



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GET COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

REPORTED BY KIM ALVARADO
KPRC Local 2 News

HOUSTON -- Dozens of high school students are spending part of their summer in a college classroom, and it's all for the experience, KPRC Local 2, Your Education Station, reported Thursday.

A university professor pushes the teenagers to a higher level of thinking.

"They process the info in that particular way, synthesize it and go beyond just knowing it and applying it," said Dr. Ana-Lisa Gonzalez with the University of St. Thomas.

Project GRAD, an acronym for Graduation Really Achieves Dreams saturates teenagers in a college setting for three weeks.

Minority students are selected for the program because data



shows that statewide, 41 percent of them do not graduate from high school.

"Even students who do still work hard for some reason -- there's not a lot of motivation in minority community for people. They don't see that education is that important," said Francisco Rodriguez, a junior at Davis High School.

Rodriguez, with a 4.2 GPA, is highly self-motivated despite the fact that no one in his family got past high school. He plans to attend college.

Project Grad has a 40 percent success rate for participating

students going to college.

Many of the students set high standards for themselves to achieve.

"I want to set it really high so they can be successful and make our parents proud," said Christina Vargas from Reagan High School.

Vargas comes from a big family, as does 16-year-old Sydney Ricalday.

"Coming from a big family, everything's not about you, and when you want to do your homework, you have to find time because there's always something to do in

the house," Ricalday said.

Seventy Davis and Reagan high school students attended the Project GRAD program at the University of St. Thomas campus.

For more information, visit www.projectgradhouston.org.

Donors supporting this program include:

The John G. and Maria Stella Kenedy Memorial Foundation

Robert H. Allen

The George and Kathryn Martinez Fund

The George Strake Foundation

