



NEWS RELEASE

Center for Public Policy Priorities

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New Study Examines Texas' Dropout Challenge: Graduation Caps or Graduation Gaps?

Austin, TX—As newspapers across the state publish graduation stories and showcase local students who are off to college, often overlooked are the Texas teens who have dropped out before earning their diplomas. A Texas KIDS COUNT special report, *The High Cost of Dropping Out: How Many? How Come? How Much?*, released today by the Center for Public Policy Priorities, examines this issue.

"The economic and societal effects of Texas dropouts on the state are too great to be ignored," said Frances Deviney, Texas KIDS COUNT Director. "We owe it to our children and our economy to address our dropout challenge."

Texas Dropout Rate Too High

- While the dropout rate has decreased since 1996, Texas still ranks among the 15 worst states in the country for kids leaving school without a high school diploma, regardless of how the dropout rate is measured.

It Would Have Cost an Additional \$1.7 Billion to Educate the Entire Class of 2004

- If every 9th grader in Fall 2000 graduated from the Texas public school system in Spring 2004, it would have cost Texas an additional \$1.7 billion over four years, just for the Class of 2004. (Texas spent about \$8.6 billion on the students in the Class of 2004 who stayed in the system from 9th to 12th grades.)
- F. Scott McCown, CPPP Executive Director and the former judge in the *Edgewood* cases, noted: "In the special session that just ended, the legislature provided \$275 per high school student, supposedly to reduce dropouts. Every high school student we keep in school, however, would cost us over \$6,000 a year to educate. The legislature didn't provide that money."

Dropouts Would Have Brought \$3 Billion to the Economy if They Had Graduated

- If every 16-19 year old who is not in school and does not have a high school diploma simply graduated, the state's combined earnings would increase by about \$3 billion over four years.

For additional Texas data, to make comparisons across counties, or to access the report, visit <http://www.cppp.org/research.php?aid=528>. For a hard copy or advance interview, call 512-320-0222, X112 or e-mail kluever@cppp.org.

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