IDRA Focus: School Holding Power

IDRA Newsletter

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School Holding Power – A Quality Schools Indicator

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

Texas public high schools lose about one-third of their students before they graduate with a high school diploma. In its latest annual attrition study, IDRA found that for every 100 ninth grade students in 2005-06, 31 students were lost from the high school graduation pipeline by 2008-09. This translates to a loss of about 125,508 students from the class of 2009. (See study on Page 4.)

Cumulatively, between 1985-86 to 2008-09, a total of 2.9 million students have been lost from Texas public schools without receiving a high school diploma. Graduation from high school with a diploma and being fully prepared for college, a career and citizenry, are the ultimate outcomes for high school students. Yet for these outcomes to be attained, students must be provided a quality education through high quality teaching, high quality school leadership, high quality curriculum, high quality learning environment, high quality student engagement, and high quality parent and community engagement.

The education system has been plagued with many issues that impact the quality of teaching and learning in our schools. Schools and communities are having difficulty keeping students in school, engaged in learning, and meeting high academic standards. Effective schools know that graduating students with a diploma, backed by an excellent education, must be the focal point of systems change in education (Robledo Montecel, 2005).

Framework for Action

Through its Quality Schools Action Framework, IDRA has presented a process for achieving systems change in education. The framework is based on experience and empirical evidence emerging from existing theories of change that assert that lasting systems change depends on sustained action within and outside of those systems (Robledo Montecel, 2005).

Several components make up this comprehensive approach to school transformation – levers of change, change strategies, school system fundamentals and indicators, and outcome indicators. Within the framework, there are three interconnected and interdependent change strategies: (1)

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community capacity building, (2) coalition building, and (3) school capacity building.

The framework examines the links among key education indicators: teaching quality, effective governance, curriculum quality and access, student engagement, parent and community engagement, and fair and equitable funding. In the framework, the final outcomes are that students are kept in school, that students succeed academically, and that students are prepared for college and career.

Increasing School Holding Power

School holding power is defined as the ability of schools to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. High quality schools have good school holding power and prepare all students to succeed in college and career.

Research suggests that quality schools possess the following characteristics: (1) high expectations for every student; (2) strong school leadership; (3) qualified teachers in every classroom; (4) rigorous curriculum and fair assessments; (5) sufficient resources that help all students achieve; (6) safe, healthy and supportive learning environments; (7) schools and classrooms equipped for teaching and learning; and (8) parent and community support (Give Kids Good Schools, nd). All of these elements are contained in strategic components of IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework.

IDRA's push for increasing school holding power is rooted in the notion that high quality schools must establish goals to graduate all students with a high school diploma. In its recently-released policy brief, "Moving Beyond AYP: High School Performance Indicators," the Alliance for Excellent Education calls for the use of sophisticated indicators to stem the tide of the high school dropout crisis and to improve the preparation of all students for college and career. The alliance supports aligning proficiency and graduation rates with the goal of every student graduating ready for college and career.

The lack of school holding power impacts everyone socially and economically. The magnitude of the school dropout problem in Texas and in the nation is related to a number of negative outcomes – higher unemployment rates, lower pay, smaller tax base, higher rates of incarceration for dropouts, etc. According to IDRA President and CEO, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, the magnitude of the dropout problem calls for *a seismic shift from dropout prevention to graduation for all*.

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"The magnitude of the dropout problem calls for a seismic shift from dropout prevention to graduation for all."

– María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel
IDRA President & CEO

In This Issue...

***The Intercultural Development Research Association** (IDRA)* is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

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School Holding Power

Dear reader,

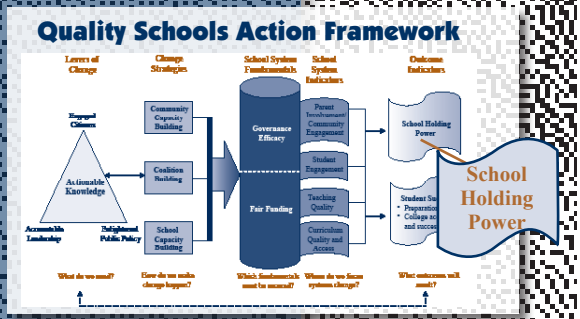
This month IDRA releases its 24th annual comprehensive study of attrition rates in the state of Texas. The results, while offering a glimmer of hope that the state is moving in the right direction, leave no doubt that we must take immediate, comprehensive action.

After all, while attrition rates have dropped from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 31 percent today (2008-09), this still means that 125,508 Texas freshman -- youth who began ninth grade in 2005-06 -- did not graduate with a diploma in their senior year. At this rate, Texas will not reach an attrition rate of zero until 2042, and we will lose a 2.3 million to 6 million more students.

All told, over the past two dozen years, 2.8 million students have been lost from school enrollment. In this economy, and in a world in which education makes a world of difference, we simply cannot afford to leave our young people with so few options.

In this October issue of the IDRA Newsletter, we provide you with the complete findings of the 2008-09 study. In "School Holding Power -- A Quality Schools Indicator," Mr. Roy Johnson offers both an overview of cumulative findings from more than two decades of IDRA research and a discussion of key indicators for strengthening school holding power. "Overall Attrition Rate Declines, But Gaps Persist Among Racial and Ethnic Groups," also by Mr. Johnson, delves into this year's findings in detail, describing the cohort methodology that IDRA has used since its inaugural study, sharing our latest attrition data for every county in the state, and providing longitudinal rates by race/ethnic group and gender.

Holding power re-emerges as a central theme in the article by Dr. Felix Montes entitled "25 Years of Effective Dropout Prevention." In this piece, Dr. Montes describes the five key reasons IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has succeeded over many years and across several countries. This year, the program marks the 25th anniversary of the program. We hope you will visit us online to learn more about how and why it works and join us in making the most of this milestone on behalf of youth.



At heart, the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and, I believe, any successful school transformation, hinges on valuing and engaging all students, without exception. For this reason, while we hope some day to work ourselves out of a job, until schools have the capacity to graduate and prepare all students for college or career, you can count us to bring you the news (good or bad) and the research and resources to take action.

As Ms. Mary A. Vidaurri, a seventh grade valued youth tutor at Memorial Middle School, writes (p. 14), "Passion for what you do is fundamental in every career path and organization." Today, we must summon that kind of passion and courage to make sure all children succeed and thrive.

Maria Robledo Montecel

Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2008-09

Overall Attrition Rate Declines, But Gaps Persist Among Racial and Ethnic Groups

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

In its most recent annual attrition study that examines school holding power in Texas public high schools, IDRA found that 31 percent of the freshman class of 2005-06 left school prior to graduating from a Texas public high school in the 2008-09 school year. The current statewide attrition rate in Texas is 6 percent lower than the initial rate of 33 percent found in IDRA's landmark 1985-86 study.

This latest finding suggests that the ability of Texas public high schools to keep students in school until they graduate has improved somewhat for students overall in recent years. However, the gaps between the attrition rates of White students, Hispanic students and Black students are higher than 24 years ago.

In 1985-86, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students was 18 percentage points (27 percent for White students and 45 percent for Hispanic students) compared to a gap of 25 percentage points in 2008-09 (17 percent for White students and 42 percent for Hispanic students). The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students in 1985-86 was 7 percentage points (27 percent for White students and 34 percent for Black students) compared to 18 percentage points in 2008-09 (17 percent for White students and 35 percent for Black students).

Improving school holding power in Texas schools is still an imperative as many of our schools have failed to keep students in school through graduation with a high school diploma.

A supplemental analysis indicates that, based on one statistical scenario of Texas attrition rate history, the state will not reach an attrition rate of zero until 2042. At this pace, the state will lose an additional 2.3 million to 6 million students. (Montes, 2009)

This 2008-09 attrition study represents the 24th study conducted by IDRA and the latest in a series of reports that began in the 1985-86 school year. In 1986, IDRA conducted Texas' first 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.

The study in 1986 was the state's first major effort to assess the holding power of Texas public schools. This inaugural study, entitled *Texas School Dropout Survey Project,* was conducted under contract with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the then Texas Department of Community Affairs. It examined three major research questions: (1) What is the magnitude of the dropout problem in the state of Texas? (2) What is the economic impact of the dropout problem for the state? and (3) What is the nature and effectiveness of in-school and alternative out-of-school programs for dropouts in the state?

IDRA's inaugural study found that 86,276 students had not graduated from Texas public high schools, costing the state $17 billion in forgone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs (Cárdenas, Robledo and Supik, 1986).

Methods

Spanning a period from 1985-86 through 2008-09, the IDRA attrition studies have provided time series data, using a consistent methodology, on the number and percent of Texas public school students who leave school prior to graduation. These studies are the only source for examining the magnitude of the dropout problem in Texas across more than two decades using consistent data. They provide information on the effectiveness and success of Texas public high schools in keeping students engaged in school until they graduate with a high school diploma.

The attrition calculations were derived from public school enrollment data in the Texas Public Education

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Attrition Study – continued from Page 4

Information Management System (PEIMS). During the fall of each year, school districts are required to report information to TEA via the PEIMS for all public school students and grade levels. IDRA's attrition studies involve an analysis of ninth-grade enrollment figures and 12th-grade enrollment figures three years later. This period represents the time span during which a student would be enrolled in high school.

IDRA collects and uses high school enrollment data from the TEA Fall Membership Survey to compute countywide and statewide attrition rates by race-ethnicity and gender. Enrollment data from special school districts (military schools, state schools and charter schools) are excluded from the analyses because they are likely to have unstable enrollments or lack a tax base for school programs.

Attrition rates are an indicator of

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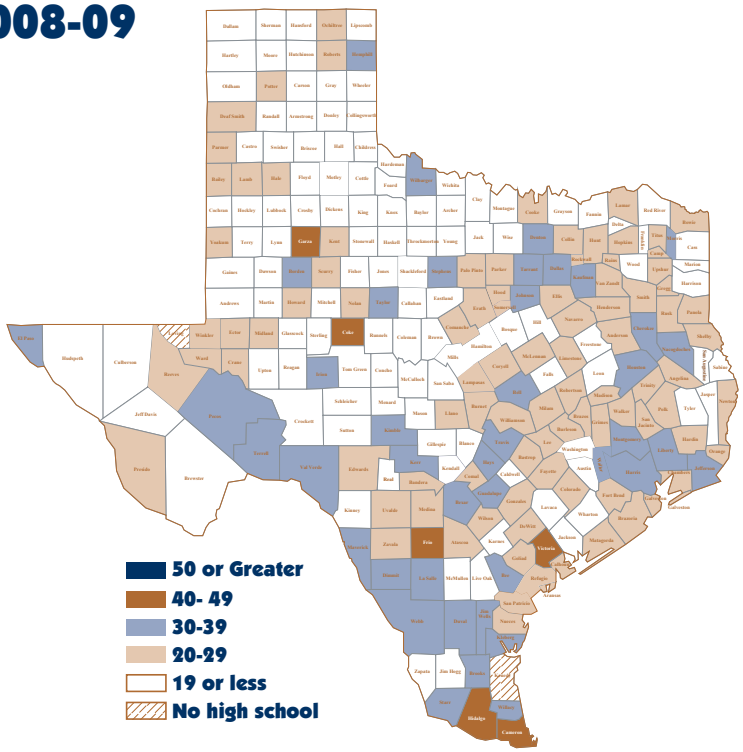
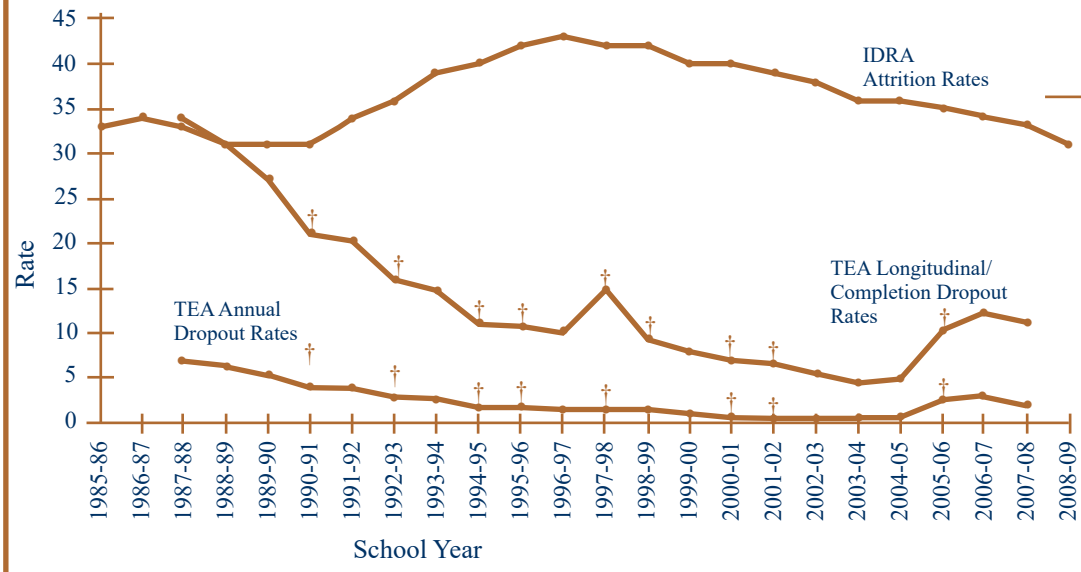
Attrition Rates by Texas County, 2008-09



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

Attrition and Dropout Rates in Texas Over Time



	IDRA Attrition Rates	TEA Long. Dropout Rates	TEA Annual Dropout Rates
1985-86	33	--	--
1986-87	34	--	--
1987-88	33	34.0	6.7
1988-89	31	31.3	6.1
1989-90	31	27.2	5.1
1990-91	31	21.4	3.9
1991-92	34	20.7	3.8
1992-93	36	15.8	2.8
1993-94	39	14.4	2.6
1994-95	40	10.6	1.8
1995-96	42	10.1	1.8
1996-97	43	9.1	1.6
1997-98	42	14.7	1.6
1998-99	42	9.0*	1.6
1999-00	40	7.7*	1.3
2000-01	40	6.8*	1.0
2001-02	39	5.6*	0.9
2002-03	38	4.9*	0.9
2003-04	36	4.2*	0.9
2004-05	36	4.6*	0.9
2005-06	35	9.1***	2.6**
2006-07	34	11.6***	2.7**
2007-08	33	10.7***	2.2**
2008-09	31		

† Change in TEA dropout definition or data processing procedures
** Longitudinal completion rate (Grades 7-12)*
***Annual dropout rate using NCES definition (Grades 7-12)*
****Longitudinal dropout rate using NCES definition (Grades 7-12)*

Sources: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009. Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Attrition Study – continued from Page 5

a school's holding power or ability to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. Along with other dropout measures, attrition rates are useful in studying the magnitude of the dropout problem and the success of schools in keeping students in school. Attrition, in its simplest form, is the rate of shrinkage in size or number. Therefore, an attrition rate is the percent change in grade level enrollment between a base year and an end year.

Historical statewide attrition rates and numbers of students lost to attrition are categorized by race-ethnicity and by gender (see boxes on Pages 6, 11 and 13). County-level data are provided on Pages 5, 15 and 16. In addition, trend data by county are available on IDRA's web site at www.idra.org. IDRA has included online historical county-level numbers of students lost to attrition. See box on Page 12 for statewide historical numbers and the graph on Page 5 for historical rates. General conclusions from this year's study follow.

Latest Study Results

About one of every three students (31 percent) from the freshman class of 2005-06 left school prior to graduating with a high school diploma. The class of 2008-09 study cohort began with 383,061 students. Of these students, 125,508 were lost from public school enrollment between the 2005-06 and 2008-09 school years (see table on Page 11). Numerically, 125,508 students were lost from public high school enrollment in 2008-09 compared to 86,276 in 1985-86.

The overall attrition rate declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 31 percent in 2008-09. The percentage of students who left high school prior to graduation was 33 percent in 1985-86 and 31 percent in 2008-09. Over the past two decades, attrition rates have fluctuated between a low of 31 percent in 1988-89, 1989-90, and 1990-91 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

The overall attrition rate was less than 40 percent in 2008-09 for the eighth time in 15 years. The current rate of 31 percent compares to 39 percent in 2001-02, 38 percent in 2002-03, 36 percent in 2003-04 and 2004-05, 35 percent in 2005-06, 34 percent in 2006-07 and 33 percent in 2007-08, respectively. After eight consecutive years of overall statewide attrition rates of 40 percent or higher between 1994-95 and 2000-01, the overall statewide attrition rate of 31 percent in 2008-09 is the lowest since a 31 percent rate in 1988-89, 1989-90, and 1990-91, and continues a downward trend over the last several years. Between 1994-95 and 2000-01, the overall attrition rate ranged from a low of 40 percent to a high of 43 percent.

The attrition rates of Hispanic students and Black students are much higher than those of White

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Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools, 1985-86 to 2008-09

Group	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 2008-09
Race-Ethnicity																									
Native American	45	39	37	47	39	39	40	39	38	42	44	43	42	25	43	42	29	39	42	40	39	36	38	32	-29
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	30	28	23	22	23	21	21	21	18	18	20	21	19	20	20	14	17	16	17	17	14	14	14	-58
Black	34	38	39	37	38	39	39	43	47	50	51	51	49	48	47	46	46	45	44	43	40	40	38	35	3
White	27	26	24	20	19	22	22	25	28	30	31	32	31	31	28	27	26	24	22	22	21	20	18	17	-37
Hispanic	45	46	49	48	48	48	48	49	50	51	53	54	53	53	52	52	51	50	49	48	47	45	44	42	-7
Gender																									
Male	35	35	35	34	34	34	37	39	41	43	45	46	45	45	44	43	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	0
Female	32	32	31	29	29	28	30	33	36	37	39	40	38	38	36	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	27	-16
Total	**33**	**34**	**33**	**31**	**31**	**31**	**34**	**36**	**39**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**42**	**40**	**40**	**39**	**38**	**36**	**36**	**35**	**34**	**33**	**31**	**-6**

** Rounded to nearest whole number.* Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

Texas Dropout Counts Using the National Center for Education Methods Decline from 2006-07 to 2007-08

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

In July 2009, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released its third dropout and school completion report using the dropout definition and calculation methods mandated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The report entitled, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007-08*, shows that the number of school dropouts reported by TEA for grades seven through 12 declined from 55,306 in 2006-07 to 45,796 in 2007-08, a decrease of 17.2 percent

***Dropout Counts** – continued on Page 8*

Texas Annual Dropout Rates – High School, Reported by the Texas Education Agency

School Year	Dropouts	Students	Annual Dropout Rate (%) By Group, Grades 9-12				
			African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
1994-95	26,499	1,058,191	3.3	3.6	1.6	1.5	2.5
1995-96	24,574	1,085,859	2.8	3.2	1.4	1.2	2.2
1996-97	24,414	1,124,991	2.9	3.1	1.3	1.4	2.2
1997-98	24,886	1,145,910	3.3	3.1	1.2	1.2	2.2
1998-99	27,592	1,773,117	2.3	2.3	0.8	0.9	1.6
1999-00	21,439	1,163,883	2.6	2.7	1.0	1.0	1.8
2000-01	16,003	1,180,252	1.8	2.0	0.8	0.7	1.4
2001-02	15,117	1,202,108	1.8	1.9	0.6	0.7	1.3
2002-03	15,665	1,230,483	1.7	1.9	0.6	0.6	1.3
2003-04	15,160	1,252,016	1.4	1.9	0.6	0.6	1.2
2004-05	17,056	1,273,950	1.7	2.0	0.7	0.6	1.3
2005-06*	48,803	1,317,993	5.4	5.2	1.8	1.5	3.7
2006-07*	52,418	1,333,837	5.8	5.4	1.9	1.5	3.9
2007-08*	43,808	1,350,921	5.0	4.4	1.5	1.2	3.2

*The 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 dropout rate was calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics dropout definition. Using the NCES definition, a dropout is defined *as* "a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Education Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die." In order to implement the legislative requirements for the computation of dropout rates, TEA had to make changes in some dates affecting dropout status and some changes in groups of students who had not been considered dropouts previously.

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2004-05*. Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007-08*.

Texas Annual Dropout Rates – Middle and High School, Reported by the Texas Education Agency

School Year	Dropouts	Students	Annual Dropout Rate (%) By Group, Grades 7-12				
			African American	Hispanic	White	Other	Total
1987-88	91,307	1,363,198	8.4	8.8	5.1	6.1	6.7
1988-89	82,325	1,360,115	7.5	8.1	4.5	4.9	6.1
1989-90	70,040	1,361,494	6.7	7.2	3.5	4.3	5.1
1990-91	53,965	1,372,738	4.8	5.6	2.7	3.1	3.9
1991-92	53,420	1,406,838	4.8	5.5	2.5	2.9	3.8
1992-93	43,402	1,533,197	3.6	4.2	1.7	2.0	2.8
1993-94	40,211	1,576,015	3.2	3.9	1.5	1.7	2.6
1994-95	29,918	1,617,522	2.3	2.7	1.2	1.1	1.8
1995-96	29,207	1,662,578	2.3	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.8
1996-97	26,901	1,705,972	2.0	2.3	1.0	0.9	1.6
1997-98	27,550	1,743,139	2.1	2.3	0.9	1.1	1.6
1998-99	27,592	1,773,117	2.3	2.3	0.8	0.9	1.6
1999-00	23,457	1,794,521	1.8	1.9	0.7	0.7	1.3
2000-01	17,563	1,818,940	1.3	1.4	0.5	0.5	1.0
2001-02	16,622	1,849,680	1.3	1.3	0.4	0.5	0.9
2002-03	17,151	1,891,361	1.2	1.4	0.4	0.4	0.9
2003-04	16,434	1,924,717	1.0	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.9
2004-05	18,290	1,954,752	1.2	1.4	0.5	0.4	0.9
2005-06*	51,841	2,016,470	3.8	3.5	1.3	1.1	2.6
2006-07*	55,306	2,023,570	4.1	3.7	1.3	1.1	2.7
2007-08*	45,796	2,042,203	3.5	3.0	1.1	0.9	2.2

*The 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 dropout rate was calculated using the National Center for Education Statistics dropout definition. Using the NCES definition, a dropout is defined *as* "a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, received a General Education Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die." In order to implement the legislative requirements for the computation of dropout rates, TEA had to make changes in some dates affecting dropout status and some changes in groups of students who had not been considered dropouts previously.

Source: Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2004-05*. Texas Education Agency, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007-08*.

Dropout Counts *– continued from Page 7*

(see table above). The annual dropout rate declined from 2.7 percent in 2006-07 to 2.2 in 2007-08, a decrease of 18.5 percent. The attrition rate for the class of 2008 (grades 9-12) was 28.6 percent compared to an attrition rate of 30.0 percent for the class of 2007.

The NCES definition mandated by the 78th Texas Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 186 in 2003 has had a dramatic impact on the dropout count and dropout rate reported by TEA. According to TEA, dropout and school completion rates using the national dropout definition adopted in 2005-06 are not comparable with rates from prior years. Since the adoption, both the dropout count and the dropout rate are about three times higher than those under the previous definition and calculations.

When the NCES dropout definition was used, the total number of dropouts reported by TEA increased from 18,290 in 2004-05 to 51,841 in 2005-06 and to 55,306 in 2006-07, but declined to 45,796 in 2007-08. From

Dropout Counts *– continued on Page 18*

25 Years of Effective Dropout Prevention

Five Primary Reasons for the Success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

by Felix Montes, Ph.D.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program achieved its 25th anniversary this year. With its less than 2 percent annual dropout rate (in schools with dropout rates often exceeding 40 percent), it has been heralded as a most successful dropout prevention program. This article explores five primary reasons for this outstanding accomplishment in the context of the student-school relationship.

The importance of meaning in our lives is well understood. Meaning is often connected to our relationships with our surroundings, our work, our peers, and our family. In the school environment, meaning is connected to friends, family, teachers, and staff. To understand the dropout phenomenon, it is essential to understand the nature of the relationship between students and their school community.

Children are naturally curious and eager to participate in school early in life. They look forward to the experience of being with other children, exploring and experimenting. Why then would some later leave the school? There may be many reasons, but one thing is certain – their relationship with the school environment changed.

"This program has made me appreciate learning and teaching. It makes me proud to know that I am making a difference in a child's life. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has given me this opportunity, and I am grateful. It has made me want to become a teacher when I graduate from school."

– Crisol Ortuño, seventh grade tutor and essay contest middle school third place winner

It no longer provides that rich source of meaning to their lives that it once did.

One of the important causes for the success of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program in increasing school holding power is that it re-establishes that primordial student-school relationship. The program brings back that initial sense of discovery, that desire of working with others in a learning community, that original confidence that they are important in this environment, that initial desire to go back to school every day because that is where substantial meaning is derived.

How does this program achieve such a feat? What elements of the program repair the fabric of the school-student relationship? There are five primary and five supporting reasons that explain this effect. In this article, I will explore the five primary reasons based on extensive research conducted in 1989. The study used a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design with data collected for the treatment and comparison group students before tutoring began, during implementation, and at the end of the first and second program years (Cárdenas, et al., 1992).

At the heart of the program is the *tutoring sessions* (IDRA, 1990). Through these sessions, which occur four times a week often as an elective or state-credit course, students who have received frequent negative feedback about their efficacy, come to recognize that they have something valuable to offer. As they see their tutees – younger students from kindergarten to fifth grade – improve their alphabet knowledge, colors, reading and math, the tutors realize that they are a positive element in the school. Tutoring requires them to review basic concepts they might have missed. Now they have an important reason to learn them well, the little ones are counting on them as

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they often say.

The program provides the structure for this learning process through its second component: *classes for tutors*. These classes are not classes in the traditional sense. Tutors meet as peers to review how their tutoring sessions are progressing. Through teacher coordinator facilitation, they share the surprises, frustrations, enjoyment and difficulties of tutoring. They learn from each other, exchanging tips on things that work and those to avoid. At its core, the classes for tutors are designed to develop critical thinking skills using tutoring as the backdrop. These higher-order thinking skills are on the levels of analyses, evaluation and creation in the Bloom's revised taxonomy. Through an interactive and student-centric approach, the tutors understand the strategies they should use to help the younger students learn and how to evaluate the results of their tutoring on a continuous basis. Since the program's inception, the classes have had three basic objectives: (1) develop tutoring skills to enable them to become successful student tutors; (2) develop a sense of self-awareness, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and pride in their success as students and tutors; and (3) improve literacy skills and any other academic skills they might need to be good tutors.

As the tutoring establishes a strong bond between the tutors and their tutees, the classes for tutors re-establish a bond among the tutors on a new, academic foundation. It also re-establishes the bond between the students and the school, as they see the teacher coordinator on their side helping them with their delicate task. They begin to understand the difficulties teachers go through as they gain a new appreciation for the school goals and the challenges the institution faces to achieve them. In this sense, the classes for tutors are a full internship experience. Tutors are treated as equals, like professionals. As such, they start improving their appearance and their behavior. They understand the importance of being on time and being prepared. They learn key elements of the teaching career, including the skill of developing lessons, selecting appropriate teaching activities and evaluating tutees' progress. (See tutor essay on Page 14.)

Three other program components consolidate these new bonds and the re-establishment of the student-school relationship: student recognition, field trips, and role models. For *recognition* to have an impact, it has to be justified, frequent, and reasonable. The program acknowledges the tutors for their efforts and for the contributions they make as tutors throughout the year. The most important recognition tutors receive is the payment for tutoring, which is given in precise correspondence to the number of tutoring sessions provided, so they can see the direct result of their work. Tutors learn that these sessions not only have value for the younger students and for themselves, but also to society at large, since it is willing to pay for it.

In addition, tutors receive t-shirts, caps, certificates of merit and personal expressions of appreciation. They are invited to field trips, often with their tutees and parents. They are given talks by carefully selected role models. They receive media attention, as the program often is featured by local reporters. And at the end of the year, they are honored at a closing event. In many campuses, this is a schoolwide affair, in which teachers, parents and students participate to recognize the excellent work accomplished by the tutors.

The field trip and role model components accomplish other functions as well. Through the *field trips*, students step out of their traditional surroundings to explore new educational, cultural and economic opportunities. Field trips are taken to local universities, museums, businesses, or even amusement parks with educational value. Tutors research the institution prior to the trips. During the trips, they meet with the hosting institution managers or other employees. They ask questions derived from their research, often generating lively exchanges of information.

Role models provide tutors with a mirror of what they could become. Role models are successful people with similar socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds as the tutors. Tutors appreciate that someone like them can succeed in science, mathematics, engineering, law, medicine, journalism, and business – areas in which minorities are often underrepresented.

These components and other implementation resources are described in detail in a set of guides provided to schools that operate the program (see Robledo Montecel, et al., 2004).

In summary, the Coca-Cola Valued Program re-establishes the student-school relationship through a mindful implementation of five sound instructional strategies (tutoring, classes for tutors, student recognition, field trips, and role models) designed to value young people for what they can offer and to empower them to see what's possible in their lives. Through this process, the students regain the original

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2005-06 and 2008-09 Enrollment, 2008-09 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	2005-06 9th Grade Enrollment	2008-09 12th Grade Enrollment	2005-06 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2008-09 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2008-09 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
Native American	**1,299**	**946**	**4,082**	**4,385**	**1,396**	**450**	**32**
Male	658	454	2,035	2,279	737	283	38
Female	641	492	2,047	2,106	659	167	25
Asian/Pacific Islander	**10,697**	**10,558**	**40,209**	**46,021**	**12,243**	**1,685**	**14**
Male	5,662	5,414	20,810	23,823	6,482	1,068	16
Female	5,035	5,144	19,399	22,198	5,761	617	11
Black	**58,414**	**38,696**	**181,226**	**185,218**	**59,715**	**21,019**	**35**
Male	30,464	18,692	91,145	93,773	31,342	12,650	40
Female	27,950	20,004	90,081	91,445	28,373	8,369	29
White	**141,943**	**112,387**	**508,437**	**483,066**	**134,863**	**22,476**	**17**
Male	74,223	57,294	261,520	248,782	70,608	13,314	19
Female	67,720	55,093	246,917	234,284	64,255	9,162	14
Hispanic	**170,708**	**111,528**	**492,372**	**552,112**	**191,406**	**79,878**	**42**
Male	89,853	54,272	251,402	281,272	100,529	46,257	46
Female	80,855	57,256	240,970	270,840	90,877	33,621	37
All Groups	**383,061**	**274,115**	**1,226,326**	**1,270,802**	**399,623**	**125,508**	**31**
Male	200,860	136,126	626,912	649,929	209,698	73,572	35
Female	182,201	137,989	599,414	620,873	189,925	51,936	27

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data. IDRA's 2008-09 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 2005-06 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 2008-09. This period represents the time span when ninth grade students would be enrolled in school prior to graduation. The enrollment data for special school districts (military schools, state schools, and charter schools) were excluded from the analyses since they are likely to have unstable enrollments and/or lack a tax base to support school programs.

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

Attrition Study *– continued from Page 6*

students. Hispanic students and Black students historically have had much higher attrition rates than White students. From 1985-86 to 2008-09, attrition rates of Hispanic students declined by 7 percent (from 45 percent to 42 percent). During this same period, the attrition rates of Black students increased by 3 percent (from 34 percent to 35 percent). Attrition rates of White students declined by 37 percent (from 27 percent to 17 percent). Hispanic students have higher attrition rates than either White students or Black students.

From 1985-86 to 2008-09, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and White students saw a decline in their attrition rates. Native American students had a decline of 29 percent in their attrition rates (from 45 percent to 32 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 58 percent (from 33 percent to 14 percent). The attrition rate of Asian/Pacific Islander students was the lowest among the racial/ethnic groups, while the rate for Hispanic students was the highest.

The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black and Hispanic students is higher than 24 years ago. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has increased from 7 percentage points in 1985-86 to 18 percentage points in 2008-09. Similarly, during this time period, the gap between the attrition rates of White students and Hispanic students has increased from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 25 percentage points in 2008-09. The gap between the attrition

Attrition Study *– continued on Page 12*

Numbers of Students Lost to Attrition in Texas, School Years 1985-86 to 2008-09

School Year	Total	Race-Ethnicity					Gender	
		Native American	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	White	Hispanic	Male	Female
1985-86	86,276	185	1,523	12,268	38,717	33,583	46,603	39,673
1986-87	90,317	152	1,406	14,416	38,848	35,495	48,912	41,405
1987-88	92,213	159	1,447	15,273	34,889	40,435	50,595	41,618
1988-89	88,538	252	1,189	15,474	28,309	43,314	49,049	39,489
1989-90	86,160	196	1,214	15,423	24,510	44,817	48,665	37,495
1990-91	83,718	207	1,324	14,133	23,229	44,825	47,723	35,995
1991-92	91,424	215	1,196	15,016	27,055	47,942	51,937	39,487
1992-93	101,358	248	1,307	17,032	32,611	50,160	57,332	44,026
1993-94	113,061	245	1,472	19,735	37,377	54,232	63,557	49,504
1994-95	123,200	296	1,226	22,856	41,648	57,174	68,725	54,475
1995-96	135,438	350	1,303	25,078	45,302	63,405	75,854	59,584
1996-97	147,313	327	1,486	27,004	48,586	69,910	82,442	64,871
1997-98	150,965	352	1,730	26,938	49,135	72,810	85,585	65,380
1998-99	151,779	299	1,680	25,526	48,178	76,096	86,438	65,341
1999-00	146,714	406	1,771	25,097	44,275	75,165	83,976	62,738
2000-01	144,241	413	1,794	24,515	41,734	75,785	82,845	61,396
2001-02	143,175	237	1,244	25,017	39,953	76,724	82,762	60,413
2002-03	143,280	436	1,611	25,066	36,948	79,219	82,621	60,659
2003-04	139,413	495	1,575	24,728	33,104	79,511	80,485	58,928
2004-05	137,424	490	1,789	24,373	31,378	79,394	78,858	58,566
2005-06	137,162	512	1,876	24,366	29,903	80,505	78,298	58,864
2006-07	134,676	500	1,547	23,845	28,339	80,445	76,965	57,711
2007-08	132,815	581	1,635	23,036	25,923	81,640	76,532	56,283
2008-09	125,508	450	1,685	21,019	22,476	79,878	73,572	51,936
All Years	**2,926,168**	**8,003**	**36,030**	**507,234**	**852,437**	**1,522,464**	**1,660,331**	**1,265,837**

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

Attrition Study *– continued from Page 11*

rates of White students and Native American students has declined from 18 percentage points in 1985-86 to 15 percentage points in 2008-09. Asian/Pacific Islander students exhibited the greatest positive trend in the reduction of the gap in attrition rates compared to White students. In fact, rates for Asian/Pacific Islander students were 6 percentage points higher than those of White students but now are 3 percentage points lower than those of White students.

Historically, Hispanic students and Black students have comprised a large proportion of students lost by schools. For the period of 1985-86 to 2008-09, students from ethnic minority groups account for more than four-fifths (82.1 percent) of the estimated 2.9 million students lost from public high school enrollment.

Hispanic students account for 63.6 percent of the students lost to attrition. Black students account for 16.7 percent of all students lost from enrollment due to attrition over the years. White students account for 17.9 percent of students lost from high school enrollment over time. Attrition rates for White students and Asian/Pacific Islander students have been typically lower than the overall attrition rates.

The attrition rates for males have been higher than those of females. In 1985-86 and 2008-09, attrition rates for males were the same at 35 percent. Attrition rates for females declined by 16 percent from 32 percent in 1985-86 to 27 percent in 2008-09. Longitudinally, males have accounted for 58.6 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 41.4 percent. In the class of 2008-09, males were 1.3 times more likely to leave school without graduating with a diploma than females.

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Conclusions

Texas public schools are failing to graduate one out of every three students. Attrition rates as an indicator in a school holding power index show that the rate was 31 percent overall and near 40 percent for Black students and Hispanic students. The overall attrition rate has declined from 33 percent in 1985-86 to 31 percent in 2008-09, but the gap or disparity in attrition rates has widened between racial/ethnic groups. Though the overall attrition rate has remained under 40 percent over the last eight years, improving school holding power in Texas schools is still an imperative as many of our schools have failed to keep students in school through graduation with a high school diploma. The number of students lost from public school enrollment has increased from 86,276 in 1985-86 to 125,508 in 2008-09.

IDRA is working on a number of efforts to improve school holding power through its collaboration with schools and communities in Texas and other parts of the country. One of these efforts is called "Graduation Guaranteed/Graduación Garantizada" which emphasizes the accountability of the school in keeping students in school until they graduate with a high school diploma. This initiative includes a School Holding Power Portal that contains dropout data that neighborhoods at the local level can use to know what is going on and take action around the issue. Another of IDRA's efforts to improve school holding power is the dissemination of the *Graduation for All* e-newsletter, which provides up-to-date information on dropouts and actions to improve school holding power (sign up free at www.idra.org).

School holding power is an important indicator of a school's success and the quality of its educational services to students. In order to stem the tide of increasing racial and ethnic disparities in the rate of students who leave school prior to graduating with a high school diploma, school-community action teams must examine and address quality school indictors that

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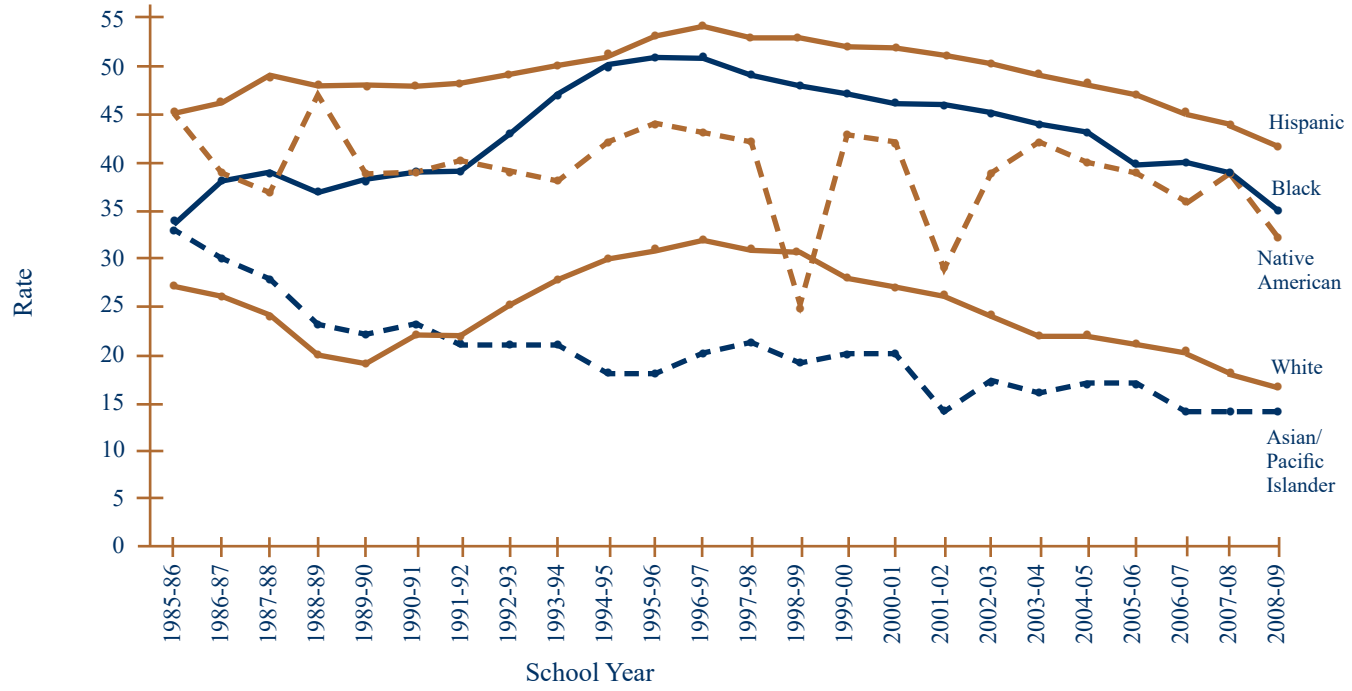
Get more info online at IDRA Newsletter Plus

- Links to other recent dropout studies
- Resources for taking action
- Trend graphs by Texas county

www.idra.org/newsletterplus

Longitudinal Attrition Rates by Race-Ethnicity in Texas Public Schools, 1985-86 to 2008-09



Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2008.

Student Voices

IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is celebrating its 25th anniversary in the United States as well as its 10th anniversary in Brazil. To celebrate these two milestones, IDRA sponsored an essay contest in the United States. Six students received prizes. Below is the essay of the second place winner at the middle school level.

What Tutoring Means to Me

by Mary A. Vidaurri, seventh grade, Memorial Middle School, La Joya

Tutoring is so much more to me than walking into a classroom talking to some kids and explaining things to them. A part of it is making a child smile and learn something at the same time and other little things like that. When my little fourth grade tutees learn something new and proudly display the new skill they've just learned, my heart melts. I think to myself then, I just prepared him just a tad bit more for the future. Tutoring to me means teaching my tutees, but learning in return, preparing them academically and to have a passion for what I do.

There's a little exchange of knowledge going on between me and my tutees. I teach them to excel in reading, grammar, science, and occasionally math and science. In exchange, unknowingly, they teach me valuable life lessons found only in a child's heart. They've taught me to smile more often, say good morning or good afternoon to someone who passes by or to just be me. I don't try to impress anyone for them to be my friends or act like a different person. They've taught me that friends are only friends if they accept you for who you are. It's strange how being around children who haven't experienced that much peer pressure are different than those who have. There's so much to learn from them. That's just part of being a tutor.

The main goal of tutoring seems to be to prepare them academically, and I'm doing my best to do just that. I especially want them to read more. I discovered the joy of reading chapter books in second grade. They're in fourth grade and haven't yet read a chapter book. The teacher says they're not prepared. But one really bright tutee named Carlos* asked me one day: "Mary I've read some short chapter books at home, and I really liked them. I was wondering if I could check one out some day." I responded, "I think you can, but just to make sure, I'll ask the teacher." The teacher said "No he can't, he'll probably fail the test." I know he won't, in my heart, but just to please the teacher I am going to work him up to a fourth grade level. That's two levels above his, and I'm making it my goal to have my tutees be at a normal reading level.

Another thing tutoring means to me is to have a passion for it. If there's no passion, what will feed the flame you feel to make your tutees succeed? Passion for what you do is fundamental in every career path and organization. Without passion you will lose your tutees' interest and won't get across to them. You might as well be speaking another language.

Tutoring to me means so much to me, it's hard to fit it all in one essay. Teaching might be my calling, but I'm not so certain right now. One thing is for sure, I love tutoring!

** name changed for privacy*

For more information on the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710, contact@idra.org , or visit www.idra.org/Coca-Cola_Valued_Youth_Program.

Attrition Study *– continued from Page 13*

impact the outcomes of the diverse Texas student population. In an article entitled "Holding On to the Goal of Quality Education for Every Child" in the September 2009 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*, Dr. Maria "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, IDRA's President and CEO, stated that disparities in educational opportunity and outcomes continue to divide our society based on class and color. She further stated that school-community teams with shared understandings and data about their local dropout and graduation rates could develop and implement comprehensive action plans to graduate all students. Improving school holding power is critical for the increasingly diverse student population in Texas public schools.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A., M. Robledo Montecel, and J. Supik. *Texas Dropout Survey Project* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

Montes, F. *Will the Student Attrition Rate Ever Drop to Zero?*, supplemental analysis published online only (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2009).

Robledo Montecel, M. "Holding On to the Goal of Quality Education for Every Child," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 2009).

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Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools By Race-Ethnicity, 2008-09

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Anderson	34	18	45	26
Andrews	100	7	21	15
Angelina	18	16	34	21
Aransas	11	29	34	29
Archer	.	1	**	0
Armstrong	.	10	50	14
Atascosa	**	8	32	25
Austin	15	2	31	12
Bailey	**	**	40	29
Bandera	100	26	33	28
Bastrop	25	18	31	23
Baylor	17	**	44	**
Bee	36	15	36	30
Bell	43	30	39	36
Bexar	42	24	45	39
Blanco	73	12	25	16
Borden	.	18	41	31
Bosque	32	9	14	11
Bowie	32	17	39	23
Brazoria	34	21	38	28
Brazos	45	8	38	26
Brewster	33	8	17	14
Briscoe	.	**	**	**
Brooks	.	26	37	36
Brown	29	14	33	19
Burleson	22	17	49	25
Burnet	39	18	34	23
Caldwell	11	7	14	11
Calhoun	17	16	38	29
Callahan	100	11	14	11
Cameron	43	20	46	45
Camp	38	11	47	28
Carson	.	8	26	8
Cass	**	13	46	13
Castro	.	0	19	13
Chambers	26	24	37	26
Cherokee	36	25	44	32
Childress	29	8	16	10
Clay	.	19	**	17
Cochran	33	5	13	11
Coke	.	32	49	43
Coleman	**	9	18	10
Collin	32	15	37	21
Collingsworth	38	20	22	21
Colorado	13	11	44	21
Comal	38	16	39	24
Comanche	.	18	26	22
Concho	**	**	17	3
Cooke	25	13	50	22
Coryell	33	24	31	27
Cottle	35	**	**	**
Crane	67	15	29	26
Crockett	.	**	30	3
Crosby	10	14	9	9
Culberson	.	**	**	**
Dallam	100	7	27	16
Dallas	36	5	49	35
Dawson	**	**	26	16
Deaf Smith	**	**	28	21
Delta	20	12	48	16
Denton	39	27	52	34

County Name	Attrition Rates[1] Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Dewitt	32	6	37	20
Dickens	0	**	**	**
Dimmit	13	13	42	39
Donley	47	8	47	18
Duval	.	17	32	31
Eastland	**	13	24	15
Ector	34	16	31	26
Edwards	75	42	5	21
Ellis	25	20	39	26
El Paso	30	21	36	34
Erath	38	19	40	26
Falls	11	5	21	11
Fannin	12	7	36	11
Fayette	18	8	52	22
Fisher	5	17	9	13
Floyd	6	**	28	14
Foard	**	17	**	7
Fort Bend	28	8	42	24
Franklin	23	16	37	16
Freestone	**	17	52	18
Frio	50	46	44	44
Gaines	3	10	7	9
Galveston	35	24	40	29
Garza	70	28	44	41
Gillespie	.	8	28	14
Glasscock	.	2	33	8
Goliad	30	24	31	26
Gonzales	18	16	27	21
Gray	7	9	35	17
Grayson	25	16	33	19
Gregg	38	13	47	26
Grimes	29	19	44	28
Guadalupe	26	20	47	32
Hale	17	6	38	29
Hall	**	4	8	5
Hamilton	60	4	37	10
Hansford	.	6	12	9
Hardeman	**	8	42	18
Hardin	8	24	19	22
Harris	39	13	46	35
Harrison	14	13	40	16
Hartley	.	10	18	11
Haskell	**	**	2	**
Hays	40	21	39	31
Hemphill	100	9	36	22
Henderson	20	23	28	23
Hidalgo	40	17	42	42
Hill	11	9	26	13
Hockley	**	17	23	19
Hood	**	24	40	26
Hopkins	32	16	39	22
Houston	40	28	35	34
Howard	43	18	39	29
Hudspeth	100	**	6	3
Hunt	37	19	49	27
Hutchinson	**	18	17	16
Irion	100	28	34	30
Jack	57	5	12	6
Jackson	41	4	33	17
Jasper	14	17	41	18
Jeff Davis	100	**	15	**

[1]Calculated by: (1) dividing the high school enrollment in the end year by the high school enrollment in the base year; (2) multiplying the results from Calculation 1 by the ninth grade enrollment in the base year; (3) subtracting the results from Calculation 2 from the 12th grade enrollment in the end year; and (4) dividing the results of Calculation 3 by the result of Calculation 2. The attrition rate results (percentages) were rounded to the nearest whole number.

** = Attrition rate is less than zero (0).
*** = No high school.

• = The necessary data are unavailable to calculate the attrition rate.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools By Race-Ethnicity, 2008-09 (continued)

County Name	Attrition Rates			
	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Jefferson	37	20	44	31
Jim Hogg	.	17	8	7
Jim Wells	31	10	34	31
Johnson	36	26	40	30
Jones	**	14	18	14
Karnes	14	**	6	2
Kaufman	43	32	50	36
Kendall	22	11	24	15
Kenedy				
Kent	.	20	100	26
Kerr	41	22	42	30
Kimble	100	20	55	33
King	.	**	0	6
Kinney	**	**	36	16
Kleberg	55	12	38	35
Knox	**	**	13	**
Lamar	33	17	44	21
Lamb	44	14	33	28
Lampasas	60	14	33	21
La Salle	.	16	31	31
Lavaca	40	**	38	4
Lee	32	15	34	23
Leon	17	5	46	13
Liberty	20	30	44	31
Limestone	29	4	42	20
Lipscomb	.	15	25	19
Live Oak	75	17	19	19
Llano	.	23	46	26
Loving				
Lubbock	21	8	29	19
Lynn	**	**	0	**
Madison	38	19	21	23
Marion	**	**	.	**
Martin	**	18	**	7
Mason	.	**	**	**
Matagorda	21	8	36	23
Maverick	57	44	33	33
McColluch	**	5	12	8
McLennan	32	15	39	26
McMullen	.	**	23	**
Medina	71	11	33	24
Menard	.	**	2	**
Midland	30	2	42	24
Milam	34	15	28	21
Mills	100	5	25	15
Mitchell	1	11	12	12
Montague	.	12	12	12
Montgomery	39	26	48	32
Moore	60	3	16	15
Morris	23	32	48	30
Motley	.	**	**	**
Nacogdoches	36	18	48	30
Navarro	34	16	44	29
Newton	29	20	44	23
Nolan	43	24	28	27
Nueces	22	12	32	26
Ochiltree	50	4	46	28
Oldham	20	5	23	9
Orange	37	21	36	25
Palo Pinto	20	18	31	21
Panola	11	23	56	22
Parker	28	20	37	22
Parmer	.	4	27	21
Pecos	78	22	35	35
Polk	3	31	32	27
Potter	30	16	37	26
Presidio	.	29	22	22

County Name	Attrition Rates			
	Black	White	Hispanic	Total
Rains	**	21	73	26
Randall	40	10	26	13
Reagan	**	**	**	**
Real	.	18	**	14
Red River	8	6	49	10
Reeves	11	10	29	27
Refugio	**	**	4	**
Roberts	.	14	86	28
Robertson	15	15	37	21
Rockwall	19	18	39	22
Runnels	54	7	19	13
Rusk	24	14	43	21
Sabine	4	20	**	18
San Augustine	24	14	26	19
San Jacinto	5	19	37	20
San Patricio	44	22	25	25
San Saba	100	18	9	14
Schleicher	.	10	7	9
Scurry	44	5	37	23
Shackelford	67	16	**	16
Shelby	25	20	54	28
Sherman	.	**	17	6
Smith	35	17	47	29
Somervell	83	14	37	20
Starr	0	**	39	39
Stephens	22	37	46	37
Sterling	.	**	**	**
Stonewall	.	**	100	**
Sutton	.	14	16	16
Swisher	57	**	**	**
Tarrant	37	18	44	30
Taylor	45	16	57	31
Terrell	.	47	11	31
Terry	28	**	3	**
Throckmorton	.	2	57	7
Titus	3	**	39	20
Tom Green	11	1	22	11
Travis	32	9	46	31
Trinity	30	22	68	28
Tyler	15	19	37	19
Upshur	30	19	32	21
Upton	.	**	1	**
Uvalde	0	10	28	25
Val Verde	42	27	33	32
Van Zandt	10	21	48	24
Victoria	47	23	55	44
Walker	28	14	27	21
Waller	23	26	43	32
Ward	45	15	29	24
Washington	32	**	53	13
Webb	**	9	35	35
Wharton	15	1	30	17
Wheeler	**	3	17	6
Wichita	27	9	31	16
Wilbarger	59	21	44	32
Willacy	100	34	35	34
Williamson	31	17	40	25
Wilson	**	13	28	20
Winkler	**	31	27	27
Wise	46	14	21	16
Wood	23	9	31	13
Yoakum	.	10	25	20
Young	**	17	27	18
Zapata	.	14	16	15
Zavala	13	**	21	21
Total	35	17	42	31

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2009.

School Attrition Rates and Title I School Accountability to Families – Necessary Information

IDRA published the first Texas public school attrition study for the 1985-86 school year and has consistently published that information annually. The methodology has been constant and is now acknowledged nationally. It is common knowledge that Texas schools are not holding on to and educating a large number of students.

Schools that serve low-income students are categorized as Title I schools because of the federal laws that apply to them. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires that families whose children attend a Title I school be informed about the status of the education of their children.

In fact, the intention of Title I since the early 1960s when President Johnson signed the first legislation has been to keep families informed. The most public indicator of school performance has been the student scores on state-mandated exams (Texas Assessment of Knowledge Skills). Yet, if we really want to hold our schools accountable, we need to also look at school holding power. How are our schools managing to hold on to their students through high school graduation? Attrition rates like those released in this newsletter are a critical piece of information for the whole community. And Texas schools are failing the school-holding-power course. In Texas, we are losing two in five Latino students and one in three African American students.

Even as official reports still attempt to explain away absent students through Texas' many "leaver codes" and attempt to classify the disappearing populations in innocuous or benign ways, the fact is: we are not educating large segments of the school-age population. And we will pay for it, clearly.

An even more complete and accurate picture of how a school is doing must have a framework that considers governance efficacy, appropriate resources, parent and family engagement, student engagement, teaching quality, and access to quality curriculum.

Parent Information and Resource Center activities with families have included presenting information online that speaks to these elements of IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework.

Parents and others in a school's community need to know specific information about their students, like…

- Are students prepared for post-secondary education?
- Do students understand the many possibilities available for their professional future?
- Do students have technological and Internet proficiency?
- Is students' development of skills and interests giving them insight into their unique gifts and talents?
- Are students ready to work hard for those things that will prepare them for the world of work and their lives as citizens and community members?

Our children, at a very minimum, must complete a full high school course of study. Title I school requirements, both in letter and spirit, help to equip people to work together toward this goal. Schools must hold on to students through high school graduation, and all families must be kept informed on their progress.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A., and M. Robledo Montecel, J. Supik. *Texas Dropout Survey Project* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

Montemayor, A.M. "Student and Parent Math Conversations," Classnotes podcast Episode 33 (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, April 29, 2008).

Montemayor, A.M. "This We Know – All of Our Children are Learning," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, May 2007).

Robledo Montecel, M. "A Quality Schools Action Framework: Framing Systems Change for Student Success," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2005).

Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., is an IDRA senior education associate and director of the Texas IDRA Parent Information and Resource Center. He also serves on the national board of PTA and Parents for Public Schools. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Dropout Counts *– continued from Page 8*

2004-05 to 2007-08, the number of dropouts increased by 27,506 students or by 150 percent. The dropout count was 2.50 times higher in 2007-08 than in 2004-05, and the dropout rate in 2007-08 was 2.4 times higher than in 2004-05.

Of the 45,796 dropouts in the latest report, 1,988 were in grades seven and eight, and 43,808 were in grades nine through 12. The reported seventh through eighth grade dropout rate was 0.3 percent, while the ninth through 12th grade dropout rate was 3.2 percent. The annual dropout rates for African American and Hispanic students in grades nine through 12 were much higher than the rates for White students. The rate for African American and Hispanic students was three times higher. The reported 2007-08 dropout rate for African American students was 3.33 times higher than that of White students, and the rate for Hispanic students was 2.93 times higher than the rate for White students.

IDRA continues its call for restructuring of the state dropout reporting system to one that provides accurate and understandable information on which schools and communities can make good decisions about improving school holding power. Historical information on the impact of the use of the national dropout definition should be reported as part of the state's annual reporting of dropout and school completion data. State and local education officials must acknowledge that Texas' old ways of counting the number of dropouts was not meeting the national "smell" test and that restructuring dropout and school completion methods must be taken.

Resources

Texas Education Agency. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007-08* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, July 2009).

Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of IDRA Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In August, IDRA worked with **6,259** teachers, administrators, parents and higher education personnel through **32** training and technical assistance activities and 155 program sites in the United States and Brazil. Some topics included:

- ✦ IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
- ✦ Native Language Instruction in Kindergarten
- ✦ Setting Up an Effective Parent Involvement Program
- ✦ IDRA Tecnology-Enhanced Community Neighborhood Organizations

Some participating agencies and school districts included:

- ✧ Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education (AGELE)
- ✧ Eagle Pass Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ✧ Edgewood Family Network

Activity Snapshot

There has been a shortage of qualified bilingual teachers and math and science teachers in Texas for many years. The Transitions and the Math and Science Smart programs are alternative teacher certification programs designed to increase the number of fully-qualified and credentialed bilingual/ESL and math and science teachers working with English language learners in "high-need" schools. These IDRA projects support teacher preparation and certification through alternative teacher certification routes for bilingual and Spanish dominant career-changing professionals and recent college graduates – in fields other than education – who desire to enter teaching and have a specific interest in bilingual education. These programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ✦ public school teachers
- ✦ parents
- ✦ administrators
- ✦ other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- ✧ training and technical assistance
- ✧ evaluation
- ✧ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- ✧ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710.

School Holding Power – continued from Page 2

Conclusions

In order to increase school holding power, schools and communities must not only set new goals pertaining to graduation rates, they also must examine schools as systems and proactively address issues that fail to keep students in school.

Working together, schools and communities must align educational goals with quality school indicators. IDRA's Quality Schools Action Framework provides specific recommendations on building community capacity, building coalitions, and strengthening school capacity to produce high quality schools and stem the leaks in the secondary school pipeline.

Resources

Robledo Montecel, M. "A Quality Schools Action Framework: Framing Systems Change for Student Success," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, November-December 2005).

Give Kids Good Schools. "What Makes a Quality Public School?" web site and fliers (Washington, D.C.: Public Education Network, no date).

Pinkus, L.M. "Moving Beyond AYP: High School Performance Indicators," Policy Brief (Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent in Education, June 2009).

Roy L. Johnson, M.S., is director of IDRA Support Services. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Get more info online at IDRA Newsletter Plus

- Quality Schools Action Framework
- School Holding Power Portal
- Podcasts about strengthening schools

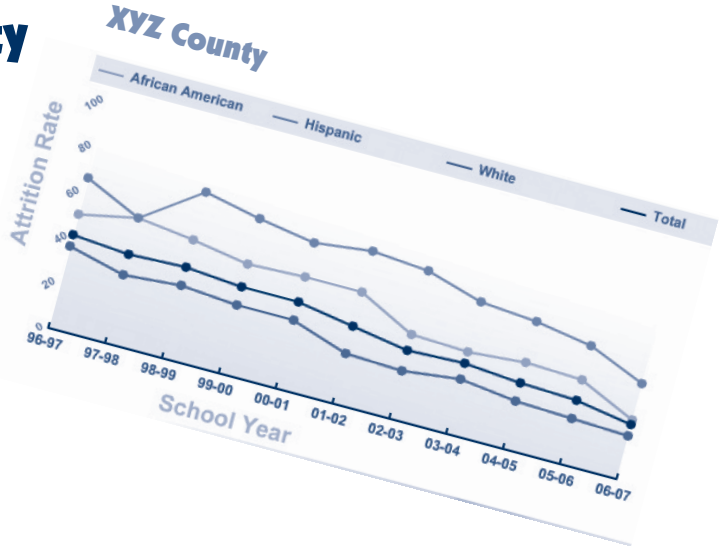
www.idra.org/newsletterplus

Look Up Your Texas County

IDRA is providing dropout trend data at your fingertips.

Go to the IDRA web site to see a graph of high school attrition in your county over the last 10 years. You'll also see the numbers of students by race-ethnicity who have been lost from enrollment in your county.

www.idra.org/Research/Attrition/



25 Years – continued from Page 10

meaning associated with the school and can then visualize themselves as future successful professionals. Those instructional strategies can operate efficiently because the program also has a set of five support strategies (evaluation, family involvement, staff enrichment, curriculum, and coordination) that guide their implementation and monitoring and provide the needed feedback for their continuous improvement. These supporting strategies will be the topic of an upcoming article.

Resources

Cárdenas, J., M. Robledo Montecel, J. Supik and R. Harris. "The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Dropout Prevention Strategies for At-Risk Students," Texas Researcher (Winter 1992) Volume 3.

Intercultural Development Research Association. *Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Important Information for Schools and Agencies One Step Away from Implementation* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1990).

Robledo Montecel, et al. Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Implementation Guides: Elementary Principal Guide; Elementary Teacher Guide; Evaluation Guide; Program Administrator Guide; Secondary Principal Guide (San Antonio, Intercultural Development Research Association, revised 2004).

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"Professional Development for Secondary Math Teachers" IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 59 – Jack Dieckmann, Ph.D., a former senior math education specialist at IDRA and current doctoral student at Stanford, discusses how teacher training needs to validate teacher experience and address multiple dimensions like content and language development.

"The Teacher as a Culturally Proficient Coach" IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 58
Adela Solís, Ph.D., an IDRA senior education associate, describes IDRA's unique model of training teacher mentors that incorporates principles of cultural proficiency with cognitive coaching.

"Helping Schools Address Issues of Race" IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 57 – Bradley Scott, Ph.D., director of the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, describes the kinds of support that the federally-funded equity assistance centers provide to help school leaders and communities address issues of race in order to ensure that all of their students have an equal opportunity for academic achievement.

"The Family Friendly Principal" IDRA Classnotes Podcast Episode 56 – Rogelio López del Bosque, Ed.D., discusses how he created a family friendly school during his recent five-year term as a high school principal in order to bring families into the conversation of creating a school that achieved success for all students.

www.idra.org/podcasts

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