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Hispanic Education [2]

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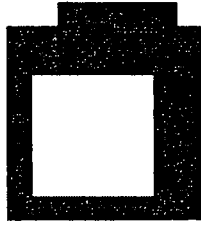
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Dept. of Education
Response to
The Hispanic Dropout
Project's
"NO MORE Excuses"

U.S. Department of Education

Richard W. Riley

Secretary

Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs

Delia Pompa

Director

This publication responds to a publication by the Hispanic Dropout Project titled *No More Excuses: The Final Report of the Hispanic Dropout Project* (February 1998), available from the U.S. Department of Education (see below).

The full text of this public domain publication is available at the Department of Education's home page at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA> and in alternate formats upon request. For more information, please contact us at:

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INTRODUCTION

All students must be equipped to perform the new jobs and roles of an increasingly sophisticated workforce, which means that offering students an equitable and excellent education must become a priority for the nation—our families, schools, communities, businesses, and all of us who are in contact with children. With this priority in mind, President Clinton and Secretary of Education Riley have been focusing the nation on a clear and urgent educational imperative: High standards for all students must be set and achieved. This imperative presents a difficult challenge and an enormous opportunity for the chronically disadvantaged who attend the nation's schools—particularly Hispanic students and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The strategies in this booklet aim at meeting the unique educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students in the context of this emphasis on high standards and high achievement.^a

In making an excellent education a priority, the administration both responded to the consensus of the people and issued a call to action to improve the education of American learners of every age, of every background, and of every community. To ensure the success of all students in becoming educated, we must provide each and every one of them with the chance to achieve to the highest academic standards; we must build upon their individual and collective gifts; and we must recognize and address the challenges they bring to the nation's schools.

The secretary's strategies for improving opportunities for Hispanic and LEP students build upon the significant initiatives undertaken by the administration and others over the past four years to develop education policy specific to this population of students. In February 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12900, creating the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, which advises the president and secretary of education on the educational progress of Hispanic Americans and on ways to increase their opportunities to receive a high-quality education. In September 1995, Secretary Riley created the Hispanic Dropout Project, whose mission was to study the Hispanic dropout problem, to produce concrete analyses and syntheses for a variety of audiences, and to recommend actions that could be taken at all levels to alleviate the problem. Finally, in June 1996 the Congressional Hispanic Caucus proposed a three-point education plan for supporting high achievement among Hispanic and LEP students.

The strategies in this booklet reflect the priority the Department places on the education of Hispanic and LEP students and respond to the recommendations proposed by the President's Advisory Commission, the Hispanic Dropout Project, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

^a LEP students are students who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and who come from an environment where a language other than English is dominant. Additionally, these students have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and those difficulties may deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in English. Hispanic students comprise approximately 73 percent of all LEP students. Hence, both Hispanic and LEP student needs must be addressed together. From *Descriptive Study of Services to Limited English Proficient Students* (1993) by Development Associates, Inc., under contract to USDOCE. #LC1003001.

We set out a substantive plan to refine existing programs and develop new initiatives that address the Department's five goals for Hispanic and LEP students:

- Goal One:** *Maintain and Refine Programs That Boost Hispanic and LEP Students' Achievement to World-Class Standards and Lower the Hispanic Dropout Rate*
- Goal Two:** *Ensure a Program of Ongoing, Empirical Data Collection and Research That Targets the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students*
- Goal Three:** *Build the Capacity of Teaching Professionals to Meet the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students*
- Goal Four:** *Support Efforts to Increase the Hispanic Community's Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning*
- Goal Five:** *Create Accountability Systems to Monitor the Progress of Hispanic and LEP Students*

For each of the goals we provide a concise outline of the Department's current improvement efforts and their direct impact on Hispanic and LEP students and adults nationwide. Next, we lay out the Department's new initiatives that support each goal and their projected impact upon the same population. We conclude by incorporating the five goals into proposed outreach and collaborative efforts designed to ensure the improvement of education for Hispanic and LEP students.

Overview of the Educational Status of Hispanic and LEP Learners

Two descriptors characterize Hispanics in the United States: rapidly growing numbers and a history of educational disadvantage. Over the past 20 years¹, the percentage of public school students who are Hispanic has increased from 6 percent to 14 percent. In some states, such as California, Texas and Florida, Hispanics constitute a majority of public school students in large urban areas. But this increase is not limited to the Southwest. Between the 1990-91 and 1994-95 school years, the number of LEP students nationwide grew substantially. For example, in Arkansas the LEP population grew by 120 percent, in Wisconsin by 42 percent, in Oklahoma by 99 percent, and in Kansas by 118 percent. *Nationwide, over 1,067,744 teachers had at least one LEP student in their class in 1992.*²

According to state education agency data³ for the years between 1990-91 and 1994-95, the number of LEP students mushroomed by nearly 50 percent. LEP students comprise approximately one in four public school students in California, Alaska, and New Mexico, and about one in eight students in Texas and Arizona.

Despite their significant representation, Hispanics and LEP students are among the most educationally disadvantaged of all population groups attending the nation's schools:

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- *The Hispanic dropout rate is unacceptably high:* about 20 percent for those who enrolled in a U.S. school and 30 percent counting both those who ever enrolled and those who never enrolled in a U.S. school. Language limitation is one factor associated with the failure to complete high school. A factor contributing to the high dropout rate is that while Hispanics in America who were born outside the United States may never have entered schools in this country, they are counted among those who dropped out. Regardless of the reasons behind their lack of high school credentials, the impact is the same—young Hispanic adults do not have the basic level of education necessary to participate in today's economy, which demands high skill levels and the ability to learn new skills fast.⁴
 - *Thirty-nine percent of Hispanic children live in families with an income below the poverty line, a rate more than twice as high as for white children.* In general, youth from families in the lowest income brackets are eight times as likely to drop out of school than those from families with a high income.⁵
 - *Hispanic children start elementary school with less preschool experience than white children.*⁶ According to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, less than 15 percent of Hispanic children attend pre-school (compared with 25 percent for black children and 35 percent for white children), despite our knowledge that such programs are proven predictors of educational attainment.⁷
 - *Achievement gaps between Hispanics and whites remain high.* At age 9, the gap in reading performance has not changed significantly since the initial assessment.⁸ In math and science proficiency, there has been little improvement in the gap between Hispanics and whites over the past 20 years. At age 13, the gap in math proficiency between Hispanics and whites has closed by 10 points; however, the current gap of 25 points still remains.⁹ And in reading proficiency, there has been little change in the gap between Hispanics and whites over the past 20 years.¹⁰ At age 17, the proficiency gaps for reading and math have closed by 11.6 and 12 points respectively; however, significant proficiency gaps remain.¹¹
 - *Academic courses like algebra and geometry in the eighth grade act as gatekeepers in high school to college preparatory courses and, hence, to college admission. Yet, well over 80 percent of Hispanic and other disadvantaged students are not introduced to these courses by the eighth grade.*¹²
 - *The demand for teachers qualified to serve LEP students far outstrips the supply.* The state of California, for example, estimates a shortage of nearly 21,000 bilingual or English as a second language teachers.¹³
 - *While approximately one-third of U.S. students are classified as minority,¹⁴ only 13.5 percent of their teachers have minority status.*¹⁵
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GOAL ONE: Maintain and Refine Programs That Boost Hispanic and LEP Students' Achievement to World-Class Standards and Lower the Hispanic Dropout Rate

Establishing more rigorous and challenging academic standards is at the heart of the U.S. Department of Education's agenda and is its most important initiative aimed at ensuring equal access to education for all students. The nation's most disadvantaged students have borne the brunt of insufficient resources and low academic standards. As a result, little opportunity exists for Hispanic, LEP, and other disadvantaged students to fully learn the basic and advanced skills required for entry into college and high-skilled, high-paying jobs. America's students can never be first in the world in math and science if all of America's students are not focused on high academic standards and helped to achieve them. This is particularly important because Hispanic and other minority workers will comprise larger and larger portions of our workforce as this sector of the population continues to grow.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Through its elementary and secondary programs, the Department provides assistance to schools that serve millions of Hispanic and LEP learners each year. The Department's current programs take into account the growing numbers of Hispanic and LEP students and respond to their educational needs and those of their families and schools. The programs described below help Hispanic and LEP students simultaneously meet high academic standards, become engaged in school, and become adequately equipped for their eventual roles in the workplace and in contemporary American society.

Title I: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized in 1994 under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), is a far-reaching, \$7.4 billion (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$7.8 billion) program of grants to local education agencies that provides a wide variety of supplementary education services, for example extended learning time and in-classroom support, to help *6.5 million low-income K-12 students* nationwide meet high academic standards.

Direct Impact: In 1994-95, Hispanic students comprised approximately *2.1 million—or 32 percent—of all the students served by Title I*, second only to white, non-Hispanics in program participation.¹⁶ In 1994, at the request of the administration, Congress modified Title I by inserting language to ensure that more LEP students would qualify for its services and be served on the same basis as other students. As a result, Title I's impact on rapidly growing numbers of LEP and Hispanic students is increasingly important.

Bilingual Education: This ESEA program directly addresses the educational needs of rapidly increasing numbers of English language learners in the nation's schools, by aiming at three primary goals:

- helping students learn English and meet high academic standards;
- training teachers to serve limited English proficient students; and
- funding research and data collection on issues and problems related to the continuous improvement of education for LEP students.

Direct Impact: 630,000 Hispanic students—*approximately 72 percent of all LEP students served in the Bilingual Education program*—receive instructional services in this \$199 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$232 million) program.¹⁷

Immigrant Education: In 1998, \$150 million will be awarded to state education agencies through the ESEA Emergency Immigrant Education Program, created in 1984. Grants are to be used to help local education agencies provide high-quality instruction to immigrant children and youth so that they effectively make the transition into American society and meet the same challenging state performance standards all children and youth are expected to meet.

Direct Impact: Over 500,000 Hispanic students—approximately 60 percent of all immigrant students—receive services provided by the Emergency Immigrant Education Program.¹⁸

Migrant Education: Migrant Education is a \$305 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$354.7) program under ESEA tailored specifically to the needs of children whose parents' occupations are migratory. Specifically, Migrant Education has three goals:

- improving coordination of identification, recruitment, testing, distance learning technology, and development of assessment instruments among all states to help improve educational outcomes;
- fostering partnerships among state directors, federal agencies, and other organizations to improve coordination of services to migrant families; and
- ensuring that migrant children have access to services that will assist them in overcoming cultural and language barriers, health-related problems, and other challenges that place them at risk of not completing their education.

Direct Impact: According to the Office of Migrant Education, approximately 610,000 migrant students were served by the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in the school year 1993-1994. Eighty percent of the migrant and seasonal farm worker population is Hispanic American.¹⁹

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): While many Americans are familiar with the services provided by special education programs in the nation's schools, they may be unaware that special education services reach Hispanic students in a variety of ways tailored to their linguistic and cultural education needs—above and beyond their special needs. Grants to states under IDEA are at \$3.8 billion in fiscal year 1998. Participation of Hispanic children in the Special Education program varies with the type of disability. For example, compared with non-Hispanic students, Hispanic students have lower rates of identification as mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed. However, they have a higher rate of identification than non-Hispanics under the specific learning disabilities category, which includes half of children with disabilities.²⁰

Direct Impact: Hispanic and LEP students and their families who qualify for special education services benefit from parent training projects, numerous bilingual/bicultural direct service projects, and teacher training projects.

The Adult Education Act: The act authorizes the major federal program that supports and promotes literacy instruction and services for educationally disadvantaged adults—reaching beyond the nation's students to serve their families as well. In fiscal year 1998, \$361 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$394 million) is available.

Direct Impact: *Hispanics represent approximately 34 percent of the 3,900,000 adults served through Adult Basic Education courses. These courses include: Adult Secondary Education, which leads to a high school degree or its equivalent, and English as a Second Language (ESL), which helps adults participate more fully in the American workplace and in society at large. It is a testimony to the need for and the value of the ESL courses when one considers that 67 percent of Hispanics participating in adult education are enrolled in ESL classes.*²¹

Even Start: An ESEA family literacy program, Even Start expands the availability of early childhood services and provides General Educational Development (GED) instruction, job training, and English language instruction to many limited English proficient parents. The Even Start program delivers formula grants to states for the support of intergenerational literacy projects combining early childhood education for children and literacy training for their parents.

Direct Impact: In fiscal year 1998, the \$124 million Even Start program (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$115 million) will provide an opportunity for strengthening literacy through community and parental support. In 1995, 36 percent of participating parents were Hispanic.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Seven of the Department's new and far-reaching initiatives to further the administration's education priorities directly address the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students and adults.

Reducing Class Size: Too many young children, especially those in low-income and Hispanic neighborhoods, face large class sizes in the early grades when they need more individual attention in small classes. The president has proposed a historic initiative to reduce class size in the first three grades.

Direct Impact: Over seven years, class size will be lowered to an average of 18 students. This will enable children in poor districts to get more individualized help from their teachers.

America Reads: The America Reads initiative's primary goal is to help all children read well and independently by the end of third grade. When implemented, it will include several efforts directly targeted to Hispanic/LEP students and their families.

- **The Read*Write*Now! Campaign:** This campaign combats "summer reading drop-off"—the loss of reading skills through non-use during summer vacation—and encourages continued reading during the year through the use of reading partners for children, active use of libraries, and concerted vocabulary development. English- and Spanish-language reading activity kits for children and their families and caregivers will be available in hard copy from the Department's toll-free number at 1-800-USA-LEARN and will be downloadable from the Department's Web site at www.ed.gov.

Modernize Schools: Many Hispanic disadvantaged and low-income children attend schools that are overcrowded and run down in counties that cannot afford to pay to build or renovate the schools.

Direct Impact: More than \$20 billion in interest-free bonds will be available to modernize school buildings to make them safer, reduce overcrowding and get up-to-date technology in the classrooms.

Model Effective High Schools: Working with the National Council of La Raza and ASPIRA, the Department of Education's New American High Schools Initiative is helping states focus attention on schools that better prepare all students for college and careers.

Direct Impact: Four of the ten schools initially selected have a Hispanic population of 20 percent or more. In addition, half of the six model urban high schools receiving Department awards have substantial Hispanic student participation.

Charter Schools: Since 1994, the Charter Schools program has been authorized in ESEA to support the design and initial implementation of charter schools and the evaluation of their effects on students, student achievement, staff, and parents. The president's FY 1999 budget request is \$100 million.

Direct Impact: Several charter schools that have received Department of Education startup funding meet the specific needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. The cur-

ricula of these schools promote learning the first language and culture in conjunction with learning a second language and culture.²²

Mathematics Literacy and Standards: Working with the National Science Foundation and groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Department is launching a comprehensive strategy to improve mathematics achievement, with particular attention to the middle school years. The Department's strategies focus on equipping teachers to teach challenging mathematics content, assisting states and school districts in selecting and implementing high-quality curricula and technologies, and increasing public understanding of the importance of high standards in mathematics.

Direct Impact: This drive to improve mathematics teaching and learning will ensure that all students have better odds of developing the mathematical skills and knowledge base they need to succeed in the 21st century. The Department and National Science Foundation activities will place special emphasis on high-poverty schools, which will reach high numbers of Hispanic and LEP students. Materials designed for parents and students will take into account the needs of second language learners and be made available in Spanish.

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education: The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education was established in 1992 at the Ohio State University. The Clearinghouse is the national repository for K-12 mathematics and science instructional materials. It also has an online searchable database of those materials, including those in Spanish and English, as well as online and direct resources for professional development supporting math and science education improvement. The president's FY 1999 budget request is \$335 million.

Direct Impact: The Clearinghouse provides, in Spanish and English, a broad range of instructional materials, software, and videos for classroom use.

GOAL TWO: Ensure a Program of Ongoing, Empirical Data Collection and Research That Targets the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students

Empirical research relevant to the real problems schools and students confront—particularly the pressing issues related to the large and increasing population of Hispanic and LEP students—is a prerequisite for achieving two of the Department's priorities: raising the level of student achievement and achieving literacy. The Department believes that a program of ongoing, empirical data collection and research targeting the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students must accomplish the following:

- **Provide Current, Accurate Demographic Data:** As the number of Hispanic and LEP students in the nation's schools continues to grow, there is a critical need for reliable data that will help educators and policy makers intervene strategically and appropriately in behalf of this population.
- **Discover and Disseminate Best Instructional Practices and Facilitative School Structures:** The Department supports a program of research that discovers best instructional practices and facilitative school structures and teaching for Hispanic and LEP youth. When disseminated aggressively, the findings of this research can be used to spur best practices in schools and communities nationwide.
- **Evaluate Ongoing Policies and Programs:** This program of research must serve an evaluative function, assessing the effectiveness of ongoing policies and programs so that they can be refined and improved. As educators assess the needs of Hispanic and LEP students, they must have a clear sense of program and cost effectiveness—as well as specific guidelines and empirically tested action plans that will carry them forward in implementing new programs and practices.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Ongoing Publications and Dissemination of Relevant Information on Hispanic and LEP Students: The Department provides leadership to researchers through the production of several data sets and related publications, which are the primary source of national-level information on Hispanic and LEP students.

Direct Impact: Two data sets and a time series study are especially key to our knowledge of Hispanic and LEP students: *Dropout Rates in the United States*, *The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988*, and *The Schools and Staffing Survey*. These studies track and analyze populations of students to better understand factors affecting educational progress

over time. Their ongoing presence on the national scene allows researchers to deal more reliably with issues directly related to improving education for Hispanic and LEP students. The studies also provide a historical context important for developing current and future policy.

Research Centers Funded by the Department: The priority that the Department places on Hispanic and LEP students is highlighted in the research conducted by several national research centers, all funded by the Department. Within the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) are two research centers, funded through the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, with a focus on Hispanic and LEP youth. Under the Department's Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination (ORAD) are three Regional Educational Laboratories with specialty areas in Language and Cultural Diversity.

Direct Impact: The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk, at Johns Hopkins University, is funded at \$27,700,000 over 5 years and the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, at the University of California at Santa Cruz, is funded at \$19,965,089 over 5 years. The Northeastern Laboratory at Brown University, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin, Texas and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) in Hawaii are funded at approximately \$1,200,000 per year, or \$6,000,000 over five years.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA ensures that Hispanic and LEP students with disabilities will receive better quality and equitable education services through data-driven practices.

Direct Impact: The reauthorization of IDEA requires states to gather data to prove that school districts are not disproportionately identifying and placing in separate educational settings children with disabilities from among minority or limited English proficient backgrounds. These data also must show that such children are not disproportionately suspended or expelled from school.

The Outcomes Center of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services: The center, located at the University of Minnesota, works to improve the assessment of educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Among its activities are projects that identify, prioritize, and generate solutions to technical and implementation issues in assessing students identified as LEP and disabled. These projects were funded at \$250,000 in 1997.

Direct Impact: Through the growing and relevant body of research on issues related to language, diversity, and student achievement produced by these national research centers, other researchers, practitioners, and policy makers will be able to develop informed, strategic, cost-effective ways to address the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Research Sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA): In fiscal year 1998, OBEMLA will award nearly \$4.5 million in research and information dissemination grants and contracts targeted solely to educational issues that affect Hispanic and LEP students. The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Web page received a *daily* average of 5,500 requests for information from practitioners, policy makers, and members of the public during 1996-97—a total of 1,596,240 hits for that year.

Direct Impact: These monies will provide funding for focused research and dissemination that will guide the development and delivery of educational services for Hispanic and LEP students.

Standardized Data Collection: In order to refine and improve its program of ongoing data collection relevant to Hispanic and LEP students, the Department will examine data collection needs and propose a standardized process for gathering and sorting data by race, ethnicity, and language background.

Direct Impact: The National Center for Education Statistics will work with OBEMLA and other relevant offices to create a systematic plan for including Hispanic and LEP students in relevant data sets.

Research on Assessment: In light of the proposed national voluntary assessments in mathematics and reading, research on how to appropriately assess Hispanic and LEP students must be paramount on the nation's education agenda. This area of research is highly complex and resource intensive.

Direct Impact: The Department plans to invest approximately \$5 million in such research in fiscal year 1998 to address the most urgent questions relevant to assessing Hispanic and LEP students so that they may fully participate in and benefit from the proposed national assessments. The major areas of research will focus on three questions:

- At what point is testing in a second language yielding useful results?
- What accommodations are appropriate when assessing LEP students?
- What role does assessment in the native language play in overall assessment?

GOAL THREE: Build the Capacity of Teaching Professionals to Meet the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students

The quality of instruction that Hispanic and LEP students receive depends in great part upon having an adequate supply of teachers with the rigorous training needed to meet the educational needs of this fast-growing population of our nation's students. Many school districts that are experiencing this rapid growth of students with diverse needs cannot find sufficient numbers of trained teachers—and instead find themselves in a state of educational crisis, struggling to deliver high-quality services to students whose need is critical. *Approximately 27.2 percent of schools seeking teachers for their LEP students have bilingual/ESL vacancies which are very difficult or impossible to fill.*²³ A 1993 study found that *only 18 percent—or fewer than one in five teachers serving LEP students—were certified in either English as a second language or bilingual education.*²⁴

However, the presence of a certified teacher alone will not accomplish the ambitious education goals of the president and the Department. Clearly, Hispanic and LEP students need teachers equipped with new skills and able to teach challenging content in ways that engage students and motivate them to achieve according to world-class standards.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Teachers and Personnel Programs: Funded under Title VII of ESEA, this program will award \$18 million to institutions of higher education and local education agencies that propose activities to increase the availability of improved training for teachers who will work with LEP students. The president's FY 1999 budget request is \$22 million.

Direct Impact: As a result of these awards 2,000 teachers will receive certification or graduate degrees in English as a second language or bilingual education. These grants will also increase the availability of professional development activities for mainstream teachers, ensuring that the nation's teachers will be better prepared to address the educational needs of the growing number of LEP students.

Career Ladder Programs: In fiscal year 1998, this Title VII program of ESEA will award \$7.3 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$17.3 million) in grants to institutions of higher education and local education agencies to train paraprofessionals or to recruit secondary school students to become certified teachers of LEP students.

Direct Impact: This is part of a long-range solution focusing on early awareness of the importance of and need for bilingual and ESL teachers in the future. Succinctly put, these resources go into the community, targeting students who potentially are interested in becoming teachers of LEP students.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Teacher Recruitment: The president has proposed legislation under Title V of the Higher Education Act that, over a five-year period, would provide \$350 million to attract excellent teachers to high-poverty communities by offering scholarships and other support services for those who commit to teach in those communities for three years.

Direct Impact: The proposed legislation contains a special emphasis on recruiting minorities into teaching and a funding priority for applications from Hispanic Serving Institutions. In addition, the legislation provides special consideration for applications from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribally Controlled Colleges, further increasing the potential for a more diverse teacher workforce.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: The Department has worked with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to develop teaching proficiency examinations for teachers of English language learners. In fiscal year 1998, the Department will provide the National Board \$16 million to develop the examinations. The National Board will provide a rigorous set of standards based on which teachers must demonstrate their knowledge of content as well as apply appropriate teaching strategies. The content domain for becoming a teacher of LEP students and the varied approaches to teaching in this setting demand different training. Teachers who meet the content and performance standards through the process of the National Board application are acknowledged as superior by their administration.

Direct Impact: School districts will have a new opportunity to identify and reward master teachers to hold them in the teaching profession. This will ensure that a significant percentage of teachers working with LEP students will meet the highest performance standards.

GOAL FOUR: Support Efforts to Increase the Hispanic Community's Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

A basic credential for future success in the workplace and in American society is the ability to expand one's knowledge base. As the workplace increases in technological sophistication, demanding workers with advanced problem-solving abilities, a two- or four-year degree and learning for a lifetime will become even more critical. Hispanic students who do graduate from high school appear to be in a good position to continue their education and acquire the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. The percentage of Hispanic students who had enrolled in college by the Fall immediately following their high school graduation was 51 percent in 1996 versus 65 percent for white students.²⁵ Furthermore, *Hispanics who achieve a bachelor's degree earn between 63 and 108 percent more than Hispanics who graduate from high school without further education.*

Adult Hispanic and LEP learners may also seek non-degree education opportunities that will further their position in American society. Individuals who do not speak English well may choose to pursue opportunities to learn English and thus improve their marketability in the U.S. workforce. Hispanic and LEP learners also benefit considerably from specialized courses or training to upgrade existing job skills or to learn new skills.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Pell Grants: Pell Grants are the most effective way to provide access to higher education for low-income students, despite the fact that the grant award amounts have not kept pace with the increase in college costs. For fiscal year 1998, Congress provided a \$1.4 billion (24 percent) increase for Pell Grants that supports the administration's proposal to increase the maximum Pell Grant from \$2,700 to \$3,000 and raises the number of Pell recipients by 220,000. The \$300 increase in the Pell maximum award is the largest in two decades. The president's FY 1999 budget request is \$7.6 billion, to support a maximum award of \$3,100.

Direct Impact: With the Pell Grants increase benefiting about 4 million students, over 40 percent of Hispanic students will receive much-needed support to access higher education with a Pell Grant. In total, 17 percent of Pell recipients are Hispanic.²⁶

Additional Student Financial Assistance: Since cost is an important factor influencing students' decisions to attend an institution of higher education, student financial aid is an important tool for providing access. Hispanics receive about 10 percent of total federal student aid, consistent with their enrollment levels in higher education overall.²⁷

Direct Impact: Overall, over 40 percent of Hispanic students receive some federal student financial aid.

Strengthening Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Program: In 1994, about 50 percent of all undergraduate Hispanic students attended the 135 HSIs eligible to participate in the HSI program. This program supports the administration's commitment to capacity building for institutions that provide educational opportunities for large numbers of diverse, needy and underrepresented students. Eligible institutions are required at a minimum to have a total Hispanic student undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment of 25 percent or more, have a high enrollment of needy students, and have low educational and general expenditures. In fiscal year 1998, the HSI program will be funded at \$12 million.

Direct Impact: As the proportion of Hispanics grows in the nation, so will their educational needs. The HSI program is a prime vehicle to assist institutions that serve large numbers of these underrepresented students by providing educational opportunities. The administration has recognized this and has proposed increasing support for this program to adequately address these growing educational needs. With FY 1998 funding of \$12 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: \$28 million), the HSI program supports 37 Hispanic-serving higher education institutions enrolling about 200,000 students, of which 120,000 are Hispanic.²⁸

TRIO Programs: Six programs are identified collectively as the Federal TRIO Programs: Student Support Services, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, Talent Search, Educational Opportunities Centers, and McNair Postbaccalaureate programs. The Federal TRIO Programs are educational outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds throughout their academic careers, from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs. For fiscal year 1998, the TRIO programs were funded at \$530 million. The president's FY 1999 budget request is \$583 million. In reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HE), the administration is recommending that priority points be added to applicants proposing TRIO projects in underserved geographic areas. This priority is intended to respond to changing national demographics and may increase the number of Hispanic students served in TRIO programs.

Direct Impact: Findings from a recent national evaluation of Upward Bound show that students who participate in the program expect to complete more schooling, take 17 percent more academic course work, and are more likely to be in a stronger academic curriculum than similar students not participating in the program. More than for any other group participating in Upward Bound, significantly positive results were found for Hispanic students.

The McNair program encourages the educational advancement of low-income, first-generation^b and minority students by providing effective preparation for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Research data show that the McNair-eligible population is substantially underrepresented in graduate education; thus, this program responds to a national need to assist disadvantaged and minority students—such as Hispanic students—complete doctoral degrees.

^b Individuals defined as first generation were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia and have one or both parents born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Adult Education: As already stated, the Adult Education Program provides instructional opportunities for obtaining a GED, as well as literacy instruction for adults. The program also supports a major new project entitled "Crossroads Cafe," a distance-learning ESL program broadcast by the Public Broadcasting Station.

Direct Impact: In 1995, 67 percent of all Hispanic Adult Education participants received ESL instruction.²⁹ This is a testament to the value of as well as the need for these services. More importantly, as programs such as "Crossroads Cafe" are developed and able to be delivered electronically into the home, such instruction will become more accessible. These types of programs and the services they offer, such as infant and day care, will enable many more students to take advantage of educational opportunities.

GOAL FIVE: Create Accountability Systems to Monitor the Progress of Hispanic and LEP Students

Hispanic and LEP students must be included in national, state, and local accountability systems. This has not been the case for many LEP students, who were excluded because of the technical challenges of assessing them. Even when they do include this population of students, many national, state, and local data collections are of little value to schools, students, or parents: Academic achievement assessments of Hispanic and LEP students conducted in English and with no accommodations for language proficiency usually provide testing officials little more than crude estimates of English proficiency and insignificant information about an LEP student's content knowledge and skills in other subjects. Often as a result of this inadequacy, LEP students are excluded from large-scale testing until their English proficiency allows them to participate in the assessment in ways that authentically measure their achievement. However, during the period of exclusion, LEP students may be forgotten or ignored. They may not receive instruction that would equip them to take these necessary tests—and education agencies are not held accountable for the plight or the success of these students.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the longest-running assessment of student academic achievement at the national level. Several studies are underway to provide useful information about Hispanic and LEP student academic achievement. In addition, the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement has budgeted nearly one million dollars to pilot a Spanish-language version of the NAEP mathematics assessment in coming years.

Direct Impact: NAEP data, which enable the Department to measure Hispanic student performance over time against a national standard and in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups, provide the basis for analyzing the academic achievement of Hispanic students.

Coordinated Program Review: There is a clear need to provide improved oversight of federal education programs. To address this need, a variety of Department offices—the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services—are conducting coordinated quality reviews.

Direct Impact: These coordinated reviews have an added benefit for Hispanic and LEP student populations, namely, specific interest in and monitoring of Hispanic and LEP participation and integration in federal programs. OBEMLA's participation in this coordinated review process has provided an insightful and much needed perspective on the participation of LEP students in diverse federal programs.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Voluntary National Assessments: New voluntary national assessments in reading and math will help to set high academic standards for all students and measure how well they meet these standards. The National Assessment Governing Board is developing the voluntary national test. At the same time, the National Academy of Sciences is studying issues related to the quality of test items and their use, making recommendations for practices and safeguards in the use of test results, and determining if an equivalency scale can be developed to link commercially available standardized tests and state assessments to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Direct Impact: Communities and parents will have information that tells them how well their children are performing in relation to a national standard. Access to this information will support parents' taking a more active role in reviewing the effectiveness of their schools in educating Hispanic and LEP students.

INCORPORATING THE FIVE GOALS THROUGH OUTREACH

As the current improvement efforts, partnerships and new initiatives described above clearly indicate, the Department's intent is to be more responsive and committed to an urgent goal: improving the quality of education for all Hispanic and LEP students so that they may get a solid foundation in elementary and secondary school and have access to college and learning for a lifetime. An additional, key component of the Department's strategies is to integrate the five goals through an ambitious program of outreach and collaboration. To extend the impact of the administration's initiatives, the Department seeks partnerships that will expand their effectiveness and the number of students reached. Community groups, businesses and professional organizations must also develop sustained key roles in communities to ensure that Hispanic and LEP students meet the highest academic standards and increase their engagement in school. The Department has instituted the following outreach activities:

La Opinión: The Department document, *Getting Ready for College Early*, is available in Spanish and English. About 200,000 copies of this document were distributed by *La Opinión*, the largest Spanish newspaper in the United States. *La Opinión* will also make the document available on computer disk to other newspapers as well as on its Web site.

Scholastic, Inc.: In partnership with the Department, Scholastic, Inc. created and disseminated 50,000 posters conveying the message "Reading is Power/Leer es Poder" to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month for 1997. The poster includes reading activities in English and Spanish that teachers and parents can reproduce for use in the classroom and at home, as well as a letter from the secretary of education and the president of Scholastic Inc. emphasizing the importance of reading.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC): LULAC, the nation's largest constituency-based organization of Hispanics, has committed to prepare its 110,000 members to tutor Hispanic students through the Department of Education's America Reads Challenge.

Univision: Univision, the country's largest Spanish-language television network, is partnering with the Department in several cities with large Hispanic populations to develop television spots and other types of televised programming that deliver to homes messages supporting education.

Toll-Free Number and Spanish Materials: The Department of Education is developing criteria to systematically determine which of its publications should be translated so that Spanish-speaking parents have better access to information about education. In addition, the Department will establish a toll-free number that is answered in Spanish to ensure that there are no barriers to Hispanic parents who want to find out how to better help their children succeed in school.

Inter-Departmental Council for Hispanic Educational Improvement: The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans will launch this new effort this

spring. Senior-level representatives from all departments will participate in the council and in working groups on early childhood, K-12, undergraduate and graduate education, and on community and federal employment to pursue aggressive programs to improve educational opportunities for the nation's Latino community.

Council of Great City Schools: The Department is collaborating with the Council of Great City Schools, which represents the nation's 50 largest city school districts, to promote high standards through the voluntary national assessments. As a result of the partnership, 15 major urban school districts, all with significant populations of Hispanic or LEP students, have committed to participate in the national assessments. Additionally, the Department is working with the Council to provide technical assistance to these districts in reaching high standards and increasing the likelihood that students will perform well on the national tests.

Coordinating Committee on LEP Research: The Department is creating an external committee to coordinate research on LEP students. The external committee, composed of researchers who bring expertise and interest to the problem of educating Hispanic and LEP populations, will assist the Department to focus its efforts on critical Hispanic and LEP education policy issues. An internal committee will aid the principal offices currently conducting research—or planning such research—on Hispanic and LEP issues to better integrate research efforts.

Corporation for National Service: In partnership with the Department, the Corporation is engaging volunteer tutors in literacy efforts in hundreds of communities nationwide. Increasing numbers of Hispanics serve in the AmeriCorps national service.

Conferences on LEP Assessment: The Department is hosting periodic conferences on the most pressing research issues affecting the development of assessments for LEP students. These conferences, which convene representatives from the research community, state education agencies, school districts, and advocacy organizations, focus on improved coordination and planning of research.

Clearinghouse on Successful Models for Dropout Prevention: The Department of Education, through its various research centers and other clearinghouses, has a great deal of resources relating to dropout prevention. This would provide school and community leaders with one-stop shopping for ideas and information on best practices for keeping kids in school.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, significant problems present obstacles to educating Hispanic and LEP students. At times these obstacles may seem insurmountable to the individuals, schools and organizations that grapple with them daily. The Department's response is meant to provide a sustained and national focus on these problems, tackling the obstacles with multifaceted, proactive, and aggressive strategies aimed at a paramount goal: educating all Hispanic and LEP students so that they meet high standards and prepare for full participation in an increasingly sophisticated job market and society.

In all its programs and initiatives, the Department believes that it must be both responsive and strategic on a variety of levels. A number of key Department-sponsored programs can have direct, positive effects on the education of Hispanic and LEP students and their families, and on adult Hispanic and LEP learners. However, we realize that the continued success of these programs depends upon the degree to which they are improved and refined over time by local leaders, educators and families—and supported throughout the nation by a variety of influential constituencies.

With its new initiatives the Department also acknowledges the need for action on a variety of fronts. This multifaceted plan for action covers a vast and difficult territory. It ranges from equipping the nation's teaching force to deal with increasing numbers of bilingual and LEP students to implementing a relevant program of research that can inform the best practices of the nation's schools. It also includes bold new ways to help families pay for college and needed training.

In all of these initiatives and strategies, the Department seeks the active collaboration of the nation's educators, researchers, families, businesses, and community, state and national organizations as well as the help of individuals. This collaboration and help can bring results through a variety of tutoring and other volunteer activities, making a significant impact on the lives of the nation's students.

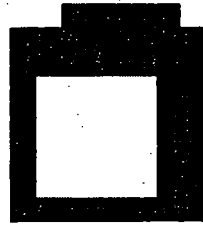
Finally, the Department's strategies for outreach supplement its current programs and new initiatives, connecting its five goals in a plan to draw upon the expertise of key community organizations, universities, distinguished researchers, and individuals connected to the Hispanic and LEP communities. With fundamental and necessary programs in place, with new and far-reaching initiatives, and with concerted collaboration and outreach throughout the nation, the Department will support educating all Hispanic and LEP students to high standards. If we, together, work toward this far-reaching, yet realistic, attainable goal for Hispanic and LEP students, they can have a productive future in the world's marketplace.

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Hispanic Dropout Project:

No More Excuses

Dear Secretary Riley:

It is with a sense of great urgency that I forward to you the final report of the Hispanic Dropout Project, *No More Excuses*. With this report, we have fulfilled the charge that you gave to us in our letters of appointment to the project and at our meeting on September 18, 1995.

Since we first met with you, thousands of this nation's Hispanic students have left school without a diploma. Some left because they felt that other life options were more viable; others left because they felt that they were being pushed out; and still others left because of family obligations. Yet almost all these students left school because no one had established individual relationships with each of them, communicated high academic expectations to them, and provided them with meaningful opportunities to achieve those expectations.

We mourn their truncated education. We worry about their future lives, their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations, their access to this nation's most cherished democratic institutions, and their full participation in the economic, labor, social, and other spheres of life. We share with you a concern for the impact of their inadequate education on this nation's economic and social systems. And we are outraged at the conditions that made possible such a shocking state of affairs in the first place.

In our report to you, we note that parents, teachers, and other school personnel have central roles in supporting this nation's Hispanic youth to complete school and to have a worthwhile education in doing so. What is more, we outline steps that need to be taken by policy makers, the business community, and the larger voting public to support the work of our nation's schools in educating and graduating their Hispanic youth. These efforts will require a concerted and long-term investment of human and fiscal resources; the problem of Hispanic school dropout will not be solved within an election cycle nor within a time frame that lends itself easily to political grandstanding and sound bite news reporting.

For all of us in the project, it has been an honor to serve the nation in this effort. What is more, we feel an obligation to the countless people who shared their expertise with us, who testified at our open hearings, and who hosted our visits to sites around the country. We feel an even stronger obligation to the younger siblings of the dropouts with whom we spoke and, in general, to all Hispanic students whose educational experiences are less than what should be their due in a nation that prides itself on the treatment of its children. We stand prepared to support meaningful follow up to this project. The time for excuses is over; there is much work to be done.

Sincerely yours,

Walter G. Secada
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Director, Hispanic Dropout Project

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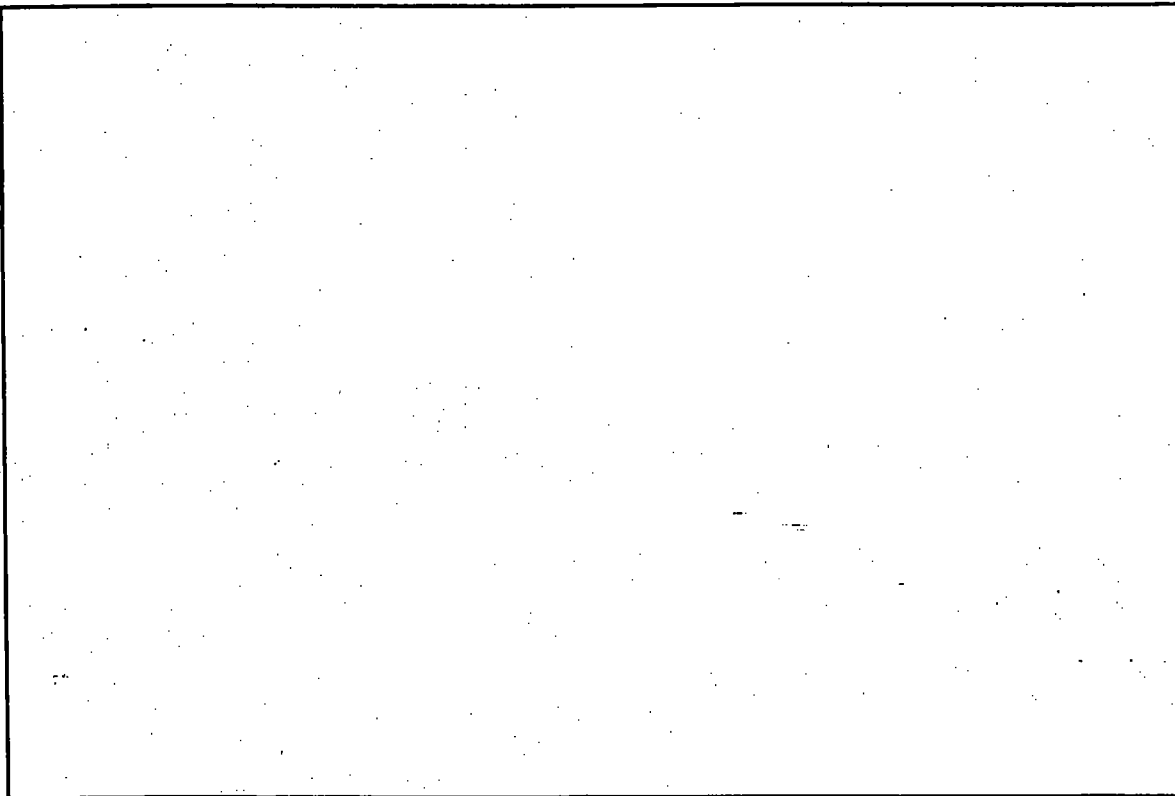


The material in this report that is marked by the icon at left or that is boxed represents the views of those we heard in the field and the knowledge of those whose work we consulted.

BACKGROUND

Nearly one in five of our nation's Hispanics between the ages of 16 and 24 who ever enrolled in a United States school left school without either a high school diploma or an alternative certificate such as a GED, according to the most recently available data from the United States Census Bureau. If we consider all of this nation's Hispanics, including immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools, the Hispanic dropout rate reaches a staggering 30 percent. While accounting for just 56 percent of all U.S. immigrants, Hispanics account for nearly 90 percent of all immigrant dropouts.

While the dropout rate for other school-aged populations has declined, more or less steadily, over the last 25 years, the overall Hispanic dropout rate started higher and has remained between 30 and 35 percent during that same time period. As a result, today's dropout rate for Hispanics is 2.5 times the rate for blacks and 3.5 times the rate for white non-Hispanics. Moreover, of Hispanics who have ever enrolled in U.S. schools, proportionately more of them seek alternative high school diplomas than do whites; that is, they may get high school diplomas, but even Hispanics who get diplomas are more likely to leave school in order to do so.¹ The situation is far more serious than any of these odds and rates suggest because they apply to a rapidly growing number of our nation's students.



As with other students, the odds of school completion rise for Hispanics with gains in factors such as family income and parent education. Nevertheless, reports and studies document that gaps in school completion rates between Hispanic and non-Hispanic students remain even after controlling for the social class background of students, for their language proficiency, and for their immigrant status. *Regardless of your position in society, if you are an Hispanic student, you are more likely to drop out of school and not earn a diploma than if you are a non-Hispanic American in a similar position.*²

For students, dropping out forecloses a lifetime of opportunities—and in turn makes it far more likely that their own children will grow up in poverty and be placed at risk. For business, this means a lack of high-skilled employees, fewer entrepreneurs, and poorer markets. For communities, this cumulates the risk of civic breakdown. The high-wage low-skill factory jobs that lifted generations of Americans from poverty and empowered them to buy homes, send their children to college, and take care of themselves and their families are little more than a memory in our age of the silicon chip and global economy. In economic progress, as in strategic security, education is truly America's first line of defense. In other words, *the career and employment prospects for dropouts are dismal.*

"Those who do not complete high school face difficulties in making successful steps in other transitions to adult life." In National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (NCES 96-863), p. 51. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education

As Thomas Jefferson said, education is the anvil of democracy. More than ever before, democracy depends not on 30-second sound bites from politicians on the cutting edge of rhetoric, but on an informed citizenry who can see through the spin and choose effective options to solve our nation's problems. From toxic waste to environmental protection to economic progress, understanding these issues is fundamental. Dropouts have among the lowest voting rates and among the lowest levels of civic participation. Lack of an informed, active citizenry is dangerous to the American prospect.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics are projected to become the largest ethnic minority in the United States by the early twenty-first century. If our country stays on its current path, the low rate of Hispanic school completion means that a large segment of the country's soon-to-be largest minority group will be underprepared for employment, for making personal choices, and for engagement in civic life as is required for this democracy to grow and adapt as the founders intended it to. Dropouts diminish our democracy, our society, and their own opportunities.



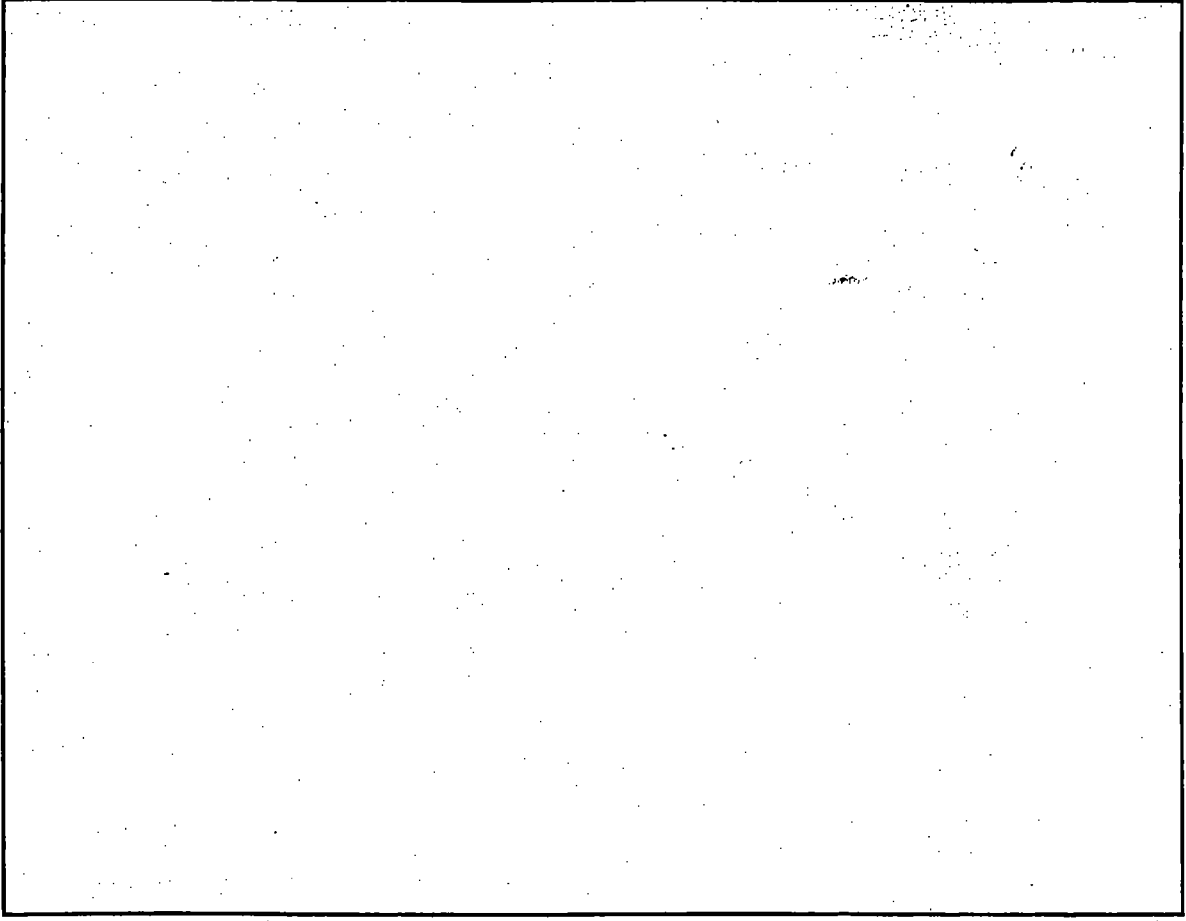
"Students...see dropping out as wrong; they see it as representing failure, a problem. This is of interest because it tells us that these Latino students (who are still in school) do not want to drop out. This counters the assumption of many who argue that Latinos are not really very interested in finishing school."

In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (pp. 89-90). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Dropping out is not a random act. According to some observers, school dropout is the logical outcome of the social forces that limit Hispanics' roles in society. Many Hispanic students live in the nation's most economically distressed areas. They attend overcrowded schools in physical disrepair and with limited educational materials. They see the devastating effects of their elders' limited employment opportunities and job ceilings. Hispanic students encounter stereotypes, personal prejudice, and social bias that is often part of larger anti-immigrant forces in this society. For many Hispanics, the United States does not appear to be a society of opportunities. Not surprisingly—faced with evidence of lingering institutional bias against Hispanics—these students figure: *The American Dream is not for me. Why bother?* And, of course, they drop out.

Hispanic school dropout has been portrayed as all of the above, and more. Although various aspects of this crisis have been highlighted by different researchers and writers, all agree on one thing: *The Hispanic dropout rate is shockingly and unacceptably high.*

If the nation does nothing, this unacceptable state of affairs can only worsen. The Census reports that because of demographic growth there will be at least a million more elementary students—many of them Hispanic—in our schools by the end of the decade. Without quick and concerted intervention, technology, trade, and changing policy will increase the number of children, many of them Hispanic, growing in poverty. Without adequate funding that is *effectively* used—particularly in the high-poverty schools attended by many Hispanic children—classes will become



even more overcrowded than we have witnessed recently, instructional materials will be increasingly out-of-date, and schools' ability to attract and hold effective teachers will decrease. Although connection between students and their teachers and role models is important, the number of minority college students entering teaching is declining. There are shortages of teachers with meaningful proficiency in more than English. The retirement of the large proportion of current teachers originally hired to teach the baby boomers will intensify attrition of the teachers with the most classroom experience.

If the same proportion of Hispanic students is still dropping out tomorrow, America will have many more dropouts—at a time when education is crucial for employability. America's young people are not going away. If they drop out at the rates that their older siblings do today, the consequences to this nation and its institutions will be devastating.

This is also an opportunity to make a difference. We know much about what works and can build on this know-how. Effective teaching and schools change lives. Support and professional skills development for today's teachers and for the large number of teachers who must be hired in the next handful of years can make much of the difference.

The Hispanic Dropout Project

In September 1995, United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley invited seven individuals to take part in a special project to study issues related to the problem of Hispanic student dropout. The secretary's charge to the Hispanic Dropout Project—as this effort came to be known—incorporated three broad goals: (a) to increase public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout; (b) to develop a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, community, business, and other stakeholder groups; and (c) to support the development of a network of stakeholders interested in this issue to support actions taken after the project ended. Because the Hispanic Dropout Project is not a federal commission, we were not invited to make recommendations addressed to the federal government. In spite of this limitation on the project's scope of work, we realize that many recommendations are more likely to be implemented with supporting action by the federal government, as well as by state and local governments, school districts, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties.

Final Report

This report constitutes the Hispanic Dropout Project's culminating activity. It is intended to raise public awareness of the issues of Hispanic student dropout. This report contains our findings and recommendations at local, state, and national levels, and is addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups.

Throughout the entire project, we tried to reflect the knowledge and views of the various individuals and constituency groups that hosted our site visits, provided witness to what is happening in our nation's schools, and participated in our open discussions on these matters. With their varied experiences and broad range of views, these students, parents, teachers, volunteers, social service and business representatives, and other concerned citizens have been working on improving the education of Hispanic students. Their actions and words breathe life into the stolid statistics found in so many research studies. They make the facts matter.



"My parents sacrificed a lot for me. That's why I want to make good. For my kids to start somewhere higher than I did." Student leader at HDP student leader forum, New York City

What we saw and what people told us confirmed what well-established research has also found: Popular stereotypes—which would place the blame for school dropout on Hispanic students, their families, and language background, and that would allow people to shrug their shoulders as if to say that this was an enormous, insoluble problem or one that would go away by itself—are just plain wrong.



"I got throwed out, mainly." Arnie (former 10th-grade student). In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p.167). New York: Cambridge University Press.

We in the Hispanic Dropout Project developed a new appreciation for Yogi Berra's "*déjà vu, all over again*." Much of what we have to report to America is *not* new. The roots of our findings run deep through the decades of extensive research gathered in many parts of the nation (see Appendix E for a bibliography). Much of the work on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, and dropout prevention applies; but then, so does much of the work on effective schools, school restructuring, school finance, and equity. Over the years, many of our findings have been repeated by Hispanic and non-Hispanic researchers, practitioners, and advocacy groups.

What troubles us and adds to our collective impatience in submitting this report is precisely that so much of this has appeared so often in the research literature and has been urged so often by those who care about student outcomes. Yet the nation has failed to put this knowledge to work in more than a few sites. There are lighthouses and beacons of excellence, yet policymakers and schools keep missing the message, sailing through the daily grind of ineffective and alienating practices, and piling up on the shoals of failure. Our nation's children, its most valuable resource

for its future, pay the price. We have tried to mix research that identifies what works in preventing school dropout with our other activities and to synthesize our findings in a form that can provide a basis for concerted action.



"Dropping out is sometimes a healthy response to an intolerable situation."

Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

We were also struck by the misinformation and myths about Hispanic dropouts. These myths excuse inaction by turning children, parents, and their communities into victims so that educators dare not aspire to Hispanics' achieving educational excellence lest they be accused of blaming the victim. These myths also excuse inaction by demonizing Hispanic students and dropouts, their families, teachers, schools, districts, the state, business, and the community—thereby undermining the basis for teamwork. The stereotype that demonizes Hispanics raises the question: What can be accomplished with a demon who cannot or will not understand, who does not want to learn, who is antisocial and untrustworthy, and who just doesn't care?



"College is for the good, American persons, but not for me. I didn't think that I could have part of the American dream." Student testimony, Albuquerque

One goal of this report is to debunk these stereotypes, myths, and excuses. Published research, the testimony we gathered, and the sites we visited clearly show that something can be done about Hispanic dropout. The nation's task is to ensure that what works for Hispanic excellence in education is not confined to isolated research studies or limited to a few lighthouse programs.

Each of the following sections focuses on the role of key actors in solving the problem of Hispanic student dropout: the students themselves; their parents and families; their teachers; schools; policymakers at the district, state, and federal levels; and business and the extended community. Each section also discusses the excuses commonly used to justify inaction and the ways that our findings contradict the myths on which the excuses are based. We end each section with a list of recommendations for that actor.

Change for the better can begin with the actions of any adult player. But the actions of all the players must work in concert to produce a move forward, to support change in other arenas, and to achieve longer lasting and more extensive improvements in Hispanic dropout rates than can be achieved through solitary action.

HISPANIC STUDENTS



"People need to respect and like children. I have seen teachers say things to kids that no one should have to put up with." Speaker at HDP public hearings, San Diego

Hispanic students deserve to be treated as if they matter—as if they have abilities and talents to contribute to our society and as if they can be responsible for achieving excellence given the chance to do so. The Hispanic Dropout Project has two major findings and recommendations involving Hispanic students:

- Schools and their staffs must connect themselves to Hispanic students and their families, provide Hispanic students with a quality education based on high standards, and provide backup options to move past obstacles on the way to achieving those high standards.
- Students and their families deserve respect. In order to accomplish the first goal, schools, their personnel, policy stakeholders, and the larger society must have respect for these children. In many cases, this means fundamentally changing people's conceptions of Hispanic students and their families. This country's Hispanic students are *ours* and they are *smart*. Hispanic families have social capital on which to build. Hispanic students deserve meaningful opportunities to learn and to succeed in later life. They deserve support in school.



"They treat you with respect here. They talk with you individually. Not just about school, but what's on your mind. I get respect from the tutors. I get it and try to give it back." Student in an alternative placement program, Las Cruces

To think of and portray Hispanic students as poor things who cannot achieve—as "pobrecitos"—is patronizing and wrong. Treating students and their families as deviant or deficient blames the victim and just doesn't work. Neither belief is correct or helpful in designing programs and intervention strategies.



"The respect and value in which students were held was [sic] extremely important in separating the schools with low Latino dropout rates from those with high rates." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform, p. 79). New York: Fordham University.

Some stereotypes that have been used to blame Hispanic students for dropping out of school suggest that they do not care about school, do not want to learn, do not come to school ready to learn, use drugs, belong to gangs, engage in violence, cannot achieve, have cultural backgrounds that are incompatible with schools, do not know English, are illegal immigrants, and in general, do not merit help or to be taken seriously. Alternative stereotypes portray Hispanic students as victims who, unable to do much about their conditions, cannot help but drop out of school.

According to these latter myths, Hispanic students can do little or nothing about their education because they are poor, are the children of drug users, are victims of violence and abuse, do not speak (read or write) English well, encounter cultural barriers in school or in the larger society, or, through no fault of their own, lack some essential ingredient for success.

 *"My life, my heritage has been a cycle of poverty, of goals that were never achieved. I want to break that cycle. I want to achieve for my family, so that my parents can be proud of me."* Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

Contrary to both sorts of myths, the vast majority of Hispanic students want to learn. They value education and try hard to do well in school. As is the case for the larger society, there are a small number of Hispanic youth who engage in antisocial behaviors. We do not condone such behaviors: If such youth are to succeed not only in school, but also later in life, they must change, and we must help them to change.

 *"I want to be a change agent. Things don't have to be like these stereotypes."*
Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

On the other hand, beliefs that paint Hispanics, en masse, as social misfits say more about how whole groups of people can be stereotyped in our society than they do about the vast majority of individuals within those groups. The Hispanic students (and their families) whom we encountered did not give up in the face of the barriers rooted in personal and institutional forms of bias and outright racism that they encounter. Instead, they worked hard to overcome those barriers.

 *"A persistent theme. . . is the observation that our educational system requires failure of some in order to assure success for others. . . . We spend enormous amounts of money and time locating children that we perceive as predestined for failure, often because they do not meet the expectations of the cultural patterns of the mainstream."* In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (pp. 2-3) New York: The Falmer Press.

Stereotypes hold that much should not be expected of Hispanic children, as if providing them with challenging opportunities to achieve educational excellence will only drive them out of school in increasing numbers. Quite the contrary: The Hispanic Dropout Project found that Hispanic students are most likely to learn when curricular content is challenging and meaningful. In visits to early childhood, elementary, and alternative high school programs, we observed that Hispanic students were very engaged when working with such content.

In our visits to less effective schools, many older students complained about being bored and not challenged in their classes. They complained of dull, dumbed down, and irrelevant curricula. The clear message they had internalized was one of low expectations, worsened by unpleasant, adverse physical circumstances and overcrowded classrooms. Students and dropouts alike com-

plained that they could not ask questions and get them answered in class, leading them to believe that their teachers did not really care about them.



*"Perhaps the most important step in fostering adolescent development and achievement is the improvement of education. ... Changes in policy are important only if they contribute to more effective school and classroom environments in which students are strongly motivated to work hard at challenging learning tasks." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 205). Washington, DC: National Academy Press*

The existence of such schools and classrooms raises the question: Why would *any rational person* stay in such a setting? Students' reports to the Hispanic Dropout Project and our own observations during site visits corroborate what is reported in the research on tracking and on the instructional quality of lower tracks—that is, the everyday in-school experiences of too many Hispanic students fail to engage their minds. In contrast to their criticisms of their secondary schools, many students interviewed by the Hispanic Dropout Project praised volunteers and teachers in their schools and in alternative placements who made course work relevant to their lives and, thereby, compelling enough to make them want to achieve.



"What is there to hope for? If I get out of school, what kind of a job will I get?"
Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

Students often complete high school because it promises opportunities—such as a good job, a military career, or postsecondary education. For too many Hispanic students, these futures don't look like realistic options. Hispanic high school students look around themselves only to see that their siblings and older friends who just graduated are earning less than their classmates who dropped out and have been working a couple of years. Many Hispanic students often need to contribute materially to their families, and this need for a paycheck often causes even successful students to respond to daily crises rather than to maintain a future orientation. If students need jobs to meet their responsibilities, schools should help them get part-time job placements and work with businesses to develop effective schedules and learning opportunities that help students, their employers, and the schools. The workplace, in its turn, needs to change from being a threat to a student's learning and finishing school to being an effective part of a high-quality education for a non-traditional student.



*"In general, there appears to be a powerful economic incentive for students to finish high school. But is this economic incentive similar for Hispanics and Chicanos as for Whites and other groups? Recent data suggest that the answer may be no...unemployment rates in October 1985 for White youths who dropped out of high school during the 1984-85 school year were almost twice as high as for high school graduates from the year before who were not enrolled in college. But for Hispanics, dropouts had an unemployment rate only slightly higher than high school graduates." In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of**

research and policy issues. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 77). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

The point is that schools and adults can help students envision better lives, help open options, and provide the connections that strengthen learning and build futures that work. To achieve these goals, the Hispanic Dropout Project—based on our observations and research review—recommends the following minimum set of guarantees for students:

1. ***Each individual Hispanic student should have someone who understands how schools work and who is willing to take personal responsibility for ensuring that the student makes it in and through school.***

Hispanic students who stayed in school (despite peer pressure, economic pressure, and other factors that pushed out many of their friends) often pointed to someone in that school—a teacher, coach, some other school staff member, someone from the larger community—whose personal interest in their finishing school nurtured their individual sense of self-worth and supported their efforts to stay in school.



"Students often say that one significant person took an interest in them." Testimony at HDP open forum, Las Cruces

2. ***Hispanic students should receive a high-quality education that guarantees that all students leave third grade able to read. They should experience curricula that are relevant and interesting, convey high expectations, and demand student investment in learning. They should understand the options that are available to them so that they can make informed decisions about their lives. They should be able to envision their futures with confidence based on an education that provided them with the tools needed to make their visions into reality.***



"The first task should be to determine what kinds of education and training would be appropriate in terms of enhancing their ability to live productive lives within this society. . . . Some of the successful dropouts designed their own curriculum: they enrolled in a training program for mechanics, got on-the-job training in supervising others, took a full-time job in a hosiery mill, but found time to complete a GED. For these subjects, the "school" they created for themselves could tolerate them and they could tolerate the intellectual and attitudinal discipline. One challenge is for schools to create opportunities within the context of the standard curriculum...The second and related comment concerns the school and behavioral problems cited by the dropouts themselves. They typically attribute leaving school to specific difficulties they had with the standard curriculum and/or school restrictions." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 186). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Junior high school is too late to *begin* dropout prevention efforts. Successful experiences must begin in the early grades and continue throughout Hispanic students' schooling. On the other hand, early interventions, *by themselves*, are not enough. Later efforts should build on the successes of early interventions.



"The national investment in Head Start and other early intervention programs, while laudatory, constitutes only a first step in the solution." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Older students who had dropped out of school often thought that they had no other choice. School personnel either did not know about or did not tell students about alternative programs because of fiscal pressures to remain quiet about those programs. A former dropout quit his original school because, as he starkly put it, "It was either school or dropping out." He entered an alternative school only because a friend told him about it.



"Interventions must be intensive, comprehensive, coordinated and sustained. Anything less is naive and will show only marginal results. There is no 'cure all' or 'fix the kid' phenomenon. ... When special intervention is stopped before high school graduation, one can expect high-risk youth who have become successful to once again be at risk for school failure and drop out." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A67.

A former dropout stated that one reason many Hispanics leave school is that they believe that the American dream is for someone else, not for them. The effective dropout interventions that we reviewed included all students in that dream. They provided Hispanic students chances to meet and talk with Hispanic college students and successful Hispanics, and to visit college campuses. Successful interventions also helped students to plan for life after high school in work, the military, or continuing education.

Hispanic youth need to be coached, not rescued. They should be able to take credit for what they achieve. They need encouragement and opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and later lives, to set long-range, real-life goals, and to take the steps needed to achieve those goals. Adults who advocate for students, who encourage students to dream about their futures, who mentor students on how to achieve those dreams, and who hold students accountable for their actions can provide needed support for students to make their dreams come true.

3. Schools should be responsive to the behaviors and needs of individual children. They should target Hispanic students for pro-social roles.

When respect, responsibility, membership, and opportunities for leadership are denied to students by their schools, then gangs and antisocial behaviors often fill the gap. The most effective schools that we visited gave students opportunities to assume important roles in school and in helping other students. They expected and often received the best from their Hispanic students. Effective schools also realize that real students have real problems; and hence, they provide flexibility, support, and backup strategies to turn things around when problems arise. For children, schools and effective support networks can make an important difference.



"Explicit in good practice models is the recognition that young people, like all people, need to feel a sense of comfort and need to be offered a sense of autonomy in order to profit from program teachings and experiences. . . . Consistent demonstrations of caring and high expectations for young people are also a prerequisite. Many programs are also providing young people with choice and 'voice' regarding program operation, and, in response to the racial and ethnic diversity of adolescents, many practitioners incorporate cultural traditions and values into programs." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 219). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

- 4. *Hispanic students have the right to schools and classrooms that are safe, healthy, free from intimidation, and inviting—that is, where their language and culture are treated as resources.***

National statistics show that many Hispanic students attend some of the most dangerous schools in America. Schools should provide students with positive and appealing alternatives to joining gangs or engaging in other antisocial behaviors. What is more, school should be a place where a student's language and cultural backgrounds are treated with respect.



"I would have been worse off if I had stayed in school. Others have dropped out to try to help their own futures." Testimony at HDP forum, Albuquerque

- 5. *Hispanics' schools should have the resources necessary to provide safe environments and a high-quality education.***

Troubled schools lack basic resources. From fights breaking out due to jostling in overcrowded halls, to filthy restrooms, to long-ignored fire hazards, the basic infrastructure for effective schooling is too often missing from the schools attended by Hispanic students. Outdated textbooks, laughable lab facilities, antiquated libraries, and the absence of a challenging academic curriculum and the requisite instructional resources all bear the implicit message that these children just don't count. America cannot afford this.



"In Maryland, for instance, the one inner-city district (Baltimore) and five rural districts each spend less than \$4,500 per student, compared with three suburban districts that spend \$6,000-\$7,500 per student. Thus, schools in the poorer Mary-

land districts have about \$45,000-\$60,000 less each year for each classroom of 30 students than schools in affluent districts. Per pupil expenditures directly affect the availability of textbooks, laboratory equipment, resource rooms, library books, and a range of other educational resources. . . . In one national survey, for example, in districts with more than one-third of the students from families below the poverty line, 59 percent of fourth grade teachers reported a lack of resources, compared with 16 percent in districts with no students below the poverty line."

In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993): Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings (pp. 106-107). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Hispanic parents and families are frequently perceived as being indifferent to their children's education, moving too frequently, not speaking or wanting to learn how to speak (read, or write) English, and being too undereducated to properly educate their children. Likewise, parents and families are often portrayed as victims unable to do anything about the racism they experience and unable to understand American cultural norms. Parents are said to be ignorant, poor, products of bad schools, in conflict with their children, and in general, culturally deprived.

The schools that we saw working effectively with Hispanic parents prove that these stereotypes and descriptions are wrong. Our observations are backed up by the testimony of countless parents, both individually and through the community-based organizations they participated in, and by the extensive research on the importance of effective parent involvement. Large-scale national studies and targeted research show that, contrary to stereotypes, Hispanic parents and families highly value learning and seek to effectively support their children in school. What students told us reinforced the research.



"There were deep chasms in the relationship and communication between school and home. School personnel had many negative misconceptions about the motivations and values of parents. There was widespread belief that parents did not sufficiently value education and that they were unwilling to give sufficient time to rearing their children and participating in school activities. On the other hand, we found most parents to be fearful and alienated from school authorities while at the same time assigning expertise and responsibility to school personnel for educating their children. However, when parents were approached with a genuine desire to serve them and their family, we found that almost all parents were exceedingly open to suggestion and to becoming more involved in directing their adolescent and monitoring school performance. Parents, far more than school or community personnel, were willing to implement suggestions from project researchers." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A66 (emphasis added).

Hispanic students, whether they stayed in school or had dropped out and then returned, almost unanimously reported that they wanted to "make it" as a way to thank their parents and families for the sacrifices that they had made on the students' behalf. These students wanted to make their parents proud of them. They wanted to better themselves and did not want to disappoint their parents by quitting school. In addition, one-time dropouts spoke about their parents' disappointment in them as well as the love, support, pressure, and encouragement that they received from their parents at first to stay in school, then to return to school, and always to try hard and to learn.

The Hispanic Dropout Project's hearings were attended by Hispanic parents who were anxious about their children's educational futures. Many of them had found out about the hearings by word of mouth. Their testimony demonstrated their readiness to be involved in their children's education.

 *"Many high-risk children and their parents are blamed and not treated with respect by educators. Highest risk students and their parents are very responsive to genuine and meaningful offers of help despite cultural, language, and economic barriers."*

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A69.

Parents said that, in order to be involved, they must often overcome school resistance and hostility to that involvement. At almost every site that we visited, Hispanic parents said that their children's schools did not take them or their concerns very seriously. One mother recounted being told of her child's suspension hearing just 30 minutes before it was held. Risking her job, she rushed to the school, only to wait all morning in the school office and to be told abruptly that the meeting had been postponed. One father did, in fact, lose his job because of the time he spent trying to keep his daughter from being, in his words, pushed out. Another mother, in flawless English, reported how her child's principal would not speak directly to her, supposedly because her accent made it too difficult for school personnel to understand her.

 *"Schools also differ on the extent to which parents are involved in school decision making, conferences with teachers, and home-school instructional programs. Over the past decade, studies consistently demonstrate the positive effects of such programs on student achievement, yet parents from low-income neighborhoods, especially racial and ethnic minorities, are least likely to participate. The reasons for this lack of participation include not only the lack of funds, but also different levels of school commitment, cultural and language barriers, and time constraints and stress on poor working families."* In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 108). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Although community groups and activists expressed anger—sometimes bordering on rage—at how schools treat parents, they also expressed determination to press on with their efforts to ensure that parental concerns would be heard. What is more, parents found help and strength by joining and working with such groups.

Hispanic parents spoke eloquently about their dreams and wishes for their children's futures, and the roles that schools must play in educating their children. In a Head Start program, in community and recreation centers that provided social services for students, and in community action groups—all visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project—parents volunteered as tutors, instructional assistants, fundraisers, program implementers, and in many other roles.

When Hispanic parents see clear benefits to their children from their participation and when parents are given meaningful roles and responsibilities, many parents will do more than asked to do. One of the few longitudinal studies of a successful dropout prevention program reported that Hispanic parents cooperated much more readily with the program's recommendations than did the schools and the teachers.³

Strategies That Families Use To Keep (Hispanic) Adolescents in School

1. Maintain parent in charge;
2. Recognize a two-way influence [between parents and their children];
3. Set limits;
4. Monitor [their children's] actions, whereabouts, feelings;
5. Draw the line about peers;
6. Send continuous positive messages [to their children];
7. Stay involved in school.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 12-14). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project finds that empowering parents to support their children's education and to work for better schools is fundamental.

1. Hispanic parents and families need to negotiate their children's education system.

In today's world, Hispanic parents must advocate for their children because no one else will—or can—do the job as well as they. Beyond individual advocacy, parents can find strength through active membership in church and community groups that rely on their size and political clout to ensure that parents' concerns are taken seriously and that provide necessary services such as recreational and after-school tutoring programs.



"To better understand how both schools and families influence achievement and dropout behavior, one must focus on the interaction between families and schools. This may be particularly important for understanding the achievement of Chicano children. For instance, research suggests that in the U.S. lower social class children in general and Hispanic children in particular often face learning environments in school that foster poor academic performance and may be dysfunctional to the type of learning style and reward structure found in the home."

In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues*. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 75). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

2. *Schools should recruit Hispanic parents and extended families into a genuine partnership of equals for educating Hispanic students.*

The most impressive schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project aggressively recruited parents to work with them in educating their children. Parent roles were authentic and appropriate. For instance, school personnel helped graduating students and their parents to understand and to fill out various financial aid forms for college. At the same school, parents whose children engaged in inappropriate behaviors were helped to recognize how their own behaviors enabled their children to avoid responsibility. When those parents knew what to look for, they monitored their children's behaviors and held them accountable for avoiding antisocial activities and for getting to school on time. These parents' behaviors show that they understood that their advocacy for their children and their partnership with the school continued at home by the parents' fulfilling their side of the bargain.

Conversely, schools that were less successful or seemed to be actively pushing students out were also those schools which, by their messages and practices, seemed to actively blame parents and families for their children's failures. Parents bitterly complained about such schools.



"The bottom line: the local school board and local power brokers should not disenfranchise parents. They should give them the power to run their schools for their neighborhoods." Testimony at HDP hearings, San Diego

3. *Hispanic parents should be helped to envision a future for their children and a reasonable means by which to plan for and achieve that future.*

One of the most powerful incentives mentioned by Hispanic students was their parents' and families' determination that these students have better lives than the older generation had. Parents want better lives for their children; schools should help parents learn what is available for their children and help parents provide these opportunities for their children. That parents can motivate their children and that schools can provide information about opportunities for students should provide the basis for the aforementioned partnership.



"My mom was always supportive of me. She pushed me to go to school. She wouldn't let me stay home. So, I ditched. Finally, she saw the problem and took me out of the school. But she pushed me to go to another school until this place [an alternative school setting] helped me to graduate." Former dropout at HDP open forum, Albuquerque

TEACHERS

Teachers and other school staff can and must make a difference in students' lives. In spite of this imperative, many teachers feel powerless. Excuses such as "The problem is too big for one teacher. How can I, a single teacher, hope to overcome the effects of students' backgrounds?" are common. This particular excuse portrays teachers as helpless when dealing with students who are not ready or do not want to learn. Hispanic students are said to lack something (usually English); their aspirations or those of their parents are said not to support schooling.



"Teachers only want to teach from 8:00 to 3:00. They just follow the contract."

Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Teachers' overcrowded classrooms are said to be the reason that they can attend to just so many students. Hence, a type of academic triage results: Some students must be sacrificed so that others can be taught. Not surprisingly, those who are sacrificed are portrayed as uneducable.



"There is no support from teachers for the students. Teachers don't believe in the students. One of the main problems I saw in high school is that teachers don't want to pay attention." Student in alternative placement, Las Cruces

On the other hand, Hispanic students at project hearings across the country leveled the most damning charge possible against some of their teachers: "They just don't care."

Neither extreme is the rule. During Hispanic Dropout Project open hearings and visits to schools, we encountered many teachers who made a difference in their students' lives. These caring individuals were trying their hardest to help Hispanic students succeed. Some had developed teaching practices designed to engage their students. Others provided counseling and mentored students. All constantly worked to improve how they taught their students. All communicated a deep sense of caring, high expectations, respect, and commitment to their students.



"I saw how teachers invested in me. I felt like a person. The teachers' personal investment in me meant so much to me." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Excellent teachers are very aware of the challenges that their students face. They are very realistic about students' individual situations. What seemed to distinguish teachers who made a difference from those who did not was that the former teachers used knowledge of Hispanic students' academic, social, and psychological characteristics as a foundation and a source of competence on which to build. These teachers passionately believed that, because of their teaching and personal concern for their students, they made a difference in their students' lives. Students and parents agreed.



"I got to know them [personnel at an alternative setting] as family. They showed

me different things that I could do besides drop out. So I went back to school and finished in three years." Former dropout at HDP public forum, Albuquerque

Students reported that teachers who really cared about them as individuals often provided them with the inspiration and personal support needed to get through hard times. When asked why they stayed in school, students (many with friends who had dropped out of school) pointed to a teacher or other school person as having taken a special interest in them and nurtured their dreams for the future.

Less successful teachers do not really understand their Hispanic students' lives. They do not use what they know about their students as a foundation on which to build. Instead, they use what they know about their students to explain away failure.



"The school staff was extremely resistant to change and to being challenged by change. School problems were perceived to be caused by deficiencies on the part of students and parents. The need for fundamental change was believed to reside within students and parents." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A65-A66.

Students know the difference and respond positively to the good teachers that they encounter. Instead of scurrying out of class as soon the bell's ringing marked its end, students with effective teachers would stay to ask a question, to discuss a new insight about the day's work, or simply to share something that had happened outside of school with the teacher. We saw such student behaviors in secondary mathematics classes, in alternative school settings, and with middle-school generalist teachers.



"Even when a school was not particularly sensitive to Latino cultural differences — as was the case at School B — the critical difference was whether the school's staff thought the student was worth teaching." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 79). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Hispanic students and their parents expect teachers to engage students in challenging content. In contrast to their complaints about low tracks, low expectations, and dumbed-down, boring and irrelevant curricula, Hispanic students and their parents who were interviewed by the project praised teachers who made material interesting and relevant. The students craved being challenged by their teachers.



"At School D, students would begin by hiring teachers who care and by making classes more fun. They would remove a large number of the faculty and replace

them with teachers who are patient and interested in the needs of all the students, not only a select few. Importantly, they would provide the school with more bilingual teachers." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 86). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Students expected teachers to help them with the subject matter. Many students complained about not getting help when they needed it and, as a result, becoming frustrated. They talked about raising their hands or calling for help during class but not getting assistance because the teacher was busy with someone else. Students realized that large class size and the fact that secondary teachers teach many courses militate against teachers being able to help them.

Teachers may send unintentional messages to students when they fail to respond directly to requests for help. Some students interviewed by the project, for instance, reported that their teachers suggested that they get academic help from a tutoring service which met during breaks and after-school. Such help is too little and too late for a student who, because of frustration, has given up trying to understand. To the student who recounted that "My teacher told me she was too busy and that I should get help from the school's tutoring service," the teacher had simply dismissed her request.



"Student preferences are viewed by school staff as non-essentials, which contributes to student alienation." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A68.

When asked about the features of alternative schools or programs that they most appreciated, almost every student pointed to the personalized relationships that they developed with their teachers and the individualized attention that they received. Many students realized that this attention was possible because of the smaller class size. These students also spoke about the mutual respect and caring that developed between themselves and the schools' staffs. This respect was communicated to the students in countless ways by adults who provided mentoring. A volunteer at a social service agency would tell students that, like them, he too had dropped out of school but had later achieved his goals by believing in himself and being persistent. A retired teacher insisted that all of her students could learn to read, and she provided them with the support to do so.



"Many disadvantaged youth feel ignored or unimportant in school—as if no one at school cares about them. . . . [Intervention] efforts [typically] rely upon three broad strategies: (1) strategies to link students to adults in the school, including mentor programs and efforts to reorganize school schedules to promote closer contact between teachers and students; (2) strategies to link students to other students in the school, including extracurricular activities and orientation pro-

grams; and (3) strategies to link students to the school as an institution, including fair and equitable policies and greater student choice over their school programs." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

1. ***Teachers should teach content so that it interests and challenges Hispanic students. They should help students to learn that content. They should communicate high expectations, respect, and interest in each of their students. They should understand the roles of language, race, culture, and gender in schooling. They should engage parents and the community in the education of their children.***

Effective instruction requires knowing the student and tapping into her or his strengths and interests to trigger learning. Effective teachers use parents as allies to extend learning outside the classroom. They provide parents with a stream of timely feedback and help parents see concrete ways of extending their children's learning outside the classroom. Teachers who are not familiar with the lives of their students, their words, and their backgrounds find it hard to be highly effective.



"Make class interesting." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

As project members have seen, under schoolhouse pressures, harried teachers may find themselves unintentionally sending the wrong message. Teachers need to monitor themselves or receive inservice training to ensure that Hispanic students and their families receive the message that they are really wanted in the classroom and in school, that excellence is within their reach, and that success depends on working together.

2. ***Teachers should become knowledgeable about and develop strategies to educate Hispanic students and to communicate with their parents. Teachers should receive the professional development needed to develop those attitudes, knowledge, and skills.***

Ongoing professional development should help teachers learn about their students' backgrounds and interests, curriculum adaptation, and other instructional strategies for heterogeneous student populations. Teachers should be familiar with the implications of second language acquisition for student learning and how to adapt instruction for students of varying levels of English language proficiency. Teachers' knowledge of their students' cultural heritage and the implications of language loss are important for effective teaching and the creation of well-functioning home-school linkages.



"Teachers were asked to organize their classrooms into small groups which eventually became cohesive work teams with full control of their own writing activities. They would explore possible topics, research them, develop data gathering instruments such as surveys and interview protocols, conduct interviews with peers and adults, discuss findings and finally write cooperatively extended

and complex essays. The students discovered that writing was no longer a futile school exercise designed by teachers for their own purposes, but a meaningful activity and a means of exchanging important ideas and specific audiences and for expressing their own feelings. Students realized that their individual and collective voices can make a difference in public opinion and in the quality of life at school. Thus Chicano high school students not only significantly sharpened their communicative skills but realized that these skills are a powerful instrument in voicing individual and collective concerns. Teachers would often express their surprise: 'I am impressed. Look!', they said as they shared their students' compositions. A teacher wrote in her diary: 'This [the unexpected high performance of students] was a very successful lesson for me in many ways. It furthers my belief that if what is taught is important in the mind of the learner, much more will truly be learned.'" In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (p. 34) New York: The Falmer Press.

Often, teachers in high-poverty schools are the last to receive high-quality professional development on new instructional approaches, curricula, and unbiased ways of assessing students. They should be the first to get these opportunities.



"Why should I want to be a teacher? Look at the conditions we're taught in."
Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

SCHOOLS

Schools are the most important focal point for dropout prevention. The research on dropout prevention, effective schools, and restructuring schools, and the Hispanic Dropout Project's commissioned papers—all conclude that schools do, in fact, matter in students' lives. In the course of our explorations, we found powerful and personalized evidence that schools matter *positively* in keeping Hispanic students in school and in helping them to achieve academically. The most impressive schools that we visited were those where teachers and staff worked together to personalize each student's school experience. Teachers collaborated to ensure that no Hispanic student fell through the cracks, either academically or psychosocially. Spanish-speaking staff were respected for their ability to communicate with students' parents; indeed, many of these schools aggressively recruited multilingual, multiethnic staff who could relate to their students and parents.



"The key finding from our research is that effective schools provide at-risk students with a community of support. School as a community of support is a broad concept in which school membership and educational engagement are central. School membership is concerned with a sense of belonging and social bonding to the school and its members. Educational engagement is defined as involvement in school activities but especially traditional classroom and academic work. . . . Schools successful at dropout prevention created a supportive environment that helped students overcome impediments to membership and engagement."

In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 223). London: The Falmer Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project saw secondary schools and an entire school system in which Hispanic students graduated in greater numbers than in similar schools; these examples challenge the myth that secondary schools are doomed to be cold and impersonal places for students or that they are too difficult to change into personalized and caring places. We also visited elementary and middle schools that made special efforts to ensure that all their children learned how to read, achieved academically, and became better connected to their school. Recognizing the real-world challenges that their students faced, principals, teachers, and other school staff spoke with determination about Hispanic students learning, about not losing students, and about always trying to do better. Teachers at one elementary school, for instance, said that they were relentless in ensuring that all of their Hispanic students—even students who did not speak English—could read by third grade.

Moreover, out-of-school alternative programs for students who could not attend regular school used the latter as reference points by providing a curriculum that mirrored what was offered in regular schools, by tutoring and helping students with their homework, and by helping to return students to their original schools. Their services, therefore, were linked to the school and its education programs.



"Latinos at these schools 'know the deal.' They know when they are getting a good education and when they are not. They also have some pretty good ideas on how to improve education. . . . The bottom line in this report is that: good neighborhoods or bad: good schools = success, bad schools cause dropouts."

In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 99). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

On the negative side, the research literature paints an unflattering portrait of schools that do nothing to improve their dropout rates, that use some subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) means to encourage Hispanic students to leave school, and that deny Hispanics educational opportunity. The staff at such schools behave as if the students (and their parents) are so rife with social problems that there is nothing that they can do. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard some school and district staff claim that schools could do very little to reduce the Hispanic dropout rate because of student poverty, lack of student readiness or desire to learn, language, excessive student mobility, excessive costs, lack of qualified staff, lack of knowledge about the real causes of the problem, lack of parental concern, parental aspirations that do not include school, and earlier efforts that have failed. Schools, according to these individuals, can do very little about the larger social ills that befall their students. The literature is clear: Schools where such beliefs are the norm are not likely to be very successful either in ensuring that large numbers of their Hispanic students graduate or in educating many of their students very well.

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from students, parents, and community activists who said that school conditions made dropping out an inevitable outcome and logical choice for students. In these schools, staff were said not to care about Hispanic students; policies involving discipline and grading were applied in a biased manner; tracking and other forms of ability grouping were used to write off whole segments of the student body, not to improve educational opportunities; and the general attitude seemed to be: "Ignore the problem and it will go away." Schools may in fact *try* to make the problem go away. For instance, we heard about schools using Hispanic students' excessive absences to suspend students rather than to conduct formal suspension hearings on more serious charges. Many Hispanic students and parents charged that rules were being enforced unfairly.



"I was absent 27 times in one class, 36 in another. They only checked things out when I was dragged into the principal's office with red eyes. 'Look at these absences.' [they said]. Well, it's about time you noticed!" Testimony at HDP open hearing, Las Cruces

Overcrowding and the quality of a school's facilities affect a school's ability to keep its students. One mother complained that the building code had been waived for the city's schools. This meant that dilapidated schools—located primarily in the inner city—would not have to be brought up to code. According to this mother, the district's newer schools, which were being built in its wealthier neighborhoods would, of course, be built according to code. Another parent noted that her son was one of over 2,000 students in a building designed for 1,500. She talked

about the heat, noise, and deteriorating conditions at this school where large males could not help but jostle one another as they went from class to class. Because of the heat and noise, tempers would flare, fights break out, and students would be suspended. As this mother observed, the step from suspension to dropping out is very small. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard about secondary schools enrolling 40 students in a class, but having 30 chairs. In at least one case, teachers were told not to worry because not all the students would show up. "What sort of a message does this send to the school's students?" asked a graduate from such a school.



"We need smaller classes. With 34 students in a class, teachers don't have time to listen to you. During my freshman and sophomore years, my math classes were small. During my junior year, I was put into large classes. Things got harder for me to learn and the teacher couldn't help me. I was an honors student; remedial classes are even bigger. My sister was in a class with 40 kids. There are 4 to 5 kids for a microscope. We don't have enough books, so they tell us, 'Go to the library [to get books].' We don't have enough chairs in our classrooms, so we have to sit on the floor. We can't even Xerox a poem by Shakespeare. This sends a strong message to the student: 'You're not important'" Testimony at student leader meeting, New York City

There are too many wrongheaded solutions to the issues of low student achievement, retention, excessive student absence, and eventually, student dropout. Tracking, grade retention, and remedial coursework are too often used to write off students considered too difficult to handle. Too many schools focus their efforts on students' acquiring English to the detriment of their learning content. Schools seldom help Hispanic students develop a sense of their own future or provide them with information needed to make informed decisions about their education programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found five characteristics of schools that make a difference in their students' education. *First*, these schools have very high academic and behavioral standards for their students. *Second*, they communicate those standards clearly, and they provide access to and support students in meeting those standards—that is, they provide students with many opportunities to succeed in meeting these high standards. *Third*, schools that make a difference connect their students in meaningful ways to adults. In spite of their size, secondary schools can adopt strategies—such as a school within a school, a group of teachers accepting responsibility for the same students, everyone on staff agreeing to "adopt" some students, older students mentoring younger students—to increase the personalization that students need to experience. *Fourth*, these schools connect their students to possible futures in college and the work force. *Fifth*, they provide families with useful information about how their children are doing and about their futures. Rather than accepting the myth that parents do not care, good schools adopt the position that parents need information in order to make informed decisions that affect their children. Aspirations are not enough. For schools to make a difference, they must provide ways for students and their families to achieve those aspirations.



"Educational engagement is a complex process that involves more than simply 'motivating' students. Promoting engagement requires attention to student char-

acteristics, the tasks students are asked to perform, the school environment in which work takes place, and the external environment that influences the student and the school itself. . . . In spite of conditions outside the school that weaken student engagement, there are practices that educators could implement to substantially strengthen it. The level of engagement. . . could be increased if specific impediments under the control of educators were addressed. . . . (1) Schoolwork is not extrinsically motivating for many students because achievement is not tied to any explicit and valued goal; (2) The dominant learning process pursued in schools is too narrow in that it is highly abstract, verbal, sedentary, individualistic, competitive and controlled by others as opposed to concrete, problem-oriented, active, kinesthetic, cooperative and autonomous. Because of these qualities, the dominant mode of learning stifles the likelihood of intrinsic rewards for many students. (3) Classroom learning is often stultifying because educators are obsessed with the 'coverage' of subject matter; this makes school knowledge superficial, and also intrinsically unsatisfying, thereby preventing students from gaining the sense of competence that ideally accompanies achievement." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 179). London: The Falmer Press.

Although we were impressed with the preschool and early childhood education programs that we visited, we would caution that, by themselves, these programs are not enough. First, Hispanic access to high-quality early childhood education programs is limited. According to Head Start data, there simply are not enough programs to meet demand. Second, the research has failed to produce substantial evidence that the effects of early childhood interventions persist very long after the program ends. Schools need to provide consistent and ongoing support throughout grades K-12.

We were impressed with the quality of the alternative programs that we visited; however, we caution that alternative programs can become little more than holding pens for their students and that these programs cannot replace schools. Schools could learn from the quality programs that we visited. Students recounted that they were treated with respect and warmth in their alternative settings. Just as important, staff at such places accepted their students' experiences yet encouraged students to consider the *consequences* of their actions. To the staff, that a student had skipped school a lot, been suspended from school, or had dropped out did not mean that the student was fundamentally flawed. Rather, that a student had behaved inappropriately meant that there were consequences. Personnel in alternative settings helped students learn from their actions, and overcome, avert, or reverse the worst of those consequences. The challenge is for Hispanic students' regular schools to become more like these alternative placements and other schools that do a good job at retaining and educating their students.

Actions the Schools Need to Take [To Keep Latino Students In]

1. Focus on student learning
2. Meet basic needs
3. Use a variety of teaching techniques
4. Make material meaningful to students
5. Make scholastic standards clear to all
6. Allow no student to fail
7. Use tests as milestones
8. Make participation in school work more rewarding than skipping
9. Make skipping difficult
10. Value persistence and hard work
11. Make schools accessible to parents
12. Assume responsibility for educating all students
13. Mobilize resources to link school and work.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 15-19). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The most shocking of our findings is the rarity of outstanding schools and programs like those we visited. Although the project visited many sites that featured impressive programs, those programs served a very small number of Hispanic students, and they are at variance with the average educational experiences of Hispanic students. However, there was little about those schools and programs that could not be replicated elsewhere.

1. Schools should emphasize the prevention of problems. They need to become more aggressive in responding to the early warning signs that a student may be doing poorly in, losing interest in, or in some other way, becoming disengaged from school.

Elementary schools should ensure that all children know how to read by third grade and that they are learning mathematics with understanding. Middle and secondary schools should build on the successes of elementary schools.

Schools should be alert to early warning signs of student disengagement. If, for example, a student has two unexcused absences in a row from school, parents should be contacted by a live person—by phone or even by a home visit. The immediacy and personalization of the contact make a difference.

1. Schools should be held accountable and should hold themselves accountable for growth and progress of all students.
2. School procedures, practices, and policies must be individualized and personalized for high-risk youth.
3. Effective middle-school interventions for high-risk youth must address simultaneously the three contexts of family, school, and community through an independent, school-based, case management approach.
4. System reforms of schools must not only change organization structures and practices, but more importantly, must change adult attitudes and behaviors to be more compassionate and nurturing toward high-risk youth.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Drop-out prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A69-A70.

Minorities are overrepresented in special education programs. Schools should ensure that their assignment practices are valid; more importantly, they should emphasize the interventions that prevent such placements.

2. *Schools, especially high schools, need to personalize programs and services that work with Hispanic students.*

Strategies that could be adopted by a high school trying to personalize its programs and services include the reduction of individual class size, reduction in the number of different classes that teachers must teach, creation of schools within schools or of a smaller high school for all but a few highly specialized classes, the creation of houses or academies within a large high school, team-teaching involving fewer students, teachers serving as counselors for or "adopting" a few students, and older students serving as mentors for younger students.

3. *Schools should be restructured to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curricula. They should reconfigure time, space, and staffing patterns to provide students with additional support needed to achieve.*

School restructuring needs to attend to the nature of the curriculum that is provided to students so that all students encounter a curriculum that is demanding, interesting, and engaging.



"A positive school climate—one in which students feel 'membership' in their schools and in which they perceive that teachers care about them as individuals—

*is considered a prerequisite for student engagement in either academic or vocational learning. The large size of many high schools is seen as a strong institutional barrier to a positive school climate. In large schools, teachers are most likely to form close supervisory relations with only the most accomplished students, while others (most often minority students and low achievers) remain isolated from ongoing adult attention. . . . Available evidence indicates that low-achieving students are most likely to prosper in smaller schools. Accordingly, some districts have created alternative schools and schools-within-schools to make schools feel smaller." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 207). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.*

Secondary and junior high schools should eliminate their lowest tracks. Relative to advanced placement tracks, low-track classrooms are overcrowded, have the least qualified teachers, have the fewest resources, and experience a low-level curriculum focused on remediation to the virtual exclusion of any new or interesting content. If tracking is to be anything for large numbers of Hispanic students other than the final stop en route to being pushed out, these conditions must change.

Hispanic students should be recruited actively into the highest tracks and provided with the support to succeed. In addition to placing students in more demanding curricular settings, schools should provide added support for students such as libraries, after-school programs, individualized tutoring, counseling, and social service referrals.



"Those programs that are most effective are the ones that are least like school. They meet the needs of the learner according to when the learner needs to learn. They provide flexibility. High schools need to become more like this." Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

The changes that we recommend above are not difficult nor are they expensive. What they require is a commitment by school personnel to provide educational opportunities to all their students.

4. Schools should replicate programs that have proven effective. In addition to using new funding, schools should redeploy existing resources to run these programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found programs and efforts that have proven effective or show promise for improving Hispanic student achievement and lowering the dropout rate. Schools do not have to reinvent these programs. They should be prepared to adapt existing programs to the needs of their students and to local conditions. Appendix F provides a list of programs identified as effective in the project's commissioned papers.

Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies

Counseling services and adult advocacy for students are key elements of any particular dropout prevention initiative.

At the elementary level, providing after-school tutoring and enrichment that are directly related to in-class assignments and having in-class adult friends (e.g., trained volunteers or helpers) appear to be effective approaches.

At the middle level, team teaching strategies, flexible scheduling, heterogeneous grouping of students, and provision of as-needed counseling assistance are especially useful strategies.

At the secondary level, paid work, embedded in activities that prepare and monitor students' on-the-job experiences, appears to be a critical component to keeping students in school.

In programs where dropout recovery is an emphasis, flexible class schedules assist students who need to work or meet personal commitments during regular school hours.

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations) (p. 7). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Although any program has start-up costs and schools are strapped for resources, many programs visited by the project and reviewed in its commissioned papers can be implemented through a combination of new and old funding, and a reconfiguration of existing roles and responsibilities.

5. Schools should carefully monitor the effectiveness of their programs and continuously try to improve them or to replace them with more reliable strategies.

School effectiveness in reducing Hispanic dropout rates or in increasing student achievement will not be accomplished overnight. The most impressive programs visited by the project had been developed and improved over the years by their staffs. Over the years, these schools and programs had carefully recruited staffs who supported their mission and respected their students; they fine-tuned their strategies for teaching students and for preventing dropout; they recruited parents into partnerships; they developed credibility and support within the Hispanic and business communities; they were entrepreneurial in raising funds to support their efforts.

In talking with members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, school personnel and concerned community people highlighted many well-meaning efforts. Yet they were unable to provide convincing, research-based evidence that their programs were reaching targeted students or that the programs were effective. Schools and others should monitor their efforts, keep what works well, modify what could be improved, and discard what does not work.



"Our recommendations for restructuring schools have called for greater coordination of educational resources and their delivery to students. Restructuring schools must lead to improved management of the educational experiences of students, whether at the classroom, school, district, state, or federal level. Restructuring the relationships among schools, families, and communities must result in the same type of improved management of the educational and social resources delivered to disadvantaged youth. At a time when the gap between available resources and needs is growing, we must obtain as much leverage as possible from all of the resources at our command. The coherent, mutually reinforcing mobilization of school, family, and community resources may be our best hope for addressing the problems of disadvantaged students. We simply cannot afford duplication, lack of coordination, and piecemeal approaches if we wish to have an impact on the problem." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 197). New York: Teachers College Press.

6. Schools and alternative programs should be better coordinated.

Students noted they often had a hard time making the transition from an alternative program back to school. Personnel working in alternative programs had similar concerns about schools' lack of cooperation with their efforts to provide students with a meaningful education until they could return to school.

DISTRICT, STATE, AND NATIONAL POLICIES

School districts, states, and the nation as a whole influence whether Hispanics drop out or stay in school. School districts' influence is felt through their governance of schools, recruitment of a workforce, and the professional development that they provide to teachers. States exert influence through their education policies, assessment and accountability programs, and teacher certification requirements. The nature and quality of national debates involving education influence funding and other forms of legislation.



"If we're the future, I don't see why we [funding for schools] have to be cut. It's the future of the whole country." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard some individuals link Hispanic education to debates about immigration—both legal and illegal—and to language policy. As a result, debates about what to do to solve a problem turn into debates about deeply held beliefs involving noneducational matters. Such unrelated beliefs interfere with the development of a coherent education policy at all levels. The following is a sampling of beliefs that are obstacles to solving the problem of Hispanic dropout: (a) until we really understand the full extent of the problem, we can do nothing; (b) this is a local school problem that does not lie in the domain of state or other policy levels; (c) there are a few successful programs, but they cannot be scaled up; (d) these are not our children, hence, it is not our problem; (e) the problem is short term and will go away when something else (typically, immigration policy) is taken care of; and (f) serious efforts to solve this problem cost more than the public is willing to spend.

Once again, our findings contradict such wrongheaded beliefs. For instance, at the most impressive sites that the project visited, language policy and immigration issues had been depoliticized for the cause of education. Districts decided that, in order to educate their students, they had to recruit teachers who could communicate with them and with their parents, that is, with the district's ever-changing clientele. These districts hired teachers and administrative staff who spoke Spanish and who were familiar with Hispanic culture. Their schools developed programs that built on students' native language and their real-world knowledge in the various subjects in order to prepare them for life in America—for higher education, jobs, careers, and citizenship. There were no questions about using and, in many cases, developing children's native languages and home cultures because this was what the children brought to school with them. Also, there were no questions that children would become literate in English and learn to high standards.



"Chapter 1 and dropout prevention programs are the traditional means for providing extra assistance to the most needy students. However, they are often de facto lower tracks for students who have been retained." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 206). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Schools and programs were very creative in finding new sources of funds and in redeploying existing monies for dropout prevention and education improvement efforts. Although the project was impressed by the sheer amount of volunteerism and creative funding employed by every site and program that its members visited, every single program and alternative school was severely underfunded and living a hand-to-mouth existence. Programs had waiting lists. Alternative schools—with their relatively small student-to-teacher ratios—felt that they were always on the chopping block due to their costs and their districts' ongoing budget problems.

On the other hand, the conditions that we witnessed at many sites recalled for us what many of those we interviewed told us—that dropping out under such conditions is a healthy response. Children and their families should never be subjected to such unhealthy conditions that they would feel they had no other choice but to drop out in order to protect their well being. Classrooms and schools where instruction and proper attention to children's needs are inhibited due to overcrowding, lack of equipment and supplies, rundown buildings, and overused, out-of-date textbooks are all unhealthy conditions that no country with high expectations for learning for all children should expect any of its children to tolerate.

Likewise, given the few resources that are available for professional development to upgrade teachers' skills for working with changing populations of students, it is not too hard to see why some school personnel respond to their Hispanic students with neglect if not actively push them out.



"When a student fails a class or two, some people want that student to drop out. He's taking space that someone else who wants to succeed could have." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard from parents, teachers, and other school personnel about contradictory guidelines and policies that are too complex for parents to understand and too time-consuming for them to follow. For instance, one district often informs parents about their children's educational problems and possible program options by using a multi-page check-off form that includes special education, Title 1, bilingual education, English as a second language, socio-psychological and behavioral problems and counseling, achievement, and excessive absence or tardiness. Though convenient for the district, these forms confuse parents who are too overwhelmed to ask for clarification about what the form means. Confronted with such forms, policies, and guidelines parents feel discouraged from participating in decisions that affect their children's schooling.



"Another surprise was the readiness of school administrators to administratively transfer students to another school for behaviors associated with school disengagement and dropout—high absenteeism, disruptive non-conforming behavior, or poor academic work. Case studies in other schools have documented how often and in what ways school administrators actively 'got rid of troublemakers.' . . . Special education law and due process were frequently ignored by either blatant noncompliance or by conforming to the letter of the law but not the intent or spirit of the law. . . . There was deep resistance by the school to provide more than 45 minutes of resource help despite youth's failing multiple classes. Most often it

was 'regular' education personnel who were responsible for making suspension and disciplinary referrals about special education youth. In general, these personnel were more exclusionary and alienating in their approach than inclusionary and engaging. Frequently, the 'letter of the special education law' framed actions as opposed to the 'spirit' of the IEP process. . . . Frequently, when a youth was having difficulty in school, especially in terms of behavior problems, the school would place the students on home or independent study. . . . Unfortunately, we found that almost every single youth placed on independent study, where they came to a center to receive and turn in assignments completed at home, did not produce enough school work to earn any credits toward graduation." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A66-A66.

District and state policies can provide incentives for schools to ignore student difficulties—if not to actively push students out. For instance, many states provide funding based on a one-time student count that takes place early in the year. Parents and school personnel reported that prior to the student census, schools actively try to keep students. After the schools have their monies, they can simply ignore student tardiness, absence, truancy, and other behaviors that lead to dropout. Not only are there no sanctions when schools rid themselves of such "bad" students, there are positive consequences, especially for overcrowded schools. When students leave overcrowded schools, the benefits include smaller classes, additional resources for the "good" students who remain, improved performance on mandated assessments and on other indicators of school productivity, less stress on the overall climate of the school, and a reduced administrative burden. Moreover, safe in the knowledge that a new crop of students will enter in time for next year's census, the school has no reason to recruit students who leave into already overcrowded alternative programs.

Districts and states also provide incentives for schools to exclude Hispanics from their accountability systems by focusing solely or mostly on achievement as the major accountability item and then allowing schools to exclude students who are identified as limited English proficient, in need of special education services, or through some other categorical marker. The exclusion of such students and the sole focus on test data allow, if not encourage, schools to hide many of their lowest-achieving students.



"The city, state, and others allow bad conditions to continue. They set the codes and allowable noise levels in schools. The district gets waivers from the state so that untrained teacher aides can become teachers." Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

Districts may overenroll high school students, under the presumption that not all students will come to class. Such a practice sends strong messages to students that they are not expected to attend. Teachers also receive the message that some students are not expected to come to class

and that they are not expected to teach all of their enrolled students. It should not be surprising when students and teachers comply with these messages.

Recommendation 1: Districts should establish strong permanent alternatives as part of a comprehensive strategy of dropout prevention. Alternative schools should be high-status organizations receiving resources commensurate with the tasks they undertake and the success they demonstrate.

Recommendation 2: Districts, in cooperation with state departments of education, should establish special alternative schools for at-risk students with a clear mission that includes experimentation, curricular innovation and staff development.

Recommendation 3: State policy should require each school system to establish a Management Information System that provides basic and common data on all students.

Recommendation 4: State policy should require schools to examine the effects of course failure, grade retention, out-of-school suspension and other practices that appear to impact negatively on at-risk students.

Recommendation 5: State and local policy should encourage the decentralization of large schools and school systems, creating smaller units characterized by site-based management.

Recommendation 6: State and local policy should encourage the development of new curricula and teaching strategies designed for diverse groups of at-risk students.

Recommendation 7: State and local policy should develop mechanisms to hold schools accountable for their dropout rates through a system emphasizing outcomes and results.

Recommendation 8: Cities should develop broad-based community partnerships aimed at serving at-risk youth.

In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (pp. 225-236). London: The Falmer Press.

- 1. Districts should inform students and parents of their policies in ways that are clear and easy to understand. Policies should not be overly complex, nor should administrative procedures discourage parental participation. Parents should be warned, well in advance, when their children's behaviors are deemed unacceptable to the district. Districts should enforce their policies fairly and equitably. If a student is charged with a serious infraction, districts should not bypass due process by also charging the student with something that is unrelated but easier to substantiate.***

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2. *States should analyze their policies to remove incentives for schools to ignore, if not push out, students who experience trouble. State policies should be rewritten with an eye towards encouraging schools to do all they can to retain students. District and state accountability and incentive systems should encourage schools to keep students through high school graduation.*

Report cards of school effectiveness and other efforts by districts and states to hold their schools publicly accountable should not be limited to overall levels of achievement. They should include information about students who were excluded from the tests, student completion rates, attendance statistics, and student enrollment in various tracks. Schools and Hispanic parents should know how Hispanic students are doing.



"We recommend four strategies for moving decisions to levels where information on student performance and behavior is available: (1) revising rules and programs to promote flexibility; (2) using goal setting to enhance the discretion of local educators; (3) creating self-contained teaching/learning units, to allow educators to make decisions about deploying resources to meet student needs; and (4) providing educational resources above those thought minimally necessary, thus allowing educators some discretion in addressing emerging needs."

In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe (p. 161). New York: Teachers College Press.

3. *In light of the ongoing standards movement, districts and states should develop standards for school conditions, class and school size, and in general, student opportunity to learn. Districts should restructure schools that are too large and impersonal into smaller-sized units. Districts' and states' oversight and accountability mechanisms should ensure that Hispanic students participate in the ongoing reform agendas. Reform agendas—especially high-stakes testing programs—should be explained to the parents of Hispanic students, and their input solicited. High-stakes testing programs should be monitored to ensure that they are implemented equitably so that Hispanic students have a fair opportunity to show what they know and can do.*
4. *Districts and state education agencies should design comprehensive strategies for dropout prevention that are tied to the states' standards and that take account of students' differing needs at different points in their lives.*

Well-meaning advocates for one or another intervention targeted for a specific age-group often seem to promise more than they can accomplish. No single strategy—be it early childhood intervention, Title I, bilingual education, alternative education, curriculum reform, student tutoring and mentoring—can by itself solve the problem of student dropout. The most successful schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project used multiple approaches across pre-K–12, and even provided support for older people to return to school to obtain a high school certificate.

5. *School districts and state education agencies should evaluate currently funded dropout prevention efforts against curricular and student learning standards, and they should provide support for those efforts to continuously improve.*
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6. *As schools become better able to respond to their diverse student populations, programs should be redirected so as to (a) reconnect students who have been placed on the borderline between success and failure and (b) provide alternatives for students who, for whatever reason, prefer to take alternative pathways to a high school credential.*
7. *Districts and state education agencies should provide lifelong learning opportunities so that people past school age can still acquire a high school credential.*

Society cannot afford to give up on people who, for whatever reasons, have dropped out of school. They should be encouraged to and provided with multiple opportunities to return to school and to graduate.



"Prior policy has always been focused on prevention. What about people who have dropped out? What should we be doing about the people who are the victims of previous policy and inaction?" Testimony at HDP open hearing, New York City

8. *Districts, state education agencies—indeed, all of society—need to target their resources strategically and to invest more money in helping schools, particularly urban schools, to provide their Hispanic students with opportunities to learn. For example, additional resources could be tied to (a) schools' implementation of programs that have been proven effective or (b) the expansion and continuous improvement of a promising program that is already in place.*

Because existing resources need to be directed more strategically, schools and districts should carefully evaluate their programs and engage in continuous improvement of their best practices. School districts should redirect monies strategically from programs that are not working (and that seem unable to work) to implementing and improving school-based programs that do work.

Schools—especially urban schools in conditions of poverty—need additional resources. There is no way to improve the physical plant of run-down schools, to reduce class size, to target much-needed resources, to purchase basic supplies and new books, to reform curriculum, and to provide professional development for teachers without an increased investment in those schools that educate our poorest children.



"The formal institution that directly affects virtually all adolescents is school. Schools are critically important because education is the means by which individuals from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds can build the skills and credentials needed for successful adult roles in mainstream American life. . . . Because of residential stratification, most of these adolescents attend schools with the fewest material resources. In 1991, for example, per pupil expenditures in the 47 largest urban school districts averaged \$5,200; in suburban districts, the figure was \$6,073. Although an \$875 per pupil funding gap may not appear significant, in an average class of 25 students, the difference is almost \$22,000—enough to hire an aide, provide special instructional materials or computers, pay significantly higher teacher salaries, or improve a dilapidated classroom. When the relatively greater need of urban chil-

dren for special services is taken into account (for health needs, language instruction for non-English-proficient students, etc.), the resource differences are even more critical. Differences in funding of this magnitude can make a clear qualitative difference in the total educational experience. Traditional education practices contribute to the high rates of failure for low-achieving students. Historically, schools have addressed the diversity of student achievement by tracking students into homogeneous ability groups and by retaining students who fail courses because of poor attendance, grades, or test scores. Contrary to expectations, these practices have consistently shown negative academic and social consequences for low-achieving adolescents." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 7). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Districts and school personnel may balk, at first, at the idea of redirecting existing resources. The larger society might have concerns about investing more money than is currently the case in the education of poor Hispanic children. Yet, if monies could be invested strategically in order to provide Hispanics with high-quality education programs in the first place, then schools and society would save on the long-term costs of their failure to have educated these children properly.

9. Schools, districts, and state education agencies need to develop better management information systems that follow students more accurately and efficiently.

In order to plan, monitor, evaluate, and improve dropout prevention programs, people need information about students who leave school. Such information is simply not available. Current policy is focused on students who stay; hence there are few incentives for schools or districts to worry about dropouts. Without such basic information, it seems impossible to envision the development of any comprehensive set of interventions.

Knowing annual dropout rates of high school students is a start, but ultimately inadequate for planning and monitoring programs. Where possible, districts should follow groups of students from first through twelfth grades.

10. Schools and districts must diversify their teaching workforce to include people with the knowledge, language skills, and backgrounds that will enable them to better connect with Hispanic students and their parents.

Beyond having role models, Hispanic students need to encounter teachers who communicate trust and confidence, who can understand what students are experiencing, and who can guide and support students. Hispanic students reported establishing mutually respectful relationships with Hispanic teachers, with non-Hispanic teachers and volunteers who themselves had dropped out of school but still managed to further their education, with retired teachers who communicated a sincere confidence in students' intelligence and ability to succeed, and with other adults whose own life experiences validated them in the students' eyes. Such teachers were in short supply in these children's schools.



*"In contrast to Coleman et al.'s 1966 finding of no consistent differences in the quantity and quality of school inputs for predominantly majority and minority schools, the analyses presented in this paper reveal substantial within district variations in four types of school inputs: teacher test scores, years of education, teacher experience and class size (student-teacher ratios). The statistical models presented in this paper document a sorting of school inputs based on campus racial/ethnic and socio-economic composition. In particular, the models suggest that teacher ability, measured with both verbal and written proficiency scores, decreases with campus percentage black and Hispanic and increases with the campus percentage of higher income students. . . . Texas teachers employed in schools with high fractions of disadvantaged minority students have fewer years of education and less experience and have more students in their classes." In Kain, J. F., & Singleton, K. (1996). *Equality of educational opportunity revisited*. (Paper presented at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Symposium.) Cambridge: Harvard Institute of Economic Research.*

In addition, schools need teachers who can understand and talk to Hispanic parents. Parents respond best to people they know outside of school such as their neighbors and other parents, to people who treat them with respect, to people who speak Spanish or at least do not denigrate their accents, and to people who clearly show that they care for their children's academic success.

Diversifying the teaching workforce will occur only when people with broad experience, knowledge, and dispositions to work with Hispanic students are recruited into and successfully complete certification programs. Schools of education, school districts, state education agencies, state boards of education, and postsecondary education's governing bodies have important roles in diversifying the teacher workforce.

- 11. Schools and Colleges of Education should recruit people into the teaching profession who will diversify its ranks. They should develop course work, practica, student teaching, and other experiences that will help all preservice teachers to succeed with Hispanic students. The governing bodies of postsecondary education institutions should require that their faculty be able and willing to prepare teachers to teach Hispanic students.**

Recommendation 1: Put the services in rather than pull students out.

Recommendation 2: Deliver the services without calling attention to the fact that special services are being provided.

Recommendation 3: Deliver the services within a supportive climate that includes adults as student advocates.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with substantive incentives to participate.

Recommendation 5: Carefully select, train, and support the staff persons providing the services .

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 8-10) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

12. *Teacher certification bodies should insist that entering teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to work with a diverse student body.*

Because it is within the power of state boards of education to set minimal requirements for entering teachers, they should use those requirements to pressure universities to update their teacher preparation programs so that new teachers will be better able to, in the long run, teach Hispanic students. In addition, the certification bodies should update their rules and regulations so as to encourage the creation of a diverse teacher workforce.

13. *Bilingual education, the education of Hispanics, and the education of immigrants should be depoliticized.*

Many schools that were successfully keeping Hispanic students in school relied on bilingual education and incorporated Hispanic culture into their functioning. On the other hand, schools can also use programs for limited English proficient students to deny such students access to a mainstream education. In other words, bilingual education, English as a second language, and sheltered English instruction are but the means to an end—keeping students in school in one case, denying them educational opportunity in the other. Schools and districts should choose among program models and adopt those characteristics that best suit their unique situations.



"There is a need for broader recognition that the achievement of educational and social potential is not just an individual affair. It also involves the constraints of the peer groups in which the youths are embedded, and the constraints of the schools they attend. When schools segregate or cluster individuals who share low standards of accomplishment (or expectations for school dropout), they explicitly help bring about those outcomes. To keep educational opportunities open, there should not only be challenges for achievement, but ample assistance and support to ensure that each student will reach adequate standards.

The curriculum should include information that is not only preparatory for subsequent accomplishments; it should place the information in the context of living.

In plans to prevent serious problems of behavior, at-risk youths should be kept in the conventional system, not excluded from it. Exclusion serves to exacerbate problem behavior by the selective isolation of the individuals from the rules and standards of conventional society.

*In the inner city and elsewhere, schools and the values they represent constitute safe havens for many students. In cases of children of privilege, the school is more typically an extension of the rest of the individual's life experience. For seriously disadvantaged youths, the haven might serve a unique function. This function must not be compromised, and society must ensure that access to schools remains open and safe, including zones around schools and places within it." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (pp. 191- 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.*

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS, AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Community-based organizations, the business community, chambers of commerce, and other agencies can play mutually reinforcing roles in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Businesses and chambers of commerce—which are rightly concerned about the productivity and quality of the local workforce—should provide work experiences that support students' staying in school, provide incentives for students to continue their education, and encourage their employees' participation in all facets of the community's schools. Community-based organizations—which are concerned about the overall quality of life for Hispanics in the local community—should advocate for their members' concerns in the schools and seek support from business for the education programs that they provide to students.



"We [schools] can't do it alone. We have a hard time educating the kids who are staying in school." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

The thoughtful comments that we heard at the project's hearings and the activities that we witnessed provide ample counterevidence to those who would assert that groups outside the school have little or no role to play in addressing issues of Hispanic dropout. Latina businesswomen became active friends, role models, and mentors to younger Latinas. Chamber of Commerce members mentored and tutored students, volunteered in schools, and served on advisory boards and committees. Community-based organizations advocated on behalf of parents and provided education services that paralleled and supported Hispanic students' school experiences. Representatives from across the local community participated in local self-study efforts to improve the schools' responsiveness to their Hispanic clientele. We visited some alternative, out-of-school programs that were financially supported by local businesses. Some businesses and chambers of commerce provided scholarships for Hispanics to go on to college. These individuals and agencies maintained long-term, personal commitments to students.



"We should encourage businesses to help link parents with schools." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

However, we also heard of cases where the conditions of employment interfered with Hispanic parents' ability to participate in their children's education. Parents often noted that more of them would have come to the project's open hearings, but friends, family, and neighbors could not get off from work. Similar to earlier stories of parents who risked, and in some cases lost, their jobs to take an active role in their children's education, one parent testified about leaving his daughter at school every day at 8:30 a.m. If anything happened before he left work in the late afternoon, that parent could not go to the school without risking his job.

- 1. The local business community, chamber of commerce, and community-based organizations should work together to help to keep students in school. Coalitions of community-based organizations and businesses should monitor local conditions to ensure that Hispanic***

students receive the high-quality education that they deserve. These same coalitions should advocate at local, state, and national levels for the improvement of the educational conditions of Hispanic students.

In addition to in-school tutoring and out-of-school mentoring programs, financial assistance, and other forms of volunteerism, businesses should offer school-to-work apprenticeships and internships that integrate productive work and schooling for Hispanic students who wish to stay in school but feel pressure to contribute to their families. Businesses could also provide space and financial, managerial, and other forms of continuing assistance for school- and community-based alternative programs.



"Increase the credits that are offered to corporations for kids who are adopted and given the opportunity to work. Corporations should get involved. They should help with parent training and provide teacher training." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

2. Businesses where students work should provide incentives and support for their students to complete and to continue beyond high school.

Many Hispanic students work out of basic economic necessity. Carefully designed school-to-work programs that balance between academic demands and the needs of the workplace can help students meet their economic and educational responsibilities by strengthening the connections between what students study and how it is applied in the workplace. Businesses must avoid encouraging or allowing students to work excessive hours that would endanger their school completion. Instead, employees of older secondary school students should provide flexible work schedules, tutoring, study time during work hours, mentoring, individual and family referrals to social service agencies as needed, incentives, and other supports so that students can finish high school. If a person cannot finish high school, then the business should encourage that student to obtain a GED.

Businesses where Hispanic students work should also develop scholarship and other financial assistance programs that encourage students to pursue postsecondary education.

3. The business community should implement policies that encourage parents to take time off, as needed, to go to parent-teacher conferences, to participate in school governance activities, and the like.

Businesses should include paid leave for participating in school activities as part of their overall compensation package for workers.



"The majority of projects offered academic skills and counseling, and many offered a wide range of additional services, combined in a variety of ways within and across 'project components' (i.e., discrete programmatic activities for specific groups of students. Many projects were considered to offer comprehensive

*services...academic, counseling, social support, and, for components serving grades 6 and higher, vocational/career)." In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (p. 2) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.*

4. *The business community in conjunction with community-based organizations should support schools in their missions.*

Businesses and community-based organizations have expertise to share with schools on fund raising, needs assessment, strategic planning, and day-to-day management. They should study the physical plant and other resources of their local schools. As necessary, these organizations should press for increased financing of schools that is targeted to the identified needs and for ensuring that Hispanic students receive high-quality programs. They should also help schools to design and implement continuing improvement programs.

5. *Community-based organizations should continue to include the concerns of Hispanic parents in their service and advocacy activities.*

We visited adult literacy programs, early childhood interventions staffed by parents, out-of-school tutoring offered by adults in the community, social service referrals, and mentoring efforts initiated by community-based organizations. In addition, many of these organizations encouraged parents to visit their children's schools and advocated for the school to take their parents' concerns seriously.



*"We point out the need within communities to develop comprehensive, clear plans for delivering services to the disadvantaged. Most communities lack a coherent policy on what services are needed, who should be receiving them, and who is responsible for delivering them. An explicit policy with clearly stated goals, that takes into account the bureaucratic and administrative complexities characteristic of contemporary social service delivery, can help insure that individuals do not fall through the cracks in the social machinery." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 196). New York: Teachers College Press.*

6. *Businesses should band together to support local research, development, and the dissemination of effective programs for enhancing student achievement and graduation rates.*

Businesses at sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project supported the development of dropout prevention programs. At a few sites, local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce also supported systematic research into those efforts. One national corporation supported the dissemination of a program that it had helped to develop.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from representatives of many programs whose developers and staff showed an impressive commitment to improving the educational opportunities of Hispanics and to reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Unfortunately, many of these programs found themselves in constant financial turmoil, in part due to their inability to provide convincing evidence that they were accomplishing their goals. The innovative ideas found in these programs are seldom tested; and hence, they face the skepticism of schools, the public, and funding agencies. Although we made the conscious decision to solicit the input of program developers and others involved in Hispanic dropout prevention in crafting these recommendations, we believe that they too should be subjected to rigorous empirical testing.



Student 1: "The differences between us and them [friends who have dropped out]? They haven't had the opportunities I've had—in life or in school. They're still young, still partying, acting like teenagers. I'm getting on with my life. They're struggling."

Student 2: "Well, it's okay to party. You just have to take responsibility for your own life." Testimony at HDP meeting with students, Albuquerque

1. There should be sustained evaluations of promising programs and dropout prevention practices.

Many programs and sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project did not have adequate research-quality evidence of their effectiveness. Given how these programs emphasize helping students, it is not surprising that scarce resources were not diverted into collecting and analyzing program-effectiveness data. On the other hand, it is difficult to recommend programs to others without empirical evidence that they make a difference. Moreover, such performance data are fundamental to continued program improvement. Program funders and designers should include evaluation components to identify effective programs that could be replicated elsewhere and to support ongoing improvement.



*"Another community influence on dropout behavior is peers. Recent research reveals that peers exert a powerful influence on children, especially teenagers. Although the influence of peers on dropout behavior has not been the subject of much study, ethnographic studies report that dropouts of all ethnic backgrounds are more likely to associate with other youth who drop out or have low educational aspirations." In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues*. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 76). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.*

2. There should be coordinated, sustained, and systematic programs of research that investigate the times and the mechanisms through which students of different backgrounds disengage from school.

Much research on student dropout is fragmentary, based on a single study, and seldom links purported causal agents with the evaluation of an intervention. For instance, we do not fully understand the complex relationship between pregnancy and a female's decision to leave school. Research can help schools to understand the mechanisms by which dropout occurs and to take steps to remove barriers to student engagement.



"The relationship between Latino children and the schools is a disconnect."

Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

3. *Research and development should focus on identifying and developing Hispanic students' knowledge and interests, and on working with and strengthening the supportive social networks found in these students' extended families.*

Much of the at-risk and dropout literature is based on assumptions that Hispanic students and their families do not know very much, are missing some important competencies, lack certain traits, or have some fundamental flaw that needs fixing. The recommendations growing out of such research are predictably bereft of helpful ideas: Fix the flaws; if the flaws can't be fixed, despair.

On the other hand, the schools we visited and the more relevant and recent research literature try to identify what students know and what their families can do to support their education. Student knowledge (including knowledge of their cultures and bilingualism) and interests (including problems that are relevant to them) provide the basis for research and development in pedagogical practices (curriculum, teaching, and assessment), teachers' professional development, and school reform. Parental concerns about and caring for their children should be the basis for the research and development that seeks to build vibrant home-school partnerships.



"The most effective thing is contact between students and the institution on a regular basis. Systematic, deliberate, ongoing contact with kids." Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

4. *Dropout prevention programs that are proven to work should be sustained and disseminated. The education research and development infrastructure should include a component for transferring such programs from development to widespread implementation.*

Increasing America's Hispanic school completion rates cannot be a stop-and-go operation. In view of the urgency for proven dropout prevention programs, it is shocking to note that one of the most impressive programs found in the research literature no longer exists. This program was based on solid research, and had shown strong and sustained effects. Too many programs are developed to demonstrate a point and subsequently cease functioning when the developers or program funders move on to other tasks and priorities. The support for dropout prevention efforts that are shown to work should no longer come from demonstration monies but from the basic funding for the nation's schools.



*"Three factors importantly affected the replication activities at various of the sites and may have inhibited the effectiveness of projects for students. These factors included: the fit of models to the replication sites; the extent of principal buy-in to the replications; turf considerations." In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 13-14) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.*

- 5. *The population of Hispanic students who are limited English proficient should be taken into account in local, state, and national efforts to (a) improve and reform the education system, (b) evaluate the impact of schools and of categorical programs, and (c) implement accountability systems for schools.***

As noted above, the exclusion of Hispanics from such efforts contributes to their being invisible and, by extension, to schools not being held accountable for their educational success. One strategy for including Hispanic children that should be explored is the use of their native language for gathering information in those efforts.



"I knew of no alternatives. Either you go to school or you don't. Or you go for a GED, and that's not as good. I was never told of the alternatives." Former dropout at HDP open forum, New York City

- 6. *Research is needed on preservice and in-service teachers' beliefs, knowledge, skills, and professional development as related to the education of Hispanic students. Moreover, research should include attention to issues surrounding the diversification of the teacher workforce.***

Teachers are central in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Teachers themselves, schools, and policymakers need to better understand the processes by which teachers can make a difference in their students' education.

- 7. *Better data on student dropouts should be gathered at all levels: local, state, and national.***

Although available data clearly document the crisis of Hispanic dropout, one of the most common complaints we encountered involved the quality of data on student dropouts. The nation needs clear, commonly accepted, and stable definitions of dropout that allow for comparisons across states, that allow schools to decide if they should adopt a program that was effective elsewhere, and that provide policymakers and parents with a clear sense of how many students are dropping out of school and when they begin to drop out. Such information is fundamental to improving education at all levels. Hence, it should be systematically gathered, analyzed, and reported at local, state, and national levels.



"I want to give back to my family. As a Dominican woman, I am going to make it. Make my parents proud that their sacrifice was worth it. I'm going to go back to my community and show them, I made it." Speaker at HDP student leader forum, New York City

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We, the members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, submit this *Final Report* to the United States Secretary of Education, with an urgency born of recognizing the devastating personal, social, and civic consequences that will accrue if Hispanic dropout rates do not improve.



"The income stratification that concentrates large numbers of low-income students into poorly funded schools is followed by instructional stratification, most often on the basis of prior performance. Low-achieving students are likely to be exposed to instructional practices—tracking and grade retention—that deny them educational opportunities, stigmatize them, and contribute to their sense of uncertainty and alienation. Many disadvantaged adolescents are unable to overcome these conditions. Students from low-income families are far more likely to receive bad grades or be held back, and as much as three times more likely to drop out before completing high school, than the children of more affluent families: 'consigning them to lives without the knowledge and skills they need to exist anywhere but on the margins of our society, and consigning the rest of us to forever bear the burden of their support.'" In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 103). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

The overall school completion rate has steadily increased, with some fluctuations, over the last 40 years: in the 1950s, an average of 40–50 percent of all students did not finish high school; in 1972, the overall dropout rate for people between 16 and 24 years of age was slightly less than 15 percent; in 1994, it was 11.5 percent. The gap in black–white school completion rate has been steadily closing over the past 20 years *through an increase in school completion by African Americans*: in 1972, about 21 percent of black, non-Hispanics between 16 and 24 years old had dropped out of school; in 1994, that rate was 12.6 percent—a drop of between 8 and 9 percentage points. In contrast, over the same time period, the average rate of white, non-Hispanic dropout decreased from approximately 12.5 percent to 10.5 percent—just 2 percentage points. In spite of this overall improvement in the school completion rate, the dropout rate for all Hispanics ages 16 to 24 in the United States has consistently hovered at between 30 percent and 35 percent. *There is no reason to expect that this unacceptably high rate of dropping out among Hispanic students will diminish on its own without major changes in our schools and society.*

The Census Bureau reports that there will be at least one million more elementary school students in our nation's schools by the end of the decade. Without adequate funding, classes will become even more overcrowded. Teachers hired to teach the baby boomers will be retiring in unprecedented numbers over the next decade. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to educate and recruit a *diverse* teaching workforce over the same time period.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that ours is not the first report to note this consistent disparity in school completion rates. Under previous Republican and Democratic

administrations, researchers, policymakers, and community advocates have spoken out about these disparities. Yet because little has been done to address them, the problems they identified have become a crisis that threatens this nation's well being.



"Programs for disadvantaged youth include those that aim to enhance the relevance of school to the students' future. If it is true that working- and lower-class adolescents believe that the social conformity and academic achievement demanded in school are not clearly linked to their future status in society, then efforts to establish this linkage in the minds of students should be successful in promoting academic achievement and educational attainment." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that, when the nation decides that something is a problem and sets its mind to do something about that problem, it moves—though often slowly—to solve the problem. The nation and its schools have risen to the challenges of dropout prevention for students in general, improving overall student achievement, starting to close the racial achievement gap, and starting to close the mathematics achievement gap between males and females. Critics from opposite ends of the political and educational spectra have often written as if there has been very little progress or even deterioration in our educational progress—as if the nation and its education systems were incapable of developing a consensus to do something about vexing social problems. The evidence clearly shows quite the contrary: *The nation and its schools can rise to the challenge when we set our collective will to do so.*

Improvement in overall school completion, student achievement, and the achievement gaps has taken decades. Progress in these areas could not be seen or measured in terms of election-year cycles or other yardsticks used by those seeking immediate payoffs or simple solutions. What is more, efforts to identify the cause for such trends—as if a simple, magic pill could be found—have been unsuccessful. We speculate that these improvements can be traced to a combination of factors. First, there has been a gradual change in the nation's beliefs so that high dropout rates, low achievement, and race- and gender-based achievement gaps have become unacceptable: Our expectations of minorities and women have risen. Second, the nation has developed a complex network of curricular and teaching innovations, school-based programs, community-based efforts, and other structural changes for educating students.



"No single model can encourage membership or respond to the specific educational needs and desires of all at-risk youth. . . . A multiplicity of interventions is required. Even then, however, some students may continue to resist the efforts of teachers whom they see as representatives of an opposing culture. . . . Many students are in fact willing to enter into the relationships with their teachers that foster social membership in the school. They become partners in the experience of 'us and us'. . . . Overcoming their sense of incongruity, formerly at-risk youth discover that their teachers can also be friends, and schooling can thus be a positive rather than an aversive experience." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of*

support (pp. 203-204). London: The Falmer Press.

We submit this report with a sense of urgency and impatience precisely because of the slow pace of improvement. Hispanics confront too many excuses for the country's inaction regarding their educational status. Ways to improve the schools that Hispanics attend and solutions to Hispanic dropout are known; they should be implemented on a large scale. There are dozens of proven, replicable programs capable of increasing Hispanic students' achievement, increasing their high school completion, and increasing their college enrollment—we visited many of them. *Only a lack of political leadership, will, and resources keeps the nation from solving the problem; there is no shortage of effective models.*

The solutions that we propose in this report support one another. Our recommendations should be implemented together if the nation is to make a significant impact in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. It would be most unfortunate if those who read our report were to selectively interpret our findings and recommendations as meaning that before they can do something, someone else must fulfill a specific task. We cannot stress enough: *Everything must work in synchronization.*

Youth are influenced by their family, school and community contexts. High-risk youth are most often required to function in contexts that are dysfunctional or antithetical to the nurturing and support children require. Consequently, if an intervention is expected to succeed it will have to address all three contexts in such a way as to enhance the effectiveness of the contexts and to increase the coordination and communication between contexts. . . . Effective middle school interventions must accomplish six functions.

- (a) Frequent (in some cases hourly but generally daily or weekly) and on-going (sustained throughout the school year) monitoring of the youth's school performance.
- (b) Close teamwork with parents including parent training in terms of being an effective educational consumer and issues with raising a teenager.
- (c) A case manager is essential to coordinating services provided and linking school, home and community together into a cohesive structure for the youth.
- (d) The intervention must respond to the individual needs of youth and must be sufficiently flexible to personalize the educational experience.
- (e) A social cognitive problem-solving approach that teaches the youth and parents how to effectively handle short- and long-term challenges is highly effective in making high-risk youth less impulsive, more independent and more goal oriented.
- (f) The intervention must actively attempt to change the youth's expectations and vision of the future from one of probable failure and hopelessness to one of hopefulness and possibility.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A67-A68.

Why, then, the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion? Many explanations have been offered: student characteristics such as social class, language, and achievement level—especially among recent immigrants; school-based forces such as student retention, ability grouping, and tracking; and nonschool forces such as family and/or neighborhood violence and criminal activity, lack of community-based economic opportunity, and the historical social and political oppression of different ethnic groups. Many of these “reasons” have assumed mythic proportions. They are used to explain a phenomenon that is portrayed as too large and too complex for schools to address. In short, these reasons have become little more than excuses for our schools’ and society’s failure to act.

The evidence that we have presented in this report clearly contradicts this counsel of despair. At our hearings around the nation, we heard Hispanic students, their parents, and community leaders tell us unequivocally that they care deeply about their schools. Through their words and actions, many school personnel, community representatives, and business people have shown that something can and must be done.

We propose an alternative reason for the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion: *Hispanic dropout rates have remained largely an invisible problem to all but Hispanic students, their parents, and their communities.* Although many researchers and a few policymakers have known about the problem, discussions of Hispanic dropout have often been submerged in discussions of dropouts in general, the education of ethnic minorities in general, or politicized debates about immigration, language, and bilingualism.



“You have to do it for yourself. In spite of all the obstacles, I had to overcome all of the people who said that I couldn’t make it. Also, bring someone along with you. My sister, who dropped out, will come back to school. She sees I’m going to graduate. That encourages her.” Participant at HDP student leader forum, New York City

Attention to Hispanic school completion must become a salient part of the national agenda on education. To reverse the long-standing disparity in school completion between Hispanics and other groups will require the long-term, sustained attention that other issues have received. That this crisis has remained largely invisible results in inaction and allows the many excuses for doing nothing to go unchallenged. At a time of a dramatically increasing need for a well-educated citizenry, the nation cannot afford, nor can it tolerate, the persistently high rate of Hispanic dropout. We, as a people, need to say: *No more excuses, the time to act is now.*

NOTES

¹ Relevant data can be found in National Center for Education Statistics, 1996a, table 14 and 1996b, table 101, and United States Department of Education, 1997, pp. ix, 2, 23, 29, 30, and 32. A comprehensive list of research studies and reports that were reviewed in the preparation of this report appears in Appendix E.

When drawing on work by others, this report uses the terms for racial and ethnic group membership that are found in those documents. We are well aware that the validity of racial and ethnic categories is undergoing scrutiny for a variety of reasons. First, the use of blood quantum to determine a person's ethnic or racial membership—which, historically, was the foundation for the creation of such categories—has been quite thoroughly discredited, even before recent developments whereby increasing numbers of people (especially children) trace their ancestry to multiple ethnic and racial sources. Second, people's self-described membership in ethnic and/or racial groups varies across generations, within an individual's lifetime, and even depending on the term that is used. Third, people who belong to ethnic groups engage in complex and elaborate methods for judging the validity of a person's claim to belong to or even to opt out of a group.

On the other hand, a person's skin color, facial features, names, accents, and other physical characteristics are used by other people as indicators of that individual's ethnic and racial group membership. In its own turn, this ascription of race and ethnicity has important social consequences for the person regardless of her or his desire to be treated as an individual. Hence, although we must use these terms, we do so advisedly and with great caution.

² See Hispanic Dropout Project, 1996; NCES, 1996a.

³ See Larson & Rumberger, 1995b, p. A66.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

An Overview of the Hispanic Dropout Project's Activities

To achieve its three goals of (a) increasing public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout, (b) developing a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups, and (c) supporting the development of a network of stakeholders who would take action after the project's end, the Hispanic Dropout Project engaged in six activities prior to writing this report. All six activities are related directly to the above goals and their results are reflected in this report.

First, we commissioned four technical papers to inform our own thinking and, eventually, the thinking of others who wish to learn more about the issues surrounding Hispanic dropout. The first paper, by Hugh Mehan, was entitled *Contextual factors surrounding Hispanic dropouts*. The second paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón, and Richard Durán, was entitled *Effective programs for Latino students in elementary and middle schools*. The third commissioned paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin, was entitled *Effective dropout prevention programs for Latino students*. And the fourth technical paper, by Rudolfo Chavez-Chavez, was entitled *A curriculum discourse for achieving equity: Implications for teachers when engaged with Latina and Latino students*.

Second, the project commissioned five nontechnical reports by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood for use in increasing public awareness and for providing examples of how local policies and local programs might be used to increase school completion by Hispanics. Entitled *Advances in Hispanic Education*, the series was written for general audiences of school personnel, parents and their children, school board members, state and federal policy makers, community representatives, business people, and other stakeholders. These reports provide nontechnical information about issues in Hispanic dropout and about exemplary school programs for increasing Hispanic student achievement and for preventing dropout.

Third, in order to learn about the issues of Hispanic dropout as seen by the people who are most directly affected by student dropout and who are trying to do something about this crisis, to seek input from the field to the development of its recommendations, and to support the creation of a network of stakeholders, the Hispanic Dropout Project held open hearings and heard testimony in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; Toledo, Ohio; Calexico, California; and Las Cruces, New Mexico. We interviewed and listened to varied groups of Hispanic students: students who had graduated, were still in school, had left school and had returned, or were enrolled in dropout prevention programs. Specialty and regular classroom teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, program directors, superintendents, other school personnel, parents, community activists, youth- and social-service agency representatives, police representatives, business

people, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and concerned citizens—over 300 people—participated in these sessions. A list of their names appears in Appendix B.

In addition to making oral presentations, many people submitted written comments, program documents, and other written materials to the Hispanic Dropout Project. A list of people, organizations, and projects submitting written materials to the project comprises Appendix C.

Fourth, in order to ascertain how promising programs actually work in their day-to-day practices, we visited school and non-school sites that were developing such practices for educating Latinos and dropout prevention efforts in Albuquerque, Calexico, Houston, Las Cruces, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Antonio, and San Diego. We reasoned that there would be an above-average awareness of issues in Hispanic dropout at these locales because of their large Hispanic populations. A list of sites that we visited appears in Appendix D.

Sites included whole-school and districtwide programs, alternative secondary schools, mentoring and tutoring programs taking place both in and out of school, and supplementary in-school programs. Dropout prevention efforts focused attention on academics, school attendance, peer relationships, and socio-psychological needs, either singly or in some combination. Interventions ranged from pre-school, early childhood programs, to alternative high schools, GED efforts, and community college-based programs that continue to provide educational opportunities to Hispanics. The people who supported, ran, worked for, and volunteered in these programs included parents, school personnel, community activists, college and other students older than the individuals receiving the services, business people, and concerned citizens. Often, workers and volunteers were themselves Hispanics, had been dropouts, knew someone whom they wished had these opportunities, or had some experiences that enabled them (the volunteers and workers) to relate to their students on a personal level.

The fifth project activity was to hold press conferences and meet with the media during visits to the above-mentioned cities. The intent of this last activity was to increase public awareness about issues of Hispanic dropout. Hispanic Dropout Project representatives were interviewed by local and national news organizations. Newspaper articles appeared in the *Albuquerque Journal*, *Albuquerque Tribune*, *El Paso Times*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Kansas City Star*, *Las Cruces Sun News*, *Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*, *New York City El Diario/La Prensa*, *Portland Oregonian*, *San Antonio Express News*, *San Diego Union*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Silver City Daily Press*, *Tampa Tribune*, *USA Today*, and the *Associated Press*. Local affiliates of Univision in Houston, New York City, and Miami, of NBC in Miami and San Antonio, and of CBS in Albuquerque, and local radio and television stations in Albuquerque, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and San Antonio carried stories about Hispanic dropout and interviews with the project's members.

Sixth, Hispanic Dropout Project members reviewed the research on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, dropout prevention, and related topics. A list of research, policy documents, and other materials that we reviewed appears in Appendix E.

Appendix B

People Who Provided Public Testimony and Otherwise Participated in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Site Visits

**Community Focus Meeting
Education Service Center (Region XX)
1314 Hines Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78208**

**December 11, 1995
2:00-4:30pm**

Magdalena Alvarado
Kevin C. Moriarty
Chuck Rodriguez
Rev. John Moder
Kimeer Jones
Gloria Zamora
R. A. Marquez
Jerry D. Allen
Ramon A. Guerra
Diana Lam
Patricia Karam
Isabel Salas
Irene Chavez
Juan Sepulveda
Shari Albright
Gilbert Garcia, Jr.
Richard Clifford
Joe Rubin
David Samrad
Bertha C. Franklin
Pilar Oates

**Community Focus Meeting
University of Houston
4800 Calhoun Street
Houston, Texas**

**December 12, 1995
2:00-4:30pm**

Gloria Gallegos
Sylvia C. Peña
Jerome Freiberg
Irma Guadarrama
Kip Tellez
Emilio Zamoros
Angela Valenzuela

David Arredondo
Joe Stubbs
Hulberto Saenz
Albert Leal
Debra Basisiera
Tom Carrizal
Guadalupe San Miguel
A. R. Warner
Peter Linden
Manuel Rodriguez
Ben Marquez
Jaime E. De la Isla
Maria M. Rustonji
Melba J. Hamilton
Diane Sirna Mancus
Phyllis Gingiss

**Community Focus Meeting
Calexico High School
1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, California**

**April 24, 1996
2:00-4:00pm**

Patricia Levy
Hortencia Armendariz
Arminda L. Romero
Gary Watts
Gloria Celaya
Sandra C. Lopez
Gilbert Mendez
Harry Pearson
Roberto Moreno
Pat Peake
Mike McFadden
Paula Wilkinson
Cecilia Castaneda
Carmen Durazo
Rachel Aguilar
Yvonne Cardona
Dana Sue Gonzalez
Elvia Contreras
Pablo A. Macias
Luz C. Paredes

Yolanda Islas
Rosa A. Vargas
Carmen Chapa
Alicia Fuentes

Community Focus Meeting
University of California
9500 Gilman Drive
San Diego, California

April 25, 1996
2:30-4:30pm

Judy Leff
Nancy Cunningham
Rafael Hernandez
Irene Villanueva
Cynthia Gutierrez
Margaret Gallego
Olga Vasquez
Jose Smith
Paul Espinoza
Maria Nieto Senour
Andrea Nieto Senour
Ricardo Stanton-Salazar
Yolanda Hernandez
Juan P. Leyva
Linda Nolte
Ana Slomanson
Richard Barrera
Luis Cerda
Marcia Venegas-Garcia
Mike Rodriguez
Diego Bavalos
Mario A. Chacon
Robert Gira
Kathy Deering
Cecil Lytle

Community Focus Meeting
University of California
Sunset Village Complex
Los Angeles, California

April 26, 1996
2:30-4:30pm

Mary Lou Gomez
Mario Chiappe
Larry D. Kennedy
Marlene Wilson
Bruce McDaniel

Lloyd Monserratt
Eliseo Davalos
Carla Vega
John Rios
Moises Valez
Raul Ruiz
Martha Sanchez
Virginia Martinez
Andres F. Castillo
Frank DePasquale
Cherie Francis
Hal Hyman
Raymond Paredes

Community Focus Meeting
Miami Dade Community College
Wolfson Campus
Miami, Florida

May 9, 1996
2:00-4:00pm

Rachel Porcelli
Susan McCallion
Betty Mallory-Colson
Denayl Serralta
Manuel Perez-Leiva
Magdi Amador
Ana Miyares
Javier Bray
George Suarez
Randy Egues
Cora Mann
Kevin Prescott
James Moore
Rosa Royo
Maria C. Mateo
Julie Palm
Carlos Seales
Orlando Blance
Javier Vazquez
Blanca Torrents Greenwood
Liliana Wolf
E.D. Taylor
Mike Lenaghan
Carrie Montano
Virginia Bustillo
Rosario S. Roman
Carlos F. Diaz
Byron Massialas
Diane Cole
Dorothy W. Graham

Zaida G. Olmsted
Samuel Gonzalez
Enrique Serna
Tony Vivaldi
German Izguierdo
Ray Zeller
Albert Rivera
Irene Secada
Nick Arroyo
Bill Primus
Lianne Acebo
Ramiro Inguanzo
Catherine Matteo
Bill Renuart
Joan Friedman
Alex Martinez
Nick Barakat
Eugenia Russell
Martha Young
Isabel Gomez-Bassols
Madeline Rodriguez
Rosa Castro Feinberg
Roger Cuevas
Hector Hirigoyen
Jose Vicente

**Education and Hispanics:
Solving the Equation
Hearing Sponsored by the Ohio
Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs
Toledo, Ohio**

**May 30, 1996
9:00am-4:00pm**

Andrea Loch
Amando P. Bejarano
Diana Flores
Irma Coah
Roberto Gonzalez
Irene Hernandez
Frederick S. Garcia
Ruth G. Garcia
Margaret A. Williams
Cynthia Arredondo
Oscar Hernandez
Deborah Ortiz
Linda Arranado-Well
Manuel Caro
Elenea Caballero
Carlos A. Caro
Ramon Perez

Consuelo Hernandez
Dan Fleck
Maria Chavez
Manuel Vadillo
Joseph Mas
Richard Daoust
Robert E. Ranchor
Pat Kennedy
Raquel Bravo
Mickey Avalos
Dal Lawrence
Rudolph J. Chavez
Craig Cotner
Ricardo Cervantes
Robert Torres
Michael Thomson

**Community Focus Meeting
Maria de Hostos Community College
475 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York**

**June 12, 1996
10:00am-12:00pm**

Tony Baez
Daralyn Calderon
Felipe Colon, Jr.
Ruth Coronado
Lorraine Cortez Vazquez
Rudy Crew
Joseph DeJesus
Rafael Diaz
Ariane Franco
Michele Gataldi
Rafael Gomez
Guillermo Linares
Lyzeth Martinez
Nancy Lopez
Mariella Martinez
Michael Mena
Aneudy Perez
Luis Reyes
Daniel J. Rivera
Maria Rivera
Sonia Rivera
James F. Rodriguez
Laura Rodriguez
Theresa Rodriguez
Yadira Santana
Yonathan Santana
Maria Santiago Mercado

Claire Sylvan
Silvio Torres Saillant
Jensy Urefia
Nicholas West
Alexander Betancourt
Rosa Agosto
Peter Martin
Victoria Sanacore
Laurel Huggins
Denise Diaz
Wilfredo Frarcia
Enrique Carmona
Garciano Matos
Annette Hernandez

**Community Focus Meeting
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

**August 12, 1996
2:00-4:30pm**

Jose Armas
Peter Horoshcak
Emma Lou Rodriguez
Alex Sanchez
Merryl Kravitz
Belinda Pacheco-Laumbach
Gloria Tristani
Loretta Armenta
Frances Gandara
Carlos Atencio
Bianca Ortiz y Wertheim
Julia Lerma
Moises Venegas
John J. Lopez
Felipe Gonzales
Maria Dolores Velasquez
Karen C. Sanchez-Griego
Robert W. Chavez
Gerald Hunt
Eddie Lucero
Eligio Padilla
David M. Gallegos
Penny Smith
Liz Ethelbah
Kathy Carpenter
Richard R. Romero
Jean Salas Reed
Cathy Alva
Angela Gonzales
Marcia Hernandez

Phil Davis
Dolores Chavez de Paigle
Evangeline Sandoval
Tasia Stockham
Robert Velarde
Jery Ortiz y Pino
Fred Griego III
Dolores Herrera
Tom Savage
Andres Valdez
Patrick McDaniel
Marisol Aviles
Jenny Vigil
Jackie Rider
Veronica C. Garcia
Tirzah Alva
Tally Archuletta
Evelyn Fernandez
Cahty Lucas
Pat Bonilla
Claire Jenson
Flora M. Sanchez
Susan Bender Benjamin
Nancy Sanchez
Ida S. Carrillo
Miriam Martinez
Stephanie Gonzales
Genaro Roybal
Theresa M. Lucero
Patricia Barela
Rommie Compber
Linda Valencia Martinez
Michael J. Gadler
Lynne Rosen
Nana Almers
Virginia Duran Ginn
Patricia Chavez
Cecilia M. Sanchez
Santos G. Abeyte
Ida S. Carrillo
Virginia M. Trujillo
Gilbert Gallegos
Marjorie Schmedt
Art Morales
Joseph P. Arellano
Raul Candelaria
Frank Duran
John Leahigh
Nan Elsasser
Natalie Meneses
RoseAnn McKernan
Oralia Zuniga Forbes

Barbara Lynn
Aurora Jane Sweeny
Bianca Ortiz Wertheim
Christine Trujillo
Maria A. Rodriguez
Steve Griego
Joseph Torres

**Community Focus Meeting
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003**

**August 12, 1996
2:30-5:00pm**

Nena Singleton
Leonel Briseno
Ray Francis
Lewis Spencer
Mary Jane Garcia
J. Paul Taylor
Rosalia Gallegos
Averett S. Tombes
Martha Montoya
Angelo Vega
Felix C. Vega
Karl Hill
Michelle Valverde
Robert Oyas
Sam Barba
Ernest Viramontes
Maria Stops
Esther Aguirre
Debbie Rhinehart
M. L. Gonzalez
Steve Trowbridge
Vodene Schultz

Cecil Shultz
Lena N. Parsons
Mike McCamley
Juan Sanchez
Ray Sandoval
John Lyle
George Duran
Ruth Cartelli
Trula Holstein
James O'Donnell
Saehint Sarangam
Sam Baca
Ann Nance
Janah O. Garcia
Cathy Provine
Ana B. Spencer
Mary Helen Garcia
Cristina Barrera
Juan Franco
Aida Delgado
Len LoPresto
Liz Gutierrez
Steve Ramirez
Alma A. Barba
Samuel Reyes
Cheryl H. St. George
Marcie Graham
Jane L. Gonzalez
Marsha Buchanan
Arminda H. Hernandez
Rosalie A. Gallegos
Eric Cress
Martha Cole
Richard Melendez
Ana Spencer
Carlos Provencio
John Allen Lyle
Laura Gutierrez Spencer

Appendix C

People and Organizations Who Presented Handouts to the Hispanic Dropout Project

Abraham Lincoln Community High School, Los Angeles, California.

ALAS (Achievement for Latinos Through Academic Success), University of California, Santa Barbara.

Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Alternative Resources, Changing Adolescent Behavior, Ontario, California.

ASPIRA of New York, Brooklyn, New York.

AVANCE, Family Support and Education Programs, Houston, Texas.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, San Diego, California.

Berriozábal, M. P., San Antonio, Texas.

Board of Education of The City of New York, New York, New York.

Calexico Unified School District, Calexico, California.

Center for Applied Linguistics, Program in Immigrant Education, Washington, District of Columbia.

Children's Aid Society, New York, New York.

Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Columbia University, New York, New York.

COPS/METRO, San Antonio, Texas.

Communities in Schools of New Mexico, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Cuban American National Council, Inc., Miami, Florida.

Dade County Public Schools, Dropout Prevention Programs, Miami, Florida.

De Jesus, J. N., New York, New York.

Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York.

Durocher, E. N., New York, New York.

Gira, R., San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Business Group, Miami, Florida.

Hernandez, L., Hostos Community College, Bronx, New York.

Home Economics Department, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science, Bronx, New York.

HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) Corporation, Vancouver, Washington.

Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), San Antonio, Texas.

Kravitz, L., New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, San Diego, California.

Lennox School District, Lennox, California.

Little Havana Institute, Cuban American National Council, Miami, Florida.

Lincoln Senior High School, Los Angeles, California.

Mains Elementary School, Calexico, California.

MANA de Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mar Vista High School, Imperial Beach, California.

Mathematica Research Policy Institute, Inc., Washington, District of Columbia.

Mesilla Alternative Learning Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Miami Beach Senior High School, Miami Beach, Florida.

National Diffusion Network, The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program, Washington, District of Columbia.

National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

New Mexico MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Mexico Youth at Risk Foundation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Workplace for Women Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Office of the Superintendent of Bronx High Schools, New York, New York.

Padilla-King, T., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Project GRAD, Houston, Texas.

Project GRADS, Portales, New Mexico.

Re: Learning New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Research Triangle Institute, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

San Andres High School, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

San Antonio Board of Education, San Antonio, Texas.

San Antonio Education Partnership, San Antonio, Texas.

San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists, San Antonio, Texas.

South Beach Alternative School, Miami Beach, Florida.

Southwest Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas.

Starbase Kelly Youth Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Success for All, Houston, Texas.

Success STARTS with Hope!, Miami, Florida.

Systemic Initiative in Mathematics and Science Education, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Texas Interfaith Fund, Alliance Schools Project, Houston, Texas.

Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

United Services Automobile Association (USAA), Mentor and Junior Achievement Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Vasquez, O. and M. Cole, Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, La Jolla, California.

Young, M., The Little Havana Institute, Miami, Florida.

Wechsler, N. M., DeWitt Clinton High School, The Bronx, New York.

Youth Development, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Zamora, G., Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, San Antonio, Texas.

Appendix D

Sites Visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project

CALIFORNIA

Aurora High School

(alternative school)
641 Rockwood Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231

Principal: Patrick Peake
619-357-7410

Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

AVID Program

Mar Vista High School
505 Elm Avenue
Imperial Beach, CA 91932-2099

Principal: Gloria Samson
619-691-5400

Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Calexico High School

1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231

Principal: Harry Pearson
619-357-7440

Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

La Clase Magica

St. Leo's Mission
936 Genevieve Street
Solana Beach, CA 92075

Contact Person: Vicente Leal
619-481-6788

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Lennox Middle School

10319 Firmona Avenue
Lennox, California 90304
310-206-4624

Contact Person: Hal Hyman
(Center X - UCLA)

Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Lincoln High School

3501 North Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90031

Principal & Contact Person: Lupe Sonnie
213-223-1291

Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Neighborhood House Head Start Program

St. Leo's Mission in Eden Gardens
936 Genevieve Street

Solana Beach, CA 92075

Site Coordinator: Amie Khalssa (site director)
619-792-1996

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Newcomer Program

Mains Elementary School
655 Sheridan Street

Calexico, CA 92231

Principal: Gloria Selaya
619-357-7410

Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Fifth Dimension

Boys & Girls Club

Lomas Santa Fe Branch

533 Lomas Santa Fe

Solana Beach, CA 92075-1323

Contact Persons: Duncan Smith or
Raul Castillo

619-755-9373

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Magical Dimension

Skyline Elementary

606 Lomas Santa Fe

Solana Beach, CA 92075

Principal: Kevin Riley

619-794-3920

Site Visited: April 24, 1996

FLORIDA

Allapattah Middle School

1331 NW 46 Street

Miami, FL 33142

Principal: Alex Martinez

305-634-9787

Teacher: Nick Barakat

Host & Escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Math

Supervisor, Dade County Schools)

305-995-1921

Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Little Havana Institute

300 SW 12 Avenue

Miami, FL 33130-2002

Director: Martha Young (Cuban American
National Council)

305-642-3484

Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade
County Public Schools, Head of Psychology
Department for Alternative Programs)

Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Miami Beach Senior High School

2231 Prairie Avenue

Miami, FL 33139-1595

Principal: Bill Renuart

305-532-4515

Mathematics Department Chair: Joan Fried-
man

Host and escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Mathemat-
ics Supervisor, Dade County Schools)

305-995-1921

Site Visited: May 11, 1996

South Beach Institute

920 Alton Road

Miami Beach, FL 33139-5204

Director: Eugenia Russell (Adult Mankind)

305-673-4782

Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade
County Public Schools, Head of Psychology
Department for Alternative Programs)

305-995-1260

Site Visited: May 11, 1996

NEW MEXICO

Cornerstones

Old Dona Ana Church

Dona Ana, NM 88032

Contact Person: Pat Taylor (Site Coordinator)

505-647-6611 (beeper)

Site Visited: August 14, 1996

MESA Program

Washington Middle School

1101 Park Place SW

Albuquerque, NM 87102-2967

Contact Person: Evangeline Sandoval (MESA
Director)

505-262-1200

Site Visited: August 13, 1996

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation (a.k.a. Court Youth Center)

401 West Court

Las Cruces, NM 88001

Contact Person: Irene Oliver-Lewis (Director)

505-541-0145 or 523-0935

Site Visited: August 14, 1996

San Andres Alternative Learning Center

Highway 28

Mesilla, NM 88046

Contact Person: Eric Cress (Principal)

505-527-6058

Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Social Services & Tutors Assisting Youth (S.T.A.Y.)

221 North Downtown Mall

Las Cruces, NM 88001-1213

Contact Person: Leonel Briseno (Program
Coordinator)

Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Youth Development Inc.

Rio Grande High School

2300 Arenal SW

Albuquerque, NM 87105-4180

Contact Person: Robert Chavez

505-831-6038 or 768-6051

Site Visited: August 13, 1996

NEW YORK

DeWitt Clinton High School
100 Mosholu Parkway South
Bronx, NY 10468
Principal: Norman Wechsler
718-543-1000
Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Martin Luther King High School
65th & 66th
New York, NY 10023
Principal: Stephanie Ferrandino
212-501-1300
Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Hostos Lincoln Academy of Science
Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College
475 Grand Concourse, 2nd floor
Bronx, NY 10451
Director: Michael Cataldi
Outreach Program
Director: Michael Cataldi
Sites Visited: June 12, 1996

TEXAS

AVANCE
2001 Rainbow
Houston, TX 77023
Contact: Carmen Cortes
310-825-2494
Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
Kazen Middle School
1520 Gillette
San Antonio, TX 78224
210-924-9021
Contacts: Linda Cantu &
Maria (Cuca) Robledo Mercel
210-684-8180
Site Visited: December 11, 1995

COPS Project
Lanier High School
1514 West Durango
San Antonio, TX 78207
Contact: Sister Consuelo Tovar & Joe Rubio
210-222-2367
Site Visited: December 11, 1995

Success for All Program
Browning Elementary
607 Northwood
Houston, TX 77027
Principal: Olga Moya
Contacts: Joseph Stubbs and Phyllis Hunter
713-892-6025 and 713-892-6024
Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Appendix E

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Appendix F

Programs Reviewed in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Commissioned Papers

**Contacts for Information on Elementary Academic Achievement Programs Reviewed by
Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón and Richard Durán (1996)**

Accelerated Schools
Claudette Spriggs
National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project
Stanford University
CERAS 109
Stanford, CA 94305-3084
415-725-7158 or 415-725-1676

Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (BCIRC)
Margarita Calderón
3001 Cabot Place
El Paso, TX 79935
915-595-5971

Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)
Elizabeth Fennema or Thomas Carpenter
University of Wisconsin Madison
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
608-263-4265

Complex Instruction/Finding Out/Descubrimiento
Elizabeth G. Cohen
Stanford University, School of Education
Stanford, CA 94305
415-723-4661

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP)
Clare Heidema, Director, CSMP
2550 South Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
303-337-0990 Voice mail 303-743-5520
FAX 303-337-3005

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD)
H. Jerome Freiberg
University of Houston
College of Education
Houston, TX 77204-5872
713-743-8663

Direct Instruction/DISTAR/Reading Mastery
Association for Direct Instruction
805 Lincoln
Eugene, OR 97401
541-485-1293

Early Intervention for School Success
Dean Hiser
200 Calmus Drive
P.O. Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
714-900-4125

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI)
Ethna R. Reid
Reid Foundation
3310 South 2700 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84109
801-486-5083 or 801-278-2334
FAX 801-485-0561

Goldenberg and Sullivan
Claude Goldenberg
Department of Teacher Education
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840
310-985-5733
FAX 310-985-1543

Group Investigation
Mark Brubacher
416-394-3402
Kemp Rickett
416-393-9565

Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS)
William E. Gibbons, Chairman
8000 N.E. Parkway Drive, Suite 201
Vancouver, WA 98662-6459
206-260-1995 or 800-833-4678
FAX 206-260-1783

Jigsaw
Spencer Kagan
Resources for Teachers
27134 A Paseo Espada #202
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
1-800-WEE-COOP

Learning Together
Roger T. Johnson and David W. Johnson
The Cooperative Learning Center
60 Peik Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-624-7031

Maneuvers With Mathematics (MWM)
David A. Page or Kathryn B. Chval
The University of Illinois at Chicago
851 Morgan Street
(m/c 249) SEO 1309
Chicago, IL 60607-7045
312-996-8708

Multi-Cultural Reading and Thinking (McRAT)
Janita Hoskyn, National Consultant, McRAT Program
1019 Ronwood Drive
Little Rock, AR 72227
501-225-5809
FAX 501-455-4137

Profile Approach to Writing
Jane B. Hughey, Dixie Copeland
1701 Southwest Parkway, Suite 102
College Station, TX 77840
Phone or FAX 409-764-9765

Project ACHIEVE
Mary Fritz
Urbana School District 116
1108 West Fairview
Urbana, IL 61801
800-ESL-PROG (375-7746)
FAX 217-344-5160

Project ALASKA (Alaska Writing Program)
Nikin McCurry
Yukon Koyukuk School District
Box 80210
Fairbanks, AK 99708
800-348-1335
FAX 907-474-0657

Project BICOMP
The Bilingual Integrated Curriculum Project
Lorie Hammond
Washington Unified School District
930 West Acres Road
West Sacramento, CA 95691
916-257-2237 or 916-371-7720
FAX 916-371-8319

Project CELL
Computer Education for Language Learning
Celia Edmundson
Irvine Unified School District
5050 Barranca Parkway
Irvine, CA 92714
800-237-CELL or 714-733-9391
FAX 714-733-9391

Project CEMI
Computer Education for Multilingual Instruction
Iris N. Dias
Turban University-Department of Education
Box 3030, University Station
Guarbo, PR 00778
809-734-7979, Ext 4940
FAX 809-743-7979, Ext 4944

Project GLAD
Guided Language Acquisition Design
Marcia Bretchel
17210 Oak Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-843-3230
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**Contacts for Information on Secondary Dropout-Prevention Programs Reviewed by
Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin (1997)**

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MEMORANDUM

December 23, 1998

TO: The First Lady

FROM: Neera Tanden

CC: Melanne Vermeer, Shirley Sagawa, Patti Solis Doyle, Jen Klein

RE: Education Attainment of Hispanic Students

A principle that has served as the cornerstone for many of this Administration's most important initiatives is that educational attainment is the key to economic prosperity. However, this economic prosperity is threatened by the alarmingly large educational disparity between Hispanic students and other students. According to every educational indicator, Hispanics are making progress at low rates -- from preschool through grade school, from junior high through high school, and on into higher education. And yet they are the fastest growing population within our schools. Hispanic Americans understand the importance of this issue, repeatedly describing education as their top concern.¹ Though you have focused attention on this problem through your speeches at La Raza and other venues, there is still more work that can be done to educate all Americans on this issue.

This memo provides you with: 1) brief background information on the gap in educational achievement of Hispanic students; 2) an account of the Administration's actions to reduce this gap; and 3) recommendations for your involvement in this issue.

I. Background

A. Demographics

Hispanic Americans have experienced rapid population growth, nearly doubling in 14 years, from 14.6 million in 1980, to over 30 million in 1994.² Projections for the year 2050 predict that Hispanic Americans will comprise 25 percent of the total population of this country, and therefore, will be the largest ethnic group in the nation. However, Hispanic representation amongst the school-age population is growing at an even faster rate. Today, about 14 percent of children of school age are Hispanic; by the year 2030, census projections suggest that Hispanic students age 5 to 18 will number almost 16 million -- 25 percent of the total school population.

¹See attached poll.

²Most Hispanics are native born or naturalized citizens or have legal residency status, and undocumented immigrants remain a small minority.

B. Educational Attainment of Hispanic Americans

Although the gap in some measures of educational attainment is narrowing, the disparity in overall achievement between Hispanic Americans and other Americans remains large. While much attention has been paid to drop-out rates, the achievement gap permeates the entire educational experience. Indeed, these disparities begin even before kindergarten, so that Hispanic children enter school less ready to learn, and then become compounded as time goes on, resulting in growing disparities in academic performance through high school.

1. Early Childhood Education

Research has shown that a quality preschool experience is an important indicator of student success. However, less than 15 percent of all Hispanic children participate in pre-school programs and they are much less likely than black or white to be enrolled in such programs. While enrollment in center-based programs, such as nursery school, pre-kindergarten, Head Start, and kindergarten, increased for nearly almost all groups between 1991 and 1996, the disparity between Hispanics and other groups remain large. Indeed, black and white three-year-olds are almost twice as likely as Hispanic children to be enrolled (roughly 40 percent among whites and blacks compared to 22 percent of Hispanics). The disparity narrows for four year olds -- roughly 45 percent of Hispanic 4-year olds are in center-based care, compared to almost 60 percent of white children and almost 70 percent of black children.³

In addition, data indicates that Hispanic children lag behind white children in an array of areas which implicate children's proper development. According to 1996 data, Hispanic children were less likely to have been read to than white children (65 percent of Hispanics compared to roughly 90 percent of whites); they were also less likely to have been told a story (70 percent of Hispanics compared to roughly 85 percent of whites), and to have visited a library in the past month (25 percent of Hispanics compared to 42 percent of whites). Hispanic children also have less well-developed school-related skills at age four than do white children. Indeed, Hispanic four-year old children are less able than their white counterparts to identify basic colors, recognize all letters of the alphabet, count up to 50 or more, and write their first name.⁴

2. Elementary, Middle and High School

Hispanic children continue to trail behind other groups in primary and secondary educational attainment as well. By age nine, Hispanic students lag behind in reading, writing, science proficiency and mathematics. Although slight gains were noted on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) in 1996, Hispanic children continue to score lower than white children in all those subject areas.

³Council of Economic Advisors, Changing America, 1998.

⁴President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence, Our Nation on the Fault Line, 1995.

Developing reading skills at an early state is important to future educational success. Once behind in reading proficiency, a student risks having difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum, as well as a continued lag in reading skills as the student gets older. In 1996, the Hispanic-white differences in reading scores were about the same at all three age levels: Hispanic students are roughly three to four years behind whites in reading ability. Hispanic students were also three years behind in writing and science proficiency. Indeed, only in mathematics proficiency did both white and Hispanic students increase at all age levels. In 1996, the scores of Hispanic 13-17 year olds increased at a faster rate than those of white students, causing the performance gaps to narrow.⁵

This educational attainment gap permeates a range of educational experiences for Hispanic students. They are less likely than white or black students to be enrolled in college preparatory programs, less likely than white or black students to be enrolled in gifted and talented programs, more likely to be placed in remedial-general education tracks, more likely than white students to be enrolled in vocational programs, and more often incorrectly assessed as mentally retarded or learning disabled.⁶

The statistic that is perhaps most dramatic is that Hispanic students are significantly less likely to complete high school than white students. In 1997, 29 percent of all Hispanics in this age group had not completed and were not enrolled in high school, which was double the rate for blacks (14 percent) and more than three times the rate for whites (7 percent) in the same group. Hispanic Americans not only have a higher drop-out rate, they tend to drop out of school earlier. One third of the Hispanic young adults in this group of dropouts have less than a Th-grade education and one half have less than a 10th-grade education. Comparable estimates for whites and blacks show that about one-tenth of the dropouts in each group have less than a Th grade education and about one-quarter have less than a 10th-grade education.

II. The Administration Record

A. Focusing on the Problem

Over the course of the Administration, the President has taken a number of steps to both focus attention on the education gap. In February 1994, the President issued Executive Order 12900, titled "Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans." This Executive Order established the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence, which held public hearings, convened expert panels and gathered research. From this experience they issued a report titled, "Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education," which made a series of recommendations on steps to close the education gap that Hispanic students are facing.

⁵National Center for Education Statistics, "The Condition of Education 1998," 1998.

⁶President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence, Our Nation on the Fault Line, 1995.

The Commission found a number of specific factors that affect the educational achievement of Hispanic Americans, including: inequity in school financing; school segregation and poverty; multi cultural training for school personnel; lack of bilingual and ESL programs; misplacement of students in special education classes; testing and assessment poorly attuned to Hispanic educational differences; lack of parental involvement; and lack of school safety.

The Commission then made specific recommendations:

- Provide pre-school education for all Hispanic American children who qualify;
- Target youth apprenticeship, mentoring, and career pathway opportunities for Hispanic;
- Train teachers to deal effectively with multi cultural populations and linguistic minority students;
- Increase the number of public, nonprofit, private, and community programs that provide intervention with parents during pregnancy incorporating health care, education, parenting education and child care to provide an even start for Hispanic Americans; and
- Increase funds, maintain and promote Bilingual Education programs, preschool programs, Title I, Title VII, migrant education, Goals 2000, and strengthen and expand parent involvement components.

In addition, in February of 1998, the Hispanic Dropout Project, a project created by the Department of Education to focus on the particular issue of dropout disparities, issued a report. That report, titled "No More Excuses," made a number of direct recommendations for federal action, such as investing in bilingual education, creating a middle-class upward bound program, restructuring schools with high drop-out rates, and focusing on reading and literacy in the early years.

B. The President's Response

Last year, as part of his FY 99 budget proposal, the President put forward his Hispanic Education Action Plan, a package of proposals that was based on the recommendations of both the Hispanic Dropout Project as well as the President's Advisory Commission on Education Excellence. The guiding principle of this set of initiatives was America cannot prosper as a nation unless educational opportunity is made available to all of our children. To address this educational disparity, the Action Plan included more than \$600 million dollars for a comprehensive strategy based on high standards and research-based school reform. Congress funded much of that strategy, which includes:

High Standards: The President proposed to increase funding for Title I by 5.3 percent -- a \$393 million increase -- to strengthen basic reading and math skills. Thirty-two percent of those served are Hispanic. In FY 99, this program received \$301 million.

Training Teachers to Teach English: The Administration proposed a 17 percent increase --\$33 million -- in the Federal program for children with limited English skills, that would help train 20,000 teachers over five years to more effectively teach English in the context of high academic standards. Congress funded an increase of \$25 million in the FY 99 budget.

Adult Literacy in English: The President proposed a \$33 million increase in adult education that would provide more parents and other adults with English training. Congress approved an additional \$24 million for this program.

Transforming Schools with High Dropout Rates: The President proposed a 25 percent expansion -- an increase of \$30 million -- of a new effort to reform failing schools, specifically targeting schools with high-dropout rates. However, the program was flat-funded at \$120 million.

Prepare Disadvantaged Youth for Success in College: The federal TRIO programs fund outreach and support programs to help disadvantaged students prepare for and successfully complete college through counseling and academic assistance. One of the programs --Upward Bound, which helps high school students with academic preparation for college --has been found to be especially helpful to Hispanic youth. The President proposed a \$40 million (20 percent) increase in funding for Upward Bound. He also proposed an increase of \$13 million in all other TRIO programs. In the final budget, these programs received an additional \$70 million. In addition, the President's budget increased funding for the Federal program that strengthens colleges with large Hispanic populations by \$16 million --133 percent --increase, which it received.

Education Programs for Migrant Youth and Adults: Migrant families face particularly difficult obstacles to gaining the education and training they would need to improve their standard of living. The President sought significant increases in the Migrant Education Program (16 percent increase of \$50 million), High School Equivalency Program (HEP: 31 percent increase of \$2.4 million), College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP: 138 percent increase of \$2.9 million) and Migrant Youth Job Training Demonstration (a new \$5 million). Except for the HEP program, all these initiatives were fully funded.

All these programs received \$500 million in additional funding as part of the FY 99 budget.

C. Implementation Concerns

A number of Hispanic groups are extremely concerned that some of the programs listed above that are only targeted for low-income or high-need populations must be focused on Hispanic students as these initiatives are implemented. While the groups have been engaged in discussions with the Department around these issues, they have not been completely reassured.

III. A Unique Opportunity for Your Involvement

We are presented with a unique opportunity to help bring attention to the educational attainment gap at this point in time because the Administration now has a real record of accomplishment. However, as the Hispanic Caucus and other groups have noted, most Americans are unaware of both the problem and our efforts to address it.

In conversations with a number of Hispanic organizations, they have recommended that you focus your attention on education, as you did for your speech to La Raza, because it remains the top

priority of the community. The groups have worked with the Administration to forge this comprehensive plan, and believe it is important to highlight its success. While they have applauded your efforts to focus attention on the problems placing Hispanic youth at risk, they are concerned that it is an overly negative message. They also point out that educational disparities are a critical cause of these at-risk behaviors so that it serves an important starting point for the discussion.

The following are a few recommendations for your involvement that would build on your La Raza event last summer:

A roundtable discussion with experts, Hispanic leaders, and members of the media: We are already working to put together a gathering of thinkers and members who will advise you on at-risk issues for Hispanic youth. We will make sure that education issues are a critical component of this conversation. As part of this ongoing dialogue, we hope to involve businesses, non-profits, and foundations that understand that education is critical to creating the workforce of the future, and that such a significant group cannot be left behind. We could either start these conversations in private and then hold a public event, or simply start with a public roundtable.

A public convening around early child hood issues: A focus on disparities in early educational experiences would allow you to bring your particular background to bear on an educational problem that has thus far received less public attention. It also provides you with a good starting point to address Hispanic educational issues in general. We propose a roundtable at the White House focused on successful efforts to involve Hispanic children in early education programs that could take place in the spring.

Conference on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Students at the Department of Education: The Hispanic Caucus as well as other groups have asked the Department for a conference to highlight the educational attainment gap of Hispanic students, as well as promising practices that address these problems. In addition, such a conference could serve to inform and guide the implementation of the Hispanic Education Action Plan. While the Department has expressed interest in such an event, your involvement -- either to lead a conference or keynote it -- would be critical to their decision to go forward.

Speeches:

- You could make a major speech to the Hispanic Caucus or other groups on educational issues.
- The White House Task Force on Educational Excellence, which is housed at the Department, holds a number of conferences around the country -- any one of which may serve as an opportunity for you to address this issue.

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Ann O'Leary
OA/Box Number: 19582

FOLDER TITLE:

Hispanic Education [2]

2013-0436-S
rc1303

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
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- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
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**PROGRESS ON PRESIDENT CLINTON'S
HISPANIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN:**

Programs (amounts in millions):	FY 1998	FY99 Agreement	Change
I. Title I Grants to School Districts	\$7,375	\$7,676	+ 301
II. Bilingual Education (Teacher Training, etc.)	\$199	\$224	+ 25
Adult Education (Model ESL, etc.)	\$361	\$385	+ 24
III. Comprehensive School Reform Demos	\$120	\$120	--
IV. TRIO College Preparation Programs	\$530	\$600	+ 70
Hispanic-Serving Institutions	\$12	\$28	+ 16
V. Migrant Education Program	\$305	\$355	+ 50
Migrant Education: HEP and CAMP*	\$10	\$13	+ 3
Migrant Youth Job Training Demonstration	\$0	\$5	+ 5
TOTAL HISPANIC EDUCATION ACTION PLAN:			+ 494
Mentoring/High Hopes	\$4	\$116	+ 120
TOTAL:			+ 610

The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students

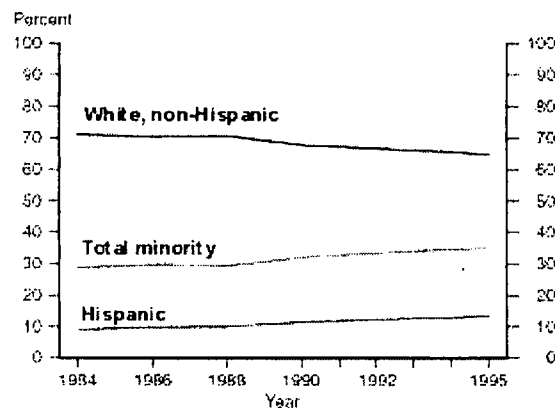
By Jennifer Sable and Janis Stennett, Pinkerton Computer Consultants, Inc.

In order to prepare American students for the types of jobs that will be available in the future, schools and parents need to work together to ensure that all students acquire the academic skills necessary to compete.¹ As the Hispanic population grows, the successful transition of Hispanic youth from school to work and active engagement in American society becomes more important for the Nation.

Racial and ethnic diversity in the United States has grown dramatically in recent years, and the growth of the Hispanic population has been a major contributor to this diversity. The Hispanic population has increased more rapidly than any other racial or ethnic group, growing from 9 percent of the child population in the United States in 1980 to 14 percent in 1996. Predictions indicate that by the year 2020, more than 20 percent of the children in the United States will be Hispanic.²

The increase in the Hispanic population in the United States, and the resulting rise in the enrollment of Hispanic students, has contributed to an 11 percentage point increase in minority enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools between 1976 and 1995. In 1976, Hispanic students made up 6 percent of the student population at public elementary and secondary schools. By 1995, the proportion of Hispanic students rose 8 percentage points, reaching 14 percent, the largest increase of any minority group (table 43-1).

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary school: 1984-95



NOTE: Data for 1992-95 are from the Common Core of Data (CCD) survey.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990; National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data Survey, 1992; and *Digest of Education Statistics, 1995* and *1996*, table 44, and 1997, table 45.

In general, the educational achievement and attainment of Hispanics has been lower than that of whites. Since Hispanics account for a growing percentage of the general U.S. and public school population, it has become increasingly important to understand the educational experiences and transitions to the labor force of Hispanics. Understanding the differences in educational experiences between Hispanics and whites, and how these differences have changed over time, provides an overview of the educational progress of Hispanics in the United States.

It should be noted that although limited data availability often leads researchers to treat Hispanics as if they were a homogeneous group, the U.S. Hispanic population is diverse. The three largest Hispanic subgroups are Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. Recent immigrants from Central America and South America constitute other, smaller groups. These subgroups are concentrated in different parts of the United States, their economic circumstances vary, and the timing of the immigration differs. In this analysis, overall trends for the U.S. Hispanic population are provided, as data are usually not available for these subpopulations.

Family characteristics and parent's involvement in education

A child's family characteristics and home environment have implications for many aspects of a child's life, including academic experiences. Children who live in poverty, in single-parent homes, or whose parents have low levels of educational attainment are at greater risk for dropping out of high school, not achieving at higher levels, and not attending postsecondary institutions. As differences between whites and Hispanics in these family background characteristics change, the educational progress of Hispanics compared to whites can be expected to change.

- *Both the likelihood of living in poverty and with a single parent increased among Hispanic children.*

The number of Hispanic youth under age 18 living below 100 percent of the poverty line has increased from 33 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1996. In contrast, the percentage of white children living in poverty has decreased slightly from 12 percent in 1990 to 10 percent in 1996.³ The percentage of Hispanic 15- to 18-year-olds living with one parent increased from 23 percent in 1972 to 33 percent in 1997, while the percentage of whites in the same age range living with one parent increased from 12 to 22 percent (Indicator 44).

- *The levels of parental education among Hispanic children have increased.*

Higher levels of parent education are generally associated with positive educational outcomes and experiences, such as participation in preprimary education and not dropping out of high school. The parental education levels of Hispanic students ages 15 to 18 nearly doubled in the past 25 years. For example, in 1997, 45 percent of mothers and 46 percent of fathers of Hispanic 15- to 18-year olds had at least a high school diploma or GED, up from 24 percent of mothers and fathers in 1972. The increase for white students has been from 68 to 64 percent of mothers and fathers having a high school diploma or GED in 1972 to 92 and 90 percent, respectively, having these credentials in 1997 (Indicator 44).

- *Many parents of Hispanic children are actively involved in their children's educational activities.*

Parents' involvement in their children's education is another way through which the family influences educational experiences. Parent participation in their children's education is evidenced by their involvement in school-related issues and activities. In 1996, parents of Hispanic children were equally or more involved in education-related activities that directly influenced their children than were parents of white children. For example, parents of Hispanics were as likely as parents of whites to attend general school meetings, and more likely to help their children with homework during the week than parents of white children. However, parents of Hispanic children were less likely than parents of white children to participate in school activities that did not directly influence their child's education, such as attending a school event, acting as a volunteer, or serving on a committee (Indicator 49).

Issues of limited English proficiency

The ability to speak and read English, a problem which is not unique to the Hispanic population, is a concern for many. Spanish-speakers may have difficulty with English because they have had limited opportunities to use English. For example, Hispanic students may speak English only at school, while speaking Spanish at home and outside of school. Difficulties in speaking and reading English places students at risk for academic failure. In fact, Hispanic students who speak Spanish are more likely to drop out of high school than peers who speak only English.

Between 1979 and 1989, the percentage of Spanish speakers age 5 and older increased 65 percent in the United States. In 1989, more than 14 million people in the United States spoke Spanish. Of those who spoke languages other than English, 58 percent spoke Spanish. Of these Spanish speakers, almost half reported having difficulty speaking English.⁴

The limited English proficiency of many Hispanics is likely to serve as an important impediment to success in the educational careers and employment outcomes of Hispanic youths. Knowing the pervasiveness of this problem is important for understanding the differences that exist between Hispanics and other racial and ethnic groups in terms of educational participation, progress, and achievement.

Preprimary education

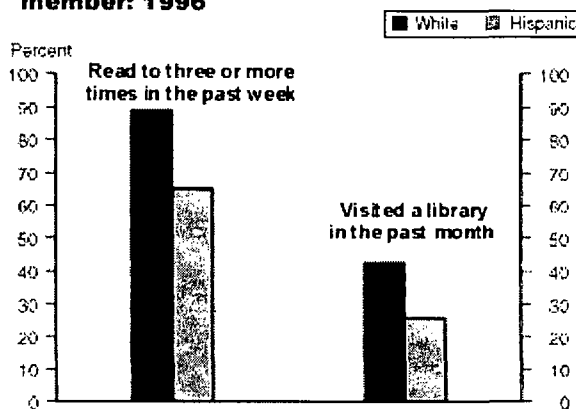
Research has shown that a quality preschool experience is an important indicator of student success. Preprimary education prepares children for school by teaching learning and socialization skills.⁵

- *The preprimary educational experiences of Hispanic children differ from those of whites. Hispanic 3- and 4-year-olds are less likely to participate in preprimary education than their white peers, and are less likely to participate in early literacy activities.*

One form of preprimary education is organized preprimary programs, such as Head Start or pre-kindergarten. In 1996, about 22 percent of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in such preprimary programs compared to 40 percent of whites. Among 4-year-olds, 45 percent of Hispanics and 59 percent of whites were enrolled. Among 5-year-olds of normal kindergarten age, these differences largely disappeared: Hispanic enrollment rates, including kindergarten enrollment, were similar to the enrollment rates of white 5-year-olds (Indicator 1).

Preprimary educational opportunities are fostered in the home environment as well as in preprimary programs. In 1996, Hispanic children, ages 3-5, were less likely to have been read to in the past week or to have visited a library in the past month than white children (figure 2 and Indicator 2). This lack of early reading experience can create learning deficits for Hispanic youngsters.⁶

Figure 2. Percentage of children ages 3-5 who participated in various literacy activities with a parent or family member: 1996



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey (NHES), 1996 (Parent and Family Involvement in Education File).

Academic performance of Hispanic students

- *Hispanic students score lower than white students in national assessments of reading, writing,*

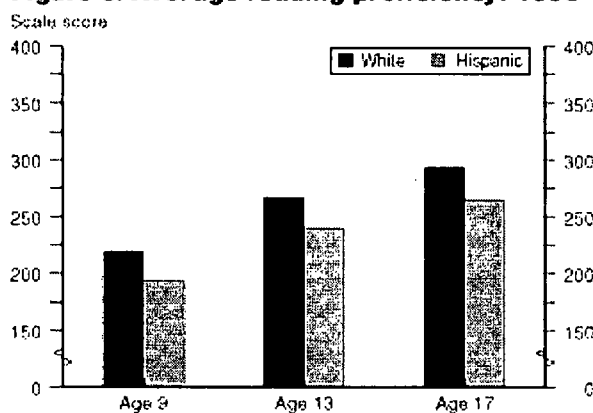
mathematics, and science proficiency, but their performance has improved in some areas since 1975.

Developing reading skills at an early stage is important to future educational success. Once behind in reading proficiency, a student risks having difficulty with other aspects of the curriculum, and a continued lag behind other peers in reading skills as the student gets older. In 1996, at age 9, Hispanic students had an average reading scale score of 194 while white students had an average score of 220 (Indicator 16).

There is evidence that the majority of reading skills are mastered by age 13, which is generally when reading is taught in school as a explicit subject for the most part.⁷ On average, the reading scores of all 13-year-old students in 1996 were about 50 points higher than their reading scores as 9-year-olds in 1992. In 1996, Hispanic reading scores differed by 46 points between ages 9 and 13, compared to 25 points between ages 13 and 17. The Hispanic-white differences in reading scores were about the same at all three age levels: 26 points at age 9, 27 points at age 13, and 30 points at age 17. At age 17, Hispanic students were reading at levels similar to white 13-year-olds (Indicator 16).

These scoring differences between Hispanics and whites mean that the average Hispanic score is below that of the average student by about 25 to 30 points. The extent to which these large differences may be attributable to recent immigration or language difficulties is unknown. Also, students whose English proficiency is judged not to be appropriate for the NAEP tests are excluded from taking them.⁸

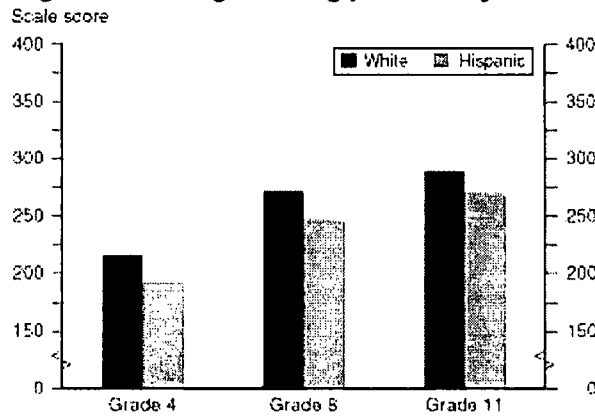
Figure 3. Average reading proficiency: 1996



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, *Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997.*

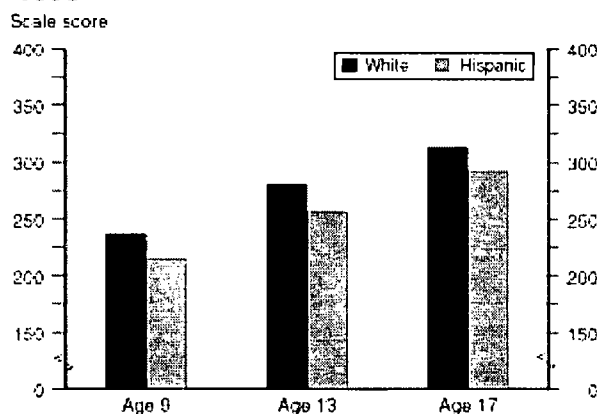
While Hispanics score at proficiency levels below those of white students at all ages, there was a slight improvement in the average reading proficiency scores of 9-year-old Hispanics between 1975 and 1996. However, there was no similar improvement for 13- and 17-year old Hispanics in reading proficiency (Indicator 16).

The NAEP writing proficiency scores of white and Hispanic 4th-, 8th-, and 11th-graders exhibited similar patterns as reading proficiency scores. In 1996, white 4th-grade students outperformed Hispanic 4th-grade students in writing proficiency by 25 scale points. As Hispanic and white students grew older, the writing scale scores of Hispanics remained lower than those of whites. Hispanic 11th-graders performed at a level similar to white students in 8th-graders, similar to the pattern with the reading proficiency scores. There have been no significant increases or decreases in performance on the NAEP writing proficiency scale for Hispanic or white 4th- or 8th-graders between 1984 and 1996 (Indicator 17). Again, students whose English proficiency is judged not appropriate for the NAEP tests are excluded from taking them.⁹

Figure 4. Average writing proficiency: 1996

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *National Assessment of Educational Progress, Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997.*

Patterns in the NAEP mathematics proficiency scores were similar to the average reading and writing scores in 1996 in most, but not all, respects. White students outperformed Hispanic students at each age level (figure 5). The major difference is that unlike reading and writing, the average mathematics proficiency scores of both white and Hispanic students increased between 1973 and 1996 at all age levels. The scores of Hispanic 13- and 17-year-olds increased at a faster rate than those of white students, causing the performance gaps to narrow over this period.

Figure 5. Average mathematics proficiency: 1996

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *National Assessment of Educational Progress, Trends in Academic Progress: Achievement of U.S. Students in Science, 1969 to 1996; Mathematics, 1973 to 1996; Reading, 1971 to 1996; Writing, 1984 to 1996, 1997.*

As in mathematics, the science proficiency scores of both Hispanic and white students increased between 1977 and 1996 at both ages 9 and 13 (Indicator 19). Unlike in mathematics, there was no improvement among 17-year-old whites or Hispanics. The gaps in science performance between Hispanics and whites also did not narrow between 1977 and 1996, and Hispanic-white differences at age 9 had not decreased by age 17.

Progress in school

- *Hispanics are taking more rigorous high school courses, and more Hispanic students are participating in the AP program than in the past.*

In the past Hispanic students have been commonly "tracked" into general high school courses that satisfied only the most basic requirements for earning a high school diploma, but did not prepare students to attend 4-year colleges or rigorous technical schools. This general high school curriculum also did not prepare students for good entry-level jobs in high-technology industries if the student chooses not to pursue a postsecondary education.¹⁰

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* recommended that all high school students seeking a high school diploma take a more rigorous core curriculum called the "New Basics." This curriculum consists of 4 years of study in English, and 3 years each in mathematics, science, and social studies. In 1982, 7 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earned the units to meet this curriculum. By 1994, this percentage was six times higher, with 44 percent of Hispanic high school graduates earning the units for the "New Basics" curriculum. White graduates are still more likely to have met the course area requirements of the "New Basics" than Hispanics (Indicator 28, Condition 1996). However, Hispanics are just as likely as whites to have completed the more rigorous requirements recommended for college-bound students, which included foreign languages and computer science.¹¹

Another way to assess the rigor of a student's high school curriculum is to examine participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) program which offers college-level courses to high school students. Satisfactory performance on an AP examination (usually a score of 3 or higher on a 5 point scale) will often allow the examinee to earn college credit. Between 1984 and 1996, the number of Hispanic students who took AP examinations per 1,000 12th-graders increased from 24 to 74. For Hispanics, the rate of 74 students per 1,000 AP examination takers is about half the rate of 133 per 1,000 students for whites. Between 1984 and 1996, whites were more likely to take AP examinations than Hispanics, but the gap between the races has decreased. In 1996, Hispanics taking the AP examination were three times as likely as whites to take a foreign language AP examination (Indicator 27).

- *Hispanic students are less likely to complete high school than white students. The rates of not completing are highest among immigrants and those with limited English-language proficiency.*

The differences in high school completion between Hispanics and whites ages 16–24 are substantial. In 1996, the dropout rate for white young adults was 7 percent compared to 29 percent for Hispanic young adults.¹² Immigration and English language use and proficiency are all associated with this difference between the two groups.

Foreign-born Hispanic students are at a much greater risk of not completing high school than native-born students. The status dropout rate (defined as a proportion of young adults ages 16–24 who are not enrolled in school and do not have a high school credential) is about two times higher for Hispanic migrants than for Hispanic young adults born in the 50 states and DC (46 versus 18 percent). Many Hispanic youths migrating to the U.S. do not enroll in school, but seek employment instead. They may be deterred from enrolling by language, economic, and cultural differences.¹³ Those who never enroll in high school may account for about one-half of the higher dropout rate for Hispanics. In contrast, Hispanics who had ever enrolled in U.S. schools had a status dropout rate of 20 percent.¹⁴

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the 16- to 24-year-old population and percentage who were dropouts: 1995

Race/ethnicity and place of birth	Percentage of the population	Dropout rate
Total	100.0	12.0
Born in U.S.	89.4	9.9
Foreign-born	10.6	29.1
White, non-Hispanic	67.9	8.6
Born in U.S.	65.6	8.6
Foreign-born	2.3	7.5
Hispanic	13.9	30.0
Born in U.S.	7.9	17.9
Foreign-born	5.9	46.2

NOTE: Details may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October 1995, unpublished data.

The likelihood of not completing high school is also related to language use in the home and English-language proficiency. In 1995, for example, the status dropout rate for Hispanics speaking Spanish at home, who were ever enrolled in U.S. schools, and who spoke English "well," was 19 percent compared to 33 percent for their peers who did not speak English "well."¹⁵

Due to immigration and the higher dropout rates for Hispanics born in the United States, the overall percentage of the Hispanic, young adult population, ages 25–29 who have completed high school through receiving a diploma or other certificate of high school equivalency is less than that of whites. These rates are 93 percent for whites and 62 percent for Hispanics in 1997. The high school completion rate for Hispanics shows no consistent trend since the early 1980s, while the high school completion rate for whites has increased (Indicator 22).

College enrollment

- *Total Hispanic enrollment in postsecondary education is increasing rapidly, primarily because of the growing proportion of Hispanics in the total population, rather than an increase in the rate at which Hispanic high school completers are entering college.*

Enrollment in colleges and universities has become increasingly diverse since the mid-1970s as the total numbers of different minorities enrolling have increased faster than the enrollment of whites. Much of this increased diversity is due to the rapid growth of Hispanic enrollment, which nearly tripled between 1976 and 1995 from .4 to 1.1 million students (fall enrollment).¹⁶ Because of this growth, Hispanic enrollment rose from 4 percent of all students in 1976 in postsecondary education to 8 percent in 1995. As shown in table 2, more Hispanic students have enrolled in community colleges than in 4-year colleges by a substantial amount, and the proportion has increased since 1976.¹⁷

Table 2. Percentage of all Hispanic and white (non-Hispanic) students in 2-year versus 4-year institutions

Type of institution and race/ethnicity of student	Year							
	1976	1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995*
4-year								
White	66.1	63.8	63.1	61.8	62.0	62.6	63.0	63.2
Hispanic	46.2	46.9	46.8	44.2	42.9	43.7	44.3	44.4
2-year								
White	33.9	36.2	36.9	38.2	38.0	37.4	37.0	36.8
Hispanic	54.8	54.1	54.2	55.8	57.1	56.3	55.7	55.6

* Preliminary data.

NOTE: Details may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS), "Fall Enrollment in Colleges and Universities" surveys; and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" surveys.

Nearly all of this growth in total Hispanic enrollments reflects rapid growth in the total numbers of Hispanic high school completers in the U.S. population and not increases in the rates at which Hispanic high school completers are continuing on into postsecondary education. The percentages of Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24 attending college has not changed since the early 1980s, while the rate for whites has grown. In 1996, 34 percent of Hispanic high school completers ages 18–24 were enrolled in college, compared to 45 percent of their white peers. In 1980, the enrollment rates were about the same, with 30 percent of Hispanics and 32 percent of whites enrolled (Indicator 9).

A large part of the growing gap between the percentages of Hispanics and white high school completers ages 18–24 who are enrolled in college reflects faster growth in the percentages of white high school completers who immediately enroll in college the following fall (Indicator 7). In 1996, 51 percent of Hispanic and 67 percent of white youth went to college immediately after completing high school, compared to 52 percent of Hispanics and 50 percent of whites in 1980 (Indicator 7).

- *Hispanic students may be less prepared or qualified to attend a 4-year college than white students. Additionally, college-qualified Hispanics are less likely to take steps toward college admission and enrollment than whites.*

Differences in college preparedness or qualifications may help to explain why Hispanics enroll in college at lower rates than their white peers. In order to have access to a 4-year college, students must complete a series of steps that will increase their chances for admission and enrollment. Students must be academically prepared to attend a 4-year college; this includes successfully following a rigorous high school curriculum and taking college admission tests such as the SAT. Students must also apply to college and enroll if accepted. In 1992, Hispanic high school graduates were less likely to be "college qualified" (as determined by a 4-year college qualification index, see the supplemental note to Indicator 8) than white high school graduates. Moreover, given that they were college-qualified, Hispanic high school graduates were less likely to take steps toward college admission or to enroll at a 4-year institution after high school than white high school graduates (table 8-1 and Indicator 8).

Subject studied in college

Once enrolled in college, Hispanics to some extent pursue different courses of study than their white peers. The choice of a college major affects the types of jobs graduates are prepared to take once they complete their education. Now more than ever, college graduates need skills in science and technology to be competitive in the job market. Examining differences in the racial and ethnic distribution of bachelor's degrees conferred by field of study can be used to predict differences in employment and earnings between Hispanics and whites.

- *Hispanics are more likely than whites to earn bachelor's degrees in business and in computer and information sciences.*

In 1995, Hispanic students were more likely than white students to earn bachelor's degrees in humanities, the behavioral and social sciences, computer and information sciences, engineering, or business management. White students were more likely to major in natural sciences, engineering technologies, education, and health sciences. These patterns of degrees earned are evident in the Hispanic to white concentration ratios in the fields of business management and computer and information sciences (concentration ratios measure the extent to which the major fields of study differ between two population groups). The Hispanic to white concentration ratios increased to greater than 1.0 in these two fields between 1977 and 1995, indicating that Hispanics are increasingly more likely to earn

degrees in these two fields than whites. In contrast, the Hispanic to white field concentration ratio decreased considerably in the education field (Indicator 29).

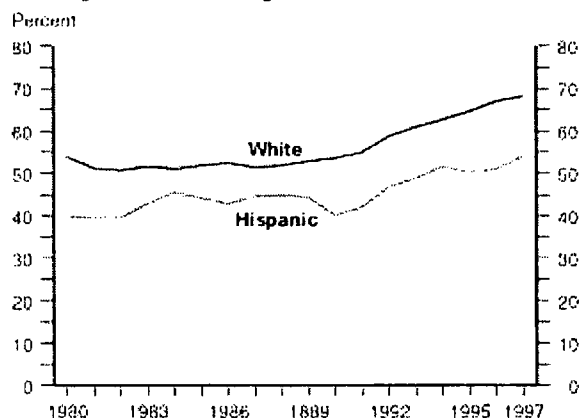
Postsecondary attainment

- *The postsecondary educational attainment of Hispanics has increased since the 1970s.*

Completion of postsecondary education has become increasingly important as the demand for education beyond the completion of high school has increased in the labor market.

The percentages of 25- to 29-year-old whites and Hispanic high school completers who have also finished some college or higher¹⁸ have increased between 1980 and 1997, as compared to no increase in the previous decade. In 1997, 68 percent of white high school completers and 54 percent of Hispanic completers had completed some college or higher, while in 1980 the corresponding figures were 54 percent of white and 40 percent of Hispanic completers (Indicator 22 and figure 7).

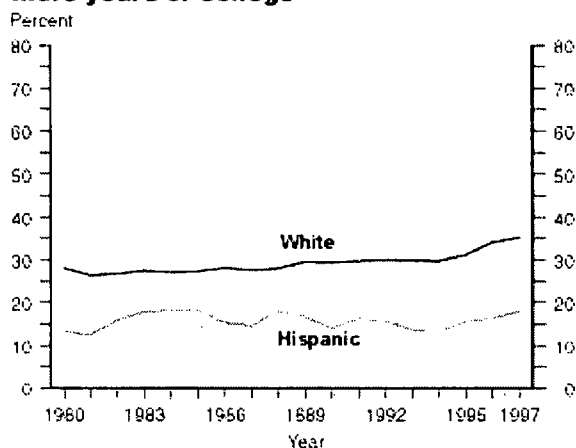
Figure 7. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school completers who completed 1 or more years of college



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

The percentages of 25- to 29-year-old white and Hispanic high school completers who have finished 4 or more years of college have not increased as rapidly (see figure 8). The proportion of Hispanic high school completers finishing 4 years of college has increased from 13 percent in 1981 to 18 percent in 1997. For whites, the increase rose from 28 percent in 1980 to 35 percent in 1997. Thus, the rate at which Hispanic high school completers attain 4 or more years of postsecondary education relative to white high school completers remains about half the rate of the whites.

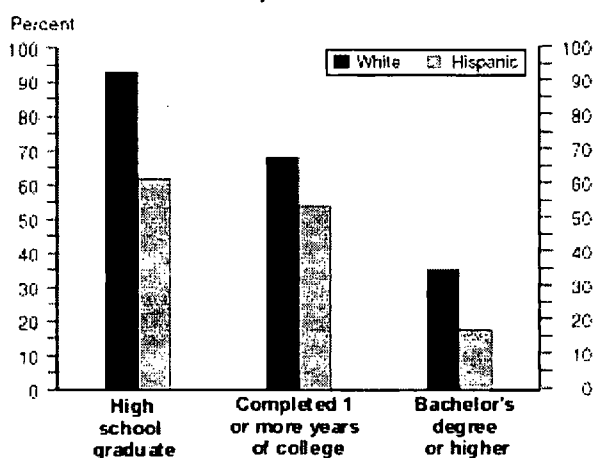
Figure 8. Percentage of 25- to 29-year-old high school completers who completed 4 or more years of college



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

As shown in figure 9, the rate of postsecondary attainment is substantially lower for Hispanics when computed on the basis of the entire Hispanic population, rather than on the number of high school completers. Among those ages 25–29, the rate of completing some college or higher declines from 54 percent of Hispanic high school completers to 33 percent of all Hispanics, while the rate of completing a bachelor's degree or more declines from 18 percent of high school completers to 11 percent of Hispanics.

Figure 9. Percentage of Hispanic and white 25- to 29-year olds who complete different levels of education, March 1997



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

In summary, while there have been some gains in the percentages of Hispanics pursuing and completing higher education, they remain behind whites in attaining this level of education.

Relationship of education and labor market outcomes

Attaining higher levels of education increases one's employment opportunities by enhancing knowledge, ability to learn, work-related skills, and job readiness. Successful employment leads to better overall opportunities for young adults by giving them the opportunity to gain valuable work experience and on-the-job training.¹⁹

- *With comparable levels of education, Hispanics generally are less likely to be employed and to earn less than whites.*

Among both high school completers not enrolled in college and high school dropouts, Hispanics are less likely to be employed than their white peers. For example, 1995, 71 percent of white high school graduates not enrolled in college and 43 percent of Hispanic high school graduates were employed. Among school dropouts, 52 percent of whites and 44 percent of Hispanics were employed (Indicator 30).

However, these figures indicate, Hispanic high school dropouts were no more likely to be employed than high school graduates.

As shown in table 3, both Hispanic men and women earn less than white men and women at every level of educational attainment.

Table 3. Median annual earnings (in 1997 constant dollars) of full-time, year-round wage and salary workers ages 25–34, by sex, race, and highest educational level: 1994–96

Highest education level	Men		Women	
	White	Hispanic	White	Hispanic
Grades 9–11	\$21,513	\$16,510	\$15,532	\$13,699
High school diploma	26,446	21,118	19,323	17,708
Some college	29,272	25,361	23,141	21,412
Bachelor's degree	38,813	34,400	31,085	29,090

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March Current Population Surveys.

Summary

There has been some progress in education for Hispanics. More Hispanic students are taking rigorous high school course loads and there has been some increase in the rates at which Hispanic high school completers are completing some college or more. The educational levels of the parents of Hispanic students are rising and many parents of Hispanic students are actively involved in their children's education. However, Hispanic students in the United States are still at great risk for academic failure and the subsequent labor market outcomes associated with such failure.

In particular limited language skills are highly correlated to the high dropout rates for Hispanic youth. The extent to which these language skills impinge on Hispanic achievement test performance is largely unknown, but it is certainly a contributing factor to the test performance gaps. An indication of this is that students with low English proficiency are less likely to achieve basic levels of reading and mathematics than students of the same socioeconomic status with medium or high English proficiency.²⁰

The rates of high school completion among Hispanics remains much lower than that of both blacks and whites, reflecting the continued immigration of Hispanics to the United States. So far, the rigorous high school course loads being taken by Hispanic students have not translated into rising rates of college enrollment immediately following high school completion. Rates of completing at least some college within 10 years of leaving high school are rising among Hispanic high school completers and have reached three-quarters of the white rate, but rates of completing 4 or more years of college education remain only half the rate of whites.

When all Hispanics in the population are factored in, including those who have not completed high school, the percentages of Hispanics completing any level of postsecondary education fall considerably further behind the rates of whites, and are showing little improvement. These low rates of postsecondary

completion mean continuing difficulties for the Hispanic population in fully participating in areas of the economy where higher levels of education are needed, employment is expanding, and wages are higher.

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¹⁸ "Some college or more" includes an associate degree or vocational degree, and a bachelor's or advanced degree. **BACK**

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Dropout Rates in the United States, 1996

EVENT, STATUS, AND COHORT DROPOUT RATES

Event, status, and cohort dropout rates each provide a different perspective on the student dropout population. The National Center for Education Statistics includes definitions and data for each type of dropout rate in order to provide a detailed profile of dropouts in the United States. High school graduation and completion rates complete the profile of high school outcomes for young adults in the United States.

Types of Dropout Rates

- **Event** rates describe the proportion of students who leave school each year without completing a high school program. This annual measure of recent dropout occurrences provides important information about how effective educators are in keeping students enrolled in school.
- **Status** rates provide cumulative data on dropouts among all young adults within a specified age range. Status rates are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts, regardless of when they last attended school. Since status rates reveal the extent of the dropout problem in the population, this rate also can be used to estimate the need for further education and training that will help dropouts participate fully in the economy and life of the nation.
- **Cohort** rates measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period of time. This rate is based on repeated measures of a group of students with shared experiences and reveals how many students starting in a specific grade drop out over time. Typically, cohort rates from longitudinal studies provide more background and contextual data on the students who drop out than are available through the CPS or CCD data collections.

Event Dropout Rates

Event rates calculated using the October 1996 CPS data measure the proportion of students who dropped out between October 1995 and October 1996.¹⁰ These dropouts are 15- through 24-year-olds who were enrolled in high school in October of 1995, but had not completed high school and were not enrolled in grades 10 through 12 a year later.¹¹ By October 1996, 5 out of every 100 young adults (5 percent) enrolled in high school in October 1995 left high school without successfully completing a high school program (table 1 and C1).¹²

Over the past quarter century, annual estimates of the event dropout rate have fluctuated between 4.0 and 6.7 percent (figure 1 and table C3).¹³ There was a downward trend in the estimated percentage of current year high school dropouts in the 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁴ However, changes in survey methodology complicate the analysis of recent estimates. The annual event dropout rates declined between 1978 and 1986, when a change in the editing procedures for the school enrollment items may have affected reporting.¹⁵

More recently, additional changes in data collection and estimation procedures coincided with an apparent increase in the rates from 1991 through 1995.¹⁶ In fact, the 1995 event dropout rate of 5.7 percent was significantly higher than the rates registered for all but one year between 1986 and 1993.¹⁷ By comparison, although the 1996 rate of 5.0 percent is not significantly lower than the 1995 rate, it is also not significantly higher than the rates registered between 1986 and 1993. (table C3)

The percentage of young adults who left school each year without successfully completing a high school program decreased from 1972 through 1986, but the rates over the subsequent years have not

shown a consistent pattern. Although there have been year-to-year fluctuations, the net effect leads to the conclusion that the percentage of students dropping out each year has neither increased nor decreased since the late 1980s.

Race-Ethnicity

The 1996 CPS data are consistent with earlier reports of a strong association between race-ethnicity and dropping out of school. In particular, cohort studies of national longitudinal data for American high school students, such as the High School and Beyond survey sponsored by NCES, show that Hispanics and blacks are at greater risk of dropping out than whites, with Hispanics at a greater risk of dropping out than either white or black students.¹⁸ More recently, analyses of data from the NCES National Education Longitudinal Study, and analyses reported by the White House Panel on Hispanic Dropouts also confirm these patterns.¹⁹

Data from the October 1996 CPS repeat this pattern, showing an event dropout rate of 9.0 percent for Hispanic students, higher than the rate of 4.1 percent for white students.²⁰ The estimated rate for black students (6.7 percent) falls between the rates for Hispanics and whites, but the differences are not significant (table 1).²¹

Race-ethnicity is only one of a number of closely linked factors that mediate a student's decision to drop out of school. A number of other factors that more than likely play an important role in this decision are highly correlated with an individual's racial and ethnic background. Just to name a few, examples include socioeconomic background, the ability to communicate in English, and geographic region of residence. Analyses of all of the specific interactions among intervening variables that mediate the dropout decision are beyond the scope of this report. Instead, this report reviews some of the primary factors that are associated with higher event dropout rates.²²

Income

The Current Population Survey includes family income data that can be used to provide information about the impact of socioeconomic background and home environment on the decisions of these young adults to drop out. Of course the range of factors that affect young adults' life decisions extend beyond the economic conditions associated with family income; however, in the absence of additional measures, family income serves as a good indicator for the other social and economic factors that are likely to have an impact on a young adult's decision to stay in school. In 1996, 11.1 percent of students from families in the lowest 20 percent of the income distribution dropped out of high school; by way of comparison, 5.1 percent in the middle 60 percent of the income distribution dropped out, and 2.1 percent of students from families with incomes in the top 20 percent dropped out (table 1).

Comparable data spanning the last quarter century provide strong evidence that income, and more than likely the complex of social factors affected by income, makes a difference in the dropout decision process. The annual event dropout rates for students with family incomes in the lowest 20 percent of the family income distribution range from 4.5 to 11 times the dropout rates recorded for students with family incomes in the top 20 percent of the family income distribution (figure 2). A comparison of the annual dropout rates at each income level suggests that there is a larger gap between the dropout rates for students in the lowest versus the middle income group than there is between the rates for students in the middle and highest income groups. A more detailed examination of these data shows that, on average, the gap between the dropout rates in the highest and lowest income groups is 11.5 percentage points. Two-thirds of this gap is accounted for by differences between students in the lowest compared to the middle income group (a difference, on average, of 7.8 percentage points); while the remaining one-third (on average, 3.7 percentage points) is due to the gap in dropout rates between students in the middle and highest income groups.

Age

In October of 1996, only 1 out of every 10 youths ages 15 through 24 enrolled in school was over age 18, but dropouts from this older group of students accounted for 1 out of every 4 high school dropouts in 1996. Thus, students who pursue a high school program beyond the traditional ages are at an increased risk of dropping out of school (table 2).

While the event dropout rates for younger enrollees are substantially lower (for example, only 3.5 percent for 15- and 16-year-olds and 3.4 percent for 17-year-olds), it is important to understand that 43 percent of all young adults who left school between October of 1995 and October of 1996 were ages 15, 16, and 17 in October of 1996. These youths left school short of a projected normal school completion. Understanding why these younger students, with presumably fewer career options, choose to leave school early is an important issue to resolve.

State Dropout Rates

For the past four years, the Common Core of Data (CCD) universe collection at NCES has included a dropout component in the agency level nonfiscal data collection. Currently NCES, through the National Cooperative for Elementary and Secondary Statistics and the CCD collection, is working with states and school districts to develop this national database of public school dropout rates. The number of states participating with consistent data definitions and collection procedures has increased from 14 states plus the District of Columbia for school year 1991-92 to 17 states for school year 1992-93 and most recently to 29 states for school year 1994-95. Once all states are participating fully in this data collection, event data for sex, race-ethnicity, and for grades 7 through 12 will be aggregated at the state and national levels. In the 1995-96 school year collection, 44 states plus the District of Columbia submitted data to CCD for dropouts from the 1994-95 school year. Data from 29 states meet the quality and comparability levels necessary for publishing state level estimates that support valid cross-state comparisons. The middle case, or median, of the dropout rates for these states is 4.6 percent registered by Delaware, Indiana, and Rhode Island, with rates ranging from 2.5 percent in North Dakota to 10.3 percent in Nevada (table 3).

Status Dropout Rates

The cumulative effect of hundreds of thousands of young adults leaving school each year without successfully completing a high school program translates into several million young adults who are out of school but lacking a high school credential. Each year over the last decade this number has exceeded 3 million.²³ In October of 1996 there were 3.6 million 16- through 24-year-olds who were not enrolled in a high school program and had not completed high school (table 4). Overall, 11.1 percent of the 32.5 million 16- through 24-year-olds in the U.S. in 1996 were in this group.

Although only 7.3 percent of white young adults ages 16 through 24 were out of school without a high school credential in 1996, they account for 1.6 million of the 3.6 million dropouts (table 5). An additional 1.3 million Hispanic dropouts account for 29.4 percent of the Hispanic young adults in this age group. Moreover, 13 percent of black 16- through 24-year-olds add another 0.6 million young adults to the dropout count.

The 1996 status dropout rate of 11.1 percent is lower than the 1995 rate of 12.0 percent, and continues an overall pattern of decline in the status rate. This 1995 to 1996 decrease is reflected in the status dropout rates for white youths, which decreased from 8.6 percent in 1995 to 7.3 percent in 1996, but is not repeated in the case of blacks or Hispanics, whose dropout rates showed no significant changes between 1995 and 1996²⁴ (figure 3). In recent years, annual fluctuations in these data have made it difficult to interpret short-term comparisons. However, a time series analysis based on the annual data provides a framework for describing longer term patterns of change. Over the past 25 years, there has been an overall pattern of decline that, on average, amounts to a change of 0.13 percent per year.

Race-Ethnicity

Over the past quarter century, the status dropout rates for white young adults have persisted at levels lower than the rates observed for either black or Hispanic young adults (figure 3). However, over the time period, the percentages of white and black young adults out of school without a high school credential have declined by about 40 percent in each group. Since the dropout rates for black young adults have been higher than those for white young adults, the comparable rates of change have resulted in a narrowing of the gap between the rates for blacks and whites.

Hispanic young adults in the United States have not shared in this improvement. Over the last 25 years, close to one-third of the 16- through 24-year-old Hispanics in the United States were reported as out of school and lacking a high school credential.²⁵ The educational gap between Hispanic young adults compared to their black and white peers is made worse by the fact that taken as a group, Hispanic young adults without a high school credential have completed less schooling than black and white young adults in the same situation. For example, one-third of the Hispanic young adults in this group of dropouts have less than a 9th-grade education and one-half have less than a 10th-grade education (table 6). Comparable estimates for whites and blacks show that about one-tenth of the dropouts in each group have less than a 9th-grade education and about one-quarter have less than a 10th-grade education.

Hispanic Dropout Rates

Earlier reports that the higher Hispanic dropout rates are in part attributable to high dropout rates among Hispanic immigrants are substantiated with data from 1996 (table 7).²⁶ In fact, the status dropout rate of 44.1 percent for Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia is double the rates of 16.7 percent registered for Hispanic youths with at least one parent born in the United States and 22 percent registered for Hispanic youths with both parents born in the United States. While these dropout rates for Hispanic youths born in the United States are lower than the dropout rate for foreign-born Hispanic youths, they are still higher than the dropout rates registered for black or white young adults, leaving a larger share of the group of Hispanic young adults ill-prepared to compete for skilled or technical jobs in today's economy.

Data from 1995 show that over half of the foreign-born Hispanic youths who were counted as dropouts never enrolled in a U.S. school, and 80 percent of these young adults were reported as either speaking English "not well" or "not at all."²⁷ Some of the young Hispanic immigrants who do not enroll in school in the U.S. may have entered the U.S. beyond what is considered "normal" high school age, and some may have come to the U.S. in search of employment rather than education. But the data also suggest that language may be a barrier to participation in U.S. schools. Regardless of the reasons that resulted in a large proportion of Hispanic young adults not having a high school credential, the impact is the same; whether they were born in the 50 states and the District of Columbia or elsewhere and whether or not they enrolled in U.S. schools, these young adults do not have the basic level of education that is thought to be essential in today's economy.

Income

The patterns described for event dropout rates and income levels are repeated in the status dropout rates. In 1996, there was almost a 20-percentage-point gap between status dropout rates for the lowest and highest income groups (table 8). Youths from families with the lowest incomes were eight times as likely as their peers from families with high incomes to be out of school without a high school credential.

The clear differences in the distribution of dropout rates across racial-ethnic groups and clear differences in the distribution of dropout rates across income levels lead to questions about the relationship between racial-ethnic group membership, income levels, and dropout rates. As reported in

past years, within each racial-ethnic group, status dropout rates are lowest at the highest income levels and highest at the lowest income levels.

Despite these patterns, differences between racial-ethnic groups persist within income levels (table 8). Although Hispanic young adults from families with low and middle incomes are more likely to drop out than Hispanic youth from families with high incomes, Hispanic young adults at each income level are more likely to drop out than white and black youths at the same income levels. Comparisons of dropout rates for white and black youths at each income level show that at the middle and high income levels the dropout rates for black and white youths are comparable. However, black young adults at the low income level do not fare as well as their white peers. White and black youths in families with low incomes are more likely to drop out than their peers in families with higher incomes, but the risk is greater for black youths (21.9 percent for blacks versus 13.9 percent for whites).

The 5.7 percentage-point difference between the rates for blacks and whites is, in part, due to the differences evident in the dropout rates for white and black youths at the lowest income levels; but the size of this gap is also driven by differences in the population distribution across the income levels. Relatively more white than black youths live in families in the highest income group (28.6 percent versus 9.7 percent), while a larger share of black than white youths live in families in the lowest income group (35.7 percent versus 13.3 percent) (table 9). As a result, a larger portion of black youths are at the increased risk of dropping out observed in the low income group (21.9 percent for blacks) and a larger portion of white youths experience the decreased risk of dropping out observed in the high income group (2.0 percent for whites).

Geographic Region

Historically, geographic regions have been another area of interest in efforts to understand patterns and trends in dropout rates. Similar to findings in 1995, the high status dropout rates of 13.0 percent in the South and 13.9 percent in the West are at least one and one-half times the rates of 8.3 percent in the Northeast and 7.7 percent in the Midwest (table 5). When these dropout rates are reviewed across regions for each racial-ethnic group, the dropout rates for Hispanics exceed the national dropout rates in each region, but there is no clear pattern for Hispanics across regions (table 10). The rates for black youths are on a par with the national average in each region except the West. Black youths in the West have dropout rates lower than the national average and lower than the dropout rates for black youths in each other region of the country. The rates for white youths are lower than the national averages in each region. But the rates for white youths in the South are higher than the rates experienced by white youths in each of the other regions. The South is the only region in which the dropout rate for white youths exceeds the national dropout rate for white youths (10.0 percent versus 7.3 percent).

Taken together, these patterns suggest that the higher rates evident in the West are partially driven by the high dropout rate for Hispanic youths.²⁸ Even though the dropout rate for white youths in the South is lower than the dropout rates for black and Hispanic youths in the South, the fact that it is the highest regional dropout rate for whites suggests that the greatest challenge to further lowering the white dropout rate lies in the South.

Cohort Dropout Rates

Longitudinal studies follow the experiences that a **cohort** of students share as they progress through school. This type of study provides an opportunity to examine in more detail questions about who drops out, the life circumstances of dropouts, the factors that influence the decisions to drop out of high school, and the experiences young adults encounter after leaving school. The NELS:88 started with the cohort of students who were in the eighth grade in the 1987-88 school year.²⁹ Subsequently, these students were re-interviewed at two-year intervals through 1994.

The cohort dropout rates for the eighth-grade class of 1988 show that by the spring of 1992, 10.8 percent of the 1988 cohort of eighth graders were out of school and had not completed a high school

program (table 11). Some of these dropouts completed a high school program over the following summer, so that by August of 1992 the size of this group was 10.1 percent. By August of 1994, only 7.2 percent of the cohort remained as dropouts.

Analysis of the outcomes experienced by these dropouts shows that relative to their peers who completed high school, they were less likely to participate in postsecondary education; on average, they earned lower incomes; and they were also more likely to make early transitions into adult roles-to have children or marry or live in marriage-like arrangements.³⁰

Comparisons can also be drawn across cohorts measured at the same point in their school careers but in different years. The NELS:88 also included a nationally representative sample of sophomores in 1990; these students were re-interviewed in 1992 and 1994. Comparable data were collected for sophomores in 1980 in the HS&B study; these students were re-interviewed in 1982 and 1984.

A comparison of cohort dropout rates from the 1980 and 1990 sophomore classes shows that 9.9 percent of the students who were sophomores in 1980 were high school dropouts by August of the 1981-82 school year (table 12).³¹ For the sophomore class of 1990, the cohort dropout rate was lower, with 5.6 percent of the students who were counted as sophomores in 1990 counted as dropouts by August of the 1991-92 school year.³² This amounts to a 43 percent reduction in the sophomore to senior dropout rate over the decade.³³

Decreases in dropout rates were widespread, with a number of different groups of students sharing in the decline. Dropout rates decreased for both male and female students, for white, black, and Hispanic students, for students living in intact families and non-intact families, and for students with children of their own living in their household. At the same time, students in poverty and with relatively poor academic achievement seem to be left untouched by the combination of factors that led to lower dropout rates over the 10-year period. Sophomores with these characteristics dropped out at comparable rates in 1980 and 1990.³⁴

Footnotes

[10] Specifically, the numerator of the event rate for 1996 was the number of persons 15 through 24 years old surveyed in 1996 who were enrolled in high school in October of 1995, were not enrolled in October of 1996, and also did not complete high school (i.e., had not received a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate) between October 1995 and October 1996. The denominator of the event rate is the sum of the dropouts (i.e., the numerator) and the number of all persons 15 through 24 years old who attended grades 10 through 12 and are still enrolled or graduated or completed high school. **BACK**

[11] Completion includes receiving an alternative credential such as a GED. **BACK**

[12] Standard errors for all tables and figures are provided in appendix A. **BACK**

[13] The statistical significance of these comparisons was assessed with Student's *t*-test with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. For a full discussion of the statistical methods used in this report, see appendix B. All comparisons in this report are statistically significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. **BACK**

[14] The time trends noted in this report were assessed using weighted least squares regressions. **BACK**

[15] The Census Bureau instituted new editing procedures for cases with missing data on school enrollment items (see Technical Appendix B). **BACK**

[16] The wording of the educational attainment of the CPS was changed in 1992. Furthermore, data

since 1994 may reflect changes in CPS due to newly instituted computer-assisted interviewing, and also may reflect the change from 1980 census-based estimates to 1990 census-based estimates, with adjustment for undercount. **BACK**

[17] The 1995 event dropout rate was higher than the rates for 1986, 1987, and 1989-93, but not for 1988. **BACK**

[18] See R. Ekstron, M. Goertz, J. Pollack and D. Rock, "Who Drops Out of High School and Why? Findings from a National Study," in *School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies*, ed. G. Natriello (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987), 52-69. For dropout data using the National Education Longitudinal Study, see the NCES publication, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994*. **BACK**

[19] M. McMillen and P. Kaufman, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, NCES 96-863); White House Panel on Hispanic Dropouts, OBEMLA, 1996. **BACK**

[20] While these differences appear to be relatively large, they are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level due to relatively large standard errors. **BACK**

[21] The erratic nature of the Hispanic event rate reflects, in part, the small sample size of Hispanics in CPS. **BACK**

[22] For more in-depth coverage on the interaction of race-ethnicity with other factors, the interested reader is referred to G. Natriello, Ed., *School Dropouts: Patterns and Policies* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987). For an excellent ethnographic depiction of these factors at work, see M. Fine, *Framing Dropouts* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991). **BACK**

[23] For data from 1985-1991, see P. Kaufman and M. Frase, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1989* (Washington D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, NCES 90-659); P. Kaufman, M. McMillen, and D. Bradby, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1991* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, NCES 92-129). **BACK**

[24] For data from 1995, see M. McMillen, P. Kaufman, and S. Klein, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997). **BACK**

[25] See for example, F. Bennici and W. Strang, *An Analysis of Language Minority and Limited English Proficient Students from NELS:88* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs, August 1995); W. Strang, M. Winglee, and J. Stunkard, *Characteristics of Secondary-School-Age Language Minority and Limited English Proficient Youth* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1993); and P. Kaufman and M. McMillen, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1990* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 91-053). **BACK**

[26] P. Kaufman, M. McMillen, and D. Bradby, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 92-129). **BACK**

[27] See tables 16 and 20, M. McMillen, P. Kaufman, and S. Klein. *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1995* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 97-473). The English-speaking ability is based on the reports of a household respondent rather than reports from each individual in the household. These data on the ability in speak English are limited to young adults who were reported as speaking Spanish at home. **BACK**

[28] The elevated dropout rate in the West is also influenced by the relatively large proportion of Hispanic youths in that region. **BACK**

[29] For more information, see S. Ingels, S. Abraham, K. Kasinski, R. Karr, B. Spencer, M. Frankel, and

J. Owings, *NELS:88 Base Year Data File User's Manuals* (Washington, D.C.: Student Component: March 1990, NCES 90-494; Parent Component: March 1990, NCES 90-466; School Component: March 1990, NCES 90-482; and Teacher Component, March 1990, NCES 90-484); and B. Spencer, M. Frankel, S. Ingels, K. Rasinski and R. Tourangeau, *NELS:88 Base Year Sample Design Report* (Washington, D.C.: NCES 90-463, 1990). **BACK**

[30] M. McMillen, P. Kaufman and S. Whitener, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1993* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 94-669, 1993).

BACK

[31] Previous analyses of the HS&B data from the spring 1982 follow-up counted students who had enrolled in alternative programs to prepare for a high school equivalency test or had completed high school by an alternative means as dropouts. See S.M. Barro and A Kolstad, *Who Drops Out of High School? Findings from High School and Beyond (1987)*; and A. Pallas, "School Dropouts in the United States" (issue paper, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1987). The analysis presented here treats these youths as students or completers. **BACK**

[32] M. McMillen and P. Kaufman, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 96-863, 1996). **BACK**

[33] In both HS&B and NELS:88, a subset of students who were not considered capable of completing the questionnaire were deemed ineligible for participation in the study. Inasmuch as no attempt was made to identify and include data from students deemed ineligible in the 1980 HS&B cohort, analyses that compare NELS:88 sophomores with HS&B sophomores do not include data reflecting the experiences of the ineligible students in NELS:88. The option for school coordinators to determine some students ineligible led to the exclusion of an unknown number of language minority and limited English proficient students in HS&B. In NELS:88 however, a Spanish-language questionnaire was administered to those members of the sophomore cohort who preferred to take this version of the questionnaire.

BACK

[34] P. Kaufman, M. McMillen and D. West, *A Comparison of High School Dropout Rates in 1982 and 1992* (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 96-893). **BACK**

Introduction



High School Completion Rates

2ND DOCUMENT of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Public Papers of the Presidents

February 22, 1994

CITE: 30 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 346

LENGTH: 1385 words

HEADLINE: Executive Order 12900 -- Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

BODY:

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the Nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and to increase opportunities for Hispanic Americans to participate in and benefit from Federal education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. There shall be established in the Department of Education the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Commission). The Commission shall consist of not more than 25 members, who shall be appointed by the President and shall report to the Secretary of Education (Secretary). The Commission shall comprise representatives who: (a) have a history of involvement with the Hispanic community; (b) are from the education, civil rights, and business communities; or (c) are from civic associations representing the diversity within the Hispanic community. In addition, the President may appoint other representatives as he deems appropriate.

Sec. 2. The Commission shall provide advice to the President and the Secretary on: (a) the progress of Hispanic Americans toward achievement of the National Education Goals and other standards of educational accomplishment; (b) the development, monitoring, and coordination of Federal efforts to promote high-quality education for Hispanic Americans; (c) ways to increase State, private sector, and community involvement in improving education; and (d) ways to expand and complement Federal education initiatives. The Commission shall provide advice to the President through the Secretary.

Sec. 3. There shall be established in the Department of Education the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (Initiative). The Initiative shall be an interagency working group coordinated by the Department of Education and shall be headed by a Director, who shall be a senior level Federal official. It shall provide the staff, resources, and assistance for the Commission and shall serve the Secretary in carrying out his or her responsibilities under this order. The Initiative is authorized to utilize the services, personnel, information, and facilities of other Federal, State, and local agencies with their consent, and with or without reimbursement, consistent with applicable law. To the extent permitted by law and regulations, each Federal agency shall cooperate in providing resources, including personnel detailed to the Initiative, to meet the objectives of this order. The Initiative shall include both career civil service and appointed staff with expertise in the area of education, and shall provide advice to the Secretary on the implementation and coordination of education and related programs across Executive agencies.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Sec. 4. Each Executive department and each agency designated by the Secretary shall appoint a senior official, who is a full-time officer of the Federal Government and responsible for management or program administration, to report directly to the agency head on activity under this Executive order and to serve as liaison to the Commission and the Initiative. To the extent permitted by law and to the extent practicable, each Executive department and designated agency shall provide any appropriate information requested by the Commission or the staff of the Initiative, including data relating to the eligibility for and participation by Hispanic Americans in Federal education programs and the progress of Hispanic Americans in relation to the National Education Goals. Where adequate data is not available, the Commission shall suggest the means of collecting the data.

Sec. 5. The Secretary, in consultation with the Commission, shall submit to the President an Annual Federal Plan to Promote Hispanic American Educational Excellence (Annual Federal Plan, or Plan). All actions described in the Plan shall be designed to help Hispanic Americans attain the educational improvement targets set forth in the National Education Goals and any standards established by the National Education Standards and Improvement Council. The Plan shall include data on eligibility for, and participation by, Hispanic Americans in Federal education programs, and such other aspects of the educational status of Hispanic Americans as the Secretary considers appropriate. This Plan also shall include, as an appendix, the text of the agency plans described in section 6 of this order. The Secretary, in consultation with the Commission and with the assistance of the Initiative staff, shall ensure that superintendents of Hispanic-serving school districts, presidents of Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education, directors of educational programs for Hispanic Americans, and other appropriate individuals are given the opportunity to comment on the proposed Annual Federal Plan. For purposes of this order, a "Hispanic-serving" school district or institution of higher education is any local education agency or institution of higher education, respectively, whose student population is more than 25 percent Hispanic.

Sec. 6. As part of the development of the Annual Federal Plan, each Executive department and each designated agency (hereinafter in this section referred to collectively as "agency") shall prepare a plan for, and shall document, both that agency's effort to increase Hispanic American participation in Federal education programs where Hispanic Americans currently are underserved, and that agency's effort to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic Americans participating in Federal education programs. This plan shall address, among other relevant issues: (a) the elimination of unintended regulatory barriers to Hispanic American participation in Federal education programs; (b) the adequacy of announcements of program opportunities of interest to Hispanic-serving school districts, institutions of higher education, and agencies; and (c) ways of eliminating educational inequalities and disadvantages faced by Hispanic Americans. It also shall emphasize the facilitation of technical, planning, and development advice to Hispanic-serving school districts and institutions of higher education. Each agency's plan shall provide appropriate measurable objectives for proposed actions aimed at increasing Hispanic American participation in Federal education programs where Hispanic Americans currently are underserved. After the first year, each agency's plan also shall assess that agency's performance on the goals set in the previous year's annual plan. These plans shall be submitted by a date and time to be established by the Secretary.

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Sec. 7. The Director of the Office of Personnel Management, in consultation with the Secretary and the Secretary of Labor, to the extent permitted by law, shall develop a program to promote recruitment of Hispanic students for part-time, summer, and permanent positions in the Federal Government.

Sec. 8. I have determined that the Commission shall be established in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 2). Notwithstanding any other Executive order, the responsibilities of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, shall be performed by the Secretary, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 9. Administration. (a) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701-5707).

(b) The Commission and the Initiative shall obtain funding for their activities from the Department of Education.

(c) The Department of Education shall provide such administrative services for the Commission as may be required.

Sec. 10. Executive Order No. 12729 is revoked.

William J. Clinton

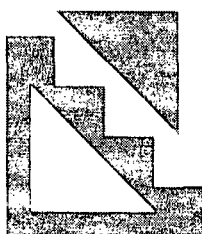
The White House, February 22, 1994.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:55 a.m., February 23, 1994]

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NO MORE EXCUSES

THE FINAL REPORT OF THE HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT

Hispanic Dropout Project Members

Walter G. Secada, *Director*
Rudolfo Chavez-Chavez
Eugene Garcia
Cipriano Muñoz
Jeannie Oakes
Isaura Santiago-Santiago
Robert Slavin

February 1998

Dear Secretary Riley:

It is with a sense of great urgency that I forward to you the final report of the Hispanic Dropout Project, *No More Excuses*. With this report, we have fulfilled the charge that you gave to us in our letters of appointment to the project and at our meeting on September 18, 1995.

Since we first met with you, thousands of this nation's Hispanic students have left school without a diploma. Some left because they felt that other life options were more viable; others left because they felt that they were being pushed out; and still others left because of family obligations. Yet almost all these students left school because no one had established individual relationships with each of them, communicated high academic expectations to them, and provided them with meaningful opportunities to achieve those expectations.

We mourn their truncated education. We worry about their future lives, their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations, their access to this nation's most cherished democratic institutions, and their full participation in the economic, labor, social, and other spheres of life. We share with you a concern for the impact of their inadequate education on this nation's economic and social systems. And we are outraged at the conditions that made possible such a shocking state of affairs in the first place.

In our report to you, we note that parents, teachers, and other school personnel have central roles in supporting this nation's Hispanic youth to complete school and to have a worthwhile education in doing so. What is more, we outline steps that need to be taken by policy makers, the business community, and the larger voting public to support the work of our nation's schools in educating and graduating their Hispanic youth. These efforts will require a concerted and long-term investment of human and fiscal resources; the problem of Hispanic school dropout will not be solved within an election cycle nor within a time frame that lends itself easily to political grandstanding and sound bite news reporting.

For all of us in the project, it has been an honor to serve the nation in this effort. What is more, we feel an obligation to the countless people who shared their expertise with us, who testified at our open hearings, and who hosted our visits to sites around the country. We feel an even stronger obligation to the younger siblings of the dropouts with whom we spoke and, in general, to all Hispanic students whose educational experiences are less than what should be their due in a nation that prides itself on the treatment of its children. We stand prepared to support meaningful follow up to this project. The time for excuses is over; there is much work to be done.

Sincerely yours,

Walter G. Secada
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Director, Hispanic Dropout Project

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The material in this report that is marked by the icon at left or that is boxed represents the views of those we heard in the field and the knowledge of those whose work we consulted.

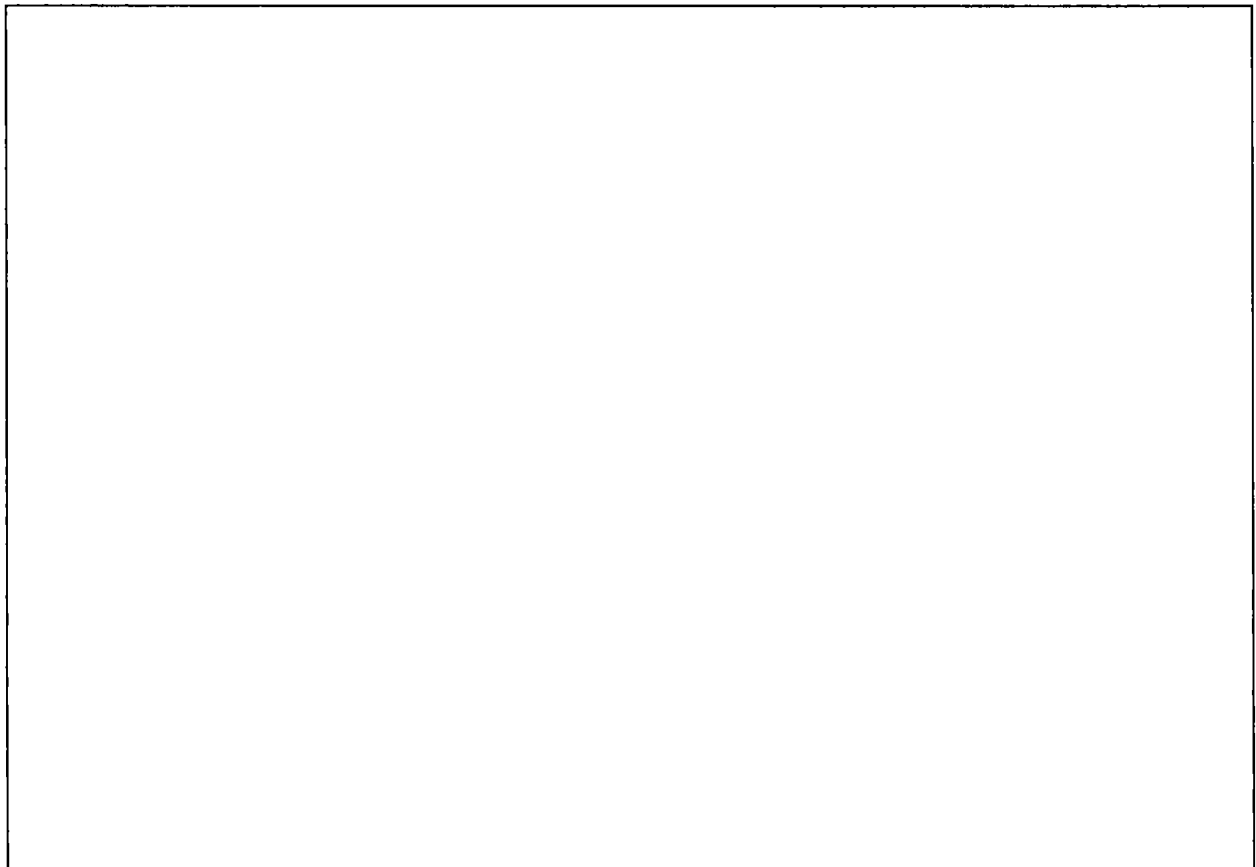
BACKGROUND

Nearly one in five of our nation's Hispanics between the ages of 16 and 24 who ever enrolled in a United States school left school without either a high school diploma or an alternative certificate such as a GED, according to the most recently available data from the United States Census Bureau. If we consider all of this nation's Hispanics, including immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools, the Hispanic dropout rate reaches a staggering 30 percent. While accounting for just 56 percent of all U.S. immigrants, Hispanics account for nearly 90 percent of all immigrant dropouts.

While the dropout rate for other school-aged populations has declined, more or less steadily, over the last 25 years, the overall Hispanic dropout rate started higher and has remained between 30 and 35 percent during that same time period. As a result, today's dropout rate for Hispanics is 2.5 times the rate for blacks and 3.5 times the rate for white non-Hispanics. Moreover, of Hispanics who have ever enrolled in U.S. schools, proportionately more of them seek alternative high school diplomas than do whites; that is, they may get high school diplomas, but even Hispanics who get diplomas are more likely to leave school in order to do so.¹ The situation is far more serious than any of these odds and rates suggest because they apply to a rapidly growing number of our nation's students.

As with other students, the odds of school completion rise for Hispanics with gains in factors such as family income and parent education. Nevertheless, reports and studies document that gaps in school completion rates between Hispanic and non-Hispanic students remain even after controlling for the social class background of students, for their language proficiency, and for their immigrant status. *Regardless of your position in society, if you are an Hispanic student, you are more likely to drop out of school and not earn a diploma than if you are a non-Hispanic American in a similar position.*²

For students, dropping out forecloses a lifetime of opportunities—and in turn makes it far more likely that their own children will grow up in poverty and be placed at risk. For business, this means a lack of high-skilled employees, fewer entrepreneurs, and poorer markets. For communities, this cumulates the risk of civic breakdown. The high-wage low-skill factory jobs that lifted generations of Americans from poverty and empowered them to buy homes, send their children to college, and take care of themselves and their families are little more than a memory in our age of the silicon chip and global economy. In economic progress, as in strategic security, education is truly America's first line of defense. In other words, *the career and employment prospects for dropouts are dismal.*



“Those who do not complete high school face difficulties in making successful steps in other transitions to adult life.” In National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (NCES 96-863), p. 51. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education

As Thomas Jefferson said, education is the anvil of democracy. More than ever before, democracy depends not on 30-second sound bites from politicians on the cutting edge of rhetoric, but on an informed citizenry who can see through the spin and choose effective options to solve our nation's problems. From toxic waste to environmental protection to economic progress, understanding these issues is fundamental. Dropouts have among the lowest voting rates and among the lowest levels of civic participation. Lack of an informed, active citizenry is dangerous to the American prospect.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics are projected to become the largest ethnic minority in the United States by the early twenty-first century. If our country stays on its current path, the low rate of Hispanic school completion means that a large segment of the country's soon-to-be largest minority group will be underprepared for employment, for making personal choices, and for engagement in civic life as is required for this democracy to grow and adapt as the founders intended it to. Dropouts diminish our democracy, our society, and their own opportunities.



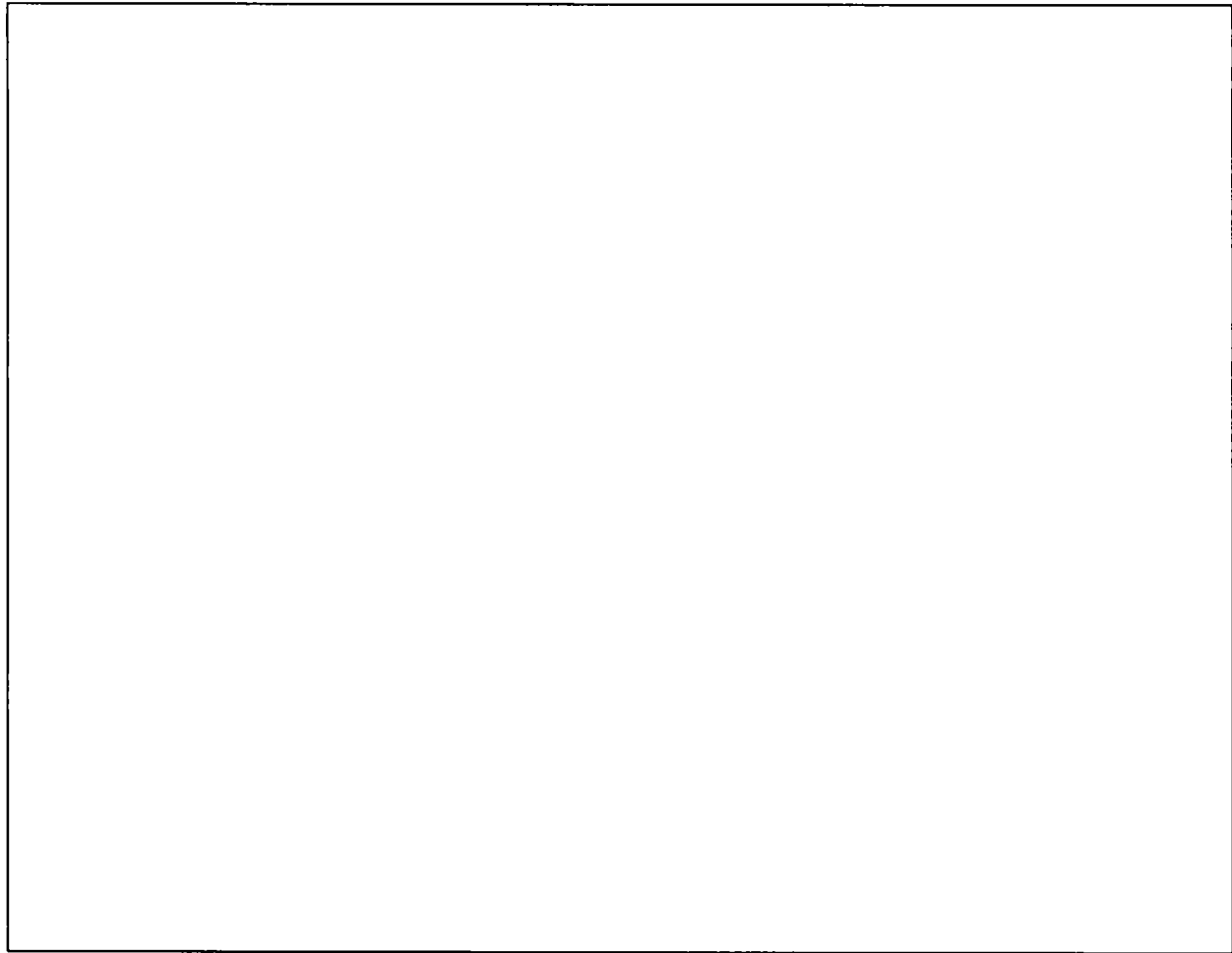
"Students...see dropping out as wrong; they see it as representing failure, a problem. This is of interest because it tells us that these Latino students (who are still in school) do not want to drop out. This counters the assumption of many who argue that Latinos are not really very interested in finishing school."

In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (pp. 89-90). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Dropping out is not a random act. According to some observers, school dropout is the logical outcome of the social forces that limit Hispanics' roles in society. Many Hispanic students live in the nation's most economically distressed areas. They attend overcrowded schools in physical disrepair and with limited educational materials. They see the devastating effects of their elders' limited employment opportunities and job ceilings. Hispanic students encounter stereotypes, personal prejudice, and social bias that is often part of larger anti-immigrant forces in this society. For many Hispanics, the United States does not appear to be a society of opportunities. Not surprisingly—faced with evidence of lingering institutional bias against Hispanics—these students figure: *The American Dream is not for me. Why bother?* And, of course, they drop out.

Hispanic school dropout has been portrayed as all of the above, and more. Although various aspects of this crisis have been highlighted by different researchers and writers, all agree on one thing: *The Hispanic dropout rate is shockingly and unacceptably high.*

If the nation does nothing, this unacceptable state of affairs can only worsen. The Census reports that because of demographic growth there will be at least a million more elementary students—many of them Hispanic—in our schools by the end of the decade. Without quick and concerted intervention, technology, trade, and changing policy will increase the number of children, many of them Hispanic, growing in poverty. Without adequate funding that is *effectively* used—particularly in the high-poverty schools attended by many Hispanic children—classes will become



even more overcrowded than we have witnessed recently, instructional materials will be increasingly out-of-date, and schools' ability to attract and hold effective teachers will decrease. Although connection between students and their teachers and role models is important, the number of minority college students entering teaching is declining. There are shortages of teachers with meaningful proficiency in more than English. The retirement of the large proportion of current teachers originally hired to teach the baby boomers will intensify attrition of the teachers with the most classroom experience.

If the same proportion of Hispanic students is still dropping out tomorrow, America will have many more dropouts—at a time when education is crucial for employability. America's young people are not going away. If they drop out at the rates that their older siblings do today, the consequences to this nation and its institutions will be devastating.

This is also an opportunity to make a difference. We know much about what works and can build on this know-how. Effective teaching and schools change lives. Support and professional skills development for today's teachers and for the large number of teachers who must be hired in the next handful of years can make much of the difference.

The Hispanic Dropout Project

In September 1995, United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley invited seven individuals to take part in a special project to study issues related to the problem of Hispanic student dropout. The secretary's charge to the Hispanic Dropout Project—as this effort came to be known—incorporated three broad goals: (a) to increase public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout; (b) to develop a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, community, business, and other stakeholder groups; and (c) to support the development of a network of stakeholders interested in this issue to support actions taken after the project ended. Because the Hispanic Dropout Project is not a federal commission, we were not invited to make recommendations addressed to the federal government. In spite of this limitation on the project's scope of work, we realize that many recommendations are more likely to be implemented with supporting action by the federal government, as well as by state and local governments, school districts, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties.

Final Report

This report constitutes the Hispanic Dropout Project's culminating activity. It is intended to raise public awareness of the issues of Hispanic student dropout. This report contains our findings and recommendations at local, state, and national levels, and is addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups.

Throughout the entire project, we tried to reflect the knowledge and views of the various individuals and constituency groups that hosted our site visits, provided witness to what is happening in our nation's schools, and participated in our open discussions on these matters. With their varied experiences and broad range of views, these students, parents, teachers, volunteers, social service and business representatives, and other concerned citizens have been working on improving the education of Hispanic students. Their actions and words breathe life into the stolid statistics found in so many research studies. They make the facts matter.



"My parents sacrificed a lot for me. That's why I want to make good. For my kids to start somewhere higher than I did." Student leader at HDP student leader forum, New York City

What we saw and what people told us confirmed what well-established research has also found: Popular stereotypes—which would place the blame for school dropout on Hispanic students, their families, and language background, and that would allow people to shrug their shoulders as if to say that this was an enormous, insoluble problem or one that would go away by itself—are just plain wrong.



"I got throwed out, mainly." Arnie (former 10th-grade student). In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p.167). New York: Cambridge University Press.

We in the Hispanic Dropout Project developed a new appreciation for Yogi Berra's "*déjà vu, all over again*." Much of what we have to report to America is *not* new. The roots of our findings run deep through the decades of extensive research gathered in many parts of the nation (see Appendix E for a bibliography). Much of the work on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, and dropout prevention applies; but then, so does much of the work on effective schools, school restructuring, school finance, and equity. Over the years, many of our findings have been repeated by Hispanic and non-Hispanic researchers, practitioners, and advocacy groups.

What troubles us and adds to our collective impatience in submitting this report is precisely that so much of this has appeared so often in the research literature and has been urged so often by those who care about student outcomes. Yet the nation has failed to put this knowledge to work in more than a few sites. There are lighthouses and beacons of excellence, yet policymakers and schools keep missing the message, sailing through the daily grind of ineffective and alienating practices, and piling up on the shoals of failure. Our nation's children, its most valuable resource

for its future, pay the price. We have tried to mix research that identifies what works in preventing school dropout with our other activities and to synthesize our findings in a form that can provide a basis for concerted action.



"Dropping out is sometimes a healthy response to an intolerable situation."

Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

We were also struck by the misinformation and myths about Hispanic dropouts. These myths excuse inaction by turning children, parents, and their communities into victims so that educators dare not aspire to Hispanics' achieving educational excellence lest they be accused of blaming the victim. These myths also excuse inaction by demonizing Hispanic students and dropouts, their families, teachers, schools, districts, the state, business, and the community—thereby undermining the basis for teamwork. The stereotype that demonizes Hispanics raises the question: What can be accomplished with a demon who cannot or will not understand, who does not want to learn, who is antisocial and untrustworthy, and who just doesn't care?



"College is for the good, American persons, but not for me. I didn't think that I could have part of the American dream." Student testimony, Albuquerque

One goal of this report is to debunk these stereotypes, myths, and excuses. Published research, the testimony we gathered, and the sites we visited clearly show that something can be done about Hispanic dropout. The nation's task is to ensure that what works for Hispanic excellence in education is not confined to isolated research studies or limited to a few lighthouse programs.

Each of the following sections focuses on the role of key actors in solving the problem of Hispanic student dropout: the students themselves; their parents and families; their teachers; schools; policymakers at the district, state, and federal levels; and business and the extended community. Each section also discusses the excuses commonly used to justify inaction and the ways that our findings contradict the myths on which the excuses are based. We end each section with a list of recommendations for that actor.

Change for the better can begin with the actions of any adult player. But the actions of all the players must work in concert to produce a move forward, to support change in other arenas, and to achieve longer lasting and more extensive improvements in Hispanic dropout rates than can be achieved through solitary action.

HISPANIC STUDENTS



"People need to respect and like children. I have seen teachers say things to kids that no one should have to put up with." Speaker at HDP public hearings, San Diego

Hispanic students deserve to be treated as if they matter—as if they have abilities and talents to contribute to our society and as if they can be responsible for achieving excellence given the chance to do so. The Hispanic Dropout Project has two major findings and recommendations involving Hispanic students:

- Schools and their staffs must connect themselves to Hispanic students and their families, provide Hispanic students with a quality education based on high standards, and provide backup options to move past obstacles on the way to achieving those high standards.
- Students and their families deserve respect. In order to accomplish the first goal, schools, their personnel, policy stakeholders, and the larger society must have respect for these children. In many cases, this means fundamentally changing people's conceptions of Hispanic students and their families. This country's Hispanic students are *ours* and they are *smart*. Hispanic families have social capital on which to build. Hispanic students deserve meaningful opportunities to learn and to succeed in later life. They deserve support in school.



"They treat you with respect here. They talk with you individually. Not just about school, but what's on your mind. I get respect from the tutors. I get it and try to give it back." Student in an alternative placement program, Las Cruces

To think of and portray Hispanic students as poor things who cannot achieve—as "pobrecitos"—is patronizing and wrong. Treating students and their families as deviant or deficient blames the victim and just doesn't work. Neither belief is correct or helpful in designing programs and intervention strategies.



"The respect and value in which students were held was [sic] extremely important in separating the schools with low Latino dropout rates from those with high rates." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform, p. 79). New York: Fordham University.

Some stereotypes that have been used to blame Hispanic students for dropping out of school suggest that they do not care about school, do not want to learn, do not come to school ready to learn, use drugs, belong to gangs, engage in violence, cannot achieve, have cultural backgrounds that are incompatible with schools, do not know English, are illegal immigrants, and in general, do not merit help or to be taken seriously. Alternative stereotypes portray Hispanic students as victims who, unable to do much about their conditions, cannot help but drop out of school.

According to these latter myths, Hispanic students can do little or nothing about their education because they are poor, are the children of drug users, are victims of violence and abuse, do not speak (read or write) English well, encounter cultural barriers in school or in the larger society, or, through no fault of their own, lack some essential ingredient for success.



"My life, my heritage has been a cycle of poverty, of goals that were never achieved. I want to break that cycle. I want to achieve for my family, so that my parents can be proud of me." Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

Contrary to both sorts of myths, the vast majority of Hispanic students want to learn. They value education and try hard to do well in school. As is the case for the larger society, there are a small number of Hispanic youth who engage in antisocial behaviors. We do not condone such behaviors: If such youth are to succeed not only in school, but also later in life, they must change, and we must help them to change.



"I want to be a change agent. Things don't have to be like these stereotypes." Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

On the other hand, beliefs that paint Hispanics, en masse, as social misfits say more about how whole groups of people can be stereotyped in our society than they do about the vast majority of individuals within those groups. The Hispanic students (and their families) whom we encountered did not give up in the face of the barriers rooted in personal and institutional forms of bias and outright racism that they encounter. Instead, they worked hard to overcome those barriers.



"A persistent theme. . . is the observation that our educational system requires failure of some in order to assure success for others. . . . We spend enormous amounts of money and time locating children that we perceive as predestined for failure, often because they do not meet the expectations of the cultural patterns of the mainstream." In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (pp. 2-3) New York: The Falmer Press.

Stereotypes hold that much should not be expected of Hispanic children, as if providing them with challenging opportunities to achieve educational excellence will only drive them out of school in increasing numbers. Quite the contrary: The Hispanic Dropout Project found that Hispanic students are most likely to learn when curricular content is challenging and meaningful. In visits to early childhood, elementary, and alternative high school programs, we observed that Hispanic students were very engaged when working with such content.

In our visits to less effective schools, many older students complained about being bored and not challenged in their classes. They complained of dull, dumbed down, and irrelevant curricula. The clear message they had internalized was one of low expectations, worsened by unpleasant, adverse physical circumstances and overcrowded classrooms. Students and dropouts alike com-

plained that they could not ask questions and get them answered in class, leading them to believe that their teachers did not really care about them.



“Perhaps the most important step in fostering adolescent development and achievement is the improvement of education. ... Changes in policy are important only if they contribute to more effective school and classroom environments in which students are strongly motivated to work hard at challenging learning tasks.” In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 205). Washington, DC: National Academy Press

The existence of such schools and classrooms raises the question: Why would *any rational person* stay in such a setting? Students’ reports to the Hispanic Dropout Project and our own observations during site visits corroborate what is reported in the research on tracking and on the instructional quality of lower tracks—that is, the everyday in-school experiences of too many Hispanic students fail to engage their minds. In contrast to their criticisms of their secondary schools, many students interviewed by the Hispanic Dropout Project praised volunteers and teachers in their schools and in alternative placements who made course work relevant to their lives and, thereby, compelling enough to make them want to achieve.



“What is there to hope for? If I get out of school, what kind of a job will I get?”
Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

Students often complete high school because it promises opportunities—such as a good job, a military career, or postsecondary education. For too many Hispanic students, these futures don’t look like realistic options. Hispanic high school students look around themselves only to see that their siblings and older friends who just graduated are earning less than their classmates who dropped out and have been working a couple of years. Many Hispanic students often need to contribute materially to their families, and this need for a paycheck often causes even successful students to respond to daily crises rather than to maintain a future orientation. If students need jobs to meet their responsibilities, schools should help them get part-time job placements and work with businesses to develop effective schedules and learning opportunities that help students, their employers, and the schools. The workplace, in its turn, needs to change from being a threat to a student’s learning and finishing school to being an effective part of a high-quality education for a non-traditional student.



“In general, there appears to be a powerful economic incentive for students to finish high school. But is this economic incentive similar for Hispanics and Chicanos as for Whites and other groups? Recent data suggest that the answer may be no...unemployment rates in October 1985 for White youths who dropped out of high school during the 1984-85 school year were almost twice as high as for high school graduates from the year before who were not enrolled in college. But for Hispanics, dropouts had an unemployment rate only slightly higher than high school graduates.” In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of*

research and policy issues. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 77). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

The point is that schools and adults can help students envision better lives, help open options, and provide the connections that strengthen learning and build futures that work. To achieve these goals, the Hispanic Dropout Project—based on our observations and research review—recommends the following minimum set of guarantees for students:

- 1. Each individual Hispanic student should have someone who understands how schools work and who is willing to take personal responsibility for ensuring that the student makes it in and through school.***

Hispanic students who stayed in school (despite peer pressure, economic pressure, and other factors that pushed out many of their friends) often pointed to someone in that school—a teacher, coach, some other school staff member, someone from the larger community—whose personal interest in their finishing school nurtured their individual sense of self-worth and supported their efforts to stay in school.



“Students often say that one significant person took an interest in them.” Testimony at HDP open forum, Las Cruces

- 2. Hispanic students should receive a high-quality education that guarantees that all students leave third grade able to read. They should experience curricula that are relevant and interesting, convey high expectations, and demand student investment in learning. They should understand the options that are available to them so that they can make informed decisions about their lives. They should be able to envision their futures with confidence based on an education that provided them with the tools needed to make their visions into reality.***



“The first task should be to determine what kinds of education and training would be appropriate in terms of enhancing their ability to live productive lives within this society. . . . Some of the successful dropouts designed their own curriculum: they enrolled in a training program for mechanics, got on-the-job training in supervising others, took a full-time job in a hosiery mill, but found time to complete a GED. For these subjects, the “school” they created for themselves could tolerate them and they could tolerate the intellectual and attitudinal discipline. One challenge is for schools to create opportunities within the context of the standard curriculum...The second and related comment concerns the school and behavioral problems cited by the dropouts themselves. They typically attribute leaving school to specific difficulties they had with the standard curriculum and/or school restrictions.” In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 186). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Junior high school is too late to *begin* dropout prevention efforts. Successful experiences must begin in the early grades and continue throughout Hispanic students' schooling. On the other hand, early interventions, *by themselves*, are not enough. Later efforts should build on the successes of early interventions.



"The national investment in Head Start and other early intervention programs, while laudatory, constitutes only a first step in the solution." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Older students who had dropped out of school often thought that they had no other choice. School personnel either did not know about or did not tell students about alternative programs because of fiscal pressures to remain quiet about those programs. A former dropout quit his original school because, as he starkly put it, "It was either school or dropping out." He entered an alternative school only because a friend told him about it.



"Interventions must be intensive, comprehensive, coordinated and sustained. Anything less is naive and will show only marginal results. There is no 'cure all' or 'fix the kid' phenomenon. ... When special intervention is stopped before high school graduation, one can expect high-risk youth who have become successful to once again be at risk for school failure and drop out." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A67.

A former dropout stated that one reason many Hispanics leave school is that they believe that the American dream is for someone else, not for them. The effective dropout interventions that we reviewed included all students in that dream. They provided Hispanic students chances to meet and talk with Hispanic college students and successful Hispanics, and to visit college campuses. Successful interventions also helped students to plan for life after high school in work, the military, or continuing education.

Hispanic youth need to be coached, not rescued. They should be able to take credit for what they achieve. They need encouragement and opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and later lives, to set long-range, real-life goals, and to take the steps needed to achieve those goals. Adults who advocate for students, who encourage students to dream about their futures, who mentor students on how to achieve those dreams, and who hold students accountable for their actions can provide needed support for students to make their dreams come true.

3. Schools should be responsive to the behaviors and needs of individual children. They should target Hispanic students for pro-social roles.

When respect, responsibility, membership, and opportunities for leadership are denied to students by their schools, then gangs and antisocial behaviors often fill the gap. The most effective schools that we visited gave students opportunities to assume important roles in school and in helping other students. They expected and often received the best from their Hispanic students. Effective schools also realize that real students have real problems; and hence, they provide flexibility, support, and backup strategies to turn things around when problems arise. For children, schools and effective support networks can make an important difference.



“Explicit in good practice models is the recognition that young people, like all people, need to feel a sense of comfort and need to be offered a sense of autonomy in order to profit from program teachings and experiences. . . . Consistent demonstrations of caring and high expectations for young people are also a prerequisite. Many programs are also providing young people with choice and ‘voice’ regarding program operation, and, in response to the racial and ethnic diversity of adolescents, many practitioners incorporate cultural traditions and values into programs.” In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 219). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

4. *Hispanic students have the right to schools and classrooms that are safe, healthy, free from intimidation, and inviting—that is, where their language and culture are treated as resources.*

National statistics show that many Hispanic students attend some of the most dangerous schools in America. Schools should provide students with positive and appealing alternatives to joining gangs or engaging in other antisocial behaviors. What is more, school should be a place where a student’s language and cultural backgrounds are treated with respect.



“I would have been worse off if I had stayed in school. Others have dropped out to try to help their own futures.” Testimony at HDP forum, Albuquerque

5. *Hispanics’ schools should have the resources necessary to provide safe environments and a high-quality education.*

Troubled schools lack basic resources. From fights breaking out due to jostling in overcrowded halls, to filthy restrooms, to long-ignored fire hazards, the basic infrastructure for effective schooling is too often missing from the schools attended by Hispanic students. Outdated textbooks, laughable lab facilities, antiquated libraries, and the absence of a challenging academic curriculum and the requisite instructional resources all bear the implicit message that these children just don’t count. America cannot afford this.



“In Maryland, for instance, the one inner-city district (Baltimore) and five rural districts each spend less than \$4,500 per student, compared with three suburban districts that spend \$6,000-\$7,500 per student. Thus, schools in the poorer Mary-

land districts have about \$45,000-\$60,000 less each year for each classroom of 30 students than schools in affluent districts. Per pupil expenditures directly affect the availability of textbooks, laboratory equipment, resource rooms, library books, and a range of other educational resources. . . . In one national survey, for example, in districts with more than one-third of the students from families below the poverty line, 59 percent of fourth grade teachers reported a lack of resources, compared with 16 percent in districts with no students below the poverty line."

In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (pp. 106-107). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Hispanic parents and families are frequently perceived as being indifferent to their children's education, moving too frequently, not speaking or wanting to learn how to speak (read, or write) English, and being too undereducated to properly educate their children. Likewise, parents and families are often portrayed as victims unable to do anything about the racism they experience and unable to understand American cultural norms. Parents are said to be ignorant, poor, products of bad schools, in conflict with their children, and in general, culturally deprived.

The schools that we saw working effectively with Hispanic parents prove that these stereotypes and descriptions are wrong. Our observations are backed up by the testimony of countless parents, both individually and through the community-based organizations they participated in, and by the extensive research on the importance of effective parent involvement. Large-scale national studies and targeted research show that, contrary to stereotypes, Hispanic parents and families highly value learning and seek to effectively support their children in school. What students told us reinforced the research.



*"There were deep chasms in the relationship and communication between school and home. School personnel had many negative misconceptions about the motivations and values of parents. There was widespread belief that parents did not sufficiently value education and that they were unwilling to give sufficient time to rearing their children and participating in school activities. On the other hand, we found most parents to be fearful and alienated from school authorities while at the same time assigning expertise and responsibility to school personnel for educating their children. However, when parents were approached with a genuine desire to serve them and their family, we found that almost all parents were exceedingly open to suggestion and to becoming more involved in directing their adolescent and monitoring school performance. **Parents, far more than school or community personnel, were willing to implement suggestions from project researchers.**"* In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A66 (emphasis added).

Hispanic students, whether they stayed in school or had dropped out and then returned, almost unanimously reported that they wanted to "make it" as a way to thank their parents and families for the sacrifices that they had made on the students' behalf. These students wanted to make their parents proud of them. They wanted to better themselves and did not want to disappoint their parents by quitting school. In addition, one-time dropouts spoke about their parents' disappointment in them as well as the love, support, pressure, and encouragement that they received from their parents at first to stay in school, then to return to school, and always to try hard and to learn.

The Hispanic Dropout Project's hearings were attended by Hispanic parents who were anxious about their children's educational futures. Many of them had found out about the hearings by word of mouth. Their testimony demonstrated their readiness to be involved in their children's education.



"Many high-risk children and their parents are blamed and not treated with respect by educators. Highest risk students and their parents are very responsive to genuine and meaningful offers of help despite cultural, language, and economic barriers."

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A69.

Parents said that, in order to be involved, they must often overcome school resistance and hostility to that involvement. At almost every site that we visited, Hispanic parents said that their children's schools did not take them or their concerns very seriously. One mother recounted being told of her child's suspension hearing just 30 minutes before it was held. Risking her job, she rushed to the school, only to wait all morning in the school office and to be told abruptly that the meeting had been postponed. One father did, in fact, lose his job because of the time he spent trying to keep his daughter from being, in his words, pushed out. Another mother, in flawless English, reported how her child's principal would not speak directly to her, supposedly because her accent made it too difficult for school personnel to understand her.



"Schools also differ on the extent to which parents are involved in school decision making, conferences with teachers, and home-school instructional programs.

Over the past decade, studies consistently demonstrate the positive effects of such programs on student achievement, yet parents from low-income neighborhoods, especially racial and ethnic minorities, are least likely to participate. The reasons for this lack of participation include not only the lack of funds, but also different levels of school commitment, cultural and language barriers, and time constraints and stress on poor working families." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 108). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Although community groups and activists expressed anger—sometimes bordering on rage—at how schools treat parents, they also expressed determination to press on with their efforts to ensure that parental concerns would be heard. What is more, parents found help and strength by joining and working with such groups.

Hispanic parents spoke eloquently about their dreams and wishes for their children's futures, and the roles that schools must play in educating their children. In a Head Start program, in community and recreation centers that provided social services for students, and in community action groups—all visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project—parents volunteered as tutors, instructional assistants, fundraisers, program implementers, and in many other roles.

When Hispanic parents see clear benefits to their children from their participation and when parents are given meaningful roles and responsibilities, many parents will do more than asked to do. One of the few longitudinal studies of a successful dropout prevention program reported that Hispanic parents cooperated much more readily with the program's recommendations than did the schools and the teachers.³

**Strategies That Families Use
To Keep (Hispanic) Adolescents in School**

1. Maintain parent in charge;
2. Recognize a two-way influence [between parents and their children];
3. Set limits;
4. Monitor [their children's] actions, whereabouts, feelings;
5. Draw the line about peers;
6. Send continuous positive messages [to their children];
7. Stay involved in school.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 12-14). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project finds that empowering parents to support their children's education and to work for better schools is fundamental.

1. Hispanic parents and families need to negotiate their children's education system.

In today's world, Hispanic parents must advocate for their children because no one else will—or can—do the job as well as they. Beyond individual advocacy, parents can find strength through active membership in church and community groups that rely on their size and political clout to ensure that parents' concerns are taken seriously and that provide necessary services such as recreational and after-school tutoring programs.



"To better understand how both schools and families influence achievement and dropout behavior, one must focus on the interaction between families and schools. This may be particularly important for understanding the achievement of Chicano children. For instance, research suggests that in the U.S. lower social class children in general and Hispanic children in particular often face learning environments in school that foster poor academic performance and may be dysfunctional to the type of learning style and reward structure found in the home."
In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues*. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 75). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

2. *Schools should recruit Hispanic parents and extended families into a genuine partnership of equals for educating Hispanic students.*

The most impressive schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project aggressively recruited parents to work with them in educating their children. Parent roles were authentic and appropriate. For instance, school personnel helped graduating students and their parents to understand and to fill out various financial aid forms for college. At the same school, parents whose children engaged in inappropriate behaviors were helped to recognize how their own behaviors enabled their children to avoid responsibility. When those parents knew what to look for, they monitored their children's behaviors and held them accountable for avoiding antisocial activities and for getting to school on time. These parents' behaviors show that they understood that their advocacy for their children and their partnership with the school continued at home by the parents' fulfilling their side of the bargain.

Conversely, schools that were less successful or seemed to be actively pushing students out were also those schools which, by their messages and practices, seemed to actively blame parents and families for their children's failures. Parents bitterly complained about such schools.



"The bottom line: the local school board and local power brokers should not disenfranchise parents. They should give them the power to run their schools for their neighborhoods." Testimony at HDP hearings, San Diego

3. *Hispanic parents should be helped to envision a future for their children and a reasonable means by which to plan for and achieve that future.*

One of the most powerful incentives mentioned by Hispanic students was their parents' and families' determination that these students have better lives than the older generation had. Parents want better lives for their children; schools should help parents learn what is available for their children and help parents provide these opportunities for their children. That parents can motivate their children and that schools can provide information about opportunities for students should provide the basis for the aforementioned partnership.



"My mom was always supportive of me. She pushed me to go to school. She wouldn't let me stay home. So, I ditched. Finally, she saw the problem and took me out of the school. But she pushed me to go to another school until this place [an alternative school setting] helped me to graduate." Former dropout at HDP open forum, Albuquerque

TEACHERS

Teachers and other school staff can and must make a difference in students' lives. In spite of this imperative, many teachers feel powerless. Excuses such as "The problem is too big for one teacher. How can I, a single teacher, hope to overcome the effects of students' backgrounds?" are common. This particular excuse portrays teachers as helpless when dealing with students who are not ready or do not want to learn. Hispanic students are said to lack something (usually English); their aspirations or those of their parents are said not to support schooling.



"Teachers only want to teach from 8:00 to 3:00. They just follow the contract."
Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Teachers' overcrowded classrooms are said to be the reason that they can attend to just so many students. Hence, a type of academic triage results: Some students must be sacrificed so that others can be taught. Not surprisingly, those who are sacrificed are portrayed as uneducable.



"There is no support from teachers for the students. Teachers don't believe in the students. One of the main problems I saw in high school is that teachers don't want to pay attention." Student in alternative placement, Las Cruces

On the other hand, Hispanic students at project hearings across the country leveled the most damning charge possible against some of their teachers: "They just don't care."

Neither extreme is the rule. During Hispanic Dropout Project open hearings and visits to schools, we encountered many teachers who made a difference in their students' lives. These caring individuals were trying their hardest to help Hispanic students succeed. Some had developed teaching practices designed to engage their students. Others provided counseling and mentored students. All constantly worked to improve how they taught their students. All communicated a deep sense of caring, high expectations, respect, and commitment to their students.



"I saw how teachers invested in me. I felt like a person. The teachers' personal investment in me meant so much to me." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Excellent teachers are very aware of the challenges that their students face. They are very realistic about students' individual situations. What seemed to distinguish teachers who made a difference from those who did not was that the former teachers used knowledge of Hispanic students' academic, social, and psychological characteristics as a foundation and a source of competence on which to build. These teachers passionately believed that, because of their teaching and personal concern for their students, they made a difference in their students' lives. Students and parents agreed.



"I got to know them [personnel at an alternative setting] as family. They showed

me different things that I could do besides drop out. So I went back to school and finished in three years." Former dropout at HDP public forum, Albuquerque

Students reported that teachers who really cared about them as individuals often provided them with the inspiration and personal support needed to get through hard times. When asked why they stayed in school, students (many with friends who had dropped out of school) pointed to a teacher or other school person as having taken a special interest in them and nurtured their dreams for the future.

Less successful teachers do not really understand their Hispanic students' lives. They do not use what they know about their students as a foundation on which to build. Instead, they use what they know about their students to explain away failure.



"The school staff was extremely resistant to change and to being challenged by change. School problems were perceived to be caused by deficiencies on the part of students and parents. The need for fundamental change was believed to reside within students and parents." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A65-A66.

Students know the difference and respond positively to the good teachers that they encounter. Instead of scurrying out of class as soon the bell's ringing marked its end, students with effective teachers would stay to ask a question, to discuss a new insight about the day's work, or simply to share something that had happened outside of school with the teacher. We saw such student behaviors in secondary mathematics classes, in alternative school settings, and with middle-school generalist teachers.



"Even when a school was not particularly sensitive to Latino cultural differences — as was the case at School B — the critical difference was whether the school's staff thought the student was worth teaching." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 79). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Hispanic students and their parents expect teachers to engage students in challenging content. In contrast to their complaints about low tracks, low expectations, and dumbed-down, boring and irrelevant curricula, Hispanic students and their parents who were interviewed by the project praised teachers who made material interesting and relevant. The students craved being challenged by their teachers.



"At School D, students would begin by hiring teachers who care and by making classes more fun. They would remove a large number of the faculty and replace

them with teachers who are patient and interested in the needs of all the students, not only a select few. Importantly, they would provide the school with more bilingual teachers.” In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). Student voices: High school students’ perspectives on the Latino dropout problem (p. 86). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Students expected teachers to help them with the subject matter. Many students complained about not getting help when they needed it and, as a result, becoming frustrated. They talked about raising their hands or calling for help during class but not getting assistance because the teacher was busy with someone else. Students realized that large class size and the fact that secondary teachers teach many courses militate against teachers being able to help them.

Teachers may send unintentional messages to students when they fail to respond directly to requests for help. Some students interviewed by the project, for instance, reported that their teachers suggested that they get academic help from a tutoring service which met during breaks and after-school. Such help is too little and too late for a student who, because of frustration, has given up trying to understand. To the student who recounted that “My teacher told me she was too busy and that I should get help from the school’s tutoring service,” the teacher had simply dismissed her request.



“Student preferences are viewed by school staff as non-essentials, which contributes to student alienation.” In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A68.

When asked about the features of alternative schools or programs that they most appreciated, almost every student pointed to the personalized relationships that they developed with their teachers and the individualized attention that they received. Many students realized that this attention was possible because of the smaller class size. These students also spoke about the mutual respect and caring that developed between themselves and the schools’ staffs. This respect was communicated to the students in countless ways by adults who provided mentoring. A volunteer at a social service agency would tell students that, like them, he too had dropped out of school but had later achieved his goals by believing in himself and being persistent. A retired teacher insisted that all of her students could learn to read, and she provided them with the support to do so.



“Many disadvantaged youth feel ignored or unimportant in school—as if no one at school cares about them. . . . [Intervention] efforts [typically] rely upon three broad strategies: (1) strategies to link students to adults in the school, including mentor programs and efforts to reorganize school schedules to promote closer contact between teachers and students; (2) strategies to link students to other students in the school, including extracurricular activities and orientation pro-

grams; and (3) strategies to link students to the school as an institution, including fair and equitable policies and greater student choice over their school programs." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

- 1. Teachers should teach content so that it interests and challenges Hispanic students. They should help students to learn that content. They should communicate high expectations, respect, and interest in each of their students. They should understand the roles of language, race, culture, and gender in schooling. They should engage parents and the community in the education of their children.***

Effective instruction requires knowing the student and tapping into her or his strengths and interests to trigger learning. Effective teachers use parents as allies to extend learning outside the classroom. They provide parents with a stream of timely feedback and help parents see concrete ways of extending their children's learning outside the classroom. Teachers who are not familiar with the lives of their students, their words, and their backgrounds find it hard to be highly effective.



"Make class interesting." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

As project members have seen, under schoolhouse pressures, harried teachers may find themselves unintentionally sending the wrong message. Teachers need to monitor themselves or receive inservice training to ensure that Hispanic students and their families receive the message that they are really wanted in the classroom and in school, that excellence is within their reach, and that success depends on working together.

- 2. Teachers should become knowledgeable about and develop strategies to educate Hispanic students and to communicate with their parents. Teachers should receive the professional development needed to develop those attitudes, knowledge, and skills.***

Ongoing professional development should help teachers learn about their students' backgrounds and interests, curriculum adaptation, and other instructional strategies for heterogeneous student populations. Teachers should be familiar with the implications of second language acquisition for student learning and how to adapt instruction for students of varying levels of English language proficiency. Teachers' knowledge of their students' cultural heritage and the implications of language loss are important for effective teaching and the creation of well-functioning home-school linkages.



"Teachers were asked to organize their classrooms into small groups which eventually became cohesive work teams with full control of their own writing activities. They would explore possible topics, research them, develop data gathering instruments such as surveys and interview protocols, conduct interviews with peers and adults, discuss findings and finally write cooperatively extended

and complex essays. The students discovered that writing was no longer a futile school exercise designed by teachers for their own purposes, but a meaningful activity and a means of exchanging important ideas and specific audiences and for expressing their own feelings. Students realized that their individual and collective voices can make a difference in public opinion and in the quality of life at school. Thus Chicano high school students not only significantly sharpened their communicative skills but realized that these skills are a powerful instrument in voicing individual and collective concerns. Teachers would often express their surprise: 'I am impressed. Look!', they said as they shared their students' compositions. A teacher wrote in her diary: 'This [the unexpected high performance of students] was a very successful lesson for me in many ways. It furthers my belief that if what is taught is important in the mind of the learner, much more will truly be learned.'" In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (p. 34) New York: The Falmer Press.

Often, teachers in high-poverty schools are the last to receive high-quality professional development on new instructional approaches, curricula, and unbiased ways of assessing students. They should be the first to get these opportunities.



"Why should I want to be a teacher? Look at the conditions we're taught in."
Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

SCHOOLS

Schools are the most important focal point for dropout prevention. The research on dropout prevention, effective schools, and restructuring schools, and the Hispanic Dropout Project's commissioned papers—all conclude that schools do, in fact, matter in students' lives. In the course of our explorations, we found powerful and personalized evidence that schools matter *positively* in keeping Hispanic students in school and in helping them to achieve academically. The most impressive schools that we visited were those where teachers and staff worked together to personalize each student's school experience. Teachers collaborated to ensure that no Hispanic student fell through the cracks, either academically or psychosocially. Spanish-speaking staff were respected for their ability to communicate with students' parents; indeed, many of these schools aggressively recruited multilingual, multiethnic staff who could relate to their students and parents.



"The key finding from our research is that effective schools provide at-risk students with a community of support. School as a community of support is a broad concept in which school membership and educational engagement are central. School membership is concerned with a sense of belonging and social bonding to the school and its members. Educational engagement is defined as involvement in school activities but especially traditional classroom and academic work. . . . Schools successful at dropout prevention created a supportive environment that helped students overcome impediments to membership and engagement."

In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 223). London: The Falmer Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project saw secondary schools and an entire school system in which Hispanic students graduated in greater numbers than in similar schools; these examples challenge the myth that secondary schools are doomed to be cold and impersonal places for students or that they are too difficult to change into personalized and caring places. We also visited elementary and middle schools that made special efforts to ensure that all their children learned how to read, achieved academically, and became better connected to their school. Recognizing the real-world challenges that their students faced, principals, teachers, and other school staff spoke with determination about Hispanic students learning, about not losing students, and about always trying to do better. Teachers at one elementary school, for instance, said that they were relentless in ensuring that all of their Hispanic students—even students who did not speak English—could read by third grade.

Moreover, out-of-school alternative programs for students who could not attend regular school used the latter as reference points by providing a curriculum that mirrored what was offered in regular schools, by tutoring and helping students with their homework, and by helping to return students to their original schools. Their services, therefore, were linked to the school and its education programs.



“Latinos at these schools ‘know the deal.’ They know when they are getting a good education and when they are not. They also have some pretty good ideas on how to improve education. . . . The bottom line in this report is that: good neighborhoods or bad: good schools = success, bad schools cause dropouts.”

In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students’ perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 99). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

On the negative side, the research literature paints an unflattering portrait of schools that do nothing to improve their dropout rates, that use some subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) means to encourage Hispanic students to leave school, and that deny Hispanics educational opportunity. The staff at such schools behave as if the students (and their parents) are so rife with social problems that there is nothing that they can do. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard some school and district staff claim that schools could do very little to reduce the Hispanic dropout rate because of student poverty, lack of student readiness or desire to learn, language, excessive student mobility, excessive costs, lack of qualified staff, lack of knowledge about the real causes of the problem, lack of parental concern, parental aspirations that do not include school, and earlier efforts that have failed. Schools, according to these individuals, can do very little about the larger social ills that befall their students. The literature is clear: Schools where such beliefs are the norm are not likely to be very successful either in ensuring that large numbers of their Hispanic students graduate or in educating many of their students very well.

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from students, parents, and community activists who said that school conditions made dropping out an inevitable outcome and logical choice for students. In these schools, staff were said not to care about Hispanic students; policies involving discipline and grading were applied in a biased manner; tracking and other forms of ability grouping were used to write off whole segments of the student body, not to improve educational opportunities; and the general attitude seemed to be: “Ignore the problem and it will go away.” Schools may in fact *try* to make the problem go away. For instance, we heard about schools using Hispanic students’ excessive absences to suspend students rather than to conduct formal suspension hearings on more serious charges. Many Hispanic students and parents charged that rules were being enforced unfairly.



“I was absent 27 times in one class, 36 in another. They only checked things out when I was dragged into the principal’s office with red eyes. ‘Look at these absences.’ [they said]. Well, it’s about time you noticed!” Testimony at HDP open hearing, Las Cruces

Overcrowding and the quality of a school’s facilities affect a school’s ability to keep its students. One mother complained that the building code had been waived for the city’s schools. This meant that dilapidated schools—located primarily in the inner city—would not have to be brought up to code. According to this mother, the district’s newer schools, which were being built in its wealthier neighborhoods would, of course, be built according to code. Another parent noted that her son was one of over 2,000 students in a building designed for 1,500. She talked

about the heat, noise, and deteriorating conditions at this school where large males could not help but jostle one another as they went from class to class. Because of the heat and noise, tempers would flare, fights break out, and students would be suspended. As this mother observed, the step from suspension to dropping out is very small. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard about secondary schools enrolling 40 students in a class, but having 30 chairs. In at least one case, teachers were told not to worry because not all the students would show up. “What sort of a message does this send to the school’s students?” asked a graduate from such a school.



“We need smaller classes. With 34 students in a class, teachers don’t have time to listen to you. During my freshman and sophomore years, my math classes were small. During my junior year, I was put into large classes. Things got harder for me to learn and the teacher couldn’t help me. I was an honors student; remedial classes are even bigger. My sister was in a class with 40 kids. There are 4 to 5 kids for a microscope. We don’t have enough books, so they tell us, ‘Go to the library [to get books].’ We don’t have enough chairs in our classrooms, so we have to sit on the floor. We can’t even Xerox a poem by Shakespeare. This sends a strong message to the student: ‘You’re not important.’” Testimony at student leader meeting, New York City

There are too many wrongheaded solutions to the issues of low student achievement, retention, excessive student absence, and eventually, student dropout. Tracking, grade retention, and remedial coursework are too often used to write off students considered too difficult to handle. Too many schools focus their efforts on students’ acquiring English to the detriment of their learning content. Schools seldom help Hispanic students develop a sense of their own future or provide them with information needed to make informed decisions about their education programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found five characteristics of schools that make a difference in their students’ education. *First*, these schools have very high academic and behavioral standards for their students. *Second*, they communicate those standards clearly, and they provide access to and support students in meeting those standards—that is, they provide students with many opportunities to succeed in meeting these high standards. *Third*, schools that make a difference connect their students in meaningful ways to adults. In spite of their size, secondary schools can adopt strategies—such as a school within a school, a group of teachers accepting responsibility for the same students, everyone on staff agreeing to “adopt” some students, older students mentoring younger students—to increase the personalization that students need to experience. *Fourth*, these schools connect their students to possible futures in college and the work force. *Fifth*, they provide families with useful information about how their children are doing and about their futures. Rather than accepting the myth that parents do not care, good schools adopt the position that parents need information in order to make informed decisions that affect their children. Aspirations are not enough. For schools to make a difference, they must provide ways for students and their families to achieve those aspirations.



“Educational engagement is a complex process that involves more than simply ‘motivating’ students. Promoting engagement requires attention to student char-

*acteristics, the tasks students are asked to perform, the school environment in which work takes place, and the external environment that influences the student and the school itself. . . .In spite of conditions outside the school that weaken student engagement, there are practices that educators could implement to substantially strengthen it. The level of engagement. . .could be increased if specific impediments under the control of educators were addressed. . . . (1) Schoolwork is not extrinsically motivating for many students because achievement is not tied to any explicit and valued goal; (2) The dominant learning process pursued in schools is too narrow in that it is highly abstract, verbal, sedentary, individualistic, competitive and controlled by others as opposed to concrete, problem-oriented, active, kinesthetic, cooperative and autonomous. Because of these qualities, the dominant mode of learning stifles the likelihood of intrinsic rewards for many students. (3) Classroom learning is often stultifying because educators are obsessed with the 'coverage' of subject matter; this makes school knowledge superficial, and also intrinsically unsatisfying, thereby preventing students from gaining the sense of competence that ideally accompanies achievement." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 179). London: The Falmer Press.*

Although we were impressed with the preschool and early childhood education programs that we visited, we would caution that, by themselves, these programs are not enough. First, Hispanic access to high-quality early childhood education programs is limited. According to Head Start data, there simply are not enough programs to meet demand. Second, the research has failed to produce substantial evidence that the effects of early childhood interventions persist very long after the program ends. Schools need to provide consistent and ongoing support throughout grades K–12.

We were impressed with the quality of the alternative programs that we visited; however, we caution that alternative programs can become little more than holding pens for their students and that these programs cannot replace schools. Schools could learn from the quality programs that we visited. Students recounted that they were treated with respect and warmth in their alternative settings. Just as important, staff at such places accepted their students' experiences yet encouraged students to consider the *consequences* of their actions. To the staff, that a student had skipped school a lot, been suspended from school, or had dropped out did not mean that the student was fundamentally flawed. Rather, that a student had behaved inappropriately meant that there were consequences. Personnel in alternative settings helped students learn from their actions, and overcome, avert, or reverse the worst of those consequences. The challenge is for Hispanic students' regular schools to become more like these alternative placements and other schools that do a good job at retaining and educating their students.

Actions the Schools Need to Take [To Keep Latino Students In]

1. Focus on student learning
2. Meet basic needs
3. Use a variety of teaching techniques
4. Make material meaningful to students
5. Make scholastic standards clear to all
6. Allow no student to fail
7. Use tests as milestones
8. Make participation in school work more rewarding than skipping
9. Make skipping difficult
10. Value persistence and hard work
11. Make schools accessible to parents
12. Assume responsibility for educating all students
13. Mobilize resources to link school and work.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 15-19). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The most shocking of our findings is the rarity of outstanding schools and programs like those we visited. Although the project visited many sites that featured impressive programs, those programs served a very small number of Hispanic students, and they are at variance with the average educational experiences of Hispanic students. However, there was little about those schools and programs that could not be replicated elsewhere.

1. Schools should emphasize the prevention of problems. They need to become more aggressive in responding to the early warning signs that a student may be doing poorly in, losing interest in, or in some other way, becoming disengaged from school.

Elementary schools should ensure that all children know how to read by third grade and that they are learning mathematics with understanding. Middle and secondary schools should build on the successes of elementary schools.

Schools should be alert to early warning signs of student disengagement. If, for example, a student has two unexcused absences in a row from school, parents should be contacted by a live person—by phone or even by a home visit. The immediacy and personalization of the contact make a difference.

1. Schools should be held accountable and should hold themselves accountable for growth and progress of all students.
2. School procedures, practices, and policies must be individualized and personalized for high-risk youth.
3. Effective middle-school interventions for high-risk youth must address simultaneously the three contexts of family, school, and community through an independent, school-based, case management approach.
4. System reforms of schools must not only change organization structures and practices, but more importantly, must change adult attitudes and behaviors to be more compassionate and nurturing toward high-risk youth.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Drop-out prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A69-A70.

Minorities are overrepresented in special education programs. Schools should ensure that their assignment practices are valid; more importantly, they should emphasize the interventions that prevent such placements.

2. Schools, especially high schools, need to personalize programs and services that work with Hispanic students.

Strategies that could be adopted by a high school trying to personalize its programs and services include the reduction of individual class size, reduction in the number of different classes that teachers must teach, creation of schools within schools or of a smaller high school for all but a few highly specialized classes, the creation of houses or academies within a large high school, team-teaching involving fewer students, teachers serving as counselors for or “adopting” a few students, and older students serving as mentors for younger students.

3. Schools should be restructured to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curricula. They should reconfigure time, space, and staffing patterns to provide students with additional support needed to achieve.

School restructuring needs to attend to the nature of the curriculum that is provided to students so that all students encounter a curriculum that is demanding, interesting, and engaging.



“A positive school climate—one in which students feel ‘membership’ in their schools and in which they perceive that teachers care about them as individuals—

is considered a prerequisite for student engagement in either academic or vocational learning. The large size of many high schools is seen as a strong institutional barrier to a positive school climate. In large schools, teachers are most likely to form close supervisory relations with only the most accomplished students, while others (most often minority students and low achievers) remain isolated from ongoing adult attention. . . . Available evidence indicates that low-achieving students are most likely to prosper in smaller schools. Accordingly, some districts have created alternative schools and schools-within-schools to make schools feel smaller.” In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 207). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Secondary and junior high schools should eliminate their lowest tracks. Relative to advanced placement tracks, low-track classrooms are overcrowded, have the least qualified teachers, have the fewest resources, and experience a low-level curriculum focused on remediation to the virtual exclusion of any new or interesting content. If tracking is to be anything for large numbers of Hispanic students other than the final stop en route to being pushed out, these conditions must change.

Hispanic students should be recruited actively into the highest tracks and provided with the support to succeed. In addition to placing students in more demanding curricular settings, schools should provide added support for students such as libraries, after-school programs, individualized tutoring, counseling, and social service referrals.



“Those programs that are most effective are the ones that are least like school. They meet the needs of the learner according to when the learner needs to learn. They provide flexibility. High schools need to become more like this.” Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

The changes that we recommend above are not difficult nor are they expensive. What they require is a commitment by school personnel to provide educational opportunities to all their students.

4. Schools should replicate programs that have proven effective. In addition to using new funding, schools should redeploy existing resources to run these programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found programs and efforts that have proven effective or show promise for improving Hispanic student achievement and lowering the dropout rate. Schools do not have to reinvent these programs. They should be prepared to adapt existing programs to the needs of their students and to local conditions. Appendix F provides a list of programs identified as effective in the project’s commissioned papers.

Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies

Counseling services and adult advocacy for students are key elements of any particular dropout prevention initiative.

At the elementary level, providing after-school tutoring and enrichment that are directly related to in-class assignments and having in-class adult friends (e.g., trained volunteers or helpers) appear to be effective approaches.

At the middle level, team teaching strategies, flexible scheduling, heterogeneous grouping of students, and provision of as-needed counseling assistance are especially useful strategies.

At the secondary level, paid work, embedded in activities that prepare and monitor students' on-the-job experiences, appears to be a critical component to keeping students in school.

In programs where dropout recovery is an emphasis, flexible class schedules assist students who need to work or meet personal commitments during regular school hours.

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations) (p. 7). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Although any program has start-up costs and schools are strapped for resources, many programs visited by the project and reviewed in its commissioned papers can be implemented through a combination of new and old funding, and a reconfiguration of existing roles and responsibilities.

5. Schools should carefully monitor the effectiveness of their programs and continuously try to improve them or to replace them with more reliable strategies.

School effectiveness in reducing Hispanic dropout rates or in increasing student achievement will not be accomplished overnight. The most impressive programs visited by the project had been developed and improved over the years by their staffs. Over the years, these schools and programs had carefully recruited staffs who supported their mission and respected their students; they fine-tuned their strategies for teaching students and for preventing dropout; they recruited parents into partnerships; they developed credibility and support within the Hispanic and business communities; they were entrepreneurial in raising funds to support their efforts.

In talking with members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, school personnel and concerned community people highlighted many well-meaning efforts. Yet they were unable to provide convincing, research-based evidence that their programs were reaching targeted students or that the programs were effective. Schools and others should monitor their efforts, keep what works well, modify what could be improved, and discard what does not work.



"Our recommendations for restructuring schools have called for greater coordination of educational resources and their delivery to students. Restructuring schools must lead to improved management of the educational experiences of students, whether at the classroom, school, district, state, or federal level. Restructuring the relationships among schools, families, and communities must result in the same type of improved management of the educational and social resources delivered to disadvantaged youth. At a time when the gap between available resources and needs is growing, we must obtain as much leverage as possible from all of the resources at our command. The coherent, mutually reinforcing mobilization of school, family, and community resources may be our best hope for addressing the problems of disadvantaged students. We simply cannot afford duplication, lack of coordination, and piecemeal approaches if we wish to have an impact on the problem." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 197). New York: Teachers College Press.

6. Schools and alternative programs should be better coordinated.

Students noted they often had a hard time making the transition from an alternative program back to school. Personnel working in alternative programs had similar concerns about schools' lack of cooperation with their efforts to provide students with a meaningful education until they could return to school.

DISTRICT, STATE, AND NATIONAL POLICIES

School districts, states, and the nation as a whole influence whether Hispanics drop out or stay in school. School districts' influence is felt through their governance of schools, recruitment of a workforce, and the professional development that they provide to teachers. States exert influence through their education policies, assessment and accountability programs, and teacher certification requirements. The nature and quality of national debates involving education influence funding and other forms of legislation.



"If we're the future, I don't see why we [funding for schools] have to be cut. It's the future of the whole country." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard some individuals link Hispanic education to debates about immigration—both legal and illegal—and to language policy. As a result, debates about what to do to solve a problem turn into debates about deeply held beliefs involving noneducational matters. Such unrelated beliefs interfere with the development of a coherent education policy at all levels. The following is a sampling of beliefs that are obstacles to solving the problem of Hispanic dropout: (a) until we really understand the full extent of the problem, we can do nothing; (b) this is a local school problem that does not lie in the domain of state or other policy levels; (c) there are a few successful programs, but they cannot be scaled up; (d) these are not our children, hence, it is not our problem; (e) the problem is short term and will go away when something else (typically, immigration policy) is taken care of; and (f) serious efforts to solve this problem cost more than the public is willing to spend.

Once again, our findings contradict such wrongheaded beliefs. For instance, at the most impressive sites that the project visited, language policy and immigration issues had been depoliticized for the cause of education. Districts decided that, in order to educate their students, they had to recruit teachers who could communicate with them and with their parents, that is, with the district's ever-changing clientele. These districts hired teachers and administrative staff who spoke Spanish and who were familiar with Hispanic culture. Their schools developed programs that built on students' native language and their real-world knowledge in the various subjects in order to prepare them for life in America—for higher education, jobs, careers, and citizenship. There were no questions about using and, in many cases, developing children's native languages and home cultures because this was what the children brought to school with them. Also, there were no questions that children would become literate in English and learn to high standards.



"Chapter 1 and dropout prevention programs are the traditional means for providing extra assistance to the most needy students. However, they are often de facto lower tracks for students who have been retained." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 206). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Schools and programs were very creative in finding new sources of funds and in redeploying existing monies for dropout prevention and education improvement efforts. Although the project was impressed by the sheer amount of volunteerism and creative funding employed by every site and program that its members visited, every single program and alternative school was severely underfunded and living a hand-to-mouth existence. Programs had waiting lists. Alternative schools—with their relatively small student-to-teacher ratios—felt that they were always on the chopping block due to their costs and their districts' ongoing budget problems.

On the other hand, the conditions that we witnessed at many sites recalled for us what many of those we interviewed told us—that dropping out under such conditions is a healthy response. Children and their families should never be subjected to such unhealthy conditions that they would feel they had no other choice but to drop out in order to protect their well being. Classrooms and schools where instruction and proper attention to children's needs are inhibited due to overcrowding, lack of equipment and supplies, rundown buildings, and overused, out-of-date textbooks are all unhealthy conditions that no country with high expectations for learning for all children should expect any of its children to tolerate.

Likewise, given the few resources that are available for professional development to upgrade teachers' skills for working with changing populations of students, it is not too hard to see why some school personnel respond to their Hispanic students with neglect if not actively push them out.



"When a student fails a class or two, some people want that student to drop out. He's taking space that someone else who wants to succeed could have." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard from parents, teachers, and other school personnel about contradictory guidelines and policies that are too complex for parents to understand and too time-consuming for them to follow. For instance, one district often informs parents about their children's educational problems and possible program options by using a multi-page check-off form that includes special education, Title 1, bilingual education, English as a second language, socio-psychological and behavioral problems and counseling, achievement, and excessive absence or tardiness. Though convenient for the district, these forms confuse parents who are too overwhelmed to ask for clarification about what the form means. Confronted with such forms, policies, and guidelines parents feel discouraged from participating in decisions that affect their children's schooling.



"Another surprise was the readiness of school administrators to administratively transfer students to another school for behaviors associated with school disengagement and dropout—high absenteeism, disruptive non-conforming behavior, or poor academic work. Case studies in other schools have documented how often and in what ways school administrators actively 'got rid of troublemakers.' . . . Special education law and due process were frequently ignored by either blatant noncompliance or by conforming to the letter of the law but not the intent or spirit of the law. . . . There was deep resistance by the school to provide more than 45 minutes of resource help despite youth's failing multiple classes. Most often it

*was 'regular' education personnel who were responsible for making suspension and disciplinary referrals about special education youth. In general, these personnel were more exclusionary and alienating in their approach than inclusionary and engaging. Frequently, the 'letter of the special education law' framed actions as opposed to the 'spirit' of the IEP process. . . . Frequently, when a youth was having difficulty in school, especially in terms of behavior problems, the school would place the students on home or independent study. . . . Unfortunately, we found that almost every single youth placed on independent study, where they came to a center to receive and turn in assignments completed at home, did not produce enough school work to earn any credits toward graduation." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A66-A66.*

District and state policies can provide incentives for schools to ignore student difficulties—if not to actively push students out. For instance, many states provide funding based on a one-time student count that takes place early in the year. Parents and school personnel reported that prior to the student census, schools actively try to keep students. After the schools have their monies, they can simply ignore student tardiness, absence, truancy, and other behaviors that lead to dropout. Not only are there no sanctions when schools rid themselves of such “bad” students, there are positive consequences, especially for overcrowded schools. When students leave overcrowded schools, the benefits include smaller classes, additional resources for the “good” students who remain, improved performance on mandated assessments and on other indicators of school productivity, less stress on the overall climate of the school, and a reduced administrative burden. Moreover, safe in the knowledge that a new crop of students will enter in time for next year’s census, the school has no reason to recruit students who leave into already overcrowded alternative programs.

Districts and states also provide incentives for schools to exclude Hispanics from their accountability systems by focusing solely or mostly on achievement as the major accountability item and then allowing schools to exclude students who are identified as limited English proficient, in need of special education services, or through some other categorical marker. The exclusion of such students and the sole focus on test data allow, if not encourage, schools to hide many of their lowest-achieving students.



“The city, state, and others allow bad conditions to continue. They set the codes and allowable noise levels in schools. The district gets waivers from the state so that untrained teacher aides can become teachers.” Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

Districts may overenroll high school students, under the presumption that not all students will come to class. Such a practice sends strong messages to students that they are not expected to attend. Teachers also receive the message that some students are not expected to come to class

and that they are not expected to teach all of their enrolled students. It should not be surprising when students and teachers comply with these messages.

Recommendation 1: Districts should establish strong permanent alternatives as part of a comprehensive strategy of dropout prevention. Alternative schools should be high-status organizations receiving resources commensurate with the tasks they undertake and the success they demonstrate.

Recommendation 2: Districts, in cooperation with state departments of education, should establish special alternative schools for at-risk students with a clear mission that includes experimentation, curricular innovation and staff development.

Recommendation 3: State policy should require each school system to establish a Management Information System that provides basic and common data on all students.

Recommendation 4: State policy should require schools to examine the effects of course failure, grade retention, out-of-school suspension and other practices that appear to impact negatively on at-risk students.

Recommendation 5: State and local policy should encourage the decentralization of large schools and school systems, creating smaller units characterized by site-based management.

Recommendation 6: State and local policy should encourage the development of new curricula and teaching strategies designed for diverse groups of at-risk students.

Recommendation 7: State and local policy should develop mechanisms to hold schools accountable for their dropout rates through a system emphasizing outcomes and results.

Recommendation 8: Cities should develop broad-based community partnerships aimed at serving at-risk youth.

In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (pp. 225-236). London: The Falmer Press.

- 1. Districts should inform students and parents of their policies in ways that are clear and easy to understand. Policies should not be overly complex, nor should administrative procedures discourage parental participation. Parents should be warned, well in advance, when their children's behaviors are deemed unacceptable to the district. Districts should enforce their policies fairly and equitably. If a student is charged with a serious infraction, districts should not bypass due process by also charging the student with something that is unrelated but easier to substantiate.***

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- 2. *States should analyze their policies to remove incentives for schools to ignore, if not push out, students who experience trouble. State policies should be rewritten with an eye towards encouraging schools to do all they can to retain students. District and state accountability and incentive systems should encourage schools to keep students through high school graduation.***

Report cards of school effectiveness and other efforts by districts and states to hold their schools publicly accountable should not be limited to overall levels of achievement. They should include information about students who were excluded from the tests, student completion rates, attendance statistics, and student enrollment in various tracks. Schools and Hispanic parents should know how Hispanic students are doing.



“We recommend four strategies for moving decisions to levels where information on student performance and behavior is available: (1) revising rules and programs to promote flexibility; (2) using goal setting to enhance the discretion of local educators; (3) creating self-contained teaching/learning units, to allow educators to make decisions about deploying resources to meet student needs; and (4) providing educational resources above those thought minimally necessary, thus allowing educators some discretion in addressing emerging needs.”

*In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 161). New York: Teachers College Press.*

- 3. *In light of the ongoing standards movement, districts and states should develop standards for school conditions, class and school size, and in general, student opportunity to learn. Districts should restructure schools that are too large and impersonal into smaller-sized units. Districts’ and states’ oversight and accountability mechanisms should ensure that Hispanic students participate in the ongoing reform agendas. Reform agendas—especially high-stakes testing programs—should be explained to the parents of Hispanic students, and their input solicited. High-stakes testing programs should be monitored to ensure that they are implemented equitably so that Hispanic students have a fair opportunity to show what they know and can do.***
- 4. *Districts and state education agencies should design comprehensive strategies for dropout prevention that are tied to the states’ standards and that take account of students’ differing needs at different points in their lives.***

Well-meaning advocates for one or another intervention targeted for a specific age-group often seem to promise more than they can accomplish. No single strategy—be it early childhood intervention, Title I, bilingual education, alternative education, curriculum reform, student tutoring and mentoring—can by itself solve the problem of student dropout. The most successful schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project used multiple approaches across pre-K–12, and even provided support for older people to return to school to obtain a high school certificate.

- 5. *School districts and state education agencies should evaluate currently funded dropout prevention efforts against curricular and student learning standards, and they should provide support for those efforts to continuously improve.***
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6. *As schools become better able to respond to their diverse student populations, programs should be redirected so as to (a) reconnect students who have been placed on the borderline between success and failure and (b) provide alternatives for students who, for whatever reason, prefer to take alternative pathways to a high school credential.*
7. *Districts and state education agencies should provide lifelong learning opportunities so that people past school age can still acquire a high school credential.*

Society cannot afford to give up on people who, for whatever reasons, have dropped out of school. They should be encouraged to and provided with multiple opportunities to return to school and to graduate.



“Prior policy has always been focused on prevention. What about people who have dropped out? What should we be doing about the people who are the victims of previous policy and inaction?” Testimony at HDP open hearing, New York City

8. *Districts, state education agencies—indeed, all of society—need to target their resources strategically and to invest more money in helping schools, particularly urban schools, to provide their Hispanic students with opportunities to learn. For example, additional resources could be tied to (a) schools’ implementation of programs that have been proven effective or (b) the expansion and continuous improvement of a promising program that is already in place.*

Because existing resources need to be directed more strategically, schools and districts should carefully evaluate their programs and engage in continuous improvement of their best practices. School districts should redirect monies strategically from programs that are not working (and that seem unable to work) to implementing and improving school-based programs that do work.

Schools—especially urban schools in conditions of poverty—need additional resources. There is no way to improve the physical plant of run-down schools, to reduce class size, to target much-needed resources, to purchase basic supplies and new books, to reform curriculum, and to provide professional development for teachers without an increased investment in those schools that educate our poorest children.



“The formal institution that directly affects virtually all adolescents is school. Schools are critically important because education is the means by which individuals from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds can build the skills and credentials needed for successful adult roles in mainstream American life. . . . Because of residential stratification, most of these adolescents attend schools with the fewest material resources. In 1991, for example, per pupil expenditures in the 47 largest urban school districts averaged \$5,200; in suburban districts, the figure was \$6,073. Although an \$875 per pupil funding gap may not appear significant, in an average class of 25 students, the difference is almost \$22,000—enough to hire an aide, provide special instructional materials or computers, pay significantly higher teacher salaries, or improve a dilapidated classroom. When the relatively greater need of urban chil-

dren for special services is taken into account (for health needs, language instruction for non-English-proficient students, etc.), the resource differences are even more critical. Differences in funding of this magnitude can make a clear qualitative difference in the total educational experience. Traditional education practices contribute to the high rates of failure for low-achieving students. Historically, schools have addressed the diversity of student achievement by tracking students into homogeneous ability groups and by retaining students who fail courses because of poor attendance, grades, or test scores. Contrary to expectations, these practices have consistently shown negative academic and social consequences for low-achieving adolescents."

In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 7). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Districts and school personnel may balk, at first, at the idea of redirecting existing resources. The larger society might have concerns about investing more money than is currently the case in the education of poor Hispanic children. Yet, if monies could be invested strategically in order to provide Hispanics with high-quality education programs in the first place, then schools and society would save on the long-term costs of their failure to have educated these children properly.

9. Schools, districts, and state education agencies need to develop better management information systems that follow students more accurately and efficiently.

In order to plan, monitor, evaluate, and improve dropout prevention programs, people need information about students who leave school. Such information is simply not available. Current policy is focused on students who stay; hence there are few incentives for schools or districts to worry about dropouts. Without such basic information, it seems impossible to envision the development of any comprehensive set of interventions.

Knowing annual dropout rates of high school students is a start, but ultimately inadequate for planning and monitoring programs. Where possible, districts should follow groups of students from first through twelfth grades.

10. Schools and districts must diversify their teaching workforce to include people with the knowledge, language skills, and backgrounds that will enable them to better connect with Hispanic students and their parents.

Beyond having role models, Hispanic students need to encounter teachers who communicate trust and confidence, who can understand what students are experiencing, and who can guide and support students. Hispanic students reported establishing mutually respectful relationships with Hispanic teachers, with non-Hispanic teachers and volunteers who themselves had dropped out of school but still managed to further their education, with retired teachers who communicated a sincere confidence in students' intelligence and ability to succeed, and with other adults whose own life experiences validated them in the students' eyes. Such teachers were in short supply in these children's schools.



*"In contrast to Coleman et al.'s 1966 finding of no consistent differences in the quantity and quality of school inputs for predominantly majority and minority schools, the analyses presented in this paper reveal substantial within district variations in four types of school inputs: teacher test scores, years of education, teacher experience and class size (student-teacher ratios). The statistical models presented in this paper document a sorting of school inputs based on campus racial/ethnic and socio-economic composition. In particular, the models suggest that teacher ability, measured with both verbal and written proficiency scores, decreases with campus percentage black and Hispanic and increases with the campus percentage of higher income students. . . . Texas teachers employed in schools with high fractions of disadvantaged minority students have fewer years of education and less experience and have more students in their classes." In Kain, J. F., & Singleton, K. (1996). *Equality of educational opportunity revisited*. (Paper presented at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Symposium.) Cambridge: Harvard Institute of Economic Research.*

In addition, schools need teachers who can understand and talk to Hispanic parents. Parents respond best to people they know outside of school such as their neighbors and other parents, to people who treat them with respect, to people who speak Spanish or at least do not denigrate their accents, and to people who clearly show that they care for their children's academic success.

Diversifying the teaching workforce will occur only when people with broad experience, knowledge, and dispositions to work with Hispanic students are recruited into and successfully complete certification programs. Schools of education, school districts, state education agencies, state boards of education, and postsecondary education's governing bodies have important roles in diversifying the teacher workforce.

11. Schools and Colleges of Education should recruit people into the teaching profession who will diversify its ranks. They should develop course work, practica, student teaching, and other experiences that will help all preservice teachers to succeed with Hispanic students. The governing bodies of postsecondary education institutions should require that their faculty be able and willing to prepare teachers to teach Hispanic students.

Recommendation 1: Put the services in rather than pull students out.

Recommendation 2: Deliver the services without calling attention to the fact that special services are being provided.

Recommendation 3: Deliver the services within a supportive climate that includes adults as student advocates.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with substantive incentives to participate.

Recommendation 5: Carefully select, train, and support the staff persons providing the services .

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 8-10) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

12. *Teacher certification bodies should insist that entering teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to work with a diverse student body.*

Because it is within the power of state boards of education to set minimal requirements for entering teachers, they should use those requirements to pressure universities to update their teacher preparation programs so that new teachers will be better able to, in the long run, teach Hispanic students. In addition, the certification bodies should update their rules and regulations so as to encourage the creation of a diverse teacher workforce.

13. *Bilingual education, the education of Hispanics, and the education of immigrants should be depoliticized.*

Many schools that were successfully keeping Hispanic students in school relied on bilingual education and incorporated Hispanic culture into their functioning. On the other hand, schools can also use programs for limited English proficient students to deny such students access to a mainstream education. In other words, bilingual education, English as a second language, and sheltered English instruction are but the means to an end—keeping students in school in one case, denying them educational opportunity in the other. Schools and districts should choose among program models and adopt those characteristics that best suit their unique situations.



“There is a need for broader recognition that the achievement of educational and social potential is not just an individual affair. It also involves the constraints of the peer groups in which the youths are embedded, and the constraints of the schools they attend. When schools segregate or cluster individuals who share low standards of accomplishment (or expectations for school dropout), they explicitly help bring about those outcomes. To keep educational opportunities open, there should not only be challenges for achievement, but ample assistance and support to ensure that each student will reach adequate standards.

The curriculum should include information that is not only preparatory for subsequent accomplishments; it should place the information in the context of living.

In plans to prevent serious problems of behavior, at-risk youths should be kept in the conventional system, not excluded from it. Exclusion serves to exacerbate problem behavior by the selective isolation of the individuals from the rules and standards of conventional society.

*In the inner city and elsewhere, schools and the values they represent constitute safe havens for many students. In cases of children of privilege, the school is more typically an extension of the rest of the individual's life experience. For seriously disadvantaged youths, the haven might serve a unique function. This function must not be compromised, and society must ensure that access to schools remains open and safe, including zones around schools and places within it.” In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (pp. 191- 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.*

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS, AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Community-based organizations, the business community, chambers of commerce, and other agencies can play mutually reinforcing roles in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Businesses and chambers of commerce—which are rightly concerned about the productivity and quality of the local workforce—should provide work experiences that support students’ staying in school, provide incentives for students to continue their education, and encourage their employees’ participation in all facets of the community’s schools. Community-based organizations—which are concerned about the overall quality of life for Hispanics in the local community—should advocate for their members’ concerns in the schools and seek support from business for the education programs that they provide to students.



“We [schools] can’t do it alone. We have a hard time educating the kids who are staying in school.” Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

The thoughtful comments that we heard at the project’s hearings and the activities that we witnessed provide ample counterevidence to those who would assert that groups outside the school have little or no role to play in addressing issues of Hispanic dropout. Latina businesswomen became active friends, role models, and mentors to younger Latinas. Chamber of Commerce members mentored and tutored students, volunteered in schools, and served on advisory boards and committees. Community-based organizations advocated on behalf of parents and provided education services that paralleled and supported Hispanic students’ school experiences. Representatives from across the local community participated in local self-study efforts to improve the schools’ responsiveness to their Hispanic clientele. We visited some alternative, out-of-school programs that were financially supported by local businesses. Some businesses and chambers of commerce provided scholarships for Hispanics to go on to college. These individuals and agencies maintained long-term, personal commitments to students.



“We should encourage businesses to help link parents with schools.” Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

However, we also heard of cases where the conditions of employment interfered with Hispanic parents’ ability to participate in their children’s education. Parents often noted that more of them would have come to the project’s open hearings, but friends, family, and neighbors could not get off from work. Similar to earlier stories of parents who risked, and in some cases lost, their jobs to take an active role in their children’s education, one parent testified about leaving his daughter at school every day at 8:30 a.m. If anything happened before he left work in the late afternoon, that parent could not go to the school without risking his job.

- 1. The local business community, chamber of commerce, and community-based organizations should work together to help to keep students in school. Coalitions of community-based organizations and businesses should monitor local conditions to ensure that Hispanic***

students receive the high-quality education that they deserve. These same coalitions should advocate at local, state, and national levels for the improvement of the educational conditions of Hispanic students.

In addition to in-school tutoring and out-of-school mentoring programs, financial assistance, and other forms of volunteerism, businesses should offer school-to-work apprenticeships and internships that integrate productive work and schooling for Hispanic students who wish to stay in school but feel pressure to contribute to their families. Businesses could also provide space and financial, managerial, and other forms of continuing assistance for school- and community-based alternative programs.



“Increase the credits that are offered to corporations for kids who are adopted and given the opportunity to work. Corporations should get involved. They should help with parent training and provide teacher training.” Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

2. Businesses where students work should provide incentives and support for their students to complete and to continue beyond high school.

Many Hispanic students work out of basic economic necessity. Carefully designed school-to-work programs that balance between academic demands and the needs of the workplace can help students meet their economic and educational responsibilities by strengthening the connections between what students study and how it is applied in the workplace. Businesses must avoid encouraging or allowing students to work excessive hours that would endanger their school completion. Instead, employees of older secondary school students should provide flexible work schedules, tutoring, study time during work hours, mentoring, individual and family referrals to social service agencies as needed, incentives, and other supports so that students can finish high school. If a person cannot finish high school, then the business should encourage that student to obtain a GED.

Businesses where Hispanic students work should also develop scholarship and other financial assistance programs that encourage students to pursue postsecondary education.

3. The business community should implement policies that encourage parents to take time off, as needed, to go to parent-teacher conferences, to participate in school governance activities, and the like.

Businesses should include paid leave for participating in school activities as part of their overall compensation package for workers.



“The majority of projects offered academic skills and counseling, and many offered a wide range of additional services, combined in a variety of ways within and across ‘project components’ (i.e., discrete programmatic activities for specific groups of students. Many projects were considered to offer comprehensive

services...academic, counseling, social support, and, for components serving grades 6 and higher, vocational/career)." In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (p. 2) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

4. *The business community in conjunction with community-based organizations should support schools in their missions.*

Businesses and community-based organizations have expertise to share with schools on fund raising, needs assessment, strategic planning, and day-to-day management. They should study the physical plant and other resources of their local schools. As necessary, these organizations should press for increased financing of schools that is targeted to the identified needs and for ensuring that Hispanic students receive high-quality programs. They should also help schools to design and implement continuing improvement programs.

5. *Community-based organizations should continue to include the concerns of Hispanic parents in their service and advocacy activities.*

We visited adult literacy programs, early childhood interventions staffed by parents, out-of-school tutoring offered by adults in the community, social service referrals, and mentoring efforts initiated by community-based organizations. In addition, many of these organizations encouraged parents to visit their children's schools and advocated for the school to take their parents' concerns seriously.



"We point out the need within communities to develop comprehensive, clear plans for delivering services to the disadvantaged. Most communities lack a coherent policy on what services are needed, who should be receiving them, and who is responsible for delivering them. An explicit policy with clearly stated goals, that takes into account the bureaucratic and administrative complexities characteristic of contemporary social service delivery, can help insure that individuals do not fall through the cracks in the social machinery." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 196). New York: Teachers College Press.

6. *Businesses should band together to support local research, development, and the dissemination of effective programs for enhancing student achievement and graduation rates.*

Businesses at sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project supported the development of dropout prevention programs. At a few sites, local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce also supported systematic research into those efforts. One national corporation supported the dissemination of a program that it had helped to develop.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from representatives of many programs whose developers and staff showed an impressive commitment to improving the educational opportunities of Hispanics and to reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Unfortunately, many of these programs found themselves in constant financial turmoil, in part due to their inability to provide convincing evidence that they were accomplishing their goals. The innovative ideas found in these programs are seldom tested; and hence, they face the skepticism of schools, the public, and funding agencies. Although we made the conscious decision to solicit the input of program developers and others involved in Hispanic dropout prevention in crafting these recommendations, we believe that they too should be subjected to rigorous empirical testing.



Student 1: "The differences between us and them [friends who have dropped out]? They haven't had the opportunities I've had—in life or in school. They're still young, still partying, acting like teenagers. I'm getting on with my life. They're struggling."

Student 2: "Well, it's okay to party. You just have to take responsibility for your own life." Testimony at HDP meeting with students, Albuquerque

1. There should be sustained evaluations of promising programs and dropout prevention practices.

Many programs and sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project did not have adequate research-quality evidence of their effectiveness. Given how these programs emphasize helping students, it is not surprising that scarce resources were not diverted into collecting and analyzing program-effectiveness data. On the other hand, it is difficult to recommend programs to others without empirical evidence that they make a difference. Moreover, such performance data are fundamental to continued program improvement. Program funders and designers should include evaluation components to identify effective programs that could be replicated elsewhere and to support ongoing improvement.



*"Another community influence on dropout behavior is peers. Recent research reveals that peers exert a powerful influence on children, especially teenagers. Although the influence of peers on dropout behavior has not been the subject of much study, ethnographic studies report that dropouts of all ethnic backgrounds are more likely to associate with other youth who drop out or have low educational aspirations." In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues*. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 76). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.*

2. There should be coordinated, sustained, and systematic programs of research that investigate the times and the mechanisms through which students of different backgrounds disengage from school.

Much research on student dropout is fragmentary, based on a single study, and seldom links purported causal agents with the evaluation of an intervention. For instance, we do not fully understand the complex relationship between pregnancy and a female's decision to leave school. Research can help schools to understand the mechanisms by which dropout occurs and to take steps to remove barriers to student engagement.



"The relationship between Latino children and the schools is a disconnect."

Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

3. Research and development should focus on identifying and developing Hispanic students' knowledge and interests, and on working with and strengthening the supportive social networks found in these students' extended families.

Much of the at-risk and dropout literature is based on assumptions that Hispanic students and their families do not know very much, are missing some important competencies, lack certain traits, or have some fundamental flaw that needs fixing. The recommendations growing out of such research are predictably bereft of helpful ideas: Fix the flaws; if the flaws can't be fixed, despair.

On the other hand, the schools we visited and the more relevant and recent research literature try to identify what students know and what their families can do to support their education. Student knowledge (including knowledge of their cultures and bilingualism) and interests (including problems that are relevant to them) provide the basis for research and development in pedagogical practices (curriculum, teaching, and assessment), teachers' professional development, and school reform. Parental concerns about and caring for their children should be the basis for the research and development that seeks to build vibrant home-school partnerships.



*"The most effective thing is **contact** between students and the institution on a regular basis. Systematic, deliberate, ongoing contact with kids."*

Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

4. Dropout prevention programs that are proven to work should be sustained and disseminated. The education research and development infrastructure should include a component for transferring such programs from development to widespread implementation.

Increasing America's Hispanic school completion rates cannot be a stop-and-go operation. In view of the urgency for proven dropout prevention programs, it is shocking to note that one of the most impressive programs found in the research literature no longer exists. This program was based on solid research, and had shown strong and sustained effects. Too many programs are developed to demonstrate a point and subsequently cease functioning when the developers or program funders move on to other tasks and priorities. The support for dropout prevention efforts that are shown to work should no longer come from demonstration monies but from the basic funding for the nation's schools.



“Three factors importantly affected the replication activities at various of the sites and may have inhibited the effectiveness of projects for students. These factors included: the fit of models to the replication sites; the extent of principal buy-in to the replications; turf considerations.” In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 13-14) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

5. *The population of Hispanic students who are limited English proficient should be taken into account in local, state, and national efforts to (a) improve and reform the education system, (b) evaluate the impact of schools and of categorical programs, and (c) implement accountability systems for schools.*

As noted above, the exclusion of Hispanics from such efforts contributes to their being invisible and, by extension, to schools not being held accountable for their educational success. One strategy for including Hispanic children that should be explored is the use of their native language for gathering information in those efforts.



“I knew of no alternatives. Either you go to school or you don’t. Or you go for a GED, and that’s not as good. I was never told of the alternatives.” Former dropout at HDP open forum, New York City

6. *Research is needed on preservice and in-service teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, skills, and professional development as related to the education of Hispanic students. Moreover, research should include attention to issues surrounding the diversification of the teacher workforce.*

Teachers are central in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Teachers themselves, schools, and policymakers need to better understand the processes by which teachers can make a difference in their students’ education.

7. *Better data on student dropouts should be gathered at all levels: local, state, and national.*

Although available data clearly document the crisis of Hispanic dropout, one of the most common complaints we encountered involved the quality of data on student dropouts. The nation needs clear, commonly accepted, and stable definitions of dropout that allow for comparisons across states, that allow schools to decide if they should adopt a program that was effective elsewhere, and that provide policymakers and parents with a clear sense of how many students are dropping out of school and when they begin to drop out. Such information is fundamental to improving education at all levels. Hence, it should be systematically gathered, analyzed, and reported at local, state, and national levels.



“I want to give back to my family. As a Dominican woman, I am going to make it. Make my parents proud that their sacrifice was worth it. I’m going to go back to my community and show them, I made it.” Speaker at HDP student leader forum, New York City

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We, the members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, submit this *Final Report* to the United States Secretary of Education, with an urgency born of recognizing the devastating personal, social, and civic consequences that will accrue if Hispanic dropout rates do not improve.



"The income stratification that concentrates large numbers of low-income students into poorly funded schools is followed by instructional stratification, most often on the basis of prior performance. Low-achieving students are likely to be exposed to instructional practices—tracking and grade retention—that deny them educational opportunities, stigmatize them, and contribute to their sense of uncertainty and alienation. Many disadvantaged adolescents are unable to overcome these conditions. Students from low-income families are far more likely to receive bad grades or be held back, and as much as three times more likely to drop out before completing high school, than the children of more affluent families: 'consigning them to lives without the knowledge and skills they need to exist anywhere but on the margins of our society, and consigning the rest of us to forever bear the burden of their support.'" In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 103). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

The overall school completion rate has steadily increased, with some fluctuations, over the last 40 years: in the 1950s, an average of 40–50 percent of all students did not finish high school; in 1972, the overall dropout rate for people between 16 and 24 years of age was slightly less than 15 percent; in 1994, it was 11.5 percent. The gap in black–white school completion rate has been steadily closing over the past 20 years *through an increase in school completion by African Americans*: in 1972, about 21 percent of black, non-Hispanics between 16 and 24 years old had dropped out of school; in 1994, that rate was 12.6 percent—a drop of between 8 and 9 percentage points. In contrast, over the same time period, the average rate of white, non-Hispanic dropout decreased from approximately 12.5 percent to 10.5 percent—just 2 percentage points. In spite of this overall improvement in the school completion rate, the dropout rate for all Hispanics ages 16 to 24 in the United States has consistently hovered at between 30 percent and 35 percent. *There is no reason to expect that this unacceptably high rate of dropping out among Hispanic students will diminish on its own without major changes in our schools and society.*

The Census Bureau reports that there will be at least one million more elementary school students in our nation's schools by the end of the decade. Without adequate funding, classes will become even more overcrowded. Teachers hired to teach the baby boomers will be retiring in unprecedented numbers over the next decade. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to educate and recruit a *diverse* teaching workforce over the same time period.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that ours is not the first report to note this consistent disparity in school completion rates. Under previous Republican and Democratic

administrations, researchers, policymakers, and community advocates have spoken out about these disparities. Yet because little has been done to address them, the problems they identified have become a crisis that threatens this nation's well being.



"Programs for disadvantaged youth include those that aim to enhance the relevance of school to the students' future. If it is true that working- and lower-class adolescents believe that the social conformity and academic achievement demanded in school are not clearly linked to their future status in society, then efforts to establish this linkage in the minds of students should be successful in promoting academic achievement and educational attainment." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that, when the nation decides that something is a problem and sets its mind to do something about that problem, it moves—though often slowly—to solve the problem. The nation and its schools have risen to the challenges of dropout prevention for students in general, improving overall student achievement, starting to close the racial achievement gap, and starting to close the mathematics achievement gap between males and females. Critics from opposite ends of the political and educational spectra have often written as if there has been very little progress or even deterioration in our educational progress—as if the nation and its education systems were incapable of developing a consensus to do something about vexing social problems. The evidence clearly shows quite the contrary: *The nation and its schools can rise to the challenge when we set our collective will to do so.*

Improvement in overall school completion, student achievement, and the achievement gaps has taken decades. Progress in these areas could not be seen or measured in terms of election-year cycles or other yardsticks used by those seeking immediate payoffs or simple solutions. What is more, efforts to identify *the* cause for such trends—as if a simple, magic pill could be found—have been unsuccessful. We speculate that these improvements can be traced to a combination of factors. First, there has been a gradual change in the nation's beliefs so that high dropout rates, low achievement, and race- and gender-based achievement gaps have become unacceptable: Our expectations of minorities and women have risen. Second, the nation has developed a complex network of curricular and teaching innovations, school-based programs, community-based efforts, and other structural changes for educating students.



"No single model can encourage membership or respond to the specific educational needs and desires of all at-risk youth. . . . A multiplicity of interventions is required. Even then, however, some students may continue to resist the efforts of teachers whom they see as representatives of an opposing culture. . . . Many students are in fact willing to enter into the relationships with their teachers that foster social membership in the school. They become partners in the experience of 'us and us'. . . . Overcoming their sense of incongruity, formerly at-risk youth discover that their teachers can also be friends, and schooling can thus be a positive rather than an aversive experience." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of*

support (pp. 203-204). London: The Falmer Press.

We submit this report with a sense of urgency and impatience precisely because of the slow pace of improvement. Hispanics confront too many excuses for the country's inaction regarding their educational status. Ways to improve the schools that Hispanics attend and solutions to Hispanic dropout are known; they should be implemented on a large scale. There are dozens of proven, replicable programs capable of increasing Hispanic students' achievement, increasing their high school completion, and increasing their college enrollment—we visited many of them. *Only a lack of political leadership, will, and resources keeps the nation from solving the problem; there is no shortage of effective models.*

The solutions that we propose in this report support one another. Our recommendations should be implemented together if the nation is to make a significant impact in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. It would be most unfortunate if those who read our report were to selectively interpret our findings and recommendations as meaning that before they can do something, someone else must fulfill a specific task. We cannot stress enough: *Everything must work in synchronization.*

Youth are influenced by their family, school and community contexts. High-risk youth are most often required to function in contexts that are dysfunctional or antithetical to the nurturing and support children require. Consequently, if an intervention is expected to succeed it will have to address all three contexts in such a way as to enhance the effectiveness of the contexts and to increase the coordination and communication between contexts. . . . Effective middle school interventions must accomplish six functions.

(a) Frequent (in some cases hourly but generally daily or weekly) and on-going (sustained throughout the school year) monitoring of the youth's school performance.

(b) Close teamwork with parents including parent training in terms of being an effective educational consumer and issues with raising a teenager.

(c) A case manager is essential to coordinating services provided and linking school, home and community together into a cohesive structure for the youth.

(d) The intervention must respond to the individual needs of youth and must be sufficiently flexible to personalize the educational experience.

(e) A social cognitive problem-solving approach that teaches the youth and parents how to effectively handle short- and long-term challenges is highly effective in making high-risk youth less impulsive, more independent and more goal oriented.

(f) The intervention must actively attempt to change the youth's expectations and vision of the future from one of probable failure and hopelessness to one of hopefulness and possibility.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A67-A68.

Why, then, the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion? Many explanations have been offered: student characteristics such as social class, language, and achievement level—especially among recent immigrants; school-based forces such as student retention, ability grouping, and tracking; and nonschool forces such as family and/or neighborhood violence and criminal activity, lack of community-based economic opportunity, and the historical social and political oppression of different ethnic groups. Many of these “reasons” have assumed mythic proportions. They are used to explain a phenomenon that is portrayed as too large and too complex for schools to address. In short, these reasons have become little more than excuses for our schools’ and society’s failure to act.

The evidence that we have presented in this report clearly contradicts this counsel of despair. At our hearings around the nation, we heard Hispanic students, their parents, and community leaders tell us unequivocally that they care deeply about their schools. Through their words and actions, many school personnel, community representatives, and business people have shown that something can and must be done.

We propose an alternative reason for the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion: *Hispanic dropout rates have remained largely an invisible problem to all but Hispanic students, their parents, and their communities.* Although many researchers and a few policymakers have known about the problem, discussions of Hispanic dropout have often been submerged in discussions of dropouts in general, the education of ethnic minorities in general, or politicized debates about immigration, language, and bilingualism.



“You have to do it for yourself. In spite of all the obstacles, I had to overcome all of the people who said that I couldn’t make it. Also, bring someone along with you. My sister, who dropped out, will come back to school. She sees I’m going to graduate. That encourages her.” Participant at HDP student leader forum, New York City

Attention to Hispanic school completion must become a salient part of the national agenda on education. To reverse the long-standing disparity in school completion between Hispanics and other groups will require the long-term, sustained attention that other issues have received. That this crisis has remained largely invisible results in inaction and allows the many excuses for doing nothing to go unchallenged. At a time of a dramatically increasing need for a well-educated citizenry, the nation cannot afford, nor can it tolerate, the persistently high rate of Hispanic dropout. We, as a people, need to say: *No more excuses, the time to act is now.*

NOTES

¹ Relevant data can be found in National Center for Education Statistics, 1996a, table 14 and 1996b, table 101, and United States Department of Education, 1997, pp. ix, 2, 23, 29, 30, and 32. A comprehensive list of research studies and reports that were reviewed in the preparation of this report appears in Appendix E.

When drawing on work by others, this report uses the terms for racial and ethnic group membership that are found in those documents. We are well aware that the validity of racial and ethnic categories is undergoing scrutiny for a variety of reasons. First, the use of blood quantum to determine a person's ethnic or racial membership—which, historically, was the foundation for the creation of such categories—has been quite thoroughly discredited, even before recent developments whereby increasing numbers of people (especially children) trace their ancestry to multiple ethnic and racial sources. Second, people's self-described membership in ethnic and/or racial groups varies across generations, within an individual's lifetime, and even depending on the term that is used. Third, people who belong to ethnic groups engage in complex and elaborate methods for judging the validity of a person's claim to belong to or even to opt out of a group.

On the other hand, a person's skin color, facial features, names, accents, and other physical characteristics are used by other people as indicators of that individual's ethnic and racial group membership. In its own turn, this ascription of race and ethnicity has important social consequences for the person regardless of her or his desire to be treated as an individual. Hence, although we must use these terms, we do so advisedly and with great caution.

² See Hispanic Dropout Project, 1996; NCES, 1996a.

³ See Larson & Rumberger, 1995b, p. A66.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

An Overview of the Hispanic Dropout Project's Activities

To achieve its three goals of (a) increasing public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout, (b) developing a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups, and (c) supporting the development of a network of stakeholders who would take action after the project's end, the Hispanic Dropout Project engaged in six activities prior to writing this report. All six activities are related directly to the above goals and their results are reflected in this report.

First, we commissioned four technical papers to inform our own thinking and, eventually, the thinking of others who wish to learn more about the issues surrounding Hispanic dropout. The first paper, by Hugh Mehan, was entitled *Contextual factors surrounding Hispanic dropouts*. The second paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón, and Richard Durán, was entitled *Effective programs for Latino students in elementary and middle schools*. The third commissioned paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin, was entitled *Effective dropout prevention programs for Latino students*. And the fourth technical paper, by Rudolfo Chavez-Chavez, was entitled *A curriculum discourse for achieving equity: Implications for teachers when engaged with Latina and Latino students*.

Second, the project commissioned five nontechnical reports by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood for use in increasing public awareness and for providing examples of how local policies and local programs might be used to increase school completion by Hispanics. Entitled *Advances in Hispanic Education*, the series was written for general audiences of school personnel, parents and their children, school board members, state and federal policy makers, community representatives, business people, and other stakeholders. These reports provide nontechnical information about issues in Hispanic dropout and about exemplary school programs for increasing Hispanic student achievement and for preventing dropout.

Third, in order to learn about the issues of Hispanic dropout as seen by the people who are most directly affected by student dropout and who are trying to do something about this crisis, to seek input from the field to the development of its recommendations, and to support the creation of a network of stakeholders, the Hispanic Dropout Project held open hearings and heard testimony in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; Toledo, Ohio; Calexico, California; and Las Cruces, New Mexico. We interviewed and listened to varied groups of Hispanic students: students who had graduated, were still in school, had left school and had returned, or were enrolled in dropout prevention programs. Specialty and regular classroom teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, program directors, superintendents, other school personnel, parents, community activists, youth- and social-service agency representatives, police representatives, business

people, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and concerned citizens—over 300 people—participated in these sessions. A list of their names appears in Appendix B.

In addition to making oral presentations, many people submitted written comments, program documents, and other written materials to the Hispanic Dropout Project. A list of people, organizations, and projects submitting written materials to the project comprises Appendix C.

Fourth, in order to ascertain how promising programs actually work in their day-to-day practices, we visited school and non-school sites that were developing such practices for educating Latinos and dropout prevention efforts in Albuquerque, Calexico, Houston, Las Cruces, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Antonio, and San Diego. We reasoned that there would be an above-average awareness of issues in Hispanic dropout at these locales because of their large Hispanic populations. A list of sites that we visited appears in Appendix D.

Sites included whole-school and districtwide programs, alternative secondary schools, mentoring and tutoring programs taking place both in and out of school, and supplementary in-school programs. Dropout prevention efforts focused attention on academics, school attendance, peer relationships, and socio-psychological needs, either singly or in some combination. Interventions ranged from pre-school, early childhood programs, to alternative high schools, GED efforts, and community college-based programs that continue to provide educational opportunities to Hispanics. The people who supported, ran, worked for, and volunteered in these programs included parents, school personnel, community activists, college and other students older than the individuals receiving the services, business people, and concerned citizens. Often, workers and volunteers were themselves Hispanics, had been dropouts, knew someone whom they wished had these opportunities, or had some experiences that enabled them (the volunteers and workers) to relate to their students on a personal level.

The fifth project activity was to hold press conferences and meet with the media during visits to the above-mentioned cities. The intent of this last activity was to increase public awareness about issues of Hispanic dropout. Hispanic Dropout Project representatives were interviewed by local and national news organizations. Newspaper articles appeared in the *Albuquerque Journal*, *Albuquerque Tribune*, *El Paso Times*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Kansas City Star*, *Las Cruces Sun News*, *Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*, *New York City El Diario/La Prensa*, *Portland Oregonian*, *San Antonio Express News*, *San Diego Union*, *Santa Fe New Mexican*, *Silver City Daily Press*, *Tampa Tribune*, *USA Today*, and the Associated Press. Local affiliates of Univision in Houston, New York City, and Miami, of NBC in Miami and San Antonio, and of CBS in Albuquerque, and local radio and television stations in Albuquerque, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and San Antonio carried stories about Hispanic dropout and interviews with the project's members.

Sixth, Hispanic Dropout Project members reviewed the research on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, dropout prevention, and related topics. A list of research, policy documents, and other materials that we reviewed appears in Appendix E.

Appendix B

People Who Provided Public Testimony and Otherwise Participated in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Site Visits

**Community Focus Meeting
Education Service Center (Region XX)
1314 Hines Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78208**

**December 11, 1995
2:00-4:30pm**

Magdalena Alvarado
Kevin C. Moriarty
Chuck Rodriguez
Rev. John Moder
Kimeer Jones
Gloria Zamora
R. A. Marquez
Jerry D. Allen
Ramon A. Guerra
Diana Lam
Patricia Karam
Isabel Salas
Irene Chavez
Juan Sepulveda
Shari Albright
Gilbert Garcia, Jr.
Richard Clifford
Joe Rubin
David Samrad
Bertha C. Franklin
Pilar Oates

**Community Focus Meeting
University of Houston
4800 Calhoun Street
Houston, Texas**

**December 12, 1995
2:00-4:30pm**

Gloria Gallegos
Sylvia C. Peña
Jerome Freiberg
Irma Guadarrama
Kip Tellez
Emilio Zamoros
Angela Valenzuela

David Arredondo
Joe Stubbs
Hulberto Saenz
Albert Leal
Debra Basisiera
Tom Carrizal
Guadalupe San Miguel
A. R. Warner
Peter Linden
Manuel Rodriguez
Ben Marquez
Jaime E. De la Isla
Maria M. Rustonji
Melba J. Hamilton
Diane Sirna Mancus
Phyllis Gingiss

**Community Focus Meeting
Calexico High School
1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, California**

**April 24, 1996
2:00-4:00pm**

Patricia Levy
Hortencia Armendariz
Arminda L. Romero
Gary Watts
Gloria Celaya
Sandra C. Lopez
Gilbert Mendez
Harry Pearson
Roberto Moreno
Pat Peake
Mike McFadden
Paula Wilkinson
Cecilia Castaneda
Carmen Durazo
Rachel Aguilar
Yvonne Cardona
Dana Sue Gonzalez
Elvia Contreras
Pablo A. Macias
Luz C. Paredes

Yolanda Islas
Rosa A. Vargas
Carmen Chapa
Alicia Fuentes

**Community Focus Meeting
University of California
9500 Gilman Drive
San Diego, California**

**April 25, 1996
2:30-4:30pm**

Judy Leff
Nancy Cunningham
Rafael Hernandez
Irene Villanueva
Cynthia Gutierrez
Margaret Gallego
Olga Vasquez
Jose Smith
Paul Espinoza
Maria Nieto Senour
Andrea Nieto Senour
Ricardo Stanton-Salazar
Yolanda Hernandez
Juan P. Leyva
Linda Nolte
Ana Slomanson
Richard Barrera
Luis Cerda
Marcia Venegas-Garcia
Mike Rodriguez
Diego Bavalos
Mario A. Chacon
Robert Gira
Kathy Deering
Cecil Lytle

**Community Focus Meeting
University of California
Sunset Village Complex
Los Angeles, California**

**April 26, 1996
2:30-4:30pm**

Mary Lou Gomez
Mario Chiappe
Larry D. Kennedy
Marlene Wilson
Bruce McDaniel

Lloyd Monserratt
Eliseo Davalos
Carla Vega
John Rios
Moises Valez
Raul Ruiz
Martha Sanchez
Virginia Martinez
Andres F. Castillo
Frank DePasquale
Cherie Francis
Hal Hyman
Raymond Paredes

**Community Focus Meeting
Miami Dade Community College
Wolfson Campus
Miami, Florida**

**May 9, 1996
2:00-4:00pm**

Rachel Porcelli
Susan McCallion
Betty Mallory-Colson
Denayl Serralta
Manuel Perez-Leiva
Magdi Amador
Ana Miyares
Javier Bray
George Suarez
Randy Egues
Cora Mann
Kevin Prescott
James Moore
Rosa Royo
Maria C. Mateo
Julie Palm
Carlos Seales
Orlando Blance
Javier Vazquez
Blanca Torrents Greenwood
Liliana Wolf
E.D. Taylor
Mike Lenaghan
Carrie Montano
Virginia Bustillo
Rosario S. Roman
Carlos F. Diaz
Byron Massialas
Diane Cole
Dorothy W. Graham

Zaida G. Olmsted
Samuel Gonzalez
Enrique Serna
Tony Vivaldi
German Izguierdo
Ray Zeller
Albert Rivera
Irene Secada
Nick Arroyo
Bill Primus
Lianne Acebo
Ramiro Inguanzo
Catherine Matteo
Bill Renuart
Joan Friedman
Alex Martinez
Nick Barakat
Eugenia Russell
Martha Young
Isabel Gomez-Bassols
Madeline Rodriguez
Rosa Castro Feinberg
Roger Cuevas
Hector Hirigoyen
Jose Vicente

**Education and Hispanics:
Solving the Equation
Hearing Sponsored by the Ohio
Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs
Toledo, Ohio**

**May 30, 1996
9:00am-4:00pm**

Andrea Loch
Amando P. Bejarano
Diana Flores
Irma Coah
Roberto Gonzalez
Irene Hernandez
Frederick S. Garcia
Ruth G. Garcia
Margaret A. Williams
Cynthia Arredondo
Oscar Hernandez
Deborah Ortiz
Linda Arranado-Well
Manuel Caro
Elenea Caballero
Carlos A. Caro
Ramon Perez

Consuelo Hernandez
Dan Fleck
Maria Chavez
Manuel Vadillo
Joseph Mas
Richard Daoust
Robert E. Ranchor
Pat Kennedy
Raquel Bravo
Mickey Avalos
Dal Lawrence
Rudolph J. Chavez
Craig Cotner
Ricardo Cervantes
Robert Torres
Michael Thomson

**Community Focus Meeting
Maria de Hostos Community College
475 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York**

**June 12, 1996
10:00am-12:00pm**

Tony Baez
Daralyn Calderon
Felipe Colon, Jr.
Ruth Coronado
Lorraine Cortez Vazquez
Rudy Crew
Joseph DeJesus
Rafael Diaz
Ariane Franco
Michele Gataldi
Rafael Gomez
Guillermo Linares
Lyzeth Martinez
Nancy Lopez
Mariella Martinez
Michael Mena
Aneudy Perez
Luis Reyes
Daniel J. Rivera
Maria Rivera
Sonia Rivera
James F. Rodriguez
Laura Rodriguez
Theresa Rodriguez
Yadira Santana
Yonathan Santana
Maria Santiago Mercado

Claire Sylvan
Silvio Torres Saillant
Jensy Ureña
Nicholas West
Alexander Betancourt
Rosa Agosto
Peter Martin
Victoria Sanacore
Laurel Huggins
Denise Diaz
Wilfredo Frarcia
Enrique Carmona
Garciano Matos
Annette Hernandez

**Community Focus Meeting
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

**August 12, 1996
2:00-4:30pm**

Jose Armas
Peter Horoshcak
Emma Lou Rodriguez
Alex Sanchez
Merryl Kravitz
Belinda Pacheco-Laumbach
Gloria Tristani
Loretta Armenta
Frances Gandara
Carlos Atencio
Bianca Ortiz y Wertheim
Julia Lerma
Moises Venegas
John J. Lopez
Felipe Gonzales
Maria Dolores Velasquez
Karen C. Sanchez-Griego
Robert W. Chavez
Gerald Hunt
Eddie Lucero
Eligio Padilla
David M. Gallegos
Penny Smith
Liz Ethelbah
Kathy Carpenter
Richard R. Romero
Jean Salas Reed
Cathy Alva
Angela Gonzales
Marcia Hernandez

Phil Davis
Dolores Chavez de Paigle
Evangeline Sandoval
Tasia Stockham
Robert Velarde
Jery Ortiz y Pino
Fred Griego III
Dolores Herrera
Tom Savage
Andres Valdez
Patrick McDaniel
Marisol Aviles
Jenny Vigil
Jackie Rider
Veronica C. Garcia
Tirzah Alva
Tally Archuletta
Evelyn Fernandez
Cahty Lucas
Pat Bonilla
Claire Jenson
Flora M. Sanchez
Susan Bender Benjamin
Nancy Sanchez
Ida S. Carillo
Miriam Martinez
Stephanie Gonzales
Genaro Roybal
Theresa M. Lucero
Patricia Barela
Rommie Compher
Linda Valencia Martinez
Michael J. Gadler
Lynne Rosen
Nana Almers
Virginia Duran Ginn
Patricia Chavez
Cecilia M. Sanchez
Santos G. Abeyte
Ida S. Carrillo
Virginia M. Trujillo
Gilbert Gallegos
Marjorie Schmedt
Art Morales
Joseph P. Arellano
Raul Candelaria
Frank Duran
John Leahigh
Nan Elsasser
Natalie Meneses
RoseAnn McKernan
Oralia Zuniga Forbes

Barbara Lynn
Aurora Jane Sweeny
Bianca Ortiz Wertheim
Christine Trujillo
Maria A. Rodriguez
Steve Griego
Joseph Torres

**Community Focus Meeting
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003**

**August 12, 1996
2:30-5:00pm**

Nena Singleton
Leonel Briseno
Ray Francis
Lewis Spencer
Mary Jane Garcia
J. Paul Taylor
Rosalia Gallegos
Averett S. Tombes
Martha Montoya
Angelo Vega
Felix C. Vega
Karl Hill
Michelle Valverde
Robert Oyas
Sam Barba
Ernest Viramontes
Maria Stops
Esther Aguirre
Debbie Rhinehart
M. L. Gonzalez
Steve Trowbridge
Vodene Schultz

Cecil Shultz
Lena N. Parsons
Mike McCamley
Juan Sanchez
Ray Sandoval
John Lyle
George Duran
Ruth Cartelli
Trula Holstein
James O'Donnell
Sachint Sarangam
Sam Baca
Ann Nance
Janah O. Garcia
Cathy Provine
Ana B. Spencer
Mary Helen Garcia
Cristina Barrera
Juan Franco
Aida Delgado
Len LoPresto
Liz Gutierrez
Steve Ramirez
Alma A. Barba
Samuel Reyes
Cheryl H. St. George
Marcie Graham
Jane L. Gonzalez
Marsha Buchanan
Arminda H. Hernandez
Rosalie A. Gallegos
Eric Cress
Martha Cole
Richard Melendez
Ana Spencer
Carlos Provencio
John Allen Lyle
Laura Gutierrez Spencer

Appendix C

People and Organizations Who Presented Handouts to the Hispanic Dropout Project

Abraham Lincoln Community High School, Los Angeles, California.

ALAS (Achievement for Latinos Through Academic Success), University of California, Santa Barbara.

Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Alternative Resources, Changing Adolescent Behavior, Ontario, California.

ASPIRA of New York, Brooklyn, New York.

AVANCE, Family Support and Education Programs, Houston, Texas.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, San Diego, California.

Berriozábal, M. P., San Antonio, Texas.

Board of Education of The City of New York, New York, New York.

Calexico Unified School District, Calexico, California.

Center for Applied Linguistics, Program in Immigrant Education, Washington, District of Columbia.

Children's Aid Society, New York, New York.

Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Columbia University, New York, New York.

COPS/METRO, San Antonio, Texas.

Communities in Schools of New Mexico, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Cuban American National Council, Inc., Miami, Florida.

Dade County Public Schools, Dropout Prevention Programs, Miami, Florida.

De Jesus, J. N., New York, New York.

Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York.

Durocher, E. N., New York, New York.

Gira, R., San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Business Group, Miami, Florida.

Hernandez, L., Hostos Community College, Bronx, New York.

Home Economics Department, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science, Bronx, New York.

HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) Corporation, Vancouver, Washington.

Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), San Antonio, Texas.

Kravitz, L., New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, San Diego, California.

Lennox School District, Lennox, California.

Little Havana Institute, Cuban American National Council, Miami, Florida.

Lincoln Senior High School, Los Angeles, California.

Mains Elementary School, Calexico, California.

MANA de Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mar Vista High School, Imperial Beach, California.

Mathematica Research Policy Institute, Inc., Washington, District of Columbia.

Mesilla Alternative Learning Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Miami Beach Senior High School, Miami Beach, Florida.

National Diffusion Network, The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program, Washington, District of Columbia.

National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

New Mexico MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Mexico Youth at Risk Foundation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Workplace for Women Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Office of the Superintendent of Bronx High Schools, New York, New York.

Padilla-King, T., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Project GRAD, Houston, Texas.

Project GRADS, Portales, New Mexico.

Re: Learning New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Research Triangle Institute, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

San Andres High School, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

San Antonio Board of Education, San Antonio, Texas.

San Antonio Education Partnership, San Antonio, Texas.

San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists, San Antonio, Texas.

South Beach Alternative School, Miami Beach, Florida.

Southwest Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas.

Starbase Kelly Youth Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Success for All, Houston, Texas.

Success STARTS with Hope!, Miami, Florida.

Systemic Initiative in Mathematics and Science Education, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Texas Interfaith Fund, Alliance Schools Project, Houston, Texas.

Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

United Services Automobile Association (USAA), Mentor and Junior Achievement Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Vasquez, O. and M. Cole, Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, La Jolla, California.

Young, M., The Little Havana Institute, Miami, Florida.

Wechsler, N. M., DeWitt Clinton High School, The Bronx, New York.

Youth Development, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Zamora, G., Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, San Antonio, Texas.

Appendix D

Sites Visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project

CALIFORNIA

Aurora High School

(alternative school)
641 Rockwood Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Patrick Peake
619-357-7410
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

AVID Program

Mar Vista High School
505 Elm Avenue
Imperial Beach, CA 91932-2099
Principal: Gloria Samson
619-691-5400
Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Calexico High School

1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Harry Pearson
619-357-7440
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

La Clase Magica

St. Leo's Mission
936 Genevieve Street
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Contact Person: Vicente Leal
619-481-6788
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Lennox Middle School

10319 Firmona Avenue
Lennox, California 90304
310-206-4624
Contact Person: Hal Hyman
(Center X - UCLA)
Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Lincoln High School

3501 North Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90031
Principal & Contact Person: Lupe Sonnie
213-223-1291
Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Neighborhood House Head Start Program

St. Leo's Mission in Eden Gardens
936 Genevieve Street
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Site Coordinator: Amie Khalssa (site director)
619-792-1996
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Newcomer Program

Mains Elementary School
655 Sheridan Street
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Gloria Selaya
619-357-7410
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Fifth Dimension

Boys & Girls Club
Lomas Santa Fe Branch
533 Lomas Santa Fe
Solana Beach, CA 92075-1323
Contact Persons: Duncan Smith or
Raul Castillo
619-755-9373
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Magical Dimension

Skyline Elementary
606 Lomas Santa Fe
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Principal: Kevin Riley
619-794-3920
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

FLORIDA

Allapattah Middle School

1331 NW 46 Street
Miami, FL 33142
Principal: Alex Martinez
305-634-9787
Teacher: Nick Barakat
Host & Escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Math
Supervisor, Dade County Schools)
305-995-1921
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Little Havana Institute

300 SW 12 Avenue
Miami, FL 33130-2002
Director: Martha Young (Cuban American
National Council)
305-642-3484
Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade
County Public Schools, Head of Psychology
Department for Alternative Programs)
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Miami Beach Senior High School

2231 Prairie Avenue
Miami, FL 33139-1595
Principal: Bill Renuart
305-532-4515
Mathematics Department Chair: Joan Fried-
man
Host and escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Mathemat-
ics Supervisor, Dade County Schools)
305-995-1921
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

South Beach Institute

920 Alton Road
Miami Beach, FL 33139-5204
Director: Eugenia Russell (Adult Mankind)
305-673-4782
Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade
County Public Schools, Head of Psychology
Department for Alternative Programs)
305-995-1260
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

NEW MEXICO

Cornerstones

Old Dona Ana Church
Dona Ana, NM 88032
Contact Person: Pat Taylor (Site Coordinator)
505-647-6611 (beeper)
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

MESA Program

Washington Middle School
1101 Park Place SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102-2967
Contact Person: Evangeline Sandoval (MESA
Director)
505-262-1200
Site Visited: August 13, 1996

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation (a.k.a. Court Youth Center)

401 West Court
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Contact Person: Irene Oliver-Lewis (Director)
505-541-0145 or 523-0935
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

San Andres Alternative Learning Center

Highway 28
Mesilla, NM 88046
Contact Person: Eric Cress (Principal)
505-527-6058
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Social Services & Tutors Assisting Youth (S.T.A.Y.)

221 North Downtown Mall
Las Cruces, NM 88001-1213
Contact Person: Leonel Briseno (Program
Coordinator)
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Youth Development Inc.

Rio Grande High School
2300 Arenal SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105-4180
Contact Person: Robert Chavez
505-831-6038 or 768-6051
Site Visited: August 13, 1996

NEW YORK

DeWitt Clinton High School

100 Mosholu Parkway South
Bronx, NY 10468

Principal: Norman Wechsler
718-543-1000

Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Martin Luther King High School

65th & 66th

New York, NY 10023

Principal: Stephanie Ferrandino

212-501-1300

Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Hostos Lincoln Academy of Science

Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College

475 Grand Concourse, 2nd floor

Bronx, NY 10451

Director: Michael Cataldi

Outreach Program

Director: Michael Cataldi

Sites Visited: June 12, 1996

TEXAS

AVANCE

2001 Rainbow

Houston, TX 77023

Contact: Carmen Cortes

310-825-2494

Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

Kazen Middle School

1520 Gillette

San Antonio, TX 78224

210-924-9021

Contacts: Linda Cantu &

Maria (Cuca) Robledo Mercel

210-684-8180

Site Visited: December 11, 1995

COPS Project

Lanier High School

1514 West Durango

San Antonio, TX 78207

Contact: Sister Consuelo Tovar & Joe Rubio

210-222-2367

Site Visited: December 11, 1995

Success for All Program

Browning Elementary

607 Northwood

Houston, TX 77027

Principal: Olga Moya

Contacts: Joseph Stubbs and Phyllis Hunter

713-892-6025 and 713-892-6024

Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Appendix E

References

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Appendix F

Programs Reviewed in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Commissioned Papers

**Contacts for Information on Elementary Academic Achievement Programs Reviewed by
Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón and Richard Durán (1996)**

Accelerated Schools
Claudette Spriggs
National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project
Stanford University
CERAS 109
Stanford, CA 94305-3084
415-725-7158 or 415-725-1676

Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (BCIRC)
Margarita Calderón
3001 Cabot Place
El Paso, TX 79935
915-595-5971

Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)
Elizabeth Fennema or Thomas Carpenter
University of Wisconsin Madison
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
608-263-4265

Complex Instruction/Finding Out/Descubrimiento
Elizabeth G. Cohen
Stanford University, School of Education
Stanford, CA 94305
415-723-4661

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP)
Clare Heidema, Director, CSMP
2550 South Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
303-337-0990 Voice mail 303-743-5520
FAX 303-337-3005

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD)
H. Jerome Freiberg
University of Houston
College of Education
Houston, TX 77204-5872
713-743-8663

Direct Instruction/DISTAR/Reading Mastery
Association for Direct Instruction
805 Lincoln
Eugene, OR 97401
541-485-1293

Early Intervention for School Success
Dean Hiser
200 Calmus Drive
P.O. Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
714-900-4125

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI)
Ethna R. Reid
Reid Foundation
3310 South 2700 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84109
801-486-5083 or 801-278-2334
FAX 801-485-0561

Goldenberg and Sullivan
Claude Goldenberg
Department of Teacher Education
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840
310-985-5733
FAX 310-985-1543

Group Investigation
Mark Brubacher
416-394-3402
Kemp Rickett
416-393-9565

Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS)
William E. Gibbons, Chairman
8000 N.E. Parkway Drive, Suite 201
Vancouver, WA 98662-6459
206-260-1995 or 800-833-4678
FAX 206-260-1783

Jigsaw
Spencer Kagan
Resources for Teachers
27134 A Paseo Espada #202
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
1-800-WEE-COOP

Learning Together
Roger T. Johnson and David W. Johnson
The Cooperative Learning Center
60 Peik Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-624-7031

Maneuvers With Mathematics (MWM)
David A. Page or Kathryn B. Chval
The University of Illinois at Chicago
851 Morgan Street
(m/c 249) SEO 1309
Chicago, IL 60607-7045
312-996-8708

Multi-Cultural Reading and Thinking (McRAT)
Janita Hoskyn, National Consultant, McRAT Program
1019 Ronwood Drive
Little Rock, AR 72227
501-225-5809
FAX 501-455-4137

Profile Approach to Writing
Jane B. Hughey, Dixie Copeland
1701 Southwest Parkway, Suite 102
College Station, TX 77840
Phone or FAX 409-764-9765

Project ACHIEVE
Mary Fritz
Urbana School District 116
1108 West Fairview
Urbana, IL 61801
800-ESL-PROG (375-7746)
FAX 217-344-5160

Project ALASKA (Alaska Writing Program)
Nikin McCurry
Yukon Koyukuk School District
Box 80210
Fairbanks, AK 99708
800-348-1335
FAX 907-474-0657

Project BICOMP
The Bilingual Integrated Curriculum Project
Lorie Hammond
Washington Unified School District
930 West Acres Road
West Sacramento, CA 95691
916-257-2237 or 916-371-7720
FAX 916-371-8319

Project CELL
Computer Education for Language Learning
Celia Edmundson
Irvine Unified School District
5050 Barranca Parkway
Irvine, CA 92714
800-237-CELL or 714-733-9391
FAX 714-733-9391

Project CEMI
Computer Education for Multilingual Instruction
Iris N. Dias
Turbano University-Department of Education
Box 3030, University Station
Guarbo, PR 00778
809-734-7979, Ext 4940
FAX 809-743-7979, Ext 4944

Project GLAD
Guided Language Acquisition Design
Marcia Bretchel
17210 Oak Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-843-3230
FAX 714-843-3265

Project GOTCHA
Galaxies of Thinking and Creative Heights of Achievement
Nilda M. Aquirre
K.C. Wright Administration Building
ESE Department -9th Floor
600 S.E. 3rd Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
305-767-8519
FAX 305-765-6017

Project MORE
Model Organization Results of Eastman
Diana Hernandez
Los Angeles Unified School District
Language Acquisition and Bilingual Development Branch
1320 West Third Street, Room 131
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project PIAGET
Promoting Intellectual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming
Kriste Falla-Serfass
The Bethlehem Area School District
1400 Lebanon Street
Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-865-7880
FAX 610-861-8107

Project PIAGET
Thomas D. Yawkey
The Pennsylvania State University
165 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-2937
FAX 814-863-7602

Project PUENTE Outreach: A Bridge Between Communities
Debbie Clarke
Healdsburg Union School District
925 University Street
Healdsburg, CA 95448
707-431-3480
FAX 707-433-8403

Project SEED (Berkeley, California)
Helen Smiler, National Projects Coordinator
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite K
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-644-3422
FAX 510-644-0566

Project SEED (Dallas, Texas)
Hamid Ebrahimi, National Director
3414 Oak Grove Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204
214-954-4432

Project SLICE
Systematic Linking and Integrating of Curricula for Excellence
Beverly R. Taub
Freemont Unified School District
Office of Federal and State Projects
4210 Technology Drive
Freemont, CA 94538
510-629-2580
FAX 510-659-2532

Project TALK
Tutors Assisting with Language and Knowledge
John Golden
Aurora Public Schools
Bilingual Education Center
15701 East First Avenue, Suite 115
Aurora, CO 80011
303-340-0764
FAX 303-340-0868

Project TWO-WAY
TWO-WAY Bilingual Immersion
Rosa Molina
San Jose Unified School District
River Glen Elementary School
1610 Bird Avenue
San Jose, CA 95125
408-998-6420
FAX 408-298-8377

Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura
Carol A. Lyons, Gay Su Pinnell, or Diane E. DeFord
Reading Recovery Program
The Ohio State University
200 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Avenue
Columbus, OH 42310
614-292-7807
FAX 614-688-3646

Reciprocal Teaching
Anne Marie Palincsar
University of Michigan
4204c School of Education Building
610 East University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

School Development Program (SDP)
Ed Joyner
Child Study Center
School Development Program
230 South Frontage Road
P.O. Box 20790
New Haven, CT 06520-7900
203-785-2548
FAX 203-785-3359

Sheltered English Approach (SEA)
Alice Petrossian
Glendale Unified School District
Special Projects
223 North Jackson Street
Glendale, CA 91206
818-241-3111 Ext 301
FAX 818-246-3715

Skills Reinforcement Project (SRP)
Elizabeth Jones Stork, Director, IAAY Western Region, and Deputy Director, CAA
Johns Hopkins University, Western Regional Office
206 North Jackson Street, Suite 304
Glendale, CA 91206
818-500-9034
FAX 818-500-9058

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournaments

Anna Marie Farnish
Center for Social Organization of Schools
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8857
FAX 410-516-8890

Success for All/Lee Connigo
Robert E. Slavin
Johns Hopkins University
Center for Social Organization of Schools
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
800-548-4998
FAX 410-516-8890

**Contacts for Information on Secondary Dropout-Prevention Programs Reviewed by
Olatkunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin (1997)**

ALAS
Katherine A. Larson & Russel W. Rumberger
University of California
Graduate School of Education
Phelps Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

AVID
Mary Catherine Swanson
Director, AVID program
San Diego County Office of Education
6401 Linda Vista Road
San Diego, CA 92111-7399
619-292-3500

California Post Secondary Education Commission
Third Floor
1020 Twelfth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-3985

Coca Cola Valued Youth Project
Linda Cantu, Project Director
Intercultural Development Research Association
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
5835 Callaghan, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
210-684-8180
210-684-5389

GRAD

J.L. Ketelsen
P.O. Box 2511
Houston, TX 77001
713-757-3563

SCORE

Sharon Marshall Johnson
Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Post Office Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
714-966-4394 or 714-966-4388
Fax 714-662-3148

Upward Bound

David Goodwin
U.S. Department of Education
600 C Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202
202-401-0182

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DRAFT

**PRESIDENT CLINTON AND VICE PRESIDENT GORE
WIN ON THE BUDGET FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS**

EDUCATION

When House Republicans tried to slash the FY 1999 education budget by more than \$2 billion, President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Congressional Democrats refused. Instead, we delivered on the education agenda:

- * More High-Quality Teachers with Smaller Class Sizes (\$1.2 billion for 100,000 teachers)
- * After School Programs (\$200 million to serve a quarter of a million children)
- * Child Literacy (\$260 million for a new literacy program/America Reads)
- * Teacher Recruitment (\$75 million for new teachers in high poverty areas)
- * Head Start (\$313 million increase adding 36,000 slots for needy children)
- * Pell Grants (The largest max-award ever--\$3,125/yr. per eligible student)

Our Administration and Congressional Democrats ensured funding for a Hispanic education initiative that the President and Vice President announced earlier this year -- the **Hispanic Education Action Plan**, a comprehensive effort to address the high-drop out rate among Hispanic children. It includes funding increases for the following programs that benefit Hispanic children:

- * Title I Grants to School Districts (\$301 million increase)
- * Bilingual Education (Including teacher training, \$25 million increase)
- * Adult Education (Model English as a second language, etc. \$24 million increase)
- * TRIO College Preparation Programs (\$70 million increase)
- * Hispanic Serving Institutions (\$16 million increase, more than double it's budget last year)
- * Migrant Ed Programs/HEP & CAMP/Youth Job Training (\$58 million increase)

This is an overall increase of nearly \$500 million (\$494 million) from last year for these programs targeted to Hispanic children.

The Clinton Administration was successful in defeating Republican efforts to eliminate the bilingual education program earlier this year, as well as new Republican efforts to attach anti-bilingual education riders to this budget.

DRAFT

NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Reducing the naturalization backlog has been a key priority for the Latino community and for the Clinton Administration. In this budget, we were successful in adding \$171 million in new resources to support naturalization activities. This will go a long way to speed up the naturalization process and reduce the backlog of pending citizenship applications.

The Administration defeated Republican efforts to reorganize the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in this budget that would have used resources and funding to disproportionately target enforcement and severely diminish naturalization efforts. The White House also defeated an effort to add a controversial H2A "reform bill". The H2A "reform bill" would have allowed the U.S. to recruit foreign workers, thereby creating a new "bracero" program, reducing job opportunities for legal U.S. workers, and depressing wages and work standards for U.S. farm workers.

CENSUS

We kept our commitment to fund statistical sampling efforts in the next census. An agreement included in this budget allows us to continue to prepare for the use of statistical sampling methods through June 15th of next year, long enough for the Supreme Court to render its decision on this issue. Ensuring that all Americans are counted is of critical importance to Hispanics who depend on a reliable census for their fair share of federal resources.

CONFIRMATIONS

The Administration continues to keep its commitment to nominate Hispanics to key positions in this Administration. On the last day of the 105th Congress, October 21, 1998, we were successful in winning Senate confirmation for:

- * Jose Rivera, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona
- * Ida Castro, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Commissioner
- * Patricia Montoya, Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families, Dept. of Health and Human Services
- * Saul Ramirez, Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- * John Sepulveda, Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management
- * Romulo L. Diaz, Jr., Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
- * Michael M. Reyna, Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board
- * Henry L. Solano, Solicitor of the Department of Labor
- * Simon Ferro, Ambassador to the Republic of Panama
- * James Le Des Ma, Ambassador to the Carbone Republic

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Date: March 29, 1999
Location: Old Executive Office Building
 Room 472
Event: Meeting with First Lady's Staff

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Beer	Kimberly			
Crespo	Hilda			
Davis	Marco			
Gil	William	R.		
Granados	Ruth			
Lenchan-Razzuri	Moir			
Loera	Patricia			
Manso	Angela	M.		
Manzueta	Arlety	F.		(b)(6)
Rivera-Albert	Marisa			
Rodriguez	Ambrosio			
Salas	Gumecindo			
Uro	Gabriela			
Walsh	Selena	T.		
Weaver	Rcg			
Welsh	Margarita			

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The Washington Monthly

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Alexandra Starr on
getting Latinas off
welfare, and Frank
Levy on why growth
is not enough

Pamela
Cicetti
the White House
The White House

WJ 28925

JASON
DEPARLE:

the
silence
of the
liberals

