



## **Coca-Cola Valued Youth College Tours**

### **On the Road to College Success**

**by Laurie Posner, MPA**

#### **Inside this Issue:**

- ❖ **Preschool transformations**
- ❖ **Unmasking gender bias in the classroom**
- ❖ **Tools for action**

It was just before 6:30 a.m. on a warm morning in June of last year when 40 teenagers piled out of cars and trucks to gather at a middle school in San Antonio. It had been just two weeks since their last day of school, and this was early in the morning. But they arrived anyway, excited or curious, nervous or hopeful. This would be the beginning of the students' college tour – a tour that introduced a host of Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program students to a range of post-secondary possibilities.

#### **Building on a Proven Model**

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an internationally-recognized, dropout prevention program. It works by identifying junior high and high school students who are in at-risk situations and enlisting them as tutors of elementary school youngsters who are also struggling in school. Given this role of personal and academic responsibility, the Valued Youth tutors increase self-discipline and build self-esteem, and schools strengthen a philosophy and practice

of valuing students considered at-risk. Results show that tutors stay in school, have improved academic performance, have better school attendance and advance to higher education.

Since its inception in 1984, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has kept more than 23,000 students in school, young people who were previously considered at risk of dropping out. The lives of more than 416,000 children, families and educators have been positively impacted by the program.

The program design is based on IDRA research on why students leave school, which dropout prevention strategies work, and how school holding power – building school capacity to hold onto all students until graduation – makes a difference. The program has grown across the United States and is presently in 16 cities in Brazil.

#### **Preventing Dropping Out, Promoting College and Career Options**

The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is well known as a

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dropout prevention program, but it also provides an opportunity for students to consider various careers and college options. College tours are at the heart of this exploration, not only giving students a view of academic options but also linking their success in school now to expectations about and opportunities for the future.

In its recent report *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some Schools Accelerate Learning*, the Education Trust found, “High impact schools [those schools that are most effective at helping students who enter high school significantly behind their peers to achieve substantial academic growth] are clearly focused on preparing students for life beyond high school – specifically college and careers” (Education Trust, 2005).

Average-impact schools, by contrast, are mainly focused on preparing students for graduation. In “A Research Study to Identify Effective Recruitment Strategies for San Antonio College,” IDRA found that “visiting college campuses while still in high

## For most students who participated in the college tours the field trip was a first visit to a college campus, a first opportunity to consider multiple college options, and a chance to ask detailed questions about academics and college life.

school and their parents’ and families’ encouragement” were mentioned most often as helping students prepare for college (Cortez and Cortez, 2003).

Through local college tours with the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, schools introduced a direct, tangible link between high school graduation and post-secondary options. This demonstrated in words and actions that graduation and college planning is part of the vision for every student.

For most students who participated in the June 2005 college tours the field trip was a first visit to a college campus, a first opportunity to consider multiple college options, and a chance to ask detailed questions about academics and college life.

Students, teachers and university administrators were actively engaged. One senior had already been accepted

to Texas A&M University, but she had never set foot on this or any other campus. A Texas A&M financial aid officer at the University of Texas Health Science Center, who specialized in recruiting first generation students, both met with students and had them dissect do a science experiment during their visit.

One of the teachers from the middle school campus attended the field trip to give the students a tour of his alma mater.

### On Board: College Tours and Preparation Make a Difference

In an economy in which 20 of the fastest growing occupations require a bachelor’s degree just to get in the door,

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# Study Shows that Model Learning Community Bears Fruit for Young Children

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

Many 3- and 4-year-old low-income and minority children appear to have the academic linguistic development of 1- and 2-year-old children, according to preliminary results of an IDRA study. Such results seem to set up children for educational failure from the start. But increased support for education at the preschool level can make a huge difference. This article will begin to show the dimension of this issue and outlines what can be done to alleviate it.

## Need for Quality Preschool

IDRA recently assessed a sample of 454 preschool students in south Texas and found that the vast majority are significantly behind in their school vocabulary development and very likely will not be academically ready to enter school when they turn 5 years old or even 6 years old, unless an appropriate intervention is implemented.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test yielded a standardized mean score for these children of 76.6, which is significantly below the national norm (100). Peabody provides evidence of children's language development through its age equivalent analysis (Williams and Wang, 1997). The table in the box at the top of Page 4 summarizes what the analysis revealed.

As the table shows, 80 percent of the children are more than one year behind in their vocabulary development, and one out of every four children is at least two years behind. Over 20 percent are more than two years behind!

Considering that these are 3- and 4-year-old children, this is an alarming finding. And it only corroborates similar previous assertions in the field. In a recent article, Dr. Klein states, "Depending on what is being assessed, anywhere from 25 percent to 60 percent of our young children are not ready to be successful when they begin kindergarten" (2004).

This is particularly alarming

because there is a clear link between children leaving school and their low academic development.

Again, Dr. Klein adds, "Of the children who drop out of high school, half were behind before they even entered a kindergarten classroom" (2004).

Magnuson, et al., state, "Children from economically disadvantaged families enter school with fewer academic skills than their more advantaged peers (although not with less enthusiasm for learning), and substantial gaps in cognitive and academic competencies persist in later school years" (2004).

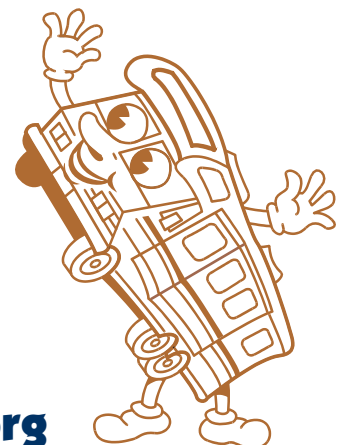
*Study Shows – continued on Page 4*

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Study Shows – continued from Page 3

The National Institute for Early Childhood Research has systematically documented this in its recent report, *“The State of Preschool: 2003 State Preschool Yearbook.”* It says: “State preschool programs are failing the nation’s children. Few set high standards and fewer still provide adequate funding. Even the disadvantaged children targeted by most state preschool initiatives are not assured of access to high-quality programs. Most children and their families receive even less help. Children’s learning and development suffers as a result. This must change” (Barnett, et al., 2003).

For each state, the report provides indicators for preschool access, quality standards and resources provided. For example, the report indicates that Texas meets only two of the 10 benchmarks in the quality standards checklist (Barnett, et al., 2003).

### Preschool Reforms Net Results

The good news is that this can be changed. With funding from the U.S. Department of Education, IDRA is implementing a research study that examines the effects of professional development models on

## Peabody Age Analysis of South Texas Sample of Pre-Kindergarten Children

Over 20 percent of south Texas preschool students are more than two years behind in their vocabulary development.

		Children	Percent
Months ahead	12 or more	1	0.2%
	0 to 11	14	3.1%
Months behind	1 to 12	75	17.0%
	13 to 24	252	56.0%
	25 to 36	105	23.0%
	37 or more	7	1.5%

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006

the effectiveness of Head Start teachers to teach early literacy skills of 3- and 4-year-old minority and low-income children. After a year of operation, we compared program children’s outcomes with other children not participating in the program on a pre-test and post-test basis, using the Peabody. The chart in the box below shows the resulting values.

The chart shows that the program children have improved their language development from a 79 standardized score to 92, while the children not receiving the benefits of the program have essentially remained at the same

pre-test value. The Peabody is a standardized assessment with a national mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15.

Although program children have improved and approached the national mean, they have not yet achieved it, underscoring the need for additional improvements. At the same time, the improvement to date should be considered nothing short of spectacular.

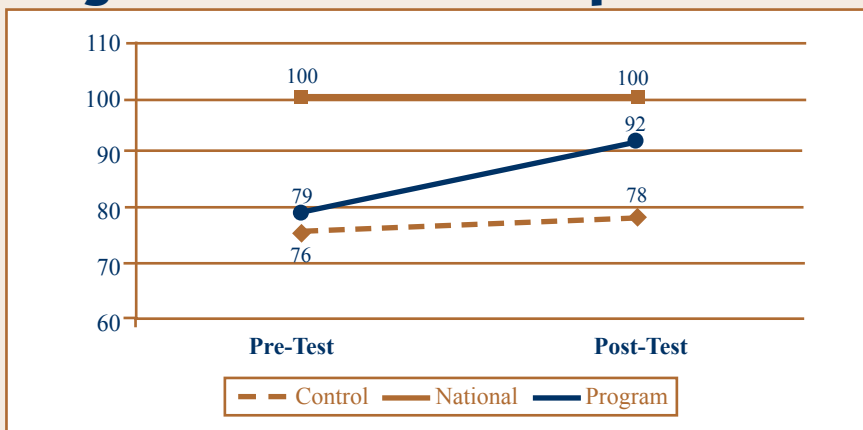
These children scored 1.5 standard deviations below the norm before the program was implemented. After only one year of participating in the program, children moved one full standard deviation toward the norm, so that they now stand half a standard deviation below the norm. Quite an achievement.

### Creating Centers of Excellence

How was this accomplished? The major goal of IDRA’s Reading Early for Academic Development (READ) project is to establish in participating preschool centers *classrooms of excellence* that collectively form a *center of excellence* that ensures reading, cognitive and emotional success for all preschool children through a print-rich environment.

Study Shows – continued on Page 9

## Peabody Standardized Scores of Program and Control Groups



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2006



# Unmasking Gender Bias

## Observing Hidden Dimensions that Affect Student Achievement

by Kristin Grayson, M.Ed.

Boys and girls receive many different silent messages in schools even while they are in the same classrooms with the same teachers using the same textbooks. These silent gender messages are part of the many complex and interactive factors in our communities, cultures and schools that can negatively influence the academic achievement of boys and girls. (Harro, 2000)

The law is clear. Bias, stereotyping and discrimination based on sex is not allowed as legislated in Title IX. But, legislation is only the first step toward change. Recognizing and addressing the complex factors that promote silent negative gender messages is the next step.

Educational equity provides *all* learners the opportunity to learn, to achieve at high levels and to have equitable access and inclusion, equitable treatment and equitable resources for learning (Harro, 2000).

In April 2000, the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity held a focus group of educators and pinpointed some of the specific gender equity issues now facing public schools. These include a low level of staff interest in gender issues, the persistent inappropriate view that gender issues are only women's issues, and the lack

**When gender issues affect student achievement, there is a need to identify processes that the school can take to improve the education of students.**

of consideration given to males and gender equity (Scott and Cortez, 2000). In view of these challenges and issues, the SCCE is piloting a new observation instrument to re-examine gender issues in schools. This instrument will provide a way to assess needs and plan for systemic changes concerning gender bias in schools.

Schools are microcosms of the larger society. The creation of the school's culture and students' perception of themselves and others is affected by many things in and around the school. The interacting processes of race, gender, class, language and heritage cannot be separated in culture and identity (Goodwin, 2000).

Thus, in order to begin the process of identifying gender bias issues within a particular school setting it is necessary to observe objectively and quantify, when possible, these interactive processes. Unmasking hidden gender bias that affects the

academic achievement of boys and girls begins with observation. Following observation, discussion can begin about the implications of what was observed and needs to be addressed. Finally, a systematic and planned process toward change can begin.

IDRA's new observation tool has been divided into four parts: a *classroom observation* component, a *teacher survey*, a *student survey* and an *administrator interview*. These four parts define a way to look for the many interrelated processes identified in the research about gender equity.

### Step 1: Classroom Observation

Within the classroom, it is important to observe the physical setting, the curriculum and instruction, and the interaction and behaviors that occur within the setting. Visuals used in the classroom and the curriculum and materials need to be examined to see when, where and how roles of girls and boys are portrayed (Hutchinson, 1999).

Actions, instructional practice and interactions between teacher and students, and between students and students, need to be examined. An early study by Myra and David Sadker

*Unmasking Gender Bias – continued on Page 6*

showed that, at all grade levels and in all subjects, boys had more opportunity for interaction (1985). Quantifying these interactions was made possible with the *Intersect* observation form that they developed during this time period.

Later, the Gender Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA) professional development program was developed to increase equity in interaction (MEC, 1993). Observing nonverbal messages, such as eye contact, personal space, seating patterns, wait type, question types and types of classroom activities are also important (Sadker, 1995).

Studies have been conducted quantifying the different interactions that African American and Latino female and male students receive. Frequency and quality of interaction have been correlated to the quality of education a student receives. Differential treatment has been linked to low and limited teacher expectations (Goodwin, 2000).

### **Step 2: Teacher Survey**

The *teacher survey* focuses on teachers' attitudes and expectations, which are very important to student success. Many well-documented studies exist that show a positive correlation between teacher expectations and student performance. It is important to unmask the assumptions that underlie comments teachers make, such as "Boys will be boys," "That's just the way it is," and "It's their fault," because these attitudes can perpetuate the exact misconception they communicate (Hutchinson, 1999). Teacher expectations and attitudes also are addressed in the observation tool.

### **Step 3: Student Survey**

The *student survey* reveals students' attitudes toward themselves as students, toward education, toward

# Tools for

## **Student Success**

The true measure of school success is the success of its students. Student success means graduating students from high school fully prepared for college and the world of work. No state in the United States knows what percentage of students who enrolled in kindergarten went on to enroll in college (Venezia, et al., 2003). Thirteen out of 19 public universities in Texas graduate less than half of their students; six graduate less than a third (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2004). IDRA is working in several areas to help schools address systemic factors that lead to student achievement, graduation and college success.

### **A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing**

**Developing Leaders** – IDRA's Science Smart! professional development provides teachers with scientific-based strategies to teach initiative scientific concepts, critical-thinking skills, problem-solving abilities and processes. As teachers' understanding of science and pedagogy increases, they become more able to engage young minds in the sciences. This professional development series supports teachers through mentoring and coaching strategies. There is also online mentoring and coaching to facilitate building a network and community of learners who share and reflect on successful practices through online discussions.

**Conducting Research** – In January, IDRA completed an update to its 1996 desegregation study of a major urban school district's efforts to eliminate segregation in its schools. The current study assessed the status of the district's desegregation efforts and the implications for unitary status. The report findings were submitted to the district, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), which represented the plaintiffs in the 1970s desegregation case, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, and the U.S. District Court in Midland/Odessa.

**Informing Policy** – The current national trend of making early childhood education mandatory is a sign that policymakers and others are recognizing the value that early childhood education has. IDRA has developed a model for effective early childhood education creating centers of excellence that ensure reading, cognitive and emotional success for all preschool children through a print-rich environment, with appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities. See the article on Page 3.

*Tools for Action continued on next page*

# Action

**Engaging Communities**—IDRA’s award-winning dropout prevention program, the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, includes as an essential component the interaction of the surrounding community with the tutors through tutor field trips and visiting guest speakers who serve as role models for the tutors. The guest speakers are powerful because tutors are encouraged by the success of people who have come from the same community and circumstances as they do. Field trips enable the tutors to experience situations they might never have considered, and the community gets to see the quality of the students who will be graduating and becoming productive community members. For more information, see the article on Page 1.

## What You Can Do

**Get informed.** Visit the web site for the National Association for the Education of Young Children to learn more about how quality early childhood education leads to student success. The site also offers tips on becoming an informed advocate for early childhood education and student success. Visit the site at <http://www.naeyc.org> for more information.

**Get involved.** Help young children see themselves as future college students. IDRA has an excellent publication called *I’m Going to College*. The book is written for children in elementary school grades and includes fun activities and pictures that foster staying in school, graduating and going to college. IDRA also has a publication called *Hacia Adelante ~ Pathways to College ~ A Guide for Latino Families* that informs parents and students on how to plan together for college. This guide includes steps for choosing high school courses, selecting a college or university, financial planning and an action calendar. Both publications are available free online at <http://www.idra.org>.

**Get results.** Talk to students before the ninth grade about going to college. How do counselors and teachers orient them to take the classes, programs, and opportunities they need to be college ready? If you work in education, help ensure teachers have access to professional development on innovative teaching strategies that engage students actively in their learning. Check out a new report released by The Education Trust, *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some Schools Accelerate Learning* at: <http://www2.edtrust.org/NR/rdonlyres/6226B581-83C3-4447-9CE7-31C5694B9EF6/0/GainingTractionGainingGround.pdf>. This report includes key findings and tips in working for student success and is the result of a careful, on-the-ground study into the practices of public high schools that serve high concentrations of either low-income or minority children and have a strong track record accelerating learning for students who enter high school below grade level.

*Unmasking Gender Bias – continued from Page 6*

schools and toward other students (boys and girls). Student language unmasked can reveal assumptions toward boys and girls that students have learned in their surroundings (Martin, 1999). Boys’ and girls’ perceptions about gender can help identify the unintended and subtle messages students receive in school, home and community.

One study conducted among middle school students found that boys and girls thought boys can do more and that boys have different restrictions and expectations (Mee, 1995). Observing student language, interaction, self-perception and gender attitudes is important for understanding the larger context of school and gender issues. The student survey provides information within this area of concern.

## Step 4: Administrator Interview

The *administrator interview* is a critical component of the observation tool. Its purpose is to provide an extensive collection of information about the community, staff, school setting, students and their achievement, and the interacting processes of race, gender, class, language and heritage. Information about males and females related to attendance, dropout rates, course enrollment, extracurricular activities, parent involvement, discipline and student achievement are types of information that can be collected during the administrative interview. Other surrounding influences also are identified during the administrative interview.

## Informing Meaningful Strategies

After observation, analysis and plans for ensuring gender equity can be initiated. Parents, teachers and administrators all have a role in ensuring equity in education. In the

*Unmasking Gender Bias – continued on Page 8*

last decade, particular emphasis has focused on ways to ensure gender equity in math and science education. Some strategies to ensure gender equity include replacing curricular materials with others that provide positive role models for males and females, especially of diverse backgrounds, in all academic areas.

Other strategies involve addressing different learning styles, providing for cooperative learning instead of competition between males and females, and encouraging and recognizing achievement of all students (Suda, 1999).

Addressing gender equity issues in the school and classroom is difficult

because it intersects so many issues in the larger society. There are many opinions on the role that teachers should take and the strategies they should use to address gender equity (Singh, 1998). But, when gender issues affect student achievement, there is a need to identify processes that the school can take to improve the education of students.

Observing factors that are part of these processes is the first step toward identifying problems and beginning to implement change for positive solutions. This new instrument piloted by the IDRA SCCE will be used for this purpose. Those interested in the instrument or pilot study can contact IDRA at [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org) or 210-444-1710.

## Resources

- Goodwin, A. L. "Honoring Ways of Knowing," *WEEA Digest on Education Assessment* (Newton, Mass.: Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center, March 2000).
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- Mee, C.S. "Middle School Voices on Gender Identity," *WEEA Digest on Education Assessment* (Newton, Mass.: Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center, March 1995).
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*Unmasking Gender Bias – continued on Page 9*

## Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In June and July, IDRA worked with **4,523** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **65** training and technical assistance activities and **134** program sites in **11** states plus Brazil. Some topics included:

- ◆ Bilingual and ESL Model Development
- ◆ Developing Leaders, Building Character
- ◆ Teaching Mathematics to Diverse Student Populations
- ◆ Sheltered Science Strategies
- ◆ Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Enhanced Curriculum Training

Some participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◇ Arizona State University, Arizona
- ◇ Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma

### Activity Snapshot

Through a series of mathematics institutes, IDRA delivered professional development training to secondary teachers based on (1) adequate yearly progress reports and accountability ratings, (2) closing the gaps and (3) increasing student achievement in secondary mathematics. These institutes integrated real-time data collection devices such as Texas Instruments CBL2s, CBRs, graphing calculators and Pasco Probeware; dynamic learning tools such as Geometer's Sketchpad, Fathom, and online java applets; and computer laptops for demonstrating the integration of computers into mathematics curricula that makes content accessible to all students. Technology integration shifted from integrating technology on a periodic basis, as was often the case according to teacher surveys, to one of integration as an ongoing basis so that mathematics success and access, enrollment and completion of higher-level mathematics courses becomes a reality for all students.

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.*



### *Unmasking Gender Bias – continued from Page 8*

- The NETWORK, Inc. *Beyond Title IX: Gender Equity Issues in Schools* (Bethesda, Maryland: Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, September 1993).
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- Suda, K. "Math and Science: A Practical Equity Guide," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, March 1999).

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### *Study Shows – continued from Page 4*

The project uses a classroom-based professional development approach that enables teachers to form an integrated instructional program that eventually prevents Head Start children from encountering reading difficulties when they enter school.

These centers of excellence are dynamic and have, at their core, students who are acquiring basic skills and competencies in oral language development, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and print awareness. Classrooms of excellence are vibrant, active, engaging, interactive learning spaces where children are supported to achieve reading competency with a teacher who guides and facilitates the process. Teachers encourage communication and language exploration through discussions in both the English and Spanish languages as a basis for learning English.

All of this is achieved by an interconnected professional development plan. IDRA trainers

## **Gender Equity Classroom Resources**

### **Classroom Tips for Non-Sexist, Non-Racist Teaching**

Suggestions adapted from Myra and David Sadker's best selling introductory textbook, *Teachers, Schools and Society*, now in its seventh edition.

<http://www.american.edu/sadker/teachingtips.htm>

### **Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way**

An innovative IDRA resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists. See Page 12.

### **IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity**

IDRA equity assistance center that serves schools and education agencies in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico and Texas.

<http://www.idra.org>

### **"What is Harassment? And What We Can Do To Stop It"**

Article regarding middle school students and harassment.

<http://www.esrnational.org/whatisharassment.htm>

### **Women's Equity Resource Center**

Resource center works to improve educational, social, and economic outcomes for women and girls.

<http://www2.edc.org/WomensEquity/>

provide an enhanced version of HeadsUp! Reading that integrates research-based principles and practices for providing children with a strong foundation in early reading and writing. The training consists of instruction delivered live, via the HeadsUp! Satellite Network. In order to serve the majority of the project's students and families, who are Hispanic, IDRA enhanced HeadsUp! Reading, through addressing the early literacy needs of native Spanish-speaking students and their families.

Another vital component consists of classroom-based professional development sessions, including practical application sessions and classroom demonstration. Teachers are continuously supported by daily coaching and mentoring.

In the end, all of those components come together to create a learning community in each center. Teachers meet to discuss topics of interest, and IDRA's training staff provide information related to these topics and organize the discussions.

As IDRA's READ project's promising results suggest, with appropriate training and support, preschool centers can become centers of excellent education to prepare all children to succeed in school.

### **Resources**

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an alarmingly low number of Hispanic students (11 percent) graduate with a bachelor's degree. This is compared to about 30 percent of White students and 17 percent of African American students (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Regarding income, the U.S. Census Bureau has estimated that people who receive a bachelor's degree rather than only a high school degree earn 75 percent more in lifetime earnings. Beyond economic imperatives, few dispute the value of college participation as a bridge to personal opportunity and lifetime learning and a cornerstone of civic health.

College participation, however, remains out of reach for thousands of youth who have been implicitly and explicitly told that they are not "college material," who have been poorly informed or uninformed of their college options and how they can cover the costs, and who have been inadequately prepared to apply with skill and confidence.

Research does not suggest that college tours and planning alone can close the gaps. But the "rubber meets the road" in valuing students when adults in their lives take concrete actions to introduce students to potential schools and help them complete tests, find funds, apply and prepare.

In *Latinos in Higher Education: Today and Tomorrow*, Brown, et al., emphasize that because many Latino students in higher education today are first-generation college-goers, they often must rely on formal sources of information in preparing for and participating in higher education. They note that "what we encounter at a familial level is an information gap, not a value gap" and stress that making a difference does not merely mean making information available and translating it into Spanish, but "concerted outreach...early in the

## Ten Tips for Top-Notch College Tours

- #1:** Feature a full range of institutions on your tour, from community colleges to four-year universities. Visit a mix of campus types: colleges and universities that are large and small, that offer various academic programs and majors, that have different demographics, and that are in a range of locations. Go beyond "one shot" tours so that students have the chance to gain confidence in asking questions and draw comparisons among schools.
- #2:** Promote student leadership, inviting students' input on what topics to address on the tour.
- #3:** Prepare "starter-questions" with students to help them identify what they want to know most and frame their visits.
- #4:** Create a college tour visit log that students can use to record information and impressions.
- #5:** Include full teacher participation on the tour itself and in follow-up conversations with students about their impressions and any new questions.
- #6:** Set appointments in advance with admissions and financial aid personnel and college recruiters so that students can ask direct questions of campus administrators. Work with college administrators to find creative ways to introduce visiting students to a given campus' programs, culture and academic life. Engage first-generation college students in meeting with students.
- #7:** Invite full student participation, advertising the college tour through fliers, over the school intercom, through in-class announcements and by word of mouth. Encourage students, irrespective of GPA, to participate.
- #8:** Start college tours early. Middle school is not too soon.
- #9:** Expect and overcome reluctance, both from teachers and students, who may have lowered expectations or the false impression that some students are inherently not "college material."
- #10:** Make college tours a top priority. Even if resources are scarce, promote a college tour as one of the most significant field trips students can take.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association

student's educational career and continually thereafter."

IDRA's research findings and policy recommendations have similarly emphasized the need to adopt a pre-kindergarten through grade 20 point-of-view that expects and supports student transitions from early childhood to college entry and success. Providing information on colleges and universities, admissions, financial aid, concurrent enrollment, scholarships and employment opportunities to students and their families, beginning in middle school, figures prominently in policy solutions developed through IDRA's InterAction initiative funded by Houston Endowment (IDRA, 2005).

Based on a cross-case analysis

**College participation, however, remains out of reach for scores of youth who have been implicitly and explicitly told that they are not "college material," who have been poorly informed or uninformed of their college options and how they can cover the costs, and who have been inadequately prepared to apply with skill and confidence.**

of six successful, demographically diverse high schools, Camblin, et al., recommend that among other indispensable strategies, schools with a commitment to increasing college participation by underserved students must expand their focus from a high school diploma to post-secondary opportunities, make clear that adults are real role models and guides in believing in students and "talk about college to every student...in every classroom." (2003)

Research by Horn and Chen on student resiliency has affirmed that participating in a college preparation activity, such as learning about financial aid and getting help with applications and entrance exams, increases the odds of student enrollment in post-secondary education.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth

Program tour offered such preparation to dozens of participating students. Lucy, a 14-year-old at a San Antonio middle school, is thinking about becoming a child psychologist or photographer when she graduates. Since Lucy became a tutor in the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, she has "focused on keeping her grades up." A field trip to the University of Texas at Austin sparked her interest in attending that school.

Another student summarized: "No matter how hard school gets, finish it. Go as far as you can, and do as much as you can in school."

While en route, many students personalized their visit logs with drawings and notes. One student filled the back cover of her booklet with the

message, "I am college material."

### Resources for College Readiness

Combining 10 tips (see box on Page 10) for successful tours with local commitment and innovation can introduce college options to many more students around the country.

In Texas, the recent passage of the high school allotment (House Bill 1, section 42.2516(b)) offers a new source of funding for Texas school districts to improve student graduation rates and college readiness. HB1 provides to districts \$275 per student in average daily attendance in grades nine through 12. The first payment is to reach schools in September 2006. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and college tours are eligible to be funded

**"I am college material."**

– middle school student

through the high school allotment, an excellent way to bring these models to your district or campus this year.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth 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 how, contact Dr. Linda Cantú, program coordinator at IDRA (210-444-1710 or [contact@idra.org](mailto:contact@idra.org)).

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# Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and María Aurora Yáñez, M.A.

**“Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even**

**considered.”**

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

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