



GRADUATION FOR ALL

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You may not be a teacher, but still you care about education. Maybe you are not superintendent, but you have skills to contribute and to lead. You are not alone--and with neighbors, friends, organizations or coalitions, you can partner with schools to take action. This edition of Graduation for All offers resources and examples of how people around the country are doing just that.

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Schools and Communities in Action

30,000 Families. 65 Town Hall meetings. One National Family Platform. In the past several years, around the country from Oakland to New Orleans and from San Juan to South Central LA, families have come together to describe the issues that matter to them most and what must be done to improve the economic well-being of American families. Part of the Equal Voice for America's Families campaign, an effort by the Marguerite Casey Foundation and its grantees, these discussions have consistently identified quality and equity in education as key. The National Family Platform that has emerged from the campaign calls for:



- Local level partnerships among families, schools and community members to work on the best educational strategies for children.
- State level changes in school funding; the elimination of zero-tolerance policies; and increased resources for post-secondary education.
- Federal investment in educational infrastructure, higher education access, and a federal role in education that "encourages respect for and engagement of families and teachers at education decision-making tables as partners in our children's success."

To learn more, visit the Equal Voice for America's Families [National Family Platform.](#)

Equal Voice - Rio Grande Valley, a network of non-profit and faith-based organizations in South Texas, is taking up important planks in the educational platform, engaging family leaders in the Texas Colonias as advocates and partners with local schools. With funding from the Marguerite Casey Foundation, IDRA is providing capacity-building assistance in this work. The work also builds on a long-standing partnership between IDRA and ARISE, a faith-based organization which is now forming PTA Comunitario, to examine local data on dropout rates and college-going rates and mobilize family leadership.

Organized Communities, Stronger Schools by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform examined how residents in seven urban communities organized to improve education, finding that: "community organizing: (1) stimulates important changes in educational policy, practices, and resource distribution at the system level; (2) strengthens school-community relationships, parent involvement and engagement, and trust in schools; and (3) contributes to higher student educational outcomes, including higher attendance, test score performance, high school completion, and college-going aspirations." To learn more, visit the [findings online.](#)

Need an advocacy primer? Whether you want to raise your voice for more equitably funded schools, better graduation and dropout counts, or proven bilingual education programs, the new year is a great time to sharpen up your advocacy skills on behalf of youth. At [Connect for Kids Youth Policy Action Center](#), you'll find: useful tips for policy advocacy, action alerts, and data and statistics. In Texas, Kids Count Databook 2009 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Center for Public Policy Priorities, provides [state-by-state data on child wellbeing.](#)

Toolbox

To learn more about best practices in family engagement and family leadership, *Listen in!* to “[Effective Parent Outreach](#),” a Classnotes podcast featuring a conversation with Aurelio Montemayor, director of the IDRA Texas PIRC, and visit the online article “[Every Family Engaged = Every Child Ahead](#).”

Aspiration x Reality = Call for Action. In its 2009 *California Educational Opportunity Report: Listening to Public School Parents*, UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access investigates the conditions of California public schools today and captures the perspectives of parents across the state. The contrast between what parents wish for their children and current conditions gives rise to a call for action. Visit the [report online](#) or [IDEA’s pressroom](#) to find out how a network of people are taking up the call.

Get the facts. Looking to get started? Get the facts on graduation and attrition rates at your school:

- For a report on graduation rates in your state, see: [High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States](#) (NCES, 2009).
- For a map of graduation rates for every school district, visit [EPE’s Research Center online](#).
- For longitudinal data and attrition rates for every county in the state of Texas, visit IDRA’s website: www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/. Visit “[Counting Dropouts](#)” for a Classnotes podcast featuring a conversation with Roy Johnson, M.S., director of IDRA Support Services and author of the 24th annual attrition study.

The **Campaign for High School Equity** is a coalition of organizations representing communities of color that “believe high schools should have the capacity and motivation to prepare every student for graduation, college, work, and life.” Learn more at: <http://highschoolsequity.org/>

Youth Voices

“I did well in high school. . . . I think that for that reason staff at the high school treated me as if I was better than my other Latina peers. Instead of feeling good, it felt unfair because I knew the staff expected less of me (as a Latina) and that was the reason for their better treatment . . . I went through high school knowing I wasn’t having the same experience as my peers (they were tracked, left to linger without getting any real support for improvement). I was the ‘token’ Latina achiever and thereby treated more like my White peers.” - from [Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation](#), just released by the National Women’s Law Center and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund



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

We want to hear from you! Have a story of school-community partnership that's raising graduation rates? Let us hear from you. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions at gradforall@idra.org. Forward to a Friend! Feel free to [share Grad4All](#) with anyone who shares your passion for every student’s success.

Thanks for reading!

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