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Temporary Policy Relieves High-Stakes for 6,000 Students

Use of Individual Graduation Committees Unlocks Diplomas for Qualified Students

San Antonio (November 14, 2016) - Students who are economically disadvantaged, Latino or African American benefited most from the alternative graduation policy established by the Texas legislature in SB149. For the 2014-15 school year, 12,077 students were assigned an individual graduation committee, and about half of those (6,279) were recommended for graduation.

Texas requires students to pass five exit STAAR exams to graduate high school. With the new policy, students who have completed all requirements and do not pass one or two of the end-of-course exams may still graduate if approved by an individual graduation committee (IGC). The policy is set to expire in 2017.

"Student assessment is essential to informing good teaching and can help communities hold local schools accountable for effectively serving all students, but children must not be hurt in the process," said [Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel](#), IDRA president and CEO. "Texas policy often goes too far by basing promotion and graduation on performance on the state's mandated tests."

The Intercultural Development Research Association's [analysis of the new IGC policy](#) was released this month with its [high school attrition study](#). Key findings show:

- In the 2014-15 school year, 12,077 students were assigned an individual graduation committee (IGC). Of these, 52 percent (6,279) were recommended for graduation.
- Latino students comprise 68 percent of IGC graduates and 48 percent of all graduates.

- Economically disadvantaged students comprise 74 percent of IGC graduates and 47 percent of all graduates.
- IGC graduates account for 2 percent of all graduates in Texas.
- Of the 3,684 IGC graduates failing one high school exit exam, the English II and U.S. History exams account for 83 percent of all IGC graduates.
- Of the 1,991 students failing two end-of-course exams, fewer than 1 percent failed a combination of exams that did not include either the English II or U.S. History exam.

"IDRA and others have been calling for accountability that does not misuse testing data for holding students back in grade or preventing them from graduating," said [David Hinojosa, J.D.](#), IDRA National Director of Policy and author of the IGC study. "Reliance on a single measure fails to consider multiple factors that impact student achievement, including the fact that the student has no control over inequitable school resources or the quality of teaching they receive."

The IGC consists of the school principal or designee, the teacher of the course, the teacher's supervisor or department chair, and the parent or designee or student. They review the student's academic record to determine his or her eligibility to graduate. The IGC analysis and IDRA's latest attrition study are available online.

Temporary Texas Policy Relieves High-Stakes for 6,000 Students

Texas requires students to pass five exit STAAR exams to graduate high school. With the new policy put in place in 2019, students who have completed all requirements and do not pass one or two of the end-of-course exams may still graduate if approved by an individual graduation committee. The policy is set to expire in 2027.

There were 6,279 individual graduation committee graduates in 2024-25.

Category	Count
Mathematics	16
Asian American	1,198
White	1,345
Black	1,021
Latino	4,265
Economically Disadvantaged	4,854

"Student assessment is essential to informing good teaching and can help communities hold local schools accountable for effectively serving all students, but children must not be hurt in the process."
 — Dr. María "Caro" Robledo Montecel, IDRA president and CEO

Students who are economically disadvantaged, Latino or African American benefited most from the new policy in 2024-25.

Category	Percent of IGC Graduates	Percent of All Graduates
Economically Disadvantaged	74%	47%
Latino	68%	39%
Black	16%	12%
White	12%	21%
Asian American	2%	1%
Medical	2%	1%

IGC graduates account for 2 percent of all graduates in Texas.

Some ways accountability systems hurt children

- ✗ Holding students back a year, even when they may have only needed help in one subject
- ✗ Increasing children's stress and anxiety over testing – the pressure can begin as early as kindergarten
- ✗ Denying diplomas, even for those who passed all their classes
- ✗ Disregarding what students do know and have learned
- ✗ Diluting instruction for all or part of a school year to focus on test-taking skills
- ✗ Punishing students for not knowing what they may not have been taught

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— Dr. Mario "Coco" Robledo Montecel, IDRA president and CEO

Infographic - IGC Policy

Use of individual graduation committees unlocks diplomas for qualified students

[See Infographic](#)

Temporary Texas Policy Using Individual Graduation Committee Relieves High-Stakes for 6,000 Students

By David Thomas, IDA

Individual graduation committees (IGCs) are a critical component of the new graduation policy in Texas. They allow students who have completed all requirements but failed one or two exit STAAR exams to graduate if approved by an individual graduation committee. The policy is set to expire in 2027.

IGC Graduate	Number of IGC Graduates	Number of All Graduates	Percent of All Graduates
All Graduates	1,215,000	1,215,000	100%
IGC Graduates	6,279	1,215,000	0.52%

Article

Temporary Texas Policy Using IGCs Relieves High-Stakes for 6,000 Students

[See Article](#)

Texas public schools are losing 1 out of 4 students

It has taken three decades to improve by 8 percentage points from 32 percent to 24.

Schools are twice as likely to lose Hispanic students and Black students before they graduate.

Schools are still losing 1 in 3 Hispanic students and 1 in 4 Black students.

Universal high school graduation is at least a quarter of a century away

Texas stands to lose another 2.25 million students.

Attrition Rate = 27% (2015)

Attrition Rate = 24% (2035)

It doesn't have to be this way
www.idra.org

All children are valuable. None is expendable.

Infographic - Attrition

Texas public schools are losing one out of four students

[See Infographic](#)

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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.