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DROPOUT CRISIS CONTRIBUTES TO SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC LOSSES IN CALIFORNIA CITIES

*The California Dropout Research Project Releases Dropout Profiles for 17 California Cities
Featuring Local Dropout Data, Economic Impact and Benefits to Reducing Dropouts*

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. –Today the California Dropout Research Project (CDRP) released City Dropout Profiles for 17 cities in California. The City Dropout Profiles provide data for each of the 17 cities on the number of middle and high school dropouts from 2006-07, the economic losses to the community, and benefits to reducing the number of dropouts by half, specifically economic savings and decrease of violent crimes. The losses and benefits were calculated using CDRP research documenting the economic impact of dropping out on earnings, unemployment, health, crime, and public assistance. The CDRP also released a companion dropout profile for the state of California. To access the State and City Dropout Profiles, visit <http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/dropouts/>.

“The Profiles reveal that economic losses from a single year’s dropouts are both substantial and borne largely by the local communities—students drop *out* of school and drop *into* the cities,” said Russell Rumberger, Director of the California Dropout Research Project. “We created these Profiles to help cities identify the magnitude and impact of the dropout crisis and to create a sense of urgency in order to start working on solutions.”

The City Dropout Profiles are produced by the CDRP to support the work of the California Mayors’ Education Roundtable (www.camayors.org), a WestEd initiative funded by the James Irvine Foundation, comprised of a group of mayors from major cities throughout California who have committed to work on the issues of high school dropouts. The cities featured in this series are all members of the California Mayor’s Education Roundtable and include: Berkeley, Chula Vista, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Modesto, Oakland, Pasadena, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Ana, Santa Barbara and Stockton.

“The data linking dropout rates to violent crime and economic losses makes clear that the dropout crisis is everyone’s problem--and that whole communities will benefit from coming together to ensure that all students graduate high school with the courses and skills necessary to succeed in college and in life,” said Roberta Furger, Education Program Coordinator, PICO California. PICO California (www.picocalifornia.org) is part of the PICO National Network of faith-based community organizations representing 450,000 families in 73 cities throughout the state working to create innovative solutions to pressing community issues including developing effective and sustainable strategies for increasing graduation rates.

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Highlights from the State Report include:

- California’s public schools produced one dropout for every three graduates
- 123,651 students dropped out of grades 7-12 in 2006-07
 - Even if half of all dropouts eventually graduate, the remaining half would contribute to more than \$24 billion in economic losses to the state over their working lives
- Reducing the number of dropouts by half would generate about \$12 billion in savings to the state and would reduce the number of homicides and aggravated assaults by more than 14,000 per year

“Law enforcement leaders across the state know that dropout prevention is crime prevention,” said Barrie Becker, state director of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids *California* (www.fightcrime.org/ca) – a bipartisan, anti-crime organization led by more than 350 sheriffs, police chiefs, district attorneys and victims of violence. “Giving kids the tools they need to succeed in school and graduate from high school will save money and lives.”

The State and City Dropout Profiles are the latest in a series of 42 research reports, policy and statistical briefs on California’s dropouts conducted by CDRP, a research program based at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Last year, the CDRP policy committee – composed of researchers, policymakers and educators – released a state policy agenda identifying short-term and long-term recommendations for improving California’s high school graduation rate.

Russell W. Rumberger, Director, California Dropout Research Project, is available for interviews and can be contacted directly at 805-451-6091.

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ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA DROPOUT RESEARCH PROJECT

Based at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the California Dropout Research Project began in December 2006. The purpose of the project is to synthesize existing research and undertake new research to inform policymakers and the public about the nature of – and potential solutions to – California’s dropout problem.

CDRP is funded by the James Irvine Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. For more information about CDRP, including copies of the complete series of the Project’s research, please visit the CDRP website at:

<http://www.lmri.ucsb.edu/dropouts/>.