

# High School Dropouts

The Texas Catholic Conference **supports** efforts to reduce high school dropouts.

In God's plan, every man is born to seek self-fulfillment, for every human life is called to some task by God. At birth a human being possesses certain aptitudes and abilities in germinal form, and these qualities are to be cultivated so that they may bear fruit. By developing these traits through formal education of personal effort, the individual works his way toward the goal set for him by the Creator. *(Pope Paul VI, On the Development of Peoples)*

## *A Texas Bishop Speaks:*

"Unfortunately a high number of dropouts in Texas are disproportionately from poor families. These are the very people who need more outreach and assistance to pull their families out of the cycle of poverty. Texas must do a better job at creative solutions to reduce the drop-out rate."



*-Bishop Curtis Guillory, Diocese of Beaumont*

## Church Teaching

- ★ Children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy. *(Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education)*
- ★ Education, however, is not only the work of educators: it is a relationship between people in which, as they grow older, the freedom and responsibility of those who are educated comes increasingly into play. I therefore turn with deep affection to you, children, adolescents and young people, to remind you that you yourselves are called to be the architects of your own moral, cultural and spiritual growth. *(Pope Benedict XVI, Presentation to the Diocese of Rome of the "Letter on the Urgent Task of Education")*
- ★ Among all educational instruments the school has a special importance. It is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding; and it establishes as it were a center whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community. *(Pope Paul VI, Declaration on Christian Education)*

## Resources

- ★ **National Catholic Education Association (NCEA)** The NCEA provides leadership and service to American Catholic Educators ([www.NCEA.org](http://www.NCEA.org))
- ★ **Secondary School Completion and Dropouts** Texas Education Agency ([www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=4080](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=4080))
- ★ **National Dropout Prevention Center Network** Clemson University ([www.DropoutPrevention.org](http://www.DropoutPrevention.org))
- ★ **National Center for Education Statistics** US Department of Education ([www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov))

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The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) is the association of the 15 Roman Catholic dioceses of the State of Texas, and is the Official Public Policy Voice of the Catholic Bishops of Texas.

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# High School Dropout Rates

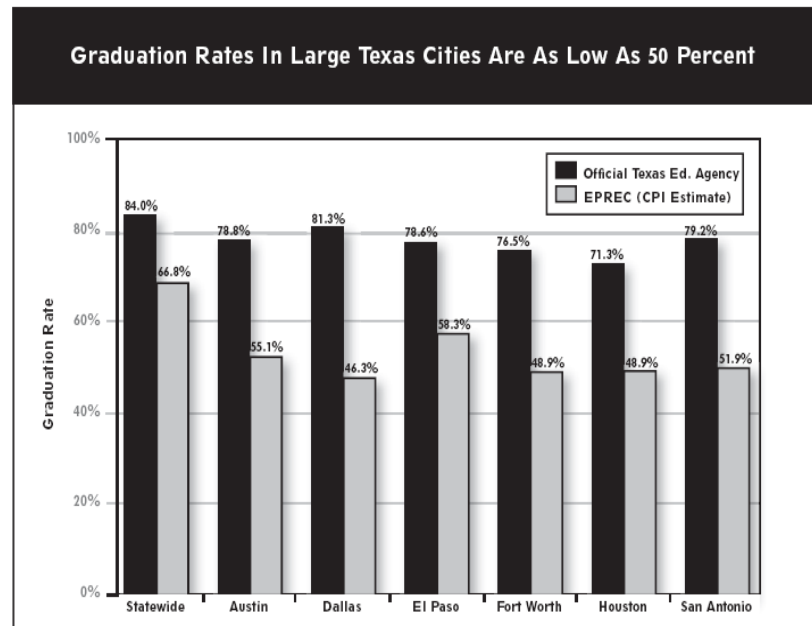
The individual consequences of not completing high school are large and well-documented, but there also are substantial public or societal costs when individuals do not graduate from high school. Public costs result when individuals who do not graduate from high school contribute less to society and consume more public services. Lower rates of labor-force participation, higher rates of unemployment among those who are in the labor force and lower wages and salaries for those employed all are consequences of the failure of many individuals to obtain a high school diploma. When individuals attain higher levels of education, there are associated public benefits in the form of lower use of public-assistance programs, better health, lower rates of incarceration and overall lower social-service expenditures. At the same time, higher educational attainment increases productivity, employment, economic growth, income and tax revenues.<sup>i</sup>

Fundamentally, education is a basic human right. The Texas Catholic Conference supports efforts to reduce high school dropout rates to ensure that all students are able to live successful lives in keeping with their human dignity, including the following tactics: <sup>i</sup>

- Assign adult advocates to students at risk of dropping out.
- Provide academic support and enrichment to improve academic performance.
- Implement programs to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills.
- Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and to serve them after they leave school.

## The Graduation Crisis in Texas Cities<sup>i</sup>

Independent estimates by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, the Urban Institute, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education and the Intercultural Development Research Association, as well as our own review of annual enrollment and graduation data, indicate that the number of dropouts is much higher in Texas than reported. Few if any states have had more independent reviews of their graduation data than Texas. These independent reviews all find similar errors in the official reported dropout and graduation data. The independent estimates of high school dropouts in Texas place the state's overall graduation rate at 65 percent to 75 percent, rather than the 81 percent reported by the Texas Education Agency for 2004-05.



## Costs of Dropouts<sup>ii</sup>

- Dropouts reduce annual earnings in Texas by \$24 billion, lower earnings of dropouts reduce Texas employment by more than 302,000 jobs, and dropouts decrease Texas tax revenues by \$2 billion each year
- Dropouts are about twice as likely to rely on Medicaid and dropouts increase Texas's state Medicaid costs by \$321 Million each year
- Texas Dropouts are twice as likely to be incarcerated; each class of dropouts costs an extra \$12 million in incarceration costs every year
- The annual public costs associated with just one year's class of dropouts is \$377 million, or about \$3,168 per dropout. Over an expected lifetime of 50 years, one year's class of dropouts will cost Texas taxpayers \$19 billion.

*(Last updated July 9, 2010, 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session)*

<sup>i</sup> "Dropout Prevention." *Institute of Education Sciences*. U.S. Department of Education, Sept. 2008. Web. 13 Aug. 2010. <[ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp\\_pg\\_090308.pdf](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dp_pg_090308.pdf)>.

<sup>ii</sup> Gottlob, Brian J. *The High Cost of Failing to Reform Public Education in Texas*. Rep. Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation, Feb. 2007. Revised Jan 2008. Web. 13 Aug. 2010. <[www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/107/TEXAS\\_STUDY%200108.pdf](http://www.edchoice.org/CMSModules/EdChoice/FileLibrary/107/TEXAS_STUDY%200108.pdf)>.