



Valued Youth Partnership

The Valued Youth Partnership is a research-based, internationally-recognized dropout prevention program that has kept 98% of its tutors in school. In the program, secondary students who are considered at-risk of dropping out of school are placed as tutors of elementary students, enabling them to make a difference in the younger students' lives.

Given this role of personal and academic responsibility, the Valued Youth tutors bolster their self-discipline and self-esteem. Schools shift to the philosophy and practices of valuing students considered at-risk. The program supports them with positive recognition and instruction.

Beyond Dropout Prevention

The goal of the Valued Youth Partnership program is to reduce dropout rates. Participating schools have also seen:

Improved attendance

Reduced disciplinary action referrals

Enhanced basic academic skills and life skills

Strengthened perceptions of self and school

Strengthened school-home-community partnerships

Research-Based Design

The Valued Youth Partnership is a research-based program, as required by the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The program was extensively researched in 1989 using a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design with data collected for the treatment and comparison group students before tutoring began, during implementation, and at the end of the first and second program years. A full description of the research is online at www.idra.org.



The Valued Youth program has made me a better student because interaction with children has helped me be more caring and understanding. Knowing that my tutees are expecting me to be there, I enjoy going every day... I understand now that we can all improve a student's outlook on school by taking time a few minutes a day to help out.

– High school tutor



All children are valuable...



“ I have to work hard to keep my grades up so I can keep tutoring and set a good example for my young students.

– Middle school tutor



Program Elements

The program has **five instructional strategies**:

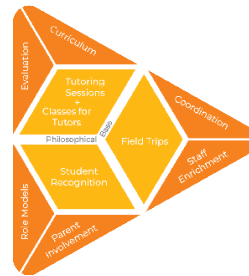
Tutoring Sessions – Tutors tutor a minimum of four hours a week for one class period a day.

Classes for Tutors – Tutors meet with their secondary school teacher coordinator once a week.

Educational Field Trips – Tutors go on at least two to three trips to explore career, economic and cultural opportunities.

Mentors and Role-Models – Adults who are considered successful in their fields and who represent students' ethnic background are invited to participate.

Student Recognition – Students are acknowledged for the efforts and contributions they make as tutors.



And it has **five support strategies**:

Curriculum – The objectives of the curricular framework are improving the students' self-concept, tutoring skills, and literacy skills.

Coordination – Periodic meetings are held to coordinate all activities, facilitate communication among personnel and provide first-hand information for monitoring the program.

Staff Enrichment – Training and technical assistance is provided to implementation team teachers and administrators

Parent Involvement – The program demonstrates to families that the school takes their children's education seriously and values the families' contributions.

Evaluation – IDRA analyzes data and other information for each school to inform implementation of the program.

The program has been approved by the Texas State Board of Education as an innovative course eligible for elective credit at the high school level.

Rigorous Evaluation

The Valued Youth Partnership's ongoing evaluation provides information throughout the program, allowing for adjustments to ensure a quality program implementation. The program utilizes a pre- and post-test evaluation that includes quantitative and qualitative measures to gauge student progress. Students are evaluated by classroom teachers at the elementary and secondary campuses. Evaluation data are collected on a secure web site.

Funding Options

School districts use the following funding sources to implement the Valued Youth Partnership in schools:

- Federal funds, such as Title I-Part A (Basic Program), Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, Title II and Title III;
- State compensatory and migrant funds;
- Other federal and state funding directed at dropout prevention and attendance;
- Funds identified through school-business partnerships with businesses and local civic groups.



The IDRA Valued Youth Partnership program was named a Hispanic Ed Bright Spot by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

– September 2015

None is expendable

Creating Success

The program has been successful everywhere it has been in keeping Valued Youth students in school, in the classroom and learning. Since its inception in 1984, the program has kept 35,000 students in school, young people who were previously considered at risk of dropping out.

School Support

Curious about what bringing the VYP program to your school involves?

- Support the program at the district level.
- Accept the program's philosophy as consistent with the school's mission.
- Commit time, effort and other resources to implementing the program's critical elements.
- Schedule a class during the day titled Valued Youth Partnership as an elective class. (In Texas, the program is an innovative course eligible for elective high school credit.)
- Identify your staff implementation team, including a core teacher for the tutors.
- Provide transportation as needed for program activities.
- Compensate tutors for their contribution as tutors. This can be stipend or other form, such as providing gift cards. (Some schools connect with a local foundation or business that provides funding for this compensation.)
- Hold a tutor leadership day event (preferably at a local college) and an end-of-year celebration event.
- Collecting evaluation information to assess program implementation and success; and
- Valuing all youth.

IDRA Support

IDRA provides the following to preserve the integrity of the program and ensure that students succeed.

- ✓ **Program orientation for school staff, parents and students**
- ✓ **Site observations of tutors working with tutees**
- ✓ **Teacher coordinator participation in annual national program institute**
- ✓ **Three implementation team meetings for program coordination**
- ✓ **Three staff enrichment sessions for faculty** working with tutors, including core area teachers, teacher coordinator, administrators and counselors
- ✓ **Program Materials**
 - Teacher Curriculum Guide
 - Tutor Workbooks for each tutor
 - Tutee Kit & Tutor Kit master
- ✓ **Program Evaluation**
 - Online evaluation review and training for collection of data
 - Student case studies
 - Analysis and interpretation of data
 - Report and presentations to school district administrative team and school board
- ✓ **Additional Activities**
 - Planning and coordinating student leadership days
 - Videoconferencing with network schools
 - Assistance with planning and participation in recognition events (end of year, tutor of the month, field trips, national essay contest)



I refuse to miss school because I do not want to disappoint my students.

– Middle school tutor

The Valued Youth Partnership was featured as an “American Graduate Champion” by PBS.

– KLRN-SA October 3, 2015





The only thing that kept my feet firmly planted on the ground was the knowledge that I was here for someone else, and they were depending on me... These children were my light.

– High school tutor

What We Have Learned

Anchored in the program’s many years of experience, *Continuities: Lessons for the Future of Education from the IDRA Valued Youth Program*, captures seven key lessons for improving the quality of education for all students.

- 1. Valuing Youth Works.** If you provide young people with an opportunity to contribute – to themselves, their families, their communities – they will.
- 2. Local Ownership is Key.** To scale up and replicate success requires holding fast to essentials while adapting to local contexts.
- 3. School Leadership Sets the Tone.** To squarely take on attrition, school leaders must inspire innovation, embody engagement, and incorporate actionable knowledge.
- 4. Realizing the Power of One + One + One.** All students must have at least one caring adult in their lives at school and a reason to care.
- 5. Family and Community Engagement is Essential.** The school-family-community triad is at the heart of holding on to students and ensuring their success.
- 6. Success Demands Well-Defined Partnerships.** When roles are clear and each partner contributes from its unique strengths, a multi-sector collaboration can reap dramatic results.
- 7. Structure and Innovation Sustains Impact.** Transformative impact demands sustained structures, resources and a commitment to valuing all youth.

Visit IDRA’s website to read the publication, get other information, see videos about the program and read essays by students on how the program impacted their lives.

www.idra.org/valued-youth

Let the IDRA Valued Youth Partnership touch the lives of students, parents and educators in your district.

To get started, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710 or contact@idra.org.



When school started, I felt a big emptiness inside me. I felt that if I missed a day of class no one would notice. Now that I started in the Valued Youth program, I have a better self-esteem. Through the VYP, three kids have made a change in my life... I know that I am making a big difference in their lives.

– Middle school tutor

