



# GRADUATION FOR ALL

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## Graduation for All - Starting with Pre-K • [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) • January 2008

Happy New Year to our readers! – a new year, a new chance to re-commit ourselves to the success of all students. To set the stage, here's a link to [18 Policy Principles for School Holding Power](#).

### Graduation via Preparation: Let's Make 2008 Count.

As 2007 raced to a close, we learned from the Programme for International Student Assessments (PISA) findings that 15-year-olds in the United States had slipped two places in mathematics. In math, the U.S. ranked 25th among the 30 OECD member countries; in science, the U.S. ranked 21st of 30 (OECD, 2006). A recent article by the Pew Hispanic Center [How Far Behind in Math and Reading are English Language Learners?](#) reports that: Almost one in two fourth grade English language learners scored "below basic" in mathematics. Nearly three out of four scored below basic in reading. In middle school mathematics, more than two-thirds of eighth grade English language learners scored below basic.

Since "graduation for all students" means sound preparation for all, this issue brings you resources on student preparation—starting with equitable, high quality early childhood education that engages students and their families from the get go. As always, thanks for reading!

[¡Usted puede recibir esta edición de Graduation for All en español!](#)

## Schools and Communities in Action

**Join Us! Parents and Early Childhood Educators set to gather for [Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño Early Childhood Educators Institute](#) - February 18-21, 2008 in San Antonio.** This year's institute, designed for early childhood educators, administrators, parents and parent educators and liaisons, will focus on inspiring children's creativity and inquiry in science and mathematics. To register online, [click here](#) or call Carol Chavez at 210-444-1710.

**"Parent Pages" link home-school science learning.** HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) is a U.S.-based and international parent involvement, school readiness program that provides home visits by and for community members to strengthen home-school ties and early learning. HIPPY's Parent Page (published in English and Spanish) extends the work of 140+ sites in 25 states. The winter issue offers tips on ***Raising Science Savvy Super Stars*** ([In English](#); [in Spanish](#)) To learn more about HIPPY, a partner of IDRA's Texas Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC), visit <http://www.hippyusa.org/>.

**Why is the sky blue?** Do you reject the idea that young children are simplistic thinkers? So do the members of the National Research Council, which argues that we need to debunk outdated views of child development to vastly improve K-8 science teaching and learning. In "Taking Science to School: Learning and Teaching Science in Grades K-8" published in 2007, the council makes the case that all young children have the capacity to learn science, building on their "substantial knowledge of the natural world." Children "come to school with the cognitive capacity to engage in serious ways with the enterprise of science." The council report stresses that science teaching must reflect new understandings about cognition and learning and also must root out inequities – in instructional quality and access, teacher qualifications and expectations of students – that limit science learning. Here you will find the [executive summary \(free\)](#). For the full book, click [here](#).

For an article on this report and other recent findings, visit: [What Research Says About K-8](#)

*Science Learning and Teaching* by Richard A. Duschl, Andrew W. Shouse, and Heidi A. Schweingruber published (Nov-Dec 2007) in Principal Magazine.

**Youth Voices.** "I truly believe if we don't learn about history, it's as if it doesn't exist. We cannot understand the present and improve the future if we do not know our past" - Clara Green, Grady High School student, featured on Youth Radio Atlanta. Click here for more [youth perspectives on education](#) or [more youth radio](#).

## Toolbox

### Tools for Early Childhood Teaching/Learning

**Teaching Young Children (TYC), a new publication from the National Association for the Education of Young Children shares best practices** in early childhood education, innovations, research and its implications. TYC's [companion web site](#) gives a [sneak preview of the first issue](#) and tips and discussions by teachers about what works.

**Early Years: the Blog.** For ideas and inspiration on pre-k to 2 science, visit the [National Science Teachers Association Early Years blog](#). Here teachers share tips on teaching young children, geology, force and motion.

**Early Years: the Buzz.** Want to know more about trends in early childhood education? Visit "[Preschool Comes of Age: The National Debate on Education for Young Children Intensifies](#)" published by Edutopia.

**Fancy Free.** Check out the U.S. Department of Education's [FREE \(Federal Resources for Educational Resources\)](#), for a host of resources on science teaching and curricula.

You received this e-letter either because you've expressed interest in the topic or somebody who likes you forwarded it to you. Have a story of school-community partnership that's raising graduation rates? - Let us hear from you. To submit question or comment, send e-mail to [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org). Feel free to [forward Grad4All](#) to anyone who shares a passion for every student's success.

The [Intercultural Development Research Association](#) is an independent, private non-profit organization whose mission is to create schools that work for all children.

Thanks for reading!

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