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October 2016 IDRA Newsletter

This month's focus: Push Outs - Children of Color



This issue of the IDRA Newsletter provides highlights from IDRA's annual attrition study for Texas that will be released soon, a story on in-grade retention in the early years, a story on instruction for secondary English learners, a winning essay by a tutor in the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program.

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Push Outs - Children of Color

Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2015-16 — High School Attrition Inches Up to 25 Percent

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.



The overall high school attrition rate in Texas inched up by one percentage point from 24 percent in 2014-15 to 25 percent in 2015-16. IDRA's latest annual attrition study shows that, for the first time since 1995-96 to 1996-97, the overall attrition rate in Texas has increased following 18 years of rates that either declined or held constant from one year to the next. (The overall attrition rate increased from 42 percent in 1995-96 to 43 percent in 1996-97).

This year's increase was not unexpected as the forecast models by IDRA's Dr. Felix Montes predicted that the attrition rate would increase to up to 26 percent before resuming its downward trajectory (2015).

This year's study is the 31st in a series of annual reports on trends in dropout and attrition rates in Texas public schools. It shows that high school attrition rates in Texas have declined from 33 percent three decades ago to 25 percent in 2015-16. Despite this one point increase, recent trends in attrition rates for Texas public high schools continue to reflect a positive outlook for the total high school population and for most race-ethnicity and gender groups. Since conducting the first comprehensive study of school dropouts in Texas in 1985-86, IDRA has conducted attrition analyses to assess schools' abilities to hold on to their students until they graduate. - [Keep reading](#)



See the latest IDRA attrition study & resources online

In-Grade Retention in the Early Years — What's Holding Children Back?

by Paula Johnson, M.A.

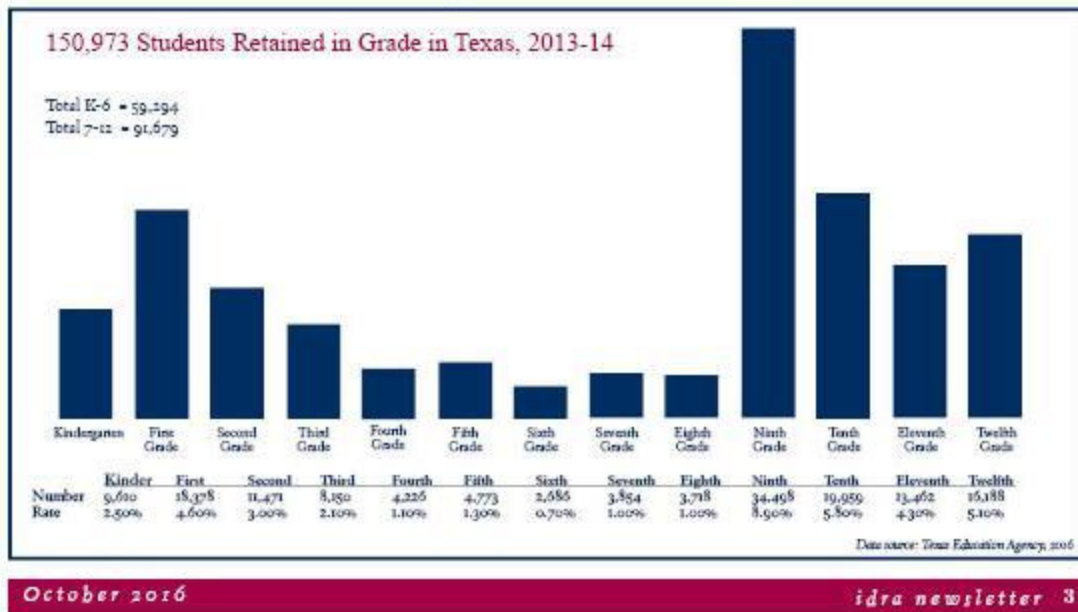
How willing are you to lose 2 percent of anything? Two cents of a dollar, 32 minutes out of a day. It doesn't seem like much, does it? Unfortunately, that value takes on quite a different meaning when it represents the percentage of public school students retained during a school year.

And it is even more alarming when it means that 59,294 of the 2,679,569 public school students enrolled in grades K-6 during the 2013-14 school year in Texas were not promoted to the next grade (Texas Education Agency, 2016). Though this article



focuses on Texas, the patterns and trends seen here are comparable to those across the country.

Much attention is placed on completion data. And for good reason. We want an educational system that allows students to successfully complete high school with the foundation to become productive citizens. However, research suggests that educators must focus on critical transition points that occur earlier in students' academic careers in order to develop effective interventions toward reducing dropout rates years later in high school (Jerald, 2006). - [Keep reading](#)



Instruction for Secondary English Learners — Major Challenges, Solutions and Possibilities

by Kristin Grayson, Ph.D.




Simultaneously learning English and academic content can be challenging for any student. The same is true for teachers who are providing this simultaneous instruction. At the secondary level (grades 7-12), language and content are especially challenging because the academic language includes complex grammar (such as the passive voice) and a high number of vocabulary items, including low frequency words (Teach Away, 2012). Effective teachers consider the many variables, such as the age of the learner, prior schooling, previous experiences, and their native language when planning and delivering instruction.

The What Works Clearinghouse has identified strategies, with low to moderate evidence of success, that are associated with quality instruction of English learners (Baker, et al., 2014). Clearly, the research is insufficient, and more is needed to accurately inform policy and instructional practices that lead to improved student outcomes (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). Additionally, research is needed to clarify how to help teachers further develop their complex

understandings of how language works, how it varies under different circumstances, and what this means for teacher instructional practice and preparation (Kibler & Valdés, 2016).

This article reviews some of the latest research on secondary English learners and then focuses on programs, professional development and instructional practices that are being used in successful schools with English learners. It also discusses Office for Civil Rights requirements for effective instruction for English learners. - [Keep reading](#)

 See IDRA's José A. Cárdenas School Finance Fellows Program Symposium Proceedings

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program Winning Essay

High School First Place


Stefan García,

12th grade, Odessa High School, Ector County ISD, Texas

First of all I'd like to take this time to thank the school district and my teachers for giving me this wonderful opportunity. Not only have I seen a glimpse of what it's like to be a teacher, I also have been given the chance to help shape a new generation of our nation's youth. Teachers are our nation's backbone. I know the average salary of a teacher is not nearly as much as it should be. This tells me something important, something all students should know. No teacher is in it for the money. The reason they are teachers is because they know the importance of leadership. It takes patience and dedication to be a teacher. Most students do not know this.

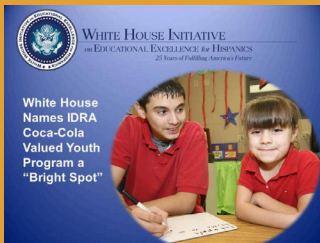


The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been mainly about being a leader. To be a leader you must guide, care and nurture for the people you are leading. The characteristics of a leader are that of a mother or father. Not only do you have to care for the people you are leading, you must create a bond with each and every one of them. With some people, you will find out you might need a little bit more patience. - [Keep reading](#)

 See other winning essays.

Learn more about the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

The program was named a Hispanic Ed "Bright Spot" by the White House



As a Bright Spot, the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is part of a national online catalog of programs that invest in key education priorities for Hispanics. The announcement was made last October by Alejandra Ceja, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics at the launch of Hispanic Heritage Month and in honor of the initiative's 25th anniversary in Washington, D.C. - [See the catalog](#)

The program was featured as an "American Graduate Champion" by PBS KLRN-SA



KLRN's American Graduate Day 2015 celebrated Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel and IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. KLRN produced new video spot about the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is online [01:30 min]. - [Watch now](#)

Video: IDRA Coca Cola Valued Youth Program - Dropout Prevention that Works



The IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is a research-based, internationally-recognized dropout prevention program that has kept 98 percent of its tutors in school. See this quick video and learn more about the program and how to bring this program to your school. [12:00 min] - [Watch now](#)

[Program Brochure](#)

In Memoriam

Ms. Sarah H. Alemán, friend and colleague, passed away on August 30, 2016, at her home in the company of her family. Her grandmother, sister, nieces, nephew, many cousins and godchildren will miss her deeply. All of us at IDRA extend our condolences.

Sarah was a treasured part of the IDRA family for 32 years. She began her work here on April 16, 1984. She provided support in multiple areas, including layout of the IDRA Newsletter and our annual attrition study. She approached her work with the same detail, care and serenity that she shared with her family.



Que en paz descanses, Sarah, y que la luz perpetua brille sobre ti siempre.

Classnotes Podcasts on Student Voice

Building Parent Voice for Action - Episode 146

Counting Dropouts - Episode 62

The Power of Student Voices in Dropout Prevention - Episode 125

College for All - Episode 75

Continuities with Lessons in Dropout Prevention - Episode 63



Tracking vs. High Quality Education for All Students - Episode 124

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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.