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## HB5 Does Not Have to Block Students from College

### San Antonio City Council Encourages College Preparation for All Students

*Statement by Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Intercultural Development Research Association, April 17, 2014*

IDRA commends the San Antonio City Council for its resolution passed today to encourage local school districts to choose the distinguished level of achievement as the default in graduation plans for all of their students.

The recommendation was made by the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, ¡PRESENTE! and IDRA. This distinguished achievement designation signifies that high school students have taken Algebra II, which is required for them to be eligible for "top 10 percent" automatic college admission. Also the SAT and ACT require knowledge of Algebra II. Making the distinguished achievement designation the default affirms the intention of school districts to prepare all students for college.



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San Antonio's action today is consistent with its "smart city" initiatives and investments in creating a college-going culture, citywide. San Antonio ISD and several other school districts across the state have already announced plans to make the distinguished level of achievement the default for their students, including Austin ISD, Houston ISD, and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD.

TG examined data on high school graduates whose parents did not go to college and who enrolled in a four-year institution (2006). The TG study found that of these students who took only Algebra I and geometry, only 11 percent went on to college. For the students who also took Algebra II, the percentage jumped to 34 percent who went to college. And those who took math beyond Algebra II, 64 percent went to college.

The City Council's action and hopefully subsequent action at the school district level is an important first step to ensuring our schools provide an excellent education to all students. To have the option to attend college and graduate, IDRA's Quality School Action Framework™ demonstrates that students must be prepared with high quality curriculum and high quality teaching.

Even though the Texas Legislature took the state several leaps backwards by eliminating the 4-by-4 plan as the required path for all students (16 high quality core curriculum courses – four years in English, math, science and social studies), school districts can encourage and even require their students take a high quality curriculum that prepares all of their students for college entrance and graduation. This includes requiring Algebra II for students to earn the distinguished level of achievement as well as requiring English IV, chemistry, physics, world history, and world geography. Until the recent legislative changes, most Texas students were taking these courses.

Rigor and high expectations work. IDRA recently released a report, [College Bound and Determined](#), showing how the PSJA school district in south Texas transformed itself from low achievement and low expectations to planning for all students to graduate from high school and college. In PSJA, transformation went beyond changing sobering graduation rates or even getting graduates into college. This school district changes how we think about college readiness.

The rigor of high school curriculum is a key indicator for whether a student will graduate from high school and earn a college degree. A study by the U.S. Department of Education shows that the rigor of the high school curriculum is the most important factor in a student's success and graduation from college – more important than the education level of the parents, their income, and their race-ethnicity (Adelman 2006).

Education has been shown to be correlated with increases not only in individual wealth but also with greater civic participation, health and well-being, and economic competitiveness. This holds for adults across race and gender.

To create true opportunities for all of our children, we must commit to high quality curriculum for all students. The young people in San Antonio and across the state – students of all backgrounds and every zip code – need our support to be prepared for the opportunities of today and tomorrow.

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## Resources

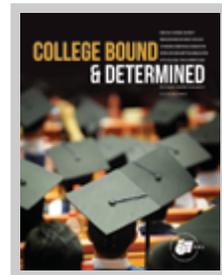
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### [College Bound and Determined](#)

[Distinguished as Default – Real Choice is Preparing All Students Well, by Laurie Posner, MPA](#)

[Classnotes Podcast: Why Algebra II? \(January 30, 2014\)](#)

[What Parents Want to Know about the New Texas Graduation Requirements, bilingual eBook/PowerPoint presentation](#) (also available [on Slideshare](#))



[Expecting Less is Not Better – Texas' New Graduation Tracks Push Students Away from College \(bilingual\)](#)

[Texas Latino Education Coalition Supports Inclusion of Algebra II in All Endorsement Tracks, Nov 2013](#)

## References

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Adelman, C. (2006). The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College. U.S. Department of Education.

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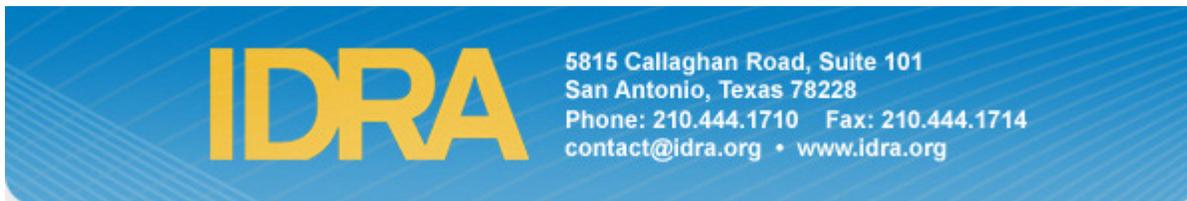
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TG. (April 2006). State of Student Aid and Higher Education in Texas. TG Research and Analytical Services.

The **Intercultural Development Research Association** is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to realizing the right of every child to a quality education. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.

We are a small organization with a powerful mission: to create schools that work for *all* children.



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