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## Transforming Education by Putting Kids First



### IDRA Newsletter – This Issue's Focus: College Readiness and Access

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## What's Inside

### Highlights of IDRA's 35th Annual Texas Public School Attrition Study – Pre-COVID-19 Attrition Rate was Down to 20%

*by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.*

Pre-COVID-19 analyses of attrition rate data in Texas public schools show continued gradual improvement overall, albeit with persistent disparities among racial and ethnic student groups.

IDRA conducted the first comprehensive study of school dropouts in Texas for the 1985-86 school year. Since comprehensive statewide data on school dropouts did not exist, IDRA developed an attrition methodology that has since become a standard method used by education researchers.



In the 2019-20 school year, the statewide attrition rate was 20% or one percentage point lower than last year. Over the years, attrition rates for all student groups have fallen and this trend continues in 2019-20, except for white and Latino students, whose rates stayed the same.

Overall, Texas public schools still fail to graduate one out of every five students. For the class of 2020, Latino students and Black students were two times more likely to leave school without graduating than white students.

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### College Degrees Are Worth It – People with Bachelor's Degrees Have Lower Poverty Rates

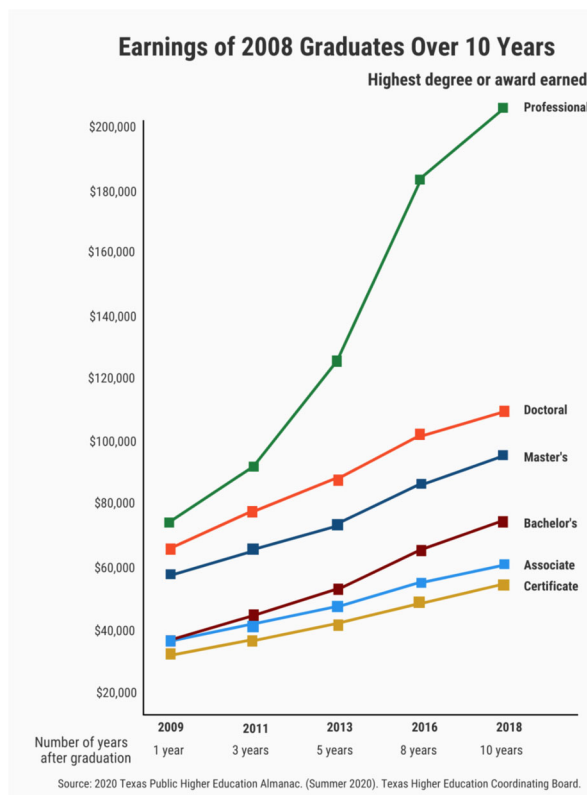
*by Bricio Vasquez, Ph.D.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the U.S. economy and brought financial uncertainty and turmoil to millions of households, further highlighting the economic benefits of those who have completed higher education. A college degree is all but a prerequisite for social and economic mobility in the United States.

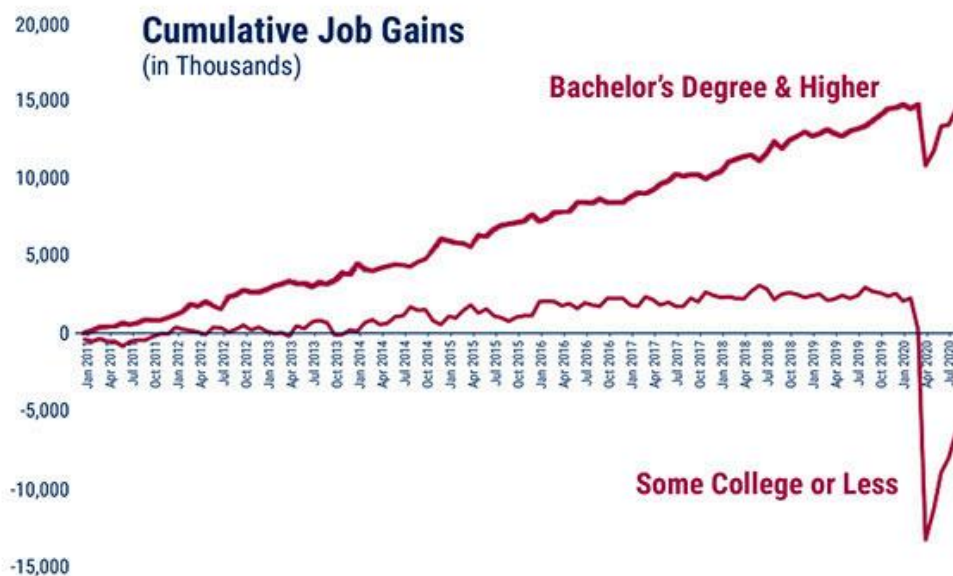


Data show that adults with at least a bachelor's degree earn more income throughout their lives, have stronger protections against unemployment risk, are less likely to experience poverty and are more likely to have health insurance.

In 2019, people with a bachelor's degree earned \$30,468 more than those without a high school diploma, \$24,388 more than those with a high school diploma or equivalent, and \$18,219 more than those with some college or an associate's degree. College access and preparation are vitally important to help students thrive.



## Since 2010, Job Gains Have Not Been Evenly Distributed



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Avalon Advisors, October 2020

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## How the IDRA EAC-South Helps School Districts Increase Access to Advanced Courses for Students of Color

by Paula Johnson, Ph.D.

Enrollment of Black students and Latino students in specialized instruction programs, such as gifted and talented, advanced placement, and dual credit, is disproportionately lower than other students. Oftentimes, disparities are due to structural barriers. For example, among high schools with the highest percentage of Black and Latino students, one in four do not even offer Algebra 2, and one in three do not offer chemistry.



The IDRA EAC-South helps school districts identify and address barriers to higher level courses and advanced programs. This includes examining key indicators to include policies, instructional supports, professional development and family engagement. Districts that the IDRA EAC-South works with use findings to inform development of action plans to expand educational opportunities for underrepresented students, promote a college and career culture, and increase family engagement at all grade levels.



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## IDRA EAC-South

Helping school districts protect students' civil rights in public schools

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[www.idraeacsouth.org](http://www.idraeacsouth.org)

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## Meaningful Strategies for Making STEM Accessible

*by Stephanie García, Ph.D., and Asmaa Mansour*

STEM is the foundation of innovation and discovery. It balances the technical with the creative to transform how we live and imagine our future. But there are many inequities in STEM education, including the underrepresentation of

women and people of color in STEM pathways. Gaps in STEM education lead to similar underrepresentation in corresponding careers, especially for women.

Making STEM truly accessible requires dismantling structures that perpetuate inequities that traumatize and “other” women and people of color. Major shifts can occur in public education and postsecondary classrooms, including transforming leadership and pedagogical practices. This article describes three strategies for educators.



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## IDRA Names Four New Fellows

The IDRA Education Policy Fellows Program is generously supported by Trellis Foundation and in partnership with the John Gardner Public Service Fellowship, facilitated by Stanford University’s Haas Center for Public Service.

This month, we named four new Education Policy Fellows.



**Dr. Altheria Caldera**

IDRA Policy Fellow –  
Preparation and Access to College



**Thomas Marshall III**

IDRA Education Policy Fellow –  
Digital Communications



**Christina Muñoz**



**Dr. Nino Rodríguez**

IDRA Policy Fellow – Preparation and  
Access to College

IDRA Policy Fellow – Racial Justice and  
Stopping the School-to-Prison  
Pipeline

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## News

### Recent IDRA News

[Virginia Commission Facilitated by IDRA Finds Black History is Incomplete in State Curriculum – Recommendations Informed by IDRA’s Framework for Culturally Responsive Education](#), September 2, 2020

[State Board of Education Should Vote Against All New Charter Proposals](#), September 10, 2020

[Recommendations for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Science](#), September 30, 2020

Infographic: [11 Women scientists who should be in the Texas K-12 science standards, just to get the ball rolling](#)

[Bring the Texas Chief Science Officers Program to Your School! – Help students lead their peers in promoting STEM](#), October 7, 2020

### Texas Interim Charge Testimony

Joint Testimony by the Texas Postsecondary Advocates Coalition (PAC): [Texas Interim Charge 4, Questions 1, 4, 6: Digital Divide](#), September 1, 2020

[Joint Testimony: Teaching Quality, Texas House Higher Education Committee Interim Charge #3 \(Questions 1-3\)](#), September 1, 2020

[Texas Must Maintain Equity and Fully Fund Schools in HB 3 Implementation](#) – Interim Charge 2, September 29, 2020

[Accountability Interventions that Harm School Communities Need to be Revisited](#), September 29, 2020

[Students Need Positive, Safe School Climates](#), September 29, 2020

[Civil Rights Groups Urge California Voters to Reinstate Affirmative Action in Higher Ed](#), September 29, 2020

**Texas Must Uphold Maintenance of Equity in HB 3 Implementation**, September 29, 2020

**Joint Testimony by the Educational Justice Coalition: Response to Public Interim Charge 1(f)** to the Texas House Public Education Committee, September 30, 2020

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Reach Out To Us



The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization. Our mission is to achieve equal educational opportunity for every child through strong public schools that prepare all students to access and succeed in college. 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.

October 30, 2020