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Overall Texas High School Attrition Rates Take Another Step Forward

Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2012-13, Released by IDRA

San Antonio (October 29, 2013) – The Texas high school attrition rate has continued its downward trend. IDRA's latest annual attrition study released today shows that the overall attrition rate declined from 26 percent last year to 25 percent in 2012-13. Schools in 102 counties saw improvement. However, attrition rates in 105 counties students have worsened since last year.



The Intercultural Development Research Association released [detailed findings](#) today from its latest study. Key findings show:

- The statewide attrition rate was **25 percent** for 2012-13.
- At this rate, Texas will not reach universal high school education for another **quarter of a century** in 2036.
- Numerically, **99,575 students** were lost from our public high schools in 2012-13.
- **102 counties had a lower attrition rate than last year, 105 counties had a higher attrition rate** than last year, and 14 counties had the same rate as last year.
- The **racial-ethnic gaps** are still higher than 28 years ago. The gap between the rates of White students and Hispanic students has gotten the closest ever from the original 18 percentage points to 19 in 2012-13. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has increased from 7 percentage points to 12 since 1985-86.
- Black students and Hispanic students are about **two times more likely** to leave school without graduating with a diploma than White students.
- Students from ethnic minority groups account for nearly **three-fourths** (72.5 percent) of the estimated **3.3 million students lost** from public high school enrollment.

“Clearly, some school districts are taking steps to improve their school holding power, and their investment into dropout prevention programs and college readiness initiatives is paying off, though at the current rate Texas will not reach universal high school education for another quarter of a century,” said Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA president and CEO. “But our state leadership has shown its willingness to neglect many of our students and their families by weakening curriculum and graduation requirements and by cutting funds for targeted dropout prevention. With these policy changes, we are in danger of losing much of what we have gained to date. Texas must move from its low expectation that only some of our students can successfully graduate to expecting and supporting all of our students to graduate college-ready.”

A school with a high dropout rate must make a concerted effort to reconfigure part or most of its structure and practices. Dr. Robledo Montecel explained: “High-impact innovations have demonstrated a set of key features: they value youth of all backgrounds, without exception; they are built around sound information and metrics; they assure that students have access to quality teaching and a high quality curriculum and; they engage students, families and community members as key partners in academic success. As we proceed with different types of solutions, we

must keep in mind that Latino and African American communities themselves are part of the solution.”

IDRA's **Quality School Action Framework™** guides communities and schools in identifying weak areas and strengthening public schools' capacities to graduate and prepare all students for success. IDRA's book, **Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework™** shows how communities and schools can work together to be successful with all of their students. The [book's web page](#) provides an excerpt, related podcasts, images of the framework and other resources.

Each fall, IDRA releases its attrition study. The latest study **became available today** online at www.idra.org. Attrition rates are an indicator of a school's holding power, or the ability to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. IDRA was commissioned to conduct Texas' first-ever comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts using a high school attrition formula to estimate the number and percent of students who leave school prior to graduation. That study in 1986 was the state's first major effort to assess the school holding power of Texas public schools and resulted in state-level policy reforms for the state education agency to count and report dropout data. IDRA is the only organization that has examined Texas attrition rates consistently, with the same methodology, for 28 years.

The annual attrition studies released by IDRA include county-level data by race and ethnicity. **Trend graphs of high school attrition in each Texas county** are available online. The study includes detailed findings, a supplemental analysis for reaching a rate of zero and graphics showing different types of dropout data. IDRA's study also looks at the latest dropout study released by the Texas Education Agency and the National Center for Education Statistics.

In addition, IDRA has developed a one-page **School Holding Power Checklist** with a set of criteria for assessing and selecting effective dropout prevention strategies and for making sure your school is a quality school.

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IDRA Attrition Study & Resources Online: www.idra.org

[2013 Study – Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2012-13](#)

[Look Up Your County – See attrition rates and numbers over the last 10 years](#)

[County List – See which counties had attrition rates go up or down](#)

[See infographic: Texas public schools are losing one out of four students](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions for reporters](#)

[eBook on types of dropout data](#)

[Listing of other dropout and graduation studies](#)

[Tool – Quality School Holding Power Checklist](#)

[OurSchool data portal – see district- and high school-level data](#)

[Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework](#)

[Overview of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, which keeps 98 percent of students in school](#)

[Ideas and Strategies for Action](#)

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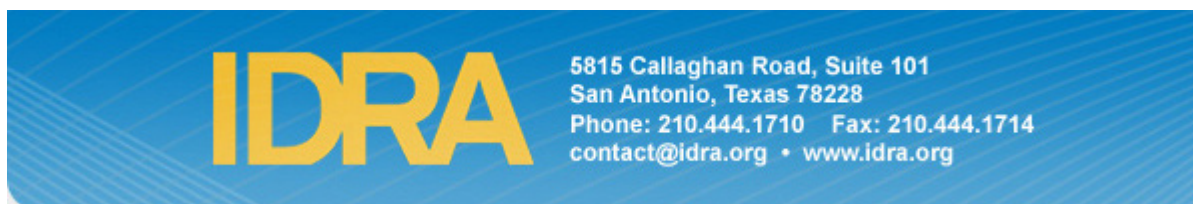
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The **Intercultural Development Research Association** is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to realizing the right of every child to a quality education. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; 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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