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Texas High School Attrition Rates Dip One Percentage Point

Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2013-14, Released by IDRA

San Antonio (October 28, 2014) – The Texas high school attrition rate has declined from 25 percent last year to 24 percent in 2013-14. At this rate, Texas will not reach universal high school education for another quarter of a century in 2035.

The Intercultural Development Research Association released [detailed findings](#) today from its [latest study](#). Key findings show:

- **94,711 students** were lost from our public high schools in 2013-14.
- **108 counties had a lower attrition rate than last year, 94 counties had a higher attrition rate** than last year, and 19 counties had the same rate as last year.
- Black students and Hispanic students are about **two times more likely** to leave school without graduating with a diploma than White students.
- The **racial-ethnic gaps** are no better than 29 years ago. The gap between the rates of White students and Hispanic students has gone back to the 18 percentage point gap of 1985-86. The gap between the attrition rates of White students and Black students has worsened from 7 percentage points to 12 since 1985-86.
- Students from ethnic minority groups account for nearly **three-fourths** (73 percent) of the estimated **3.4 million students lost** from public high school enrollment.
- Schools are 1.2 times more likely to lose **male students**.



“We cannot sit back and be happy with one percentage point decline per year, resulting in a loss of an additional 2.4 million young people,” said Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel, IDRA president and CEO.

In February 2014, IDRA released a new report, [College Bound and Determined](#), showing how one south Texas school district transformed itself from low achievement and low expectations to planning for all students to graduate from high school and college. The result was a school district that **doubled its number of high school graduates, cut dropout rates in half and increased college-going rates**. Half of the district’s students are earning college credit while still in high school.

“We cannot settle for incremental improvement in high school graduation rates. The cost is too high. Clearly, to achieve different results, we must envision a dramatically different process and undertake a new strategy,” said Dr. Robledo Montecel. “IDRA research and decades of experience show clearly that students are far more likely to succeed and graduate when they have the chance to work with highly qualified, committed teachers, using high quality curricula, when schools partner with parents and communities, and when students themselves feel engaged.”

IDRA’s [Quality Schools Action Framework™](#) guides communities and schools in identifying weak areas and strengthening public schools’ capacities to graduate and prepare all students for

success. IDRA's book, [Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework™](#) shows how communities and schools can work together to be successful with all of their students. The book's [web page](#) provides an excerpt, related podcasts, images of the framework and other resources.

Each fall, IDRA releases its attrition study. The latest study became [available today online](#). Attrition rates are an indicator of a school's holding power, or the ability to keep students enrolled in school and learning until they graduate. IDRA was commissioned to conduct Texas' first-ever comprehensive statewide study of high school dropouts using a high school attrition formula to estimate the number and percent of students who leave school prior to graduation. That study in 1986 was the state's first major effort to assess the school holding power of Texas public schools and resulted in state-level policy reforms for the state education agency to count and report dropout data. IDRA is the only organization that has examined Texas attrition rates consistently, with the same methodology, for 29 years.

The annual attrition studies released by IDRA include county-level data by race and ethnicity. [Trend graphs of high school attrition in each Texas county are available online](#). The study includes detailed findings, a [supplemental analysis for reaching a rate of zero](#) and graphics showing different types of dropout data. IDRA's study also looks at the latest dropout study released by the Texas Education Agency and the National Center for Education Statistics.

In addition, IDRA has developed a one-page [School Holding Power Checklist](#) with a set of criteria for assessing and selecting effective dropout prevention strategies and for making sure your school is a quality school.

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IDRA Attrition Study & Resources Online

[2014 Study](#) – Texas Public School Attrition Study, 2013-14

[College Bound and Determined](#) – A report profiling what happens when a school district raises expectations for students instead of lowering them

[Look Up Your County](#) – See attrition rates and numbers over the last 10 years

[County List](#) – See which counties had attrition rates go up or down

[See infographic: Texas public schools are losing one out of four students](#)

[See infographic: Texas is improving attrition rates by 1-2 percent each year, but one district cut its rates in half](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions for reporters](#)

[eBook on types of dropout data](#)

Tool – [Quality School Holding Power Checklist](#)

[OurSchool data portal](#) – see district- and high school-level data

[Courage to Connect: A Quality Schools Action Framework](#)

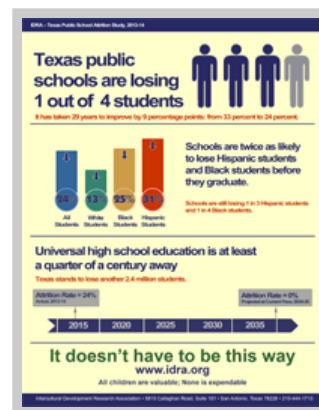
[Overview of the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program](#), which keeps 98 percent of students in school

[Ideas and Strategies for Action](#)

[Set of principles for policymakers and school leaders](#)

[Classnotes Podcast: "Counting Dropouts"](#)

[Graduation for All E-letter \(English/Spanish\)](#)



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The **Intercultural Development Research Association** is an independent private non-profit organization dedicated to realizing the right of every child to a quality education. IDRA strengthens and transforms public education by providing dynamic training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

IDRA works hand-in-hand with hundreds of thousands of educators and families each year in communities and classrooms around the country. All our work rests on an unwavering commitment to creating self-renewing schools that value and promote the success of students of all backgrounds.

We are a small organization with a powerful mission: to create schools that work for *all* children.

IDRA

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