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- ✧ **Model dropout prevention program**
- ✧ **New NCES measure**
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## Time to Make High School Graduation the New Minimum

**by María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.**

On October 31, 1986, IDRA completed and published the Texas School Dropout Survey Project. The seven-volume work, commissioned by the State of Texas, was the first statewide study of dropouts and was released in Austin at a gathering of educators, policymakers and community members.

As principal investigator for the study, I provided the gathering with key findings: many, many young people were dropping out of Texas schools, most schools reported no plans to address the fact that one out of three students were leaving school before obtaining a high school diploma, and the costs of undereducation to dropouts, their families and the state were enormous.

The cost analyses conducted as part of that study indicated that education is a good investment: every dollar invested in education resulted in a nine-dollar return. (Cárdenas, Robledo and Supik, 1986)

The 1986 study had an immediate effect on policy and practice. State

policy requiring dropout data collection and reporting was passed in April 1987. As a result, data collection systems were put into place at the Texas Education Agency. The first report by TEA (1988) pointed to a statewide longitudinal dropout rate of 34 percent. Also, as a result of new state policy and regulation following the IDRA study, most school districts identified dropout prevention coordinators and developed dropout plans.

However, focused resources and productive actions attendant to assuring that schools in Texas increase their ability to hold students through to high school graduation were short-lived. Instead, resources and actions went to explaining away the problem by blaming students or families and by lowering the dropout counts through changes in dropout definitions. The results are evident.

Our latest attrition study indicates that 137,000 Texas students, or 35 percent of the freshman class of 2002-03, left school before graduating in the 2005-06 school year. In the last 20 years, the racial-ethnic school holding power gap has widened with attrition rates increasing for Hispanic students

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and Black students while decreasing for White students. At the same time that the gap in schools' ability to hold on to minority versus White students has widened, minority youngsters have become the majority of the school-aged population in Texas schools. (For more information on IDRA's October 1986 Texas School Dropout Survey Project, the October 2006 study results, and trends in yearly attrition data over the last 20 years, see Page 3.)

These statistics are not new to the many educators and community members who are committed to equity and excellence for all students. What is new is a palpable sense of public awareness of the dropout problem in Texas and the nation, and a growing political will to address it.

In recent months, we have seen new national-level attention to the issue, such as the President's High School Initiative, a bipartisan attempt to promote national graduation-for-all policy, and the National Governors Association's compact to develop consistent state-level data.

## **It is now time that we make high school graduation and college readiness the new minimum. The economics of undereducation demand it. Our children deserve no less.**

We have seen new foundation investment in combining school reform with citizen awareness campaigns, such as StandUp!, a public will campaign funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Media coverage, including the coordinated release in April 2006 of a two-part segment aired on the Oprah Winfrey Show and a cover story in *Time* magazine, have brought new attention to what has been called "the high school dropout crisis in America."

And we have seen a sharpened focus on the problem by a wide array of research institutes, non-profit organizations, coalitions and networks. Reports from the National Center for Education Statistics, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Harvard Civil Rights Project, the American Diploma Project Network, and the Alliance for Excellent Education are underscoring the magnitude of the problem and

strengthening a knowledge base.

This level of dramatically heightened attention presents a historic opportunity for a sea change in Texas and in the nation's recognition of the problem and willingness to address it. But that moment can fade or make little difference for schools and for students.

To seize the moment and produce results, it is important to learn from the past as we engage citizens, develop public policy and promote truly accountable schooling (see "From 'Dropping Out' to 'Holding On'—Seven Lessons from Texas," by Robledo Montecel, April 2004).

It is also important to work from what we know about schools. To graduate students who are prepared for later life, IDRA research indicates that schools must have: (1) competent

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# Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2005-06 Gap Continues to Grow

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

The overall statewide attrition rate in Texas public schools is less than 40 percent for the fifth consecutive year, but the rate is 6 percent higher than it was 21 years ago. In its most recent annual attrition study that examines school holding power in the state of Texas, the Intercultural Development Research Association found that 35 percent of the freshman class of 2002-03 left school prior to graduating from a Texas public high school in the 2005-06 school year. This rate corresponds to more than 137,000 students.

After seven consecutive years of overall statewide attrition rates of 40 percent or higher between 1994-95 through 2000-01, the overall statewide attrition rate of 35 percent in 2005-06 was the lowest since a 34 percent rate in 1991-92 and continues a downward trend over the last several years.

Nonetheless, the current statewide attrition rate in Texas remains higher than the initial rate of 33 percent found in IDRA's landmark 1985-86 study.

Furthermore, the gaps in attrition rates between White students and Black students and between White students and Hispanic students is actually growing.

School holding power in Texas public schools remains weak and begs for renewed commitment and efforts

**The current statewide attrition rate in Texas remains higher than the initial rate of 33 percent found in IDRA's landmark 1985-86 study.**

of all stakeholders to improve school completion and graduation rates of schools and their students.

This 2005-06 attrition study represents the 21<sup>st</sup> study conducted by IDRA and the latest in a series of reports that began in the 1985-86 school year. In 1986, IDRA conducted Texas' first comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts using a high school attrition formula to estimate the number and percent of students who leave school prior to graduation. The study in 1986 was the state's first major effort to assess the school holding power of Texas public schools (see article on Page 7).

This inaugural study, entitled *Texas School Dropout Survey Project*, was conducted under contract with the Texas Education Agency and the then Texas Department of Community Affairs. It examined three major research questions: (1) What is the magnitude of the dropout problem in the state of Texas?, (2) What is the economic impact of the dropout problem for the state?, and (3) What

is the nature and effectiveness of in-school and alternative out-of-school programs for dropouts in the state?

The study found that 86,276 students had not graduated from Texas public high schools, costing the state \$17 billion in forgone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs (Cárdenas, Robledo and Supik, 1986).

Twenty years later, other researchers have corroborated IDRA's attrition numbers and have concurred that attrition is a valid estimate, including the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

During the last several years, study after study of dropouts, school completion and graduation rates have shown that school holding power is dramatically less than desirable. It appears that, regardless of the methodology or calculation procedures used, the overall estimates of the percent of students who leave school range from about 25 percent to 35 percent and that nearly 50 percent of African American students and Hispanic students are lost from enrollment prior to graduation with a diploma.

For over two decades, IDRA has called attention to the need to improve school holding power and for the prevention and recovery of dropouts. Pointing out that 30 percent to 40

*Attrition Study – continued on Page 4*

*Attrition Study – continued from Page 3*

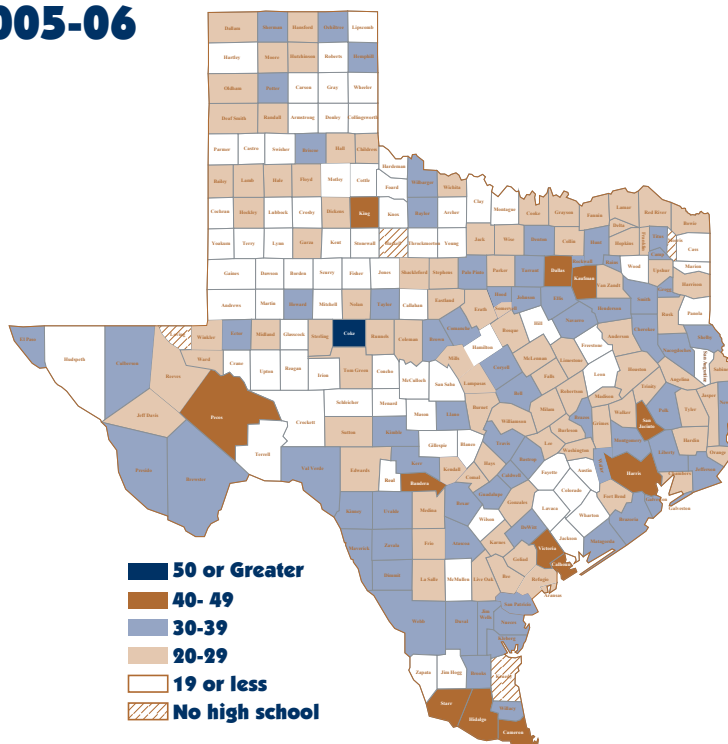
percent of Texas students are leaving school prior to graduation has been IDRA's clarion call to take action to reduce dropout rates and to improve school holding power. Across the United States, reports on dropout rates, school completion rates, and graduation rates continue to point out that school holding power is an urgent local, state and national issue.

## Methods

Spanning a period from 1985-86 through 2005-06, the IDRA attrition studies have provided time series data, using a consistent methodology, on the number and percent of Texas public school students who leave school prior to graduation. These studies provide information on the effectiveness and success of Texas public high schools in keeping students engaged in school until they graduate with a high school diploma.

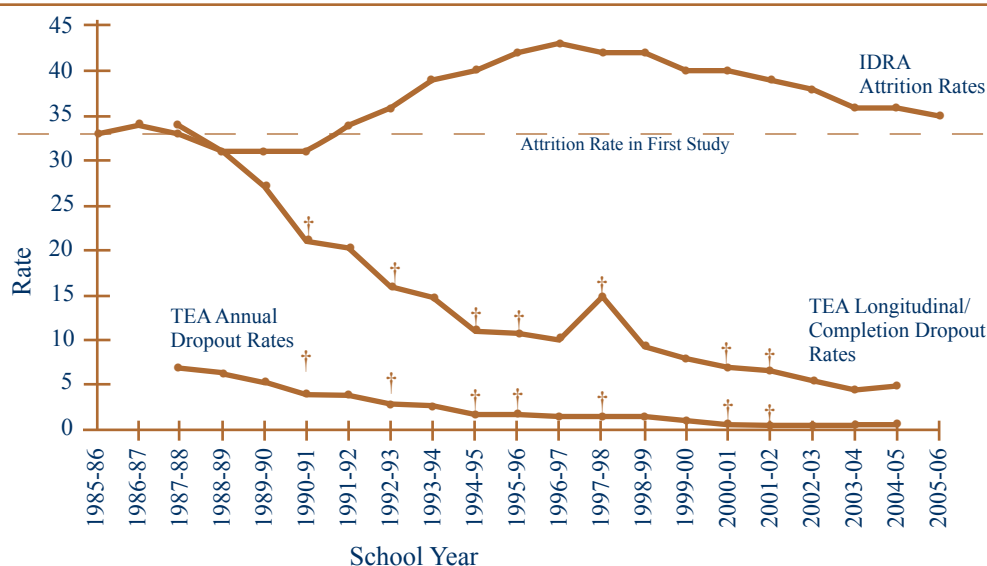
*Attrition Study – continued on Page 3*

## Attrition Rates by Texas County, 2005-06



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006.

## Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time



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

† Change in TEA dropout definition or data processing procedures

\*\* Longitudinal completion rate (Grades 7-12)

Sources: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006. Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts, 2003-04.



# Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

## Strengthening Student Connections with School

by Linda Cantú, Ph.D.

Schools in Texas will lose almost half of their Hispanic, African American and Native American students between their freshman and senior year. In Arizona, 31.8 percent of students will not graduate (IDRA, 2002). California has a graduation rate of 71 percent as reported by the Harvard Civil Rights Project (2005). Schools must make it a high priority to strengthen their student holding power. There are many reasons students leave school. Many of these reasons can be associated with a sense of disconnectedness from school.

### School Connectedness Helps

A 2004 John Hopkins study concluded that 40 percent to 60 percent of all students feel chronically disengaged from school. The study also suggested that stronger ties with a caring adult would help reduce students' risky behaviors and improve students' academic achievement. (Blum and Libbey, 2004)

Students are more likely to succeed if they feel a connection to school. School connectedness refers to the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals. A positive relationship with one caring adult is one of the elements identified that

helped students feel more connected. Research indicates that students who feel connected to school have increased school completion rates, reduced absenteeism and increased academic performance. According to Blum, from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, students need to be engaged in their own education, and that will make them want to be part of the school. (Blum and Libbey, 2004)

### Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Provides Connectedness

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program identifies students who are considered to be at risk of dropping out and places them in a designated class where they become engaged in learning by tutoring younger children.

*Student Connections – continued on Page 6*

## New Texas High School Allotment

In May, the Texas Legislature passed a measure to fund an initiative to prepare and graduate all Texas students from high school. These funds can be used for:

- College readiness programs to prepare underachieving students for college,
- Programs that encourage students toward advanced academic coursework,
- Programs that give students opportunities to take academically rigorous coursework, including four years of mathematics and science,
- Programs that align the curriculum for grades six through 12 with post-secondary curriculum, or
- High school completion and success initiatives in grades six through 12 as approved by the commissioner.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program can be funded through the high school allotment. In addition, the program is approved by the Texas State Board of Education as an innovative course, and the Texas Education Agency lists the program as an approved innovative course on its web site. The course provides ½ credit per semester for a total of one credit. To find out about the program, contact Dr. Linda Cantú, program coordinator at IDRA (210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)).

The “tutees” develop a strong affection for their tutors. The elementary receiving teacher provides a welcoming environment. And a secondary teacher coordinator becomes the tutors’ school advocate.

An added benefit is that tutors recapture academic skills they may have forgotten or missed during their earlier school years. In the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, tutors improve and contribute to their own education as well as to others. But most importantly, they find caring adults as well as young children who look forward to seeing them at school.

## **The Program**

IDRA’s Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an internationally-recognized, dropout prevention program. The central feature is cross-age tutoring by middle school and high school students for elementary school youngsters who are also struggling in school. Given this role of personal and academic responsibility, the Valued Youth tutors learn self-discipline and develop self-esteem. Schools shift to the philosophy and practices of valuing students considered at-risk.

The primary goal of the program is to keep students in school. When the program is implemented as designed, results show that tutors stay in school, have increased academic performance, have improved school attendance and advance to higher education.

The program consists of five core components: (1) tutoring, (2) classes for tutors, (3) field trips, (4) role models/community leaders, and (5) student recognition events. In addition to these core components that provide the programmatic part of the program, tutors can also participate in (6) leadership days and (7) opportunities for increased technology awareness and utilization.

Through the program, IDRA also provides a support component

## **Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Thrives in Brazil**



Coca-Cola Brazil

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program began in 1984 in the United States. Now in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, the program continues to work dramatically for students across the country. The program also has expanded to Brazil, where during the last six years it has impacted Brazilian students’ lives as well.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil began with two schools in 1999 and has grown to 42 schools in 17 cities in the 2005-06 school year. During 2005-06, there were 4,200 students (1,050 tutors and 3,150 tutees) participating in eight states in Brazil. The program has had many successes for each child.

One fun story involves the World Cup. The Coca-Cola Enterprise’s “Take this Flag” initiative invited teenagers from 23 countries to attend the World Cup Soccer competition held in Germany in June 2006. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil sponsored a writing competition asking students to respond to the question, “Why do you deserve to be the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program representative at the World Cup?” Aliny is a 12-year-old from Cuiabá whose writing piece was one of the top three selected in Brazil. Tutors were then asked to vote for one of the top three. Aliny won the vote from her peers as the tutor to represent them.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in Brazil then sent Aliny (pictured above) and her mother to Germany to attend the event with all expenses paid by the Coca-Cola Company. This is another way in which Coca-Cola Brazil demonstrates its commitment to support tutors who are working hard. Aliny’s adventure made news in many Brazil newspapers.

comprised of: (1) curriculum, (2) family involvement, (3) staff development, (4) coordination, and (5) evaluation (see box on Page 20).

Additionally, students participate in Youth Leadership Days held by the district or sometimes held regionally at local colleges and universities. Tutors from different schools meet each other and recognize there are many different students in the program contributing to their communities and schools by being tutors. They participate in personal awareness activities, team-building activities and leadership activities that enhance

their presentation, communication and decision-making skills.

Tutors also participate in video conferencing with students from other cities. They have an opportunity to experience technology with an academic purpose through e-mailing key pals, planning and presenting in front of a camera and audience, and using the most advanced technology in video conferencing.

## **Program Evaluation**

Quantitative and qualitative measures are used to gauge student

*Student Connections – continued on Page 20*

# Texas School Holding Power Past, Present and Future

by Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

Twenty years ago, no one knew how many students Texas schools were losing before high school graduation. No one knew the reasons they left school, what it cost this state or what schools could do about it. The Intercultural Development Research Association was the first to answer those questions and, decades later, remains steadfast in its commitment to make a difference for children and youth.

IDRA has made a difference through its research and program development in these critical areas. Foremost was the 1986 Texas Dropout Survey Project.

## Dropout Prevention in 1986

In that original study, IDRA found that approximately one out of 10 Texas school districts reported having a dropout prevention program. Yet nine out of 10 dropout programs had no evaluation data. This meant that districts were unaware of whether or not their programs were having any impact in keeping students in school through high school graduation.

Fast-forward to 2006, and schools still are not effectively evaluating the effectiveness of dropout prevention efforts. Fashola and Slavin's *Show Me the Evidence: Proven and Promising Programs for America's Schools*

**The most significant finding and the one that schools could immediately act upon was that students tend to stay in school if they believe there is someone who cares about them and if they are involved in school activities.**

reported that only two dropout prevention programs in the country, one of which is IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, were researched and evaluated rigorously.

IDRA's 1986 research also showed that most dropout prevention programs were based on a deficit paradigm—*fixing* the child or the family rather than looking at institutional solutions. IDRA's *Dallas Dropout Study*, a 30-month study of the dropout issue in the Dallas Independent School District in 1986, was the first research study to identify factors contributing to and preventing student dropouts using a paradigm that values students and identifies what schools can do to prevent students from dropping out of school. IDRA interviewed 200 students who dropped out of school and 200 students still in school, as well as parents of both groups. The major

findings included:

- Students first think about leaving school while still in middle school.
- Most leave school between eighth and ninth grades, and between ninth and 10th grades.
- Students tend to leave school if they:
  - ✧ Change schools often,
  - ✧ Work more than 15 hours per week,
  - ✧ Are behind in academics and get no support,
  - ✧ Are retained in grade,
  - ✧ Are bored with classes, or
  - ✧ Are encouraged by school personnel to leave.

The most significant finding and the one that schools could immediately act upon was that students tend to stay in school if they believe there is someone who cares about them and if they are involved in school activities.

IDRA found similar results with its more recent Arizona Dropout Study, conducted for the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC) in 2002. IDRA found that Arizona was losing about one third of its students (31 percent or 21,472 were lost from the 1997 freshman class) with Hispanic students (43 percent) and Native American students (48 percent) having the highest dropout rates.

As with Texas, Arizona had few dropout prevention programs with

*School Holding Power – continued on Page 8*

research or evaluation data. Arizona also had no central clearinghouse on dropout prevention programs for the state.

IDRA's extensive research in dropout prevention clearly shows that for a program to be successful, the following components must be in place:

- All students must be valued.
- There must be at least one educator in a student's life who is totally committed to the success of that student.
- Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.
- Equity and excellence in schools contribute to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.
- The solutions sought must be institution-based with family and community participation and must embrace the strengths and contributions that students and their families bring.

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was designed and developed with these critical components. For 21 years, this cross-age tutoring program has provided and is still providing an opportunity for middle school and high school students who are in at-risk situations to tutor younger students. Students are supported as Valued Youth making a significant contribution to their schools and to their communities.

Since 1984, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has impacted the lives of more than 416,000 tutors and tutees and has kept 23,000 students in school. The program results include:

- High expectation and high motivation,
- Academic success,
- Financial assistance,
- Belonging and contribution, and

## Where to Get More Information

### Organizations

Intercultural Development Research Association  
[www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org), 210-444-1710

Alliance for Excellent Education  
<http://www.all4ed.org>, 202-828-0828

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network  
[www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org), 864-656-2599

National Center for Education Statistics  
[www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov), 202-502-7300

### Articles and Publications

**"A Quality Schools Action Framework: Framing Systems Change for Student Success,"** by M. Robledo Montecel, *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio: IDRA, November-December 2005).

**"From 'Dropping Out' to 'Holding On' – Seven Lessons from Texas,"** by M. Robledo Montecel, *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio: IDRA, April 2004).

**"Texas Needs Diplomas, Not Delusions,"** testimony to the Texas State Board of Education by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio: IDRA, September 2002).

**Missing: Texas' Youth – Dropout and Attrition in Texas Public Schools,** by J.D. Supik and R.L. Johnson (San Antonio: IDRA, January 1999).

**Texas School Dropout Survey Project: A Summary of Findings,** by J.A. Cárdenas, M. del Refugio Robledo and J.D. Supik (San Antonio, Texas: IDRA, 1986).

- Inclusion.

As a result of the program, tutors have a positive self concept, an expanded vision of life, and a greater commitment to succeed and stay in school. Their tutees learn basic skills in a safe environment, get personal attention, and form positive and strong ties. Their schools have a decreased dropout rate, increased attendance, improved communication across and within schools, increased valuing of students, and reduced disciplinary actions. Tutors' families experience renewed family pride, economic support, and improved communication among family, tutor and school. (See article on Page 5.)

IDRA's research also shows that dropout programs are not enough. No single program is a magic bullet. What is required is a "re-forming" of the school culture that changes the paradigm from *prevention* to *graduation* where every student is known and valued and where losing even one student is not an option.

IDRA can help your school achieve this. Contact us at 210-444-1710 (or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org), [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org)) and let us make a difference at your school.

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The attrition calculations were derived from public school enrollment data in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

During the fall of each year, school districts are required to report information to TEA via the PEIMS for all public school students and grade levels. IDRA's attrition studies involve an analysis of ninth-grade enrollment figures and 12th-grade enrollment figures four years later. This period represents the time span during which a student would be enrolled in high school.

IDRA collects and uses high school enrollment data from the TEA *Fall Membership Survey* to compute countywide and statewide attrition rates by race-ethnicity and gender. Enrollment data from special school districts (military schools, state schools and charter schools) are excluded from the analyses because they are likely to

**When compared to 1985-86, the attrition rates for White students are 22 percent lower, while the attrition rates for Black students are 18 percent higher and the attrition rates for Hispanic students are 4 percent higher.**

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

Attrition rates are an indicator of a school's holding power or ability to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. Along with other dropout measures, attrition rates are useful in studying the magnitude of the dropout problem and the success of schools in keeping students in school.

Attrition, in its simplest form, is the rate of shrinkage in size or number. Therefore, an attrition rate is the percent change in grade level enrollment between a base year and an end year.

Historical statewide attrition rates are categorized by race-ethnicity and by gender (see boxes on Page 4 and below). County-level data are provided on Pages 4, 12 and 13. In addition, trend data by county is provided via IDRA's web site at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org). For the first time, IDRA is including online historical county-level numbers of students lost to attrition. See the box on Page 11 for statewide historical numbers. General conclusions from this year's study follow.

Attrition Study – continued on Page 10

## Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools, 1985-86 to 2005-06

Group	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 2005-06
<b>Race-Ethnicity</b>																						
Native American	45	39	37	47	39	39	40	39	38	42	44	43	42	25	43	42	29	39	42	40	39	-13
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	30	28	23	22	23	21	21	21	18	18	20	21	19	20	20	14	17	16	17	17	-48
Black	34	38	39	37	38	39	39	43	47	50	51	51	49	48	47	46	46	45	44	43	40	18
White	27	26	24	20	19	22	22	25	28	30	31	32	31	31	28	27	26	24	22	22	21	-22
Hispanic	45	46	49	48	48	48	48	49	50	51	53	54	53	53	52	52	51	50	49	48	47	4
<b>Gender</b>																						
Male	35	35	35	34	34	34	37	39	41	43	45	46	45	45	44	43	43	41	40	39	38	9
Female	32	32	31	29	29	28	30	33	36	37	39	40	38	38	36	36	35	34	33	32	31	-3
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>

\* Rounded to nearest whole number.

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

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006.

## 2002-03 and 2005-06 Enrollment, 2005-06 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	2002-03 9th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 12th Grade Enrollment	2002-03 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
<b>Native American</b>	<b>1,060</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>3,274</b>	<b>4,082</b>	<b>1,322</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>39</b>
Male	516	397	1,631	2,035	644	247	38
Female	544	413	1,643	2,047	678	265	39
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	<b>9,882</b>	<b>9,343</b>	<b>35,420</b>	<b>40,209</b>	<b>11,219</b>	<b>1,876</b>	<b>17</b>
Male	5,152	4,737	18,253	20,810	5,874	1,137	19
Female	4,730	4,606	17,167	19,399	5,345	739	14
<b>Black</b>	<b>53,039</b>	<b>35,920</b>	<b>159,405</b>	<b>181,226</b>	<b>60,286</b>	<b>24,366</b>	<b>40</b>
Male	28,088	17,392	80,546	91,145	31,784	14,392	45
Female	24,951	18,528	78,859	90,081	28,502	9,974	35
<b>White</b>	<b>146,945</b>	<b>114,196</b>	<b>518,493</b>	<b>508,437</b>	<b>144,099</b>	<b>29,903</b>	<b>21</b>
Male	76,919	58,401	266,384	261,520	75,515	17,114	23
Female	70,026	55,795	252,109	246,917	68,584	12,789	19
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>152,739</b>	<b>92,121</b>	<b>435,535</b>	<b>492,372</b>	<b>172,626</b>	<b>80,505</b>	<b>47</b>
Male	81,099	45,568	224,107	251,402	90,976	45,408	50
Female	71,640	46,553	211,428	240,970	81,650	35,097	43
<b>All Groups</b>	<b>363,665</b>	<b>252,390</b>	<b>1,152,127</b>	<b>1,226,326</b>	<b>389,552</b>	<b>137,162</b>	<b>35</b>
Male	191,774	126,495	590,921	626,912	204,793	78,298	38
Female	171,891	125,895	561,206	599,414	184,759	58,864	31

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data. IDRA's 2005-06 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 2002-03 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 2005-06. This period represents the time span when ninth grade students would be enrolled in school prior to graduation. The enrollment data for special school districts (military schools, state schools, and charter schools) were excluded from the analyses since they are likely to have unstable enrollments and/or lack a tax base to support school programs.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006.

*Attrition Study – continued from Page 9*

### Latest Study Results

Seven of every 20 students (35 percent) from the freshman class of 2002-03 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma. The class of 2006 began with 363,665 students. Of those students, 137,162 were lost from public school enrollment between the 2002-03 and 2005-06 school years. (See table above.) Numerically, 137,162 students were lost from public high school enrollment in 2005-06 compared to

86,276 lost in 1985-86.

The overall attrition rate has increased by 6 percent from 1985-86 to 2005-06. The percentage of students who left high school prior to graduation was 33 percent in 1985-86 compared to 35 percent now. Over the past two decades, attrition rates have fluctuated between a low of 31 percent in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

The overall attrition rate was less than 40 percent in 2005-06 for the fifth time in 10 years. Between

1994-95 and 2000-01, the overall attrition rate ranged from a low of 40 percent to a high of 43 percent. In 2005-06, the overall attrition rate was 35 percent, representing the lowest rate since 1991-92.

Hispanic students and Black students historically have had much higher attrition rates than White students. From 1985-86 to 2005-06, attrition rates of Hispanic students increased by 4 percent (from 45 percent to 47 percent). During this

*Attrition Study – continued on Page 11*

## Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition in Texas, School Years 1985-86 to 2005-06

School Year	Total	Race-Ethnicity					Gender	
		Native American	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	White	Hispanic	Male	Female
1985-86	86,276	185	1,523	12,268	38,717	33,583	46,603	39,673
1986-87	90,317	152	1,406	14,416	38,848	35,495	48,912	41,405
1987-88	92,213	159	1,447	15,273	34,889	40,435	50,595	41,618
1988-89	88,538	252	1,189	15,474	28,309	43,314	49,049	39,489
1989-90	86,160	196	1,214	15,423	24,510	44,817	48,665	37,495
1990-91	83,718	207	1,324	14,133	23,229	44,825	47,723	35,995
1991-92	91,424	215	1,196	15,016	27,055	47,942	51,937	39,487
1992-93	101,358	248	1,307	17,032	32,611	50,160	57,332	44,026
1993-94	113,061	245	1,472	19,735	37,377	54,232	63,557	49,504
1994-95	123,200	296	1,226	22,856	41,648	57,174	68,725	54,475
1995-96	135,438	350	1,303	25,078	45,302	63,405	75,854	59,584
1996-97	147,313	327	1,486	27,004	48,586	69,910	82,442	64,871
1997-98	150,965	352	1,730	26,938	49,135	72,810	85,585	65,380
1998-99	151,779	299	1,680	25,526	48,178	76,096	86,438	65,341
1999-00	146,714	406	1,771	25,097	44,275	75,165	83,976	62,738
2000-01	144,241	413	1,794	24,515	41,734	75,785	82,845	61,396
2001-02	143,175	237	1,244	25,017	39,953	76,724	82,762	60,413
2002-03	143,280	436	1,611	25,066	36,948	79,219	82,621	60,659
2003-04	139,413	495	1,575	24,728	33,104	79,511	80,485	58,928
2004-05	137,424	490	1,789	24,373	31,378	79,394	78,858	58,566
2005-06	137,162	512	1,876	24,366	29,903	80,505	78,298	58,864
<b>All Years</b>	<b>2,533,169</b>	<b>6,472</b>	<b>31,163</b>	<b>439,334</b>	<b>775,699</b>	<b>1,280,501</b>	<b>1,433,262</b>	<b>1,099,907</b>

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.  
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006.

### *Attrition Study – continued from Page 10*

same period, the attrition rates of Black students increased by 18 percent (from 34 percent to 40 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 22 percent (from 27 percent to 21 percent). Hispanic students have higher attrition rates than either White students or Black students.

From 1985-86 to 2005-06, Native American students, Asian/Pacific Islander students and White students saw a decline in their attrition rates. Native American students had a decline of 13 percent in their attrition rates (from 45 percent to 39 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 48 percent (from 33 percent to 17 percent).

**The gaps between the attrition rates of White students and the rates of Black students and Hispanic students are increasing.** The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has increased from 7 percentage points in 1985-86 to 19 percentage points in 2005-06. Similarly, during this time period, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students have increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 26 percentage points in 2005-06. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Native American students has remained constant at 18 percentage points in both 1985-86 and 2005-06.

Asian/Pacific Islander students

exhibited the greatest positive trend in the reduction of the gap in attrition rates compared to White students. In fact, rates for Asian/Pacific Islander students were 6 percentage points higher than those of White students but now are 4 percentage points lower than those of White students.

**Historically, the attrition rates of Hispanic students and Black students have been higher than the overall attrition rates.** For the period of 1985-86 to 2005-06, students from racial-ethnic minority groups account for more than two-thirds (69.3 percent) of the estimated 2.5 million students lost from public high school enrollment.

Hispanic students account for

*Attrition Study – continued on Page 14*

# Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools By Race-Ethnicity, 2005-06

COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES <sup>1</sup>				COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES <sup>1</sup>			
	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL		BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
ANDERSON	37	20	52	28	DEWITT	34	17	50	30
ANDREWS	**	**	26	13	DICKENS	•	14	60	22
ANGELINA	29	22	42	28	DIMITT	79	51	29	33
ARANSAS	100	18	38	25	DONLEY	48	**	5	**
ARCHER	•	2	40	6	DUVAL	•	17	32	31
ARMSTRONG	•	16	0	15	EASTLAND	61	24	33	26
ATASCOSA	21	27	39	35	ECTOR	29	23	43	35
AUSTIN	19	9	37	18	EDWARDS	33	32	28	29
BAILEY	58	**	34	21	ELLIS	31	25	43	30
BANDERA	**	38	65	45	EL PASO	36	20	39	37
BASTROP	33	27	46	34	ERATH	13	14	43	23
BAYLOR	18	8	65	20	FALLS	37	4	42	26
BEE	27	11	31	25	FANNIN	17	21	36	21
BELL	46	26	44	36	FAYETTE	34	10	37	18
BEXAR	34	19	41	35	FISHER	•	**	15	2
BLANCO	33	11	8	11	FLOYD	15	4	40	28
BORDEN	•	15	38	7	FOARD	**	34	**	17
BOSQUE	10	18	33	22	FORT BEND	26	9	41	22
BOWIE	38	20	52	27	Franklin	39	20	52	27
BRAZORIA	44	30	48	37	FREESTONE	10	17	35	18
BRAZOS	53	17	55	36	FRIO	•	20	31	29
BREWSTER	75	20	35	30	GAINES	**	12	24	16
BRISCOE	**	14	57	30	GALVESTON	37	26	47	31
BROOKS	•	**	42	39	GARZA	72	2	32	23
BROWN	3	24	50	30	GILLESPIE	14	**	37	11
BURLESON	17	23	26	22	GLASSCOCK	•	6	33	18
BURNET	52	21	38	26	GOLIAD	74	13	39	26
CALDWELL	54	17	45	35	GONZALES	29	21	32	28
CALHOUN	25	29	52	42	GRAY	**	10	41	17
CALLAHAN	100	17	31	19	GRAYSON	28	23	48	26
CAMERON	36	24	50	48	GREGG	45	17	54	31
CAMP	21	30	40	30	GRIMES	32	20	34	26
CARSON	•	15	43	19	GUADALUPE	38	25	44	34
CASS	1	18	49	15	HALE	25	2	35	25
CASTRO	**	**	19	12	HALL	10	25	26	25
CHAMBERS	20	21	43	25	HAMILTON	•	12	15	12
CHEROKEE	35	34	55	39	HANSFORD	•	19	21	20
CHILDRESS	**	25	19	21	HARDEMAN	0	0	36	10
CLAY	•	10	8	9	HARDIN	34	19	35	22
COCHRAN	50	18	2	12	HARRIS	45	20	52	40
COKE	85	35	71	57	HARRISON	17	23	56	24
COLEMAN	36	15	32	20	HARTLEY	18	**	23	8
COLLIN	42	21	44	27	HASKELL	***	***	***	***
COLLINGSWORTH	13	19	7	14	HAYS	25	19	34	26
COLORADO	13	8	31	16	HEMPHILL	100	26	44	37
COMAL	36	22	41	28	HENDERSON	28	27	51	31
COMANCHE	•	10	58	30	HIDALGO	32	24	49	48
CONCHO	•	26	**	13	HILL	5	6	46	15
COOKE	12	23	41	26	HOCKLEY	**	5	34	20
CORYELL	39	38	31	38	HOOD	14	33	36	33
COTTLE	**	**	**	**	HOPKINS	26	16	49	22
CRANE	**	**	11	2	HOUSTON	34	6	54	22
CROCKETT	•	13	**	5	HOWARD	16	16	47	31
CROSBY	100	**	23	11	HUDSPETH	•	**	12	7
CULBERSON	•	40	30	30	HUNT	50	22	57	32
DALLAM	50	16	33	23	HUTCHINSON	16	18	41	23
DALLAS	45	13	58	41	IRION	**	18	**	12
DAWSON	**	**	16	8	JACK	•	18	37	21
DEAF SMITH	40	3	35	28	JACKSON	44	8	27	16
DELTA	28	12	85	21	JASPER	29	19	50	22
DENTON	44	29	59	36	JEFF DAVIS	**	**	49	22

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

\*\* = Attrition rate is less than zero (0).

\*\*\* = No high school.

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



# Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools By Race-Ethnicity, 2005-06 (continued)

## COUNTY NAME

### ATTRITION RATES

BLACK WHITE HISPANIC TOTAL

COUNTY NAME	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
JEFFERSON	38	20	46	32
JIM HOGG	•	5	4	5
JIM WELLS	100	19	40	37
JOHNSON	38	34	50	37
JONES	12	8	25	13
KARNES	12	6	30	21
KAUFMAN	40	38	61	41
KENDALL	30	18	34	22
KENEDY	***	***	***	***
KENT	•	**	100	1
KERR	68	24	57	37
KIMBLE	•	26	41	31
KING	•	43	•	48
KINNEY	**	18	53	38
KLEBERG	35	25	34	32
KNOX	**	19	15	15
LAMAR	35	23	42	27
LAMB	14	8	32	24
LAMPASAS	21	24	36	25
LA SALLE	•	**	33	28
LAVACA	26	7	38	11
LEE	38	19	37	27
LEON	**	12	43	14
LIBERTY	27	28	44	31
LIMESTONE	11	26	37	24
LIPSCOMB	•	**	37	6
LIVE OAK	•	20	34	28
LLANO	50	36	39	37
LOVING	***	***	***	***
LUBBOCK	28	8	31	19
LYNN	0	**	11	5
MADISON	22	27	27	26
MARION	6	15	•	10
MARTIN	100	**	34	13
MASON	•	8	**	**
MATAGORDA	42	20	45	34
MAVERICK	•	40	36	36
MCCOLLUCH	36	13	3	11
MCLENNAN	39	16	45	29
McMULLEN	•	**	**	**
MEDINA	1	17	37	28
MENARD	67	**	23	5
MIDLAND	28	2	47	25
MILAM	18	18	44	27
MILLS	13	17	36	21
MITCHELL	12	6	29	17
MONTAGUE	**	10	36	13
MONTGOMERY	40	30	52	35
MOORE	31	17	40	29
MORRIS	***	***	***	***
MOTLEY	•	**	42	**
NACOGDOCHES	37	17	53	30
NAVARRO	44	27	61	39
NEWTON	29	39	3	36
NOLAN	63	20	31	28
NUECES	25	17	36	30
OCHILTREE	•	15	53	34
OLDHAM	63	22	42	26
ORANGE	43	24	35	26
PALO PINTO	7	31	47	33
PANOLA	12	13	62	16
PARKER	49	27	42	28
PARMER	•	11	21	16
PECOS	85	28	40	40
POLK	15	38	34	34
POTTER	44	19	51	33
PRESIDIO	•	22	35	34

## COUNTY NAME

### ATTRITION RATES

BLACK WHITE HISPANIC TOTAL

COUNTY NAME	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
RAINS	**	32	33	31
RANDALL	63	17	38	20
REAGAN	**	**	2	**
REAL	•	3	**	**
RED RIVER	27	19	58	24
REEVES	30	**	25	22
REFUGIO	0	18	30	22
ROBERTS	•	**	•	**
ROBERTSON	38	16	41	23
ROCKWALL	45	32	51	37
RUNNELS	61	2	39	20
RUSK	24	25	51	28
SABINE	16	19	100	20
SAN AUGUSTINE	19	2	54	11
SAN JACINTO	32	46	46	43
SAN PATRICIO	55	24	43	36
SAN SABA	17	16	17	16
SCHLEICHER	•	**	19	3
SCURRY	25	2	33	17
SHACKELFORD	100	19	35	23
SHELBY	31	25	49	30
SHERMAN	•	11	52	30
SMITH	30	23	56	32
SOMERVELL	•	15	45	21
STARR	•	**	41	41
STEPHENS	68	14	44	23
STERLING	•	**	**	**
STONEWALL	25	1	58	7
SUTTON	•	9	28	21
SWISHER	45	**	26	10
TARRANT	44	24	55	37
TAYLOR	41	21	50	30
TERRELL	•	11	17	13
TERRY	7	5	4	5
THROCKMORTON	•	11	**	10
TITUS	40	25	42	33
TOM GREEN	5	9	34	20
TRAVIS	42	16	52	36
TRINITY	7	29	68	27
TYLER	3	24	28	22
UPSHUR	18	25	18	25
UPTON	**	22	6	14
UVALDE	53	8	44	37
VAL VERDE	47	27	39	38
VAN ZANDT	34	26	41	27
VICTORIA	39	22	59	45
WALKER	32	19	45	28
WALLER	36	29	41	35
WARD	46	11	13	15
WASHINGTON	42	12	53	26
WEBB	84	5	39	39
WHARTON	11	**	36	15
WHEELER	18	**	39	4
WICHITA	40	20	38	25
WILBARGER	36	27	44	34
WILLACY	67	**	33	32
WILLIAMSON	45	20	45	28
WILSON	11	11	32	19
WINKLER	100	19	32	27
WISE	43	21	39	25
WOOD	13	15	45	18
YOAKUM	**	**	23	12
YOUNG	**	18	26	18
ZAPATA	•	14	17	17
ZAVALA	79	18	37	37
TOTAL	40	21	47	35

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006.

50.4 percent of the students lost to attrition. Black students account for 17.4 percent of all students lost from enrollment due to attrition over the years. White students account for 30.7 percent of students lost from high school enrollment over time. Attrition rates for White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students have been typically lower than the overall attrition rates.

**The attrition rates of males have been higher than those of females.** Between 1985-86 and 2005-06, attrition rates for males have increased by 9 percent (from 35 percent to 38 percent). Attrition rates for females declined by 3 percent from 32 percent in 1985-86 to 31 percent in 2005-06. Longitudinally, males have accounted for 56.6 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 43.4 percent.

**Over a 21-year period, the estimated cost of weak school holding power is \$730.1 billion.** Between the 1985-86 and 2005-06 school years, more than 2.5 million students have been lost from public school enrollment, costing the state of Texas about \$730.1 billion in forgone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs.

## Conclusions

Though the overall attrition rate has remained under 40 percent over the last five years, improving school holding power in Texas schools is still an imperative. Texas public schools are failing to graduate seven out of every 20 students. Long-standing goals of graduating 90 percent or more of all students are yet to be achieved in our nation and in Texas amidst growing scrutiny and attention about the quality of education in our schools.

School holding power is an important indicator of a school's

*Attrition Study – continued on Page 15*

# Tools for

## School Holding Power

School holding power refers to a school's ability to prepare all students academically and to hold on to them through graduation. Nationally, our schools lose one student every three minutes. Among Latino students alone, 1.4 million young people have been lost from our schools. That's like losing Atlanta, Kansas City and Milwaukee in one year. Yet some still argue over counting methods rather than focusing on the real problem.

Fortunately, many educators, parents and students have not waited to make a change. They know there is a problem. They know there are solutions. Around the country, schools and communities, in partnership with IDRA and in a range of other initiatives, have pioneered new ways to turn the tide. Class by class, they have found ways to transform schools from places that misplace children into settings that hold on to them.

## A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing

**Developing Leaders** – In IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, secondary school students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school are placed as tutors of elementary school students, enabling the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives. These tutors become leaders in their classrooms, tutoring the younger students and shoring up their own studies so that they are able to continue in the program and not disappoint their young charges. As important are the changes among school teachers and administrators who now see these tutors as valuable contributors rather than as troublemakers. (See Page 5.)

**Conducting Research** – IDRA's annual attrition study (see Page 3), with results published online, provides a consistent, statewide look at attrition trends in Texas. Both the results of this study and the methodology point to a longstanding need for more accurate official counts of dropout rates and new approaches to addressing a problem that should be considered a crisis and central challenge.

**Informing Policy** – IDRA recently was involved in state policy reform discussions related to providing targeted resources to improve high school graduation rates and school holding power in Texas high schools by allocating

*Tools for Action continued on next page*

# Action

new state funding to support such programs. Though the Texas legislature did provide a new \$275 per high school ADA allotment, the new revenues can be used for an array of high school improvement efforts, including but not limited to dropout prevention (see box on Page 5).

**Engaging Communities** – IDRA’s Graduation Guaranteed/*Graduación Garantizada* is supporting educators, community members, parents and new community-school partnerships with: (1) clear, actionable data on attrition and the factors that give rise to it, (2) information on proven practices for preventing students from dropping out and strengthening school holding power, and (3) resources and technical assistance on how to develop and implement local action plans. Tailored around campus-based needs and plans, the initiative is designed to build the capacity of school leaders and educators to implement effective, data-driven reforms.

## What You Can Do

**Get informed.** Achieve, Inc., has released a recent study to provide policymakers with an overview of the research about the dropout problem and the best strategies for building an early warning data system that can signal which students and schools are most in need of intervention. You can visit the web site to get numerous materials on the subject at <http://www.achieve.org>.

**Get involved.** Talk with parents. Engage your school’s site-based decision making team, PTA, boosters and other groups and find out what they are doing to promote graduation of all students. Join them in doing more. Find out about your school’s plans to improve graduation rates. Ask your principal or parent liaison for a copy of your school’s “campus improvement plan.” Help create opportunities for all students to be meaningfully engaged in school life.

**Get results.** If you are interested in organizing a Graduation Guaranteed/*Graduación Garantizada* convening in your area or in forming a local community-school action team, contact IDRA. Learn more about the Graduation Guaranteed initiative at [http://www.idra.org/School\\_Holding\\_Power/](http://www.idra.org/School_Holding_Power/). You can look up your county’s attrition rate on IDRA’s web site (<http://www.idra.org/wrapper/>) and learn more about rates and what to do to improve them locally. Parents can meet with teachers and counselors to make sure their child is on track to graduate.

*Attrition Study – continued from Page 14*

success and the quality of its educational services to students. In order to strengthen our public schools and to improve their outcomes for students, communities and schools must work together in creating and implementing a framework for success.

In her “Quality Schools Action Framework,” Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA’s executive director, shows how communities and schools can work together to strengthen public schools to improve holding power through the following six areas: fair funding, governance efficacy, parent and community engagement, student engagement, teaching quality, and curriculum quality and access (2005). Each of these areas is defined below.

- **Fair Funding** – Availability of funds in a school district to support a quality educational program for all students.
- **Governance Efficacy** – The capacity of administrative and supervisory personnel to deliver quality educational services to all students, along with the policymaking and pro-active support of a school board to hold on to every student.
- **Parent and Community Engagement** – Creating partnerships based on respect and a shared goal of academic success and integrating parents and community members into the decision-making processes of the school.
- **Student Engagement** – School environment and activities that value students and incorporate them into the learning process and other social activities within the school with academic achievement as a result.
- **Teaching Quality** – The preparation of teachers and the

*Attrition Study – continued on Page 16*

placement of teachers in their fields of study. Teaching is informed by continual professional development. Also the practices that teachers use in the classroom to deliver comprehensible instruction that prepares all students to meet academic goals and ensures that no child is left behind or drops out of school.

- **Curriculum Quality and Access**  
– The educational programs of study, materials and other learning resources, such as technology, and their accessibility to all students. Also relates to assessment and accountability—the school practices related to fair and unbiased assessment of students and degree that schools take responsibility

**Improved school holding power strengthens schools and their outcomes for students. Working together, all stakeholders – schools, parents, students, educators, policymakers, researchers – can make a difference in strengthening school holding power.**

for the academic success of all students.

Improved school holding power strengthens schools and their outcomes for students. Working together, all stakeholders – schools, parents, students, educators, policymakers, researchers – can make a difference in strengthening school holding power.

### Resources

Johnson, R.L. “Little Improvement in Texas School Holding Power: Texas

Public School Attrition Study, 2004-05,” *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2005).

Robledo Montecel, M. “A Quality Schools Action Framework: Framing Systems Change for Student Success,” *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2005).

Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of the IDRA Evaluation Research Division. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

## Key IDRA Findings about Dropouts in Texas

**The picture has not changed much in 20 years.**

In 1985-86, Texas schools lost **33 percent** of their students.

In 2005-06, Texas schools lost **35 percent** of their students.

In 1985-86, Texas schools lost **86,276 students**.

In 2005-06, Texas schools lost **137,162 students**.

Since the first IDRA study...

Attrition rates for White students have improved.

Attrition rates for Asian/Pacific Islander students have improved.

Attrition rates for Native American students have improved.

Attrition rates for Hispanic students have worsened.

Attrition rates for African American students have worsened dramatically.

Since IDRA's first study...

More than **2.5 million students** have been lost from public schools.

This loss has cost the state of Texas **\$730.1 billion** in foregone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs.





# Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate

## A New Measure of On-Time School Completion

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

The National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, has released a new measure to estimate the percentage of high school students who graduate on time. This new measure, referred to as Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR), expands the number of indicators that NCES provides on high school dropouts and completers in the United States.

Every year since 1988, NCES has released a series of reports that provide trend data on the characteristics of school dropouts and completers in the nation as a whole and by state or jurisdiction.

To the three traditional indicators – event dropout rate, status dropout rate, and status completion rate – the averaged freshman graduation rate has been added to bring the number of NCES indicators of dropouts and completers to four.

Data for this new measure were drawn from counts of enrollment by grade and graduates in the Common Core of Data (CCD) State Non-fiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education. Data are available for three school years: 2001-02, 2002-03 and

2003-04.

The 50 states and the District of Columbia reported counts of high school graduates in both 2001-02 and 2002-03, while 48 states and the District of Columbia reported graduate counts for 2003-04 (see the table on Page 19 for rates nationally and by state and for rank orders by state). The data were reported by state education agencies for high school graduates between the period of October 1 and September 30 of each applicable school year.

### Types of Dropout Data

According to NCES, the definitions of its indicators of school dropout and school completion include the following.

- **Event dropout rate**—the percentage of private and public high school students who left high school between the beginning of one school year and the beginning of the next without earning a high school diploma or its equivalent. (This rate is also referred to as an annual dropout rate.)
- **Status dropout rate**—the percentage of individuals in a given age range (i.e., 16-24, 16-18, 18-24) who are not in school and have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency, irrespective of when they dropped out. (This rate focuses on an overall age group or cohort rather than on individuals.)

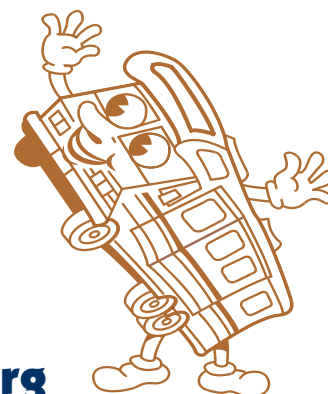
*Averaged Freshman – continued on Page 18*

## Take a Field Trip!

### On IDRA's Web Site

- ✧ Read related *IDRA Newsletter* articles from 1996 to the present
- ✧ Access statistics, definitions, etc.
- ✧ Learn about Internet resources
- ✧ Find extensive useful Internet links
- ✧ Use IDRA's topical index to find

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



- **Status completion rate** – the percentage of individuals in a given age range who are not in high school and who have earned a high school diploma or equivalency credential, irrespective of when the credential was earned. (This rate also is referred to as the school completion rate as the positive way of expressing the status dropout rate.)
- **Averaged freshman graduation rate** – the proportion of high school freshmen who graduate with a regular diploma four years after starting ninth grade. (This rate measures the extent to which schools are graduating students on time.)

## **Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate**

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

- About three-fourths of freshmen in the United States graduated from high school on time in the three years of data reported.
- The averaged freshman graduation rate in the United States increased from 72.6 percent in 2001-02 to 73.9 percent in 2002-03 and to 75.0 percent in 2003-04.
- For the class of 2001-02, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public schools ranged from a low of 57.9 percent in South Carolina to a high of 85.8 percent in New Jersey. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 72.6 percent: Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia,

Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. Nine states had rates of 80.0 percent or higher: Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont and Wisconsin. In 2001-02, Texas ranked 30<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 73.5 percent.

- For the class of 2002-03, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public schools ranged from a low of 59.6 percent in the District of Columbia to a high of 87.0 percent in New Jersey. Sixteen states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 73.9 percent: Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee. Fourteen states had rates of 80.0 percent or higher: Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin. In 2002-03, Texas ranked 30<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 75.5 percent.
- For the class of 2003-04, the averaged freshman graduation rate of public schools ranged from a low of 57.4 percent in Nevada to a high of 87.6 percent in Nebraska. Twenty states and the District of Columbia had rates lower than the overall average of 75.0 percent: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee. Fifteen states had rates of 80.0 percent or higher:

Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah and Vermont. In 2003-04, Texas ranked 26<sup>th</sup> among the 48 reporting states and the District of Columbia with a rate of 76.7 percent.

- From 2001-02 to 2003-04, 42 of the 48 reporting states or jurisdictions had an increase in their averaged freshman graduation rates, and six experienced declines in rates.

The addition of the averaged freshman graduation rate will expand the picture of school holding power in the nation's public schools. The four NCES rates (the event dropout rate, the status dropout rate, the status school completion rate, and the averaged freshman graduation rate) along with other traditional measures, such as the attrition rate and cohort dropout rates, provide unique information about high school dropouts, completers and graduates. Attrition rates measure the number of students lost from enrollment between two points in time (e.g., ninth grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment). IDRA conducts an annual attrition study for the state of Texas (see Page 3).

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

## **Resources**

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2002 and 2003* (June 2006).
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools From the Common Core of Data: School Years 2002-03 and 2003-04* (July 2006).

Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of the IDRA Evaluation Research Division. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

## Averaged Freshman Graduation Rates, By State, School Years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04

State or Jurisdiction	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04	
	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank	Rate	Rank
<b>United States</b>	<b>72.6</b>		<b>73.9</b>		<b>75.0</b>	
Alabama	62.1	46	64.7	43	65.0	45
Alaska	65.9	43	68.0	41	67.2	40
Arizona	74.7	26	75.9	25	66.8	32
Arkansas	74.8	25	76.6	21	76.8	25
California	72.7	33	74.1	32	73.9	31
Colorado	74.7	27	76.4	22	78.7	19
Connecticut	79.7	11	80.9	12	80.7	12
Delaware	69.5	39	73.0	36	72.9	34
District of Columbia	68.4	40	59.6	51	68.2	39
Florida	63.4	45	66.7	42	66.4	43
Georgia	61.1	48	60.8	49	61.2	47
Hawaii	72.1	25	71.3	39	72.6	35
Idaho	79.3	13	81.4	10	81.5	10
Illinois	77.1	18	75.9	26	80.3	15
Indiana	73.1	31	75.5	29	73.5	32
Iowa	84.1	4	85.3	4	85.8	4
Kansas	77.1	19	76.9	20	77.9	21
Kentucky	69.8	38	71.7	38	73.0	33
Louisiana	64.4	44	64.1	44	69.4	38
Maine	75.6	24	76.3	23	77.6	22
Maryland	79.7	12	79.2	15	79.5	16
Massachusetts	77.6	16	75.7	27	79.3	17
Michigan	72.9	32	74.0	33	72.5	36
Minnesota	83.9	5	84.8	6	84.7	6
Mississippi	61.2	47	62.7	47	62.7	46
Missouri	76.8	20	78.3	17	80.4	13
Montana	79.8	10	81.0	11	80.4	14
Nebraska	83.9	6	85.2	5	87.6	1
Nevada	71.9	26	72.3	37	57.4	49
New Hampshire	77.8	15	78.2	18	78.7	20
New Jersey	85.8	1	87.0	1	86.3	2
New Mexico	67.4	42	63.1	46	67.0	41
New York	60.5	49	60.9	48	NA	NA
North Carolina	68.2	41	70.1	40	71.4	37
North Dakota	85.0	2	86.4	2	86.1	3
Ohio	77.5	17	79.0	16	81.3	11
Oklahoma	76.0	22	76.0	24	77.0	23
Oregon	71.0	27	73.7	35	74.2	30
Pennsylvania	80.2	9	81.7	9	82.2	9
Rhode Island	75.7	23	77.7	19	75.9	28
South Carolina	57.9	51	59.7	50	60.6	48
South Dakota	79.0	14	83.0	8	83.7	7
Tennessee	59.6	50	63.4	45	66.1	44
Texas	73.5	30	75.5	30	76.7	26
Utah	80.5	8	80.2	14	83.0	8
Vermont	82.0	7	83.6	7	85.4	5
Virginia	76.7	21	80.6	13	79.3	18
Washington	72.2	24	74.2	31	74.6	29
West Virginia	74.2	29	75.7	28	76.9	24
Wisconsin	84.8	3	85.8	3	NA	NA
Wyoming	74.4	28	73.9	34	76.0	27

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Dropout Rates in the United States: 2002 and 2003 (June 2006), The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools From the Common Core of Data: School Years 2002-03 and 2003-04 (July 2006).

progress in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Students are evaluated by classroom teachers at both elementary and secondary campuses. Evaluations include field-based observations of, for example, how tutors interact with their tutees and how they follow their teacher's directions in working with the students.

Surveys are given to students, parents and teachers at the beginning of the year and at the end. Students complete journal entries, which are opportunities for reflection during the school year. Students' demographic data, end of course grades, standardized test scores, absences and disciplinary referrals are collected at the beginning and end of the project year for all participants. IDRA's evaluation is on a secured web site.

## Program Success

In the 2005-06 program year, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was in 96 middle and elementary schools in the United States (Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, Oregon and Texas) and the country of Brazil. For the period of 2003 to 2006, the overall dropout rate among tutors in the United States was 0.8 percent. For the period of 2003 to 2005, the overall dropout rate among tutors in Brazil was 2.5 percent.

In 2005-06 nationally, there were 2,104 students (526 tutors and 1,578 tutees) in 53 schools in 13 school districts in 13 cities. In Brazil, there were 4,200 students (1,050 tutors and 3,150 tutees) participating in 43 schools in 17 cities in eight states.

## Starting a Program

Participating districts and schools fund the program through district resources, such as Title I (Neglected and At-Risk Youth), Title III (Language Instruction for LEP Students), Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools) and Title V (Innovative Programs) funds,

# Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Elements

## Five Instructional Strategies

### Tutoring Sessions

Tutors tutor a minimum of four hours a week for one class period a day.

### Classes for Tutors

Tutors meet with their secondary school teacher coordinator once a week.

### Educational Field Trips

Tutors go on at least two to three trips to explore career, economic and cultural opportunities.

### Mentor and Role-Models

Adults who are considered successful in their fields and who represent students' ethnic background are invited to participate.

### Student Recognition

Students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make as tutors.

## Five Support Strategies

### Curriculum

The objectives of the curricular framework are to improve students' self-concept, tutoring skills and literary skills.

### Coordination

Periodic meetings are held to coordinate all activities, facilitate communication among personnel and provide first-hand information for monitoring the program.

### Staff Enrichment

Training and technical assistance is provided to implementation team administrators and teachers.

### Parent Involvement

The program demonstrates to families that the school takes their children's education seriously and values the families' contributions.

### Evaluation

IDRA analyzes data and other information for each school to inform implementation of the program.

For more information on the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710, [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org) or visit us online at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org).

as well as, forming a partnership with local businesses. In Texas, the high school allotment provided through Texas House Bill 1 for improving graduation rates and college readiness is a possible source.

IDRA provides training, technical assistance, online evaluation and materials for the program. School districts and campuses interested in implementing the program should contact Linda Cantú, project coordinator at IDRA (210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)).

## Resources

Blum, R.W., and H.P. Libbey. "School

Connectedness – Strengthening Health and Education Outcomes for Teenagers," *Journal of School Health*, Executive Summary (September 2004).

Civil Rights Project – Harvard University. "Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in California," Executive Summary (March 24, 2005).

Intercultural Development Research Association. *Stemming the Tide of Dropouts: An Action Agenda for Arizona* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center, May 2002).

Linda Cantú, Ph.D., is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development and director of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).



**Since 1986, Texas has lost more than 2.5 million students.**

**This is the equivalent of losing Austin, Dallas and El Paso over the course of two decades.**



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association.

*New Minimum – continued from Page 2*

caring teachers who are paid well and are supported in their work, (2) consistent ways to partner with parents and engage the local communities to whom they account, (3) ways to really know students and have students know that they belong, and (4) high quality, enriched and accessible curriculum (Robledo Montecel, 2005).

Schools and the communities to which they belong, need consistent, credible data sets that assess graduation data in relationship to quality teaching, parent-community engagement, student engagement and high quality curriculum.

To respond to this need for actionable knowledge at the local level, IDRA's Graduation Guaranteed/ *Graduacion Garantizada* initiative is piloting a web-based portal that can be used by community-school partners as they craft a shared vision; assess local needs and assets; identify proven practices that strengthen school holding

power; develop ways to implement, monitor and evaluate local actions plans; and build inclusive enduring partnerships to sustain momentum and action.

Losing children, particularly poor and minority children, from our school systems before high school graduation has been and is today a defining feature of education in the United States. The feature and its assumption that fewer students will graduate than started in the ninth grade and even fewer children will graduate than started in kindergarten is built into teacher hiring practices, into ways in which schools deal with parents and communities, into whether and how schools connect with kids, and into curriculum decisions about which courses will be offered and to whom. Student attrition is built into facilities planning and funding decisions. It is time to change.

Not too long ago, it seemed unreasonable to think that this country would have universal education through

elementary school. It is now time that we make high school graduation and college readiness the new minimum. The economics of undereducation demand it. Our children deserve no less.

## Resources

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

Robledo Montecel, M. "From 'Dropping Out' to 'Holding On' – Seven Lessons from Texas," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 2004).

Robledo Montecel, M. "A Quality Schools Action Framework: Framing Systems Change for Student Success," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2005).

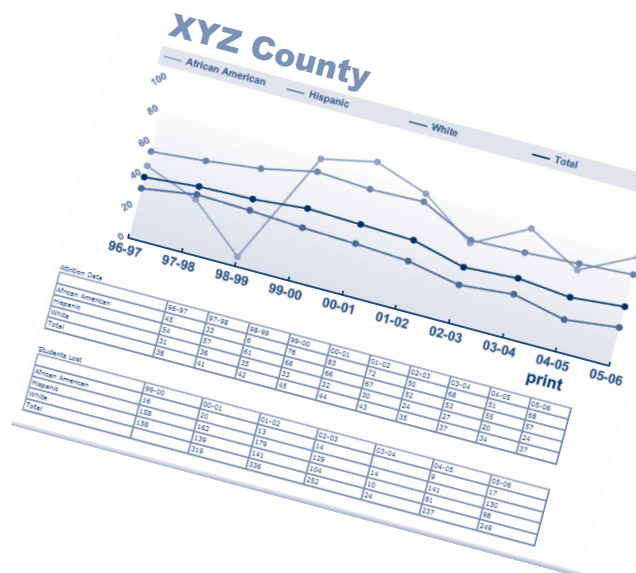
María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., is the IDRA executive director. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at [comment@idra.org](mailto:comment@idra.org).

## Look Up Your County

IDRA is providing dropout trend data at your fingertips.

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

<http://www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/>



## Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In August, IDRA worked with **2,805** teachers, administrators, parents and higher education personnel through **23** training and technical assistance activities and **134** program sites in **11** states plus Brazil. Some topics included:

- ◆ Instructional Methods for Bilingual Paraprofessionals
- ◆ Food Service Personnel Supporting Literacy
- ◆ Science in the Spanish Bilingual Classroom
- ◆ Unlawful Harassment of Students in Education

Some participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ Kingsville Independent School District, Texas
- ◆ Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
- ◆ Office for Civil Rights

### Activity Snapshot

As a result of assistance from the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, the community-school task force of an Oklahoma school district created strategies to improve race relations among students. Before IDRA's assistance, the district experienced racial tension and conflict that grew from reactions to increasing student diversity. The Office for Civil Rights cited the district for racial incidents and violations under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act*. As a part of its settlement, the district worked with IDRA to address some of the problem areas. IDRA worked with a multicultural taskforce to monitor race relations throughout the district and provided staff development on topics concerning learning styles, embracing cultural differences in the classroom, and racial attitudes and perceptions. The taskforce and strategies have improved the district's race relations. The IDRA 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

*For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710.*

# Guidelines for a School Holding Power Program Design

Students who are most at risk of dropping out go through a gradual process of disengagement, isolationism and indifference that leads to a loss of self efficacy, self esteem and resiliency; history of academic underachievement; dysfunctional behaviors; and eventual physical exiting from the school environment.

We are living in an extraordinary time of diversity and change in the midst of educational inequities. This context offers unique opportunities to value diversity and co-create reality that pushes our educational systems, families and communities to act in partnership to eliminate inequities.

A school with a high student dropout rate or a high attrition rate must make a concerted effort to reconfigure part or most of its structure and practices to ensure that it meets the following three goals: (1) **strengthen relationships** among students, school staff and families; (2) **improve teaching and learning** in every classroom every day; and (3) if necessary, **reallocate budget, staff and time** to achieve goals one and two that lead to increased student achievement and graduation rates. In addition, this reconfiguration must be embedded into any existing or proposed school reform effort.

## Quality Program Characteristics

- Keep students in school with a determined faculty that provides the support and opportunities for students to experience academic success.
- Develop persistence and self efficacy in an environment that values all students' strengths and assets.
- Provide an authentic and engaging curriculum that prepares students for college and the workplace.
- Provide students opportunities to experience support and engage themselves in academic and extracurricular activities sponsored by the school.
- Involve parents in a collective effort to support students both in school and at home.

If you are interested in organizing a Graduation Guaranteed/*Graduación Garantizada* convening in your area or in setting up a local community-school action team, contact IDRA. Learn more about the Graduation Guaranteed initiative at:

**[http://www.idra.org/School\\_Holding\\_Power/](http://www.idra.org/School_Holding_Power/)**

By: Dr. Abelardo Villarreal, Director IDRA Division of Professional Development

**New!**

**Free!**



IDRA has launched a new podcast series designed to be a tool for public school teachers and administrators as well as to provide insights into key issues in education in the United States.

Episode 1 is online now. In **“Racial and Sexual Harassment – A School’s Legal Obligations,”** Dr. Bradley Scott, Director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, discusses types of racial and sexual harassment and what school leaders must be doing to prevent and deal with it.

Future topics include:

- Using the New High School Allotment in Texas
- Four Dimensions of IDRA’s Parent Engagement Model
- Serving Students Displaced by Katrina and Rita
- Successful Teaching Strategies for English Language Learners and Integration of Technology into the Classroom

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

**What is a podcast?** A podcast is an audio file that can be downloaded to your computer for listening immediately or at a later time. Podcasts may be listened to directly from your computer by downloading them onto an Mp3 player (like an iPod) for listening at a later date.



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*Creating schools that work for all children,  
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination*