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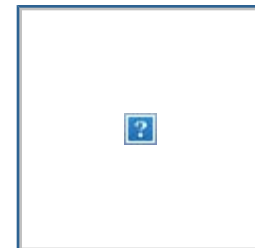
Welcome to Graduation for All! • [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org) • August 2007

**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. But together we can make a difference. **Welcome to Graduation for All.** In each monthly e-letter, we will send you up-to-date information to take action in your school and community to strengthen school holding power. To unsubscribe, click the link at the bottom of this e-mail.

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## Schools and Communities in Action

**New California center to study dropout issue, then press for solutions.** In 2005, 145,000 public school students in California either dropped out or did not graduate on time (California Department of Education). This spring, UC Santa Barbara created the [California Dropout Research Project](#) to study the issue and solutions. To watch for upcoming reports from the center, see: <http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs.htm#stat>.



**More than a program: Holding on to students calls for comprehensive action.** Research and common sense tell us that it takes more than a program to engage students in school. In [Essential Tools: Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving from Policy and Research to Practice](#), Camilla Lehr, et al., point out that: (1) Dropping out is a "process of disengagement that begins early," and (2) School completion is about more than simply preventing dropouts. "School completion" implies:

- A strength-based orientation
- A comprehensive interface of systems
- Implementation over time
- Creating a person-environment fit
- A long-term vision and plan for a "good" outcome, not just preventing a "bad" outcome. [To learn more...](#)

Click [here](#) to find out about the models they have in mind.

**A Framework for School-Community Action.** IDRA's [Quality Schools Action Framework](#) provides a model for communities, educators, the public, researchers and policymakers working together to strengthen school holding power. The framework calls for coordinated action to make sure schools are fairly funded and well-run to: (1) **Partner with parents and community members** in meaningful ways; (2) **Engage and value every student**; (3) **Prepare and support teachers** in their work; and (4) **Provide curricula and instruction that are rigorous, meaningful and accessible.** Here's a link to the [full article on the Quality Schools Action Framework](#) by IDRA executive director, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel.

On **making instruction meaningful and accessible**, "Regardless of their background or English language proficiency," write IDRA staff members Dr. Adela Solís and Kristin Grayson, English language learners "should have meaningful opportunities to succeed in school." Solís and Grayson are spearheading IDRA's Engagement-Based Sheltered Instruction model, "helping teachers feel empowered to make a

difference for English language learners, build trusting relationships...and...present content in a comprehensible way to all students to be sure they are engaged." For the full article, see: ["You Can't Win if You Don't Get to Play – Effectively Engaging All English Language Learners."](#)

**Event in Texas - Video Conference Series for Parents and Parent Liaisons** Is my child on track to graduate? How can I help make sure every child graduates? Join us for: **Learning About Schools Online** - a free, bilingual (English/Spanish) video conference for parents and parent school liaisons around the Lone Star State. **Date/Time:** August 10, 2007 9:00 - noon (central daylight savings time). **Place:** Your local education service center. Also, **save the date** for a second videoconference taking place on August 17: **Graduation: A Call to Action. To register, contact:** Anna Alicia Romero or Carol Chávez at 210-444-1710 or by email at [anna.alicia.romero@idra.org](mailto:anna.alicia.romero@idra.org) or [carol.chavez@idra.org](mailto:carol.chavez@idra.org).

**Could students be dropping out of your school because they feel unsafe?** In [Trends and Tudes](#), HarrisInteractive describes findings from its national survey of 1,814 U.S. seventh and eighth grade students. School safety (15 percent cited problems with gangs, bullies) was among students' top concerns. Listen in to an IDRA Classnotes Podcast by Dr. Bradley Scott, director of IDRA's South Central Collaborative for Equity, on [racial and sexual harassment in school and what school leaders can do to prevent it](#). A [list of national conferences](#) on violence prevention and school safety taking place this summer and fall has been compiled by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), at the University of Colorado at Boulder online. The center also publishes [recommendations for parents](#).

**Survey research - why students leave school.** Last month, the California Dropout Research Project (mentioned above) released [Why Students Drop Out of High School Comparisons from Three National Surveys](#). The number one reported reason students left school: "Missed too many school days."

**Youth need independence, yes, but also guidance, caring, trust.** In [Family Involvement in Middle and High School](#), the Harvard Family Research Project looks at how family involvement impacts student achievement. "To be successful in school and in life, adolescents need trusting and caring relationships...Adolescents desire autonomy, independence and time with peers, but at the same time they continue to rely on guidance from parents and other adults." Want more resources on family engagement? Listen in to [Valuing Families in Children's Education](#) an IDRA Classnotes Podcast by Aurelio Montemayor or visit the [Texas IDRA Parent Information Resource Center](#).

**Youth Voices.** *"Putting good resources into the best schools needs to stop...good resources should go equally to every single school. It is important that we recognize...how much these students I'm standing up for are suffering. Their voice is not being heard at large, and as days go by, we are losing these students."*

- Alejandra "Maggie" Teran, high school student, at IDRA/LULAC Graduation Guaranteed/Graduación Garantizada Summit, speaking on behalf of the Youth Education Tekkies, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

## Toolbox

**New national report on dropout rates.** In June, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) released [Dropout Rates in the United States: 2005](#). Key findings?

- **Low-Income Families Hardest Hit.** Students living in low-income families were approximately six times more likely to drop out of high school between 2004 and 2005 than of their peers from high-income families.
- **Graduation Pays.** The average income of 18- to 65-year olds who had not completed high school was about \$20,100 in 2005. Those with a high school credential, including a GED, earned nearly \$29,700.
- **From the redwood forest to the gulf stream waters—the skinny on your state.** For the class of 2003-04, the averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) ranged from 57.4 percent in Nevada to 87.6 percent in Nebraska. 15 states topped 80 percent—Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah and Vermont. Eleven states and the District of Columbia had rates below 70.0 percent—Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, South Carolina and Tennessee.

**What's "AFGR?"** NCES presents four ways of counting dropouts ("dropout rates") and high school



completion. The averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) looks at the percentage of high school students who graduate on time—that is, four years after starting ninth grade—with a regular diploma. To find out more about AFGR and different ways researchers calculate dropout rates, check out [Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate: A New Measure of On-Time School Completion](#), by Roy L. Johnson, director of IDRA Support Services.

**Supporting students from the start.** Investment in quality pre-K programs pays off, according to new state data released by the Economic Policy Institute. In [Enriching Children. Enriching the Nation: Public Investment in High-Quality Prekindergarten](#), Robert G. Lynch reports that annual benefits of investing in pre-k education outstrip costs by more than 12 to 1. Lynch finds that the benefits don't fade over time: quality pre-K programs result in greater student success in school; higher graduation rates and job earnings. **What's at stake for your state?** [Click here](#) for factsheets on the cost/benefit of pre-K programs in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

**We want to hear from you!** You received this e-letter either because you've expressed interest in the topic or somebody who likes you forwarded it to you. To submit question or comment, send e-mail to [gradforall@idra.org](mailto:gradforall@idra.org).

**Tell a friend.** 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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