a stronger desire to graduate (IDRA, 2009).

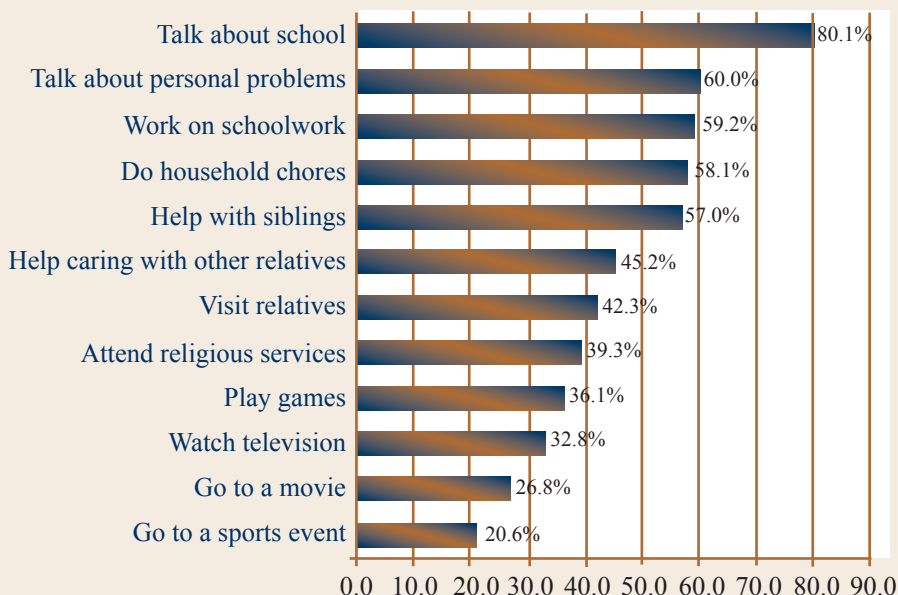
Most educators and practitioners know today the importance of *family involvement* in their children's education. Twenty-five years ago, it was one of the novel aspects of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Tutor families are involved in the program from the beginning. Of course, they need to approve of their children's participation in the program. This is not just done by their signing a form. They receive detailed verbal explanations about what the program is and how they, as parents, will be involved.

Parents participate in many field trips and often are role models invited to speak to the tutors. This recognizes the contributions they make to the community and emphasizes the dignity of families. Parents participate in at least three enrichment sessions, focusing on needs they have expressed. These sessions are conducted in the language of the parents. In addition, individual family sessions with the teacher coordinator or family liaison are arranged to share with parents information important for their children's education.

Throughout the program, parents foster a new partnership with the school to further their children's education beyond high school. Parents also evaluate the program, providing valuable insights into how the tutors' behavior has changed at home. They often report that the students become more responsible by helping more with

## Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – Brazil 2008 Academic Year

### Activities Parents Report Tutors Do more Frequently after Participating in the Program



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

home chores and with their siblings and elderly, and by spending more time talking about the schools and doing school homework. The box here shows an example from the Brazilian implementation. Similar results are found in the United States and in other settings.

*Staff enrichment* is at the

foundation of the program achievements. Through this support component, the implementers create a team committed to the program's success, regardless of the prevailing conditions in the schools. The team is made up of the school principals (elementary and secondary), teacher coordinator, family liaison, evaluation liaison, and the tutors' and tutees' teacher representatives. Staff enrichment is achieved through technical assistance and training provided by IDRA. Although there are concrete training sessions, much of the staff enrichment happens on a continuous, collaborative working basis. This unfolds as the team meets to review the current status, plan the logistical elements of program operation, including student selection and placement, and use the curriculum framework to develop appropriate instructional activities.

During these meetings, there is an emphasis on understanding the concept

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of *Valued Youth* – what does it mean to value youth in a variety of contexts: inviting parents, selecting students, planning activities, and dealing with difficulties. As the team becomes more cohesive and a climate of success permeates their activities, participants start using formative and summative evaluation results to improve program implementation.

Ostensibly, the fourth supporting component, *curriculum*, prepares the students to become effective tutors. Through its student-centered activities, the emphasis on tutors' sharing their own experiences and the use of current materials – often created by the tutors themselves – does much more. While it does improve the students' tutoring skills, it also increases their literacy and more importantly enhances their self-concept and self-efficacy. Tutors regain the sense of being able to function in the school environment with whatever resources are available. This is substantiated through the holistic approaches the curriculum offers. Instead of concentrating on a particular subject to the exclusion of others, the teacher coordinator sees the tutors as young persons with diverse abilities and potentialities. Thus, a particular situation could be approached in different ways by different tutors, as they try to help the tutees in their own creative ways. The tutors drive the curriculum pace, as the teacher coordinator constructs lessons to respond to the tutors' needs. Tutors learn important lessons about managing their activities, setting goals and evaluating results directly applicable to their lives, as they can visualize future careers, going to college and achieving exciting professional lives.

*Coordination*, the final Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program supporting component, brings everything together. The implementation team coordinates and monitors program activities, removes roadblocks, and extends

## Student Voices

“Ever since I have been in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, I have gotten all A's in school. Before I was in the program, my grades weren't so good, and I didn't think much of school. Once I learned about the program and got in, I thought, I tutor the children because they need my help, and I want them to get good grades. Wouldn't they want the same for me? Since I thought that I put my effort on my school and homework. Each time I get my report card and see that I got all A's, I thank the program and the children because I know that in their eyes they see me as a role model.”

– Nubia Cid, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program ninth grade tutor;  
San Antonio, Texas; high school second place essay winner

“This program has made me appreciate learning and teaching. It makes me proud to know that I am making a difference in a child's life. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has given me this opportunity, and I am grateful. It has made me want to become a teacher when I graduate from school.”

– Crisol Ortuño, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program seventh grade tutor;  
La Joya, Texas; middle school third place essay winner

“Throughout my life, I have always been taught to believe that I was no good, that I could never do anything right, and that maybe I should have never been born. I felt that my parents and former teachers were always disappointed in me because of my low grades. In truth, I was even disappointed in myself... I have a purpose now because of this program, but most important is that I now know that I have a reason for being alive. Thank you Coca-Cola for caring enough to provide us with such a valuable and life-changing experience. For I truly believe that if it hadn't been for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, I wouldn't have found the real me.”

– Jamillesh Hernandez, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program eighth grade tutor,  
La Joya, Texas; middle school first place essay winner

See tutor's complete winning essays online at

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the program valuing philosophy campus-wide as appropriate. The team makes use of various planning manuals and instruments to conduct a step-by-step implementation (see Robledo, et al., 2004). At least three full-team implementation meetings are conducted annually. In addition, regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings are conducted by the core team – the teacher coordinators and the tutors' and tutees' teacher representatives – to monitor day-to-day activities.

In summary, the Coca-Cola Valued Program re-establishes the student-school relationship through a mindful implementation of five sound instructional strategies (tutoring, classes for tutors, student recognition, field trips, and role models) designed to value young people for what they can offer and to empower them to improve those offerings. Through this process, the students regain the meaning associated with the school in their

*Dropout Prevention – continued on Page 15*



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

*Maria Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.*

This new 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. 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.

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an empirically-tested dropout prevention program implemented in 550 schools in the continental United States, Puerto Rico, Brazil and the United Kingdom. The program works by engaging youth at risk of dropping out as tutors of younger students. Valuing youth of all backgrounds transforms perceptions and outcomes: since 1984, the program has kept over 29,000 students in school and positively impacted more than half a million children, families and educators.

*Continuities: Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program* is available from IDRA for \$7.00, plus shipping or free online at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org).



## What We Have Learned

Anchored in this 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.

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/)**

assessments include: (a) interviewing the new teacher during the first mentor-mentee session; (b) observing teaching during an unplanned classroom visit; (c) analyzing videos or audio recordings of teaching; (d) examining the classroom setting to see how it is organized; and (e) taking notes of student feedback and reaction during lessons (Solís, 2007a).

#### **4. Adopt a Valuing Perspective to Mentoring**

Mentors who acknowledge the principle that new teachers will excel and want to stay teaching when they feel valued and fulfilled can and should easily adopt a valuing perspective to mentoring. What does valuing mean? IDRA's work, whether with students, families or teachers, is grounded in a set of valuing assumptions. The intent is to champion and speak for the inclusive and nondiscriminatory idea that all students are inherently good and worthy of being treated with respect, dignity and value (Montemayor & Romero, 2000). IDRA's Aurelio Montemayor describes the IDRA Valuing Assumptions further in Episode 11 of the Classnotes podcast ([www.idra.org/Podcasts](http://www.idra.org/Podcasts)).

IDRA's professional development, including the mentoring and coaching conducted in many schools, is guided by this valuing philosophy. It is expressed like this: During professional development, trainers and mentors: (a) respect the knowledge and skills of all teachers; (b) treat teachers as partners and adult learners; and (c) identify teachers' assets and build on their strengths. Mentors of new teachers committed to a valuing perspective to mentoring can write and post in their room a statement like this: "I commit to Maggie (new teacher) that I will be a critical friend and will listen as much as I talk, and, further, that my advice will always be prefaced with statements of the great things I see her do."

#### **5. Follow a Culturally Responsive Mentoring and Coaching Plan**

An effective mentor knows that the path to student success for the new teacher is through a rigorous and relevant instructional approach. Rigor is promoted when the mentor uses coaching. Coaching is a collegial act. It is about having an advocate and a partner who can stimulate curiosity, facilitate learning and support specific needs (Peddy, 1998).

Relevance is accomplished when instruction embraces the diverse characteristics (needs, interests and values) of all students (Solís, 2009a; Villarreal, 2009). One particular coaching approach, Culturally Proficient Coaching (Lindsey, et al., 2007), provides a framework for mentoring that can accomplish the goal of rigorous-relevant instruction. It brings together a set of strategies from two models (see Solís, 2009b). One is *Cultural Proficiency for School Leaders* (described in Lindsey, 2007), which incorporates strategies for valuing, respecting and honoring diverse backgrounds while looking deeply at one's own beliefs. The other is *Cognitive Coaching* (Costa and Garmston, 2009), which involves the use of self-directed learning and mediated thinking strategies to build the new teachers' critical thinking and teaching skills. The desired end result of cultural proficiency in this model is for the mentor and new teacher alike

to move in a positive direction along a cultural proficiency continuum that includes these levels: destructiveness, incapacity, blindness, pre-competence, competence and proficiency (Lindsey, et al., 2007).

A mentor's cultural proficiency coaching action plan to help a new teacher deal with sensitive diversity situations (as expressed in this statement: "I can't stand the sound of Spanish in my classroom") may do the following: (1) Use the basic structure of cognitive coaching: reflecting, planning and problem-solving; and (2) During conference or classroom observations, the mentor looks through a cultural proficiency lens using five steps of the cultural proficiency action plan. (For a complete description of the action plan, see Lindsey, et al., 2007.)

#### **Conclusion**

The desired outcome for sharing the mentoring for success strategies in this article is to empower mentor teachers to transform the struggling new teacher into a competent, highly qualified, culturally proficient teacher. By putting the key principle-driven practices into action, it becomes possible to materialize the optimism and excitement that new teachers bring to school on the first day and during the critical first year. By eliminating uncertainty and anxiety and giving new teachers the right tools to succeed, it will be more likely that they will feel valued, fulfilled and willing to make teaching a life-long career, even in the most challenging classrooms.

The mentoring for success strategies described in this article are part of a larger repertoire of tools and techniques for training mentor of beginning teachers. IDRA's Coaching and Mentoring for Novice Teachers model is the framework for mentor training tailored to district needs. The Mentor as a Culturally Proficient Coach and Summer Institutes for First Year

*Mentoring New Teachers – continued on Page 15*

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Mentors are two focused (long-term) training programs available for districts upon request.

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lives, and can then visualize themselves as future successful professionals (Montes, 2009). The instructional strategies operate efficiently because the program also has a set of five support strategies (evaluation, family involvement, staff enrichment, curriculum, and coordination) that guide implementation and monitoring, and provide the needed feedback for continuous improvement. Indeed, this 5 x 5 approach is at the heart of the program's success during its 25 years and in the years to come.

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**engage and surround students in the continuum from preschool through high school graduation and into higher education.** IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework (Robledo Montecel, 2005a) provides a change model through informed family-school-community partnerships and enlightened policymaking. It offers a strong foundation upon which to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the critical structures and curricular and instructional practices that comprise excellence and equity in education. The framework identifies three strategies for changing schools: building capacity of the community to influence schools, building coalitions, and building the capacity of the schools themselves. The evidence-based collaboration that is called for in the model is a holistic guide to view benchmarked standards in creating centers of college readiness.

**4. College readiness has implications for effective community engagement and parent involvement programs.** Ensuring that every student is fully prepared for high school graduation and beyond requires informed engagement and purposeful action of home-school-community strategies aimed at developing a shared vision for college readiness through collaborative planning and shared accountability for the success of all students. This includes school boards, superintendents, teachers and school leaders working together to set this expectation, creating a culture of engagement with parents that acknowledges the funds of knowledge represented in families and communities to achieve this goal. From the earliest grades, effective partnerships between home and school must pro-actively foster the expectation of college readiness and establish clear pathways, with all necessary and appropriate supports for the transition from high school into higher education.

**5. College readiness implies**

**we create a school culture that focuses on valuing the giftedness of every student.** While our focus, appropriately so, continues to be on reducing the achievement gap and improving the quality of educational opportunities for students who are culturally or linguistically diverse, we also should be concerned about the under-representation of these students in gifted and talented programs. Ford, Grantham, and Whiting (2008) note that Black students, Hispanic students and Native American students have always been significantly under-represented in gifted education programs. King, Kozleski & Lansdowne (2009) underscore the need to focus on giftedness, finding student strengths as a powerful strategy for discovering and encouraging the development of the multicultural assets of students.

To create a culture of college readiness we may need to deliberately re-direct our thoughts toward that

expectation, dramatically shifting the paradigm from one that sees *some* children and their families as “problems to be solved” to one that recognizes *all* children are gifted and can graduate college ready. Latino and other minority families have high expectations for their children to go to college and see them as gifted; schools must catch up to this vision.

**6. College readiness is linked to the type of leaders this nation will produce and to its competitive standing in the world.** The future will certainly require more participatory and inclusive leadership that is shared and focuses on the group rather than just the capacity of one individual (Robledo Montecel, 2005b).

A new frontier of leadership research and practice is emerging that reflects leadership of the many vs. leadership of only a few chosen ones. This fundamental shift assumes a

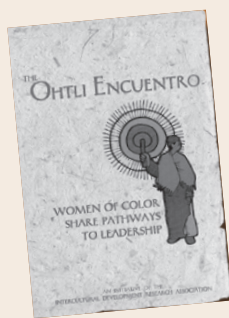
*Student Success – continued on Page 17*

The

# Ohtli Encuentro

## Women of Color Share Pathways to Leadership

A unique book that shares the wisdom of African American, Latina and Native American leaders



This beautiful book presents the voices of 30 African American, Latina and Native American women who share their leadership journeys. IDRA brought together these women leaders to capture, honor and share their inspiring stories of leadership. This book highlights their moving stories. Four dimensions, or pathways, of leadership were shared by the women as they told their personal stories: (1) history, language and culture; (2) community engagement; (3) vision, spirit and values; and (4) social change and institutional transformation. The book is accompanied with analytic reflections that present a brief review of the literature on women's leadership and discusses common themes that arose from the women's interactions in a multicultural, multi-generational gathering designed to explore leadership in women of color. The word “ohtli” means “pathway” in the Nahuatl (Mexican indigenous) language. (ISBN# 0-9740243-8-4; 112 Pages; Boerne, Texas: Sor Juana Press 2005) \$15

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process that acknowledges the strengths to be found within diverse communities and cultures, one that honors and celebrates the gifts of history, language and culture as valuable resources upon which we all benefit (Louque, 2002). Responding to this call will mean that schools draw fully upon the social, intellectual and spiritual capital represented in their diverse students, families and communities.

In 2005, IDRA hosted a dialogue with emerging and existing leaders to explore dimensions of leadership linked to community, history, language, culture, spirituality and institutional transformation, the *Ohtli Encuentro*. While focusing on women of color, the lessons learned are relevant to college readiness. Women leaders from across the nation cited the importance of maintaining their roots, language and cultural ties, as well as their individual forms of spirituality inextricably linked to their leadership journeys. The *Ohtli* dialogue underscored the importance of hearing the voices of existing and emerging leaders to add to and expand upon our present constructs of leadership (Robledo Montecel, 2005b).

In looking at Latino leadership, one comprehensive study shows that some groups, such as Latinos, place a much higher priority on leadership traits associated with compassion and community service (Ramirez, 2001), while other research finds similarities between Latinos and African Americans (Walters & Smith, 1999; Kilson, 2000).

Where will our future leaders come from? Our future leaders will emerge from schools that are centers of college readiness, representing the sum of what they have been taught from preschool through higher education, reflecting the context of the families and communities from which they came. One hopes they will be guided by a profound desire to live a life of

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service, embracing a world perspective, where one's purpose is to work for the benefit of our communities: leaders who are culturally competent, who act from a place where concern for "me" and "mine" is laid aside and consciously replaced with commitment and action that contribute to the greater good, through awareness, compassion, dignity, grace, generosity, integrity, openness, warmth and wisdom.

That will require a new view of what constitutes student success. It is an urgent call for schools to become centers of college readiness, preparing all students to exercise fully all their options in higher education and beyond to become knowledgeable, politically engaged and responsive adults. For as one civil rights leader, Cesar Chavez, has said, the end of all education must surely be service to community, not for their sake but for our own (Olmos, et al., 1999).

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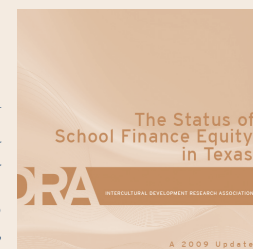
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### **The Status of School Finance Equity in Texas – A 2009 Update**

#### **Without Fair Funding, Most Texas Schools Struggle to Succeed – State Has Backed Away from Fair Funding of Schools**

Disparities in per student funding have doubled in Texas, leaving millions of children in schools with severely limited resources for qualified teachers, up-to-date curriculum and basic supplies. IDRA has released a policy update on the status of education funding equity showing that Texas was headed in the right direction until the last two legislative sessions when revisions made to the school funding plan eroded equity among Texas schools. *The Status of School Finance Equity in Texas – A 2009 Update* summarizes where things are and identifies changes that are needed.



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## **Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities**

In September, IDRA worked with **8,028** teachers, administrators, parents and higher education personnel through **51** training and technical assistance activities and 155 program sites in the United States and Brazil. Some topics included:

- ◆ Gender Equity Assessment
- ◆ WOW! Workshop on Workshops
- ◆ Math Smart!
- ◆ Coaching and Mentoring of Teachers

Some participating agencies and school districts included:

- ✧ Southern Minority Leadership Council
- ✧ Houston Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ✧ Oklahoma City Public Schools
- ✧ San Marcos Consolidated ISD, Texas

#### **Activity Snapshot**

Under the direction of the federal court to desegregate schools and programs within them, three school districts in Arkansas sought to create an equity-monitoring form. The court also mandated the formation of bi-racial teams in the three districts to include four parents and two teachers from each of the campuses. The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity worked with the school districts to create the monitoring form to measure the quality of desegregation on every campus. It trained the teams to use the instrument, to conduct equity monitoring and to create an appropriate report of findings. The state department of education adopted the equity monitoring form and process, which were implemented by all districts to monitor the assignment and placement of students in classes, programs and extracurricular activities. The SCCE is the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

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

Services include:

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

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minority students, English language learners, and other student groups who tend to get lost in the shuffle participate in these interventions. For example, hold a freshmen seminar that is conducted bilingually for those who are beginning to learn the English language.

**Teachers Contextualize a Study Skills Approach Within Content Pedagogy.** In addition to providing a college preparatory curriculum, college prep high schools expect students to prepare for college by requiring, not teaching, a set of study skills. Students who, over time, have acquired these study skills (mainly responsibility, as demonstrated by completed homework on time) through unknown haphazard methods stand a better chance to take advantage of an educational system that has distanced itself from considering grades a reflection of what a student has learned and can do with the knowledge learned. Grades have been contaminated, or should I say compromised, to ensure that the student who has not mastered the content but shows responsibility as defined by turning in homework on time can succeed or rather get a passing grade in school. This can be penalizing for a student who has mastered content but has failed to turn in homework assignments. For recent immigrants who do not speak English and have mastered content, participation in class becomes difficult when all instruction is in English. Consequently, their participation affects the assigned grade.

There is no question that being responsible is necessary for being successful in college. There also is no question that in extenuating circumstances involving disruptive behaviors that threaten the safety of students and educators, some form of discipline practices must be instituted. Nevertheless, the challenge of today's

high schools is to find ways of reaching more students in more compassionate ways, teaching responsibility among the many other study skills within the required curriculum, and eliminating achievement gaps among student groups.

We as educators must reflect and act accordingly on the following truths: (a) academically engaged students are less prone to engage in disruptive behavior; (b) teachers who are trained in managing conflict will divert emerging disruptive behavior and will be more successful with students; and (c) teachers who teach responsibility experience greater student participation and are more successful in class.

In summary, there are three questions for educators to reflect on and study: (1) Is the zero tolerance policy working at your campus? (2) Are students who received zeros on missed assignments now turning in subsequent assignments and learning? (3) Have alternatives to zero tolerance been tried that are more positive rather than devastatingly punitive?

Reflect and study the following recommendations to meet the requirements of a college prep high school [Equity + Instructional Quality + Student Achievement  $\geq$  College Prep]; (1) Replace a zero tolerance policy with one that values and respects students, expects reciprocity from students and that creates a learning environment that is developmentally appropriate and challenging; (2) create a system of consequences that promotes rewards rather than punishments; and (3) enter into partnership agreements with parents to garner the support to engage students in meaningful educational opportunities that will lead to college readiness and success. Making high schools responsible for preparing students for college remains a challenge that must be addressed without hesitation and with commitment for equity to ensure that all student groups succeed.

## Resources

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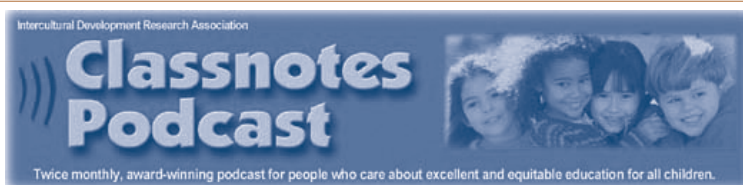
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**“Counting Dropouts”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 62 – Roy L. Johnson, M.S., director of Support Services at IDRA and author of the study for a number of years, discusses why counting dropouts is important and how the data can be used to strengthen school holding power.



**“Reflective Teaching”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 61 – Kristin Grayson, M.Ed., an IDRA education associate, describes her working in coaching teachers through the process of reflective teaching where teachers reflect on a particular lesson from the perspective of how well the students were engaged.



**“School Accountability to Poor Families”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 60 – As IDRA prepares to release its latest study of high school attrition in Texas, Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., director of the IDRA Texas Parent Information and Resource Center, talks about how parents can work together to hold their school accountable and to examine the big picture of how well their children’s school is doing for all students.



**“Professional Development for Secondary Math Teachers”** IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 59 – Jack Dieckmann, Ph.D., a former senior math education specialist at IDRA and current doctoral student at Stanford, discusses how teacher training needs to validate teacher experience and address multiple dimensions like content and language development.

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