ABSTRACT

            This document contains the 10 issues of the IDRA Newsletter
published in 2002. The newsletter disseminates research findings,
descriptions of successful programs and reforms, and other information
related to equality of educational opportunity, focusing on Hispanic
students, bilingual education, and Texas. Articles are: "Successful Bilingual
Education Programs: Indicators of Success at the School Level" (Maria Robledo
Montecel, Josie Danini Cortez); "Engaged Accountability: Practices and
Policies To Open Doors to Higher Education" (Rosana G. Rodriguez, Abelardo
Villarreal); "Binational Collaboration Prepares New Teachers" (Linda Cantu);
"Children-Based Reform: Can Standards Meet It?" (Micaela Diaz-Sanchez,
Aurelio M. Montemayor); "Mathematics Achievement for All? Yes!" (Jack
Dieckmann); "Collaborating for Educational Reform" (Albert Cortez, Josie
Danini Cortez); "'I Saw the Flame': Student Reflection" (Sofia Bahena);
"Arkansas Educators Explore Ways To Better Serve Their Growing Numbers of
English Language Learners" (Jose L. Rodriguez); "TESOL Statement on Language
and Literacy Development for Young English Language Learners"; "Teachers and
Instructional Technology: Wise or Foolish Choices" (Laura Chris Green);
"Who's Responsible, Who's To Blame?" (Bradley Scott); "Emerging Gender Issues
in Education" (Aurora Yanez); "Holding the Line: School Finance Reform in
Texas" (Albert Cortez); "They Believed in Us: Student Reflection" (Yanessa
Romero); "Excelling English Language Learners: An Innovative Professional
Development Program" (Jack Dieckmann); "Texas Assessment of Knowledge and
Skills: The Next Stage in Texas' Challenge To Meet High Standards" (Adela
Solis); "A Strategy of Support for Publicly-Funded Charter Schools" (Bradley
Scott); "Dropping Out of School in Arizona: IDRA Conducts a New
Study" (Albert Cortez, Josie Danini Cortez, Maria Robledo Montecel); "Texas
Needs Diplomas, Not Delusions" (Maria Robledo Montecel); "Educational
Technology: An International Conversation" (Felix Montes; Linda Cantu);
"Texas Schools Have Weak Holding Power: Texas Public School Attrition Study,

2001-02" (Roy L. Johnson); "School Holding Power Goal: Unachieved in Texas" (Roy L. Johnson); "ACCESS - San Antonio: A Community Collaborates for Student Success" (Josie Danini Cortez, Albert Cortez); "Improving Educational Impact through Community and Family Engagement" (Rosana G. Rodriguez, Abelardo Villarreal); and "Closing the Graduation Gap for Latino Students" (Pam McCollum, Rosana G. Rodriguez). Issues also announce new publications and conferences. (SV)

Intercultural Development Research Association

Newsletter

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IDRA Newsletter

Successful Bilingual Education Programs

Indicators of Success at the School Level

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., and Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

Inside this Issue:

Editor's Note: Recently, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) conducted a research study with funding by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) to identify characteristics that contribute to the high academic performance of students served by bilingual education programs. A series of six articles in the IDRA Newsletter describes this research study's significant findings. The November-December 2001 issue featured the major findings in student outcomes and assessment, as will this fifth installment.

Research finds that exemplary bilingual education programs hold school staff accountable for their students' success, while providing them with the support and tools they need. These programs also nurture meaningful parent and community involvement. Our study of 10 exemplary bilingual education programs confirms this.

IDRA researched school- and classroom-level indicators of successful bilingual education programs. Our extensive review of current research provided a strong theoretical framework with indicators conducive to successful programs for limited-English-proficient (LEP) students.

These indicators were framed as research questions in 10 areas: leadership, vision and goals, school climate, linkages, school organization and accountability, professional development, parent involvement, staff accountability and assessment, staff selection and recognition, and community involvement.

This article provides IDRA's major findings in the second set of five of the 10 school-level indicators; the first five were presented in the November-December 2001 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*.

Five main questions guided the research for school-level indicators. Each question had a more detailed subset of questions. The questions that guided the research for five of the school level indicators follow.
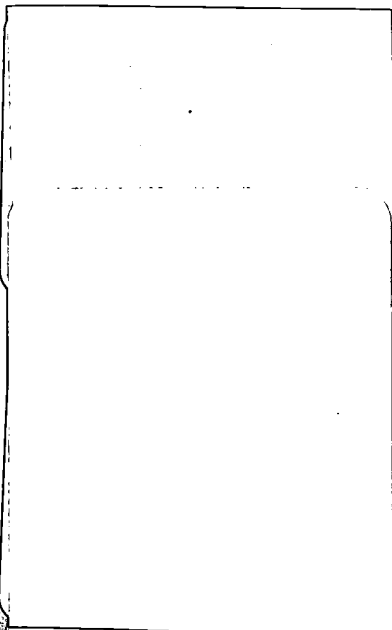
Professional Development – What are the demographic

characteristics of professional staff, and what opportunities for professional development are provided (Milk et al., 1992; Villarreal, 1999)?

• Do fully-credentialed bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) teachers receive training that is aligned with the instructional plan prepared for LEP students?

• Do teachers also receive training and technical assistance as needed, particularly regarding best practices in bilingual education and ESL?

Parent Involvement – What is the type, level and quality of parent involvement in the school and the bilingual education program (McLoed, 1996; Robledo Montecel et al., 1993)?

• Do parents feel welcomed and play different roles (leadership, decision-making, resource) in the educational process?

• Does the school provide opportunities for parents who do not speak English to participate?

• Do parents meet with teachers and administrators to discuss their individual and team responsibilities?

At the schools IDRA studied, parents were strong advocates of the bilingual programs and were welcome in their children's schools, not as "helpers" but as partners engaged in meaningful activities within the school structure.

• Together, does the team provide support to ensure that LEP students reach the goals established for all students?

• In the same way, do students outline the ways in which they will be responsible for their own learning?

• Are these responsibilities shared with parents?

• Do students, parents and teachers discuss and reinforce the importance of meeting those responsibilities in ensuring success?

Staff Accountability and Student Assessment – How do staff

hold themselves accountable for student success, and how are students assessed (Berman et al., 1995; Valdez-Pierce and O'Malley, 1992)?

• Is there alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment?

• Does the school assess student progress and continually re-evaluate its capacity to help all students reach high standards?

• Do the staff believe that assessments must measure authentic work of students and involve them and their parents in the process?

• Does student assessment and progress monitoring use baseline student data on language and content knowledge to plan and adjust instruction?

• Are responsibilities for student success clear, and are they shared with all school personnel?

• Do teachers use periodic, systematic and multiple student assessment measures to inform the instructional decision-making process?

• Do staff hold themselves accountable

In This Issue...

Engaged Accountability: Practices and Policies to Open Doors to Higher Education

**Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D.
and Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D.**

The 2000 Census tells us that the U.S. Latino population is larger than the entire population of Canada and equal to the combined population of 22 U.S. states. One-third of Latinos are under age 18, and half are under 26 (Geary, 2001).

This is an enormous opportunity for educators, parents and communities to target Latino success in education as a high-priority concern. With significant growth anticipated in Latino student numbers in all areas of the United States, it is imperative for us to harness the enormous intellectual, economic, spiritual and human resource this population represents to our nation.

Institutions must focus on the practices and policies that either facilitate or impede access to higher education for this group and take action accordingly.

This is the third in a series of articles in the *IDRA Newsletter* aimed at raising awareness of institutional responsibilities to engage families and communities in efforts that create positive educational environments for a diverse student population. This article provides insights on practices and policies that open access to higher education, especially for Latino students, in kindergarten through
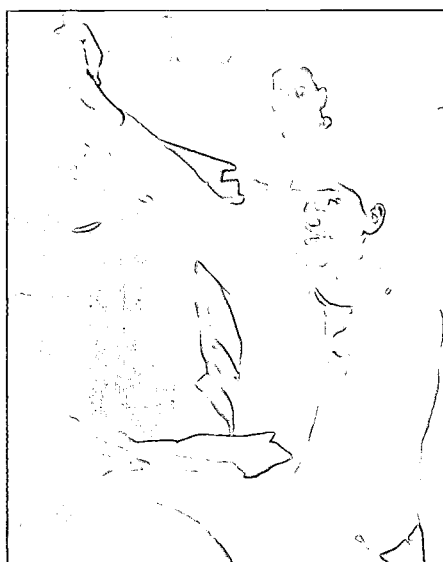
college graduation (K-16).

Successful transformations in practice and policy begin by taking stock of the assets that nourish Latino student success in schools, universities and communities. These assets include compassionate and caring teachers, schools and institutions that value the impact of diversity, and communities that articulate high expectations to their students.

Each system has unique strengths in supporting students through the educational pipeline. The individual or collective practices of school systems and communities can create a web of support for students entering into and completing higher education. With a Latino majority existing or emerging in many K-12 systems throughout the

country, there are a host of pending related policy proposals and practices that are critical to the success and life opportunities for Latino students.

Hispanics currently make up 14.5 percent or 3.6 million of the total traditional college-age population. By the year 2025, Latinos will make up 22 percent of the college-age population. Because of their location in the community, affordability, and flexibility in offering courses, community colleges enroll about half of Hispanic students in undergraduate education.

Just over half of all Hispanic students enrolled in higher education are in California and Texas. Almost three-fourths of Hispanic students enrolled in higher education are in California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas.

During a dialogue with K-12 educators and university administrators in Santa Ana, California about issues of Latino access and admissions to higher education, leaders explored practices and key policies that have been barriers to Latino success in higher education. The thought-provoking discussion addressed contextual and process factors that affect access to quality services for Latino students.

This article describes these factors. This discussion is germane to

other settings in the United States and could provide some important insights that can serve as a backdrop to formulate plans and be used to inform a blueprint for change.

Teacher Preparation and Development

Teacher preparation should advocate equity and excellence to serve a changing student body.

Universities can call on the cultural and linguistic assets of the community to enrich and expand existing curricula for teacher preparation.

The importance of pro-active inclusion of parents in the learning process should be stressed throughout the internship period.

There is a critical shortage of Latino teachers in many urban and rural areas. Early teacher education recruitment can be effective at middle school or earlier, offering opportunities for young people to obtain financial aide and create student success and placement agreements

School and University Partnerships

Excellent education is a seamless process that extends from early elementary through higher education. Currently, higher education institutions are set up as separate entities that seldom communicate or coordinate student support efforts.

Ideally, accountability is shared by education partnerships that include schools, universities, community colleges and families. These partnerships can result in greater articulation and alignment of curriculum at local, regional and state levels.

Creating a seamless web of support for students requires collaboration with advocacy groups and other community-based organizations that support families and student success.

An emphasis in all grades of a continuous educational pipeline and into lifelong learning is indispensable. The appropriate and frequent question for students and their parents should change from "Are you going to college?" to "Where are you going to college?" and "Do you know the path, are you on that path, and what support is needed to stay on that path?"

Aggressive and Focused Outreach

Effective higher education outreach is culturally sensitive. It recognizes and is responsive to the needs of the constituents to be served. One example is to pay special attention to the proximity of the community college or university to geographic accessibility for students and families.

Other examples include having open accessibility for part-time as well as full-time enrollment; a community service orientation that describes

opportunities for community members to serve as resources for the university; and campus days for parents and families of elementary, middle and high school students that can be effective in demystifying the goal of higher education.

Aggressive Retention Strategies

Campuses need to address retention strategies in addition to recruitment. They must provide ongoing academic, financial and social support for students. This support includes availability of non-credit centers that can offer skill sets that students will need in order to succeed in college, including strengthening basic and study skills.

Attention should also be given to creating an active climate within the campus that supports student groups and activities, such as mentoring, learning communities, and service
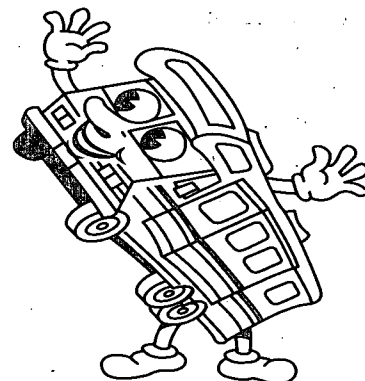
learning.

A key component for improving persistence rates involves having sufficient numbers of adequately prepared counselors at the high school and community college levels who participate in a coordinated system of student support.

Diversity at All Levels

For optimal learning, students need to see a reflection of the community in the role models of their teachers and professors throughout the educational pipeline. The presence and valuing of diversity enriches the quality of life for the campus and the learning experience as a whole. For a more equitable system it is paramount to appoint regents who reflect diversity, especially of the population in the states they serve.

Student Financial Support

Quality programs that offer access and equity are mindful of the availability of student financial support. Schools can help to demystify the process of higher education through aggressive outreach campaigns to offer information and assistance to parents and students about the requirements and application processes for financial support. Critical information should be distributed early to parents of elementary and secondary school students so that families can make long-range, realistic plans.

Early Assessment and Support

Students benefit from comprehensive assessment that identifies potential areas for support early in their college careers. Targeted recruitment of students by colleges can offer support for students who may need remedial help in key areas such as writing and composition and in higher-order thinking skills in critical academic areas such as English and math.

College Success

I always knew I would go to college. I did not know how. I did not know where. But I did know why. College was a way of giving back – giving back what I was so generously given…

So, I got help and I helped others. Learning and schooling are worth the effort, and being educated is more than being schooled. Over the years, I have met people – too many people – who believe that educational achievement among Latinos is merely an individual feat of those few who manage to divest themselves of the baggage that is their family, their culture, and their language. These people are wrong. The broad and strong shoulders of our families, of our communities, of our culture, and of our language are helping many of us to meet the challenge of educational institutions that too often remain closed to Latino students.

by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., IDRA executive director. Excerpted from *The Latino Student's Guide to College Success*, edited by Leonard A. Valverde (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002).

Partnerships with K-12 school programs can promote extensive summer in-service education for students prior to entering and during the early college years, especially in mathematics and the use of technology.

Clearly-Articulated and Student-Focused Mission

A commitment to diversity at both the student and faculty levels will herald the climate for a transformative environment. A clearly-articulated mission provides the context for clear, systemwide goals and shared accountability for increasing outcomes in the number of student transfers and associate, vocational, undergraduate and post-graduate degrees.

Comprehensive Impact Strategies

Any initiative to improve educational opportunities for Latino students should include rigorous programs for evaluation, communication and dissemination of results to a broader range of stakeholders, including businesses, families and community members. These impact strategies

must incorporate a plan for sustainability of support for student success long-term and provide for interconnectedness of every element of the pre-kindergarten through sixth grade system.

An effective marketing and communication strategy engages the broader public and connects the media to stories of young students and back again to the public to gain broader support, shared decision making and accountability.

Clearly-Articulated Pathways to College

A comprehensive plan for improving access, persistence and graduation rates for Latino students includes K-12 and community college-prep standards and systems alignment. A commitment to an equitable path for all students includes listing courses and grades needed, in the early grades, for parents and students to better understand and prepare for the road to college. Other strategies for clearing the path to college are dual admissions programs that include counseling and

support components.

Policies as the Gatekeepers to Student Success

A comprehensive review of practices and policies that support or impede student success is key to transformation. Areas of policy that need to be assessed include outreach strategies, assessment and placement practices, curricular and instructional requirements, and access and graduation. Examples include the unique needs of Latino immigrant students and families, who because of prohibitive legislation and practices in some states, must pay foreign student fees or out-of-state immigrant fees, instead of local in-state fees, for college participation.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that the success of students throughout the educational pipeline is a shared responsibility of all: parents, the community, pre-kindergarten through higher education, business and support groups, and local, state and federal government. The time for blaming one segment of the educational pipeline, a segment of the community, parents, or government for low educational achievement is over.

We must enter into a new age of inter-connectedness that leaves no sector behind in supporting young people's success and in taking up the responsibility and accountability to see that K-16 education is realizable for *all* students.

Resources

Geary, D.L. "The PR Implications of Census 2000," *The Public Relations Strategist* (New York, NY: Public

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In October, IDRA worked with **10,504** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **71** training and technical assistance activities and **283** program sites in **15** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

♦ IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program National Teacher Coordinator Institute
♦ Multicultural Education
♦ Planning for Technology Integration in Reading Instruction

Participating agencies and school districts included:
✧ Grand Rapids Public Schools, Michigan
✧ Garland Independent School District (ISD), Texas
✧ Jefferson Parish, Louisiana
✧ Wagon Mound Public Schools, Oklahoma
✧ Athens ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

With help from the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (SCCE), a New Mexico school district has implemented the second phase of a plan to restructure classroom processes to ensure greater access to learning opportunities for students. After an Office for Civil Rights investigation generated by a complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the school district sought technical assistance in implementing a correction plan to protect the civil rights of language-minority students. The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The center provided training of trainer sessions on how to embrace students' culture in the classroom, how to conduct appropriate assessment of language-minority students, and how to develop appropriate teaching styles and classroom practices that value the second language learning characteristics of students. The strategies helped teachers to provide equal access to learning opportunities for all children.

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.

for the success of every student?

Staff Selection and Recognition – How are the staff selected and recognized (Maroney, 1998)?

* Does staff selection and recognition include screening to ensure proficiency in both languages, training for teachers to become action researchers, and adjusting the program to ensure that all teachers are able to serve LEP students?
* Do teachers feel supported and free to innovate, and are they regularly recognized for their contributions to their students' achievements?

Community Involvement – What is the type, level and quality of community involvement in the school and the bilingual education program (Moll et al., 1992)?

* Does the responsibility for the educational success of LEP students rest on the entire educational community of the district, not just on the bilingual education central staff or the bilingual or ESL teachers in the campus?
* Is the community perceived as an asset that should be integrated into the school resources in a way that values and acknowledges their contributions?
* Is the community a strong advocate of the program?

Through on-site classroom observations, structured interviews with teachers, administrators and parents and surveys, these are the major findings for each area.

Professional Development

At the schools IDRA studied, bilingual teachers were fully credentialed and continuously acquiring new knowledge regarding best practices in bilingual education. All teachers in the schools received information about bilingual education. Teachers took a pro-active interest in keeping up on best practices and sharing their lessons learned with others.

One non-bilingual education teacher who did not speak Spanish, began taking evening classes to learn Spanish on his own time and at his own cost, so that he could communicate with Spanish-speaking students.

Ultimately, teachers were committed to learning and sharing for the sake of their students. Professional development was perceived as a means to that end. Teachers and administrators reported substantive, appropriate and inclusive professional development with all teachers providing input into

Research finds that exemplary bilingual education programs hold school staff accountable for their students' success, while providing them with the support and tools they need. These programs also nurture meaningful parent and community involvement. Our study of 10 exemplary bilingual education programs confirms this.

professional development.

One administrator explained: "Teachers seek out professional development, and some is provided by the district and school. All of the programs we have are there to support ESL."

Another commented: "Teachers who go out to workshops have to come back and give presentations on the workshops to other teachers."

A teacher added: "We as teachers meet and decide what we think needs to be done in the school. We take these needs to the principal and school council and make recommendations. Staff development has more meaning because we make recommendations about it."

A teacher described: "Our weekly grade level planning is one of the main ways we provide our own staff development. The planning that we do, the work we do at these meetings prepares us for the work we do with students."

Another teacher said: "[One

teacher] cites the sharing of ideas and thoughts among the staff as being the single most important professional development activity. Curriculum planning and mapping at the school helps us see that we are all going the same direction."

Parent Involvement

At the schools IDRA studied, parents were strong advocates of the bilingual programs and were welcome in their children's schools, not as "helpers" but as partners engaged in meaningful activities within the school structure. Parents' experiences were validated and honored in the classrooms, irrespective of their socioeconomic backgrounds.

Some businesses facilitated parent involvement with flextime for work so that parents could participate in school activities during the day.

One teacher stated: "Many of the farmers allow time off for parents to attend English classes, parent meetings and school events. One farmer even posts school events [notices] at his farm for parents to attend."

Parents reported that they felt they belonged at their children's school and were very positive about the administration, faculty and staff, saying they believed them to be truly concerned for and committed to their children's success.

School respondents reported actively encouraging parents to participate in all activities in meaningful

ways. They also reported that all parents were knowledgeable and supported the bilingual education program, citing mutual respect and validation toward cultural diversity.

A parent said: *"Los maestros permiten que los padres vengan para platicar personalmente con ellos. Yo he mandado una nota pidiendo juntarme con ella. Ese mismo día vienen a buscarme.* [The teachers allow parents to come and talk personally with them. I have sent a note asking to meet with her. That same day she came to look for me.]"

Another parent added: *"Los niños tienen más éxito siendo bilingües porque cuando llegan a la universidad van a tener más oportunidad encontrando trabajo. El estudiante bilingüe es más exitoso.* [The children who are bilingual are more successful because when they get to the university they will have more opportunities to find jobs.]"

Staff Accountability and Student Assessment

The schools studied used multiple assessment measures, including measures in the students' native language. Rigorous academic standards applied to all students, including LEP students.

Administrators and faculty actively sought appropriate assessment measures and set clear and rigorous standards and achievement levels, sometimes engaging expertise and support from researchers in the bilingual education field. Teachers felt accountable for all of the students. They knew each one individually and adapted their instructional strategies according to the needs and strengths of each. Student assessment was ongoing and used for diagnostic purposes.

Survey respondents confirmed assessment in multiple languages and the disaggregation of data by student group and program. They also reported frequent discussions between the principal and the faculty on student achievement.

An IDRA researcher observed at one school: "Upon further probing, when asked if they felt the pressure from the principal to maintain this level of expectation, they looked startled and replied, 'No way!' A teacher explained: 'We have our high expectations, but it is our colleagues that are pushing us to maintain and stay focused. I know if I lag behind, the teacher next year will come and talk to me and see what it is I am teaching. She's going to be the one to kick my behind, not the principal!'"

Staff Selection and Recognition

At the model schools, staff were selected based on their academic background, experience in bilingual education and language proficiency. They were also selected for their enthusiasm, commitment and openness to change and innovation.

Teachers were strongly supported, often recognized for their students' successes. They were part of a team that was characterized as loyal and committed.

Many of the staff stayed in their schools. One group followed their principal from one school to another, implementing a successful program in both. Teachers and administrators also reported positive reinforcement of their students' academic progress.

Community Involvement

The communities of the schools IDRA studied were well aware of the bilingual education programs and were strong advocates of the programs. Community members formed strong linkages with the schools, sharing staff and building resources, and expertise.

One notable exception was the California school, which was struggling to survive in the context of Proposition 227. There, the community was divided, and the school isolated, left to survive despite the political context. These dynamics appeared to have resulted in a united stand among the administration, faculty, and staff and have mobilized many to actively fight for their students' rights to an excellent and equitable education.

Teachers and administrators reported active and positive engagement of parents and community members, many in long-term and intensive partnerships. This resulted in shared responsibility and ownership for student success.

A teacher commented, "Senior citizens and retired people come back to work with students."

Another stated, "We [the school] took a trip to the nursery [on a farm] where students' parents worked – the hard work was valued and a source of pride."

A parent added: *"La iglesia apoya mucho. El padre de la escuela nos dice a nosotros los padres que también debemos estudiar. También que apoyamos a nuestros hijos.* [The church provides much support. The priest tells us that we as parents should also study and support our children]."

Example of a Successful Bilingual Program

A commitment to professional development, strong parent involvement, staff accountability and ongoing assessment, informed staff selection and meaningful recognition, and active community involvement are five indicators that were found in the research sites. One example of such a program is found at St. Mary's Public School in Mount Angel, Oregon.

St. Mary's Public School, Mount Angel, Oregon

St. Mary's Public School's high expectations of excellence for all learners include teachers and staff as well as students. The principals, teachers, aides and staff work

collaboratively, through continuously planning and re-evaluating the school's program and each student's progress to ensure success for each student.

Teachers meet weekly in teams by grade level. The Title I reading teacher is included in these meetings. There is ongoing work on projects where data is collected and analyzed, and changes or affirmations are made. Depending on the need, these meetings can be held two or three times per week.

District improvement plans are discussed and teachers often seek, as well as share, strategies to help meet goals. St. Mary's Public School has a very committed staff. They come early and stay late. It is not surprising to find many teachers at the school on weekends.

All teachers and staff are involved in action research. This shows a commitment to the premise that student learning is the job of everyone at the school and keeps each member of the teaching and support staff accountable to the school's goals. Everyone looks to each other for assistance in areas where improvement is needed.

For planning during weekly meetings, faculty members are divided into teams. The principal is present at reporting times and works with the team or with individual teachers to get them back on track as needed. These planning meetings and discussions are often lively – teachers are vocal and joyful when test results are reported. There is tremendous support to ensure student achievement.

Native language instruction is supported starting at the kindergarten level. Since the school's vision encompasses excellence for all students, teachers and assistants strive to always put children first, not curriculum or prep time. The ability to help students is constantly evaluated. St. Mary's Public School commits itself to being pro-active rather than reactive.

ESL students make up a large part

Did You Know?

Between 1990 and 1998, American's high-tech employment increased 21 percent while high-tech degrees awarded declined 5 percent.

Nationally, 5.4 percent of the population was enrolled in higher education in recent years. California and Illinois enroll 6 percent of their state's population. Michigan enrolls 5.7 percent, New York enrolls 5.6 percent, and Texas enrolls only 5 percent. Texas would have to enroll immediately 200,000 more students to reach California's current participation rate.

In Texas, less than half of the students who enter a public university will graduate with a bachelor's degree in six years.

Source: *Closing the Gaps: The Texas Higher Education Plan* (Austin, Texas: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2001).

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

of the student population. The school has been on the cutting-edge of school reform since the current principal came to the school. School site team meetings began 14 years ago, and block scheduling began a year later. The principal instituted site committees before they were mandated, as well as multi-age instruction, which proved to be an uphill battle for support in the community. The school has been involved in Goals 2000 since it began.

Block scheduling allows uninterrupted reading time for students with all support staff. Teachers share students and skill groups and continually assess how students are progressing. The staff ensures that all students are treated equally, regardless of their backgrounds or special circumstances.

Additionally, assistants are treated like teachers; they are involved in training programs and planning sessions; and everyone is involved in making sure the students receive whatever they need to succeed.

Each year, the principal directs

staff involvement in new projects. This guarantees professional growth for the staff; teachers and other classroom aides see firsthand how their new efforts benefit students. Moreover, the bilingual program at St. Mary's Public School has made the faculty more aware of modifying education plans to suit each individual student. School staff and the community are dedicated to making the school special, innovative and visionary.

The school's valuing of culture and diversity is evident in activities within the school as well as involvement in community events. There are monthly sing-alongs featuring songs from predominant cultures of the area as well as a multicultural winter concert. Assemblies are also held in which the principal gives out awards to students who excel in the classroom and the community.

The community supports the school's activities and provides ideas and supplies.

Indicators of Success - continued from page 9

Additionally, many cultures are celebrated through studying about and participating in festivals. One proud teacher noted: "All cultures are respected, and there is zero tolerance for cultural bias."

Within the school, unity among students is promoted through the "Buddy" reading program, schoolwide themes, peer mediating, and tutors and readers from across ages and classrooms. Unity within the staff is boosted by celebrations of teachers' day, assistants' day, boss' day and secretaries' day, as well as the participation in committee and staff retreats.

Teachers learn from each other through their weekly team planning and team teaching in inclusion models. Teaming develops the curriculum for teaching English-learning students important academic skills.

For example, regular teachers work closely with the ESL teacher to pick out content area vocabulary, which is then studied in classrooms. The vocabulary is presented in both English and Spanish, and a concerted effort is made in all subjects to use the vocabulary words. Such support in planning and instruction ensures English-learners' skill and knowledge development.

The staff invite parents into the school to participate in school activities at every opportunity. Assemblies are open to parents and extended families. Programs featuring music and dance are specifically developed to show the students' talents to the community. Teachers also host parent coffees where everyone makes supplies.

Importantly, the school has a migrant liaison who conducts home visits with teachers and offers transportation to the school for open house, parent-teacher conferences and other events. Parents are encouraged to attend school-sponsored curriculum nights, where they are shown the lessons and teaching practices used in the school. St. Mary's Public School also has home consultants for Spanish and Russian households.

The school sponsors a booth at the annual Oktoberfest celebration, providing funds to the school district. The community is also involved with the homework club, sponsored by the Mt. Angel Youth Commission.

This group, sanctioned and supported by the school, works with students on comprehension and completion of homework assignments. A bond issue has recently passed that will provide additional funding for the youth commission's homework club.

Furthermore, there are field trips, newsletters, personal letters to the home in the native language, and frequent phone calls from classroom teachers, the ESL teacher and the migrant liaison. Meetings with teachers of English-learners are conducted with the help of interpreters.

One of the favorite functions of the staff and parents is the daily "early morning greeting" time, when parents bring their children to the school. Teachers and staff stand outside the school, weather permitting, and are available to chat with parents, answer questions and generally socialize. This enhances community involvement with the school, particularly volunteering and fund-raising opportunities.

For instruction purposes, St. Mary's Public School groups its students by content area and level of

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achievement. In content areas, students are grouped heterogeneously, while in reading, grouping is mostly homogeneous. Student groups flex depending on academic need and remain fluid to allow varying rates of progress.

Classroom organizations range from whole classes in some subjects to small groups in others, such as math, reading and writing. Generally, however, students are grouped by ability rather than age. Cross-tutoring is organized wherein students who excel in specific subjects are paired with students who are having difficulty. Students who help others in one area often find that they themselves need help in another. Through this arrangement, all students benefit.

Each grade has guidelines based on state criteria. The school also has developed its own benchmarks that align with Oregon's. Standardized testing, state tests and open-ended assessments are used to measure compliance.

Data is shared at staff meetings, and specific sessions are scheduled for data analysis. There is ongoing assessment and intervention to assure that all students reach end-of-year benchmarks. Yearly plans for each grade level are built on those results and continuously updated, and checklists and quarterly assessments are shared with parents. Data analysis is also presented at staff meetings and district planning meetings.

St. Mary's Public School supports English-learners with the appropriate instructional strategies, resources and environment. Indeed, its approach to the bilingual education of children has made it a program with exemplary practices.

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13

TABE Awards Dr. María Robledo Montecel for Community Advocacy

María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., executive director of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), was recently honored by the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE). Dr. Robledo Montecel received the TABE Community Advocacy Award for her exemplary professional service to bilingual education. The award was presented at the TABE annual conference in October in Dallas.

Dr. Robledo Montecel's lifetime concern with youth – especially youth who are minority, poor or limited-English-proficient – has provided inspiration and vision for many individuals and communities across the country. Her advocacy and expertise in education have been instrumental in achieving the goals of excellence and equity in education for students in San Antonio, the nation and the world. Going against the current deficit model approaches in schools, she champions the value, integrity and possibilities of *all* children.

Dr. Robledo Montecel is a nationally recognized expert on the prevention and recovery of dropouts.

From left to right: Mary Esther Bernal, José Hernández, Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, and Dr. José A. Ruiz-Escalante.

She has testified in state and national legislatures regarding dropouts, bilingual education and other critical education issues.

Dr. Robledo Montecel's excellence in leadership has earned her the privilege of serving on numerous local, national and international boards and advisory groups. An alumnus of Our Lady of the Lake University, she is currently serving her second term on the university's Board of Trustees.

Dr. Robledo Montecel's experience and leadership have also been instrumental in the creation of some key national and international organizations. She is a founding board member of the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation, which is an organization created to strengthen ties between Mexican citizens and the Mexican American community. She served as an invited expert on the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. In 1997, Dr. Robledo Montecel was named among the top 100 Hispanic influentials by *Hispanic Business* magazine.

14

Binational Collaboration Prepares New Teachers

Inside this Issue:

✧ Creatively supplying new teachers

✧ Bilingual education indicators of success

✧ Upcoming early childhood institute

Linda Cantú, M.A.

Education leaders in Mexico and the United States have forged a powerful alliance to help address the critical teacher shortage facing U.S. schools, particularly teachers serving children, who speak a language other than English.

The Hispanic community has one of the lowest educational levels and one of the highest school dropout rates of any racial or ethnic group in the United States. Hispanic students are greatly underrepresented in colleges and universities compared to their representation in the general population.

One cause for this lack of school success is the shortage of qualified teachers who can serve the growing number of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in our schools.

Roughly 15 million people of Mexican origin live in the United States. More than half were born in Mexico. According to the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation (MASF), the educational challenge is a responsibility that should be shared by the educational systems of both Mexico and the United States. Each educational

system needs the other to create a successful approach to serve the Mexican American community in the United States. One program that is meeting this challenge is Project Alianza.

Project Alianza

Project Alianza is a model teacher preparation and leadership development initiative, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, to develop a comprehensive, binational and interdisciplinary program for teacher preparation and leadership development. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is working in collaboration with the MASF and nine universities (see box on Page 9) in Arizona, California, and Texas to prepare educators to work in bilingual and bicultural environments.

Alianza is reconnecting universities and other community assets in a strong and lasting alliance where they mutually seek solutions to barriers that affect the quality of education provided to Hispanic students (Cantú, 1999). Alianza began showing impact from its inception.

Now in its fourth year, this model
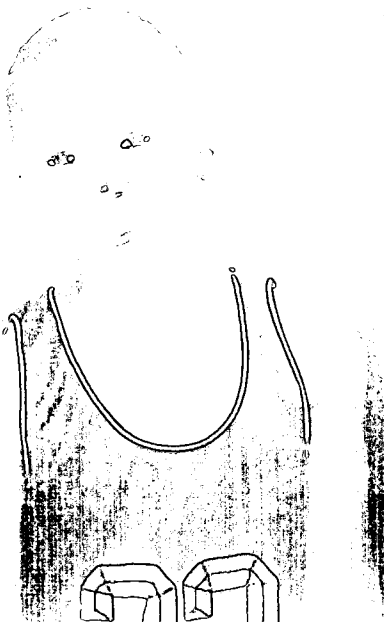
program has enabled universities to tap three groups who possess the basic requirements of prospective bilingual education teachers. The targeted groups are:
* bilingual education teacher aides,
* students in traditional bilingual teacher preparation programs, and
* *normalistas* – teachers trained in Mexico to teach in elementary grades and who are legal residents in the United States.

These three groups are developing their leadership skills to serve Hispanic students. The project also is enhancing the capacity of Hispanic and non-Hispanic students and educators to speak Spanish and work in cross-cultural environments, abilities essential to success today.

There has been an overwhelming response to the call for Alianza applicants. Hundreds of *normalistas* and other students have wanted to be a part of this effort. Many of the applicants learned of the project through word-of-mouth alone. Josie Cortez, of IDRA, reports, "Two

There has been an overwhelming response to the call for Alianza applicants. Hundreds of normalistas and other students have wanted to be a part of this effort.

students walked off migrant fields as workers and walked into an Alianza university and are now enrolled to become teachers" (Cortez, 2000b).

Specifically, Alianza is preparing these individuals to help fill the shortage of bilingual teachers. The project is creating a model for universities in Mexico and in the United States to collaborate. And, it is establishing a collaborative with universities to assist public schools implement quality bilingual education programs.

Example: Southwest Texas State University

Southwest Texas State University is one of the higher education

institutions that is participating in Alianza. During previous years, the bilingual teacher preparation program at this university has been involved in a binational exchange. University students go to Cuernavaca to participate in week-long educational experiences with public schools in Mexico.

The university's bilingual education department has expanded and strengthened its efforts toward building a binational collaboration through Alianza.

One of these efforts involves increasing the number of bilingual education teachers available to serve the growing Hispanic population in U.S. classrooms. In addition to targeting traditional bilingual education students and paraprofessionals, *normalistas* are an untapped resource that has been identified by the program to help fill this need. Southwest Texas State University has selected 14 *normalistas* to participate in the program, and two are now bilingual teachers in Austin. Dr. Nancy Ramos, program director at the university, says

In This Issue...

Successful Bilingual Education Programs

Indicators of Success at the School Level, Part III

by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., and Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

This is the last of a series of articles outlining major findings of IDRA's research of exemplary and promising practices in bilingual education programs. It comes just as the U.S. Congress approves the 2001 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with the President signing the final HR 1 *No Child Left Behind Act* on January 8, 2002.

Education Law Changes

In this Act, Title VII (*Bilingual Education Act*) is now Title III (*English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act*). The Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) is now named the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for LEP Students (OELALEAA). The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) is now named the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELALIEP).

In the 120 pages of the new Title III regulations, the term *bilingual education* is never used. It has been replaced by *English language acquisition*.

The primary purpose of Title III is to "help ensure that children who are limited English proficient, including immigrant children and youth, attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet" (Title III, Part A, Sec. 3102).

This primary purpose is similar to the original 1968 *Bilingual Education Act*, which states that limited-English-proficient (LEP) students will be educated to "meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth, including meeting challenging state content standards and challenging state student performance standards in academic areas."

One key distinction is that the new regulation does not specify the methods for achieving such standards. The former law specified the development and implementation of exemplary bilingual education programs, development of bilingual skills and multicultural understanding, and development of English and the native language skills.

Through Title VII, exemplary bilingual education programs were developed and key research was conducted that informed and improved bilingual education programs for LEP students.

LEP Children Must be Served

Students who speak a language other than English have the right to comprehensible instruction that fosters learning. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the failure of schools to respond to the language characteristics of LEP children was a denial of equal educational opportunity (*Lau vs. Nichols*, 1973).

The *Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974* states, "No state shall deny equal educational opportunity on account of his/her race, color, sex or national origin by... the failure of an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional program" (20 U.S.C., Section 1703 (f)).

This was followed in 1975 by detailed guidelines for determining the language characteristics of students and appropriate educational responses to those characteristics.

As the country enters this new legislative era, it must be remembered that the civil rights of children remain unchanged. Educators must use the most appropriate tools available to

ensure their students' success. One of these tools is bilingual education.

Thirty years of research have proven that bilingual education, when implemented well, is the best way to learn English. Children in such programs achieve high academic standards.

IDRA's research re-affirms what is possible when committed and dedicated individuals use research to develop and provide excellent bilingual education programs for their students.

This last article presents IDRA's major findings in the classroom level indicators, focusing on the program model, classroom climate, curriculum and instruction, teacher expectations, and program articulation.

At the Classroom Level

IDRA visited each of the 10 bilingual education programs selected for this study. It was important to collect information directly from each program and observe first-hand the program models being implemented. This was in addition to the extensive review of quantitative student outcome and school data, and surveys of principals, teachers and administrators.

IDRA researchers conducted structured, formal classroom observations as well as structured interviews with the principals and central office administrators and, whenever possible, focus group interviews with teachers, parents and students. Researchers also described each site visit providing a rich context for each program.

Program Model

In the schools IDRA studied, all of the program models – transitional, late exit and dual language – were grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model and were consistent with the characteristics of the LEP student population. Administrators and teachers we surveyed believed in the program and consistently articulated on its viability and success.

An IDRA researcher observed at one school: "Before starting the bilingual program four years ago, the staff read the literature and visited exemplary schools in Oregon and around the country. It then decided to implement a late exit model. Last year, they asked a team [of researchers] to the school to assess the program and provide the staff with suggestions for improvement."

At another school, a teacher stated: "We don't have an early exit model. Students gradually transition. We work hard to make sure we teach concepts that will help them transition. They have content and concepts in their own language that help them be successful."

Classroom Climate

The classrooms we studied strongly reflected the school climate. There were different styles but common intrinsic characteristics, such as:
* high expectations for all students,
* recognition and honoring of cultural and linguistic differences,
* students as active participants in their own education,
* parents and community members actively involved in the classrooms

Indicators of Success for Bilingual Programs

School Indicators	Student Outcomes	At the School Level: Leadership	At the School Level: Support	At the Classroom Level: Programmatic and Instructional Practices
✓ Retention Rate	✓ Oral Language Proficiency	✓ Leadership		
✓ Dropout Rate		✓ Vision and Goals	✓ Professional Development	✓ Appropriate Program Models
✓ Enrollment in Gifted and Talented/ Advanced Placement Programs	✓ Reading and Writing Proficiency	✓ School Climate	✓ Parent Involvement	✓ Positive Classroom Climate
✓ Enrollment in Special Education or Remedial Programs	✓ Content Area Mastery in English	✓ Linkages	✓ Teacher Accountability and Student Assessment	✓ Academically Challenging Curriculum
✓ Test Exemption Rates	✓ Content Area Mastery in Native Language	✓ School Organization and Accountability	✓ Staff Selection and Recognition	✓ High Teacher Expectations
✓ Program Exiting Standard			✓ Community Involvement	✓ Program Articulation

Intercultural Development Research Association, 2001

through tutoring, sharing experiences, reading, planning activities, etc., and

• heterogeneous grouping.

People we surveyed reported highly interactive and engaging classroom climates with a high percentage of time on task and consistent, positive student behavior.

An IDRA researcher noted: "For the most part, few of the classrooms were arranged with desks. If the classroom had desks, they were arranged in such a way that they made a table or a center for the group to work with. The students had very interesting discussions on different topics. The students are responsible for setting up the classroom. They set up the bulletin boards, and they decide or give input into the type of direction they want their discussions to follow."

A Russian parent stated, "[The teachers] are really passionate about teaching our kids."

Curriculum and Instruction

In the schools IDRA studied, the curricula were planned to reflect the students' culture. All of the instruction we observed in the classrooms was meaningful, academically challenging, and linguistically and culturally relevant. Teachers used a variety of strategies and techniques, including technology, that responded to different learning styles.

Teachers and administrators reported their bilingual program was designed to meet the students' needs with alignment between the curriculum standards, assessments and professional development. Teachers were actively involved in curriculum planning and met regularly, with administrative support, to plan.

At one school, an IDRA researcher reported: "Students start and finish in a mainstream classroom. The first and last periods of the day students are with the same teacher and

The following 13 states reported teacher shortages in bilingual education and/or English as a second language for the 1999-00 school year: Arkansas, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island, Texas and Wisconsin (not all states filed reports).

– U.S. Department of Education, 2000
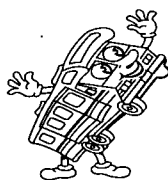
For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

their mainstream class. This gives the students a feeling of being core integrated into the entire school. This is different from other programs where ESL [English as a second language] students only are integrated during P.E., art and music."

At another school, a researcher noted: "There is a day set aside for teachers to plan Russian and Spanish classes and to make sure they are in their native language but along the same theme. So all children are getting the same thing in their native language."

Teacher Expectations

Teachers expected all students to succeed and were willing to do whatever it took to reach this goal. They valued diversity and drew on its strengths, creating an environment in the classroom and the school that was accepting, valuing and inclusive.

Teachers and administrators also reported a high commitment to their students' educational success and cited this as a critical factor in academic achievement.

An IDRA researcher observed at one school: "All teachers are truly committed to preparing the students for high performance... Students are very aware that as they learn English, they need to follow certain paths that will lead them to college."

A teacher stated: "During training we learn about not watering down the curriculum. We expect the same things for all students."

An observer reported: "I tried to press them [teachers and staff] to talk to me about 'problem students,' and no one saw any student as such."

Program Articulation

There were common programs of instruction across grade levels that had been aligned with developmentally appropriate practices and student language proficiency levels in English and the students' native language. This was accomplished in many schools through coordination and communication and through strong linkages across all levels (grades, principal and faculty, school and

central office).

Teachers met frequently to plan collaboratively. This open and frequent communication, coupled with alignment across the curriculum and assessment resulted in a seamless, well-articulated curricular and instructional plan.

A teacher stated: "Action research [allowed us to look at] how we could bring our ESL and bilingual education students up to the level of all students. We collected state test data and found that not all students who fell through the cracks were ESL students but were actually Title I students. This resulted in grouping students and giving them additional support."

At another school, an IDRA researcher observed: "There appears to be a great deal of coordination in the school. Teachers talk about 'good' faculty meetings that help them continue their mission. I thought this was quite unique – teachers actually praising faculty meetings."

Key Criteria

IDRA's study resulted in a set of criteria for identifying promising and exemplary practices in bilingual education. At the classroom level, programmatic and instructional practices included the following.

Program Model – Teachers and community members participate in the selection and design of a bilingual/ESL program model that is consistent with the characteristics of the LEP student population. The program model is grounded in sound theory and best practices associated with an enriched, not remedial, instructional model. Administrators and teachers believe in the program, are well versed on the program, are able to articulate and comment on its viability and success, and demonstrate their belief.

Classroom Climate – The classroom environment communicates high expectations for *all* students,

including LEP students. Teachers seek ways to value cultural and linguistic differences and fully integrate them into the curriculum.

Curriculum and Instruction – The curriculum reflects and values the students' culture. The curriculum adheres to high standards. Instruction is meaningful, technologically appropriate, academically challenging, and linguistically and culturally relevant. It is innovative and uses a variety of techniques that respond to different learning styles.

Teacher Expectations – Teachers expect all students, including LEP students, to achieve at high standards and are willing to do whatever it takes to reach this goal. They value diversity and know how to create an environment that is accepting and inclusive.

Program Articulation – There is strong evidence of a common program of instruction that is properly scoped, sequenced and articulated

across grade levels and has been aligned with developmentally appropriate practices and student language proficiency levels in English and the students' first language.

Example of a Successful Bilingual Program

The above are five of the indicators that IDRA found in the research sites. They comprise the final of five dimensions for assessing a school's success in educating English-language learners:
- School indicators,
- Student outcomes,
- Leadership,
- Support, and
- Programmatic and instructional practices.

One example of such a successful program is found at River Glen Elementary School in San José, California.
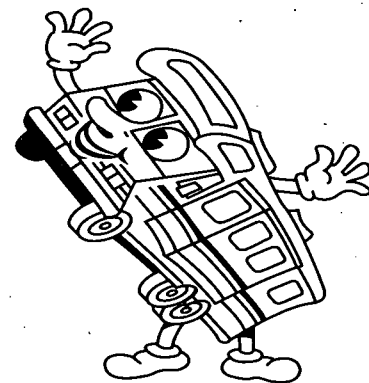
River Glen Elementary School
San José, California

River Glen Elementary School (kindergarten through grade six) is a public school of choice – parents apply and students are selected through a lottery process. Students in kindergarten, first and second grades are taught completely in Spanish.

All students receive increased amounts of English instruction each school year so that by the fifth grade, students spend half of their day in Spanish instruction and the other half in English instruction. At the end of the fifth grade, students understand, speak, read and write in both Spanish and English and meet high academic standards in all subjects.

River Glen Elementary School is a public school of choice in another way – the principal and staff chose to promote and nurture bilingualism despite California's Proposition 227, which ended bilingual education instruction in most of the state's schools. River Glen Elementary School applied for and received a waiver to continue its two-way bilingual immersion program despite the anti-bilingual sentiment in the state.

The program's goals are to:
• promote high levels of oral language proficiency and literacy in both Spanish and English,
• establish a strong academic base in two languages, and
• develop cross-cultural understanding between students.

The program has been granted *exemplary status* by the state of California.

The school's underlying philosophy for its program design is valuing bilingualism and the benefits accrued. The program is designed so that strong emphasis on Spanish instruction in the early grades benefits both English and Spanish language groups.

For Spanish-language speakers, this early emphasis on their home language enables them to "expand their vocabulary and build literacy in their first language; study a highly academic curriculum in their first language; successfully transfer Spanish reading and writing skills to English in later grades; acquire high levels of self-esteem by becoming bilingual and playing a supportive role for their English-speaking classmates."

English-language speakers benefit from "extensive exposure to Spanish, accelerating their absorption and usage of the language to achieve early Spanish literacy; a highly academic curriculum, taught in a second language; the ability to transfer Spanish reading and writing skills to English language reading and writing after the second grade; the confidence to speak Spanish, resulting from the self-esteem and pride they gain because they are bilingual."

During the school site visit, the IDRA researcher noted a very positive school climate. The principal and teachers were proud of their work, and it showed. As a matter of course, the school is opened to visitors once a month.

The school building was clean and attractively decorated. All of the information posted around the school was in Spanish and English. Everyone was friendly and made visitors feel welcome and comfortable. The friendliness and collegiality among staff was also evident. Parents, teachers and staff assistants were very comfortable with each other.

Many of the classrooms had about 30 students with a teacher and assistant in each classroom.

In one classroom, students debated the pros and cons of living longer than normal. In another, students discussed whether or not they would take it if they had the opportunity to make more money.

Students are provided with

How I Am

One student at River Glen Elementary School wrote the following poem illustrating the sentiment found throughout this program and the recognition and celebration of culture, ethnicity and languages:

En el espejo
cuando me miro
en el espejo
como me gusta
asi como soy.

Soy morenito
Me falta un diente
Y toda la gente
Me dice chulito.

Como me gusta
Como me gusta
Como me gusta
asi como soy.

In the mirror
when I see myself
in the mirror
how I like
how I am.

I'm dark-skinned
I'm missing a tooth
And everyone
Calls me cute.

How I like
How I like
How I like
How I am.

challenging course materials in both English and Spanish. Teachers use only Spanish or English during instruction. They do not translate but instead use other second language acquisition techniques and strategies to make the language and content

understandable.

Teachers also exchange classes with each other at the kindergarten through second grade levels during the English portion of the day so that students learn to identify a particular teacher with a particular language, increasing the likelihood they will use the specific language in particular contexts.

Teachers provide direction and counsel to their students but always allow for student input and ownership.

The bilingual program is an integral part of the school. All of the teachers are expected to speak Spanish fluently. The IDRA observer reported: "'Proud to be Bilingual' should be the key phrase to describe River Glen Elementary School. Everyone there, from the teachers to the parents, recognize that bilingualism is a valuable asset. They are very proud of their stance on bilingual education, despite the state's controversial Proposition 227."

River Glen Elementary School teachers have courageously defended their advocacy of bilingual education despite opposition from the state, from many community members and from their own teacher union.

Every classroom has a computer that students use throughout the day. The computer software in kindergarten through second grade is in Spanish. Students in the upper grades have a choice of the mode and language of instruction.

Teachers at River Glen Elementary School must be certified in bilingual education. There is very little turnover at the school.

All of the teachers commented on the high level of good and open communication with each other and with their principal. They usually meet on a weekly basis to plan, always focusing on instruction. The principal and teachers implement a structured curriculum where every teacher at every grade level knows exactly what is expected of them. This approach allows for any new teachers to become acclimated to the school and receive the necessary information and support.

Teachers usually participate in staff development at the beginning of each year. The focus of the last sessions was the issue of standards. School district and state academic standards are met or exceeded at each grade level.

All of the teachers have high expectations for their students. Students are expected to achieve at or above the state standards.

One teacher said: "We have our high expectations, but it is our colleagues who are pushing us to maintain and stay focused. 1 know if 1 lag behind, the teacher next year will come and talk to me and see what it is 1 am teaching."

Student performance is assessed in a variety of ways from timed tests to portfolios to folders that students keep at their desks. They also hold themselves accountable for the success of each and every student.

During the classroom observations, IDRA representatives reported that each teacher knew the exact status (task and skill level) of every student. Student progress was constantly monitored with the teachers in the lower grades keeping a running record of the student's progress. In the upper grades, almost all of the student work was posted on walls or displayed in some form.

Family involvement is an important contributor to the program's success. While parents are not necessarily bilingual, they must be supportive of bilingualism. They must also be willing to make a long-term commitment to the program to allow enough time for their children to succeed.

The IDRA researcher reported: "The school is successful because of the commitment and integrity that the teachers have toward the bilingual program at their school. They attribute their success to the clear and focused program that is articulated throughout the campus and to the support that the principal provides."

Resources

River Glen Elementary School. "Project Two-Way, Title VII Academic Excellence Project, River Glen Elementary School Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Program, Literacy in Two Languages," informational brochure (San José, California: River Glen Elementary School, nd).

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Robledo Montecel, M., and J.D. Cortez. "Successful Bilingual Education Programs: 10 Schools Serve as Models," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 2001).

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., is the IDRA executive director. Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., is the IDRA production development coordinator. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

the *normalista* students have enriched the quality of the program by sharing their linguistic and pedagogical expertise with traditional students.

The *normalistas* in the program are improving their English language proficiency in content areas and are developing a cultural understanding and sensitivity to Hispanic students. They also are filling the need for bilingual education teachers in public school districts surrounding the university.

Traditional bilingual education students and paraprofessionals have also been benefiting from the binational collaboration. During May 2000 and June 2001, Southwest Texas State University sent five of its Alianza traditional and paraprofessional bilingual education students and the bilingual education director and coordinator to participate in the Seminar on the Education and Culture of Mexico held in Saltillo, Coahuila.

Alianza students from the university will participate in a second seminar sponsored by the MASF during the spring of 2002.

In conjunction with the Mexico Ministry of Education, the foundation has identified a sister institution in Mexico to collaborate with Southwest Texas State University. The sister university is *Escuela Normal Profesor Serafín Peña* in Montemorelos, Nuevo Leon.

Southwest Texas State University has initiated a student exchange program with its sister institution. The first student exchange took place in May 2001 when one *normalista*, one paraprofessional and eight traditional bilingual education students from Southwest Texas State University visited *Escuela Normal Profesor Serafín Peña* for a one-week intensive exchange program.

During that week, students were given an overview of the history of Mexico and the educational system, including teacher preparation and curriculum used in public schools. The students toured urban and rural schools in Montemorelos. They participated in workshops on Spanish grammar and pedagogy and participated in demonstration levels both as observers and participants.

Traditional students and teacher aides in the program have benefited from this binational exchange. They have learned new pedagogical approaches for working with Hispanic students and have identified new materials and curriculum that can be used in the classroom. They have improved their Spanish language skills generally and in content areas. They have a better understanding of the immigrant student's educational system and a greater respect for the pedagogical preparation of Mexican teachers. They also have a greater understanding of the social, cultural and socio-economic structure of

Project Alianza Universities

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Intercultural Development Research Association and the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation are working with universities to develop teacher preparation and leadership development programs to increase the number of teachers prepared to teach English in bilingual and multicultural environments.

Participating U.S. Universities

Arizona State University

California State University – Bakersfield

California State University – Long Beach

Southwest Texas State University

Texas A&M International University

Texas Woman's University

University of Texas at El Paso

University of Texas – Pan American

University of Texas at San Antonio.

Participating Mexican Universities

Benemérita Escuela Normal de Coahuila

Escuela Normal Estatal de Ensenada

Escuela Normal del Estado "Profesor Jesús Manuel Bustamante Mungarro"

Escuela Normal Federal "Miguel Hidalgo"

Escuela Normal Federalizada de Tamaulipas

Escuela Normal "Ing. Miguel F. Martínez" Centenaria y Benemérita

Escuela Normal Oficial de Guanajuato

Escuela Normal "Profesor Serafín Peña"

For more information, contact Linda Cantu at IDRA (210-444-1710; contact@idra.org)

Mexico.

The second exchange in July 2001, brought 18 Montemorelos students studying to be teachers and three Montemorelos professors to Southwest Texas State University for a look at the U.S. school system. During the exchange, the university gave an overview of the educational system in the United States and toured students through the university and summer programs in two local school districts. Students were also taken on cultural excursions to Austin and San Antonio. The Montemorelos students participated in English as a second language (ESL) seminars and a day-long mini-conference sponsored by the bilingual education department.

Students and faculty from Southwest Texas State University and the surrounding community have benefited greatly from the binational collaboration as a result of participation in Alianza. The general education department at the university is finding ways to better serve its *normalista* students, including learning ESL strategies and using them in their teaching.

The university admissions office has identified a staff person to work with Project Alianza students, particularly *normalistas*, and assist them through the admissions process.

There is university-wide recognition of the program. Other non-bilingual faculty (reading, curriculum and instruction, technology) have been involved in the binational exchange program. The international office has formed a strong relationship with Alianza and works to individualize programs that better suit students' needs. A local school district is exploring ways to include its teaching staff in the binational effort, including participation in exchange programs and seminars initiated by Alianza.

Binational Collaboration

Alianza is also fostering binational collaboration to establish ties between U.S. and Mexican universities, enabling professor and student exchanges, collaborative research and shared curriculum development. The collaborative activities (*seminarios*) provide a unique experience for students to learn the intricacies and richness of the educational system in Mexico (Cortez, 2000).

This binational collaboration is a powerful element of Alianza. As part of this effort, the MASF has created a partnership with the Ministry of Education in Mexico and U.S. universities participating in Alianza and acting as an intermediary between them. Through this partnership, U.S. universities have been able to obtain, directly from the Ministry of Education, school transcripts and interpretation of course work for *normalista* students who have attended a school or university anywhere in Mexico. This relationship has helped expedite these students' acceptance into U.S. universities, where they had faced multiple barriers before.

The Ministry of Education has identified a person within its institution to respond directly to requests for school transcripts by directors of Alianza programs. The Ministry of Education has modified procedures that allow *normalistas* in the United States who did not complete their teaching credentials in Mexico to receive them.

The foundation is sponsoring a seminar on the education and culture of Mexico to traditional bilingual education students and paraprofessional students seeking degrees in bilingual and bicultural education. It also is sponsoring a senior fellows seminar on Mexico for the professors, directors and coordinators of Alianza. The foundation is providing research on teacher preparation for teachers in Mexico and

is providing information on the curriculum and teaching strategies used in student learning.

Seminars on the Education and Culture of Mexico

The MASF also has sponsored two seminars on the education and culture of Mexico for Alianza participants. The seminars were held in Saltillo, Coahuila, and Hermosillo, Sonora in Mexico. About 40 future bilingual education teachers, paraprofessionals and professors participated in these two seminars. Two more seminars are planned for the spring of 2002.

Each seminar is a seven-day theoretical and practical program that gives Alianza students a greater understanding of the socio-economic and cultural reality of Mexican children. It includes a general understanding of the educational system and the teaching and learning system in Mexico through conferences, workshops, visits to schools and teaching experiences in Mexican schools.

The overall objective of the seminar is to give Alianza's future teachers an opportunity to upgrade their professional capacity as teachers in bilingual and bicultural environments where a great majority of their students are Mexican immigrants or students of Mexican descent.

Senior Fellows Seminar on Mexico

A Senior Fellows Seminar on Mexico was conducted by the MASF in June of 1999. The seminar provided a broad, diverse and insightful vision of the economic, political, educational, social and cultural aspects of today's Mexico. This perspective gave professors, coordinators and directors of Alianza an opportunity to upgrade

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their professional and leadership skills in the formation of bilingual teachers who work with Mexican immigrant children and with children of Mexican descent.

Participants of the seminar included IDRA staff, Alianza coordinators, university faculty and two U.S. Department of Education program officers. Participants reported that the dynamic exchange enhanced the sensitivity, the understanding, and the compassion of those involved in preparing teachers who work with children of Hispanic or Mexican background in the United States (Cortez, 2000a).

Resources

Cantu, L. "Project Alianza: Tapping Community Resources for Bilingual Teachers," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 1999).

Cortez, J.D. "A Model Teacher Preparation and Leadership Development Initiative: First Year Findings," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 1999).

Cortez, J.D. "Project Alianza – Second Year Milestone," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, June-July 2000).

Cortez, J.D. *Project Alianza Milestones to Date, May 1998 – September 2000* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2000).

Linda Cantu, M.A., is a education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

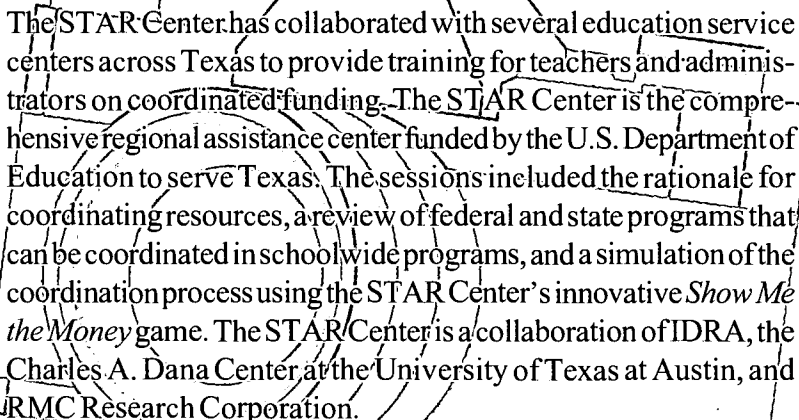# Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In November-December, IDRA worked with **11,637** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **62** training and technical assistance activities and **283** program sites in **16** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

+ A Matter of Equity: Identifying Race and Gender Bias in the Classroom
+ High-Stakes Testing
+ Developing a Districtwide Dropout Plan
+ College Access for Latino Students

Participating agencies and school districts included:

◇ Mora Public Schools, New Mexico
◇ Abilene Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Piñon Unified School District, Arizona
◇ Texas Education Service Center, Region II
◇ Austin ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

The STAR Center has collaborated with several education service centers across Texas to provide training for teachers and administrators on coordinated funding. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Texas. The sessions included the rationale for coordinating resources, a review of federal and state programs that can be coordinated in schoolwide programs, and a simulation of the coordination process using the STAR Center's innovative *Show Me the Money* game. The STAR Center is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:
+ public school teachers
+ parents
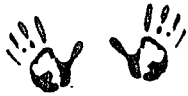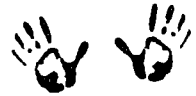+ administrators
+ other decision makers in public education

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.

Ninth Annual IDRA

La Semana del Niño

Early Childhood Educators Institute™
San Antonio, Texas
April 23-25, 2002

The Ninth Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to value and capitalize on the linguistic and cultural assets brought forth by a diverse student population. This year's event will focus on building reading concepts and skills of young learners. Topics include: literacy, technology, social development, and curriculum.

* Visit model early childhood centers. These visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. You will travel to high-performing, high-minority sites in the San Antonio area that are effectively working with diverse learners.
* Interact with parents to discuss ideas to form effective learning partnerships.

* Learn in workshops on multi-age classrooms, the use of centers in the early childhood classroom, incorporating technology, second language acquisition and many more.
* Hear presenters like Pedro Luis Boitel, an author, journalist, actor and singer who is an expert in early childhood education; and Jesus Jacinto Cardona, one of San Antonio's outstanding teachers and poets.

Fees Before March 15
____ $175 institute registration, April 23-25, 2002*
____ $15 parent institute registration (if a parent and not an education professional), April 25, 2002
____ $60 parent institute registration (if an education professional), April 25, 2002
*.Includes institute sessions, Tuesday and Thursday luncheons, two school visits [for first paid registrants], and materials.

Contact Carol Chávez at IDRA (210-444-1714) or visit the IDRA web site (www.idra.org) for more information or a registration form.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
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Children-Based Reform: Can Standards Meet It?

Micaela Díaz-Sanchez and
Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed.

"When I started out as a high school English teacher in 1964 I was the 'American flag' teacher. In my classes, students' papers were white, their ink was blue, and my red marks bled all over their papers. I was determined that no grammatical or spelling mistake would pass my desk unmarked. I put out the best and worst essays of the week on the bulletin board. I would shame them into learning. I had, I thought, rigorous high standards. It took me several years to realize that the many students that I flunked reflected more on my teaching rather than their intelligence," Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed.

"When I was in high school, I never understood why so many students were having problems with passing the TAAS [Texas Assessment of Academic Skills]. But when students were having to take the test three and four times, it was obvious to me that the problem was not with the students alone. It seemed to me that there was lack of communication about

what the students were supposed to learn and how they were being taught," Micaela Díaz-Sánchez.

Standards identify what students are expected to know and be able to do. Standards can also support high expectations for all students. For many reasons there has been a strong push for having uniform high standards in education. The important question is, how do standards help or hinder our children in getting an excellent education.

The Need for Standards

Standards and assessment are essential to providing the accountability a decentralized system requires. They can guide schools away from worksheet activities and toward learning for understanding, reasoning, problem-solving and communicating. They can be useful tools for diminishing low expectations. High standards can unfreeze lock-step instruction and allow for a variety of tools for assessing student progress.

There are multiple forms of assessments that schools can use. The Center for Law and Education describes the following three categories

Children-Based Reform - continued from page 1
(1999).

Performance assessments require students to show what they have learned. Performance assessments are often used along with other forms of testing.

Portfolios are collections of student work. Students and teachers select work that shows what they have learned over time. Portfolios are graded by teachers or others outside the school. Some states use portfolios to assess student progress in math and writing.

Scoring guides and rubrics describe what students must do on a lesson to reach the standard. Often, rubrics set three or four performance levels, from high (excellent) to low (needs improvement). Teachers use rubrics to assess student work. Scoring guides and rubrics can tell students and parents how far students must go to reach the standard.

Some Cautions

Some people speak about the current movement for high standards

Schools should support ongoing dialogue between parents and educators on standards and how children can be supported to learn.

as seeking equity through excellence – that having lower standards is racist and classist. But, as Keenan and Wheelock state, the results of simply putting new standards in place and enforcing them universally without providing necessary resources leads to increased rates of retention, failure and dropouts among poor and minority students.

Keenan and Wheelock also state: "The standards movement further reneges on its promise when states translate standards into curriculum frameworks that reinforce the status quo, elevate certain knowledge to a level of official approval and render poor, African American and Latino students invisible in the curriculum. English language

arts standards that call for more reading of *better* books create an aura of rigor, but if the frameworks fail to address the need for multicultural content, many students will remain on the periphery, perceiving school as another world, another culture" (1997).

Another concern about the standards movement is that when massive failure happens, too many people look for causes within the families, their culture, language, economic status, or limited formal education. A deficit view of children and families assumes that the lack of academic achievement by students is the fault of the family. Besides being inaccurate, this view increases the tension families feel over their children's educational achievement.

In these cases, the institution wants to change the family and the children to adapt to its "higher" standards. The fact is, most families want their children to do well and to have a bright future connected to their educational attainment. Most families are supportive of activities that will

Mathematics Achievement for All? Yes!

Developing students as flexible, fluent and resourceful mathematical thinkers, ready to compete in a global economy

by Jack Dieckmann, M.A.

Middle school students are at a critical crossroad with mathematics. Even though math is essential for all students, it continues to be a gatekeeper for many adolescents. Students from groups under-represented in high school and college completion are also under-represented among those who succeed in learning mathematical knowledge and skills (Kilpatrick, et al., 2001).

Historically, minority and economically-disadvantaged children under-perform, especially in mathematics and science. The National Assessment for Educational Progress recently issued its *National Report Cards 2000 in Math and Science.* Persistent achievement gaps remain across the grades tested (Braswell, et al., 2001).

Clearly, traditional approaches to teaching and learning mathematics

continue to fail too many students. With the growing demand for a scientifically- and mathematically-literate workforce, the loss of talent among our youth is unacceptable, and we must take action for solutions. IDRA's focus on middle school math resonates with the work of other exciting and innovative efforts.

Veteran civil rights activist, Robert Moses began one such effort called the Algebra Project. The project is a reform initiative designed to help African American students obtain a high level of math competency. The Algebra Project focuses mainly on the middle school years.

Moses and his colleagues believe that African American children must be prepared to enter high school math classes, which will open the door to higher education and technical careers that require a strong math background. The new project includes curricular materials, teacher training, development of student leadership and community involvement, well beyond the scope of

most educational reform efforts (Moses and Cobb, 2001; Levine, 2001).

So, in the face of what seems an insurmountable problem, there are success stories and effective practitioners who can lead the way to academic success for all students in Algebra and other challenging math courses.

Educators who have high expectations of *all* students, who are searching for teaching approaches that open new mathematical vistas and accelerate the learning of higher math concepts with students from all backgrounds, those educators must say, "You, my middle school student, can master math and I, your teacher, can help you get there!"

Institute for Math Educators

One way the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is helping is to host institutes

for middle school math teachers. The goal of the most recent institute was to educate teachers on developing students as flexible, fluent and resourceful mathematical thinkers, ready to compete in a global economy. The Re-Energizing Teaching and Learning: Middle School Mathematics Teacher Leadership Institute was held in the fall of 2001.

Institute participants accepted the challenge of increasing student performance and closing the achievement gap for all students. Nine school instructional teams of math teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators from seven school districts in the San Antonio area participated in the institute. The participating schools serve large numbers of ethnically and linguistically diverse and low-income students.

IDRA sponsored this innovative institute in collaboration with its projects, the South Central Collaborative for Equity and the STAR Center as part of their mission of equity and excellence in education, focusing on the critical content area of mathematics. The SCCE is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools and education agencies in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The STAR Center is the comprehensive regional assistance center funded by the U.S.

Department of Education to serve Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation.

The institute engaged campus improvement teams of middle school math teachers and specialists. Together they developed teaching and learning strategies to significantly accelerate math achievement for all their students.

First, participants *gained* information on effective programs and teaching of the state's curriculum standards for mathematics, in grades six through eight and Algebra I by linking current research with best practices. Second, they *learned* effective teaching techniques and approaches from interactions with local math teachers, specialists, and education researchers. Finally, participants *practiced* capitalizing on students' strengths and informal applications of math concepts to achieve high performance goals for *all* learners.

Institute Presenters

The state mathematics director at the Texas Education Agency, Paula Gustafson, participated in small group discussions, provided updates on the new assessments in mathematics (TAKS) and served as a panelist to discuss equity and excellence in mathematics.

Other key presenters and collaborators included Ms. Norma Torres-Martinez with the Alamo District Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and Dr. Kathleen Cage Mittag, president of the Texas Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Dr. Mittag gave an overview and led a discussion about the preliminary guidelines for the Master Mathematics Teacher program in development for Texas teachers.

Dr. Judy Beauford, with the

Talking About Equity...

"If we are interested in equity, we'll want to offer as many different ways of learning as possible."

— Tim Erickson

"Developments in science wait on new questions being asked in new ways and using new tools. Often this means waiting for new scientists – different scientists."

— Cecily Cannan Selby

"Every day, every educator makes decisions that affect equity. Each decision carries implications for educational outcomes. If decisions are thoughtful and knowledge-based, we stand a much better chance of creating classrooms and settings in which all children believe themselves to be learners."

— Nancy Kreinberg

"Experience can change beliefs. Skeptics can become believers. Even in areas of poverty, some schools perform well above average. If some can do it, why can't others? Because most people do not really believe that is possible for all students to learn algebra and geometry. That's where equity begins: with strong beliefs in high expectations for all."

— Susan L. Forman and Lynn Arthur Steen

Source: *Mathematics for All: A Source Book of Essential Information for Leaders in Mathematics Equity (Reston, Va.: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1999).*

University of the Incarnate Word, guided the group in interactive activities that highlight the integration of math, science and technology. Dr. Arthur Hernández of the University of Texas at San Antonio, served as an expert panelist to help teachers understand the cognitive, physical, social and emotional changes that middle school students experience, with an eye toward the instructional implications.

Engagement Process

Participants worked in small groups to analyze approaches to math tasks in a relevant context involving ratios and proportions, a key organizing theme in the middle school curriculum. They were asked to connect to what they know, use multiple representations (numbers, tables, graphs, pictures, words, equations, and models) to solve them, and provide convincing arguments for their solutions. The teachers, as learners, experienced a process to use in their teaching.

Through this intensive process, participants were given a much wider and deeper understanding of mathematical proficiency, moving beyond simply getting the "right" answer (Kilpatrick, et al., 2001).

At the end of the first day, teams designed a mathematical task for their students. They were asked to give the task to their classes and to bring back the completed task for a guided analysis on the second day of the institute, held a month later. The goal of this activity was to look at student work from the perspective of what the student brings to the task rather than simply whether the answer was correct.

By using these assessment strategies, teachers can identify and activate students' untapped informal knowledge of mathematics and connect it to school mathematics. By connecting professional development to classroom

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IDRA Re-Energizing Teaching and Learning:
Middle School Mathematics Teacher Leadership Institute, Fall 2001

Objectives for Day 1

- Engage in mathematical reasoning using multiple representations to illustrate informal, intuitive, and invented mathematics
- Experience, articulate and analyze the following components of mathematical proficiency: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, analytic reasoning, and productive disposition
- Integrate adolescent development, the content and pedagogy of mathematics, and equity for all students
- Create an assessment tool based on the principles of mathematical reasoning presented in the institute and commit to bringing the results to the next session

Objectives for Day 2 (held one month after Day 1)

- Analyze and share student work and discuss implications for instruction
- Interact with a panel of principals and math education researchers about supporting effective practices, latest findings and trends in middle school math
- Draft a document "Planning for Mathematical Excellence and Equity" as a support document for campus improvement plans
- Sample technology with dynamic software to illustrate the connection to mathematical proficiency and engaged mathematical thinking
- Plan follow-up networking activities

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Mathematics Selections for Illustration of Activities during the Institute

Strand: Patterns, Relationships, and Algebraic Thinking

6.3 Proportional reasoning: Use ratios to describe proportional situations; represent ratios and percents with models, fractions and decimals; use ratios to make predictions.

7.4 Proportional reasoning: Expressing relationships and making predictions; generate formulas and graft data; describe relationship between terms in a sequence.

7.5 Equations: Solve equations with models and symbols; formulate problems from equations.

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practice, this experience was a powerful teacher development tool.

Teachers reported being surprised and excited about interesting and complex ways their students approached the given tasks. One teacher stated, "I'm going to think about using a variety of strategies rather than just pictorial and numerical, my preferences."

Technology and Mathematics

During the second day of the institute, technology was explored as a classroom tool that can deepen the way mathematics is taught and learned. Participants worked in hands-on technology activity groups to see how scientific probeware and real-time data collectors using graphing

calculators and computers can be used to let students play a more active role in learning mathematics.

In particular, a motion detector was featured because of the many content connections available (slope, linear functions, and mathematical modeling). Representatives from Texas Instruments, Casio, and Pasco Scientific attended and shared information at the institute.

Bonnie McNemar, a recognized leader in mathematics, facilitated the session for Texas Instruments. With each technology presentation participants were given an assessment form, which included questions such as, "How might this technology help the struggling math learner?" and "What language considerations might you as a teacher need to take into account in using this technology?"

Some of the teachers had experience with these technologies and were able to assist others. Experienced teachers shared strategies for using technology in the classroom with novice users, once again validating the usefulness of peer networking for changing teacher practice. One teacher reported, "We must have this technology for our students!"

Building Networks of Leaders

Many of the participants did not have supervisory positions, so they did not consider themselves leaders. Because of this narrow view of leadership, some of the participants found it confusing to be working in a leadership conference. IDRA led the group in a discussion about an alternative view of leadership around the premise: "If you can make a difference, you can be a leader."

Math teachers in particular can have a profound impact on students' short-term and long-term success. Teachers, whose students succeed academically in math are directly affecting their students' potential career paths, quality of life and participation in society.

Teachers, administrators, parents and community are key to helping all students thrive in mathematics. This institute promoted equity and excellence by connecting content, pedagogy, assessment, technology and a valuing-of-student thinking. It is an important step toward reaching that goal.

Both the content and the process were critical for engaging participants. Each of the two days was highly interactive. The institute process included panel presentations, small group discussions, work circles, technology demonstrations, use of readings and task sheets, and application of strategies in participants' classrooms between sessions. The theme of equity and excellence unified the experience as the group considered instructional strategies, math content, adolescent development, state assessments and technology.

One teacher commented that he learned "[to] keep equity in the foremost of my mind."

Follow-up topics suggested by participants included: math strategies for English language learners, technology planning, training, curricular alignment, classroom demonstrations, and motivating struggling learners.

The initial dialogue established in this institute continues to be extended through an interactive, online network, with plans for an "action conference for mathematics" in 2002. The

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Key Principles of the IDRA Re-Energizing Teaching and Learning: Middle School Mathematics Teacher Leadership Institute

- The learning and mastery of mathematics directly impacts students' well-being, both short term and long term. Potential career pathways, quality of life and participation in society are all affected by how math is taught and learned in schools.
- All students come to school with a substantial amount of untapped informal mathematics. With training and support, teachers can identify students' informal knowledge and intuition and use them to promote success in school mathematics.
- Campus math departments represent a powerful unit of change and can form dynamic learning communities to meet the challenges of creating and sustaining quality mathematics learning environments for every student in every classroom.
- Teachers who are flexible, fluent and resourceful mathematical thinkers are better able to develop such qualities in students.
- Teacher networks are valuable opportunities for teachers to grow professionally, share and reflect together about best practices, and receive key information in a timely manner. Investment in teachers' learning gives them more powerful tools to use with students in their classrooms.
- The process of re-energizing teaching and learning mathematics so that all students succeed can occur when it is supported by campus and district-level leadership, which include periodic communication, resource allocation, and parent and community involvement.

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participants established a personal connection because of the face-to-face interaction with a variety of researchers and practitioners that continues to live in a network of sharing and communication.'

Along with discussion, ideas, readings, notebook and online resources for effective math teaching at the middle school level, participants are forming a network of math leaders and practitioners to continue to share information and best practices in teaching and learning of mathematics in middle grades and Algebra I. This ongoing communication validates the research in professional development that highlights the importance of teacher networking to support teacher growth and powerful changes in instructional practices (Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1998).

With so much at stake, IDRA is committed to long-term support of meaningful change in mathematics instruction.

Resources

Braswell, J.S., and A.D. Lutkus, W.S. Grigg, S.L. Santapau, H. Tay-Lim, M.S. Johnson. *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2000* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2001).

Kilpatrick, J., and J. Swafford, B. Findell.

Adding It Up: Helping Children Learn Mathematics (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001).

Levine, D. "Radical Equations," *Rethinking Schools* (Summer 2001).

Loucks-Horsley, S., and P. Hewson, N. Love, K. Stiles. *Designing Professional Development for Teachers of Science and Mathematics* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, Inc., 1998).

Moses, R.P., and C. Cobb. *Radical Equations: Math Literacy and Civil Rights* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 2001).

Jack Dieckmann, M.A., is a senior associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

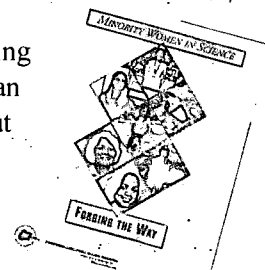# Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and Maria Aurora Yáñez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

We must ensure that minority girls are not left behind as progress is made toward narrowing gender and racial gaps in math and science education. This is an innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists.

You will find:

◆ Profiles of seven minority women scientists who have surmounted barriers to forge the way for themselves and future scientists.

◆ Science lessons for the classroom that cover such topics as acid/base chemistry, earth science, wildlife and environmental science, and biology.

◆ Life skills lessons for the classroom that cover topics such as getting college information from the school counselor, identifying a support system, reaching goals, knowing self-worth, having community pride, overcoming stereotypes, and linking hobbies with career choices.

◆ The opportunity to use this guide to plan with other teachers, from other departments, using the stories of these inspirational women as the basis for cross-curricular lessons for students.

"Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

(Student Workbook ISBN 1-878550-67-5; 2000; 32 pages; paperback; $6.50)
(Teacher's Guide ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association 5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350, San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org. Shipping and handling is 10 percent of the total price of the order. Orders must be prepaid. Purchase orders for orders totaling more than $30 are accepted.

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April 23-25, 2002

The Ninth Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute offers a valuable series of information-packed professional development concurrent sessions that are customized to value and capitalize on the linguistic and cultural assets brought forth by a diverse student population. This year's event will focus on building reading concepts and skills of young learners. Topics include: literacy, technology, social development, and curriculum.

- Visit model early childhood centers. These visits provide you with the opportunity to share ideas while seeing them in action. You will travel to high-performing, high-minority sites in the San Antonio area that are working effectively with diverse learners.
- Interact with parents to discuss ideas to form effective learning partnerships.
- Learn in workshops on multi-age classrooms, the use of centers in the early childhood classroom, incorporating technology, second language acquisition and many more.

Special Events
Parent Leadership Institute: How Families and Schools Collaborate in Literacy Development
Thursday, April 25, 2002 – San Antonio
Families are integral and valuable contributors to early childhood education. Because of the importance of families to education, RE-CONNECT, IDRA's parent information and resource center that serves Texas, will sponsor a one-day, bilingual parent institute.

Video Conference on Parent Leadership in Reading
Monday, April 22, 2002 – Texas, Statewide
In addition to the institute the San Antonio, parents, community liaisons and community resource personnel across the state will come together through special sessions focusing on parent leadership in reading via a statewide video conference. *Contact Yojani Hernández at IDRA (210-444-1710) for details.*

Featuring

Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel is executive director of IDRA. Her lifetime concern with youth – especially youth who are minority, poor or limited-English-proficient – has provided inspiration and vision for many communities across the country.

Mr. Jesús Jacinto Cardona is one of San Antonio's outstanding teachers and poets. He has been a National Endowment for the Humanities Visiting Scholar in lyric poetry at Harvard University and was awarded the Imagineer Award for his work in teaching creative writing to high school students.

Mr. Pedro Luis Boitel is an author, journalist, actor and singer and an expert in early childhood education. He has assisted numerous elementary and middle schools by providing instructional technical assistance in the classroom while modeling teaching strategies and methods that have propelled many a student to excel in bilingual reading and writing endeavors.

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Registration Form

YES (Please use one form per person. Feel free to make copies of this form.)

Name _____

Campus _____

School or Organization _____

Title/Position : _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____

Fax (_____) _____

E-mail _____

$_____ Total enclosed   Check or PO#_____

Registration Fees

___ $195 institute registration, April 23-25, 2002*

___ $15 parent institute registration (if a parent and not an education professional), April 25, 2002

___ $70 parent institute registration (if an education professional), April 25, 2002

* *Includes institute sessions, Tuesday and Thursday luncheons, two school visits [for first paid registrants], and materials.*

Make checks payable to: Intercultural Development Research Association. Purchase order numbers may be used to reserve space. Full payment prior to the institute is expected.

Register **On-line** with a purchase order number at *www.idra.org*

Mail with a check or purchase order to IDRA at 5835 Callaghan Road, #350, San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190, Attention: Carol Chávez or **Fax** with a purchase order to IDRA at 210-444-1714 Attention: Carol Chávez

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Institute Sponsors

The Intercultural Development Research Association is pleased to bring you this Ninth Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute. Supporting IDRA projects include:

- IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas).
- RE-CONNECT (the parent information resource center at IDRA that serves Texas), and
- STAR Center (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation).

Each of these IDRA projects provides specialized training and technical assistance to schools. Information on how your campus can use these resources to improve instruction and assessment will be available at the institute or by calling IDRA at 210-444-1710 or by visiting IDRA's web site: www.idra.org.

Hotel Information

The institute will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Riverwalk Hotel. The hotel is offering a special rate of $89 per night for a single or double room (plus state and local taxes), based on availability. The hotel reservation deadline for the reduced rate is March 23, 2002. Call 1-800-288-3927 to make reservations. Be sure to reference the Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute in order to qualify for the special rate.

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Recapitalizing America's Strengths in Science and Education

The scale and nature of the on-going revolution in science and technology, and what this implies for the quality of human capital in the 21st century, pose critical national security challenges for the United States. Second only to a weapon of mass destruction detonating in an American city, we can think of nothing more dangerous than a failure to manage properly science, technology, and education for the common good over the next quarter century.

Current institutional arrangements have served the nation well over the past five decades, but the world is changing. Today, private proprietary expenditure on technology development far outdistances public spending. The internationalization of both scientific research and its commercial development is having a significant effect on the capacity of the U.S. government to harness science in the service of national security and to attract qualified scientific and technical personnel. These changes are transforming most facets of the American economy, from health care to banking to retail business, as well as the defense industrial base.

The harsh fact is that *the U.S.*

> **Second only to a weapon of mass destruction detonating in an American city, we can think of nothing more dangerous than a failure to manage properly science, technology, and education.**

need for the highest quality human capital in science, mathematics, and engineering is not being met. One reason for this is clear: American students know that professional careers in basic science and mathematics require considerable preparation and effort, while salaries are often more lucrative in areas requiring less demanding training.

Non-U.S. nationals, however, do find these professions attractive and, thanks to science, math, and technical preparation superior to that of many Americans, they increasingly fill American university graduate studies seats and job slots in these areas. Another reason for the growing deficit in high-quality human capital is that the American kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) education system is not performing as well as it should. As a result too few American students are *qualified* to take these slots, *even if they are so inclined.*

This is an ironic predicament, since America's strength has always been tied to the spirit and entrepreneurial energies of its people. America remains today the model of creativity and experimentation, and its success has inspired other nations to recognize the true sources of power and wealth in science, technology, and higher education. America's international reputation, and therefore a significant aspect of its global influence, depends on its reputation for excellence in these areas. U.S. performance is not keeping up with its reputation. Other countries are striving hard, and with discipline they will outstrip us.

This is not a matter merely of national pride or international image. It is an issue of the utmost importance to national security. In a knowledge-based future, only an America that remains at the cutting edge of science and technology will sustain its current world leadership. In such a future, only a well-trained and educated population can thrive economically, and from national prosperity provide the foundation for national cohesion. Complacency with our current achievement of national wealth and international power will put all of this at risk.

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Collaborating for Educational Reform

by Albert Cortez, Ph.D., and Josie Danini Cortez, M.A.

What is collaboration? Why is it an important alternative to changing schools? Who should be involved? Who are principle stakeholders and what roles can or should they play in a local educational reform process? These and many other questions were at the forefront of a Ford Foundation effort designed to bring about systemic educational reform in a selected number of communities around the country.

Project ACCESS, a collaboration involving six organizations based in San Antonio, was one of the projects selected for funding. This article traces some of the collaborative's early work, and includes descriptions of major activities undertaken to date and significant insights that may be useful to others considering a collaborative approach for implementing an education reform model.

In the spring of 1998, the Ford Foundation began a major 10-year initiative – the Collaborating for Educational Reform Initiative (CERI) – to increase the number of minority students achieving academic success from pre-kindergarten through college graduation. Eight communities around the country, including San Antonio, were awarded grants to form broad collaboratives to achieve this goal in their communities.

The San Antonio collaborative is comprised of six organizations:
- Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA),
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund,
- University of Texas at San Antonio,
- Alamo Community College District,
- San Antonio Independent School District (ISD), and
- Communities Organized for Public Services.

Originally, the Ford Foundation invited the six groups separately to submit proposals for planning grants for CERI. Yet, clearly the foundation was interested in greater impact through collaborative approaches to local educational reforms. The active support of leaders of each local organization was considered crucial for ensuring both the short- and long-term viability of the project. With the goal of significant impact in our
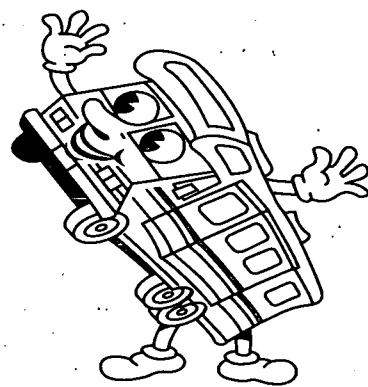
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community, the six organizations came together to collaborate instead of compete.

The Collaborative's Vision

In the initial discussions, the collaborating organizations identified critical issues and barriers to access for local students to complete high school, successfully transition into college, and persist in post-secondary schools through graduation. Representatives also considered what they might contribute to a local education reform effort that would use a collaborative approach to change specific aspects of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade education as well as targeted post-secondary operations.

They developed the planning grant application submitted to the foundation. The goal of the planning grant as outlined in the proposal was to: "Develop a strategic plan for a seamless system of support for families and educators, such that students experience educational success as they move through the kindergarten through college educational pipeline and into the workplace."

The group would hold a number of information-gathering and decision-making sessions over the course of the planning period. Topics of discussion included assessing factors that impacted the extent of successful student transitions through all levels of the educational pipeline, particularly those transitions at the elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college levels.

The group would explore strategies for more engagement by parents, school personnel and college staff in supporting student success at the various levels.

Participants would research strategies to develop local parent, teacher and student leadership that would help promote and sustain reforms.

They would assess professional development efforts that would be required to initiate and sustain the specific reforms envisioned by the project during the subsequent implementation phases.

They also would design the types of curricula and program alignments needed to create a seamless system of educational support.

To achieve these ends, the collaborative – first named Seamless Support for Educational Success – outlined four objectives for the planning year. These objectives follow.

- Develop a network of parent, student and community leaders to identify barriers to academic success and create a plan for improved parent and community involvement.
- Develop a network of school district and higher education faculty and administrators to identify barriers to student academic success and create a two- year professional development plan for all involved campuses.
- Establish structures for communication and support systems between and across the providers (teachers, administrators, and university student service providers) and their clients (students and parents).
- Define policy issues within four areas of focus (access to services, public engagement, school-university connections, and in-service and pre-service teacher training) to better equip schools and universities for the challenges of growing student diversity.

The collaborating organizations chose to designate IDRA as the lead organization and fiscal agent for the collaborative. The planning grant budget would be allocated across the collaborating organizations in amounts proportionate to their level of involvement. This approach proved to

be essential to the continuing engagement and commitment of the six entities involved in the effort.

Official Planning Stage Begins

In August of 1999, the Ford Foundation selected the San Antonio collaborative as one of the invited city applicants to receive planning grant funds under the foundation's CERI initiative. The planning grant informed the development of a full-fledged implementation effort and outlined the specific roles that each of the collaborating organizations would take in that developmental effort.

Capitalizing on each organization's unique strengths, the collaboration divided its efforts across five distinct workgroups, each led by one of the collaborating organizations. Each workgroup designated a lead person who became the workgroup liaison to a coordinating committee, which ensured consistency and alignment across the various efforts proposed.

The workgroups were organized around the major themes outlined in the planning grant application:
- **School-to-school workgroup** – focused on coordinating transition issues within the pre-kindergarten to 12th grade system.
- **School-to-college workgroup** – concentrated on communication, alignment and coordination issues across the school levels.
- **School-to-work workgroup** – examined issues related to strengthening connections between schools and community colleges and business and community.
- **Parent and community engagement workgroup** – focused on strategies for more meaningfully including parents and community members in all levels of school decision making.
- **Policy workgroup** – helped identify local, state and national policy issues

that supported or hindered successful student transitions and high school and college graduation.

The workgroups convened a series of meetings over the planning year gathering input not only from their own institutions, but also from parent, community and student representatives. They identified major obstacles and developed strategies that addressed the problems identified in each of the major areas. Planning work also included convening focus groups of parents and students in high school and college who were asked to share their perspectives of major barriers to student educational successes and possible reforms needed to help address the shortcomings they had identified.

Following months of workgroup meetings and coordination committee deliberations, the collaborating organizations designated a sub-group of members from the various committees to develop the implementation proposal. Critical to the process were the synthesis and convergence of the initiatives proposed by the various workgroups and the development of a budget that appropriately allocated resources across the various tasks. Commensurate with those discussions was the designation of the lead organization – IDRA – which continued primary responsibility for efforts in specific areas and the corresponding budget allocations required to support those efforts.

Implementation Phase Begins

In July of 2000, the Ford Foundation advised IDRA that the San Antonio collaborative – renamed Project ACCESS (Academic and Community Collaborative Ensuring Student Success) – was one of the collaboratives selected for implementation funding for two years. Ford Foundation funding continued for

another year in 2001 with a new emphasis on scaling up best practices for institutionalization and sustainability.

Project ACCESS is an evolving model of institutional engagement with educators, communities and families becoming pro-actively involved in improving student achievement and increasing college enrollment and completion rates.

As we begin this third year of implementation, Project ACCESS' six collaborating partners continue their commitment to significant systemic reform through school alignment, professional development, support for school-to-school and school-to-college transitions, community engagement and systematic policy review and reform.

Over time, the collaborative refined Project ACCESS' shared vision which drives the effort: "Students and families will be supported by a seamless network of systems from school-age through college graduation resulting in economically self-sufficient, professionally competent and responsible citizens. Students will achieve above state and national standards, exhibit personal growth, and serve others."

The partners are working toward a common understanding and consensus on the third year's plan of action, based on projected impact, for example what activities will yield the greatest impact for the greatest number of students this year?

In addition to the team meetings, the chief executive officers of each organization convene on a quarterly basis. This is an important mechanism for engaging the organizations at the highest levels, providing opportunities for further leveraging of resources and intellectual capital.

Also factoring into the third-year plan is a set of "elements of success" that the foundation provided to the CERI sites in July 2001. These elements are based on CERI premises

that "large-scale, sustainable and measurable improvements in the quality of urban schools can take place when key educational reform stakeholders collaborate toward a locally-determined and shared vision for improving student experiences and outcomes by engaging in strategies at multiple levels (classroom, school, cluster, district and state)."

With all of this in mind, the collaborative has concentrated on activities that will provide opportunities for scaling up and sustainability with a focus on alignment or "vertical teaming" with a "school-within-a-school." concept beginning with the Burbank cluster of schools in San Antonio ISD. Within each cluster, a cohort of teachers stewards a cohort of students, ensuring easy and safe transitions from elementary to middle school, middle to high school, high school and college, and throughout college.

The use of data to inform decision-making has also been a focus for the ACCESS partners. For the first time, the school district has been using interim assessments to inform curriculum and instruction. New efforts are underway to critically analyze the transition point between high school graduation and college enrollment. Campus-based activities – such as "Adopt-A-Hallway," which increases college visibility and awareness – have increased this fall semester with more planned for the spring semester.

Lessons Learned Thus Far

Throughout the planning and implementation phases, the collaborative has identified and used lessons learned to fine-tune its efforts in each subsequent phase of the collaboration. A major insight obtained during the planning was that creation of a successful working collaborative requires clarity of intent, extensive

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communication among all partners, persistence, and nurturing high levels of trust across organizations involved.

Clarity of intent means not only in terms of the goals and objectives of the project, but also in the collaborative's intention to create long-term inter-relationships. This was one of the pillars of the Ford Foundation effort. Extensive communication across the collaborating organizations and the various workgroups was essential to keeping everyone informed and all activities aligned. More importantly, the communication nurtured the development and strengthening of bonds across groups. Creating and sustaining trust across very capable, yet distinct entities served as the mortar for the building of the ACCESS collaborative.

This trust became essential in the process of breaking out the planning activities across the six partnering organizations. It was particularly important in crafting a budget that was not equally distributed across groups, but tied to the level of activities that each organization volunteered to undertake or coordinate.

Through it all, participating organizations have been willing to persist in a challenging process that does not lead to quick and neat conclusions, but sets the stage for long-term sustainable reforms.

Albert Cortez, Ph.D., is the director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Josie Cortez, M.A., is the IDRA production development coordinator. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In January, IDRA worked with **10,278** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **69** training and technical assistance activities and **283** program sites in **15** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

+ IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
+ English as a Second Language Strategies in Science
+ *WOW Workshop on Workshops*
+ Parent Leadership Development
+ Vertical Alignment

Participating agencies and school districts included:
◇ Washington, D.C., Public Schools
◇ Eagle Pass Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Louisiana County Office of Education
◇ Albuquerque Public Schools, New Mexico
◇ Terrell ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

This year, IDRA is holding a series of live interactive video conferences for hundreds of Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program tutors in schools in multiple cities. IDRA's Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an internationally-recognized cross-age tutoring program in schools across the United States, Great Britain and Brazil. By connecting students in up to four separate cities at a time, these events give tutors the opportunity to meet each other across state boundaries and the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the students communicate with each other via fax and as key pals (electronic pen pals) prior to their video conference as well. The program's video conference model is designed to build students' literacy and skills related to state and national academic standards. It also supports key components of this highly successful dropout prevention program.

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.

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contribute to student success.

Each person has a particular learning style. And this variety of learning styles among students reveals another concern. School curricula, textbooks, and some teachers' approaches to teaching have a narrow focus on how children learn. Too often the assumption is that the home is English-speaking, middle-class, and college-educated.

As the bar is raised on standards, teachers may be tempted to increase the *rate* of teaching and the *amount* of content taught. This acceleration increases dependence on rote-learning and memorization of greater amounts of information. It reduces class discussion time, open-ended questions, creativity, one-on-one work, and alternative approaches to learning.

Wheelock states: "When schools assert that every student can learn, they take concrete steps to saturate school life with opportunities to access the extra help they need to succeed. The steps they take can vary from school to school, but effective approaches have several characteristics in common: They are offered early and often as a normal part of the school routine; and they are often multi-faceted, with supports for academic achievement made available in a variety of ways" (Wheelock, 2002).

Recommendations to Families

Parents must have the right questions and good, basic information in order to support children in high standards. Education should be at the service of its participants: families, children and community. Children, families, and communities should not be at the service of education. Parents and families need to know what is going on in the classroom: how teachers are being trained, how their children are being engaged, how their children are understanding, reasoning, problem-solving, and communicating.

Did You Know?

Fully 37 percent of doctorates in natural science, 50 percent of doctorates in mathematics and computer science, and 53 percent of doctorates in engineering at U.S. universities – the best in the world – are awarded to non-U.S. citizens. However, the percentage of science and engineering doctoral recipients with firm plans to stay in the United States is declining.

Americans have performed relatively well in both mathematics and science at the fourth grade level, and slightly above the international average at the eighth grade level, but show the sharp relative decline in the high school years. The most recent test shows a relative decline at the eighth grade level as well.
– "Road Map for National Security: Imperative for Change," by the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century.

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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Schools should support ongoing dialogue between parents and educators on standards and how children can be supported to learn. Forums that are bilingual and in lay-person's terms should be held where family and community can learn about the specifics of standards, how they are measured, and how they are assessed.

Meetings held with parents, educators and administrators support peer exchange. At these meetings goals are set, people are empowered and student achievement remains central to the work.

IDRA's model of parent involvement focuses on four major roles: parents as teachers, as resources to the school, as decision-makers, and as leaders and trainers of other parents. There are many things parents can do in these roles, such as the following.

Parents as teachers
- Support children by creating space to learn at home.
- Reduce television viewing and other distractions.
- Ask children to share work and talk about school.
- Encourage children to support each other in learning.
- Create family peer groups and neighborhood support systems for children to extend their learning and experience individual and collective support for success in school.

Parents as resources to the school
- At the elementary school level, parents are resources to the classroom teacher with oral language presentations, listener, coach and observer of children, etc.
- Identify and support children in

using neighborhood support systems, e.g., libraries, religious and community centers, after-school support systems, YMCA and YWCA, computer access, and field trips.

Parents as decision-makers

- Participate on curriculum committees and advisory groups.
- Review standards, tests and assessment procedures.
- Convene parent and community groups to increase awareness, school support for student achievement, and even getting elected to parent organizations and school boards.
- Create and support committees to increase financial support to schools, increase teaching staff and reduce class size.
- Work with schools to identify the variety of ways in which students learn.
- Find out about graduation rates and

retention rates.

Parents as leaders and trainers of other parents

- Create parent and family networks of mutual support for student achievement, training other parents to be advocates, resources and decision-makers, and surveying families and using data to create further organizations, support and leadership.
- Poll and conduct focus groups of students, teachers and parents.
- Map the assets of children and families (if standards show what students do not know, we need to find out what they do know).

The whole community wants and needs children to achieve. It is inherent in human nature to want to learn. The role and power of family in this movement for high achievement for *all* students must be immediately recognized. High standards for all children are good if the appropriate support and resources are given to

schools, to children and to families. All children and families must be valued, none is expendable to standards or tests.

Resources

Center for Law and Education. *Urgent Message for Parents* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Education, Community Action for Public Schools, 1999).

Keenan, J.W., and A. Wheelock. "The Standards Movement in Education: Will Poor and Minority Students Benefit?" *Poverty and Race* (May-June 1997).

Wheelock, A. "Everybody Has to Get It: Extra Help and Support to 'Meet Standards' and Prevent Grade Retention," Internet article www.middleweb.com/whlckreten.html.

Micaela Díaz-Sanchez is an education assistant in the IDRA Division of Community and Public Engagement. Aurelio M. Montemayor is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Community and Public Engagement. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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Creating schools that work for all children,
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination

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IDRA Newsletter

"I Saw the Flame"

Student Reflection

Inside this Issue:

✧ **Arkansas educators learn new skills**

✧ **TESOL issues statement**

✧ **Early childhood resources**

by Sofia Bahena

"I saw the flame" banners and stickers were all being distributed to the roaring crowd of spectators. Hundreds of students and faculty witnessed the passing of the Olympic torch. As I stood there watching, I saw what Fox Tech High School had become – a united body who, despite racial and cultural differences, stood together as one.

Three and a half years ago when I first set foot on the Tech campus I had heard that two years earlier it was almost demolished due to its poor academic background. At first, I was a bit discouraged by this, but I am not one to pass up a challenge. So I enrolled at Fox Tech with the aspirations of contributing to a major change at Tech.

And, similar to the Olympic torch being lit, the Fox Tech torch was lit in 1996 with the restructuring of its faculty and the induction of a new leader, Ms. Joanne Cockrell. For the past six years, the torch has been carried by the Tech faculty and students. It is through their – or I should say "our" – hard work and ambition that we have accomplished what we have. It is Ms. Cockrell's

Sofia Bahena, student

constant pushing, the teachers' constant support and the students' constant dedication that Fox Tech has been recognized at both the state and national level. The National Blue Ribbon Award, the Chase Award, the Texas Education Agency Recognized School (for two consecutive years, I might add) and *Time* magazine's article describing us as the No. 2 school in the nation are but a few of the many honors to come.

Not only have we overcome academic barriers, we have broken through the brick walls of prejudice.

Internet Web Sites on Early Childhood Education

Association for Supervision and Curriculum
   Development (ASCD)   http://www.ascd.org
Birds of a Feather
   http://www.mcn.org/ed/cur/liv/ind/birds
Center for the Improvement of Early Reading
   Achievement   http://www.ciera.org
Children's Music Web   http://www.childrensmusic.org
Diversity Bookmarks Collection
   http://www.diversitybookmarks.homestead.com/
   index.html
ERIC Clearinghouse – Elementary and Early Childhood
   Education   http://ericeece.org
Early Childhood Education On Line
   http://www.ume.maine.edu/~cofed/eceol
Early Childhood Research Institute (CLAS)
   http://clas.uiuc.edu
Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters
   (HIPPY)   http://www.hippyusa.org
Idea Box – Early Childhood Ed and Activities
   http://www.theideabox.com
Intercultural Development Research Association
   http://www.idra.org
K-8 Aeronautics Internet Textbook
   http://wings.avkids.com

KinderArt   http://www.bconnex.net/~jarea/lessons.htm
Kindergarten Connection   http://www.kconnect.com
National Association for the Education of Young Children
   http://www.naeyc.org
National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System
   http://www.nectas.unc.edu
National Institute on Early Childhood Development and
   Education   http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI
Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.
   http://www.patnc.org
ReadyWeb: Readiness Links
   http://ericps.ed.uiuc.edu/readyweb/readyweb.html
Texas Education Agency   http://www.tea.state.tx.us
Thematic Planning Units   http://www.sped.ukans.edu
Zero to Three   http://www.zerotothree.org

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.
www.idra.org

Arkansas Educators Explore Ways to Better Serve Their Growing Numbers of English Language Learners

by José L. Rodríguez

Many communities across the country are experiencing changes in their population. Some are shrinking, while others are growing. Still others have growing concentrations of certain racial and ethic groups. These changes have implications for the way schools operate, particularly when the growing population speaks a language other than English. Such is the case throughout the state of Arkansas.

As a result, educators in Arkansas have been in search of strategies and models to help them serve their English language learners. Some educators attended an institute hosted by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), the Annual *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute.

This institute began nine years ago as a professional development experience to enhance early childhood educators' professional skills and to give participants an opportunity to network with colleagues and other experts. The institute focuses on ensuring that children who speak a language other than English benefit from quality instructional programs that capitalize on students' language and culture. The ninth institute is being held in San Antonio this month.

The Arkansas participants were inspired to host their own early childhood educators institute. They wanted to include more of their educators in exploring, assessing, and reflecting on alternative strategies to lead a diverse student population to success.

Arkansas Department of Education's Dr. André Guerrero asked IDRA to work with a team of educators from Arkansas to plan an event that would address not only English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual instruction, but also technology and parent leadership. IDRA's role was sponsored by its South Central Collaborative for Equity, the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

The first day of the institute
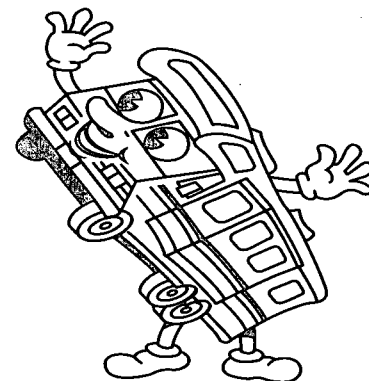

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would be dedicated to recognizing cultural differences in the classroom and best practices in ESL and bilingual instruction. The second day would be spent working out a plan of action for parent leadership. The final day would be dedicated to technology and second language acquisition.

Recognizing Cultural Differences in the Classroom

Because recognizing cultural differences in the classroom makes such a difference to a quality education, there was a group session dedicated to the topic. The purpose of this session was to bring to focus the value of validating our student's culture. To better serve our English language learners, we must first understand and value their culture. Before we can accomplish this, we have to define culture and become familiar with the categories of culture. The participants reviewed the elements of surface culture and deep culture from several ethnic groups. They then generated ideas for validating the culture of the students they serve.

Through a series of group activities and sharing, they were able to see how each person present in the room contributed to the richness of our world community. By sharing their personal experiences, they discovered that many have an understanding of and concentrate on students' surface culture. As a whole, the group discussed similarities and differences in the cultures. They then were able to better understand where their students are coming from.

Strengthening Second Language Learning

Ms. Tara Newman and Ms. Claudia Torres, excellent teachers from the Nacogdoches Independent School District in Texas, facilitated an intensive workshop on strengthening English language learning. The presenters led the participants through the stages that students go through while learning a second language. Because the focus was second language acquisition in early childhood classrooms, they did not include early language development in the native language.
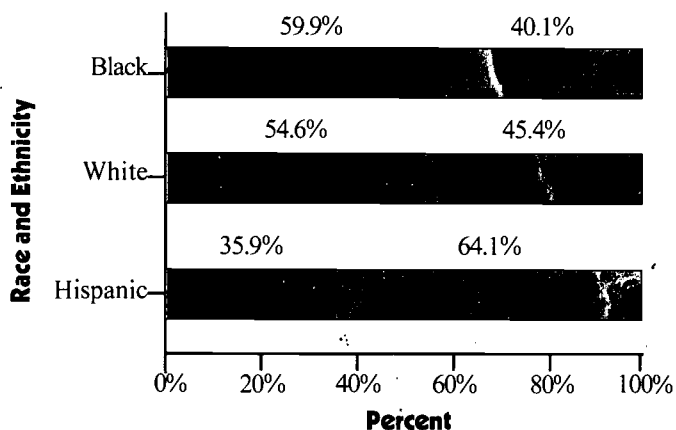
The stages are:
* Sound approximations;
* One word utterances;
* Short phrases, such as telegraphic speech;
* Rule development;
* Sociolinguistic awareness;
* Linguistic-code awareness;
* Scribbling and drawing;
* Reading, print awareness;
* Syllabic writing; and
* Alphabetic writing and invented spelling.

"Not all children go through all stages, but because we want to value their progress and celebrate it at each step of the way, we feel it is important for us to have these stages in mind as we interact with our students," said

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Did You Know?

Enrollment of Three- and Four-Year-Olds in Pre-Primary Education Programs by Race and Ethnicity, 2000

Race and Ethnicity	Enrolled	Not Enrolled
Black	59.9%	40.1%
White	54.6%	45.4%
Hispanic	35.9%	64.1%

Percent (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Educational Attainment of the Population, 25 Years and Over by Sex and Race Origin*, March 2000

■ Enrolled ■ Not Enrolled

The foundation of a successful school career begins with early childhood education programs, in which Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds are less likely to be enrolled than other American children. A significantly smaller proportion of 3- and 4-year-old Hispanic children were enrolled in pre-primary education programs in 2000 than Black children and White children.
– U.S. Census Bureau, *Educational Attainment of the Population, 25 Years and Over by Sex and Race Origin*, March 2000

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

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Ms. Newman.

Children are most eager to learn the letters and sounds of their own name because it is so meaningful to them. That is why the presenters stressed the importance of name centers, name charts, name puzzles and other activities focused on students' names.

The participants were also involved in a book-making process. This activity increases the students' perception of themselves as authors. The books made by the children soon become their favorite reading books.

The use of the oral tradition is also important because it enhances comprehension, and students are able to master sequencing, main idea and story elements. The participants then interacted with each other and shared some of the activities they are already implementing in their own classrooms.

Valuing Parent Leadership for Educational Excellence

Anna Alicia Romero, an IDRA education assistant, led a whole-group, all-day workshop on parent leadership. IDRA's concept of the leadership role is part of a broader schema for parent involvement. Our underlying philosophy is that of valuing as illustrated in facilitating parents to identify the strengths and assets in themselves and their peers (Montemayor and Romero, 2000).

During the session at the institute, the participants engaged in a series of activities so that they could compare *deficit* and *valuing* assumptions. They learned what kinds of activities educators can apply with parents of English language learners.

Ms. Romero stated: "This model is a vision of all parents as advocates of excellent neighborhood public schools. We consider leadership the culminating set of activities in a spectrum of parent participation."

Diversity Bookmarks Collection

http://www.diversitybookmarks.homestead.com/index.html

Adult Education – web sites designed for those who help adult learners learn to read and write, acquire English, obtain GEDs, etc.

Assistance Centers – web sites hosted by training and technical assistance providers. Good sources for schools of information for training such as research results and model programs. Includes: ERIC system, national centers and labs, standards and assessment, state of Texas, technical assistance

Bilingual/ESL education – web sites of interest to bilingual and ESL educators, researchers, and advocates at all educational levels. Includes: advocacy and language policy, ESL multi-resource web sites, ESL student activities collections, Spanish resources (SSL and SFL), technical assistance for bilingual/ESL education, technology approaches to bilingual/ESL

Early Childhood – web sites for educators who work with ages 0 to grade 3. Includes: authors, bilingual (Spanish), student activities, technical assistance, early childhood

Fine Arts – web sites for the visual and performing arts. Includes: kid art, museums and exhibits

Language Arts – web sites that promote literacy (reading and writing) development. Includes: authors, electronic books, literature, student activities, technical assistance, language arts

Math and Science – web sites that help teach math and science topics. Includes: earth science, general science, health and anatomy, life science, math, museums and zoos, physical science, space, technical assistance for math and science

Multicultural – web sites dealing with issues of equity and multicultural education as well as sites that address specific cultural and minority groups. Includes: advocacy and educational equity, African-American, Asian-American, Latino, multicultural education, Native Americans, women and girls

Parents and Families – web sites for parents and families and educators who work with them. Includes: college, family fun, family literacy and homework help, parenting and parental involvement, teens

Resources – web sites that can provide informational and instructional resources to schools either free or through purchase. Includes: book publishers, electronic journals, grants and funding, libraries and reference materials, professional associations, software, commercial

Social studies – web sites that help teach the social sciences. Includes: careers and vocational, geography, government and law, history, news and current events

Special programs – web sites for categorical programs excluding bilingual/ESL programs. Includes: gifted education, migrant education, safe and drug-free schools, special education

Technology – web sites that focus on a variety of ways to use technology for general purposes or for instruction. Includes: audio resources, collaborative projects, graphics and video, integrating technology into teaching, lesson plans (many subjects), links to major lists, plug-ins and other web tools, search engines, noncommercial software, technical assistance for technology

The *Diversity Bookmarks Collection* is developed by Dr. Laura Chris Green at IDRA and is updated regularly.

Intercultural Development Research Association, www.idra.org

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In this context, leadership is:
- Expanding;
- Based on peer support and rotating responsibilities;
- Ongoing invitation and support of new leadership;
- Connecting parents and communities across race, ethnic and class divisions; and
- Focusing on collective action for the good of all children (Montemayor and Romero, 2000).

After the work session, participants collaborated with their colleagues to create a strategic plan of action with long-range goals and yearly objectives. A few of the questions that needed to be answered for these goals included:
- When will the plan of action be completed?
- What are the initiatives?
- Where will our resources come from?
- Who will be responsible for this plan to be fulfilled?

The participants had a productive day and were re-energized about the work ahead of them.

Bilingual Early Childhood Web Sites

Dr. Laura Chris Green, an IDRA senior education associate, led a session based on her *Diversity Bookmarks Collection*. It was a very popular session. This large list of Internet bookmarks, or *favorites*, was developed over the course of two years. It includes most of the major web site addresses of special interest to bilingual and ESL educators and others interested in issues of educational equity and diversity (Green, 2001).

The participants were led on a journey through the Internet using the bookmark collection. It was amazing to see the many resources available on the Internet for educators and students. Surfing the web is intimidating

> "Research has shown that young children exposed to high-quality (early learning) settings exhibit better language and mathematics skills, better cognitive and social skills, and better relationships with classmates than do children in lower-quality care. Evaluations of well-run early-learning programs also have found that children in those environments were less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, need special education, or get into future trouble with the law than similar children who did not have such exposure."
>
> – "Early Learning," *Education Week on the Web*, March 21, 2002

for some of us, but Dr. Green's *Diversity Bookmarks Collection* makes it friendlier and more efficient.

Educators were able to see relevant and creative books and activities. They visited museums from around the world, which is an opportunity our students seldom have. In her bookmarks, Dr. Green has categories including: adult education, bilingual and ESL, early childhood, math and science, and parent information. See the box on Page 5 for a complete list. This was a wonderful session for educators who find themselves wondering how to incorporate technology into their teaching.

Conclusion

The Arkansas Early Childhood Educators Institute was designed to prepare teachers to serve the growing Latino population in their communities. After the three-day institute, they felt they had a better understanding of the culture of their students and felt more comfortable with the literacy strategies presented. The parent leadership component however was most inspiring for the participants. Once we value parents as the first teacher, we can understand more about the culture of our families.

Some comments from participants include:
- "I appreciate the dedication and hard work from the presenters in

this conference. They are very skilled in conveying the message to us and empowering us to go back and share. I felt that everything I learned is top priority to engage our families and partner with them."
- "This was more than I thought it was going to be. Thank you so much for it. I will work with my parents and children to better our center."
- "I am very pleased to have been invited here and excited about what we learned."

Dr. André Guerrero captured the spirit of the institute saying to the participants: "You are the cornerstone in our state's efforts to welcome language-minority families and children into our educational system. You are key to opening the door for our English language learners into the world of literacy and learning and success in school."

Resources

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José L. Rodríguez is an education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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TESOL Statement on Language and Literacy Development for Young English Language Learners

by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

Editor's Note: The TESOL executive committee approved a new position paper addressing language and literacy development for young English language learners. Written by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization task force, the position paper specifically addresses the needs of young English language learners regarding early language and literacy development and recommends programs that work with young ESOL students. Because U.S. President Bush has early reading programs as a key part of his education plan and the reauthorization effort (namely, "Reading First" and "Early Reading First"), this position paper joins those already published for advocacy efforts based in Washington, D.C. IDRA senior education associate, Dr. Laura Chris Green was a member of the task force.

Literacy learning and language acquisition are essential to young children's cognitive and social development. For all students, a strong and solid early education is critical to ensuring their long-term academic success. "Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of grade three" (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998).

Improving reading programs in early childhood and primary classrooms is the key to making sure that all students read on grade level by the third grade. For young learners of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), the challenges of literacy and language development are compounded by the fact that they must be achieved in a language that is not spoken in their home.

Principles and Recommendations

Based on research in early literacy development and second language acquisition, the following features of effective early literacy programs are recommended for young ESOL students.

1. Oral language and literacy development is supported by the student's native language.

Development and learning begin at an early age, and the language young children have heard since birth is the language they have used to begin to construct their knowledge and form meaningful communicative relationships.

All young children come to school with knowledge and learning from home. Successful early childhood programs acknowledge and build upon this prior knowledge. Wherever possible, young ESOL learners should

receive their initial reading instruction in their native language. The body of research in second language acquisition shows that literacy learning is easiest when the initial instruction is in the student's native language because literacy skills are easily transferred from the first to the second language. Moreover, use of the native language builds a connection between the home and school.

ESOL students' families should be encouraged to read and talk to their children in the family's native language if this is their strongest language. ESOL students' interaction with their families in their native language will give them the richest possible language foundation, advancing the learning of their first language as well as English, in both academic and social situations. These experiences will allow young children to associate reading with meaning from the very beginning so

that they do not word call, that is, pronounce words from print when they do not understand them.

2. Adequate time is provided for students to acquire literacy skills in English.

It is well documented that all children learn at different rates. This principle is especially true for young ESOL learners, who follow developmental patterns that are distinctly different from those of native English speakers. Young ESOL learners should not be hurried prematurely into formal literacy instruction in any language or into moving from reading in their native language to reading in English. Oral or social language proficiency, which can be achieved within two to three years, should not be equated with academic proficiency or literacy in a language.

Literacy, cognitive, and conceptual development of ESOL students should be interlaced. Research shows that for young children in particular, the stronger the native language foundation, especially when learned in formal schooling environments, the greater the academic success in English literacy development.

Of course, not all new English language learners or their families have had formal schooling opportunities. Therefore, accountability systems that hold teachers and schools responsible for English literacy development for ESOL learners in an unrealistic time frame may, in the long run, hinder the students' chances for academic success.

3. Instruction and materials are developmentally appropriate.

ESOL students who are at early stages of schooling (pre-K-Grade 2) need to experience developmentally appropriate instruction that will help them develop oral and written language proficiency in one or more languages. This kind of instruction engages children in meaningful interactions with adults, other children, concrete materials, and print materials. Moreover, the materials that are used need to be comprehensible to the learner and meet their developmental, cognitive, social, and cultural needs, which for young ESOL learners include language proficiency.

In developmentally appropriate classrooms, students spend most of their time in rich language environments in which they observe, touch, listen, talk, and interact. Early reading and writing instruction is largely informal, playful, and based on oral language activities and personal experiences.

Activities that typically challenge the attention span of young learners, such as sitting quietly and listening for long periods, and printing neatly on fine-lined paper, should be limited. Standards-based instruction, as described in *ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 Students* (TESOL, 1997) and *Integrating the ESL Standards Into Classroom Practice: Grades Pre-K-2* (TESOL, 2001), should be incorporated into developmentally appropriate practices.

4. Literacy programs are meaning-based and balanced.

ESOL learners need to understand why people read and write in order to be motivated to excel in their own literacy development. A preponderance of isolated skills, such as an intensive phonics program that is not firmly grounded in books and stories, does not foster overall reading comprehension.

A balanced literacy program will teach skills within the context of meaningful interactions with texts that elicit students' emotional and intellectual responses to ideas, characters, and events. Using children's literature, preferably from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, will be a key part of any such program. Effective literacy programs seek both literacy and content development, assert that students within the program are learning the same content as native-English-speaking children, and look beyond the classroom for literacy experiences.

5. Assessment is reliable, valid, and ongoing.

Many young children cannot demonstrate the knowledge and skills they possess if they are assessed with methods more appropriate to older learners or those designed for native English speakers.

In order to more accurately assess the literacy development of young ESOL learners, a variety of formal and informal tools should be used. Assessments that only focus on phonics, spelling skills, and writing content and style may be vulnerable to linguistic interference from the native language. Teachers should be aware that errors on assessments of English literacy skills can be developmental in nature and will disappear over time as students acquire English language proficiency.

By continually using reliable, valid, and fair assessments, teachers are able to modify their instruction and tailor it to the individual needs of ESOL learners. Gathering classroom data on an ongoing basis, as described in **Scenarios for ESL Standards-based Assessment** (TESOL, 2001) keeps teachers apprised of student progress toward the attainment of ESL standards.

6. Professional preparation and development is continually provided for educators regarding linguistic and cultural diversity.

The presence of English language learners and culturally diverse

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classrooms – long a characteristic only of major cities – is more and more becoming the norm throughout the country. In order to face the challenges that come with a diverse classroom, all educators and administrators need to have both pre- and in-service training opportunities in linguistic and cultural diversity, and in principles of first and second language development.

It is also critical for the early childhood educator to understand the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their children in order to facilitate learning, and build cross-cultural understandings with their families.

Summary

For young children, the quality of education they receive in their first years of schooling is often a critical indicator of their long-term academic success. Early literacy and language development are interlaced with social and cognitive development and are vital elements in the education of young children. For young ESOL learners, the complexities involved with literacy and language development are compounded by the fact that they must be achieved in a language other than their native language, and often before they are literate in that language. Successful early childhood programs build upon the knowledge that young learners bring from home, and for young ESOL learners, this knowledge is learned and expressed in their native language.

Research in second language development has shown that literacy in a second language is much more easily achieved when literacy is developed in the native language, as literacy skills are more easily transferred from the first language to the second language. Differences between social and

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In February, IDRA worked with **8,006** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **53** training and technical assistance activities and **124** program sites in **15** states plus Brazil. Topics included:

◆ Principles and Standards for Equity in School Mathematics
◆ Dropout Prevention
◆ *Focusing on Language Academic and Instructional Renewal* (FLAIR)
◆ *Dicho y Hecho*: Language Play and the Arts

Participating agencies and school districts included:

◇ New York Community School District #7
◇ Houston Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Dysart Unified School District, Phoenix, Arizona
◇ Southwest Texas State University
◇ Victoria ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation funds Project Alianza, a collaboration of IDRA and the Mexican and American Solidarity Foundation, to create a comprehensive and interdisciplinary teacher preparation-and leadership development program to serve an increasing Hispanic student population in the U.S. Southwest and Midwest. The project is expanding the elementary education curricula at participating universities to enhance the abilities of teachers, parents, administrators, school board members and community leaders to collaborate effectively. It focuses on kindergarten through sixth grade teachers – grade levels where bilingual education is offered most and where there is a shortage of well-prepared teachers. Project Alianza is enabling universities to tap into three groups of individuals who possess the basic requirements of a prospective bilingual education teacher: bilingual teacher aides, students in traditional bilingual teacher-preparation programs, and teachers trained in Mexico to teach in their elementary grades (*normalistas*) and who are legal U.S. residents.

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.

academic language need to be recognized and addressed by all teachers that ESOL students encounter. In other words, all teachers need to understand that social language is based principally on familiar and often concrete concepts, whereas academic language is more linguistically complex, often involving abstract concepts, and is embedded into new cognitive information and topics.

As a result, teachers, administrators, and families should understand that social language skills may develop within two to three years, as compared to full academic proficiency in a second language, which is more literacy dependent and can take five to seven years to develop. Arbitrary time limits for mainstreaming ESOL learners should not be placed on programs, nor should educators be encouraged to move young students hastily into literacy programs before they are capable of performing successfully.

Instruction and materials should be appropriate in terms of developmental characteristics and language proficiency. Effective literacy programs maintain a balanced focus on both literacy and content development. In order to measure young learners' progress, a variety of formal and informal tools should be used that are reliable, valid, and fair.

Most importantly, early childhood educators, just as their peers in K-12 education, need to receive pre- and in-service training on the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity as well as the foundations of second language learning for young children so that they can meet the needs and challenges of their diverse classrooms.

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Just one glance in the Fox Tech cafeteria speaks for itself. At a single table, the students vary from the "intellectual" to the "creative" to the "athletic."

Pride beams in all our faces, but most importantly through our actions. One sees students and teachers pick up trash from the campus grounds. Furthermore, pride is shown on the faces of the students and teachers through the myriad of organizations and clubs, which allow us to become involved in our community and school. Organizations range from drama to band to academic decathlon to sports to vocational clubs to community service clubs. One particular service learning organization, known as Political Thinkers, emerged here with the help of its founder for the purpose of informing students of their civic duty to serve their community and the effect of laws on society. It is the first and only organization of its kind in the district.

The future success of this school shines brilliantly like the Olympic torch in Salt Lake City. On May 28, 2002, the senior class of 2002 will pass that torch on to the next class of seniors with the assurance of their future triumph. And from now until I grow old and gray I will be content knowing that I saw the flame.

Sophia Bahena is a high school student at Louis W. Fox Technical High School in San Antonio.

My Spanish-Speaking Left Foot

by José A. Cárdenas, Ed.D.

My Spanish-Speaking Left Foot

José A. Cárdenas (right) and his sister. Maria de Jesús (left), in Charro and China Poblana costumes. Circa 1938.

It was inevitable that José Angel Cárdenas would spend most of his professional life working in the development of multicultural and bilingual programs. He was born in Laredo, Texas, in 1930 with an extensive number of relatives on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. In his fourth book, Dr. Cárdenas combines laughter and insight as he re-lives his encounters growing up in a multicultural environment. He depicts the cultural influence of Mexico and the Spanish-speaking world on a Mexican American living in the United States.

"*I remember sometimes saying that I was born with my right foot in the United States and my left foot in Mexico. I specifically designate my left foot as the Spanish-speaking one because I was taught in the U.S. Army that the left foot always comes first, and Spanish was my first language.*"
– José A. Cárdenas

In addition to illustrating his childhood capers and his travels throughout Central and South America, Dr. Cárdenas provides compelling reflections of multicultural topics such as wealth, class, language, religion, education and family. Dr. Cárdenas served more than 50 years as a professional educator and is the founder and director emeritus of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). IDRA is based in San Antonio and works with schools across the country and internationally to improve education for all children.

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Connections... for Early Childhood Education

"America's Kindergartners" Report
National Center for Education
    Statistics
Office of Educational Research and
    Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
1990 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone: 202-502-7300
http://nces.ed.gov

**Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development**
1703 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1714
Phone: 703-578-9600 or 1-800-933-ASCD
Fax: 703-575-5400
http://www.ascd.org/

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Early
Childhood Education**
University of Illinois at Urbana-
    Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Phone: 217/333-1386 or 800/583-4135
Fax: 217/333-3767
http://ericeece.org/

**Home Instruction Program for
Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)**
220 East 23rd Street, Suite 300
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 212-532-7730
Fax: 212-532-7899
http://www.hippyusa.org

**Intercultural Development
Research Association**
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, Texas 78228-1190
Phone: 210-444-1710
Fax: 210-444-1714
http://www.idra.org

**National Association for the
Education of Young Children**
1509 16th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: 202-232-8777 or 800-424-2460
Fax: 202-328-1846
http://www.naeyc.org

**National Institute on Early Childhood
Development and Education**
Office of Educational Research and
    Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
555 New Jersey Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20208
Phone: 202-219-1935
Fax: 202-273-4768
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI

Parents as Teachers National Center
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, Missouri 63132
Phone: 314-432-4330
Fax: 314-432-8963
http://www.patnc.org

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Creating schools that work for all children,
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination

Teachers and Instructional Technology:

Wise or Foolish Choices

Laura Chris Green, Ph.D.

In 1911, Thomas Edison, inventor of the magic lantern, predicted that it "is going to make schools so attractive that a big army with swords and guns couldn't keep boys and girls out of it" (Papert, 1980).

Although many teachers today use movies, videos and even laser discs to spice up a unit, I have yet to see them beat students away from their doors with a stick because of it.

In the early 1940s, advocates for educational radio said, "This technology can...bring [boys and girls] the good things of life...It will ultimately be used as a substitute for certain teacher instruction" (Dockterman, 1991).

Today, despite wide access to all kinds of radio programs and hundreds of television channels – including *Sesame Street*, the *Discovery Channel* and the Whittle system – students still seem to need their teachers eight hours a day.

In 1980, speaking of computer assisted instruction, Seymour Papert promised, "Much if not all the knowledge schools presently try to teach with such pain and expense and such limited

success will be learned, as the child learns to talk, painlessly, successfully and without organized instruction" (Dockterman, 1991).

Years later, many schools have networked computer labs, multimedia personal computers (PCs), and CD-ROMs, but we still have joyless programs of organized instruction and countless students who fail.

Will the new technologies go the way of the old, that is, will they be heralded by grandiose promises of revolution but fall short of any real changes in schools? What role *should* teachers and technology play as we move into the next century? And how do bilingual students fit into the picture? We must clarify such basic issues before we can take true advantage of our enticing new tools.

This article describes three roles educators commonly expect technology to play, outlines three roles that prevent us from reaching technology's full potential, and presents a more promising vision for teachers and technology that focuses on better roles they can play in today's schools.

The Babysitter, the Entertainer and the Drill Sergeant

Three unproductive roles instructional technology often assumes are: babysitter, entertainer and drill sergeant. The **babysitter** role is very common. Some teachers want a competent babysitter so they can take a break from their hectic and exhausting days. They fervently wish for a computer lab staffed with a full-time aide who will receive their students at the door and return them safe-and-sound 30 minutes later.

I sympathize with teachers' need for relief and refreshment. Having experienced seven years as a classroom teacher, I know that teaching is the most demanding and stressful job in the world.

But computer labs that cost tens of thousands of dollars are not the correct answer to the question of how to prevent teacher burnout. Cheaper and more honest answers such as teacher aides, music and art teachers, shortened school days, etc., should be considered instead.

> **IDRA's vision of teachers and technology is a different one...It is the teacher, not the technology, who assume the dominant roles.**

In technology's role as **super star entertainer**, students are razzle-dazzled by flashing lights and cartoon characters as they play games of sometimes dubious educational value. Typical of this entertainment mode is the classroom where one computer sits in the back of the room and students who finish their work are rewarded with extra computer time. The new multimedia hardware and software could easily fall into the entertainer trap if we are not careful.

Another common role technology assumes in schools is that of **master drill sergeant**. In this role, technology is used to drill and practice minute skills in isolation. We see students at individual terminals, pushing keys and clicking mice as they go through instructional obstacle courses. Their omniscient and omnipotent drill sergeant, the computer, keeps track of every response so that teachers can tell who is goofing off and who is not. At first, students are like eager soldiers, but eventually they tire of the incessant pace and often must be forced to march by means of dire threats and enticing rewards.

Notice that in all three of these roles, the teacher takes a back seat. Using technology as a babysitter, the teacher is absent, not even there. In its entertainment role, we assume that what the teacher offers is not interesting or motivating, and so it must be jazzed up with the kinds of tricks that the media offers such as *MTV*, Saturday cartoons and the thrill of *Nintendo* games. When we use instructional technology as our drill sergeant, we assume that students must be passive learners who answer questions and never ask them.

The Architect and the Muse

IDRA's vision of teachers and

Who's Responsible, Who's to Blame?

by Bradley Scott, Ph.D.

Recently, I watched a television program in which rescuers used wide wooden boards stretched out over quicksand to get to a sinking victim. The boards supported their weight. If they had tried to walk over the quicksand without the wood's support, they too would have sunk. They were able to save the victim without sinking because the planks were broad enough to overcome the physical properties and natural dynamics of the quicksand.

After some discussion with colleagues here at the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), it is patently clear to me that school accountability, both individual and institutional, is like the planks of wood the rescuers used.

School accountability is the missing aspect of the Goals of Educational Equity that I have developed over the years. The discussion of accountability covers a range of issues.

President George W. Bush has embraced accountability as a central tenet in his *No Child Left Behind Act*

framework (2002). IDRA's Dr. María Robledo Montecel and Dr. Albert Cortez have discussed the issue as a part of the indicators of school success (2002). Dr. Rosana Rodríguez and Dr. Abelardo Villarreal described engaged accountability as a critical aspect for implementing policies and practices to open doors to higher education for students (2002). Certainly, I can do no less – it is a natural fit.

The sixth goal of educational equity is accountability (see chart on following page for all six goals.) In this framework, *accountability* is defined as: the assurance that all education stakeholders accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and appropriate, sufficient support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes.

By implication in this definition, where the system and those who are

responsible for it fail the learner, they also share the blame. No one group of stakeholders can point the finger of blame at any other. *All stakeholders* bear the responsibility for student school success and the blame when students are not successful.

If we see the Goals of Educational Equity as being a house, it all comes together very nicely. The roof is Goal One – Comparably High Achievement and Other Student Outcomes. The four walls are Goal Two (Equitable Access and Inclusion), Goal Three (Equitable Treatment), Goal Four (Equitable Opportunity to Learn), and Goal Five (Equitable Resources), respectively. Finally, Goal Six is Accountability, the broad planks of the floor supporting the entire structure.

Without each part of the house, the structure will sink, not unlike the victim trying to walk on quicksand without support. In truth, we are all responsible or to blame for student success.

Resources

Robledo Montecel, M. and J.D. Cortez. "Successful Bilingual Education Programs: Indicators of Success at the School Level," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research - Association, January 2002).

Rodríguez, R. and L. Villarreal. "Development Through Engagement: Valuing the 'At-Promise' Community," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, August 2000).

Bradley Scott, Ph.D., is a senior education associate. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

To learn more about the Goals of Educational Equity see:

"Coming of Age," by Bradley Scott, Ph.D., *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association, March 2001).

"The Fourth Generation of Desegregation and Civil Rights," by Bradley Scott, Ph.D., *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, January 1995).

"We Should Not Kid Ourselves: Excellence Requires Equity," by Bradley Scott, Ph.D., *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, February 2000).

These articles are also online at http://www.idra.org

Six Goals of Educational Equity

Goal 1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes.

As data on academic achievement and other student outcomes are disaggregated and analyzed, one sees high comparable performance for all identifiable groups of learners, and achievement and performance gaps are virtually non-existent.

Goal 2: Equitable access and inclusion.

The unobstructed entrance into, involvement of and full participation of learners in schools, programs and activities within those schools.

Goal 3: Equitable treatment.

Patterns of interaction between individuals and within an environment characterized by acceptance, valuing, respect, support, safety and security such that students feel challenged to become invested in the pursuits of learning and excellence without fear of threat, humiliation, danger or disregard.

Goal 4: Equitable opportunity to learn.

At minimum, the creation of learning opportunities so that every child, regardless of characteristics and identified needs, is presented with the challenge to reach high standards and are given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional and psychological supports to achieve the high standards of excellence that are established.

Goal 5: Equitable resources.

Funding, staffing and other resources for equity-based excellence that are manifested in the existence of equitably assigned qualified staff, appropriate facilities, other environmental learning spaces, instructional hardware and software, instructional materials and equipment, and all other instructional supports, are distributed in an equitable and fair manner such that the notion that all diverse learners must achieve high academic standards and other school outcomes become possible.

Goal 6: Accountability.

The assurance that all education stakeholders accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn, and appropriate, sufficient support for learning so they can achieve at excellent levels in academic and other student outcomes.

Emerging Gender Issues in Education

by Aurora Yáñez, M.A.

Editor's Note: IDRA assistant research associate Aurora Yáñez interviewed Ms. Eva Ross, who is a board member of the Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education. The following is an excerpt of the interview.

In your opinion, what are emerging gender issues?

E.R.: The first gender issue is the need for the institutionalization of programs to address gender equity across the nation. Different school districts or groups have tried to make gender equity part of the very fiber of education, but there has been a lot of resistance.

Despite working on different gender equity issues – whether it is academic achievement of African American girls or sports opportunities or whether it is issues related to young boys – it is not in the fiber of educational institutions. We still have to work toward that goal.

The second issue is dropouts of all ethnicities and genders. These students are a big sign that we are not meeting their needs. Part of the alienation is a function, conscious or not, of gender issues for these young people.

Something that has also been developing in the gender equity community is a greater concern about the issues of young boys and a sense of empowerment for them. Some say that schools are female-oriented places and that boys need more attention. Thus, the needs of boys in the classroom and on the playground in terms of bullying and harassment and academic achievement are also emerging issues.

How equitable is the use and access of technology, math and science in school?

E.R.: There is more computer availability. There are standards regarding the full utilization of computers. But young girls typically are using computers in limited ways for e-mail and for communication.

Studies show that boys use technology much more for in-depth problem solving. They look at the computer as this incredible tool to make new things, to figure out big issues and to really chew on a problem. Girls just typically see it as a glorified typewriter.

There are studies about what is going on in computer labs and how this is a critical time for girls to plug in to the concept of computers as a very powerful tool. [A solution, suggested by colleagues in the field] is to implement and improve community-based projects around computer use

for groups outside the school.

What are some emerging trends in economic power and self-sufficiency by gender?

E.R.: One of the things I was disturbed to learn was that the Bush administration is proposing to remove from the 2003 budget the regional Women's Bureaus across the nation. The role of the Women's Bureaus historically has been to focus attention on the status of women's employment. I am concerned that without these few outlets that some important advocacy of improved economic power will go by the wayside.

Monies have been withdrawn for initiatives that serve young fathers and mothers and build awareness of non-traditional careers. This is significant because it is at the high school years and early college that very important career decision-making goes on. Young people get onto a track that does not lead to economic viability for their families.

Even women in managerial roles with high technology skills are hitting barricades or the equivalent of the glass ceiling concept. These are women with good educations and good technology skills, but they still encounter barriers.

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Has there been a change in the incidents of harassment or harassment due to sexual orientation?

E.R.: Washington Safe Schools Coalition reports that we have had a raft of incidents of profound violence of student to student. These incidents reflect problems in students' stereotypes and intolerance of any kind of difference whether it is external clothing or sexual orientation or different views.

The Office for Civil Rights has put out a huge Title IX guidance package and has addressed the issue of sexual orientation.

There are gender issues that affect different racial or ethnic populations. What issues do you see in this area?

E.R.: I would say dropout rates. The National Assessment of Educational Progress science scores show that the average gap between White and Black 12th graders is 31 points with only 3 percent of Black students achieving at the average level, compared to 23 percent of White students. The scores for the White students are not incredibly good, but the gap is significant.

Another issue is the concentration of minority boys in special education as well as the underrepresentation of girls in the much-enriched services. It is lopsided, and it always has been.

Minority teachers are 13.5 percent of the teaching force with a student population that is about 40 percent minority. There is a big difference [between the teaching force and the student population]. I feel that people of various ethnicities can work together, but there is a recruitment issue.

Gender Equity and Technology Resources

Knowledge Loom
An active online teaching and learning community. Includes resources and examples of effective use of technology in classrooms.
http://knowledgeloom.org

Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way
An innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists. The set includes: profiles of seven minority women scientists who have surmounted barriers to forge the way for themselves and future scientists, science lessons for the classroom, and life skills lessons for the classroom. Developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association. Student Workbook $6.50; Teacher's Guide $25.
http://www.idra.org

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Third International Mathematics and Science Study-Repeat (TIMSS-R)
Access initial findings about change in the mathematics and science achievement of students in different nations over the last four years. Also available are resources and information on related publications.
http://nces.ed.gov/timss/timss-r/index.asp

"What is Harassment? And What We Can Do To Stop It"
Article regarding middle school students and harassment.
http://www.esrnational.org/whatisharassment.htm

How prepared are schools to deal with these issues? What recommendations would you give schools or districts?

I think schools are paying attention to everything except gender equity. They are paying attention to assessment. The national leadership is saying "test these children." Though, some of these tests are very alienating to kids.

To the schools I stress not to minimize the importance of students' civil rights issues. You need central office people who are totally familiar with all these aspects of issues in the curricular area and the human resources area, which is where a lot of the complaints go, and the student discipline area where they also come up.

There are community leaders, like LULAC, NAACP and IDRA, that come to our schools and tell them that gender equity is an issue that we see and are very concerned about. Within school districts and state education agencies and all of the institutions that feed the educational system, there are concerned people who feel that the boys are crying out in the wilderness, very much ignored for a very long time.

That isolated, but completely concerned individual needs to be listened to quickly. I am talking about people like me who know the law and try to make some type of impact. There are people still concerned about these

issues, but they are not given institutional support. So the problem exacerbates until it becomes some horrible fight in the community or it results in terrible outcomes for students.

How can technical assistance centers like the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity help schools?

E.R.: What I want all the equity assistance centers to do is strive for obtaining state disaggregated data. It has always been a concern to me that the Texas system will not let you break out just the data on Hispanic girls in the 10th grade, for example. You can get the results by Hispanic students in general, and boys and girls together. That very simple design of the system obscured information that would have helped gender equity advocates. Anything the equity assistance centers can do to get state level policy to break out the data in complex ways is very important.

Another important issue is getting to pre-service teachers in college. Everything has been so caught up in the testing movement, gender equity is barely acknowledged as an educational issue in those places. Teachers coming into the field need a profound understanding of what happened to them as students, regardless of their gender, and find ways to address each of their students and their students' needs based on gender. It takes a lot of thought and self-examination. Getting to the colleges as much as possible is important.

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In March, IDRA worked with **10,932** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **46** training and technical assistance activities and **262** program sites in **16** states plus Brazil and Mexico. Topics included:
+ Early Childhood Literacy
+ Gender Equity
+ Community Education Leadership Program
+ Using Technology to Reach English Language Learners

Participating agencies and school districts included:
◇ Dodge City Public Schools, Kansas
◇ Somerset Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Cobre Consolidated School District, New Mexico
◇ Texas Education Service Center, Region XI
◇ Weslaco ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

Under the direction of the federal court to desegregate schools and programs within them, three school districts in Arkansas sought to create an equity-monitoring-form. The court also mandated the formation of bi-racial teams in the three districts to include four parents and two teachers from each of the campuses. The IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity worked with the school districts to create the monitoring form to measure the quality of desegregation on every campus. It trained the teams to use the instrument, to conduct equity monitoring and to create an appropriate report of findings. The state department of education adopted the equity monitoring form and process. The form and process were implemented by all districts to monitor the assignment and placement of students in classes, programs and extracurricular activities. The SCCE is the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

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.
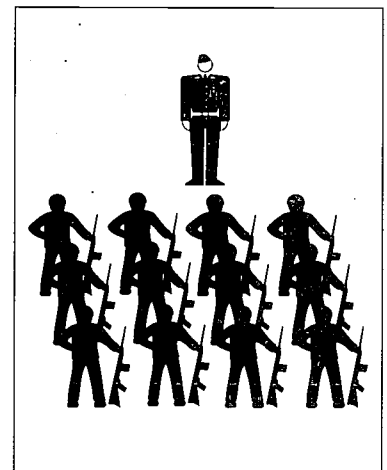
Common Unproductive Roles of Instructional Technology
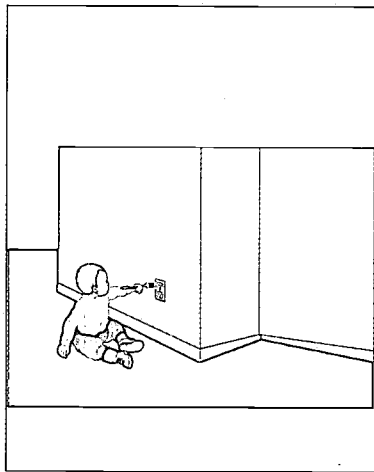
Babysitter

Entertainer

Drill Sergeant

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technology is a different one. In this vision, teachers are in the driver's seat, making decisions about technology based on their knowledge of students and their understanding of teaching and learning. It is the teachers, not the technology, who assume the dominant roles.

Two roles for technology are recommended as alternatives to the roles of babysitter, entertainer and drill

computer lab are separate events that never touch each other.

For example, in the classroom, students might be studying the Civil War, but in the lab they are experiencing the software program, *Oregon Trail,* with its theme of westward expansion. In language arts, they might learn that a noun is a person, place or thing, while in the computer lab they conjugate verbs. While both programs, classroom program and technology program, may

effectively to make teacher paperwork and administrative loads lighter so there will be more time to teach.

Like the ancient **Greek muses,** our ideal teacher inspires his or her students to become authors and artists, mathematicians and scientists. This teacher views students as active learners capable of constructing meaning and solving problems of all kinds.

Muse teachers know how to use programs such as word processing programs, paint programs, data bases, spreadsheets, graphing programs and simulations to enhance the higher order thinking their students engage in. Their students use these high tech tools to help them gather and analyze data, make decisions and create compositions, artworks, graphs and tables. These teachers constantly model, demonstrate and guide their students as they struggle with challenging tasks. But the rewards are great because students see themselves as genuine thinkers and creators. Motivation becomes genuine, lasting and intrinsic.

A New Vision

Now, how can teachers become

First and foremost, teachers should be involved in decision making from start to finish. Too often, school districts and administrators leave teachers out of the decision making loop.

sergeant. More productive roles for instructional technology are those of the architect and the muse.

As an **architect**, the teacher is the planner and builder. The architect teacher knows that a structure must have a firm foundation and be a unified whole. Rooms and other appendages that are tacked on at the last minute can mar the beauty and symmetry of the whole. This teacher avoids the dangers that exist when what happens in the classroom and what happens in the

be excellent, this lack of integration contributes to students' all-too-common experience with many separate bits of knowledge that they cannot put together or completely understand.

Our ideal teacher takes the time to review the software and to select programs that match his or her classroom instruction and teaching style. This teacher constantly reviews catalogs looking for new products that meet his or her instructional objectives. And he or she learns to use the computer

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muses and architects, ideal teachers who mesh instruction and technology in masterful ways? First and foremost, teachers should be involved in decision making from start to finish. Too often, school districts and administrators leave teachers out of the decision making loop. Central office administrators and/ or campus principals decide what hardware and software to buy, where to put it on campus, and which teachers and students will have access to it.

I, too, have been guilty of this top-down approach. As a campus administrator, I saw computers sit in boxes because teachers could not or would not find the time to learn how to use them. So, like many other principals and supervisors across the country, I decided that the computer lab was the answer to this inefficiency. I gathered

If we want to integrate technology into instruction, we must give teachers extensive daily access to the technology. We must work first with teachers who want to experiment with technology, and we must continue to expose the rest to new ideas, waiting patiently until they are ready to go forward.

all our school's computers together and put them in one room. I purchased software and trouble-shot hardware. I trained teachers and students how to load and handle disks, how to turn the machines on and off, and how to ask for help when needed. As a result, we went from occasional use by 25 fifth graders to weekly use by 500 first through fifth graders.

Yes, I increased computer access for students and teachers by establishing and maintaining a computer lab on my campus. And, yes, this represented genuine progress for us. But I see now that other problems were unresolved by this approach.

Chief among these problems was teacher dependence on my expertise. Because I was always there to handle it, the teachers never learned to copy disks, check extension cords or call the repair service when all else failed.

Perhaps even more significantly, they did not integrate their curriculum with that of the lab. When I left that campus, the computer lab disintegrated and with it went our computer assisted instruction program.

This lack of teacher ownership and empowerment was caused by a lack of teacher access. It takes time to learn to operate keyboards and disk drives, mice and printers. Time is also needed to review the contents of courseware packages. It takes even longer to learn how to use word processing and other utilities programs.

Training can help, and we need to provide more hands-on instructional technology training to our teachers. But training alone will not provide enough time-on-task. Teachers need to have constant access to the hardware and software.

The very best access occurs when teachers have computers at home. Some districts give or lend teachers this equipment. The next best access is in the teacher's own classroom. Distributed labs (two or more terminals in a room) that are networked into a central collection of software are ideal. Teachers also then have more flexibility for scheduling students. The least

Productive Roles of Instructional Technology
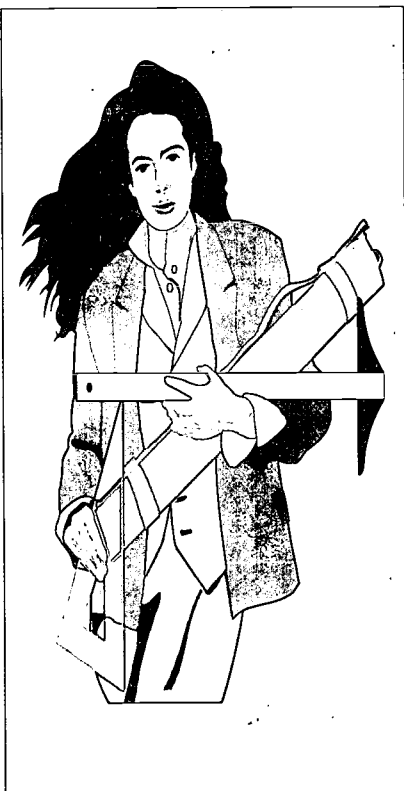
Architect

Muse

desirable solution is to place teacher workstations in a central location such as a computer lab or teacher's lounge.

Of course, if we just go back to placing computers in teacher's classrooms without asking teachers if they want the computers, we will also go back to having computers sit in boxes or stuck in the backs of rooms where they are used as expensive toys.

One solution is to offer workshops that are tied to the distribution of materials. For example, teachers who voluntarily attend a workshop on how to use word processing to teach writing could be given the computer and the software demonstrated so they could implement this approach.

Or teachers could be asked to write mini-proposals to explain how they will use the desired equipment. Teachers who are genuinely motivated to use technology and understand what they are trying to do could be identified by using such mini-proposals.

As these committed and innovative teachers experience success on their campuses, other teachers will become interested and request services, too. Over time, the technology will spread in a powerful bottom-up fashion, and teachers will become empowered muses and architects.

If we want to integrate technology into instruction, we must give teachers extensive daily access to the technology. We must work first with teachers who want to experiment with technology, and we must continue to expose the rest to new ideas, waiting patiently until they are ready to go forward.

We must take the time to ask teachers their opinions about what to buy, where to put our purchases and how to schedule students. And we need to take the time to continue to ask their opinions as new products come out and as our understandings about how to teach and learn change.

Internet Web Sites on Technology

Read Me a Book http://www.readmeabook.com
National Public Radio http://www.npr.org
Adventure Online http://www.adventureonline.com/index.html
African Quest and Other Quests
    http://quest.classroom.com/archive/africaquest1998/default.asp
MayaQuest http://quest.classroom.com/maya2001/
Scholastic Network http://www.scholasticnetwork.com
Amazing Picture Machine http://www.ncrtec.org/picture.htm
Media Builder Free Image Library http://www.mediabuilder.com/graphicsfree.html
Techniques for Teaching with Video http://www.phregents.com/techniqu.html
Classroom Connect http://www.classroom.net
Guide to Web Site Building http://www.erols.com/blind/wsr
Guides to Internet Searching http://www.mnsfld.edu/~library/helpsearch.html
SmartParent.com http://www.smartparent.com
Teachers' Internet Use Guide (STAR Center) http://www.starcenter.org
Online ESL Links http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Academy/4843/onlineesl.htm
Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)
    http://www.coe.missouri.edu/~cjw/call/index.htm
Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium http://www.calico.org
Computer Enhanced Language Instruction Archive
    http://www.latrobe.edu.au/www/education/celia/celia.html
Computer Learning Foundation http://www.computerlearning.org
Computer Resources for ESL http://207.236.117.20/orlac
Kid's Domain Free Software http://www.kidsdomain.com
Anna Bishop, Multilingual Technologies http://www.metc.com
ERIC Clearinghouse – Information and Technology http://ericir.syr.edu/ithome
National Education Technology – Standards http://cnets.iste.org
North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium
    http://www.ncrtec.org
National Center for Technology Planning http://www.nctp.com
High Plain Regional Technology in Education Consortium http://www.hprtec.org
South Central Regional Technology in Eduction Consortium – Texas
    http://www.coe.tamu.edu/~texas/index.html
Texas Center for Educational Technology http://www.tcet.unt.edu
History Channel – Great Speeches
    http://www.historychannel.com/speeches/index.htm
The Global Schoolhouse http://www.gsn.org
Clip Art Connection http://www.clipartconnection.com/index.html
Clip Art Universe http://www.nzwwa.com/mirror/clipart

For many more Internet resources and links, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

Resources

Papert, Seymour. *Mindstorms* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).
Dockterman, David A. *Great Teaching in the One Computer Classroom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Tom Snyder Productions, 1991), pp. 19-20.

Dr. Laura Chris Green is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org. Due to its popularity this article is reprinted from the November-December 1995 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter*.

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Connecting Curriculum and Technology

Essential Conditions to Make it Happen

Students in a Chicago elementary school recently used technology to explore the history of Ice Age animals in Illinois. Using the Internet, they "traveled" to the Illinois State Museum (200 miles away) and the Brookfield Zoo (10 miles away) to gather information and talk with experts via two-way video. The students constructed an electronic database to organize and analyze their information and shared their findings with students outside their own school through multimedia reports posted on a web site titled, "Mastodons in Our Own Backyard."

Successful learning activities, such as this, depend on more than just the technology. Certain conditions are necessary for schools to effectively use technology for learning, teaching, and educational management. Physical, human, financial, and policy dimensions greatly affect the success of technology use in schools.

A combination of essential conditions are required to create learning environments conducive to powerful uses of technology, including:

- Vision with support and pro-active leadership from the education system;
- Educators skilled in the use of technology for learning;
- Content standards and curriculum resources;
- Student-centered approaches to learning;
- Assessment of the effectiveness of technology for learning;
- Access to contemporary technologies, software, and telecommunications networks;
- Technical assistance for maintaining and using technology resources;
- Community partners who provide expertise, support, and real-life interactions;
- Ongoing financial support for sustained technology use; and
- Policies and standards supporting new learning environments.

Enriched learning environments supported by technology provide rich opportunities for students to find and utilize current information and resources, and apply academic skills for solving real-world problems.

Traditional educational practices no longer provide students with all the necessary skills for economic survival in today's workplace. Students today must apply strategies for solving problems using appropriate tools for learning, collaborating, and communicating.

Incorporating New Strategies

The most effective learning environments meld traditional and new approaches to facilitate learning of relevant content while addressing individual needs. The resulting learning environments should prepare students to:

- Communicate using a variety of media and formats;
- Access and exchange information in a variety of ways;
- Compile, organize, analyze, and synthesize information;
- Draw conclusions and make generalizations based on information gathered;
- Know content and be able to locate additional information as needed;
- Become self-directed learners;
- Collaborate and cooperate in team efforts; and
- Interact with others in ethical and appropriate ways.

Teachers know that the wise use of technology can enrich learning environments and enable students to achieve marketable skills. It is still critical, however, that educators analyze the potential benefits of technology for learning and employ it appropriately.

Traditional Learning Environments	New Learning Environments
Teacher-centered instruction ———————	Student-centered instruction
Single-sense stimulation ———————	Multisensory stimulation
Single-path progression ———————	Multipath progression
Single media ———————	Multimedia
Isolated work ———————	Collaborative work
Information delivery ———————	Information exchange
Passive learning ———————	Active, exploratory, inquiry-based learning
Factual, knowledge-based learning ———	Critical thinking and informed decision-making
Reactive response ———————	Pro-active, planned action
Isolated, artificial context ———————	Authentic, real-world context

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Creating schools that work for all children,
through research • materials development • training • technical assistance • evaluation • information dissemination

Holding the Line

School Finance Reform in Texas

Albert Cortez, Ph.D.

Some people attribute Texas' school funding challenges to the *Edgewood* court cases that forced it to change its system. But the state of Texas has been heading toward this crossroads since the 1920s. Since that time, Texas public education has reflected a heavy reliance on local property taxation to raise money to fund public schools. This article presents an overview of how we got here and what is ahead

Describing the evolution of the state finance system, Walker and Kirby stated: "By the early 1920s the modern dilemma of public school finance was taking form. In 1920 constitutional tax limits on school districts were abolished and made a legislative prerogative... Texas educational historian Fredrick Eby noted, 'The problem of equalization of taxation for schools and the problem of equalizing the opportunities for all citizens of the state are now being generally discussed.' Disparities in local wealth and local tax effort were recognized as creating inequalities, but the paucity of state aid forced school

districts to rely on local resources if they desired quality educational programs" (1986).

The practice of using local property taxation to supplement state educational funding persisted through the 1950s, '60s, '70s, '80s and in the early part of the '90s in Texas. This local supplementing of the minimal state aid provided to schools resulted in tremendous differences in the amount of funding available to educate children in different school districts.

Describing the vast disparities in local property wealth, tax rates and expenditures, Dr. José A. Cárdenas, IDRA founder and director emeritus, wrote: "In 1970, a low wealth school district with $5,147 in taxable property per student and a $1.50 tax rate per $100 of assessed valuation produced $77.21 to fund the local share of the minimum foundation program and enrich the educational program. A high wealth district with $5,642,114 in taxable property per pupil with the same tax rate would produce $8,463,171 per student to fund the entire minimum foundation program and enrich the educational program" (1997).

Getting to Texas' Current System

In 1995 the Texas Supreme Court affirmed IDRA's long-standing position that the quality of any child's education should not depend on the wealth of his or her parents or of the community in which he or she happened to reside. This affirmed an earlier state court decision that the gross inequities that characterized the Texas funding system at the time violated the state constitution.

After two unsuccessful efforts to change the funding system, the Texas Legislature adopted Senate Bill 7 in 1993. This bill modified the funding system in a manner that effectively neutralized the wealth and thus the revenue-raising differences between the state's poorest and wealthiest school systems (Cortez, 1993).

In recent legal challenges, critics of the Texas school finance system have attempted to topple it. Although most challenges focus on constitutional language and related requirements, the intent by some is to eliminate state

> **While far from being fully equal, the existing state funding system certainly has done much to close the gap in funding available to property poor and property wealthy schools in Texas.**

funding features that limit local school expenditures among the state's wealthier school districts. Some schools and their constituents want to return to the time when the wealthiest schools spent hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of dollars more for each student than their neighboring communities. Guised as challenges to allow greater "local flexibility," the actual effect of these challenges would return the state to the gross inequalities that led to its being criticized as being "chaotic and unjust" (Cárdenas, 1997).

While far from being fully equal, the existing state funding system

certainly has done much to close the gap in funding available to property poor and property wealthy schools in Texas. This equity was achieved by providing increased state funding that offset local ability to raise school funding and placing limits on how much revenue the wealthiest schools were permitted to acquire.
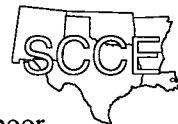
In 1995 the State Supreme Court upheld the new system, which had been challenged by a group of the state's wealthiest school districts. The new system contained two features that were considered particularly onerous to the state's wealthiest systems.

One feature resulted in neutralizing wealth advantages by requiring local districts to contribute a portion of their funding either to the state or to a lower wealth school district (called *recapture*) or face other consequences including state allocation of taxable property to a neighboring low wealth district or forced consolidation.

In This Issue...

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They Believed in Us
Student Reflection

by Yanessa Romero

Before I ever stepped foot on the Fox Technical High School campus, I heard both bad and good things about it. I heard the words "bad" and "rowdy" and also "good" and "excellent;" but I did not know what to believe.

I never thought I would come to Fox Tech High School, but when I did I knew it was where I wanted to be. Yes, it was hard getting used to high school and being in a new place. After a while it was not as bad as I thought. The teachers made me feel like I belonged and always encouraged me.

Our principal, Ms. Cockrell, gave us confidence to achieve what had only been a dream. Ms. Cockrell pushes us to strive for the best because she believes in us and cares about each and every one of her students. She has never given up on us even in the worst of times.

The teachers also give us support and inspiration to believe in ourselves. One thing that is amazing about teachers here at Fox Tech High School is that they really care. If they see that you are down and blue, they ask if you are okay and if you need an ear to listen, they are always there when you need them. I will always remember and be grateful for teachers like ours.

These past years at Fox Tech have been filled with victories and proud memories. We have accomplished many things, things we never thought we could. We all — principal, teachers, staff and students — worked together in order to succeed. Now as a senior I look back at all we have done and I am filled with so much pride. I hope future students will be as proud as I am and continue our success for an even better Fox Tech.

My years at Fox Tech have been some of the best times of my life. I will never forget my friends who have become like family. Through thick and thin, bad and good, they have always, without fail, been there when I need them. I am thankful for them and the fact that they cared enough to help a friend in need. I will never forget the memories and the good times but will keep them in my heart always and forever.

Yanessa Romero is a high school student at Louis W. Fox Technical High School, a National Blue Ribbon School in San Antonio.

Did You Know?

In 1950, the state of Texas paid 80 percent of education costs, and local communities paid the rest. Today, the state only pays 42 percent of the cost.
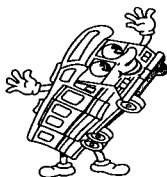
For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

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The second feature incorporated a $1.50 tax rate limit on districts' maintenance and operations tax rate, essentially capping expenditures at a fixed level.

Since the adoption of these reforms, the state's wealthiest school systems have chafed under both the recapture provisions and/or the tax rate limitations in that both features restrict their ability to spend additional money on their own educational programs.

From a state perspective, these features have two advantages. The recapturing of local tax revenue from the wealthiest districts saves the state more than $600 million per year that would otherwise have had to be provided from other state revenue sources (other state taxes or some new state fees). Rather than being merely an approach where money is taken from rich schools by poor schools, recapture funds are used to decrease the amount of direct state money needed to fund a more equalized system of school funding.

While some have nicknamed this feature, "Robin Hood," Dr. Cárdenas preferred to note that schools were providing the money to King John rather than to Robin Hood, as this re-allocation feature is currently described. Because the courts have declared that the state does have certain prerogatives when it comes to how it finances the public education system, including recapture options, no additional direct legal challenges to this feature of the Texas finance system had been filed.

As for the tax rate limits, placing a cap on taxes allows a state to limit the extent of local taxes that it must equalize. By capping taxes, the state in essence contains the cost of equalization and, therefore, the overall cost of state funding for the system. The state could propose to increase the maximum from $1.50 to a higher limit, for example $1.60. However, for every additional

Texas Latino Education Coalition Meets with Texas Commissioner of Education

IDRA invided Texas education commissioner, Dr. Felipe Alanis, to meet with members of the Texas Latino Education Coalition in June to discuss the discouraging situation facing poor and minority students throughout the kindergarten through grade 16 educational pipeline. The Texas Latino Education Coalition is a new collaborative of organizations and individuals who have traditionally advocated the rights of Latinos.

The coalition was organized to focus specifically on critical education issues in Texas and improve the state of education for Latino students in public schools. The founding members of the collaborative first met in 2001. Member organizations include: the Intercultural Development Research Association, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Mexican American School Boards Association, the Texas League of United Latin American Citizens, among others.

At the June meeting, coalition representatives shared priority issues (see below) with the commissioner, who then presented his views of important education challenges facing the state. There was also a dialogue on how the coalition and commissioner can mutually support improving education for all children in Texas.

Although test scores for school districts are rising, growing numbers of schools, especially those serving poor and minority students: (1) do not have adequate financial resources and support to provide quality education, (2) are not keeping their students in school, and (3) are providing little or no information for accessing colleges and succeeding in higher education.

Coalition members agreed that it is prime time to unite efforts through a statewide coalition to ensure a brighter future for our children. They framed an education agenda with five target issues, each with an overarching vision for schools in Texas:
- **Fair funding** – All public schools will have equitable funding.
- **Quality teacher preparation** – Every teacher will be prepared to provide excellent instruction.
- **Quality teaching** – Schools will have all students succeeding on grade level.
- **School holding power** – Schools will graduate all students with a high school diploma.
- **College access and success** – All students will have access to and be adequately prepared for higher education.

The coalition plans to accomplish these goals by creating and executing strategies that: educate the media, inform public policy at state and local levels, mobilize communities, and synthesize and disseminate information. The mission is to improve public education for Latino children, which will impact the quality of education for all children. By working together, we can improve life for all children in Texas.

For more information about the Texas Latino Education Coalition or about joining the coalition, contact Dr. Albert Cortez, director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership, or Anna Alicia Romero at IDRA by phone at 210-444-1710 or by e-mail at aromero@idra.org.

cent that local districts are allowed to levy, the state would have to increase its funding by several billion dollars to maintain the existing level of equalization in the system.

Due to a persistent legislative reluctance to raise the maximum tax limits, some districts chose to challenge the tax caps in state court.

Legal Challenges

In 2001, one group of school districts attempted to challenge the $1.50 limit on maintenance and operations tax rates. The Austin District Court Judge has retained jurisdiction over the school funding issues. Judge Scott McCown rejected the wealthy district plaintiff's arguments that the existing $1.50 limit was unconstitutional. In his ruling, the state judge noted that a small percentage of districts were at the limit, and even if more districts taxed at the maximum level, the legislature would still need to be given an opportunity to address the issue before a definitive court ruling.

The court also noted that voluntary exemptions granted by some of the complaining districts need to be

IDRA contends that whatever reforms are considered should be judged by the extent to which they increase or decrease existing expenditure inequities that still plague the existing funding system.

considered since the voluntary exclusion of some property resulted in higher local tax rates in a few of those school systems. A state appeals court recently upheld the lower state court ruling. This issue is expected to be considered by the Texas Supreme Court perhaps as soon as this fall.

More recently, a group of taxpayers have been attempting to get the state funding system declared unconstitutional by charging that existing school taxing requirements are in reality a state property tax, which is not permitted under the state constitution. These plaintiffs are also contending that the state taxes are not uniform (as required of state taxes) and are challenging the incorporation of weights in the current funding system. The case has been filed in a Dallas state district court, and proceedings are scheduled to begin in November. Defendants include the Dallas school district and

the state of Texas.

Looking Ahead

In part because of the pressures created by the legal challenges to the existing system, but also because some legislators feel compelled to further reform the current system, the 2001 Texas Legislature established the Interim Commission on School Finance. This commission has been holding hearings across the state to generate input from a cross section of groups. It is expected to recommend some changes to the existing funding system.

One area that has been the topic of much discussion is whether or not the state should consider adopting new taxes that would be used to reduce or eliminate local property taxation. Witnesses testifying before the commission noted that Texas has among the highest sales tax and property tax rates in the country. One reason noted is that Texas is one of few states that does not have a personal income tax, creating significant dependence on other tax sources, particularly property taxes and sales taxes.

Ultimately what might be recognized is that the state of Texas continues to labor under an antiquated taxing structure that may be dysfunctional, not only for education, but also for many state and local services. Local property taxes are regressive (impacting lower income families more than wealthy families when those taxes are considered as a proportion of a family's income) when compared to other tax options. Unfortunately, second major revenue sources, state sales taxes, are similarly

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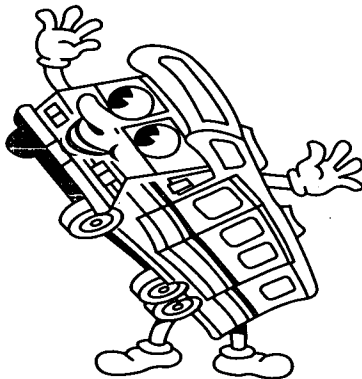
STAR Center Web Site Upgraded

The STAR Center has updated and improved its web site. STAR Center products that support high student achievement are easier to find, and the site is now accessible to people with disabilities. Users can view products *by topic* or *by type of resource* and can also locate resources using the site's new search engine. The site currently features the STAR Center's 2001 research report entitled *Opening Doors: Promising Lessons from Five Texas High Schools* and the 2002 update of the *Teachers' Internet Use Guide*. These products and more than 60 other resources developed by the STAR Center are available free-of-charge on the site.

www.starcenter.org

Visit the site and let Dorothy Knight (dlknight@mail.utexas.edu) or Betsy Clubine (b.clubine@mail.utexas.edu) know how you like the changes. The STAR Center is the comprehensive center that serves schools in Texas. It is a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation

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Holding the Line - continued from page 5

regressive.

Among the options that will surface in upcoming discussions will be calls to ensure that all sectors are paying their share of existing taxes, including taxing services that are recognized as the fastest growing part of the state economy. While the options of expanding the areas subjected to taxation have been discussed, eventual opposition from those potential new tax contributors has squelched those earlier efforts to "expand the tax base" subjected to existing taxes.

Progressive groups, such as the Texas Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) in Austin, suggest that it may be time for the state to seriously consider a state income tax. In a recent editorial opinion CPPP's Dick Lavine reminds us that although adoption of such an income tax requires a statewide referendum, if adopted "two thirds of the revenue would go to cut property taxes, and one third would be dedicated to education" (2002).

More importantly, according to CPPP, if Texas adopted a state income tax comparable to the approach used in Kansas "more than 60 percent of families would see a tax cut... and the

highest income families who would pay the most in new state income taxes would also receive the most benefit from federal deduction for state income taxes" (2002).

While an income tax may ultimately be considered in Texas, many who have followed the Texas tax scene speculate that all other options, including expanding the coverage of existing taxes, will be attempted before an income tax is seriously considered. Given a projected $5 billion budget shortfall, it well may be that all available options for increasing state revenues will be examined.

Another popular belief is that serious funding reform may be unlikely in a state experiencing a serious revenue shortage. Earlier studies of state finance reforms note that it is always easier to adopt school funding reforms in eras when there is surplus revenue.

To address the existing revenue shortfall and the need to increase education funding, some suggest that the state conduct a study of "adequacy" and then ensure that all schools are provided equal access to that level of "adequate" funding. Some of us who have tracked the school funding issue have serious questions

about such an approach to funding. Too often, definitions of "adequate" become discussions of what is minimally required.

Minimums do not ensure access to excellent educational opportunities. Discussions of adequacy too often skirt the question of adequacy for whom, for what purposes, and for how long. Some would propose that we allow a few school districts to provide quality education while other schools struggle to provide bare minimum or "adequate" programs. Such an approach would set Texas education back decades. It should be noted that "adequate" would be defined in a manner acceptable to some but not all, and would most likely be tied to whatever the state presumes is acceptable.

IDRA contends that whatever reforms are considered should be judged by the extent to which they increase or decrease existing expenditure inequities that still plague the existing funding system. Although progress has been made in reducing the gross inequalities cited earlier in this article, expenditure differences among some of the lowest and highest wealth schools still exceed $600 per student and have been increasing in recent

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years.

We should recall that it was that different status among school districts that allowed some of our state's wealthier systems to sit on the sidelines in past decades when the need to increase state taxes became acute. That in turn led some legislators to comfortably oppose any increases in state taxes, because their school constituents did not suffer from the existing shortage in state support for education.

Under the existing funding system, all districts are now "in the same boat," with state funding shortages impacting wealthy and poor systems alike. Prospects for increasing state taxes to address the needs of all school districts are more promising if all school systems are advocates of increased state funding.

Until the state confronts these much more difficult state revenue issues, schools may be forced to wait for levels of funding that both are equitable and assure access to quality education *for all pupils*.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A. *Texas School Finance Reform: An IDRA Perspective* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1997).

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Lavine, D. *Smarter Taxes; Better Texas* (Austin, Texas: Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2002).

Walker, B.D., and W. Kirby. *The Basics of School Finance, Third Edition* (Austin, Texas: Texas Association of School Boards, 1986).

Albert Cortez, Ph.D. is the director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Comments and questions may be directed to him via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In April, IDRA worked with **10,259** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **22** training and technical assistance activities and **262** program sites in **17** states plus Brazil and Mexico. Topics included:

◆ Annual IDRA *La Semana del Niño* Early Childhood Educators Institute
◆ Parents as Partners in Education (bilingual session)
◆ ENLACE Networking Conference
◆ Desegregation Planning
◆ Title III Evaluation

Participating agencies and school districts included:
◇ Arkansas Department of Education
◇ San Antonio Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Franklin Virginia School Board
◇ Texas Education Service Center, Region XI
◇ St. Mary Parish, Louisiana

Activity Snapshot

During the Annual IDRA La Semana del Niño *Early Childhood Educators Institute*, IDRA hosted a special full-day institute for parents to concentrate on the challenges of early childhood education and how to maximize parent leadership. More than 200 parents participated with a panel of experts on parent leadership and early childhood reading. They then worked together to develop a concrete plan of action for exerting leadership in early childhood education. The institute was co-sponsored by the IDRA *South Central Collaborative for Equity* (the equity assistance center that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas); *STAR Center* (the comprehensive regional assistance center that serves Texas via a collaboration of IDRA, the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and RMC Research Corporation); and RE-CONNECT (the parent information and resource center that serves Texas).

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.

Supreme Court Ruling Bad for Neighborhood Public Schools

A statement by Dr. Maria Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director

IDRA is deeply disappointed by the Supreme Court's ruling in the Cleveland voucher case that endorses the use of public money to support private education. This ruling sets the stage for a new battle for public tax revenue, pitting public versus private education, a battle that promises to be detrimental for both.

The Intercultural Development Research Association has been deeply concerned about proposals to establish such programs for children and neighborhood public schools. Diverting public money for private schools takes money away from communities, resulting in higher taxes for homeowners and businesses in the community. More importantly, evidence shows that publicly-funded vouchers do not significantly improve educational achievement of students.

The dangers of such programs include the fact that private schools are not accountable to the public for their actions or results. With a voucher program, it is not the parents who have a choice. The private schools have the choice about which students to accept and which to reject. Vouchers would give a new government subsidy to private schools and wealthy parents with children already in private schools.

The most recent attacks on neighborhood public schools have been led by voucher proponents – individuals who have historically denied children their support for improved conditions in their public schools. With this decision, IDRA and others will need to monitor the aftereffects closely to ensure that a foundation is not established for creating an alternative system of schooling with access for a few and dysfunction for the many. Advocates of neighborhood public schools and community empowerment and proponents of the separation of church and state will continue to ally to counter this very serious threat to public education.

With this ruling, the battles shift back to the state level, where elected bodies will make the final decisions on proposed voucher programs. While the court ruling allows for states to subsidize private education, it does not require them to do so.

Despite the court's ruling in this particular case, the fact remains: **the best way to strengthen public schools is to strengthen public schools**.

María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, Ph.D., is the IDRA executive director. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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Creating schools that work for all children,
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IDRA Newsletter

Excelling English Language Learners
An Innovative Professional Development Program

Inside this Issue:

✧ **Out with the TAAS, in with the TAKS**

✧ **Immigrant students' right to attend public school**

✧ **Publicly-funded charter schools**

Jack Dieckmann, M.A.

Scenario 1: You are a high school American history teacher who speaks only English. Antonio, one of the English as a second language (ESL) students in your third period class has been in the United States for over a year now, but refuses to speak any English in your classroom. You have spoken to his ESL teacher who tells you that he is capable of responding in English. You have told the student repeatedly that he must speak English in class, but he continues to respond either with silence or in Spanish such that you do not understand what he is saying.

Scenario 2: You are a high school biology teacher who believes in lots of hands-on lab experiences. You have students form teams of four each time you assign them a lab experiment to perform, although you require individual written reports for each experiment at its conclusion. You have noticed that your four ESL students always team together, helping each other through the activity. They seem to do the work well and basically understand what they are doing, but their written reports leave much to be desired.

Scenario 3: You are a middle school English teacher who loves engaging students in conversations about the books and stories they are reading in class. You often have them follow-up these discussions with written essays, think pieces. You have a new student, Rosita, who just arrived from Mexico this month and speaks no English. You have several bilingual, Spanish-speaking students in your room, but all have refused to be the ESL student's bilingual buddy, helping her by translating your instructions to her from English to Spanish and by translating her responses to you from Spanish to English.

These scenarios are typical of the challenges that middle school and high school teachers face in teaching English language learners. At the secondary level especially, most professional development is content-oriented, with perhaps a session or two devoted to teaching strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Usually, content generalists and language specialists conduct these "diversity" sessions. As a result, many core content area teachers are left

with generic strategies that are not connected to their subjects (e.g., math, science or social studies).

This fragmentation in professional development is in part due to institutional separation of content. Ultimately, many core area teachers are left with the dilemma of knowing their ESL students need help but, apart from translating, not knowing what else to do.

In reality, serving students is far beyond a training session, or even a series of them. It takes more than techniques to transform schools into supportive learning environments where all students thrive academically. Some elements critical to transformation include:

- high teacher expectations and commitment to the learning of all students;
- understanding the way diverse students perceive themselves in relation to other students;
- resource allocations for training and materials;
- . school leadership; and
- meaningful partnerships with parents

At the secondary level especially, most professional development is content-oriented, with perhaps a session or two devoted to teaching strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse children.

and communities.

These elements form the basis of ExCELS, a new Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) project.

ExCELS (Educators x Communities = English Language learners' Success) is an innovative professional development program that creates learning communities of schools, families and communities for English language learners' academic success. One high school and one middle school in San Antonio are the partner schools in this U.S. Department of Education Title VII program.

Outcomes for Students

The ultimate outcome of professional development is increased student learning. At least 90 percent of English language learners involved in the project for three years or more are

expected to increase their English language skills by two or more levels as measured by the Idea Proficiency Test, and 75 percent will meet or exceed the passing standard on the Reading Proficiency Test in English.

By the project's fifth year, 90 percent will meet or exceed the passing standard in the content areas as measured by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading, writing, math, science and social studies and the end of course tests.

Key Strategies

The academic success of English language learners requires ongoing collaboration and co-construction among teachers, schools, parents, families and communities. ExCELS has five key strategies to meet the project

In This Issue...

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Newsletter Executive Editor

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Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

The Next Stage in Texas' Challenge to Meet High Standards

by Adela Solís, Ph.D.

The curtain is closing on Texas' famous Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The state's accountability system has utilized this much-publicized standardized test since 1990. But beginning this year, a new test is being phased in.

The TAAS has the reputation, nationally, of being a challenging measure for many students. It assesses higher order thinking and problem solving ability in reading for students in grades three through eight, mathematics for grades three through eight, and writing for grades four and eight. The "exit" level TAAS, administered in grade 10, assesses reading, writing and mathematics.

Because it is an integral part of the state's accountability system and is required for Texas high school graduation, the TAAS also has emerged as a classic symbol of the pressure and anxiety that high-stakes testing has generated not only in students but also in teachers, parents and entire communities.

In the year 2002, schools find themselves preparing for the enhanced accountability system represented by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), which is replacing the TAAS. Although there is much information from TEA about it, questions still abound about the test and its implications.

What Exactly is the TAKS?

The TAKS is the new accountability exam that replaces the TAAS, as mandated by the Texas Legislature in 1999. Development of the test began officially in 2000 and is nearing completion in 2002.

Field testing was conducted in spring 2002 with the writing section administered in January and February, and mathematics, reading, language arts, science, and social studies administered in April and May. Field tests are a tryout of the exam. The results will be used by the test developers to adjust for inappropriate and biased test items.

Initially this new test was referred to as TAAS II, but in June 2001, more than a year into its development, it acquired the name TAKS. To a large extent, the test is intended to be better aligned with the state's content standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TEKS were adopted as the state's required curriculum (also known as content standards) in 1997 and are more extensive and tougher than their predecessor, the Texas Essential Elements.

What Academic Areas Will be Assessed in the TAKS?

This exam will assess the following academic areas:
- English reading in grades three

through nine,
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11,
- Writing in grades four and seven,
- Math in grades three through 11,
- Science in grades five, 10 and 11, and
- Social studies in grades eight, 10 and 11.

The Spanish version of the test will assess:
- Reading in grades three through six,
- Writing in grade four,
- Math in grades three through six, and
- Science in grade five.

TAKS is different than the TAAS in that it will assess more content areas, specifically science and social studies, including at the exit level. Additionally, the objectives of the test are linked directly to the student expectations in the TEKS and are sequenced across the grades in ways that should enable students to be prepared for the content of the exit-level exam.

What is the Passing Standard for TAKS?

The passing standard for this new test will be set by the State Board of Education by November 2002. It is expected that the passing standard will be more stringent than TAAS.

A Texas Learning Index of 70 represents the passing standard for the TAAS now. For TAKS, one recommendation is for the board to consider setting multiple passing standards to differentiate levels of student performance, as is done in alternative assessment programs and by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which has four levels of performance ranging from "below" basic to "advanced."

Is TAKS Tied to High School Graduation?

Consistent with current state policy, students must pass the TAKS in order to graduate from high school. The TAKS will be administered as a graduation requirement beginning spring 2004, although 11th grade students will have to take the exit level test in 2003 because it is required by the legislature.

According to TEA, this means that students in grades eight or below in January 1, 2001, will have to pass the TAKS in order to graduate. TAAS will remain the graduation requirement for students enrolled in grades nine or higher in January 1, 2001 (TEA, 2002).
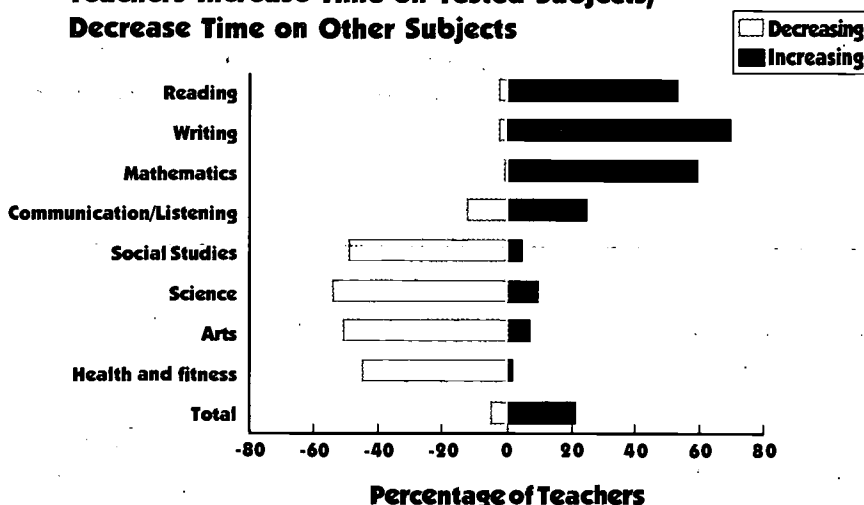
What About TAKS and Grade Promotion and Retention?

Also in 1999, the Texas Legislature enacted legislation that ties grade promotion and retention to the TAKS. This statutory requirement, named the *Student Success Initiative,* mandates new passing requirements, meaning that students will be promoted or retained in grade based on test results.

These requirements are to be phased in. Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, for promotion, students must pass the reading test at grade three. Beginning in the 2004-05 school year, the reading and mathematics tests must be passed at grade five. Beginning in the 2007-08 school year, students must pass the reading and mathematics tests at grade eight.

As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level once he or she passes these tests or by a unanimous decision of a *grade placement committee* stating that the student is likely to perform at grade level after accelerated instruction. Important information about the *Student Success Initiative* is accessible through the TEA web site (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/conference/tac/2002/success/index.html).

Did You Know?

Teachers Increase Time on Tested Subjects, Decrease Time on Other Subjects

☐ Decreasing
■ Increasing

Percentage of Teachers

Source: *Rand Review,* Spring 2002

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org 79

Why IDRA Prints the School "Opening Alert" Every Year

Many educators are not aware that the education of undocumented students is guaranteed by the *Plyler vs. Doe* decision or that certain procedures must be followed when registering immigrant children in school to avoid violating restrictions on obtaining personal information without obtaining prior parental consent.

In *Plyler vs. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students in fact are required under state law to attend school until they reach a mandated age. As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools may not deny admission to a student on the basis of undocumented status, treat a student differently to determine residency, or require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status.

The Supreme Court arrived at this decision because such practices:

- **Victimize innocent children** – Children of undocumented workers do not choose the conditions under which they enter the United States. They should not be punished for circumstances they do not control. Children have the right to learn and be useful members of society.

- **Hurt more than they claim to help** – Denying children access to education will not eliminate illegal immigration. Instead, it ensures the creation of an underclass. Without public education for children, illiteracy rates will increase, and opportunities for workforce and community participation will decrease. Research has proven that for every $1 spent on the education of children, at least $9 is returned.

- **Turn public school teachers and officials into INS agents** – Rather than teaching students, school officials could spend their time asking our 33.6 million school children about their citizenship status. States would be forced to spend millions of dollars to do the work of the INS.

- **Promote misinformation** – Incorrect assumptions and inappropriate figures have been used to blame immigrants and their children for economic problems.

- **Support racism and discrimination** – Historically, financially troubled times breed increased racism. Children of undocumented workers should not be the scapegoats.

At IDRA, we are working to create schools that work for all children, families and communities. Help us make this goal a reality for every child; we simply cannot afford the alternatives. Denying children of undocumented workers access to an education is unconstitutional and against the law.

Excerpted in part from: *Lessons Learned, Lessons Shared: Texas Immigrant Education Collaborative* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, December 1998).

Immigrant Students' Rights to Attend Public Schools

The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (NCAS) has launched its annual *School Opening Alert* campaign to reaffirm the legal rights of all children who reside in the United States to attend public schools, regardless of immigration status. The fliers provide information for immigrant parents about the rights of their children to attend local public schools this fall. IDRA is working with NCAS to make this alert available. NCAS can also provide a camera-ready copy of the alert in English and Spanish to be reproduced and distributed by schools and community groups. The copy of the alert below and on the following page may be reproduced and used as well.

School Opening Alert

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202 (1982)] that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are required under state laws to attend school until they reach a legally mandated age.

As a result of the *Plyler* ruling, public schools *may not*:
* deny admission to a student during initial enrollment or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status;
* treat a student differently to determine residency;
* engage in any practices to "chill" the right of access to school;
* require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status;
* make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status; or
* require social security numbers from all students, as this may expose undocumented status.

Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program for a student need only state on the application that they do not have a social security number.

Recent changes in the F-1 (student) Visa Program *do not* change the *Plyler* rights of undocumented children. These changes apply only to students who apply for a student visa from outside the United States and are currently in the United States on an F-1 visa.

Also, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prohibits schools from providing any outside agency – *including the Immigration and Naturalization Service* – with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status without first getting permission from the student's parents. The only exception is if an agency gets a court order (subpoena) that parents can then challenge. Schools should note that even requesting such permission from parents might act to "chill" a student's *Plyler* rights.

Finally, school personnel – especially building principals and those involved with student intake activities – should be aware that they have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws.

For more information or to report incidents of school exclusion or delay, call:

NCAS	Nationwide	(800) 441-7192	(English/Spanish/French/German)
META	Nationwide	(617) 628-2226	(English/Spanish)
META	West Coast	(415) 546-6382	(English)
NY Immigration Hotline	Nationwide	(718) 899-4000	(English/Spanish/Chinese/French/Korean/Polish/Urdu/ Haitian Creole/Hindi/Japanese/Russian)
MALDEF – Los Angeles	Southwest/ Southeast	(213) 629-2512	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – San Francisco	Northwest	(415) 546-6382	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – Chicago	Illinois	(312) 782-1422	(English/Spanish)
MALDEF – San Antonio	Southwest	(210) 224-5476	(English/Spanish)
Florida Parent Hotline	Florida	(800) 206-8956	(English/Spanish/Haitian Creole)

Please copy and distribute this flier.
This flier is available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Vietnamese, and Hmong at 1-800-441-7192 or http://www.igc.org/ncas/soa.htm)

National Coalition of Advocates for Students   100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116

Llamada Urgente al Comienzo del Curso Escolar

En 1982, El Tribunal Supremo de los Estados Unidos dictaminó en el caso *Plyler vs. Doe* [457 U.S. 202] que los niños y los jóvenes indocumentados tienen el mismo derecho de asistir a las escuelas públicas primarias y secundarias que tienen sus contrapartes de nacionalidad estadounidense. Al igual que los demás niños, los estudiantes indocumentados están obligados a asistir a la escuela hasta que llegan a la edad exigida por la ley.

A raíz de la decisión *Plyler*, las escuelas públicas **no pueden**:

* negarle la matrícula a un estudiante basándose en su situación legal y/o inmigratoria, ya sea a principios del curso o durante cualquier otro momento del año escolar;
* tratar a un estudiante en forma desigual para verificar su situación de residencia;
* efectuar prácticas cuyo resultado sea obstruir el derecho de acceso a los servicios escolares;
* requerir que un estudiante o sus padres revelen o documenten su situación inmigratoria;
* hacer interrogatorios a estudiantes o padres que pudieran revelar su situación de indocumentados;
* exigir que un estudiante obtenga un número de seguro social como requisito de admisión a la escuela.

La escuela debe de asignar un número de identificación a los estudiantes que no tienen tarjeta de seguro social. Los adultos sin números de seguro social quienes están solicitando que a un estudiante lo admitan a un programa de almuerzo y/o desayuno gratis, sólo tienen que indicar que no tienen seguro social en el formulario.

Los últimos cambios del Programa de Visado F-1 (de estudiantes) **no cambiarán** las obligaciones antedichas en cuanto a los niños indocumentados. Se aplican sólo a los estudiantes que solicitan del extranjero un visado de estudiantes y que están actualmente en los Estados Unidos en un Visado F-1.

Además, el Acta Familiar de Derechos y Privacidad Escolar *(Family Education Rights and Privacy Act - FERPA)* le prohíbe a las escuelas proveerle a cualquier agencia externa – **incluyendo el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización** *(Immigration and Naturalization Service – INS)* – cualquier información del archivo personal de un estudiante que pudiera revelar su estado legal sin haber obtenido permiso de los padres del estudiante. La única excepción es si una agencia obtiene una orden judicial – conocida como una citación o subpoena – que los padres pueden retar. Los oficiales escolares deben estar conscientes de que el mero hecho de pedirle tal permiso a los padres podría impedir los derechos *Plyler* de un estudiante.

Finalmente, el personal escolar – especialmente los directores de las escuelas y los secretarios generales – deben saber que no están bajo ninguna obligación legal de poner en vigor las leyes de inmigración de los EE.UU.

Para más información, o para denunciar incidentes de exclusión escolar o retraso en la admisión a clases, favor de llamar a:

NCAS	Nacional	(800) 441-7192	(Inglés/Español/Francés/Alemán)
META	Nacional	(617) 628-2226	(Inglés/Español)
META	Costa Oeste	(415) 546-6382	(Inglés)
NY Línea de Urgencia de Inmigración	Nacional	(718) 899-4000	(Inglés/Español/Chino/Francés/Coreano/Polaco/Urdu/ Haitiano Criollo/Hindú/Japonés/Ruso)
MALDEF – Los Angeles	Sudoeste/ Sudeste	(213) 629-2512	(Inglés/Español)
MALDEF – San Francisco	Noroeste	(415) 546-6382	(Inglé/Español)
MALDEF – Chicago	Illinois	(312) 782-1422	(Inglés/Español)
MALDEF – San Antonio	Suroeste	(210) 224-5476	(Inglés/Español)
Línea Para Padres de Florida	Florida	(800) 206-8956	(Inglés/Español/Haitiano Criollo)

Favor de copiar y distribuir esta hoja informativa.
Esta información fue puesta al día en 8/99 y está disponible en inglés, español, haitiano criollo, portugués, vietnamita, y hmong (http://www.igc.org/ncas/soa.htm).

National Coalition of Advocates for Students   100 Boylston Street, Suite 737, Boston, MA 02116

A Strategy of Support for Publicly-Funded Charter Schools

by Bradley Scott, Ph.D.

Publicly-funded charter schools are one of the public school options (along with traditional public schools and magnet schools) supported by the U.S. Department of Education under the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. The 10 equity assistance centers, including the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity, have developed a nationwide network of technical assistance and training for charter schools.

This network has created a national plan for technical assistance and training that was approved by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of School Improvement Programs. The plan has three goals:

* Hold regional meetings and focus groups to equip charter school stakeholders with strategies and resources;
* Establish national and local networks to support charter schools and their operation through focused technical assistance and training; and
* Provide technical assistance and training to increase the enrollment of diverse students in charter schools using equitable recruitment, admission, and retention policies and procedures.

Several powerful outcomes are expected to occur after implementing this national plan. There will be increased opportunities for information sharing regarding matters of civil rights, equal educational opportunity, equity and excellence; safe schools; and parent involvement and engagement, particularly as these issues impact the national agenda for leaving no child behind.

A list of materials and resources will be available online and in print for charter schools. There will be timely delivery of streamlined and up-to-date technical assistance and training through the use of surveys administered by the equity centers to charter schools.

A network of support and collaboration will be built and strengthened through online services, conferences, and regional meetings held for charter schools.

There will be improved opportunities for the equity assistance centers to build an appropriate baseline of data reflecting the impact of services and support to charter schools in a given year and over time. Finally, there will be an increased ability of the network to determine the critical issues faced by charter schools that can be appropriately supported through assistance from the centers.

Each of the equity assistance centers has an individualized regional strategy, based on this national plan, and made specific to the needs of the

states in each region. The plan for IDRA's center (which serves schools in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) has been in place since July 2000. It has been expanded each year to include some of the following activities.

Regional Meetings and Focus Groups

The IDRA SCCE has included selected charter school representatives in its annual regional focus group and work session. This activity enables IDRA to update its regional needs assessment of equity issues and concerns by equity area, by state, and by type of public school entity (i.e., traditional public school, charter school, and magnet school).

The SCCE distributes a regionwide needs assessment that addresses more than 26 areas of educational excellence, student achievement, literacy development, parent engagement, civil rights, disciplinary actions and other areas of equal educational opportunity for all students regardless of race, gender, and national origin. This needs assessment is distributed to charter schools throughout the region since, being public schools, they are also eligible for services provided by the SCCE.

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National and Local Networks

The SCCE distributes the *IDRA Newsletter* to charter schools throughout the region to keep them informed about educational issues and trends as well as effective classroom practices.

Charter school personnel can regularly access the IDRA web site for information, training materials, online assistance, and contacts to support their activities at their local level. The networking and learning opportunities are endless, and the center is able to track the increasing level of use of this type of technical assistance.

Technical Assistance and Training

The SCCE has reached an agreement with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to provide charter school leadership training.

Part One will be a trainer of trainers institute that will train IDRA SCCE staff members to implement the *Charter Starters* curriculum that was developed by the laboratory. Part Two will provide several training sessions across the region to give information and support to those who have charter schools or who are contemplating establishing charter schools.

The IDRA SCCE is steadily building a powerful record of support to all types of public schools in support of learners no matter where they are. The goal is to help every child to achieve excellence and to reach high standards regardless of race, gender, or national origin. Whether they are traditional public schools or publicly-funded charter schools, the goal is the same: excellent, equitable schooling for all children.

Bradley Scott, Ph.D., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development and director of the equity assistance center (South Central Collaborative for Equity).

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In May, IDRA worked with **21,275** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **82** training and technical assistance activities and **288** program sites in **16** states plus Brazil and Mexico. Topics included:

+ Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program – Youth Leadership Day
+ Community Planning for Education and Leadership
+ Math and Science Lesson Demonstrations
+ Metacognitive Strategies for Elementary Teachers
+ Technology in Education

Participating agencies and school districts included:

◇ Bienestar Familiar
◇ Brownsville Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Roosevelt School District, Arizona
◇ Little Rock School District, Arkansas
◇ Dallas ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) has been working with several schools to redesign and re-energize their reading programs to be more responsive to the characteristics of their diverse learners. In this three-year IDRA reading program, known as FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal), IDRA provides technical assistance that includes classroom demonstrations and observations of effective teaching strategies, coaching for success, nurturing of innovations, and guidance for finding funding options. FLAIR capitalizes on each school's strengths to increase reading scores, weave reading throughout the curriculum and recapture students' love of reading. The participants have become reinvigorated by this new instructional method that is based on three principles: active involvement, validating students and guidance.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

+ public school teachers
+ parents
+ administrators
+ other decision makers in public education

Services include:
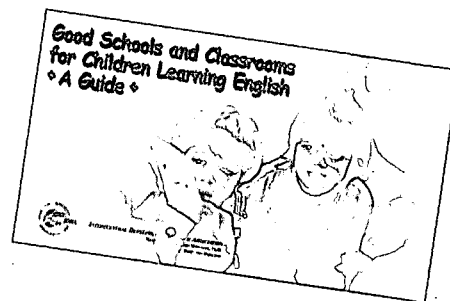
◇ training and technical assistance
◇ evaluation
◇ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
◇ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

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

Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English
❖ A Guide ❖

Thirty years of research have proven that, when implemented well, bilingual education is the best way to learn English. New research by IDRA has identified the 25 common characteristics of successful schools that contribute to high academic performance of students learning English. This guide is a rubric, designed for people in schools and communities to evaluate five dimensions that are necessary for success:

Now available!

- ❖ school indicators
- ❖ leadership
- ❖ programmatic and instructional practices
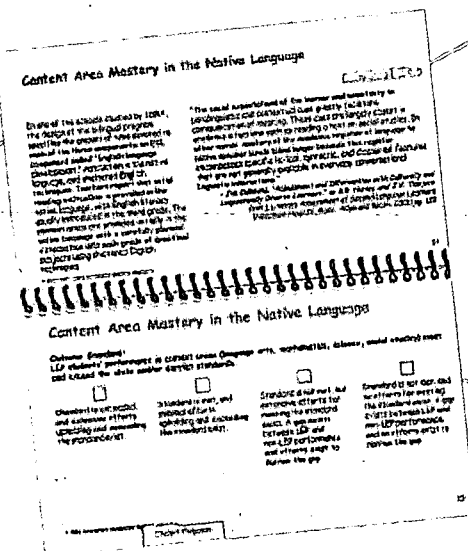- ❖ student outcomes
- ❖ support

For each criterion, this guide indicates which specific educational equity goal(s) it reflects:

- ❖ Goal 1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes;
- ❖ Goal 2: Equitable access and inclusion;
- ❖ Goal 3: Equitable treatment;
- ❖ Goal 4: Equitable opportunity to learn; and
- ❖ Goal 5: Equitable resources.

Characteristic or criterion

Related goal of educational equity

Brief discussion and/or research-based example of the characteristic

Indicator and four options – users check the box that describes the degree to which each criteria is met, "4"

Special Tribute to Albert H. Kauffman

In any society, social change arrives not on its own, but with the toil and dogged persistence of people who have their sight set on a vision. One such person has been Albert H. Kauffman. Noted by *Texas Lawyer* as one of ten most influential attorneys in Texas, between 1985 to 1995, who created a significant impact, Kauffman has been a dynamic driving force on a myriad of issues in the areas of civil rights and education. (It is also notable that Kauffman was the only civil rights lawyer among the ten.)

With his recent departure from his position as regional counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Eductional Fund (MALDEF) to pursue other opportunities and take time to be with his family, IDRA acknowledges and thanks Kauffman for his commitment with this tribute in the *IDRA Newsletter*.

For more than 20 years, Kauffman worked as an attorney for MALDEF where he took on such issues such as voting rights, employment rights, and education. From 1984 to 1996, Kauffman was a staff attorney for MALDEF, and in 1996 he became regional counsel of the office in San Antonio until April 2002.

Very specifically, IDRA is grateful for the work Kauffman has done in the area of education. Most recognized for his tactical dexterity as legal counsel in the landmark school finance cases in Texas, Kauffman has been a friend, ally and supporter to IDRA in the fight for excellent and equitable education for all children. He has been an occasional contributing writer to the *IDRA Newsletter* offering explanations and updates on school funding lawsuits, on the *Hopwood v. Texas* case and others.

Some of Kauffman's professional milestones in the field of education include: *Edgewood, et al. v. Kirby et al.; Ross, et al. v. Eckels, et al.; U.S. v. Texas -PPST; Edgewood, et al. v. Kirby, et al.;Keyes v. Denver Public School; Edgewood v. Meno; LULAC v. Richards*; and *GI Forum v. TEA*.

Albert Kauffman and Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel, 2002.

Kauffman consistently sought different strategies for either improving or strengthening the outcome of his efforts. He worked closely with state legislators and rallied support from other advocacy organizations to address those issues legislatively as well as through the courts.

Kauffman has already made an indelible mark in the pages of history as a litigator in court, as a vocal and unwavering advocate of justice before the media and in the halls of the state Capitol, and as a trusted friend.

Whether it was making elementary and secondary education more accessible to children, defending affirmative action, protecting the rights of voters, workers, and immigrants, or defeating mean-spirited discriminatory practices, such as hate crimes, Kauffman has always fought for Texans. We know that where ever he goes, he will continue to shine brilliantly and inspire others. Thank you, Al; and best of luck.

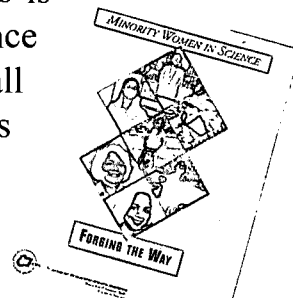## For protecting and defending the rights of children and their families, thank you.

On behalf of all of us at IDRA. Good luck, Al!

Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way

by Keiko E. Suda, Oanh H. Maroney, M.A., Bradley Scott, M.A., and María Aurora Yánez, M.A.

A great student-centered tool to support equity in math and science education!

We must ensure that minority girls are not left behind as progress is made toward narrowing gender and racial gaps in math and science education. This is an innovative resource that can be used with all students – girls and boys – to help break down gender stereotypes about scientists.

You will find:

✦ Profiles of seven minority women scientists who have surmounted barriers to forge the way for themselves and future scientists.

✦ Science lessons for the classroom that cover such topics as acid/base chemistry, earth science, wildlife and environmental science, and biology.

✦ Life skills lessons for the classroom that cover topics such as getting college information from the school counselor, identifying a support system, reaching goals, knowing self-worth, having community pride, overcoming stereotypes, and linking hobbies with career choices.

✦ The opportunity to use this guide to plan with other teachers, from other departments, using the stories of these inspirational women as the basis for cross-curricular lessons for students.

(**Student Workbook** ISBN 1-878550-67-5; 2000; 32 pages; paperback; $6.50)
(**Teacher's Guide** ISBN 1-878550-68-3; 2000; 94 pages; paperback; $25.00)

> ## "Being a scientist can open doors to opportunities that you may never have dreamt of or even considered."

– Patricia Hall, M.S., one of the scientists featured in *Minority Women in Science: Forging the Way*

goals:

- **Training for Capacity Building –** to prepare teachers to improve content area instruction for students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and former LEP students.
- **Technical Assistance for Classroom Support** – a support system for helping content area teachers meet the instructional needs of LEP and former LEP students.
- **Teacher Mentoring** – a support system for mentoring beginning and experienced teachers of LEP students who have little or no training in the instruction of LEP students and are new to the participating campuses.
- **Teacher-Parent Partnerships** – a system to bring parents and educators together for planning and implementing student success models.
- **ESL Learning Communities** – a sustainable collaborative structure for ESL teachers, content area teachers and administrators to monitor and support the progress of LEP and former LEP students.

Co-constructing a Professional Development Program

Coordination and collaboration is crucial to ExCELS. "Co-construction" best defines the ideal process (Hubbard and Mehan, 1999). Co-construction focuses on the institutionalization of an innovation and supports sustainability by: (a) attending to the cultural context of school and community; (b) operating multi-directionally so that key partners within and outside of the educational system have influence; and (c) encouraging community and parent partnerships. Thus, co-construction provides unique opportunities for shared project ownership, cooperation and interdependence, and mutual accountability.

> *In reality, serving students is far beyond a training session, or even a series of them. It takes more than techniques to transform schools into supportive learning environments where all students thrive academically.*

A Taste of Co-construction

At our first presentation at the middle school in January 2002, teachers were given a description of the project, the benefits and the duration. To give a taste of what would ensue, IDRA staff presented a vocabulary strategy, which participating teachers applied in small groups.

The vocabulary strategy is designed to build on prior knowledge and tap into the power of imagery and association to develop the academic English needed to succeed in core content areas, such as math, science, language arts and social studies.

In the work session, many teachers commented that they could use this strategy the very next day. It was clear that they were eager to hone their skills in working with English language learners, but we noted that effective classroom strategies were just one piece of the puzzle.

Instead of prescribing a regimented plan for helping teachers develop students' academic language, IDRA outlined a broad framework for training, emphasizing the ultimate commitment to improving student outcomes.

To guide them as co-constructors, a survey was conducted that asked: (a) What are you most excited about? (b) What are you most concerned about? (c) What would help you address the concerns you listed? (d) What level of involvement do you see yourself

having? (e) What should project staff know about you as a learner? The results were used as a basis for planning ExCELS activities with the learning partnership team that includes school administrators.

Informal Assessment – Continuing to Co-construct

As with any effective teaching and learning situation, assessment is at the core of determining how to proceed. In order to customize a professional development process for the two campuses, IDRA staff spent several weeks at the campuses, informally interviewing teachers and students, and taking an inventory of the instructional practices currently in place.

The purpose was to get a snapshot of the status, identify currently successful approaches, and delineate those areas that could be improved. Our observation protocol, adapted from the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model, helped us organize the data (Chamot and O'Malley, 1995).

Knowledge Sharing as Co-construction: The First Full Session

In our first professional development meeting in May we brought middle school and high school teachers together. The initial activity required the teachers to identify effective strategies that challenge their students academically and also motivate them and cause them to participate actively in the lessons.

The sharing of successful teaching approaches among the teachers caused some of those who initially could not think of many strategies to get excited about their colleagues' successes. This positive sharing among peers will continue to be a key element as IDRA facilitates the transformation of the teaching of English language learners

Who Takes the TAKS?

All students will be required to take the TAKS in grades three through 11. The exemptions and procedures for assessment and additional (English) assessments for limited-English-proficient (LEP) and special education students that are in force today will remain.

However, as in the past, TEA will certainly authorize studies on the impact of the new assessments on these populations and make recommendations on how to expand or modify the assessment system to ensure that these students are able to meet the testing requirements.

For LEP students, information on assessments and exemptions can be found in a recently completed document entitled *LPAC Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment*

As TAKS takes center stage in the coming year, there will be continued challenges to Texans. Issues of equity, fairness, and objectivity in the assessment system will surely climb up the stage alongside the test.

Program (Grades 3-8) (TEA, 2001). This is accessible by downloading it from the TEA web site (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/guides/lpac/) or from the Bilingual Education Office at TEA (512-463-9734).

As TAKS takes center stage in the coming year, there will be continued challenges to Texans. Issues of equity, fairness, and objectivity in the

assessment system will surely climb up the stage alongside the test. Hopefully, the commitment and optimism about student learning, which has also characterized the era of TAAS, will not only ascend but surpass all obstacles.

Resources

Texas Education Agency. *LPAC Decision-Making Process for the Texas Assessment Program (Grades 3-8)* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division, 2001).

Texas Education Agency. *A Standard-Setting Plan for the State Board of Education* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division, January 2002).

Adela Solís, Ph.D., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Comments and questions may be directed to her via e-mail at contact@idra.org.

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and is a key aspect of co-construction.

Administrators as Co-constructors

Both campuses had administrators present, voicing energetic support for strategies that built on students' prior knowledge, irrespective of language background. The administrator participation communicated "team effort" to the teachers. Administrators will continue to be encouraged to participate at all levels and will be especially supported to validate innovations as teachers increase their success with students in their classes.

Parent's Role

Simultaneous to the work with teachers, IDRA staff have conducted sessions with parents of English language learners. ExCELS parent sessions are based on a set of affirming

principles. Parents are valued as their children's first teachers. They continue to contribute as: (1) teachers of their own children; (2) resources to the school; (3) decision makers; and (4) leaders in creating excellent schools for all children (Montemayor, 1997).

Thus far, all of the sessions have been delivered in Spanish since all the participants have been Spanish-speaking. Parents are welcomed in their own language and participate in a series of carefully thought out activities that draw on their hopes and dreams for their children and help them to see themselves as vital and valued partners in making those dreams a reality.

Next Steps

Upcoming events for ExCELS include a four-day summer institute for teachers, classroom technical assistance and follow-up coaching, and continued work sessions with parents culminating in a parent-led district conference.

Through each of these activities, the co-constructing process will be used: collaboration, listening, building on assets, valuing the right and role of parents in the education process, and keeping student outcomes as the bottom line.

Resources

Chamot, A.U., and J.M. O'Malley. "Implementing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach: CALLA in Arlington, Virginia," *Bilingual Research Journal* (1995).

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Montemayor, A.M. "The Nurturing of Parent Leadership," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 1997).

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The Dangerous Consequences of High-Stakes Testing

Tests are called "high-stakes" when they are used to make major decisions about a student, such as high school graduation or grade promotion. To be high stakes, a test has to be very important in the decision process or be able to override other information (for example, a student does not graduate if he or she does not pass the test regardless of how well he or she did in school). Research has shown that high-stakes testing causes damage to individual students and education. It is not a reasonable method for improving schools. Here are a few of the many reasons:

High-stakes tests are unfair to many students

Some students simply do not test well. Many students are affected by test anxiety or do not show their learning well on a standardized test, resulting in inaccurately lower scores.

Many students do not have a fair opportunity to learn the material on the test because they attend poorly-funded schools with large class sizes, too many teachers without subject area certification, and inadequate books, libraries, laboratories, computers and other facilities. High-stakes tests punish them for things they cannot control. If students do not have access to an adequate and equitable education, they end up being held accountable while the system is not.

High-stakes testing leads to increased grade retention and dropping out

Grade retention has repeatedly been proven to be counterproductive: students who are retained do not improve academically, are emotionally hurt by retention, suffer a loss of interest in school and self-esteem, and are more likely to drop out of school.

High-stakes testing produces teaching to the test

The higher the stakes, the more schools focus instruction on the tests. As a result, what is not tested often is not taught. Science, social studies, art or physical education may be eliminated if only language arts and math are tested. Important topics and skills that cannot be tested with paper-and-pencil tests – such as writing research papers or conducting laboratory experiments – are not taught.

Narrowing of curriculum and instruction happens most to low-income and minority students. Too often, poor kids in under-funded schools get little more than test coaching that does not adequately prepare them for further learning. In some schools, the library budget is spent on test prep materials, and professional development is reduced to training teachers to be better test coaches. All this further limits educational opportunities for low-income children.

High-stakes testing drives out good teachers

As learning largely depends on teacher quality, real improvements in schools can only come through teachers. Good teachers are often discouraged, even disgusted, by the overemphasis on testing. Many excellent teachers leave.

High-stakes testing misinforms the public

People have a right to know how well schools are doing. However, tests fail to provide sufficient information. Teaching to the test causes score inflation (score gains that do not represent actual improvements in learning), which misleads the public into thinking schools are improving, when they may not be better – and due to teaching to the test, may even be worse.

Tests are a narrow slice of what parents and the public need to know about schools. They do not include non-academic areas and they are weak measures of academics.

Test results do not take into account non-school factors that affect learning, such as school resources and teacher certification – all of which must be addressed if "no children are to be left behind."

Conclusion: High-stakes testing does not improve education

Test standards and major research groups such as the National Academy of Sciences clearly state that major educational decisions should not be based solely on a test score. High-stakes testing punishes students, and often teachers, for things they cannot control. It drives students and teachers away from learning, and at times from school. It narrows, distorts, weakens and impoverishes the curriculum while fostering forms of instruction that fail to engage students or support high-quality learning. In a high-stakes testing environment, the limit to educational improvement is largely dictated by the tests – but the tests are a poor measure of high-quality curriculum and learning. In particular, the emphasis on testing hurts low-income students and students from minority groups. Testing cannot provide adequate information about school quality or progress. High-stakes testing actively hurts, rather than helps, genuine educational improvement.

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To register contact Lena Guerra at IDRA (210-444-1710; fax 210-444-1714; policy@idra.org) and provide your name, title, address and phone number. RSVP by September 20, 2002. There is no registration fee. Details are available in print and online at http://www.idra.org/Events/Events.htm.

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Dropping Out of School in Arizona
IDRA Conducts New Study

**Albert Cortez, Ph.D.,
Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and
María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.**

Arizona is losing almost one-third of its high school students from public school enrollment. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) recently conducted a study of dropout-related issues in the state of Arizona, examining the numbers, costs, and programs that have been identified as effective in addressing the dropout issue. This article presents an overview of the study and key findings.

In October 2001, IDRA was selected by the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (AMEPAC), a division of the Arizona Commission on Higher Education, to develop a commissioned paper focusing on the issue of dropouts in Arizona.

AMEPAC had a long-standing interest in the dropout issue, recognizing that non-graduation of substantial portions of the Arizona minority student population adversely impacted higher education enrollment prospects and had serious implications for many aspects of the Arizona economy.

Committed to helping inform pub-lic policy discussions on the issue, AMEPAC requested that IDRA assess the extent of the dropout problem in Arizona, develop estimates of the cost of dropouts to the state, identify existing dropout prevention programs, and develop a set of recommendations to address the issues identified.

Methods Used

In a 1986 study, IDRA developed a model for estimating the number and cost of dropouts in the state of Texas. The model was developed as part of a research project funded by the Texas Department of Community Affairs (TDCA), which later evolved into the Texas Department of Commerce, in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Using state- and county-level enrollment data, IDRA generated estimates of the number of students lost from enrollment (attrition), developing estimates for the overall high school student population, as well as for sub-groups of students by gender and race-ethnicity.

The original Texas model also provided estimates of the costs associated with dropping out, including costs related to job training and adult educa-

tion, crime and incarceration, unemployment and job placement, and lost wages and related lost tax revenue.

The model has been used annually to estimate the costs of dropouts in Texas since 1986, with formulas adjusted to incorporate inflation experienced for each of the years of the study. With insights from years of experience in Texas, IDRA used similar procedures to develop attrition and cost estimates for Arizona.

In order to conduct its analyses, IDRA requested assistance from the Arizona Department of Education. The department was very cooperative in facilitating the acquisition of state- and county-level student enrollment data and prior dropout reports compiled by the state agency.

Major research strategies used in IDRA's Arizona dropout study included:
- Reviewing Arizona Department of Education dropout studies and related data sets;
- Assessing costs of dropouts using available related data sources and

For every $1 Arizona spent on keeping its pupils in school up to and through graduation would have yielded the state $66 in savings, not even considering how much more might have been gained if even 10 percent of those students lost had gone on to college.

conducting secondary analyses;
- Conducting attrition analyses using IDRA attrition estimation procedures;
- Reviewing related national dropout research; and
- Examining data on effective programs within and outside Arizona.

IDRA reviewed available data, tabulated attrition estimates, and interviewed staff of the Arizona Department of Education. IDRA also met with a cross section of Arizona's public school educators, higher education leaders, business representatives, and Arizona Commission of Higher Education commissioners and staff. From this data, IDRA developed a report, "Arizona Dropouts: The Scope, the Cost and Successful Strategies to Address

the Issue." The report was published by AMEPAC.

Major Findings

Among the major findings in the report were the following:
- Arizona has a significant dropout problem with an estimated overall attrition rate of 33 percent.
- Arizona Department of Education procedures for calculating rates are better than procedures used in some other states.
- Caution is required in reviewing annual report data due to lack of data from some schools.
- Though some students indicate that they plan to drop out, most are identified as "status unknown."

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Texas Needs Diplomas, Not Delusions

by María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.

Dr. María Robledo Montecel, executive director of the Intercultural Development Research Association, presented the following testimony on September 12 to the Texas State Board of Education.

Since 1986, Texas has lost almost 2 million students from our high schools. This is like losing Austin and Dallas over the course of a decade and a half. These 2 million young people did not do anything to deserve to disappear. Our schools, rather, are not holding on to them through graduation. And our state is looking the other way.

In September of 2000, I appeared before this board to urge the state to address what at the time was an emerging need to have more credible estimates of the Texas dropout rate. Two years later, there is growing statewide disenchantment with Texas Education Agency dropout counting and reporting procedures. And the credibility gap is approaching a crisis.

Major state newspapers, including the *Dallas Morning News*, the *El Paso Times*, the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, and the *San Antonio Express-News*, have criticized the adequacy of the state dropout counting and reporting process and have called for major changes.

Since 1986, Texas has lost almost 2 million students from our high schools. This is like losing Austin and Dallas over the course of a decade and a half.

Recent studies by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) have emphasized the problem. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education, in reporting state level school statistics, decided to use its own alternative methods for estimating the Texas dropout rate, due in large measure to concerns with Texas' existing dropout reporting system. Other institutions, like the National Dropout Prevention Network, have raised similar concerns.

In 1986, the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) conducted Texas' first comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts. Until then, no one knew how many dropouts we had. Using a high school attrition formula, IDRA found that 86,000 students had not graduated from Texas high schools that year, costing the state $17 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues, and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs.

By 2001, 16 years later, the estimated cumulative number of Texas

high school dropouts had grown to 1.6 million students – with a net loss in revenues and related costs to the state of $441 billion.

The latest IDRA attrition study is being completed in the coming weeks. It reflects that 143,175 more students were lost to attrition in 2001-02. Texas experienced a 39 percent overall attrition rate for the class of 2002.

Following a 16-year trend, Hispanic students had the highest attrition rate at 51 percent, followed by African American students at 46 percent and Native American students at 29 percent. White students had an attrition rate of 26 percent.

IDRA is the only organization to annually compute attrition rates using consistent definitions and calculation methods. In the mid 1980s, IDRA and official TEA estimates of the number and percentage of dropouts were very similar. Unfortunately, over the years, the state has pursued a course of trying to define away the dropout numbers, rather than actually decreasing the numbers of dropouts.

As the agency's dropout estimates have declined over the last decade, so has the credibility of its dropout reporting. Few in or outside of Texas believe that the actual Texas dropout rate is anywhere near the 1.6 percent rate reported by TEA in its latest dropout estimates. Despite the claims that the new "school leaver"

student accounting system would address these problems, this system as currently implemented only serves to compound rather than resolve the state's dropout credibility problems. IDRA and many others contend that it is time for a major restructuring of the dropout reporting system. We simply *have* to know how many students are graduating.

In order to present recommendations to you today, IDRA has examined, as it does regularly, different methodologies that are used. First, let me give you an overview of the differences between TEA and the NCES definitions, collection procedures and methods of calculation, because these differences have led to inconsistencies in the number and percent of students reported as public school dropouts.

Comparison of NCES and TEA Dropout Counting and Calculation Procedures

Definitions and Calculation Methods. TEA currently defines a dropout as "a student who is enrolled in school at some time during the school year, but either leaves school during the school year without an approved excuse or completes the school year and does not return the following year."

NCES, the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing and reporting education data, in 1990 defined a dropout as an individual who:
(1) was enrolled in school at some time during the previous school year;
(2) was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school year;
(3) has not graduated from high school or completed a state-or district-approved educational program; and ·

Commonalities and Differences in TEA and NCES Dropout Definitions

Characteristics of Students Considered Dropouts	Considered a Dropout	
	TEA	NCES
Graduates	No	No
Transfers to, or withdraws with intent to transfer to, a public or private school	No	No
Is being home schooled	No	No
Enrolls in college	No	No
Dies	No	No
Receives a General Educational Development (GED) certificate by March 1 the following year	No	Yes
Receives a GED certificate by the last Friday in October the following year	Yes	No
Enrolls in an approved adult education GED preparation program	No	Yes
Meets all graduation requirements but does not pass the exit-level Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)	No	Yes
Is previously counted as a dropout	No	Yes
Is not eligible for state funding	No	Yes
Is reported as dropout by more than one district and whose last district of attendance cannot be determined :	No	Yes.
Enrolls at any time before the third week of January of the next school year (returning students)	No	Yes
Except for migrant students, enrolled on the last Friday in October of the next school year (returning students)	Yes	No
Summer dropouts are added to the counts of the school years and grade levels completed (summer dropouts)	Yes	No
Summer dropouts are added to the counts of the school years and grade levels in which they fail to enroll (summer dropouts)	No	Yes
Cumulative enrollment is used as the denominator in dropout rate calculations	Yes	No
Fall enrollment is used as the denominator in dropout rate calculations	No	Yes

Sources: Texas Education Agency Department of Accountability Reporting and Research, Division of Research and Evaluation. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2000-01 (August 2002). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999-00.

TEA Annual Dropout Data, 1997-98 to 2000-01

School Year	Grades 7-12		Grades 9-12	
	Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Dropouts	Dropout Rate
1997-98	27,550	1.6	24,414	2.2
1998-99	27,592	1.6	24,886	2.2
1999-00	23,457	1.3	21,439	1.8
2000-01	17,563	1.0	16,003	1.4

Source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2000-01

TEA Longitudinal Completion/Student Status Rates, Class of 1998 to 2001

School Year	Grades 7-12		Grades 9-12	
	Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Dropouts	Dropout Rate
Class of 1998	22,738	9.8	20,226	8.9
Class of 1999	21,779	9.0	20,231	8.5
Class of 2000	19,004	7.7	17,729	7.2
Class of 2001	17,087	6.8	15,551	6.2

Source: Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2000-01

Texas Needs – continued from Page 4

(4) does not meet any of the following exclusionary conditions:
- (a) transfer to another public school district, private school, or state- or district-approved educational program,
- (b) temporary absence due to suspension or school-excused illness, or
- (c) death.

NCES began collecting dropout data through the Common Core of Data (CCD) in the 1991-92 school year. Dropout statistics are only reported for those states whose dropout counts conform to the CCD dropout definition. Until very recently, the Texas dropout counts have not conformed to this definition. A comparison of the specific areas of agreement and disagreement are outlined in the box on Page 4

According to an assessment by TEA, annual dropout rates of TEA and NCES differ in several ways, including:
- The situations treated as high school completion;
- The situations when school leavers are considered to be continuing high school elsewhere;
- When dropouts are excluded from the dropout count;
- How duplicate, erroneous, and indeterminate records are handled;
- How summer dropouts are assigned to school years and grades;
- The conditions under which students are considered re-enrolled in the fall; and
- The denominator.

NCES counts the following groups of students as dropouts while TEA does not:
- Students previously counted as a dropout;
- Students who withdraw to enroll in an approved adult education GED program;
- Seniors who meet all graduation requirements but do not pass the exit-level TAAS;
- Students enrolled but not eligible for state Foundation School Program funding; and
- Dropouts for whom the last district of attendance cannot be determined.

According to TEA, there are two major reasons for these differences. The largest numerical difference is attributable to the count of students who withdraw to enroll in approved adult education GED preparation programs. The second largest numerical difference occurs because NCES counts a student as a dropout if he or she is unaccounted for on the first day of school.

Because of the definitional and procedural issues, NCES has determined that Texas would need to recalculate dropout counts for inclusion in NCES publications. In its study presented to the 76th Legislature, TEA recommended that it submit dropout rates compatible with the NCES definitions. Results for the state and districts for 1999-00 were submitted to NCES and will be published in August 2002.

Counts. TEA publishes two sets of annual dropout rates – one for grades seven through 12 and one for grades nine through 12 (see box above). It also publishes a longitudinal completion/status rate and an unadjusted attrition rate (see second box above). The box on the next page shows the differences in TEA and NCES dropout data for the 1999-00 school year.

For grades seven through 12 in 1999-00, NCES identified more than 35,000 additional dropouts in Texas.

Comparison of TEA and NCES Dropout Data, 1999-00

Enrollment				Enrollment			
Grades 7-12	TEA	NCES	Difference	Grades 9-12	TEA	NCES	Difference
7th grade	317,744	303,344	14,400				
8th grade	313,311	298,159	15,152				
9th grade	386,108	357,166	28,942	9th grade	386,108	357,166	28,942
10th grade	290,571	273,371	17,200	10th grade	290,571	273,371	17,200
11th grade	249,146	241,876	7,270	11th grade	249,146	241,876	7,270
12th grade	237,641	216,015	21,626	12th grade	237,641	216,015	21,626
Total	1,794,521	1,689,931	104,590	Total	1,163,466	1,088,428	75,038

Dropouts				Dropouts			
Grades 7-12	TEA	NCES	Difference	Grades 9-12	TEA	NCES	Difference
7th grade	703	1,231	-528				
8th grade	1,315	3,195	-1,880				
9th grade	7,630	15,204	-7,574	9th grade	7,630	15,204	-7,574
10th grade	4,631	13,511	-8,880	10th grade	4,631	13,511	-8,880
11th grade	4,518	11,216	-6,698	11th grade	4,518	11,216	-6,698
12th grade	4,660	14,459	-9,799	12th grade	4,660	14,459	-9,799
Total	23,457	58,816	-35,359	Total	21,439	54,390	-32,951

Dropout Rate				Dropout Rate			
Grades 7-12	TEA	NCES	Difference	Grades 9-12	TEA	NCES	Difference
7th grade	0.2	0.4	-0.2				
8th grade	0.4	1.1	-0.7				
9th grade	2	4.3	-2.3	9th grade	2	4.3	-2.3
10th grade	1.6	4.9	-3.3	10th grade	1.6	4.9	-3.3
11th grade	1.8	4.6	-2.8	11th grade	1.8	4.6	-2.8
12th grade	2	6.7	-4.7	12th grade	2	6.7	-4.7
Total	1.3	3.5	-2.2	Total	1.8	5	-3.2

Source: Texas Education Agency Department of Accountability Reporting and Research, Division of Research and Evaluation. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2000-01 (August 2002). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999-00

For grades nine through 12, NCES reported a Texas dropout rate of 5 percent, compared to TEA's 1.8 percent. The lag in aligning state and NCES accounting procedures has denied Texas schools access to millions of dollars targeted to dropout prevention.

Another measure of Texas dropouts involves the calculation of an attrition rate, which compares a group of entering freshmen to the number of seniors enrolled three years later, adjusting the latter by the increase or decrease in enrollment in the class for the intermediate years that the class is followed. IDRA uses such an attrition method as a way of providing an alternative measure of Texas schools' holding power and providing a way of triangulating findings from related dropout research.

IDRA Attrition Data

The "Did You Know?" box on the next page shows IDRA attrition rates for the 2001-02 school year as I summarized earlier. The percent of students lost from public school enrollment has remained relatively unchanged over the past eight years. An estimated 143,175 students from the class of 2002 were lost from enrollment due to attrition.

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The cumulative costs of students leaving public high schools prior to graduation with a diploma are continuing to escalate. Between the 1985-86 and 2000-01 school years, the cumulative costs of public school dropouts in the state of Texas were in excess of $441 billion.

What is Needed

In order to make the state dropout counting and reporting system credible, IDRA continues to insist that the dropout counting and calculation procedure must be made simple and clear. Specifically IDRA recommends the following.

Recommendation 1: Put the dropout definition back into the law as follows: "For the purposes of local, district and state dropout reporting, 'dropout' means a student:
* **Who does not hold a high school diploma;**
* **Who is absent from the public school in which the student is enrolled for a period of 30 or more consecutive days; and**
* **Whose attendance within that period at another public school or private or parochial school cannot be verified."**

Rationale: Prior to the re-writing of the Texas Education Code in 1995, a similar definition for dropouts had been included in state statutes, specifically upon the adoption of HB 1010 by the 1989 Texas Legislature.

Employers know that a GED is not equal to a high school diploma. Therefore it should be included in dropout calculations, thus the exclusion of its "equivalent" in the new proposed wording.

On the question of substituting the terms "cannot be verified" rather than "cannot be evidenced," we propose that *verification* is a clearer, more easily understood term than *evidenced,* which is more suited to

Did You Know?

IDRA has conducted an annual attrition study since 1986 to track the number and percent of students in Texas who are lost from public school enrollment prior to graduation. Preliminary results of the 2002 study are below. IDRA will release the final 2002 study in the October issue of the *IDRA Newsletter.*

Attrition Rates, 2001-02 in Texas

Hispanic students	**51 percent**
Black students	**46 percent**
White students	**26 percent**
Native American students	**29 percent**
Asian American students	**14 percent**
All students	**39 percent**

For more facts and statistics, go to the "Field Trip" on IDRA's web site.

www.idra.org

legal proceedings.

Recommendation 2: Adopt a new high school dropout counting and dropout rate calculation procedure into state policy that reads as follows: "State, school district, and local school campus dropout counts (DC) and DR (dropout rates) shall be calculated as follows: DC= A+B- (C+D+E+F). Where:

DC = Dropout count
A= students enrolled in ninth grade
B= additional students enrolled in subsequent years that become part of the original ninth grade class
C= students still enrolled in the same school when the ninth grade class enrolls in the 12th grade
D= students who enroll at another parochial or private school that grants a high school diploma, and whose enrollment has been verified by the receiving school
E= students from the original ninth grade who are deceased
F= students from the ninth grade class who graduated early and received a high school diploma.

The dropout rate (DR) shall be calculated as follows:

$$DR = \frac{A+B - (C+D+E+F)}{A+B} \cdot 100$$

Rationale: The current dropout counting procedures and the use of excessive numbers of leaver categories tends to both complicate and confuse public understanding of the dropout issue in Texas. Use of this shorter, more streamlined approach allows for recognizing those legitimate

adjustments to the dropout counts, while at the same time presenting a more accurate picture of the number and percentage of pupils from a freshman class who actually wind up earning a high school diploma.

Recommendation 3: The state should maintain the goal as stated in the Texas Education Code: "Through enhanced dropout prevention efforts, all students will remain in school until they obtain a high school diploma" (TEC Section 4.001).

Rationale: The goal of the state of Texas is simply and clearly that *all* students obtain a high school diploma. In Texas, all must mean all.

Recommendation 4: The state

The lag in aligning state and NCES accounting procedures has denied Texas schools access to millions of dollars targeted to dropout prevention.

dropout definition should be amended and simplified by defining a dropout as a student whose re-enrollment or graduation from a high school (diploma granting school) has not been verified.

Rationale: Much of the current confusion about actual dropout rates is created by the state's complex process for counting and reporting dropouts.

A streamlined procedure is needed that informs us of whether a student who was formerly enrolled in a Texas school has actually re-enrolled, has graduated, has dropped out, or whose status is in reality unknown due to a lack of verifiable information on actual re-enrollment. Current state reports indicate that the group of "unknown status" students continue to account for over one-half of those

This state can continue to delude itself by resorting to tricks like cumbersome counting systems, or we can simplify the process so that it is both understandable and believable.

reported as non-dropouts. In response to a request for verification of the re-enrollment of approximately 113,000 students whom the school leaver system identified as purportedly "other school leavers," TEA was unable to account for more than 57,000 of those pupils who were recorded as "intending to enroll in another school." In fact, this number of students who disappeared from Texas schools is actually greater than the 17,000 dropouts "officially" reported by the agency in that year. Emerging data however, suggest that many of those same students actually never re-enroll in any school.

It is this type of discrepancy that weakens the credibility of the Texas dropout reporting system as well as its highly touted school accountability system because the latter incorporates these highly suspect dropout rates into the state's current accountability and school rating system.

Recommendation 5: Modify the state dropout reporting system to include fewer major categories, specifically the numbers of: (a) students actually enrolled in a specified graduating class; (b) students in that class who are still enrolled in any public or private high school (diploma granting institution) or who are verified as home schooled; (c) students known to have dropped out; (d) students who received a GED; and (e) students who completed all requirements but were denied a diploma for not passing the exit

level Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

Rationale: Further confusion and related credibility of the state dropout reporting system can be attributed to the complexity that has been built into it by the state agency. With 43 student leaver codes, separating the number of pupils who actually received a regular high school diploma from the myriad of other reporting categories has rendered the new school leaver reporting system even less useful than the one it is replacing. The cumbersome 43 school leaver codes can be combined into several major categories that would provide a much clearer picture of students' status and enable anyone to calculate rates using these numbers.

Much of the resistance to modifying dropout reporting procedures lies in the fact that schools and the state agency continue to oppose reporting – as dropouts – students who have enrolled or indicated an intent to enroll in another public or private school but for whom no actual verification of enrollment is available. The creation of the "unknown" subcategory allows for this distinction – without automatically assuming that these students actually re-enrolled at a subsequent school. Similarly, by accounting for GEDs in a separate category, the public can distinguish those students who get a regular high school diploma from those who completed a GED.

A final category would involve those students who have completed all requirements – but who failed to pass the exit level TAAS. Such students are not reported either as dropouts or as high school graduates in the current reporting system. Like for GED recipients, the new system would account for these students, further allowing for calculating dropout and/or completion rates by combining or disaggregating the various subcategories.

Recommendation 6: Require

What People are Saying about Dropout Rates and School Holding Power in Texas

"If an infectious disease were causing one in five freshmen
not to graduate, we'd be devoting eight pages a day
trying to get to the bottom of it."
– Bob Mong, Publisher, *The Dallas Morning News*

"It's time to stop denying the problem's magnitude and
offering data that minimize its severity."
– Editors, *San Antonio Express-News*

"This state has suffered from a focus on lowering the dropout numbers
as opposed to lowering the number of dropouts."
– Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director

"It is absolutely crucial to fix the discrepancies in the TEA's system, not
only to keep Texas from losing millions more in federal funding, but also
to help ensure that as many young Texans as possible are
staying in school… What Texas does not need is a
lackluster alteration aimed more at silencing the critics
than solving the dropout-accounting problems."
– Editors, *El Paso Times*

"The major contributing factor to dropouts, we have found, is basically
that students get frustrated with lack of success, and in some situations
there is no support, so they get tired of butting their heads against the
wall, and too many leave school."
– Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director

dropout reduction and retaining students throughout high school…
The dropout problem must not fall victim to playing the numbers games
with dropouts and who and what should be include in the statistics…
Solid consideration must be given to keeping dropouts in school."
– Editors, *El Paso Times*

"Hiding the dropout rate – sweeping it under the carpet – is more than a
disservice. The word is not strong enough. It is treasonous."
– Texas State Senator Carlos Truan

"By understanding how the school environment contributes to a student's
failure, we can change what blocks success.
What works are sound, effective and efficient educational
strategies that encourage students to remain in school."
– Dr. María Robledo Montecel, IDRA executive director

that each local school district establish local dropout oversight committee(s) or task force(s) including parent representatives, private sector representatives and school staff. These committees should regularly and systematically monitor the dropout identification, counting, and reporting process and dropout prevention efforts at their campuses and districts. Such efforts should be part of the regular school program involving regular school staff.

Rationale: There is currently no local oversight committee to monitor the local dropout reporting or intervention. Schools and communities must be directly involved in addressing the issue.

School Holding Power

In addition to the more formal state policy recommendations, IDRA is calling on school leaders to focus less on dropouts and more on holding on to students until high school graduation. Schools must do whatever it takes to work with students where they are and to keep them in school and learning through graduation. I call this "school holding power."

To support this major shift we propose the following:

1. Schools should re-examine their practices to increase student academic achievement and strengthen their student holding power.

Effective schools that produce high student achievement and keep students in school know what it takes to be truly successful:

- *All* students must be valued.
- There must be at least one educator in a student's life who is totally committed to the success of that student.
- Families must be valued as partners with the school, all committed to ensuring that equity and excellence

is present in a student's life.

- Schools must change and innovate to match the characteristics of their students and embrace the strengths and contributions that students and their families bring.
- School staff, especially teachers, must be equipped with the tools needed to ensure their students' success, including the use of technology, different learning styles and mentoring programs. Effective professional development can help provide these tools.

2. Schools must establish the strengthening of their student holding power as a high priority along with the priority assigned to increased student academic achievement.

3. Schools must examine student, school and community data in a way that holds the institution accountable for student success and uses it to design their school improvement plans.

4. Schools must incorporate into their professional development plans effective teaching strategies that engage students in the educational process and increase the school's holding power.

5. Schools must partner with communities and families in an effort to strengthen the educational opportunities of students.

6. Schools should implement strategies to truly recover and provide educational opportunities to students who have dropped out of school in their community.

7. Schools should re-assess their effectiveness in increasing their student holding power regularly.

8. Evaluation must be an integral part of any dropout prevention and recovery program and should address three primary questions:

- To what extent is the program being implemented as proposed?
- What is the impact of program activities on participants?
- Is the program working and, if not,

As the agency's dropout estimates have declined over the last decade, so has the credibility of its dropout reporting. Few in or outside of Texas believe that the actual Texas dropout rate is anywhere near the 1.6 percent rate reported by TEA in its latest dropout estimates.

what modifications should be made?

Dr. Slavin and Dr. Fashola reported that only two programs in the country designed to increase high school graduation rates of at-risk students actually present rigorous evaluation evidence of success. One of these two dropout prevention programs is the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program. Developed in Texas by IDRA in 1984, it is now an internationally-recognized cross-age tutoring program.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has kept 12,000 students in school – middle and high school students previously thought to be at risk of dropping out of school. More than 136,000 students, families and educators have been impacted by the program. The Valued Youth philosophy, "all students are valuable, none is expendable," is helping more than 150 schools in 17 cities keep 98 percent of valued youth in school.

As effective as the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is, it is not a magic bullet. No one program can increase a school's holding power. What is needed are real institutional changes that shift the paradigm from "dropout prevention and recovery" to *graduation*; from "some students at-risk of dropping out" to *all students will graduate from high school*. IDRA stands ready to continue working with schools to significantly increase their holding power.

Closing Comments

IDRA also will continue to compile attrition data for the state. But it is critical that the state upgrade its own dropout reporting process. Whether

referred to as "leavers" or "dropouts," far too many Texas students are leaving our schools without ever earning their high school diplomas.

This state can continue to delude itself by resorting to tricks like cumbersome definitions and unwieldy reporting and counting systems, or we can simplify the process so that it is both understandable and believable.

Texas needs diplomas, not delusions.

Resources

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Educational Technology – An International Conversation

by Felix Montes, Ph.D. and Linda Cantú, M.A.

Technology is an integral part of education. It was once a discrete subject of study or an added component to the list of extra academic activities. But, it has become intertwined with the curriculum and in every aspect of the educational experience in the most advanced schools in the United States.

This paradigm is changing the way educators see their work both here and in other countries. This paradigm shift was the general framework of a seminar that Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) researchers organized for Mexican educators from the *Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico* (UNAM). This article reports on some interesting lessons gained from this seminar.

The PAAS Program

Since 2001, IDRA has participated in the *Programa de Apoyo a la Actualización del Personal Docente del Bachillerato* (PAAS) or Support and Staff Development Program for High School Teachers. The program was created by UNAM in 1995 for teachers from Mexico in the Department of Science and Humanities and the Department of Education to enhance the academic preparation of Mexico's teachers.

The teachers participate in the program for one year, three to four weeks of which are spent in either the United States or Canada. This international exposure affords these educators the opportunity to learn methods, theoretical principles, and practical skills commonly used in these countries. The expectation is that some of these new elements and skills will find a place, with the appropriate adaptations, in Mexican classrooms.

This international dimension was added to the program in 2001. In the United States, the participating UNAM campus is located in San Antonio. In Canada, it is located in Hull, Quebec. There are plans to expand the program to include the UNAM campus in Chicago.

For the implementation of the program in San Antonio, UNAM has created a partnership that includes IDRA, the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Institute of Texan Cultures, the Witte Museum, and the Business Careers High School in the Northside Independent School District. Last year, 40 educators participated in this international collaboration, and 49 participated this year.

During their stay in San Antonio, the educators improved their English through formal English as a second language classes (an important component of the program) and informal contacts. They learned about successful teaching methods from local teachers; visited middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities in both San Antonio and Austin; and shared their experiences via video conference with educators participating in the program in Canada. In addition, these educators had ample opportunities to enjoy the varied cultural and tourist possibilities that San Antonio has to offer.

The Mexican Educators

This year, IDRA organized a seminar about issues and possibilities for technology in education. The session started with a short survey designed to obtain basic information about the teachers' knowledge and inclinations regarding the issue of technology for education.

The Mexican educators were highly computer literate, as much as can be elucidated from this survey. More than 95 percent knew how to use the computers; more than 90 percent had a computer at home; more than 80 percent used the Internet; and more than 90 percent used e-mail.

Although a large majority (93.5 percent) believed using technology was important for education, most did not have access to technology in their schools. Only 13 percent reported having a computer in their classroom, and a similar percentage indicated that their schools had a computer lab.

Some Mexican educators took issue with how the last question was phrased on the survey: *¿Usted cree en el uso de la tecnología en la educación?* [Do you believe in the use

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of technology for education?]. They objected to the use of the word "cree" (believe) in this context. They said its use implied an article of faith reserved for religious contexts. This is especially important when used in writing and in an academic context. Colloquially and verbally, they indicated that they understood the intent and therefore, instead of the 93.5 percent, the real value should be closer to the 100 percent.

This is an important point because language is important for international collaboration. At IDRA, we have encountered similar issues in our collaborations with colleagues from Brazil and even England. The lesson is to be aware of linguistic and cultural sensitivities when engaging in international collaborations.

Educational Technology in the United States and Mexico

Although the group agreed with the notion that technology is a very important component to any educational improvement plan, there was no consensus as to what degree its immersion should reach. Some educators talked about software packages that were developed to help students deal with some specific problems, for example, to solve quadratic equations ($ax^2 + bx + c = 0$). Many suggested that general software packages (word processing, spread sheets, statistics, databases) were more useful because any kind of problem can be represented and solved through their appropriate use.

The trend in the United States is to use these general packages. Even the newer educational software are versions of these generic packages. The new versions have some specific adaptations to allow for manipulative educational applications, such as graphic representation of movement and pulse rates in a spreadsheet-type presentation to illustrate concepts such as ratio, tends, and variable relationships. There

Discussion Highlights on Technology in Education

Situación tecnológica: Capacidad actual
- Falta de equipo suficiente y actualizado.
- Existen laboratorios de cómputo. Es necesaria la actualización de la planta docente.
- El número de computadoras que existen en los diferentes planteles, no es suficiente para atender a la gran población escolar existente.

Current technological status
- Equipment is out-of-date and insufficient.
- There are computer labs.
- Teachers need to be trained.
- There are way too many students for the current number of computers available to them.

Situación tecnológica: Problemas o limitaciones actuales
- La reducida asignación de presupuesto limita las posibilidades de que el uso de las computadoras, por parte de los alumnos, sea continuo y eficiente.
- Las posibilidades económicas de los alumnos son limitadas.

Problems and limitations of current technological situation
- The small budget limits the continuous and efficient use of technology in education.
- Students are poor and have limited access to technology.

Nuestros objetivos con la tecnología
- La aplicación de estos medios al desarrollo del proceso educativo.
- La promoción de la creatividad a través de esta tecnología.
- La actualización de los recursos didácticos en el proceso de aprendizaje y enseñanza.

Our technology goals
- The application of technology to improve the educational process. The use of technology to promote creativity.
- The actualization of the pedagogical resources and tools.

Propuesta tecnológica: Elementos para avanzar (Institución)
- Introducir de manera permanente el uso de la computadora.

Technological improvement to be done by the institution
- Make technology a permanent component of the educational process

Propuesta tecnológica: Iniciativas propias
- Elaboración de material didáctico, por parte del profesor.
- Diseño de materiales, por parte de los alumnos.

Technological improvements to be done by the teachers
- Create teaching materials.
- Involve the students in the design of these materials.

Qué aprendimos hoy sobre la tecnología
- La práctica en el empleo de la computadora.
- Reafirmar que la integración de los medios electrónicos al nivel del bachillerato en el desarrollo del proceso educativo es indispensable.

What we learned today about the technology
- How to use the computer for practical applications.
- To reaffirm that the integration of technology to the education at the high school level is indispensable.

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are important pedagogical uses of these applications to improve mathematics achievement (Dieckmann, 2002).

The essence of technology is its power to facilitate and extend the student capacity of finding, processing, organizing and representing information so that knowledge, experience and hopefully wisdom can be enriched. Therefore, the emphasis should be on the way these higher-order thinking skills are created (Montes, 1996; Montes, 1997). The essential point here is that the pedagogy should encourage more participation through student-centered activities and discourage oppressive, disempowering, and passive activities. The teachers concurred that, while technology is only a tool, it is a tool that has become indispensable.

There was a spirited debate about the issue of the digital divide. U.S. participants assumed this would be a big concern with their Mexican colleagues. Although they recognized that schools in Mexico are poorly equipped with the required technology, they suggested that access to technology is plentiful in Internet cafes, which are abundant in the country's larger cities. Access to these cafes is affordable to most people.

The educators recognized that the digital divide is not just this kind of access but rather a systemic trend that alienates certain groups of society usually along socio-economic indicators. Typically females, older people, poor families, rural dwellers, and racial and ethnic minorities have less access to technology. This also happens in Mexico. But the inexpensive Internet cafes provide a measure of democratization to technology not immediately apparent in the United States.

Some of the items the participants agreed were current issues in educational technology in both countries are:
- Limited technology budget;
- Inappropriate infrastructure in

schools, many of which do not even have telephone or electricity;
- When there is some technology, its use might not be appropriate (Some schools are still using technology for practice and drills); and
- Teacher training continues to be a low priority in many schools, even though it has been amply demonstrated that this is one of the most relevant factors influencing the appropriate implementation of the technology in education.

One issue that surprised Mexican educators was the availability of computers in many classrooms in the United States. Given the limited resources of Mexican schools, the few computers they have are placed in a central computer lab. The Mexican educators were excited about the possibilities that such an arrangement would create. But this would probably remain a distant dream for Mexico (and most other Latin American countries), where classrooms can have more than 40 students.

However, the group agreed that even under present limitations there are many things that can be accomplished with technology including:
- A more realistic alignment of the curriculum with present society;
- Exploration of abundant free sources of information and resources via Internet and other electronic sources such as encyclopedias and comprehensive knowledge bases on compact disks;
- Better support for special education; and
- Better pedagogical possibilities to accommodate different ways of learning.

The participants believe all members of society should be involved in the process of enriching students' educational experience through technology. In addition to teachers and administrators, students, parents and families should be actively involved. Some Mexican educators related a situation commonly found in the United States of

students who knew far more than their teachers in certain areas of technology. The group agreed that such students could become valuable resources for the other students under the appropriate pedagogical approach.

The group also embraced the importance of including other educational institutions at the local, regional and national levels in this process. Institutions such as museums and foundations can provide valuable resources and assistance to traditional educational institutions. Governments can be active participants, not just passive providers of funds.

Finally, there were some ideas about how teachers and researchers help community groups become involved in the process. Teachers have the knowledge, experience, and communication skills for creating a vision of the possibilities of what technology can bring to the educational process. They can convey that vision to their administrators, parents and families. Teachers can help their school decision makers integrate technology planning into the campus improvement plans. At a minimum, teachers can provide their own objectives and personal goals regarding the use of technology in their classrooms. Green (2002) provides some principles to facilitate this process.

To conclude the seminar, the Mexican educators presented their visions of how technology could improve their own institutions. In groups, the educators applied some of the theoretical concepts debated during the seminar to their own situations. This group situation also gave them an opportunity to practice with Microsoft PowerPoint so they could emulate its use in the classroom.

Discussion

The conversations that occurred during the seminar with Mexican teachers served as an international exchange about the status of the current uses of

technology for improving the education process in both the United States and Mexico. Although some of the issues were theoretical, the teachers invariably tied the issues with practical implications and applications.

Mexican teachers are dealing with many of the same issues as U.S. teachers in the area of technology. That is, limited training possibilities, insufficient technology in the classroom, and pedagogical issues in its application.

Some of the unexpected divergences occurred around the issue of the digital divide and the technology distribution in the schools (computer labs vs. classrooms). We also were reminded that linguistic issues and cultural sensitivities have to be considered

carefully in any international collaboration. Overall, we concluded that this is the kind of exchange that should increase among countries and peoples of the world.

Resources

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In June and July, IDRA worked with **11,610** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **53** training and technical assistance activities and **278** program sites in **13** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

◆ Strategies to Support English Language Learners in Math
◆ Bridging the Gap Between Latinos and Higher Education
◆ Sexual Harassment Prevention
◆ Children's Literature for Even Start Students and Parents

Participating agencies and school districts included:
◇ District of Columbia Public Schools
◇ Medina Valley Independent School District (ISD), Texas
◇ Texas Women's University
◇ Louisiana Department of Education
◇ Channelview ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

Thirteen colleges and universities are improving higher education opportunities for Latino youth through grants provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. The grants represent Phase II of the Foundation's six-year ENLACE (ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education) initiative. Through ENLACE, colleges and universities are forming partnerships with communities, K-12 public and private school districts, and businesses. By working together the partners are giving Latino students the support they need to succeed from kindergarten through high school and beyond. IDRA is providing technical assistance to the partnerships for the initiative. The three key components of ENLACE are a common vision of a brighter future for Latino youth; collaborative work in coalitions; and a focus on strengthening public school-university-community partnerships.

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.

- The largest number of pupils who drop out do so in high school.
- As in most states, Arizona's minority pupils drop out at higher rates than White pupils.
- Arizona loses hundreds of millions in lost wages and taxes because of its high dropout rates.
- Few Arizona dropout prevention programs have been rigorously evaluated.

Arizona's Dropout Counting and Reporting Procedures

Reviews of department of education dropout reports, interviews with department of education staff, and work with the state's student enrollment reports revealed that the department has made some effort to determine and validate the extent of school holding power throughout the state.

As part of its data collection and reporting process, the state requests that schools submit data on the enrollment status of their pupils. These procedures include instructions for reporting students' status by specific categories, including a code for students whose status is unknown.

The Arizona Department of Education counts as dropouts students whose status is unknown, a procedure that provides a more accurate estimate of dropouts than one that excludes such pupils or treats them as a separate category of pupils that could be excluded from local or state dropout calculations.

Another strength of the department's process is the decision to include in the dropout counting procedure students who have obtained or are in the process of acquiring a GED. In many states and at the national level, GED enrollees and graduates are not counted as dropouts – leading to *inaccurate* dropout counts.

While many of the Arizona Department of Education dropout counting and reporting processes are better than those in other states, two areas were identified as in need of improvement.

The first involved lack of data submission by some schools, a factor that led to the statewide reports suffering from missing data. Review of state reports did not make it clear how many schools had failed to submit their dropout data.

A second weakness in data submitted was an inability to conduct audits to verify the numbers that were submitted. Both of these issues were being addressed in legislation adopted by the state in 2001.

The more serious limitation of Arizona's dropout reporting was its preference for calculating annual dropout rates rather than longitudinal, or cohort, dropout rates – considered a better measure of school holding power.

Though the state did conduct occasional graduation rate studies, lack of a comprehensive student tracking system hampered such efforts. A new student record system is expected to help the state develop improved cohort dropout rates in the future.

Attrition Rates in Arizona

To develop an estimate of Arizona school holding power, IDRA conducted an attrition study using procedures it developed and uses to estimate dropouts in Texas. IDRA's attrition formula compares ninth grade enroll-

Overall Enrollment and Attrition Rates in Arizona

1994-95 9th Grade Enrollment	1997-98 12th Grade Enrollment	1994-95 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1997-98 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1997-98 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Attrition Rate (%)	Number Students Lost To Attrition
59,150	43,402	194,196	212,170	64,625	32.8%	21,223
1995-96 9th Grade Enrollment	**1998-99 12th Grade Enrollment**	**1995-96 9-12th Grade Enrollment**	**1998-99 9-12th Grade Enrollment**	**1998-99 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment**	**Attrition Rate (%)**	**Number Students Lost To Attrition**
60,633	43,958	199,459	214,968	65,380	32.8%	21,422
1996-97 9th Grade Enrollment	**1999-00 12th Grade Enrollment**	**1996-97 9-12th Grade Enrollment**	**1999-00 9-12th Grade Enrollment**	**1999-00 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment**	**Attrition Rate (%)**	**Number Students Lost To Attrition**
62,863	45,971	205,895	220,896	67,443	31.8%	21,472

IDRA. Dropping Out of Arizona's Schools: The Scope, the Costs, and Successful Strategies to Address the Crisis. (Phoenix, Arizona: AMEPAC, 2002).

1996-97 Enrollment and 1999-00 Attrition Rates in Arizona by Racial and Ethnic Group

Racial Ethnic Group	1996-97 9th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 12th Grade Enrollment	1996-97 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 9-12th Grade Enrollment	1999-00 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Attrition Rate	Number Lost
White	35,577	28,323	122,743	128,964	37,380	24.2%	9,057
Hispanic	18,969	11,977	56,952	62,573	20,901	42.7%	8,924
Native American	4,700	2,638	13,831	15,006	5,099	48.3%	2,461
Black	2,496	1,912	8,226	9,349	2,837	32.6%	925
Asian	1,121	1,121	4,143	4,824	1,305	14.1%	184
Total	**62,863**	**45,971**	**205,895**	**220,716**	**67,522**		**21,551**

IDRA. Dropping Out of Arizona's Schools: The Scope, the Costs, and Successful Strategies to Address the Crisis, (Phoenix, Arizona: AMEPAC, 2002).

ments with subsequent 12th grade enrollments for the same group. It provides the number and percentage of students who were enrolled in a particular year who are no longer "in the state system" three years later.

Using Arizona Department of Education enrollment figures, IDRA developed attrition estimates for the freshman classes of 1996, 1997, and 1998. The box on Page 15 summarizes the statewide attrition rate for the three years analyzed.

In Arizona, the overall high school attrition rate was estimated at 21,233 pupils, or 32.8 percent, for the graduating class of 1998; 21,422 pupils, or 32.8 percent, for the graduating class of 1999, and 21,472 pupils, or 31.8 percent, for the graduating class of 2000.

Attrition rates varied extensively by racial and ethnic group. Native American students, Hispanic students and African American students had much higher attrition rates than White students or Asian students.

Attrition rates for Native American students ranged from 48.3 percent for the class of 2000 to 45.3 percent for the class of 1998. Attrition for Hispanic students ranged from 44 percent for

the class of 1999 to 42.7 percent for the class of 2000.

The "within group" attrition percentages were highest for Native American students, but because Hispanic students make up a larger proportion of the overall population of students in Arizona, they accounted for the larger number of students lost to attrition. Hispanic students comprised 8,629 of a total of 21,321 students lost to attrition for the 12th grade class of 1998; 8,824 of 21,465 students lost from the class of 1999; and 8,924 of the 21,551 students lost from the class the class of 2000.

Cost of Dropouts to Arizona

Using its Texas study as a starting point, IDRA developed cost estimates for incarceration, lost wages and lost tax revenue that would result from the loss of the estimated number of pupils derived from our attrition estimates. Those costs are outlined below.

Total annual costs attributable to one class of dropouts were estimated at $214.9 million. Cumulative costs over the working lifetime of that one group of dropouts totaled $14.25 billion. Adding all costs for the 64,117 students lost from the three classes analyzed yielded

a staggering $42.58 billion in lost revenues.

By contrast, for every $1 Arizona spent on keeping those same pupils in school up to and through graduation would have yielded the state $66 in savings, not even considering how much more might have been gained if even 10 percent of those students lost had gone on to college.

Dropout Prevention and Recovery Efforts

In 1986, IDRA's landmark research study canvassed Texas for dropout prevention and recovery programs. A survey of all Texas school districts, community colleges, universities, service delivery areas and community-based organizations found the following:

• Ninety percent of the dropout programs in Texas reported having no evaluation data. (Program staff were often confused, embarrassed or even defensive when asked for evaluation data or reports.) Furthermore, program personnel lacked information about the type of data needed to adequately evaluate a dropout prevention and recovery program.

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- No individual in any of the institutions surveyed was charged with coordinating program efforts.
- No standardization or uniformity in data collection methodology existed. Nor did there exist any centralized or accessible information on programs in the state much less across the country.

The same situations remain in Texas and can be found in Arizona almost two decades later – there is no one individual accountable for ensuring that students remain in school in a meaningful way and no centralized repository for programs and models that work to keep students engaged and valued in schools.

In 1997, Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin reviewed dropout prevention programs across the country and determined that only two, the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program and Upward Bound, had rigorous evaluations that provided evidence of effectiveness (1998).

Another serious problem is the lack of research on *school factors* that contribute to students dropping out before graduating from high school. Most reports inaccurately conclude that student deficiencies (poor grades, lack of motivation, absenteeism, etc.) are the cause for dropouts, or they cite "family background factors" such as poverty, less educated parents, single-parent families, family mobility, English language proficiency, and race-ethnicity.

As a result, the programmatic responses are based on "fixing" the student rather than seeing what school characteristics contribute to a student leaving school – characteristics such as the lack of quality teaching, low expectations for certain students, lack of professional development, a lack of resources, non-credentialed teachers, and a lack of leadership.

A review of the types of programmatic responses clearly shows

Long-Term Costs of Dropouts to the State of Arizona

$4,080,000,000
Lost Tax Revenue From Lost Wages
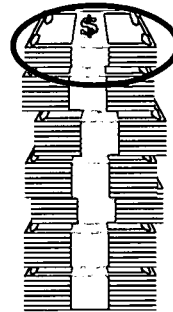
$638,060,000
Incarceration and Judicial Costs

$13,610,000,000
Lost Wages
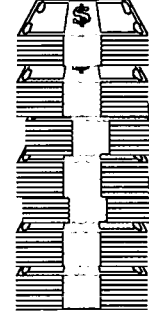
$14,250,000,000
Total Cost for One Class of Dropouts
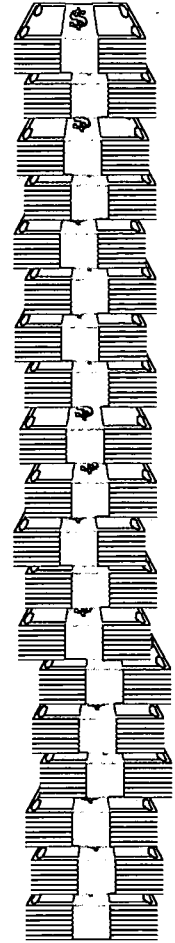
$42,580,000,000
Total Cost for Last Three Classes of Dropouts

IDRA. Dropping Out of Arizona's Schools: The Scope, the Costs, and Successful Strategies to Address the Crisis, (Phoenix, Arizona: AMEPAC, 2002).

that the deficit model prevails. Many programs are add-ons to the school with no institutional changes, or they take the student out of the traditional school setting to an alternative one that focuses on the "at-risk" factors.

What Works in Dropout Prevention

IDRA's research on strategies for reducing the dropout rate, based on a review of the research of effective dropout prevention strategies and IDRA's experience over the last three decades, shows the following components are vital to successful dropout prevention:

- *All* students must be valued.
- There must be at least one educator in a student's life who is totally committed to the success of that student.
- Families must be valued as partners with the school, all committed to ensuring that equity and excellence is present in a student's life.
- Schools must change and innovate to match the characteristics of their

students and embrace the strengths and contributions that students and their families bring to the classroom.

- School staff, especially teachers, must be equipped with the tools needed to ensure their students' success, including the use of technology, different learning styles and mentoring programs. Effective professional development can help provide these tools.

These components are also grounded in seven philosophical tenets that IDRA developed over the many years of our work in dropout prevention:

- All students can learn.
- The school must value all students.
- All students can actively contribute to their own education and to the education of others.
- All students, parents and teachers have the right to participate fully in creating and maintaining excellent schools.
- Excellence in schools contributes to individual and collective economic growth, stability and advancement.
- Commitment to educational excellence is created by including students, parents and teachers in setting goals, making decisions, monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.
- Students, parents and teachers must be provided extensive, consistent support in ways that allow students to learn, teachers to teach and parents to be involved.

Fulton provides a series of evaluative questions that can help educators decide if a model or program is appropriate and effective for their students (Williams, 1999). They should ask:

- What well-documented evidence or results in student achievement exist;
- Tough questions about suggested reforms and those already in place;
- The intended goals of a strategy, and how one knows if they are achieved;

- How to measure progress throughout the program's implementation and assess its impact;
- How to identify and apply corrective measures, if needed;
- How long to allow a program to operate before deciding whether to continue, expand, or abandon it;

Fulton also recommends using a combination of strategies that include well-researched approaches as well as cutting-edge ones. Whatever strategies are used, they should be part of a *comprehensive, long-term plan* that improves student achievement.

This plan must be firmly grounded in "valuing" principles and with the expectation that all students will not only learn but will achieve and graduate from high school. No dropout prevention program, even the most effective ones, will accomplish this.

What is needed is a paradigm shift in schools – from "dropout prevention" to "graduation." Every student must be seen as a high school graduate, instead of someone at risk of dropping out.

When this shift occurs, educators develop and implement comprehensive, long-term plans that are geared to educate and graduate every child beginning at pre-kindergarten. With this in place, there is no need for a "dropout prevention or recovery program;" every school is expected to hold on to their students and graduate them, with the skills needed to succeed in the 21st century.

Resources

Fashola, O. and R. Slavin. *Show Me the Evidence! Proven and Promising Programs for America's Schools* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, Inc., 1998).

IDRA. *Dropping Out of Arizona's Schools: The Scope, the Costs, and Successful Strategies to Address the Crisis*, commissioned by the Arizona Minority Education Policy Analysis Center (Phoenix, Arizona: AMEPAC, 2002).

Williams, T.L. *The Directory of Programs for Students At Risk* (Larchmont, New York: Eye on Education, 1999).

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Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English
❖ A Guide ❖

Thirty years of research have proven that, when implemented well, bilingual education is the best way to learn English. New research by IDRA has identified the 25 common characteristics of successful schools that contribute to high academic performance of students learning English. This guide is a rubric, designed for people in schools and communities to evaluate five dimensions that are necessary for success:

Now available!

- ❖ school indicators   ❖ student outcomes
- ❖ leadership   ❖ support
- ❖ programmatic and instructional practices

For each criterion, this guide indicates which specific educational equity goal(s) it reflects:

- ❖ Goal 1: Comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes;
- ❖ Goal 2: Equitable access and inclusion;
- ❖ Goal 3: Equitable treatment;
- ❖ Goal 4: Equitable opportunity to learn; and
- ❖ Goal 5: Equitable resources.

Characteristic or criterion

Related goal of educational equity

Brief discussion and/ or research-based example of the characteristic

Content Area Mastery in the Native Language

Content Area Mastery in the Native Language

Indicator and four options – users check the box that describes the degree to which each criteria is met, "4"

(ISBN 1-878550-69-1; 2002; 64 pages; paperback; $15)
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Texas Schools Have Weak Holding Power

Texas Public School Attrition Study: 2001-02

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

Inside this Issue:

- ✧ **Annual IDRA attrition study**
- ✧ **School holding power goal**
- ✧ **Course credit for the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program**
- ✧ **Community collaborates for student success**

Two of every five students of the freshman class of 1998-99 left school prior to graduating from a Texas public high school in 2001-02. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) calculates Texas school attrition rates each year. This year, down one percentage point from last year, the percent of students lost from public school enrollment has remained relatively unchanged over the past eight years at or about 40 percent.

The latest IDRA attrition study, released in October 2002, shows that 143,175 students in the Texas class of 2002 were lost from enrollment due to attrition. Between the 1985-86 and 2001-02 school years, nearly 2 million students have been lost from public school enrollment with estimated cumulative costs of public school dropouts in the state of Texas in excess of $488 billion. The average cost per student dropout is estimated to be $265,268. Overall, the statewide attrition rate has ranged from a low of 31 percent in 1988-89 and 1989-90 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

In 1986, IDRA conducted Texas'

first comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts. Using a high school attrition formula, 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). IDRA's latest study spans a 17-year time period from 1985-86 through 2001-02 and documents the number and percent of public school students who leave school prior to graduation.

IDRA is the only organization to annually compute attrition rates since 1985-86 and is the only state-level group that does so using consistent definitions and calculation methods (Robledo Montecel, 2002). The inaugural study in 1986 was the state's first major effort to assess the school holding power of Texas public schools, the measure of schools' performance to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate.

Using its high school attrition formula, IDRA collected and used high school enrollment data from the Fall

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Membership Survey of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to compute countywide and statewide attrition rates by race-ethnicity and sex. The enrollment data from 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.

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

Historical Attrition Data

Historical statewide attrition rates and numbers of students lost to attrition

The cumulative effect of hundreds of thousands of students leaving school each year prior to graduation has translated into 1.8 million students without a diploma and an estimated cost of $488 billion dollars.

are categorized by race and ethnicity and by gender on Page 11. General conclusions follow.

The overall attrition rate has increased by 18 percent from 1985-86 to 2001-02. The percentage of students who left high school prior to graduation was 33 percent in 1985-86 and was 39 percent in 2001-02. Over the past 17 years, attrition rates have fluctuated between a low of 31 percent in 1988-89 and 1989-90 to a high of 43 percent in 1996-97.

Numerically, 143,175 students were lost from public high school enrollment in 2001-02 as compared to 86,272 in 1985-86. From 2000-01 to 2001-02, the overall attrition rate declined by 2.5 percent.

The overall attrition rate was less than 40 percent in 2001-02 for

the first time in eight years. Between 1994-95 and 2000-01, the overall attrition rate ranged from a low of 40 percent to a high of 43 percent. In 2001-02, the overall attrition rate was 39 percent representing the lowest rate since 1992-93.

The gaps between attrition rates of Hispanic students and Black students and those of White students have widened since 1985-86. Hispanic students and Black students have had considerably higher attrition rates than White students. From 1985-86 to 2001-02, attrition rates of Hispanic students increased 13 percent. During this same period, the attrition rates of Black students increased by 35 percent. Attrition rates of White students

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School Holding Power Goal

Unachieved in Texas

by Roy L. Johnson, M.S.

Is asking schools to graduate 90 percent to 95 percent of their students with a high school diploma too much to ask? Apparently, the highly visible goal of having 90 percent to 95 percent of our public school students remain in school and graduate with a high school diploma has been washed away in the Texas flood waters of questionable dropout statistics, mounting school leaver codes, and vacillating measures of educational excellence.

Research from the Intercultural Development Research Association's latest attrition study, completed in October 2002, reflects that two of every five students (39 percent) of the freshman (ninth grade) class of 1998-99 left school prior to graduating from a Texas public high school in 2001-02 (see Page 1).

In contrast, longitudinal completion and school status rates from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) showed that 79.8 percent of students from the class of 2001 graduated with a high school diploma. From 1998 to 2000, the National Center for Education Statistics shows that Texas had a high school completion rate of 79.4 percent. Regardless of the data source, we know that Texas public schools are failing to graduate 90 to 95 percent of their students with a high school di-

ploma.

Since *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983, education reform initiatives have targeted improvements in student academic achievement, teaching quality, reduction in the dropout rate, and improvement in the high school completion rates. On the heels of the release of this landmark assessment on the condition of education by the U.S. Department of Education, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 72, which among other reform efforts increased graduation requirements and established a minimum competency testing pro-

gram. In 1986, under contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs and TEA, IDRA conducted the first comprehensive statewide study of school dropouts in Texas.

IDRA estimated that 86,000 students had not graduated from Texas public high schools in 1985-86, costing the state $17.12 billion in foregone income, lost tax revenues and increased criminal justice, welfare, unemployment and job training costs. In 1987, the Texas Legislature adopted HB 1010, which set criteria for collecting and

Comparison of TEA and NCES Annual Dropout Data by Grade, 1999-00

Grade	Annual Dropout Rates		Number of Dropouts	
	TEA	NCES	TEA	NCES
7th	0.2	0.4	703	1,231
8th	0.4	1.1	1,315	3,195
9th	2.0	4.3	7,630	15,204
10th	1.6	4.9	4,631	13,511
11th	1.8	4.6	4,518	11,216
12th	2.0	6.7	4,660	14,459
7th – 12th	1.3	3.5	23,457	58,816
9th – 12th	1.8	5.0	21,439	54,390

Source: Texas Education Agency Department of Accountability Reporting and Research, Division of Research and Evaluation. Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2000-01 (August 2002). U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999-00.

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	*	21.4	3.9
1991-92	34	20.7	3.8
1992-93	36	15.8	2.8
1993-94	*	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		
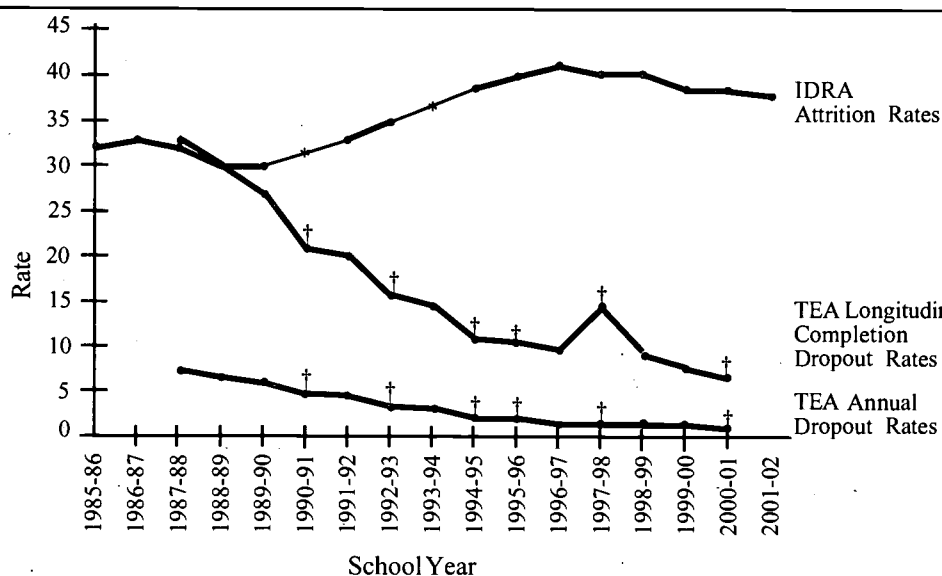
School Year

† Change in TEA dropout definition or data processing procedures
* Rates were not calculated for the 1990-91 and 1993-94 school years due to unavailability of data.
** Longitudinal completion rate

Sources: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002. Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts, 2000-01.

---

reporting information on students at risk of dropping out of school and for developing a program "to reduce the statewide longitudinal dropout rate to not more than 5 percent of the total student population" (TEC § 11.205).

In 1987-88, a *dropout* was defined as "a student in grades seven through 12 who does not hold a high school diploma or the equivalent and is absent from school for 30 or more consecutive days" (TEA, 1987). Less than a decade later, in 1994-95, the definition of a dropout was removed from state law and State Board of Education rules. Removal of the statutory language opened the door for subsequent manipulations of state dropout counts.

In 1997-98, TEA began to collect individual student-level records for all school leavers using "leaver codes." Today, there are 41 such codes. The use of these leaver codes, which often rely on unverified reports of "declared intent to enroll," has served to severely undercount dropouts.

Amidst the rhetoric by TEA of school accountability and declining dropout rates, the goal of keeping significant percentages of students in school until they graduate with a diploma has been shelved, pigeon-holed or placed on the back-burner by some legislators, state education personnel, district and school personnel, and others.

Concept of School Holding Power

School holding power refers to the ability of schools to keep students in school until they achieve the ultimate objective of a high school diploma. Our current system retains students in grade for failure of the system to assist them in achieving high academic and content standards. But, school holding power shifts the focus from the individual to the schools' ability to track and support students as they progress through the education system. The ultimate measure then is not to assess whether students fail to navigate the system but how successful schools are in shepherding students from their entry in school all the way through to the point that they receive their high school diploma.

Evidence of Lack of School Holding Power

School holding power is an important indicator of a school's success (Robledo Montecel, 2003). However, no concerted effort exists to collect or report such data. Lacking a state or national procedure for calculating this measure, dropouts have served as an alternative indicator, reflecting the number and percentages of students that are lost by school systems. Published reports by TEA, NCES, and IDRA show wide disparities in the number and percent of students who are considered dropouts, school completers and graduates.

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In 2000-01, TEA reported an annual 1.0 percent dropout rate for students in grades seven through 12 and a 1.4 percent dropout rate for students in grades nine through 12. A reported 17,563 students "officially" dropped out of school at grades seven through 12 and 16,003 at grades nine through 12.

Across race-ethnicity groups at grades seven.through 12, TEA reported an annual dropout rate of 1.4 percent for Hispanic students, 1.3 percent for African American students, 0.9 percent for Native American students, 0.5 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 0.5 percent for White students.

At grades nine through 12, TEA reported annual dropout rates of 2.0 percent for Hispanic students, 1.8 percent for African American students, 1.2 percent for Native American students, 0.7 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 0.8 percent for White students.

The longitudinal completion and school status rate for the class of 2001

School holding power refers to the ability of schools to keep students in school until they achieve the ultimate objective of a high school diploma.

was 6.8 percent for grades seven through 12 and 6.2 percent for grades nine through 12.

NCES is the primary federal entity charged with collecting, analyzing and reporting education data. In the 1991-92 school year, NCES began to collect dropout data through the Common Core of Data (CCD) collection. It works with state education agencies and school districts across the country to develop a national database of public school dropout rates using common data definitions and collection procedures. In 1999-00, 37 states and the District of Columbia submitted data that met the specified definition and collection procedures (see map below for a comparison of NCES dropout

rates by state).

Until 1999-00, the Texas dropout counts have not conformed to these standards, and even now the dropout rates calculated by NCES are at least twice those reported by the TEA. For the 1999-00 school year, TEA reported an event (annual) dropout rate of 1.3 percent for grades seven through 12 compared to a NCES reported rate of 3.5 percent (see box on Page 3). At grades nine through 12, TEA reported an annual dropout rate of 1.8 percent compared to 5.0 by NCES. NCES reported 35,359 additional dropouts in Texas at grades seven through 12 and 32,951 additional dropouts at grades nine through 12.

The latest attrition study by IDRA for the 2001-02 school year shows that 39 percent of students in the freshman class of 1998-99 left school prior to graduation – 143,175 students were lost from high school enrollment. Across race-ethnicity groups, the attrition rate was 51 percent for Hispanic students, 46 percent for African American stu-

Annual Dropout Rates (Grades 9-12), by State 1999-00 School Year
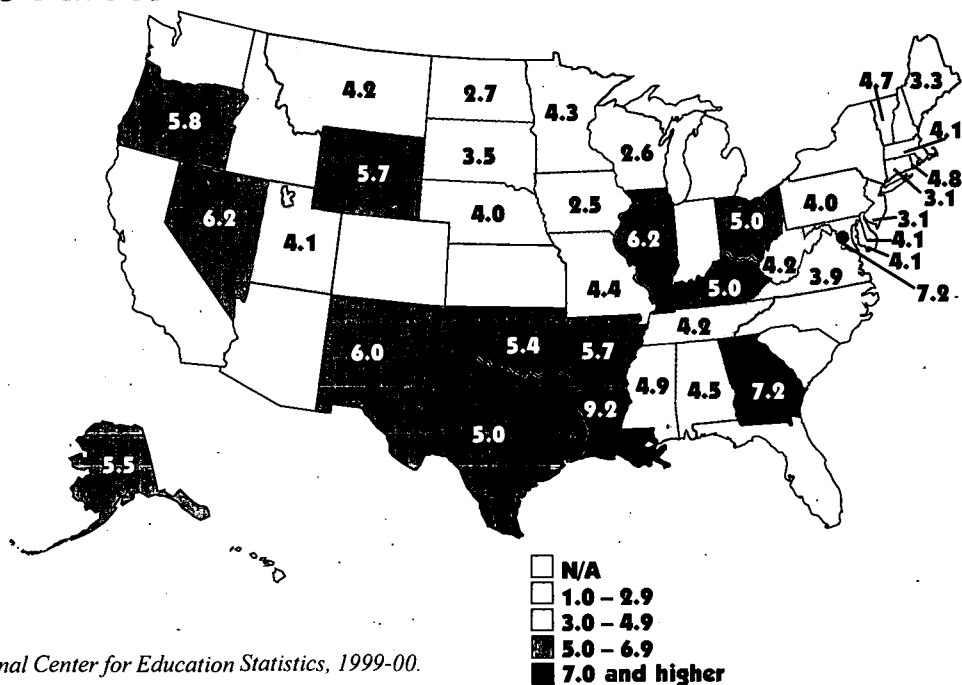
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 1999-00.

□ N/A
□ 1.0 – 2.9
□ 3.0 – 4.9
■ 5.0 – 6.9
■ 7.0 and higher

ACCESS – San Antonio

A Community Collaborates for Student Success

by Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Albert Cortez, Ph.D.
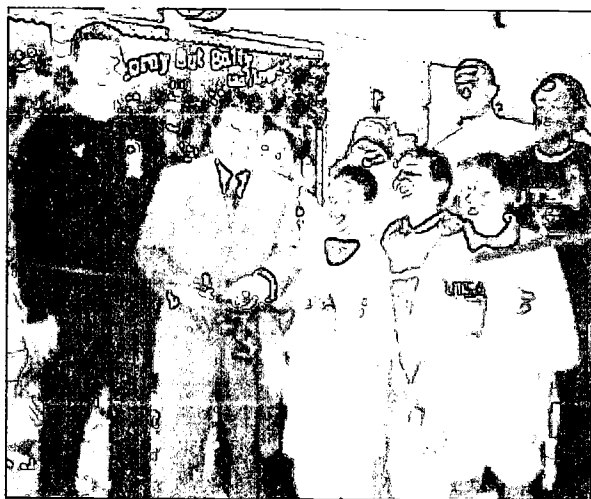
Collaborations among educators, families and community organizations can oftentimes accomplish more than individuals can do alone. Ensuring that students go from pre-kindergarten through college graduation and careers is a topic that benefits from the attention a collaboration can give.

ACCESS – San Antonio is one collaboration concentrating on the crucial issue of education reform to help underserved students. For the past three years, six organizations in San Antonio have partnered to improve student achievement and increase high school completion and college enrollment and completion rates.

Photo Above: Jesse Zapata, vice provost for the University of Texas at San Antonio downtown campus and former student at Charles Graebner Elementary, cuts the ribbon marking the hallway adopted by UTSA at the elementary school as part of Project ACCESS. Through the "Adopt-A-Hallway" program, representatives from UTSA and the Alamo Community College District (ACCD) visit local schools to distribute information about the colleges. Students also are invited to UTSA and ACCD campuses for tours during the year.

With funding from the Ford Foundation, Project ACCESS (Academic and Community Collaborative Ensuring Student Success) has evolved as a model of institutional and public engagement in targeted schools within the San Antonio Independent School District (ISD). As the model gears up to reach an even greater number of students, families and educators, it will become known as *ACCESS – San Antonio*.

Over the next two years, ACCESS – San Antonio will build on successes, learn from challenges and develop tools for educators, students, families and communities to create excellent schools. The collaborative consists of five partners:

- Alamo Community College District that includes four two-year colleges and is one of the largest community college districts in the country;
- Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), a vanguard research, training and technical assistance team that serves as the fiscal agent and lead for the project;
- Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a legal and education advocacy organization;
- San Antonio ISD, the second largest of San Antonio's 13 school districts; and
- The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), the fastest growing public university in Texas, with more than 20,000 students.

COPS (Communities Organized for Public Service) is a grassroots advocacy organization that partnered in Project ACCESS during the first three years.

This collaborative is dedicated to creating a pathway that safely leads students and their families through school – from elementary school to middle school to high school and on to college and careers. This seamless network of systems will ensure that no

student is lost or forgotten and no student is left behind.

Over the next two years, we will concentrate on two primary activities. We will identify our collaborative learnings and promising strategies through a series of structured, introspective meetings. These insights will be summarized and shared with the stakeholders and the Ford Foundation. We will also develop a "school success indicator" (SSI) system. These indicators will assess the "educational health" within the school system (e.g., staffing, teacher qualifications, professional development, student performance, budget, parent and community engagement) in a quick and efficient manner. The indicators will be reliable, valid and useful to the school, parents, community and policymakers.

This new initiative is not so much a departure from our previous course as the next leap needed to make a significant difference for more students. We will create a School Success Indicator (SSI) system that will take the pulse of educational health of our community as a whole and show the community that we are indeed making that critical difference for our students.

Where We Began

Our original strategy for reform of the San Antonio ISD Burbank High School feeder pattern was grounded in research on effective school reform and our collective experience. We organized our work around a change framework with four key elements of change in: (1) school organization and culture, (2) district services, (3) teaching and learning, and (4) the broader community's role in school and district operations.

To achieve the various reforms we envisioned, we organized our efforts through five distinct workgroups that focused on specific areas:

• **School-to-School Transitions** – coordinating transition issues within

For the past three years, six organizations in San Antonio have partnered to improve student achievement and increase high school completion and college enrollment and completion rates...This seamless network of systems will ensure that no student is lost or forgotten and no student is left behind.

the pre-kindergarten to 12th grade system;

• **School-to-College Transitions** – concentrating on communication, alignment and coordination issues across the school levels;

• **Professional Development** – identifying and filling needs in teacher and administrator professional development;

• **Parent and Community Engagement** – creating strategies for more meaningfully including and engaging parents and community members in all levels of school decision making; and

• **Policy Reform** – identifying local, state and national policy issues that hinder or support successful student transitions and high school and college graduation.

Each area of focus experienced significant milestones and accomplishments. Here are a few of them.

School-to-School Transitions

Project ACCESS helped develop critical linkages between the nine schools in the Burbank High School cluster. Teachers and administrators from elementary to middle to high school are now connected, creating opportunities for cross-level meetings that focus on curriculum alignment issues. Vertical and horizontal alignment is now facilitated with increased communication, coordination and understanding. Through these linkages, teachers, counselors, librarians, and community liaisons in the nine cluster schools have identified critical skills and objectives for each grade and shared best practices.

As part of Project ACCESS' curricular and instructional alignment effort, sixth grade teachers communicated with the elementary school teachers and met with fifth grade students to advise them on what to expect the next year in middle school.

Student voices have been integrated into the project work with Burbank High School administrators forming the ACCESS student advisory committee, comprised of students who were likely to be overlooked or forgotten. Their insights and experiences are being shared with middle school and high school teachers to help inform instructional practices and ease the transition from middle school to high school.

School-to-College Transitions

Through Project ACCESS, "college" and "access to college" have been introduced and conceptually integrated into every student's vocabulary at the elementary, middle and high schools. Activities have included: visits to ACCD colleges and UTSA, "Adopt a Hall" activities, Burbank High School alumni of the month awards, $1,000 scholarships to ACCESS students each year, meaningful career days, and speakers and campus visits. As a result, more students are now speaking of *when* they will go to college instead of *if* they will go to college.

ACCD has helped middle school students prepare for college by providing materials and training teachers on how to assist their eighth-grade students in creating personal portfolios

to use in preparing their college applications as seniors.

A school culture in which all students are expected to go to college is being re-affirmed, especially at the middle school level. The project has created an emphasis on conveying those expectations throughout the pipeline. A variety of direct services to students and indirect services through counselors and teachers have provided information about college opportunities and served to interest more students in going to college.

All of these activities have been so successful in heightening student awareness and engaging their teachers and counselors in preparing them for college, that other San Antonio ISD schools are requesting similar efforts. Leveraging resources, activities have already been extended to another middle school.

Professional Development

Through Project ACCESS, there is now communication and coordination with the Burbank High School cluster and the colleges and university, allowing for a deeper understanding of needs at the teacher preparation level and at the kindergarten through grade 12 teacher in-service level.

Professional development activities focused on sharing best practices and aligning curriculum and instruction across the grades. Elementary school teachers shared their best practices, methods and approaches for aligning instruction and assessment during a cluster-wide workday. This workday also provided for horizontal teaming within the cluster in which each school shared a successful activity that focused on specific math objectives in scope and sequence.

Parent and Community Engagement

Project ACCESS has provided opportunities for parents and community members to participate in leadership development sessions. These sessions result in a better understanding of how the educational system works within the school district. The sessions have been so successful that participants have requested that the complete parent-school partnership curriculum be offered in its entirety this school year (in the previous year, only half of the issues and topics were addressed).

Project ACCESS has established monthly staff development for the community liaisons in the Burbank High School cluster. These sessions have provided an opportunity for the liaisons to network with each other to strengthen their campus parent involvement program. The effort has been so successful that the area director has expanded these sessions to include the other community liaisons. The positive effect of the district's support and commitment has created among the liaisons open communication, camaraderie, and the validation of their contribution to the total school-community partnership.

Parent and community engagement was exemplified by both middle schools completing all of the activities required to become Alliance Schools, becoming part of a statewide network committed to improving school performance through coordinated, community-school partnerships. Furthermore, the high school was accepted as a member of the San Antonio Education Partnership this past year. Graduates from partnership schools who have a B average and a 95 percent attendance rate are awarded full scholarships to any public college or university in the city.

The project has been instrumental in expanding parent access to the cluster schools. One important example is the establishment of parent centers in both middle schools. The centers are used for parent and community liaison meetings and other efforts designed to integrate parents and families into the day-to-day activities of the schools.

School staff and parents have moved from conventional teacher-parent meetings to engagement in genuine dialogue over issues of mutual concern, with parents assuming extensive ownership and leadership in the framing of the agendas. More than

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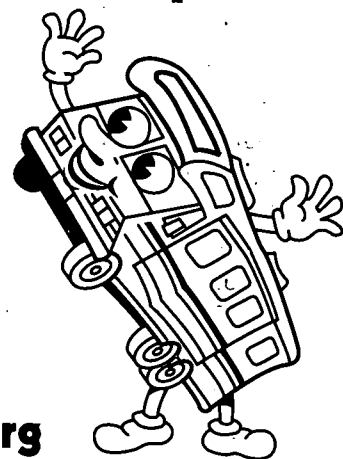
100 parents attended a recent meeting held in the school's cafeteria, a significant increase in participation when compared to prior teacher-parent meetings with only one parent present. Project ACCESS has also brought attention to the need to have community liaisons as an integral part of each campus.

Policy Reform

A group of parents and school staff met monthly to review district and state policies and make recommendations for improvement. As a result of these meetings, parents and staff discovered that the district

Student Code of Conduct was available in both Spanish and English, but that parents had to specifically request a copy of it in Spanish in order to receive it. After discussions with district staff, the district changed its practice, and the information is now distributed in both languages to all parents.

Summary

Three years is a short time to implement education reform, but ACCESS – San Antonio is making significant inroads in the issue. The groups that make up ACCESS – San Antonio are all committed to ensuring that students, especially underserved students, go from pre-kindergarten

through college graduation and careers. As individuals, these groups might have made small advances, but as a collaborative, they are succeeding in ways each group only dreamed of.

This article highlighted some of the achievements in each subgroup of the collaborative. Next month we will discuss changes in instructional practice, curricula; consistency with school district reform priorities; and next steps in the process.

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Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In August, IDRA worked with **7,694** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **40** training and technical assistance activities and **278** program sites in **15** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:
- ◆ FLAIR (Focusing on Language and Academic Instructional Renewal)
- ◆ *WOW Workshop on Workshops*
- ◆ Accessing College
- ◆ Multi-age Learning in Early Childhood

Participating agencies and school districts included:
- ✧ Mesa Public Schools, Arizona
- ✧ Midland Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ✧ Jefferson Parish, Louisiana
- ✧ Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma
- ✧ Texas Education Service Center Region XVII
- ✧ Ft. Worth ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

Federal law requires school districts to provide gender-equitable instruction to students. Recognizing its need to ensure that materials are free of gender-bias, one district in south Texas called upon the IDRA **South Central Collaborative for Equity**. The South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The center provided training to personnel in the school district to ensure that all children have more complete access to curriculum without the burden of cultural, linguistic and social bias that may occur in instructional materials. As a result, teachers in the district are better equipped to identify and respond to such bias.

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.

declined by 3.7 percent. Hispanic students have higher attrition rates than either White students or Black students.

From 1985-86 to 2001-02, Native American students and Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline in their attrition rates. Native American students had a decline of 36 percent in their attrition rates, while Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline of 58 percent.

The historical attrition rates for Hispanic students and Black students have been typically higher than the overall attrition rates. For the period of 1985-86 to 2001-02, students from ethnic minority groups account for two-thirds of the estimated 1.8 million students lost from public high school enrollment. Hispanic students account for nearly half (48.5 percent) of the estimated 1.8 million students lost to attrition. Black students account for 17.3 percent of all students lost from enrollment due to attrition over the years, and White students account for 32.8 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. Between 1985-86 and 2001-02, attrition rates for males have increased by 22.9 percent. Attrition rates for females have increased by 9.4 percent. Longitudinally, males have accounted for 56.3 percent of students lost from school enrollment, while females have accounted for 43.7 percent.

On the average, nearly 119,000 students do not graduate each year, costing the state of Texas in excess of $488 billion.

Attrition Rates by Texas County, 2000-01

■ 50 or Greater
■ 40-49
☐ 30-39
☐ 20-29
☐ 19 or less
▨ No high school
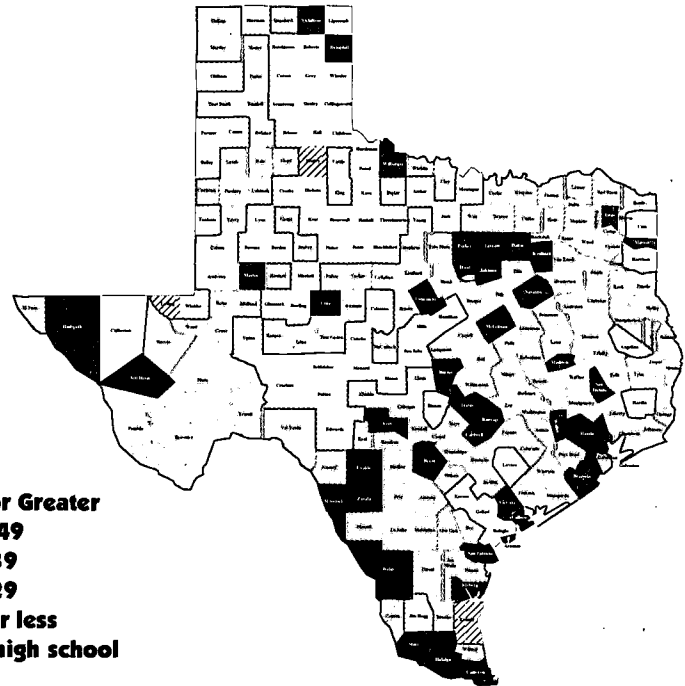
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002.

Costs associated with school dropouts (forgone income; lost tax revenues; and increased job training, welfare, unemployment and criminal justice costs) have continued to escalate. Between 1985-86 and 2001-02, the estimated cumulative costs of public school dropouts in the state of Texas were in excess of $488 billion.

Latest Attrition Results

Major findings from the latest attrition study mirror those in earlier studies — Hispanic students and Black students are at greater risk of being lost from high school enrollment prior to graduation than White students, and males are more likely to be lost from enrollment than females. Enrollment and attrition data for the 1998-99 and 2001-02 school years are categorized by race and ethnicity in the box on Page 14. Statewide and county attrition rates are presented for the three major race and ethnicity groups in the state on Pages 12 and 13. The map above displays the distribution of 2001-02 attrition rates by county in Texas.

Major findings of the 2001-02 attrition study include the following.

Two of every five high school students were lost from high school enrollment prior to graduation. Two of every five students (39 percent) enrolled in the ninth grade in Texas public schools during the 1998-99 school year failed to reach the 12th grade in 2001-02. An estimated 143,175 students, or about 39 percent of the 1998-99 freshman class, were lost from public school enrollment by 2001-02.

Hispanic students and Black students were more likely than White students to be lost from high school enrollment in 2001-02. Fifty-one percent of Hispanic students and 46 percent of Black students were lost from public school enrollment, compared to 26 percent of White students. Hispanic students were two times more likely than White students to leave school before graduation, while Black students were 1.8 times more likely than White students to leave

Number of Students Lost to Attrition in Texas
School Years 1985-86 to 2001-02

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	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
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	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
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
All Years	1,779,111	4,087	21,516	306,933	583,760	862,815	1,001,720	777,391

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.
Rates were not calculated for the 1990-91 and 1993-94 school years due to the unavailability of data.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002.

Longitudinal Attrition Rates in Texas Public High Schools,
1985-86 to 2001-02

Group	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1991-92	1992-93	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	Percent Change* From 1985-86 to 2000-01
Race-Ethnicity																
Native American	45	39	37	47	39	40	39	42	44	43	42	25	43	42	29	-36
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	30	28	23	22	21	21	18	18	20	21	19	20	20	14	-58
Black	34	38	39	37	38	39	43	50	51	51	49	48	47	46	46	35
White	27	26	24	20	19	22	25	30	31	32	31	31	28	27	26	-4
Hispanic	45	46	49	48	48	48	49	51	53	54	53	53	52	52	51	13
Gender																
Male	35	35	35	34	34	37	39	43	45	46	45	45	44	43	43	23
Female	32	32	31	29	29	30	33	37	39	40	38	38	36	36	35	9
Total	33	34	33	31	31	34	36	40	42	43	42	42	40	40	39	18

* *Rounded to nearest whole number.*   Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data.
Rates were not calculated for the 1990-91 and 1993-94 school years due to unavailability of data.
Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002.

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools
By Race-Ethnicity, 2001-02

COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES[1]				COUNTY NAME	ATTRITION RATES[1]			
	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL		BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
ANDERSON	49	22	67	34	DENTON	50	33	58	38
ANDREWS	77	15	38	28	DEWITT	39	16.	51	32
ANGELINA	21	14	34	19	DICKENS	20	10	18	13
ARANSAS	59	36	54	41	DIMMIT	100	13	30	30
ARCHER	•	16	56	18	DONLEY	57	2	40	13
ARMSTRONG	•	**	78	0	DUVAL	•	26	26	26
ATASCOSA	**	19	39	32	EASTLAND	50	20	41	24
AUSTIN	37	14	47	25	ECTOR	54	23	45	36
BAILEY	100	**	37	19	EDWARDS	•	**	16	8
BANDERA	**	36	51	38	ELLIS	32	28	52	34
BASTROP	51	39	61	47	EL PASO	32	19	39	37
BAYLOR	40	17	37	23	ERATH	46	26	60	35
BEE	60	14	42	33	FALLS	41	7	41	24
BELL	36	26	42	31	FANNIN	4	21	55	22
BEXAR	41	26	47	41	FAYETTE	53	18	51	30
BLANCO	**	14	36	18	FISHER	100	**	12	1
BORDEN	•	**	34	17	FLOYD	82	10	31	25
BOSQUE	41	26	58	38	FOARD	33	4	31	13
BOWIE	44	26	71	33	FORT BEND	38	23	52	33
BRAZORIA	44	37	56	43	FRANKLIN	**	20	45	21
BRAZOS	52	25	56	38	FREESTONE	30	21	72	27
BREWSTER	•	**	38	21	FRIO	75	13	33	31
BRISCOE	•	**	54	10	GAINES	10	24	33	28
BROOKS	**	50	28	29	GALVESTON	38	31	52	35
BROWN	43	20	40	26	GARZA	64	25	42	37
BURLESON	30	21	40	26	GILLESPIE	29	19	60	30
BURNET	33	39	56	42	GLASSCOCK	•	8	21	14
CALDWELL	35	29	53	41	GOLIAD	**	1	42	17
CALHOUN	62	36	62	50	GONZALES	38	17	53	38
CALLAHAN	•	20	21	21	GRAY	21	13	43	18
CAMERON	56	28	50	49	GRAYSON	40	26	65	31
CAMP	30	19	60	29	GREGG	40	20	64	30
CARSON	•	8	**	7	GRIMES	36	23	52	33
CASS	19	15	77	17	GUADALUPE	35	24	56	37
CASTRO	**	12	17	14	HALE	40	8	40	30
CHAMBERS	35	28	45	31	HALL	**	**	25	8
CHEROKEE	35	22	62	33	HAMILTON	•	19	**	16
CHILDRESS	9	6	19	10	HANSFORD	•	**	44	20
CLAY	•	19	59	20	HARDEMAN	6	**	26	4
COCHRAN	39	17	45	36	HARDIN	14	16	13	16
COKE	97	25	62	54	HARRIS	52	27	59	45
COLEMAN	15	14	18	14	HARRISON	48	41	70	11
COLLIN	44	25	50	29	HARTLEY	•	22	38	23
COLLINGSWORTH	34	**	27	8	HASKELL	52	5	9	8
COLORADO	20	21	66	35	HAYS	29	25	44	33
COMAL	46	29	52	36	HEMPHILL	100	29	82	60
COMANCHE	100	35	54	42	HENDERSON	23	28	50	29
CONCHO	•	**	2	**	HIDALGO	62	28	51	50
COOKE	35	28	63	33	HILL	43	29	43	33
CORYELL	45	32	38	34	HOCKLEY	4	5	43	24
COTTLE	57	10	0	21	HOOD	8	38	65	41
CRANE	**	17	29	22	HOPKINS	28	26	48	29
CROCKETT	•	11	23	18	HOUSTON	36	25	48	31
CROSBY	40	**	18	13	HOWARD	56	24	53	36
CULBERSON	•	10	20	19	HUDSPETH	•	25	47	43
DALLAM	59	16	64	32	HUNT	54	33	53	38
DALLAS	52	26	63	46	HUTCHINSON	**	12	37	17
DAWSON	18	**	28	17	IRION	•	18	25	21
DEAF SMITH	2	**	37	24	JACK	**	17	28	17
DELTA	30	19	100	23	JACKSON	39	13	29	20

[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 ition rate results (percentages) were rounded to the nearest whole number.

** = Attrition rate is less than zero (0).

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

Attrition Rates in Texas Public Schools
By Race-Ethnicity, 2001-02 (continued)

COUNTY NAME	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
JASPER	17	19	36	20
JEFF DAVIS	100	57	60	63
JEFFERSON	46	21	57	37
JIM HOGG	.	**	19	18
JIM WELLS	**	**	38	31
JOHNSON	35	39	59	42
JONES	49	17	10	17
KARNES	14	3	28	18
KAUFMAN	49	37	61	42
KENDALL	79	29	50	35
KENT	.	0	100	5
KERR	72	30	67	43
KIMBLE	.	28	45	35
KING	.	11	.	22
KINNEY	.	**	40	27
KLEBERG	36	12	48	41
KNOX	71	21	**	14
LAMAR	32	29	49	30
LAMB	16	5	39	27
LAMPASAS	18	28	42	31
LA SALLE	.	39	31	33
LAVACA	3	0	33	4
LEE	35	18	50	28
LEON	33	21	39	24
LIBERTY	33	33	61	37
LIMESTONE	34	33	56	37
LIPSCOMB	.	5	27	11
LIVE OAK	**	11	32	21
LLANO	0	33	61	37
LUBBOCK	23	13	38	24
LYNN	17	14	11	11
MADISON	44	46	56	48
MARION	46	42	38	43
MARTIN	0	**	45	43
MASON	.	**	30	7
MATAGORDA	11	17	46	27
MAVERICK	.	**	43	43
MCCOLLUCH	.	30	47	36
MCLENNAN	55	31	58	43
MCMULLEN	.	17	53	34
MEDINA	46	22	42	33
MENARD	.	**	5	**
MIDLAND	48	19	52	34
MILAM	47	19	39	28
MILLS	100	4	38	15
MITCHELL	0	23	16	19
MONTAGUE	.	16	11	16
MONTGOMERY	42	34	52	37
MOORE	52	17	48	35
MORRIS	41	34	62	38
MOTLEY	.	.	.	.
NACOGDOCHES	27	21	58	28
NAVARRO	52	30	66	42
NEWTON	23	30	75	29
NOLAN	64	18	58	37
NUECES	38	20	42	35
OCHILTREE	.	25	67	41
OLDHAM	0	10	42	17
ORANGE	33	19	27	21
PALO PINTO	26	32	52	34
PANOLA	38	22	44	26
PARKER	74	39	67	41
PARMER	54	2	29	19
PECOS	100	**	35	29
POLK	41	32	53	36
POTTER	49	27	58	38
PRESIDIO	.	0	40	38

COUNTY NAME	BLACK	WHITE	HISPANIC	TOTAL
RAINS	**	23	63	23
RANDALL	38	23	44	26
REAGAN	25	7	27	20
REAL	.	4	50	20
RED RIVER	15	26	54	25
REEVES	63	14	37	36
REFUGIO	17	2	24	16
ROBERTS	.	2	.	**
ROBERTSON	26	22	60	31
ROCKWALL	50	28	46	31
RUNNELS	64	16	30	22
RUSK	24	24	49	27
SABINE	6	30	67	26
SAN AUGUSTINE	32	41	.	38
SAN JACINTO	54	50	73	53
SAN PATRICIO	54	34	47	42
SAN SABA	100	4	14	9
SCHLEICHER	80	**	16	0
SCURRY	36	8	47	24
SHACKELFORD	.	**	41	4
SHELBY	14	25	63	25
SHERMAN	.	**	45	11
SMITH	42	28	63	38
SOMERVELL	67	33	33	33
STARR	0	20	46	46
STEPHENS	.	17	33	20
STERLING	.	8	18	11
STONEWALL	.	**	48	2
SUTTON	.	7	30	20
SWISHER	67	**	36	22
TARRANT	49	30	60	41
TAYLOR	43	21	54	32
TERRELL	.	47	1	24
TERRY	14	9	45	30
THROCKMORTON	.	**	**	**
TITUS	36	19	67	41
TOM GREEN	37	15	40	26
TRAVIS	50	24	60	43
TRINITY	48	34	61	39
TYLER	30	22	18	23
UPSHUR	25	18	35	20
UPTON	.	**	12	6
UVALDE	3	19	63	49
VAL VERDE	26	28	37	35
VAN ZANDT	35	32	61	34
VICTORIA	59	26	65	49
WALKER	45	28	50	37
WALLER	37	29	58	40
WARD	42	14	32	25
WASHINGTON	53	13	54	29
WEBB	57	18	40	40
WHARTON	27	12	48	29
WHEELER	71	**	51	9
WICHITA	44	25	54	31
WILBARGER	58	30	60	41
WILLACY	**	**	40	38
WILLIAMSON	47	28	52	34
WILSON	39	17	41	28
WINKLER	**	**	26	12
WISE	48	29	47	31
WOOD	10	19	56	21
YOAKUM	**	2	30	19
YOUNG	58	23	50	27
ZAPATA	.	0	30	28
ZAVALA	100	80	44	45
TOTAL	46	26	51	39

Source: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002.

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school before graduation.

From 2000-01 to 2001-02, four racial-ethnic groups had a decline in attrition rates: Native American students had a decline from 42 percent to 29 percent; Asian/Pacific Islander students had a decline from 20 percent to 14 percent; White students had a decline from 27 percent to 26 percent, and Hispanic students had a decline from 52 percent to 51 percent. Attrition rates for Black students remained unchanged at 46 percent.

Hispanic students made up the

highest percentage of students lost from public high school enrollment in 2001-02. Over half (53.6 percent) of the students lost from school enrollment were Hispanic. White students comprised 27.9 percent of the students lost from enrollment, and Black students comprised 17.4 percent.

Males were more likely to be lost from enrollment than females. For 2001-02, 43 percent of males were lost from public high school enrollment, compared to 35 percent of females. Males constituted 57.8 percent of all students lost from public school

enrollment compared to 42.2 percent for females.

Overall, there has been an 18 percent increase in the attrition rate since 1985-86. The percent of students lost from public high school enrollment has increased by 18.2 percent between the 1985-86 school year and the 2001-02 school year. The number of students lost through attrition per school year has increased

1998-99 and 2001-02 Enrollment and 2001-02 Attrition in Texas

Race-Ethnicity and Gender	1998-99 9th Grade Enrollment	2001-02 12th Grade Enrollment	1998-99 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2001-02 9-12th Grade Enrollment	2001-02 Expected 12th Grade Enrollment	Students Lost to Attrition	Attrition Rate
Native American	926	567	3,499	3,037	804	237	29
Male	500	299	1,770	1,552	438	139	32
Female	426	268	1,729	1,485	366	98	27
Asian/Pacific Islander	8,295	7,833	30,952	33,863	9,077	1,244	14
Male	4,370	3,931	15,904	17,471	4,801	870	18
Female	3,925	3,902	15,048	16,392	4,276	374	9
Black	51,393	28,879	148,019	155,232	53,896	25,017	46
Male	27,187	13,667	74,565	78,161	28,498	14,831	52
Female	24,206	15,212	73,454	77,071	25,398	10,186	40
White	151,856	112,229	515,464	516,595	152,182	39,953	26
Male	79,304	56,577	264,900	264,775	79,266	22,689	29
Female	72,552	55,652	250,564	251,820	72,916	17,264	24
Hispanic	135,682	73,760	373,757	414,535	150,484	76,724	51
Male	72,313	35,955	191,933	212,835	80,188	44,233	55
Female	63,369	37,805	181,824	201,700	70,296	32,491	46
All Groups	348,152	223,268	1,071,691	1,123,262	366,443	143,175	39
Male	183,674	110,429	549,072	574,794	193,191	82,762	43
Female	164,478	112,839	522,619	548,468	173,252	60,413	35

Figures calculated by IDRA from the Texas Education Agency *Fall Membership Survey* data. IDRA's 2001-02 attrition study involved the analysis of enrollment figures for public high school students in the ninth grade during 1998-99 school year and enrollment figures for 12th grade students in 2001-02. 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, 2002.

from 86,276 in 1985-86 to about 143,175 in 2001-02.

Conclusions

IDRA's attrition analyses show that there has been little change in the percent of Texas high school students who are lost from high school enrollment in the last several years. Two out of every five students from freshman classes continue to leave school prior to graduation. In an era of ever growing rhetoric of school accountability and school success, the ability and performance of schools to keep students in school until they graduate is questionable and below standard.

The 17-year cumulative effect of hundreds of thousands of students leaving school each year prior to graduation has translated into 1.8 million students without a diploma and an estimated cost of $488 billion dollars. The challenge of increasing school holding power must become a mandate in our state. We must ensure that our students progress through our schools and graduate with a high school diploma to be educationally, socially and economically responsible.

Resources

Cárdenas, J.A., and M. Robledo, J. Supik. *Texas School Dropout Survey Project:*

A Summary of Findings (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 1986).

Robledo Montecel, M. "Texas Needs Diplomas, Not Delusions," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002).

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999-00.

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

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dents, 29 percent for Native American students, 14 percent for Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 26 percent for White students. A comparison of TEA and IDRA dropout and attrition data are outlined in the box on Page 4.

Conclusions

The goal of reducing the dropout rate and the goal of increasing the number and percent of students who graduate from public high schools with a high school diploma must be actualized in Texas. In order to set and assess the accomplishment of these goals, credible dropout data from our state education agency and school districts must become the standard and not the exception. School holding power must become part of our school accountability and success measures.

Is asking schools to graduate 90 to 95 percent of their students with a high school diploma too much to ask? The answer is no. Just as higher and higher standards and expectations are set for our students, the goals of increasing the holding power of our schools and increasing the number and percent of students graduating with a high school diploma must be expected and realized.

Resources

Johnson, R.L. "Missing: Texas Youth – Cost of School Dropouts Escalates," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2001).

Robledo Montecel, M. *Texas Needs Diplomas, Not Delusions*, testimony before the Texas State Board of Education (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, September 12, 2002).

Texas Education Agency. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools: 2000-01* (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, August 2002).

Texas Education Agency. Texas Education Code, Texas Administrative Code and Public Education Information Management System (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, 1987).

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics. Documentation to the NCES Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Dropout File: School Year 1999-00.

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

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Texas State Board of Education Approves Course Credit for Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

The Texas State Board of Education has approved the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program as an innovative course. The course is approved for credit for students in grades nine through 12 but is recommended for grades nine and 10. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program was approved for state graduation elective credit only for the 2002-03 through the 2004-05 school years.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program is an internationally-recognized cross-age tutoring program in schools across the United States, Great Britain and Brazil created by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). In the program, secondary school students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school are placed as tutors of elementary school students during one class period each day. This enables the older students to make a difference in the younger students' lives. With a growing sense of responsibility and pride, the tutors stay and do better in school. The program supports them with positive recognition and instruction.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program goals include

- reducing dropout rates;
- enhancing students' basic academic skills;
- strengthening students' perceptions of self and school;
- reducing student disciplinary action referrals and absenteeism; and
- strengthening school-home-community partnerships to increase the level of support available to students at risk of dropping out of school.

The key to the program's success is in valuing students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and sustaining their efforts with effective, coordinated strategies.

The State Board of Education did not approve the course to substitute for any state graduation required credits. Presently, there are five high schools in Dallas, Houston, Mission and San Antonio offering the state credit to their high school students participating in the program.
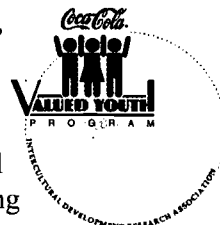
The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has impacted more than 136,000 children, families and educators. Since its inception at four schools in San Antonio in 1984 until 2002, the program kept more than 11,500 students in school, young people who were previously at risk of dropping out.

According to the Valued Youth creed, *all students are valuable, none is expendable.* This philosophy is helping more than 240 schools in 25 cities keep 98 percent of Valued Youth students in school, keeping these young people in the classroom and learning.

For more information contact Linda Cantú at IDRA (lcantu@idra.org).

IDRA Newsletter

Inside this Issue:

❖ ENLACE partnerships making progress

❖ Promising strategies from a community collaborative

❖ Suggestions for supporting family involvement in schools
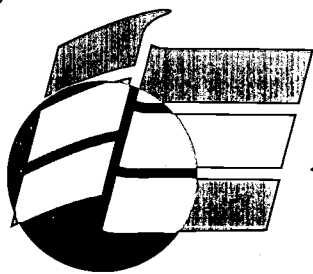
Improving Educational Impact through Community and Family Engagement

by Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D., and Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D.

As the discussion on educational accountability and achievement escalates, the question of impact becomes key in measuring student success. There are many points to consider when discussing student impact, such as ways educational systems can have greater positive impact on learners and ways educators at all levels can engage with parents and communities to create support systems that have positive impact on access and success for all students throughout the educational pipeline.

Much of the work currently underway focuses on these points from the perspective of educators, faculty and administrators. Less is written about how to assess impact from the perspective of parents and communities.

This article provides information about resources and poses key questions that can be used by parents and communities to assess the degree of accessibility and readiness for parent and community engagement on the part

of educational systems. These questions are indicators of pathways that exist or need to be created in order to begin a dialogue toward shared accountability and greater impact for student success.

Families in Schools

The importance of family in the educational process is a strongly-held belief in many circles. Parent involvement predicts children's academic achievement even more than family characteristics, such as education, family size, marital status, socio-economic level and student grade level.

Therefore, a strong parent component can strengthen the impact of any educational program. A clear understanding of educational goals and how to achieve them leads to honest relations with parents and consistent instruction and a curriculum that is coherent.

When trying to foster greater involvement of parents, schools need to recognize that learning begins at home. Teachers who recognize and value the informal learning that takes place in the home are more likely to

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listen to parents and to be listened to by parents. In this way, faculty and parents can create avenues of engagement and more positive learning environments that will result in greater impact.

In programs for second language learners, there are specific ways the school and the family are each uniquely qualified to contribute to creating positive impacts in learning, and their work should complement each other (Brisk, 2000). Good school-parent-community interaction contributes to the formation of bicultural individuals who can flourish in the new culture as well as in their own ethnic community (Kleinfeld, 1979).

Inviting parents to teach a class or participate actively in learning with their children can stimulate the learning environment for all children. Tapping into the assets parents and communities have to share can increase parent involvement and create positive impact in educational programs. For example, one innovative approach, the Funds of Knowledge Project, surveyed the community for the knowledge evident

Positive impact through engagement stems from partnerships between schools, parents and communities that are based on mutual benefit, respect and accountability. Engagement for impact goes beyond temporary or limited outreach on the part of educational institutions.

in their lives, incorporated it in the curriculum, and asked community members to participate in teaching (Moll, et. al., 1992).

Community organizations can also provide key support to schools when access to families is difficult or when there are language or cultural barriers. One bilingual educational project describes an English-speaking teacher who engaged community workers who spoke Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese to explain to parents how they might contribute to activities taking place at the school (Faltis, 1993). Community workers can also encourage schools and parents in forming networks to support each other in creating and strengthening the learning community for youth.

Positive impact through

engagement stems from partnerships between schools, parents and communities that are based on mutual benefit, respect and accountability. Engagement for impact goes beyond temporary or limited outreach on the part of educational institutions.

To foster lasting and meaningful educational impact, mechanisms for engagement with parents and families need to be firmly embedded in the mission, vision and central activities of educational institutions from pre-school through higher education. While the process is challenging, an approach that embraces engagement can yield significant results in learning for all spheres.

Families that work with the school in creating an environment conducive

In This Issue...

Closing the Graduation Gap for Latino Students

by Pam McCollum, Ph.D., and Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D.

Rather than using the traditional "one size fits all" approach to solving educational problems, community-based partnerships in several U.S. cities are identifying problems in the local educational pipeline and are collaboratively working to resolve them. These communities are part of ENLACE, an innovative national initiative funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The ENLACE initiative is working to increase the number of Latino college graduates by strengthening supports for Latino students at key transition points in the kindergarten through grade 16 (K-16) educational pipeline. The acronym ENLACE stands for "ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education" and also means to *weave* or *link*. The premise of the initiative is that by linking community resources to schools through partnerships of colleges and universities, kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) schools, and communities, a blanket of support can be woven to support student success.

The ENLACE initiative is comprised of 13 partnerships located in seven states with significant Latino populations – Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. In the spring of 2001 partnerships received grants ranging from $1.3 million to $2 million to implement plans designed to promote Latino student success in their particular locality.

The plans and specific strategies for improving the graduation rate of Latino students in ENLACE partnerships are as varied as their communities. For that reason, they offer the promise of uncovering extremely innovative and effective approaches to improving education for a segment of the population that is projected to comprise 20 percent of the nation's workforce by 2020.

Innovative Strategies to Support Latino Students

The ENLACE project at the University of South Florida, Tampa has a partnership with Hillsborough Community College, the School District of Hillsborough Council, and the Hispanic Services Council. You might say they are "takin' it to the streets" with the ENLACE Education Express, a converted bus with a conference room and computer stations. Bilingual teachers and counselors distribute free materials on educational opportunities to students and their families and assist

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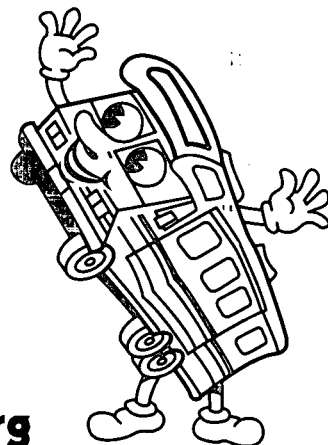
them in applying to college and for financial aid.

The ENLACE Education Express goes to venues where parents are in the community, such as at sporting events or meetings, instead of the more traditional method of inviting families to schools where they may not feel comfortable and may be reluctant to attend.

The Chicago ENLACE Partnership, headed by Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), focuses on strengthening two transition points in the educational pipeline: high school to college and two-year to four-year colleges. NEIU has instituted a dual admissions agreement with two-year institutions that provides students with simultaneous admission to NEIU and the assignment of an academic advisor who helps students develop an intended plan of study.

Chicago ENLACE also has implemented a series of *charlas* [talks] that engage students' families in dialogues about higher education. The goal of these dialogues is to make college graduation a shared vision of the family, not just the student. They also help families of students who are the first in their family to attend college to have realistic expectations about the demands college places on students and what is required to succeed.

The critical shortage of Latino faculty in institutions of higher education to provide role models for Latino students is addressed by the ENLACE Fellows Initiative in Chicago ENLACE. Twenty students will earn master's degrees in educational leadership and will be prepared to assume roles as faculty, counselors, and administrators.

As part of the initiative, students have the opportunity to intern at NEIU or one of the six colleges that are in the partnership. The experience helps them gain the knowledge and leadership skills necessary to become part of a new generation of leaders in higher education

ENLACE Partnerships

Arizona
Arizona State University
http://mphxenlace.asu.edu

California
Santa Ana College
http://www.sacollege.org/community/partnerships/enlace/index.htm
University of California – Santa Barbara
http://research.ucsb.edu/ccs/enlace/

Florida
Florida International University
http://www.eng.fiu.edu/enlacemiami
University of South Florida
http://dm.hcc.cc.fl.us/cairns/davuluri2/images/index.html

Illinois
Northeastern Illinois University
http://www.neiu.edu/~enlace

New Mexico
New Mexico State University
http://www.nmsu.edu/~senlace
Santa Fe Community College
http://www.acad.usf.edu/enlace
University of New Mexico
http://www.unm.edu/~enlace/

New York
Lehman College – City University of New York
http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/bronxed/enlace/

Texas
Saint Edward's University
http://www.stedwards.edu/enlace
Southwest Texas State University
http://www.health.swt.edu/cstep/
University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College
http://phys.utb.edu/enlace

For more information visit http://www.idra.org/enlace

or community service.

The Metro Phoenix ENLACE, headed by Arizona State University, is supporting student success for middle school students by strengthening student leadership. It has successfully introduced the IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, a cross-age tutoring dropout prevention program developed by IDRA, at two elementary and middle schools in Phoenix and Tempe.

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program takes middle school students who are considered at risk of dropping out of school and places them as tutors of elementary school students. Powerful benefits accrue for both parties.

Research has shown that tutors stay in school, improve their literacy and thinking skills, develop self esteem, feel they belong in school, and improve class attendance (Cárdenas, Montecel, Supik, and Harris, 1992). The younger students who receive tutoring experience learning in a comfortable and non-threatening climate and often develop strong bonds with their tutors (visit www.idra.org for more information).

In New Mexico, a partnership of the state's three largest communities sponsored "ENLACE Day" at the state capitol where students, parents and

educators spoke to legislators about their partnership's goals and activities to reduce the gap in Latino graduation from college within their state.

Similarly, the three Texas ENLACE partnerships have formed a coalition, sponsored in part by the Houston Endowment Inc., to craft a statewide agenda to improve the educational pipeline for Latino students.

A Fresh Approach to Educational Change

The goal of the ENLACE initiative is to bring about change in the K-16 educational pipeline that will increase Latino students' access, retention, and graduation from college. ENLACE projects are based on effective partnerships that engage communities to collaboratively plan and design mutually beneficial programs.

The innovations shared by projects nationwide at the ENLACE networking conference in April in Chicago, some of which were reported here, represent a fresh approach to educational change. This both acknowledges and values community knowledge and engages the community to define the barriers that impede attainment of a college degree and help in finding appropriate solutions for their community. Keep your eye on ENLACE. It holds great promise.

Resources

Cárdenas, J. A., and M.R. Montecel, J.D. Supik, R.J. Harris. "The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Dropout Prevention Strategies for At-Risk Students," *Texas Researcher* (Austin, Texas: Texas Center for Education Research, Winter 1992).

Pam McCollum, Ph.D., is a senior education associate in the IDRA Division of Professional Development. Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D., is the director of the IDRA Division of Community and Public Engagement. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

IDRA Materials Available on Higher Education and Community Engagement
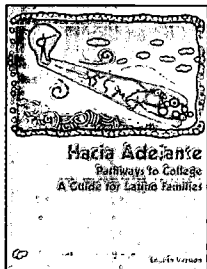
Hacia Adelante ~ Pathways to College ~ A Guide for Latino Families informs parents and students on how to plan together for college. It includes steps for choosing high school courses, selecting a college or university, financial planning, and an action calendar. **Hacia Adelante ~ Pathways to College ~ Una Guía para Familias Latinas** is the Spanish-language version of the above publication. Both are available from IDRA ($7) and online (free) at http://idra.org/enlace/parents.html.

The **Community Engagement Review and Planning Guide – Field Test Version** with accompanying online presentation aids ENLACE partnerships' planning and strengthening of community engagement. The guide includes a rubric and planning worksheets for monitoring progress. Available from IDRA ($7.50) and online (free) at http://idra.org/enlace/partnerships.html.

In **Our Voices** is a two-part video and discussion guide on the topics of access, leadership, and community engagement. This beautiful video uses word and song as a vehicle for hearing student voices regarding higher education access. It is designed for use with groups of students, administrators and/or faculty in small group discussions or in classroom settings. Available from IDRA (No ISBN; 45 minute video/40 Pages; 2002; VHS; $35).

To learn more about the individual plans of the ENLACE projects in the areas of community engagement and leadership, see **Weaving the Fabric of Engagement and Action**. This online publication provides profiles of ENLACE partnerships, highlighting areas of community engagement and leadership. Free online at http://idra.org/enlace/latinolead.html.
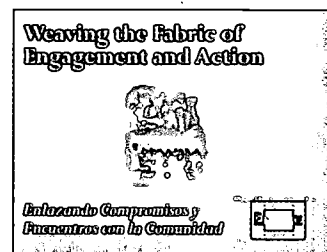
For more information visit http://www.idra.org

ACCESS – San Antonio

A Community Collaborates for Student Success (Part 2)

by Josie Danini Cortez,
M.A., and Albert Cortez,
Ph.D.

Systemic change is taking place at the San Antonio Independent School District (ISD) because of the work of the ACCESS – San Antonio collaborative. The October 2002 issue of the *IDRA Newsletter* provided an overview of this work. This article describes the systemic changes that are occurring and envisions the future of the collaborative.

For the past three years, six organizations in San Antonio have partnered to improve student achievement and increase high school completion and college enrollment and completion rates, especially among traditionally underserved students. With funding from the Ford Foundation, ACCESS (Academic and Community Collaborative Ensuring Student Success) has evolved as a model of institutional and public engagement education in targeted schools within the San Antonio ISD. As the model gears up to reach an even greater number of students, families and educators, it is becoming known as ACCESS – San Antonio.

ACCESS – San Antonio has strengthened relationships based on trust, mutual respect and shared decision making across all levels and with all stakeholders which, in turn, has yielded improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. This past year, we re-focused our work to support the concept of vertical alignment and teaming and creating smaller schools-within-a-school (or small learning communities). Our approaches and the early results follow.

Seamless Academic Transitions Across Grades and Schools

The collaborative partners understand that some transition points are especially treacherous for students: the move from home to kindergarten, from fifth grade to sixth grade, from eighth grade to ninth grade, and from high school to college.

ACCESS has already cast a light on these transition points and has begun to ease the transition for students through improving communication between teachers across transition points. The project has also been informing students and parents about the challenges and opportunities that await them.

Authentic Learning that Transcends All Areas of the School Curriculum

We believe that authentic learning goes well beyond the knowledge and skills tested by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) – the state-mandated criterion reference test – and other multiple-choice tests. Authentic learning is genuinely meaningful to learners and prepares them well for the next level of schooling and for life beyond schooling.

While there remains a tension between "studying for the test" and authentic learning, ACCESS has helped teachers ease some of this tension through targeted professional development. Teams of teachers from the nine Burbank High School clusters participated in specific training on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and the changes in its successor, the TAKS. The training outlined changes to test item format, data analysis, benchmark assessment development and use, as well as TAAS and TAKS objectives transition and impact on course sequencing. This done, it is now possible to think beyond the testing.

Transform Classroom Instruction Through the Use of Innovative Strategies

ACCESS has provided a forum for teachers to share their best practices, share their innovative strategies and build on new school efforts including using data to inform decision-making. This year, the district

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began using interim assessments to assess the scope and sequence every nine weeks. ACCESS schools are incorporating these assessments into their decision-making across grade levels.

New and Improved Relationships among Families, Communities and Schools

ACCESS provides opportunities for secondary level teachers to learn from elementary school teachers about student-centered approaches. Elementary school teachers have also learned from secondary level teachers how to acquire more subject matter expertise. College professors have learned to appreciate and use the creativity of pre-kindergarten through 12th grade teachers who meet the challenges of diverse classrooms.

Through ACCESS, parents have a greater understanding of how to work effectively to get issues resolved. They are aware of and appreciate the efforts teachers make for their children, and teachers acknowledge and salute the efforts parents make.

ACCESS has helped students see themselves as "college material" and contributors to their communities and chosen professions. Parents and teachers see their roles as ones in which they both nurture and guide students toward these futures. Teachers challenge students to strive harder, set higher goals, and achieve more.

Consistency with School District Reform Priorities

The goals of ACCESS have always been consistent and aligned with San Antonio ISD's educational reform efforts. The school district's major reform efforts are embedded in its *Vision 2005* – a five-year district improvement plan that gathers broad-

based support to improve the academic performance of all of its students. District activities are designed to build consensus of key leadership groups around the *Vision 2005* plan based on five fundamental beliefs:

- Excellence and equity in student performance are achievable for all students.
- No child will be left behind.
- The teacher is the program
- People support what they help create.
- Change comes from within.

San Antonio ISD's *Vision 2005* is working toward having the following:

- A high quality cadre of academically-prepared, professionally-performing, and student-caring teachers and staff;
- A state-of-the-art instructional environment with proven successful technology for student learning and teacher support;
- An educational delivery system where no child is left behind;
- An entire community that is student-centered and committed to student learning;
- Trust between policymakers and community members and a foundation for a continuous school improvement culture; and
- An effective, unified governance structure with strong leadership and high quality policymakers.

San Antonio ISD has undergirded this effort with an extraordinary commitment to continuous self-assessment. Its comprehensive self-evaluation has provided a reality-based framework that establishes where the district has been, where it is going and where it wants to be. As such, the district has already begun a systematic and systemic set of educational indicators that ACCESS – San Antonio will build on and expand.

ACCESS – San Antonio will take this beyond the pre-kindergarten through 12th grade system and connect it with the higher education dimension

in a way that is aligned and integrated – a critical difference from what currently exists.

Collaborative Learnings and Promising Strategies

Over the next two years, we will concentrate on two primary activities. We will identify our collaborative learnings and promising strategies through a series of structured, introspective meetings. We will also develop a "school success indicator" (SSI) system. These indicators will assess the "educational health" within the school system (e.g., staffing, teacher qualifications, professional development, student performance, budget, parent and community engagement) in a quick and efficient manner. The indicators will be reliable, valid and useful to the school, parents, community and policymakers.

Our collaborative's learnings, promising strategies and possibilities for sustainability will be critical for the San Antonio collaborative stakeholders to institutionalize those strategies that ACCESS created and deemed successful in strengthening a pre-kindergarten through grade 16 educational pipeline. It will be important to reflect on and document what has worked, what has been transformed, what has been institutionalized, and what has remained the same over time.

This is particularly important given the recent evidence that the Burbank High School cluster of schools has made significant gains in alignment of curriculum and instruction, coordination and communication, and student achievement. When compared to the other cluster of schools in the district, the Burbank High School cluster distinguishes itself as a leader in these and other areas, operating as its own learning community. The San Antonio collaborative will explore and examine the relationship of our work these past three years, the gains the schools have

already made, and what should be sustained over time.

The collaborative learnings will also provide an empirical grounding for the identification and strengthening of effective professional development and parent and community engagement strategies that have proven to be most successful in helping San Antonio educators strengthen their practices and/or assisted parents and community members in understanding their rights and responsibilities.

School Success Indicator System

Our second activity will be the development of the school success indicator system, a new dynamic initiative that will point to the educational areas needing attention and support. The framework will be comprised of information at the key transition points: fifth to sixth grade, eighth to ninth grade, 12th grade to college or university enrollment, and ultimately college graduation.

Our collaborative, including parent and community representatives, will identify the guiding questions and subsequent data needed to answer those questions as well as determine where the indicators will be housed and how they will be maintained and updated. Partners' databases will be accessed (using confidentiality protocols) and the data organized and housed in a user-friendly, publicly accessible central database.

Unlike most indicator systems that focus on student factors, this one will target school and community factors in an effort to shift the paradigm from "fixing kids" to changing schools, strengthening those characteristics that work for students and changing those that do not. Possible indicators include:

- **Contextual indicators** such as (1) student access to a wide range of extracurricular activities, like fine arts, sports, and media, that serve to engage and hold students throughout their schooling; and (2) school efforts that positively address student needs in areas such as teenage pregnancy, disciplinary incidents, access to higher education, including access and support for success in the SAT and ACT, Advanced Placement courses, and high school graduation.
- **Quality of the delivery system indicators** such as the number of certified teachers, the breadth of curriculum, instructional practice, and professional development, among others.
- **Resources available** including expenditures per pupil, facilities allocations, and other resource issues.
- **Outcome indicators,** such as TAKS scores, the numbers of students taking the SAT and ACT and their scores, the numbers of students taking Advanced Placement and dual credit courses, and higher education retention and graduation rates.

Guiding questions for the development of indicators might include the following:

Performance
- How many students is the high school graduating each year?
- How many students from that high school is the college or university enrolling and graduating?
- Who is the high school, college, or university not graduating?
- What high school, college, or university factors influence student success?

Staffing, Teacher Qualifications, Professional Development
- What is the student to teacher ratio?
- What is the average class size?
- What is the average tenure of teachers, principals and faculty?
- Are teachers qualified to teach the subjects they are teaching?

- What professional development is provided to teachers and faculty?

Budget
- How much is spent per student?
- How much is spent on staff, student services, professional development?
- How much is spent on programs and are the programs effective?
- What outside sources of funding are available and how is that funding used?

Parent and Community Engagement
- How are the schools connecting with parents and the community?
- What are the effects of the linkages?
- How satisfied are employers with the preparation of the community's graduates?

ACCESS – San Antonio is clear about what this indicator system can and cannot do. By definition, it cannot set goals or priorities or evaluate. It can, however, signal problems as well as identify areas of school success within the system in a quick and efficient manner. Ideally, it "must tell a great deal about the entire system by reporting the condition of a few particularly significant features of it" (Shavelson, et al., 1991).

During the next year, the collaborative, including parent and community representatives, will develop criteria to select indicators that are reliable, valid and useful to the school, parents, community and policymakers. The next step will involve inventorying what data are currently available in databases and areas where new indicator data are needed. Each potential indicator will be evaluated by the collaborative for its usefulness, accessibility and feasibility (if data gathering is needed). Strategies for parents and the community accessing and using this system will also be developed with leadership from

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) through professional development and parent training.

One natural linkage that will be cultivated for this effort exists with neighborhood association coalitions whose members have been trained at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

The school success indicator system will provide much needed information to further advocacy of schools that work for all students and will amplify the indicators of school success from its currently narrow focus in the Texas accountability system of one test to a much wider, richer and more appropriate picture of success.

This activity comes at a particularly propitious time as the University of Texas system further expands its kindergarten through grade 16 initiative. Recently, the Board of Regents approved a major expansion of programs in the University of Texas system to assist teachers and students in the public schools.

The million-dollar initiative, "Every Child, Every Advantage," will include new programs for teacher education, professional development for current teachers, and research-based instructional programs in elementary and secondary schools. Our collaborative learnings, promising strategies, and SSI system will be an important contribution to this initiative

helping to inform larger state policies that will impact the future of education in Texas for decades to come.

Resources

Cortez, J.D., and A. Cortez. "ACCESS–San Antonio: A Community Collaborates for Student Success," *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 2002).

Shavelson, R.J., et al. "What Are Educational Indicators and Indicator Systems?" *ERIC/TM Digest* (1991).

Albert Cortez, Ph.D., is the director of the IDRA Institute for Policy and Leadership. Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., is the IDRA production development coordinator. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In September, IDRA worked with **6,485** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **56** training and technical assistance activities and **278** program sites in **15** states plus the United Kingdom and Brazil. Topics included:

◆ Capitalizing on Cultural Diversity
◆ *IDRA Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program*
◆ Strategies for Second Language Learners
◆ Asset Mapping

Participating agencies and school districts included:
✧ Tempe Elementary School District, Arizona
✧ Austin Independent School District (ISD), Texas
✧ South San Antonio ISD, Texas
✧ Community School District #13, Brooklyn, New York
✧ Mission ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

The U.S. Department of Education has established parent information and resource centers (PIRCs) across the country to bring together parents, schools, universities, community organizations and businesses to support under-served student populations. IDRA operates the primary center that serves Texas, called *Reform in Education: Communities Organizing Networks for Emerging Collaborations with Teachers* (RE-CONNECT). The center's work is based on the valuing principle that recognizes all parents as teachers and leaders regardless of economic condition or background. A primary focus for RE-CONNECT is families of preschool children ages birth through 5 and parents of school-age children. The center also engages in special initiatives to reach low-income, minority and limited-English-proficient parents. Some of the tools used by RE-CONNECT for its support activities include parent-to-parent training, parent institutes, video conferences for educators on parent involvement and leadership, materials dissemination and a web site (at www.idra.org).

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

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to higher student achievement can function as full-fledged partners. These families can have an impact on the school's ability to deliver quality services to children by asking the right questions and involving themselves in the solutions of the schools.

The next section of this article provides information for schools to use in creating involvement strategies that are meaningful to families. It provides characteristics of a plan to increase impact through the involvement of community and a series of questions that parents can use to assess the degree of accessibility, readiness and effectiveness of the school in creating a partnership that leads to higher student achievement.

Designing and Implementing Meaningful Family Involvement Strategies

Schools that are committed to engagement and are genuinely using the partnership approach do three things before embarking into the process of developing a plan. First, schools assess their approach to identify the degree to which barriers to family involvement will impact the creation of the partnership. The box on Page 11 contains a list of barriers identified in the literature and some suggestions for counteracting the impact of these barriers in creating a partnership (Colten, 2002).

A way of identifying the degree to which these barriers are present in the community is to monitor interactions with parents and conduct focus groups with parent and family representatives. Below is a series of sample questions that could be asked in a focus group.
- What is the commitment of the school to engage with parents in meaningful ways to enhance learning?
- How does the school demonstrate this commitment?

- How pro-active are teachers and administrators in creating effective pathways to communication between schools and families?
- What are the important resources that families can offer to the learning process?
- Are mechanisms in place to facilitate shared decision-making and communication between school and home?
- What strategies are working to effectively engage parents?
- What needs to be improved?
- What action can be taken and by whom?

Once this information is collected and analyzed, the next step is to outline the guiding principles that will be used in selecting family involvement strategies. Those guiding principles are based on the elements of a successful partnership. The following are a set of guiding principles that have emerged from the literature.
- Learning is enhanced through mutual trust and respect.
- Effective partnerships in learning are built upon a no-fault/no-deficit model.
- Parents and teachers each have unique contributions to enhance the learning process.
- Accommodations for different needs and expertise strengthen the context for learning to take place.
- Children's learning and development are enhanced by parent involvement.
- Communication is facilitated when it is two-way, ongoing, clear of jargon and reflective of the native language of the family.
- Information and mutual respect help break down cultural barriers.
- Transportation and childcare facilitate interaction with families.
- Learning strategies that are fun, inexpensive, and feasible encourage parental interaction.
- Parents are valuable resources who can assume important leadership roles in education.

- Strong home-school partnerships and effective collaboration draw and build upon the strengths of parents.
- Responsive schools are flexible in order to accommodate a variety of parent and caregiver schedules.

Third, schools must integrate into their school improvement plans the role that community and family involvement will play complementing the schools' efforts to improve student achievement. Mechanisms for engagement need to be firmly embedded in the mission, vision and central activities of educational institutions. This is true for public schools, community colleges and universities. In this way, schools and universities can make an important investment in the future of young people and have lasting positive impact upon their communities.

Characteristics of an effective plan to partner with community and families, at a minimum, include the following:
- See their present and future well-being as inextricably linked;
- Collaboratively plan and design mutually beneficial programs and outcomes;
- Engage in reciprocal learning;
- Respect the history, culture, knowledge and wisdom of the other;
- Create structures that promote open communication and equity with one another;
- Have high expectations for their performance and involvement with each other;
- Value and promote diversity; and
- Regularly conduct a joint assessment of the partnership and report results (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2002).

Families can have an important, positive impact on the school's ability to deliver quality education when they are valued, their contributions are sought and integrated into the school

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Supporting Family Involvement in Schools

School-Perceived Barriers	Some Ideas for Addressing Barriers
Problems with logistics such as transportation, childcare, or scheduling	Schedule school programs for parents during non-work hours and at multiple times to accommodate a variety of work schedules. Provide childcare and transportation for families to attend school functions. Engage other parents to help with scheduling and transportation.
Teachers' lack of expertise on working with families	Provide mandatory professional development and training for teachers in how to work effectively with families. Engage professionals to work with educators throughout the year in developing skills of interaction and outreach. Create linkages with universities, local community-based organizations and other parents to identify resources for this purpose. Positively reinforce and reward teachers who have mastered this skill and enlist their help in mentoring other teachers.
Confusion over the roles of school personnel and families	Stress the importance of partnerships in learning at all levels. Reinforce the unique roles, skills and expertise that each member of the partnership brings to the table in planning successful educational outcomes for all youth. Clarify the roles of each partner through focus groups and discussions involving parents, teachers, counselors, administrators and other personnel.
School educators may not wish to have parents "complicating" their schedules	As part of a year-long strategic plan, create a schedule for outreach, visitation, parent-led activities and school programs. Make the schedule available early in the year with multiple contacts each month. Strive for ongoing, consistent and regularly scheduled times for parents, making sure these times allow for testing, curriculum assessment and other mandated school time lines.
Changes in family commitments and lack of time for reaching older, upper grade students in non-threatening and productive ways	For each child, create a plan for support that includes a variety of strategies for success. Recognize that family work schedules and circumstances are subject to frequent change. Help parents feel welcome to discuss these changes with teachers so that continued support can be provided. Arrange for short-term interventions from the home as well as longer-term meetings or committees in order to allow flexibility for parents to participate as their schedules allow. For upper grade students, be specific about how parents can help with planning for graduation and higher education.
Parents' feelings of inadequacy, failure and poor self-worth	Value the contributions parents make to the informal learning process. Reinforce parents as partners with meaningful decision-making roles. Provide parents opportunities to be leaders within the school.
Parents' own negative attitudes of bad experiences with school	Pro-actively engage parents with outreach and positive reinforcement. Make home visits to invite parent participation. Provide childcare for special meetings with flexible time lines to accommodate work schedules. Invite parents to serve on committees or in focus groups.
Parents' suspicions or anger that schools are not treating some families equally	Plan family days that recognize and celebrate the diversity reflected in the language, culture and history of all students. Reinforce the importance of this diversity to the democratic process throughout the year in the classroom. Provide useful information in clear, jargon-free messages to the home in several languages. Engage outreach workers for home visits or telephone outreach.
Cultural and language differences	Stress the importance of multiple languages for economic, social and educational advantages. Provide information in the home language. Invite parents to visit the classroom, incorporating their languages and culture as part of the curriculum.

Source: Colton, A.B. *Helping Parents Help Children Learn: Involving Caregivers in a Child's Education* (Grand Haven, Mich.: Council of Michigan Foundations, 2002).

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decision making, and they collaboratively plan and deliver services aimed at higher student achievement. Families represent a valuable resource that should be factored into the educational equation. A dialogue between families and educators should be established to arrive at a shared accountability approach with a focus on academic achievement of children. The Intercultural Development Research Association has developed two guides to help families and school personnel to review and plan improvements to the school's community engagement (for details call 210-444-1710 or e-mail contact@idra.org).

Research has found correlations between family education, size, marital status, and socio-economic levels and student achievement. Recent research is suggesting that meaningful parent involvement in education is a great predictor of high student academic achievement. A challenge for the school is to design family involvement that fosters a partnership with one central goal in mind – that of high academic achievement. Students should be able to graduate and be prepared to exercise their options of a college education or the workplace.

Resources

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