



GRADUATION FOR ALL

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Welcome to Graduation for All! • www.idra.org • June 2007

Dropout Rates Still High: It's Time for Bold Action. Today, three out of every 10 students will not graduate with a high school diploma. Schools are losing nearly one in two minority students. Together we can make a difference.

Welcome! Welcome to Graduation for All. In each monthly e-letter, we will send you up-to-date information that you can use to take action in your school and community. You can unsubscribe from this newsletter by clicking on the link at the bottom of this e-mail.

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Schools and Communities in Action

Community Engagement is Strengthening Schools. The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (NDPC/N) at Clemson University outlined [15 strategies](#) for increasing graduation rates. Two of the 15 call for more ways to engage parents and families in schools: (1) [School-Community Collaboration](#) “when all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, a strong infrastructure sustains a caring supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve;” and (2) [Family Engagement](#), which “research consistently finds... has a direct, positive effect on children’s achievement and is the most accurate predictor of a student’s success in school.” Visit NDPC/N’s [video and slide presentation](#) for a discussion of the [15 strategies](#) as well as resources and examples from NDPC/N’s clearinghouse.



What You Can Do – Beyond Bake Sales. [Adopt Valuing Assumptions.](#)

When it comes to real change, “limited ideas about parents and parent involvement,” says IDRA PIRC director, Aurelio Montemayor, “won’t make the grade.” Montemayor points out that overcoming these deficit assumptions “requires a true ‘paradigm shift,’ which does not come quickly or easily.” He says that we all “have and transmit – often unknowingly – certain prejudices.” To encourage that shift, this past year, [IDRA’s Texas Parent Information Resource Center \(PIRC\)](#) has produced a series of [articles](#), [podcasts](#) and resources highlighting keys to parent leadership in strengthening public schools.

...from [Principal Shares Successes in Parent Involvement](#): At Eastwood Academy (Houston ISD), parents are meeting with school leaders on the school improvement plan, talking about the impact of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills by grade level and making plans for scholarships, college nights and dual credit courses...

...from [E-ruption! Bridging Language and Technology: Educational Leadership Across Generations](#): “A parent in the La Milpas Colonia of Pharr, Texas...is surrounded by other parents and young people, creating an e-mail to send to the principal of her son’s school. She is requesting information about the next site-based decision-making committee. This is the first time she has used her new e-mail address...”

Ready by 21. Many of you are probably familiar with [Connect for Kids Weekly](#) - an e-letter edited by Caitlin Johnson and Thaddeus Ferber with timely news, views, research and policy developments affecting youth, children and families. You may not know, though, that CFK Weekly is managed by the [Forum for Youth](#)

Investment. The Forum may be helping to bring a “Ready by 21” youth council or partnership to a community near you. In Texas, [Austin's/Travis County's Ready by 21 Coalition](#) is learning more about the gaps and overlaps in youth services, [listening to youth](#) and setting up a [youth council](#). Austin's Ready by 21 Coalition brings together public, private and school district partners like Austin ISD, WorkSource-Greater Austin Area Workforce Board (<http://www.worksourceaustin.com/>), and [Austin Voices for Education and Youth](#).

We want to hear from you! Want to share a model of school-community partnership that is making a difference in your district? Let us hear from you! You can drop us a note at: gradforall@idra.org.

Toolbox

New Research and Maps on Tap. What is a good job? How much education is needed? What are the economic payoffs? These are some of the questions [Education Week](#) aims to answer with [Diplomas Count: Ready for What? Preparing Students for College, Careers and Life After School](#) its second annual report on graduation rates. Diplomas Count finds that “Nationwide, only about 70 percent of 9th graders make it to graduation...that figure drops to 46 percent for Black males and 52 percent for Hispanic males.” The report includes descriptions of the [“Reality Gap”](#) between dropout rates reported under NCLB vs. independent research and [interactive maps](#) and special reports for every state and school district.



12 Things You Should Know and Expect. As a resource for parent leadership, check out [As a Parent, Here are 12 Things You Should Know About and Expect From Your Schools...and Yourself](#) – in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), produced by KSA-Plus Communications and the Center for Parent Leadership at the Pritchard Committee.

Highlighting School-Family-Community Partnerships. This year, Annie E. Casey Foundation has published stories and findings from its education investments online at [Connecting Schools, Families, and Communities](#).

Raise Parent Involvement in NCLB. The [Public Education Network \(PEN\)](#), after three years [gathering public input on NCLB](#), is advocating for far stronger provisions for parent engagement in NCLB reauthorization. See: June 8: [PEN pushes for stronger parental involvement measures](#). For highlights from public hearings on NCLB in Texas, including a hearing that IDRA convened in collaboration with PEN, visit: http://www.publiceducation.org/nclb_hearings.asp.

Listen In! Jump to [Valuing Families in Children's Education](#) for an IDRA Classnotes podcast by Aurelio Montemayor, director of IDRA's [Texas Parent Information Resource Center](#).

Check out Iowa public radio show [The Exchange \(NPR, May 2007\)](#) to hear Karen Pittman, executive director of the Forum for Youth Investment, describing Ready by 21 and a national vision for youth development.

Youth Voices. “How would it feel to be the only student of your race...a token Black student in an advanced placement class? At this moment, there are hardly any Blacks in AP classes...When minorities are not encouraged to take advanced placement classes a defacto segregation line is created. The dream of *Brown* and *Mendez* was not only to make education equal for all races but to also give hope to improving education as a whole.”

- Little Rock High School student, presenting to cross-sector leaders in Arkansas attending IDRA's Mendez and Brown Community Blueprint Dialogues (click [here](#) for a virtual tour), Little Rock, Arkansas 2007.

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2007!

Spring is a time of commencement...and promise. 30 years ago, on June 16, 1977, Barbara Jordan delivered the commencement address at Harvard University. Jordan, the first Black woman from the South to be elected to the Texas legislature since Reconstruction said: "What the people want is simple. They want an America as good as its promise."

You received this e-letter either because you've expressed interest in the topic or somebody who likes you forwarded it to you. Feel free to forward it to anyone who shares a passion for every student's success. To submit question or comment, send e-mail to gradforall@idra.org.

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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