



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

February 7, 2000

Mr. Raul Yzaguirre
President
National Council of La Raza
1111 19th Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Mr. Yzaguirre:

We are writing to update you on the implementation of the Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP) and recent progress with the Executive Order 12900 Annual Performance Plans, including steps the Administration has taken, and plans to take, to successfully implement these two central components of our strategy to improve educational opportunities for Latinos. We continue to strongly support programs designed to improve the lives of the 7.5 million Latino elementary and secondary students, 1.2 million Latino postsecondary students, and 7.9 million Latino adult education students in this Nation.

As you may know, each of the 27 agencies submitted their FY 1998 Executive Order 12900 Annual Performance Plans to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans last October. Overall, we found that several agencies demonstrated improvements over FY 1995. For example, the Departments of Energy and Health and Human Services have developed department-wide initiatives with short and long-term strategies to ensure that Latinos participate in and benefit from the agencies' education and employment programs. Likewise, several agencies have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to improving the education of Latinos through creative and innovative approaches of implementing the Executive Order.

The difficult process of developing annual plans has increased each Federal agency's awareness of its responsibility to better meet the educational needs of Latinos. We remain committed to ensuring that the agency plans and efforts continue to improve. The White House Initiative and OMB have already begun efforts to improve the focus of the FY 2000 Annual Performance Plans and continue to meet with the Inter-Departmental Council on Hispanic Educational Improvement to refine this exercise to achieve the best possible outcomes. We look forward to you joining us at the next IDC meeting scheduled for February 15, 2000.

Additionally, the Departments of Agriculture, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Small Business Administration have worked throughout this past year with the White House

Initiative to focus outreach efforts on Latino parents through the national conference series, *Excelencia en Educación: The Role of Parents in the Education of Their Children*.

Collaborating with local partners in San Antonio, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Miami, *Excelencia en Educación* brought together over 4,000 parents, educational, business, and civic leaders, community-based organizations, and federal agencies to discuss effective strategies and available resources to assist parents in their pursuit of a quality education for their children. The White House Initiative also continues to support joint technical assistance workshops for Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) with several Federal agencies, coordinate a working group on Latinos in higher education, and inform agencies about the condition of Latinos in education through intra-agency informational sessions and more issue-specific policy seminars.

Even before HEAP was launched, the Department of Education successfully expanded Latino participation in several education programs over the last few years. For example, changes in the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as expanded adult education programs and improved student financial aid resources, have provided for increased access to quality education for Latino students, particularly those with limited English proficiency.

For the first time, the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 clearly articulated the responsibility of Title I schools not only to serve students whose first language was not English, but also to provide them with necessary supports to ensure that they achieve to the same high academic standards expected of all children. As you know, this requires grantees to include limited-English proficient students in assessment and accountability systems. In addition, the number of Latino students served by Title I has increased by 72 percent since 1994, comprising approximately 30 percent of the 3.3 million students served by this \$8 billion program. Similarly, the 1996-1997 program year reports of adult participation in State-administered adult education programs report Latino enrollment at nearly 1.6 million, an increase of more than 50 percent since 1988.

The Department also has made significant improvements to its student aid outreach and delivery systems, including providing a Spanish language version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid as well as bilingual toll-free customer service and support lines. In 1997, a record high 65.5 percent of Latino high school graduates enrolled in college, with 45 percent of Latino college students receiving Federal student financial aid. Department studies suggest that Latino recipients of Pell Grants are more likely to attain a degree than those who do not receive such support.

Most recently, the Department of Education focused Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) outreach and technical assistance to ensure that the program, designed to help young students in high-poverty communities complete high school and be academically prepared to attend college, adequately serves minority students. For the first GEAR UP competition, held in 1999, the Department conducted an aggressive outreach strategy to encourage institutions of higher education, including HSIs, and school systems in local communities with large Latino populations, to apply for GEAR UP awards. This strategy also includes selecting high quality reviewers who understand approaches to increasing Latino

college participation and reducing the dropout rate. In August, the President announced the award of the first GEAR UP grants, including 164 partnership grants and 21 state grants. This initial group of GEAR UP grantees will help more than a quarter of a million disadvantaged young people prepare for and go on to college. More than 31 partnerships involving HSIs were funded, involving \$20 million (or nearly 27 percent) of the \$75 million for partnership funding.

The Head Start program has also taken significant steps to increase access for the Latino community. Since 1992, Hispanic enrollment has increased by 70,000, a rate more than twice as fast as non-Hispanic enrollment. Head Start now reaches approximately 220,000 Latino children (183,000 excluding Puerto Rico). Specific steps have included increasing by 50 percent the number of points awarded to expansion grant applicants who emphasize outreach to underserved populations (such as seasonal farm workers, recent immigrant families, and non-English speaking groups). In addition, Head Start has increased its efforts to work with and monitor programs to ensure full utilization of community assessments to better target outreach, recruitment and enrollment of under-served populations. Head Start expects to become even more informed about serving LEP children through the Research Conference on Early Childhood Bilingual Language and Literacy Development in San Antonio later this month.

Despite these and other examples, we believe there is still much to be done to improve the impact of HEAP and other Federal education programs in effectively targeting and reaching Latino students. To ensure HEAP implementation, we have assigned Barbara Chow, Associate Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Michael Cohen, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, to lead this effort. In addition, we have engaged educators and members of the Latino community to identify and plan additional steps to be taken. Your staff has been particularly helpful in this effort.

Over the next several months we will continue to expand these efforts to improve Latino participation in Federal education programs and ensure that such programs effectively serve these students and their unique needs. For example, we will build on our experience with GEAR UP to increase Latino participation in after school activities through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) will focus on strengthening the enforcement of provisions in current Title I law that require states to hold schools and local school districts accountable for the academic performance of Latino and LEP students. OESE and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs will also continue to identify and disseminate information to schools served by Title I, Title VII, and other federal education programs to implement models of effective practices for helping Latino students learn to read and meet academic challenging standards in other academic subjects. Similarly, we will be working with our higher education programs to track and improve their effectiveness in serving Latino students, as well as adult education programs to ensure access to meaningful learning opportunities.

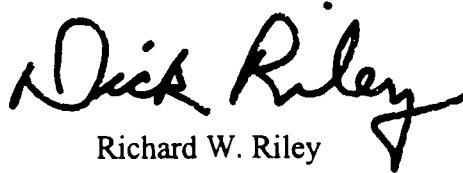
These steps are beginning to show results. The attached documents include updated implementation strategies for all of the programs in the Hispanic Education Action Plan and the steps we will take in the coming months.

We look forward to working with you and your staff, as well as the larger community, as we continue on this significant path.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob J. Lew'.

Jacob J. Lew
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dick Riley'.

Richard W. Riley
Secretary, Department of Education

Attachments

THE HEAD START PROGRAM: Steps to Improve Access for Under-served Populations

Since its inception in 1965 as a summer program launched during President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty," Head Start has helped more than 16 million children and their families. Head Start was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children with a program to meet their emotional, educational, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs. The idea was that, with a little help—a *head start*—children from even the most disadvantaged families could begin elementary school at the same level as their more advantaged peers.

In the last three decades, the United States population has undergone some dramatic demographic changes yielding a far more culturally diverse population. Children in Head Start now come from scores of different countries and speak approximately 140 different languages. While Head Start has always been committed to providing culturally relevant services to children and families from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, these changing national demographics mean that Head Start must continue to strengthen efforts to encourage the participation of new populations and tailor programs to meet their unique needs.

1. Give greater priority to under-served groups in the expansion grant process.

ACF currently provides specific incentives for local Head Start grantees to reach under-served populations with Head Start expansion funding. Starting in FY 1998, the Head Start Bureau added language to its competitive expansion announcement encouraging grantees to focus on under-served populations. This language was strengthened in FY 1999 and the point system for grant awards was revised to put more weight on addressing the existing need for service, particularly among new or under-served populations. Specifically, the language in this year's expansion announcement said:

This expansion provides an opportunity for Head Start programs to reach neighborhoods, communities and groups within their service area that they have been unable to serve in the past. These may include a variety of special populations of low-income families, such as seasonal farmworkers, recent immigrant families, non-English speaking groups or American Indian families outside of Federal Indian Reservations. All applicants are encouraged to base their applications on a careful assessment of the community, including identification of special populations who are not being served by Head Start.

Applicants are then rated on, among other things, the degree to which they have identified new and under-represented populations, and their strategy for serving these groups. The points awarded in this area increased by 50% in FY99 and now represent close to a third of the total points.

Next Step: ACF will include new language in the FY 2000 expansion announcement that puts additional emphasis on reaching under-served populations, and will evaluate the effectiveness of giving greater weight to outreach under-served population when scoring expansion grant applications. Conversely, an applicant's failure to use the community needs assessment data or adhere to Head Start regulations will be considered in making expansion grant decisions. In addition, ACF will increase the number of grant application reviewers who have expertise in serving language minority children, so that each set of proposal review teams includes persons with such expertise as appropriate.

2. Increase funding to serve the children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

In the 1998 reauthorization of Head Start, Congress gave Head Start explicit authority to serve the children of seasonal farmworkers, and the Bureau is mobilizing to take advantage of this opportunity through the Migrant Head Start program. Seasonal farmworkers are typically families that were formerly migrant workers but who decided to settle in a particular agricultural community. To begin better meeting the needs of these families, most of whom are not being served by Head Start, the 1999 Head Start expansion effort made over \$5 million available last summer to increase enrollment of migrant and seasonal farmworker families by nearly 1,000 children. The vast majority of seasonal farmworkers are Hispanic, the largest under-served population in Head Start.

Next Step: The President's Budget included a \$27 million increase for Migrant Head Start in FY 2000, which, in addition to providing approximately \$13 million for cost-of-living and quality improvement increases, provides \$14 million to serve as many as 2500 additional migrant and seasonal farmworker children.

3. Provide information, training, and technical assistance to promote the recruitment of children and families from under-represented populations, and identify culturally appropriate social service organizations in the area to serve them.

Head Start's training and technical assistance network employs consultants with expertise in the field of conducting community assessments and using the data collected from these assessments to design programs that most effectively serve all families in the community. Grantees who need assistance conducting a thorough and accurate community assessment, or who have not appropriately used the assessment to design their program, have access to these consultants who are able to help programs better serve all members of the community with culturally relevant and responsive programs.

Next Step: ACF has recently issued an Information Memorandum that reiterates Head Start's policy to assure all eligible families within a grantee's service area are given fair consideration for enrollment in the Head Start program. Grantees have been reminded that 45CFR Part 1305.3 requires them to conduct community assessments at least once every three years. This

assessment provides data on “the demographic make up of Head Start eligible children and families, including their estimated number, geographic location and ethnic composition.” This information is then used by each Head Start grantee to decide in which part of its service area it will recruit. The need for Head Start services should be the basis for determining which communities to serve, and how many children in each community to enroll, not historical enrollment patterns. Grantees were advised that they must be sensitive to demographic changes in their service area and that as new families and children move into their service area, they must also be given consideration for enrollment.

Next Step: Head Start is initiating an effort, with contractor assistance, to collect demographic data at the county level which can be used to make judgements about how well grantees are doing in terms of enrolling families that reflect the overall make-up of their community. Once this data collection is complete, Head Start will, as discussed below, focus on working with grantees that seem to be having the most difficulty serving all the populations of their communities.

Next Step: To assist grantees in this process the Head Start Bureau will work with its training and technical assistance (T/TA) providers to ensure that they assist grantees who are experiencing demographic changes within their service area in designing their programs, when appropriate, so that grantees can better serve new populations in culturally sensitive programs. In FY 2000, ACF will, using the data collected through the process discussed above, identify at least ten communities where the unmet need of emerging populations is most dramatic. ACF will then work closely with existing and potential grantees and leaders in these communities in order to implement various outreach and T/TA strategies designed to improve representation of under-represented children, and, where appropriate, facilitate the participation in Head Start of local organizations representing these groups. In this way, while generally broadening its efforts using current techniques, ACF can also (1) develop and test the effectiveness of new T/TA and outreach strategies designed to improve the representation of underserved children into Head Start; (2) actively work with grantees and local leaders to ensure that the skills, expertise and capabilities of local organizations in underrepresented communities are effectively utilized; (3) provide focused attention to the communities with the most dramatic problems; and (4) ultimately, point to these model communities as examples where the representation of underserved groups has improved and where that progress has effectively drawn upon the skills of community groups dedicated to addressing the needs of under-represented populations.

In areas with large under-represented populations, ACF will work with grantees to identify social service organizations that work with families from these populations. For smaller Head Start grantees, these organizations can serve as valuable partners in recruiting from new communities. Where grantees are large enough to have sub-grantees, they will be encouraged to consider making these organizations delegate agencies based on their demonstrated potential to run a Head Start program and their commitment to hire culturally representative staff.

4. Assure equitable access and efforts to reach under-served communities following grant terminations and relinquishments.

If Head Start grantees relinquish their grants or are terminated due to an inability to meet Head Start Performance Standards, an assessment will be made to determine if service areas should be reconfigured to assure equitable access for all children in the community. For instance, when the large Denver Head Start grantee was terminated, ACF chose to split the single Denver grant up into several smaller grants that better met local needs. In doing so, one of the grantees, Rocky Mountain SER/Jobs for Progress, was specifically chosen to help address the unmet needs of eligible Hispanic families in the Denver area. A similar process occurred in Houston, which resulted in new services to Hispanic children and families and the funding of Avance, Inc. as a Head Start grantee.

Next Step: ACF is institutionalizing this process of outreach and community needs assessment, including the needs of underserved populations, as grant terminations or relinquishments occur.

5. Reinforce monitoring to ensure that grantees serve new and under-represented populations.

Each Head Start program, as required by law, must be monitored, on-site, at least once every three years by a team led by a federal employee.

Next Step: In the Information Memorandum that was issued in July 1999, ACF discussed the role of the monitoring process in helping grantees work towards greater equity in reaching under-served populations. ACF regional staff who monitor Head Start programs will build on current procedures to create a stronger emphasis on assuring that grantees have conducted comprehensive community assessments and have used the data from these assessments to design their Head Start programs. Grantees will need to be able to clearly explain why they have chosen to serve the specific communities and populations they have and, conversely, why they are not serving other communities or populations. Grantees that are not using community assessment data properly or adhering to Head Start regulations regarding the selection and recruitment of children will be found "out-of-compliance" and will be required to implement a corrective action plan. Head Start staff will closely monitor these grantees to ensure that they are in compliance within one year. This approach will help assure that all families eligible for Head Start will be given fair and equitable consideration for enrolling their child in Head Start and that Head Start programs will increasingly serve families that are representative of the diversity of their service area.

6. Continue to track and provide updates on outreach to under-served communities.

Head Start will issue a report by the end of FY 2000, detailing its efforts and accomplishments in extending access to under-represented populations.

**Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP) Strategies and Implementation
DRAFT 1-3-00**

Title I

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$300 million	\$8.0 billion	\$7.9 billion (\$201 million increase)

Objective: Strengthen the effectiveness of Title I services to help Hispanic students achieve to high academic standards.

Performance Indicator:

- Between 1994 and 2002, performance of the lowest achieving students and students in the highest-poverty public schools, including Hispanics--disaggregated by race and ethnicity--will increase substantially in reading and math (1.1).
- By 2002, 32 states with 2 years of assessment data and aligned standards and assessments will report an increase in the percentage of students--including Hispanics--in schools with at least 50% poverty who meet proficient and advanced performance levels in reading and math on their state assessment systems. (Data will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, LEP status, and migrant status.) (1.2)

Results to Date: Title I currently serves 3.3 million Hispanic students, approximately 30% of all students participating in the program. Hispanic participation has increased by 72% (up from 1.9 million) since 1993-94. This increase appears to be attributable to the expanded number of schoolwide programs, funding increases, and clearer requirements that LEP students must be served under Title I.

Strategy 1:

Ensure that schools are held accountable for improving the academic performance of Hispanic students, by enforcing the Title I requirements for implementation of state standards, assessments and accountability systems by school year 2000 – 2001, and ensuring the inclusion of LEP students in those systems.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	November 1999	√	• Issue final guidance on Title I standards, assessments, and accountability requirements. • Provide technical assistance on the above through 2000, with attention given to communities with new and emerging populations.	OESE
2	November 1999	√	• Issue final guidance on the inclusion of LEP students ("in the native language to the extent practicable") in assessment and accountability systems. • Provide technical assistance on the above through 2000, with attention given to communities with new and emerging populations.	OESE
3	October-December 1999	√	• Conduct three workshops on Title I assessment requirements and best practice.	OESE
4	January 2000		• Release "Toolkit for Assessment of LEP Students"--technical reports and handbook on large scale testing--in partnership w/ CCSSO.	OESE
5	February 2000	✓ draft completed 11/99	• Produce report on state policies for including LEP students in assessments.	OBEMLA
6	Ongoing		• Identify states w/ greatest difficulty in complying w/ requirements for the inclusion of LEP students in state assessment and accountability systems and provide appropriate technical assistance and encouragement.	OESE
7	Ongoing		• Monitor for and provide technical assistance on state compliance to Title I requirements by ensuring review of assessment policies and services to LEP students are central to state integrated reviews.	OESE
8	March 2000		• Develop follow-up and technical assistance plan for states needing assistance in improving services to and assessment of LEP students.	OESE
9	October 2000		• Ensure appropriate consequences for states that fail to comply w/ Title I assessment requirements.	OESE

Strategy 2:

Provide Title I schools and districts, particularly those with high and growing concentrations of Hispanic and LEP students, with high quality resources, including best practices.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	Ongoing		Incorporate NAS reading research into all ESEA program technical assistance and implementation strategies.	OESE and OBEMLA
2	February 2000		Synthesize and promote use of high quality research in the teaching of reading to students with limited English proficiency.	OESE (REA)
3	October-December 1999		Co-sponsor (with CAL) regional workshops on best practices in teaching reading to LEP students (IAS conferences).	OS (America Reads) and OBEMLA
4	March 2000		Produce practical research summaries and related materials (including workshop videos) on teaching reading to LEP students.	OS and OBEMLA
5	RFP-November 1999		Support research on teaching reading to young children whose first language is Spanish (ED and NICHD).	OERI
6	January 2000		Develop an "Idea book" on the education of Hispanic students. (An initial report was developed by NCBE and released in January 1999.)	PES
7	Ongoing		Produce and disseminate a variety of Spanish-language materials to support parent involvement in education and early reading. (Spanish language catalogue of materials, Even Start guide on helping the child's brain develop, etc. have been completed.)	OIIA and OERI
8	First year report-March 2000	✓ First year data collection complete.	Evaluate the effectiveness of Title I in serving LEP students through the National Longitudinal Study of Schools (NLSS) (3-year study).	PES
9	February 2000		Develop plan for ongoing technical assistance and outreach to school districts with large, fast growing, or emerging Hispanic student populations.	OESE and OBEMLA

Bilingual Education

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$25 million	\$259 million (\$25 million for Bilingual Education Professional Development and \$10 million for Instructional Services)	\$248 million (\$24 million increase; \$19.5 million for Professional Development and \$2.5 for Instructional Services)

Objective: Improve effectiveness of Title VII grantees in helping linguistically diverse children learn English and achieve to the same challenging academic standards required of all children.

Performance Indicator:

- Each year, the number of grantees meeting criteria for model programs--progress in learning English and meeting high academic standards--will increase by 20%. (2.1)
- For LEP students--including Hispanics--who participated in Title VII for at least 3 years, grantees will report achievement, and compare it with that of non-LEP students. The two groups will perform comparably. (1.3)

Results to Date:

- In 1999, approximately 1.4 million Hispanic students were served by Title VII programs. Federal bilingual education projects continue to demonstrate effectiveness in teaching English.
- Recent evaluation reports indicated that for 91% of projects, at least two-thirds of LEP students made gains in oral English proficiency.

Strategy 1: Ensure effective project implementation through improved grants management, technical assistance, and identification and dissemination of promising practices.

Strategy 2: Launch an outreach and technical assistance campaign to solicit Professional Development grant proposals from IHE's and other eligible institutions located in and serving areas with a large unmet need for bilingual education and ESL instructors as well as in communities with emerging Latino populations.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	Ongoing		Support the development and dissemination of high quality research, instructional materials, and resources to help ensure the effective education of LEP students.	OBEMLA and OERI
2	March 2000		Develop a database of current Title VII grantees to improve program monitoring and the provision of technical assistance.	OBEMLA
3	Ongoing		Identify and highlight promising practices (in coordination with NCBE and NABE) and work with OESE to improve implementation of all federal programs.	OBEMLA
4	October 1999- March 2000	√ evaluation criteria, TA to be provided	Support intensive evaluation of programs and individual criteria by developing and providing technical assistance and guidance on and criteria for high quality evaluation.	OBEMLA
5	Ongoing	√ 1999 data	Identify communities with large and fast-growing LEP populations (and native languages) across the country and by state (through NCBE).	OBEMLA
6	March 2000		Increase outreach to parents and teachers of LEP students (e.g. Produce and disseminate a guide to parents on standards-based reform and the inclusion of LEP students in high quality instruction, assessment, and accountability systems.)	OBEMLA

TITLE I, Part C: MIGRANT EDUCATION

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$49 million	\$380 million	\$354.7 million (no increase)

Objective: Help improved academic achievement and school completion of migrant children.

Performance Indicator:

- Increasing percentages of migrant students will meet or exceed the basic and proficient levels in state and local assessments (where in place).

Results to Date:

- 752,000 migrant children have been identified as being eligible for the migrant education program; 621,000 are currently being served. Approximately 85% of migrant children are Hispanic.
- In Reading, Elementary & Middle Grades: At least 60% of migrant students scored at or above basic in 6 of the 10 states providing usable data.
- In Math, Elementary Grade: At least 60% of migrant students scored at or above basic in 4 of the 10 states providing usable data.
- In Math, Middle Grade: At least 60% of migrant students scored at or above basic in 2 of the 10 states providing usable data.

Strategy 1:

Ensure that migrant children are included in state assessments that are linked to high standards.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	January 2000		Disseminate guidance to states about Title I standards, assessments, and accountability requirements (including guidance on the inclusion of LEP students) at 2000 State Directors Meeting.	OESE
2	February 2000		Conduct study on level of migrant student participation in state assessment systems.	PES
3	May 2000		Disseminate report describing state practices on assessing LEP students to State MEP Directors.	OESE
4	July 2000		Work with states in Summer Leadership Institute to examine the testing, reporting, and use of state assessment information for migrant students.	OESE
5	Ongoing		Provide technical assistance to states on the testing, reporting, and use of state assessment data with the migrant student population.	OESE
6	Ongoing		Monitor for state compliance on Title I requirements for the disaggregation and reporting of migrant student assessment data.	OESE

Strategy 2:

Encourage the implementation of comprehensive school reforms (e.g., SWPs & CSRD) that effectively integrate MEP funds and services with other programs so that migrant children benefit more fully.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	January 2000		Promote the design and use of high quality programs and services at the 2000 State Directors Meeting.	OESE
2	Ongoing		Disseminate information to MEP State Directors on strategies for states and school districts to work with Title I, Part A, staff in comprehensive school reforms and school-wide programs.	OESE
3	Ongoing		Monitor for evidence of support for building level attention to the unique needs of migrant children in schoolwide and CSRD programs via state integrated reviews.	OESE
4	May 2000		Implement revised research agenda for migrant education focusing on graduation rates, secondary school dropout risk factors & levels, student achievement on state standards, and school readiness.	PES & OESE

Strategy 3: Ensure that states and local school districts provide education services outside the regular school term to help migrant students achieve high standards.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	October 1999	✓	Include incentives for the implementation of summer-term and inter-session programs in MEP funding formula as presented within ED's reauthorization proposal.	OESE
2	January 2000		Promote the design and use of high quality programs and services at the 2000 State Directors Meeting.	OESE
3	March 2000		Conduct workshops at the National Migrant Education Conference on student participation rates and high quality programs.	OESE
4	July 2000		Provide funding incentives for multi-state consortia that will develop and use innovative materials and procedures to ensure education continuity for migrant students.	OESE
5	May 2000		Implement revised research agenda for migrant education focusing on graduation rates, secondary school dropout risk factors and levels, student achievement on state standards, and school readiness.	PES & OESE

Strategy 4: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services to migrant children through more effective coordination.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	March 2000		Present recent ED research on promising practices that enhance the coordination of education for migrant children.	OESE
2	October 2000		Pilot consolidated database to assist in the transfer of migrant student records.	OESE
3	On-going		Continue support for technology grants that are examining innovative ways technology can enhance the education of migrant children.	OESE
4	On-going		Coordinate with Mexico's Department of Education on improving educational outcomes for bi-national children.	OESE
5	On-going		Continue support of incentive grants that promote partnerships with agribusiness and other local organizations to support education services and the work of migrant families and workers.	OESE

College Assistance Migrant Program

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$4 million	\$7 million	\$ 7 million (\$3 million increase)

Objective:

Assist migrant and seasonal farmworker students, a majority of whom are Hispanic, to complete successfully their first academic year of college, and to continue in post-secondary education.

Performance Indicator:

- The number of migratory students--including Hispanics--served by CAMP will continue to increase.
- The percentage of CAMP participants--including Hispanics--who complete the program and continue in postsecondary education will increase.

Results to Date:

The CAMP program serves approximately 660 students, an increase of over 50% since 1994. Approximately 86% of program participants are Hispanic. Four of the 12 CAMP projects are located at Hispanic Serving Institutions, an increase of three since 1994.

Strategy 1:

Develop a technical assistance plan to ensure that programs provide effective services to Hispanic students.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	January 2000		• Develop and issue notice of new competition for CAMP program, including outreach to HSI's.	OESE
2	Annual mtg- January 2000; National Migrant Ed. Conference- May 2000		• Provide improved technical assistance to CAMP grantees.	OESE
3	May-June 2000		• Award new CAMP grants and host meetings for new grantees.	OESE
4	May through December 2000		• Develop a follow-up monitoring plan for CAMP projects needing assistance.	OESE
5	Ongoing		• Improve partnerships with and technical assistance to support implementation of all federal education programs in a manner that meets the unique needs of migratory students.	OESE, OBEMLA, and OSERS

High School Equivalency Program (HEP)

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$9 million	\$15 million	\$15 million (\$6 million increase)

Objective: Assist migrant and seasonal farmworker students, a majority of whom are Hispanic, to obtain a GED and be prepared to enter institutions of higher education, training programs, or career positions.

Performance Indicator:

- The percentage of HEP participants--including Hispanics--who complete the program and receive a GED will remain high or increase. (1.1)
- The percentage of HEP participants--including Hispanics--with a GED who enroll in postsecondary programs will either equal or exceed the percentage achieved the previous year. (2.1)

Results to Date:

The HEP program currently serves approximately 3,800 students, an increase of approximately 1,300 students since 1994. Hispanic participation in these programs is approximately 85%, an increase of 10% since 1994. Seven of the 23 HEP programs are located at Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Strategy 1:

Develop a technical assistance plan for the current HEP programs and for new programs to help them achieve these objectives.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	January 2000		Issue and broadly disseminate notice of new competition for HEP programs.	OESE
2	January -May 2000		Provide improved technical assistance to HEP grantees.	OESE
3	May-June 2000		Award new HEP grants and host meetings for new grantees.	OESE
4	May-December 2000		Develop a follow-up monitoring plan for HEP projects needing assistance.	OESE
5	Ongoing		Improve partnerships with and technical assistance to support coordinated implementation of all federal education programs in a manner that meets the unique needs of migratory students.	OESE, OBEMLA, and OSERS

21st Century Learning Centers

FY 1999	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$200 million	\$600 million (\$400 million increase)	\$ 453.7 million (\$253.7 million increase)

Objective:

Increase participation of LEP students in 21st Century Learning Center program to 25-30% in the FY 2000 competition.

Performance Indicators:

- The proportion of students with limited English proficiency--including Hispanics--served by 21st Century Community Learning Centers will increase with each competition.
- Beginning in 2000, Centers will report continuous improvement in achievement among students--including Hispanics--participating in reading and mathematics activities (disaggregated by LEP status and race/ethnicity). (1.1)
- Beginning in 2000, Centers will report that more than 75% of students participating in the program for at least 2 years show improvements on measures such as grades, attendance, taking of advanced or challenging courses (e.g., algebra, honors courses, AP courses) and fewer disciplinary actions (disaggregated by LEP status and race/ethnicity). (1.2)

Results to Date:

- The 21st Century Community Learning Center program funds at least one project in 14 of the 20 districts with the highest LEP enrollment.
- Between 18-20% of all students served, more than 48,000, have limited English proficiency.¹

¹ 183 new grants serving 600 schools were announced in November, 1999. Preliminary analysis of these grantees suggests increases in both Hispanic and LEP student participation in funded projects.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	December 1999	√	• Revise FY2000 RFP and application to provide an invitational priority to applicants who will serve communities with significant risk of educational failure, particularly those with high drop out rates and high concentrations of LEP students. • Add clarifying language in the application to encourage attention to the specific educational needs of LEP students.	OESE
2	Ongoing		• Expand outreach and dissemination efforts to ensure representation of Hispanic communities in the applicant pool. • Promote, through the Mott Foundation, a network of partnerships with national and local Hispanic advocacy and service organizations to provide technical assistance to improve the quality and competitiveness of grant applications from districts and CBO's serving high numbers of Hispanic and LEP students. (NABE will help coordinate and design more than 50 outreach and technical assistance workshops targeted to communities with large Hispanic populations.)	OESE
3	April 2000		• Recruit reviewers with particular understanding of the needs of Hispanic youth by soliciting recommendations of peer reviewers for the grant review from a variety of organizations. (Clnet National & Community Latino Organizations have provided an initial list.)	OESE

GEAR UP

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$120 million (initial funding)	\$240 million	\$200 million (\$80 million increase)

Objective:

Maximize participation of Hispanic youth in awarded projects.

Results to Date:

- Of the 164 partnership grants awarded in August 1999, 31 partnerships involving HSI's were funded. These partnerships received 27% of the funds (\$20 million out of \$75 million).
- The Department of Education is collecting data on the demographic profile of the students served by all GEAR UP partnerships in order to monitor the participation of Hispanic students as well as institutions.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1			• Track and evaluate participation of Hispanic and LEP students in funded projects.	OPE & PES
2			• Expand outreach to Hispanic communities and HSI's through mailings, application workshops and technical assistance in communities with large Hispanic populations.	OPE
3			• Develop ongoing partnerships with Hispanic advocacy groups and community-based organizations to identify and solicit grant proposal reviewers knowledgeable about Hispanic communities and education issues.	OPE

Adult Education

	FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
Adult Education State Grants	\$345 million (\$20 Million Increase)	\$468 million (\$123 Million Increase)	\$450 million (\$85 million increase, \$25 million of which is dedicated to ESL/Civics education)
National Activities	\$14 million (including \$7 million for ESL/Civics demonstration grants)	\$101 million (including \$70 million for ESL/Civics demonstration grants)	\$14 million

Objective:

Help limited English proficient adults, including Hispanics, become literate in English and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Performance Indicator: In program year 2000-01, 40% of adults--including Hispanics--in beginning English for Speakers of Other Languages programs will complete and achieve basic English literacy.

Results to Date:

- In 1997-98 program year reports of adult participation in State-administered adult education programs, total Hispanic enrollment was approximately 1.6 million, an increase of more than 50% since 1988.
- Hispanics now represent more than 40% of the total adult education enrollment.

Strategy 1:

Increase access to high quality, innovative adult education programs.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	Ongoing		• Use current study of promising ESL practices to Improve customer service to ensure the provision of high quality technical assistance (based on best practice)--workshops, print and online dissemination of best practices and examples of effective programs and partnership efforts--particularly in supporting improved services for Hispanic adults.	OVAE
2	Grant Awards-March 2000	√ RFP- November 1999	• Make available nearly \$7 million in new funding for 20-25 projects to demonstrate effective strategies for teaching English literacy in the context of the citizenship education. Developed a quality application and plan for outreach and competitive review of proposals.	OVAE

TRIO

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$600 million (\$70 million increase)	\$630 million (\$30 million increase)	\$645 million (\$45 million increase)

Objective: Improve access to and quality of TRIO programs for Hispanic and LEP students.

Performance Indicator:

- The proportion of students from underserved groups --including Hispanics-- participating in TRIO programs will increase.
- TRIO participants who are English language learners (ELL) will enroll in postsecondary education programs at rates higher than the national average and comparable high school students who did not participate in TRIO. (1.1)
- TRIO participants who are ELL will enroll in postsecondary education programs and will complete them at rates higher than comparable students who do not participate in TRIO.

Results to Date:

- An estimated 16% of TRIO program participants are Hispanic. Recent evaluations indicate that while the number of Latino students served is limited, students participating in Upward Bound are positively affected.
- Hispanics participating in Upward Bound earn more high school credits, are less likely to drop out of high school, and attend four-year colleges at a higher rate than comparable non-participants.

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1	Ongoing		• Improve data collection and program evaluation to better track the participation and achievement of Hispanics in TRIO programs.	OPE/PES
2	February 2000		• Develop a plan to improve dissemination of promising practices and innovative strategies in reaching and serving underserved populations, including Hispanics, recent immigrants, those with limited English proficiency, or individuals with disabilities.	OPE
3	March 2000		• Target additional support and technical assistance to existing Upward Bound grantees to expand outreach to and recruitment of underserved/educationally at-risk students, including Hispanics, recent immigrants, those with limited English proficiency, or individuals with disabilities.	OPE
4	Ongoing		• Develop partnerships with Hispanic advocacy groups and community-based organizations to identify and solicit grant proposal reviewers knowledgeable about the education of Latinos.	OPE

Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$28 million (\$16 million increase)	\$42.3 million	\$42.3 million (\$14.3 million increase)

Objective: To provide financial support and technical assistance to assist eligible Hispanic-serving institutions of higher education to expand their capacity to effectively serve Hispanic and low-income students.

Performance Indicator:

Result to Date:

Support continues to be provided to help strengthening institutions of higher education that: (1) have an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students; and (2) assure that not less than 50 percent of its Hispanic students are low-income individuals.

FY 1998: 37 continuation grants

FY 1999: 37 continuation grants; 39 new grants

FY 2000: 39 continuation grants; 68 new grants; 13 planning grants

Action Steps:

No.	Expected Completion Date	Complete	Action	Responsible Office
1			Develop a plan for improved data collection and program evaluation to guide the provision of high-quality technical assistance and appropriate program improvements.	OPE
2	Ongoing		Expand outreach and technical assistance to HSIs to support expanded participation in all federal education programs.	Department-wide
3	Applications due March 2000		Provide technical assistance and outreach to expand grantee applicant pool and award new grants.	OPE

In FY 1998, 217,000 of the more than 822,000 children funded by Head Start were Hispanic. This equals 26.4 percent of Head Start enrollment. Excluding the 32,249 Hispanic children in Puerto Rico, Hispanic children constitute 23.3 percent of total Head Start enrollment;

Over the past decade, Hispanic children have received an increasingly larger portion of Head Start services. Since FY 1992, *Hispanic enrollment (excluding Puerto Rico) has increased 62% while non-Hispanic enrollment has increased 27%.* In other words, Hispanic enrollment has risen more than twice as fast as non-Hispanic enrollment.

Despite these increases, Hispanic children remain underrepresented in Head Start. In 1997, young (3-4 years old), low-income Hispanic children represented 29.8 percent of all low-income pre-school children in the U.S., compared to 23.3 percent in Head Start (excluding Puerto Rico)

In the last ten years, enrollment in Head Start programs for migrant farmworkers has increased from 18,500 to almost 37,000 children, 95 percent of whom are Hispanic.

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THE WEEKLY
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GOVERNMENT

They are both more,
and less, economically
successful and politically
powerful than imagined,
and they are crucial to
America's future.

A SPECIAL REPORT

Beyond the Myths: Hispanics in America





Hispanics: Beyond the Myths

■ BY DICK KIRSCHTEN

The immigrants keep coming, not only to the Southwest but up the eastern seaboard to New York and Boston and west to Chicago and the Midwest, where they meet the long-established Chicanos, the North Americans of Mexican origin, who have been here even longer than the gringos.

—CARLOS FUENTES, *The Fourth Deadly Sin*, 1992

THEY WILL SOON BE
AMERICA'S LARGEST
MINORITY, HOLDING THE
KEYS TO PROGRESS
AND POWER IN THE NEW
CENTURY.

In the eve of the 21st century, Hispanics—people with that most variegated of ethnicities—are emerging with fanfare as America's hot new minority. The faces of Latino singers and movie stars have recently graced the covers of popular magazines, including *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *People*, and *George*, surrounded by headlines blaring that "Young Hispanics Are Changing America" and "Latino Power Brokers Are Making America Sizzle." At Major League Baseball's All-Star Game in July, seven

of the starting players were Hispanics, whose average salaries exceed \$7 million a year. Presidential aspirants are using Spanish-language sound bites in their stump speeches.

Not only are famous Hispanics getting attention, but so, too, the infamous. The nation's front pages and television screens focused relentlessly this summer on the face of illegal immigrant Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, the object of a six-week FBI manhunt, a man thought to be the "railroad killer" responsible for eight brutal slayings since 1997.

Indeed, Hispanics are becoming a larger and more prominent part of the American polyglot. Their numbers have been bolstered by high birth rates and a remarkable shift in immigration patterns since World War II, with Latinos making up more than 11 percent of the U.S. population, a proportion that is projected to grow to one in four by 2050. (The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" seem to have become virtually interchangeable.) They will outnumber non-Hispanic blacks by 2005, laying claim to the title of America's largest minority group.

Hispanics, however, are not the monolithic minority sometimes portrayed in the media. With origins traceable to more than a score of Spanish-speaking homelands, and complexions that range in hue from white to brown to black, Hispanics are, as Mexican diplomat Carlos Fuentes so aptly noted, "above all mixed, mestizo."

A more accurate portrait of the 31 million Hispanics in the United States would be equally mixed and, indeed, more complex. Most Hispanics are neither highly paid entertainers nor members of an impoverished underclass of illegal aliens.

In reality, the Hispanic community is both more and less successful, and more and less important, than popular opinion or prejudice might suggest. It is a vibrant community to be sure, and many—probably most—members are carving their niche in the nation's middle class, just as other ethnic immigrants did before them. Others, however, are struggling to get into the working class. Poverty is a serious concern for one Latino in four.

Neither are Hispanics a teeming mass of illegal and illiterate aliens. Today's Hispanics are predominantly native-born (56 percent). When those who have been naturalized or are

Puerto Rico natives are included, 70 percent are U.S. citizens. A majority of the remainder reside here legally. Estimates vary, but it appears that no more than 13 percent to 14 percent of Hispanics in the United States are here unlawfully.

Spanish is spoken in many Latino households, but fluency in English is widespread, especially among U.S.-born children exposed to television programming and the U.S. educational system. And bilingual education, although controversial, is, in fact, rare.

Two-thirds of Hispanic children who speak only Spanish receive instruction in U.S. schools where only English is taught.

Though they are voting in larger numbers, the might of the Latino electorate—quadrennially hyped as "a slumbering giant"—has proved illusory. Although one in nine Americans is Hispanic, only about one in every 20 votes is cast by a Hispanic. Nearly a third of Hispanics cannot vote because they are not citizens, and more than 40 percent of those who are citizens are below voting age.

Politicians, however, can ill afford to ignore the Latino community, which in recent years has begun to mature as a political force and to place higher priority on attaining citizenship. Hispanic voters are particularly important because they are concentrated in a half-dozen key electoral states. In California, whose 54 electoral votes are by far the largest

plum in presidential contests, Hispanics make up more than a third of the population and cast upward of 12 percent of the votes in the 1996 election. In Texas, where 32 electoral votes are up for grabs in 2000, Latinos accounted for 17 percent of the 1996 vote.

Hispanic economic power is also maturing. The magazine *Hispanic Business*, which annually lists the 500 largest Latino-owned companies, this year hailed the first such company to post annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion: the Miami-based construction firm MasTec Inc., headed by Jorge Mas Jr., son of a deceased Cuban-exile leader.

But like other immigrant groups before them, Hispanics for the most part are found on the lower rungs of the economic ladder. In today's booming economy, Hispanic men are participating in the labor force at a higher rate than either black or white men. But not all who are working are getting ahead. The median family income for U.S. Hispan-



STRONG FAMILIES:

Hispanic households in the United States are as likely to be headed by married couples as are white households.

ics was \$26,628 in 1997 and has been climbing slowly. It remains well below that of whites (\$38,972) and only slightly higher than that of blacks (\$25,050).

Large numbers of Latinos, both native- and foreign-born, belong to the ranks of America's working poor. More than a third of Hispanic children are being raised in poverty—defined as \$16,700 a year for a family of four—and disturbingly large numbers of them are falling by the educational wayside, dropping out of school and—with increasing frequency—dropping into the criminal justice system.

This more nuanced portrait of Hispanics in America has given rise to a lively debate as to whether Hispanics should be treated as a discriminated against minority entitled to civil rights remedies similar to those afforded blacks, or viewed simply as another immigrant group en route to assimilating into the U.S. mainstream. It's a debate that continues today in such states as California and Texas, where quotalike approaches to affirmative action have been rejected, but other means are used to bolster Latino enrollment in state colleges and universities; one such measure is Texas' program of admitting any student who graduates in the top 10 percent of his or her high school class.

Political scientist Peter Skerry ruffled feathers with his 1993 book, *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority*, which criticized those who promote the idea that Hispanics are an oppressed minority. "It is the racial minority perspective that has fundamentally shaped Mexican-American politics," he wrote. Such an approach, he argued, may be "emotionally and programatically gratifying . . . to its elite practitioners, but it offers little help to newcomers struggling to make sense of their new lives."

But other experts warn that if America wants to enjoy continued prosperity and maintain a qualified work force, remedial governmental measures are needed to ensure that today's youthful Hispanic population receives the educational tools—including command of the English language—necessary to compete successfully in a technology-driven economy.

Susan E. Martin, executive director of the congressionally mandated immigration reform commission that completed its work in 1997, says that the federal government should more aggressively address the problems of newcomers using new "immigrant integration" policies that give "particular attention" to health care and English skills. The government, she adds, should also provide aid to communities most affected by immigration. (See sidebar, p. 2357.)

Now at Georgetown University, Martin argues that if a larger proportion of Hispanic immigrants and their children are to prosper as American citizens in the 21st century, they need special services now, including a faster process for obtaining citizenship that would also better educate them about American civic culture.

The elimination of naturalization backlogs is a high priority of Latino advocacy groups and congressional critics of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Most immigrants must reside in the United States for five years before they can apply for citizenship, but it takes another 15 to 24 months to process their applications, according to Rep. Lamar S. Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Judiciary Immigration and Claims Subcommittee, which oversees the INS. Smith notes that the INS has a backlog of 1.8 million naturalization petitions and 800,000 applications for permanent residence. And the pressure will very likely not ease any time soon. About 450,000 Hispanics enter the United States each year, including legal and illegal immigrants.

A COMPLEX HISTORY

The story of U.S. Hispanics—some call them *Américanos*—dates back to the Spanish crown's sponsorship of Christopher Columbus' 1492 voyage of discovery. His feat led to the establishment of a Spanish empire in the Western hemisphere in the early 16th century. Its foot soldiers were the conquistadors and missionaries who left their language, their religion, and sometimes their progeny from Florida to California.

Few of today's Latinos trace their roots directly to Spain. Some claim bloodlines here long predating this nation's founding, but most are of more recent vintage and more closely related to the native peoples of this hemisphere who came under the Spaniards' control.

Nearly two-thirds of "Américanos" are of Mexican ancestry; 11 percent are Puerto Rican; 4 percent Cuban; and the rest are mostly from Central and South America and other countries of the Caribbean. Mexicans first headed north in large numbers in the 1920s, in a movement that was cut

short by the Depression and World War II, which virtually halted immigration to America. From 1942-64, 4 million to 5 million supposedly temporary farm workers were shuttled in from Mexico under the "bracero," or "strong arms," program. Many stayed illegally and joined the low-wage underground economy. In the 1960s, and again in the 1970s and 1990s, refugees from the Castro revolution in Cuba washed ashore in large numbers in southern Florida.

The doors opened more widely for Hispanics (and Asians) in 1965, when Congress revoked restrictive and discriminatory "country of origin" quotas and anchored U.S. immigration policy on the principle of fostering the reunification of families. Migration from south of the border increased further after the enactment of 1986 legislation granting amnesty to nearly 3 million unlawful immigrants, who later became eligible to send home for their wives and children. Civil warfare in Central America during the 1980s created even more refugees.



CARLOS RIOS

MEXICAN HERITAGE:

Our Lady of Guadalupe is tattooed on the back of a Houston resident. Mexicans make up about two-thirds of U.S. Hispanics.



REACHING MIDDLE CLASS

Although this country's Hispanics did not arrive on trans-Atlantic ships, as their European counterparts did earlier this century, they do resemble the Ellis Island immigrants in their slow but steady generational advancement up the economic and political ladder.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., represents a down town Los Angeles district adjacent to the one that her New Mexico-born father, Rep. Edward R. Roybal, served for 30 years before retiring in 1992. In an interview, she stressed the need to paint a balanced and more complex picture of a Latino community that has both serious needs and laudable accomplishments.

"There are lousy schools in the Latino community, and people need better jobs," she said. "But we have to make sure that the public isn't under the impression that every Latino is a poor immigrant or—unfortunately, because of negative publicity—that we are all criminals or drug addicts."

Roybal-Allard noted that "the Hispanic community is very proud that we have more Medal of Honor recipients than any other ethnic group, that we have doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other professionals."

Gregory Rodriguez, a research fellow with the Pepperdine University School of Public Policy in California, has traced the economic progress of Hispanics in five Southern California counties that, according to the 1990 census, were home to more than a fifth of the nation's Latino population. Their progress was conspicuous.

This 1996 survey, "The Emerging Latino Middle Class," found that a third of the area's households headed by foreign-born Hispanics, and slightly more than half of those headed

CITIZENSHIP:

Seventy percent of Hispanics in the United States are citizens. A majority of the rest reside here legally.

by U.S.-born Hispanics, had incomes in excess of \$35,000 or owned their own homes.

In a recent interview, Rodriguez argued that Washington's "dysfunction-oriented" approach to minorities has created a perverse political system that "channels the spoils to the loser." If minorities prove they are victims, they get special help. Such an approach, he maintained, makes little sense at a time when Hispanics are making significant political gains in key states. (California's Lt. Gov. Cruz M. Bustamante and state Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa, for example, are both Latinos.) "It becomes incongruous to use the victimization approach when you're the lieutenant governor," he said.

Rodriguez likens today's Latinos to earlier generations of Irish and Italian immigrants, whose economic progress was multigenerational, evolving over time from upper-blues to lat to sort of lower-pink collar. "He predicted that the basic Spanish identity will not go away, but politically, Latinos will be co-opted by the mainstream. 'When Al Smith first became Governor of New York,' he said, 'that's when people first started identifying the Irish as Irish-Americans. And that is already happening with Hispanics.'"

As the author of a recent report, "From Newcomers to New Americans," published by the Washington-based National Immigration Forum, Rodriguez hopes to debunk the stereotype that portrays Hispanics as unwilling to culturally assimilate and adopt English as their language. "We have to take the debate away from the left-wing multiculturalists and the ethnic nationalists, as well as from the right-wing nativists," he said. To do that, "it makes common sense to focus on the upward mobility of these groups."

Rodriguez's research on Southern California shows that, as Latinos move into the middle class, they achieve increasing fluency in English while retaining "some linguistic and cultural continuity" in the home. Significantly, the majority of upwardly mobile Latinos choose to reside in racially integrated middle-income communities where they often constitute a minority, the report states. Nearly a third, he found, marry non-Hispanics.

A third-generation Mexican-American, Rodriguez acknowledges that Hispanics have differed from other immigrant groups in their reluctance, even after living here for decades, to formally sever ties with their homelands by becoming U.S. citizens. "There was a nostalgia for home, an idea that one day they would return to Mexico to retire," he said. But that tendency has changed markedly since former California Gov. Pete Wilson backed a ballot initiative in 1994 to deny public education and other benefits to illegal immigrants, and Congress, two years later, voted to strip legal immigrants of their eligibility for key benefits. The nostalgia for home has diminished, and Hispanics are seeking to naturalize in record numbers.

STRUGGLING FOR A Foothold

Yet while many Hispanics are achieving middle-class status, a sizable portion is not. In her recently published book, *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Urban City*, sociologist Katherine S. Newman of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government notes that "the largest group of poor people in the United States are not those on welfare. They are the working poor, whose earnings are so meager that despite their best efforts, they cannot afford decent housing, diets, health care, or child care."

Hispanics are more likely than any other group to be members of the working poor. Newman's study focuses on New York City, where Puerto Ricans and Dominicans are among the

poorest of the poor. The Puerto Ricans, who have the advantage of U.S. citizenship and greater English proficiency, tend to have higher earnings, she reports, while the Dominicans "tend to make up for this disadvantage by increasing the number of people per household who are in the labor market."

Yet even when both parents in a Hispanic family are working, their income often falls short of their needs. "One of the really troubling things," says Sonia Pérez, a deputy vice president of the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic advocacy group, is that Latino families headed by intact married couples are more likely to live in poverty than similar African-American or white families.

"There is something wrong here," Pérez argued in a recent interview. "You have a mother and a father and someone who is working full time. This is what everybody is supposed to be doing. These are the values we are trying to promote. They are exemplified by this community, but it's not working for them."

Census statistics support Pérez. Hispanic households are almost as likely as white households to be headed by married couples—55 percent, compared with 56 percent for the latter. Only 32 percent of non-Hispanic black households are headed by married couples. Yet more than a fourth of Latino families (27.1 percent) are poor, and slightly more than a third of America's total Hispanic population lives in poverty.

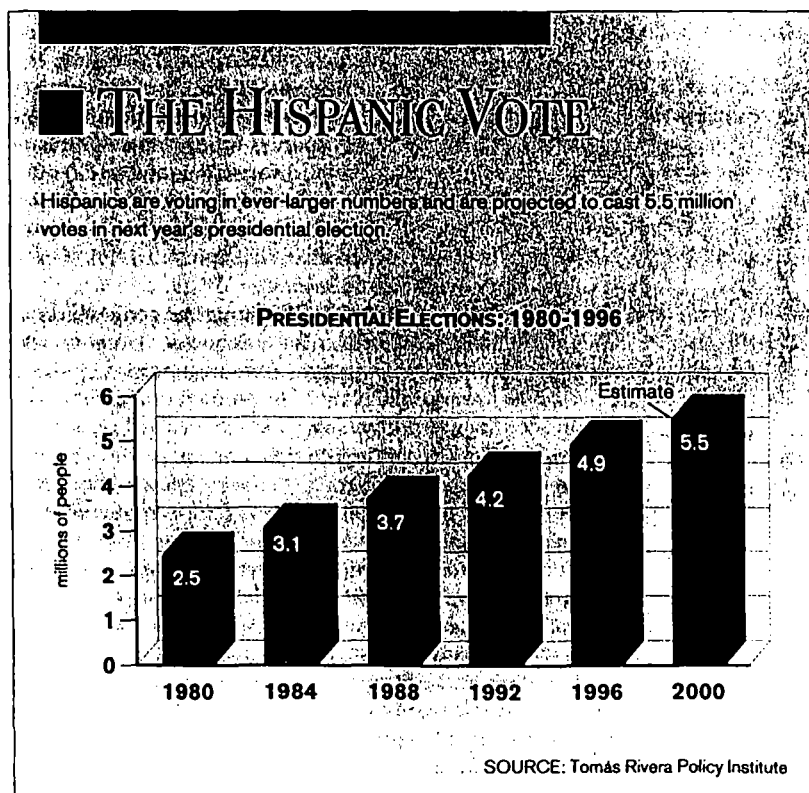
EDUCATION IS KEY

Pérez and other experts view education as critical to overcoming Latino poverty, particularly for large numbers of children who are growing up in Spanish-speaking homes and whose fluency in English is limited or nonexistent. The Urban Institute, a Washington think tank, notes that the number of school-age children whose parents are immigrants has more than tripled since 1970 and now totals nearly 12 million. Of that number, close to 7 million are Hispanics.

The highly polarized debate over bilingual education has not helped. It has masked the fact that such programs are offered to fewer than a third of immigrant children, and that many language-limited youngsters receive no special help at all. Researchers estimate that more than 3 million public school students, three-fourths of whom are Hispanics, have limited ability to speak and understand English.

The debate over bilingual education has also hidden the need for continuing help with English for Hispanics in the upper grades of elementary school and in middle and high schools.

In an interview, Michael Fix, a senior analyst at the Urban Institute, said "some kind of language instruction" is available to three of four elementary students who need it, but fewer than half of students in higher grades whose English is limited receive such assistance. Hispanic students, he added, are far more likely than whites or blacks to attend schools where a third or more of the enrollment consists of English-deficient students. Such schools, he declared, "are not just ethnically, but linguistically, segregated."



Studies show that "limited English proficiency" students have better attendance rates than other students, but nonetheless perform worse on tests, including those administered in Spanish, and are less likely to graduate from high school. One of every five students with limited English proficiency drops out of school—double the rate for English speakers.

Like other school dropouts, Latino youngsters frequently become involved with gangs and run afoul of the law. Although Hispanics make up only about 11.5 percent of the U.S. population, they account for a larger—and steadily rising—share of the nation's state and federal prison populations. Justice Department estimates indicate that 13.3 percent of all prisoners in 1990 were Hispanic, a figure that rose to 15.8 percent by 1996. A recent National Academy of Sciences report that focused on immigrants found that "noncitizens are more likely to be in prison for drug offenses, especially possession of drugs," than for violent offenses or property crimes.

From the perspective of La Raza's Pérez, America can ill afford to ignore the problems associated with low educational achievement by large numbers of Hispanics. As of 1997, only 54.7 percent of U.S. Latinos had graduated from high school and only 7.4 percent from college.

"These are the workers for the new millennium, and we



HABANA DEL NORTE:

A Cuban Day parade in New York City. Cubans make up 4 percent of U.S. Hispanics.

need to make sure that we prepare them for the kinds of jobs that will have high demand," she said. "We don't live in the kind of society any more in which people without a diploma can get a factory job and raise a family."

THE CRITICAL FEW

America's Hispanics are many things—both rising middle class and working poor. But one thing they are not is a monolithic vote.

Florida's Cubans have found a comfortable home in the Republican Party; Puerto Ricans in the big cities of the Northeast and Midwest have found solace in the social safety net programs of the Democratic Party. While the growing electoral strength of Mexican-Americans in California has recently enhanced the prospects of Democrats in the Golden State, Mexican-Americans in Texas have elevated the presidential prospects of their

Spanish-speaking Republican Governor, George W. Bush.

Indeed, the fact that Hispanics have voted in mixed patterns makes them highly sought after by both parties, and explains why Latinos are so much in play for the 2000 elections.

Republicans next year would love to equal or better the high-water mark set in 1984 when President Reagan received 40 percent of the nationwide Hispanic vote in his re-election sweep. Democrats, on the other hand, crave a

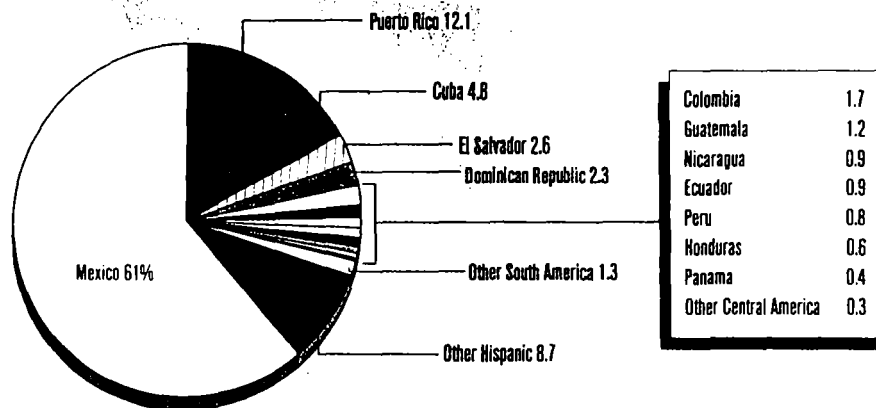
repeat of 1996—when GOP contender Bob Dole won only 21 percent of the Latino vote.

But in seeking Hispanic votes, the approaches of the two parties could not be more different. Bush has chosen Linda Chavez as his leading adviser on immigration issues. She is a controversial and outspoken opponent of affirmative action who was Reagan's appointee to chair the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. A key adviser to Vice President Al Gore will be Maria Echaveste, currently a deputy White House chief of staff, who made a name for herself at the Labor Department cracking down on sweatshop abuses by the garment industry.

Chavez traces her Latino ancestry through her

HISPANICS: COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

During the 20th century, people from Mexico have made up the largest group of Hispanic immigrants. That is expected to continue in the next century, although the proportion of immigrants coming from other Central American countries is expected to grow.



SOURCE: 1990 census

father's side of the family back to Spain and the 1600s. Her mother was English-Irish. Echaveste, by contrast, is the daughter of Mexican farmworkers who migrated first to Texas, then to California, and now, in retirement, have returned to their native Mexico.

In separate interviews, the two advisers argued that the traditional approaches of their respective political parties will have resonance with Hispanic voters.

Chavez pointed out that the Hispanics who "are most likely to vote" are hard-working entrepreneurs "who are moving into that lower-middle-class niche" despite shortcomings in formal education. For the most part, she said, they operate small businesses, such as restaurants, gardening services, or mom-and-pop groceries.

Republicans should be able to appeal to such voters by addressing their concerns about crime and safety and by condemning government regulation. "These are people who have problems with red tape, problems with government mandates for everything from health care to mandatory parental leave," Chavez said.

Echaveste, by contrast, said Democrats will appeal to Hispanics as consumers of government services that will be in jeopardy if the GOP gains control of the White House. "One of the reasons that Hispanics are caught in low-wage jobs is that they need better command of the language so they can move up," she said. "But the Republican Party has not been a friend of the Department of Education or of programs designed to get resources into poor neighborhoods."

If Gore is the Democratic candidate, Echaveste predicted, Hispanic voters will reward him for the Clinton Administration's recent efforts to restore welfare benefits for legal immigrants and for efforts to block the deportation of Central Americans seeking political asylum here.

Chavez and Echaveste are probably both correct. The political fault lines that divide Hispanic voters are largely economic

and precisely the same as those that divide the rest of the electorate. If that's the case, rising prosperity among Latinos could, over time, boost the GOP's share of their vote.

Political scientist Harry P. Pachon, who heads the California-based Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, says "the roots of partisan attachment are not deep" among Hispanics, who have mostly voted Democratic but are comparatively new to the electoral process. When his institute polled Latinos in three states last year, 55 percent said that "neither party" does a better job than the other.

Roybal-Allard, who chairs the all-Democratic Congressional Hispanic Caucus (three Latino Republicans in the House decline to join), notes that Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, a Republican, "does very well with Hispanic voters because he reached out to the community and supported important educational projects" before running for public office.

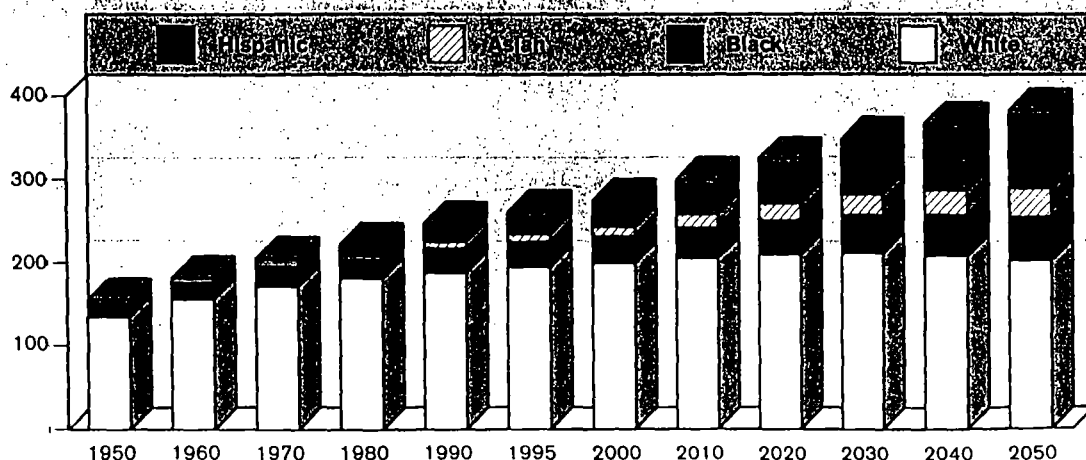
"Traditionally, Latinos are more conservative," Roybal-Allard explained, adding that Democrats will have to overcome "the unfortunate perception that they are anti-business" if they expect to compete for middle-class Hispanic votes.

That competition could be crucial. Although Hispanic voter registration and turnout rates still lag behind those of other groups, they have increased dramatically in recent elections. In the 1996 presidential election, 11.2 million Hispanics were eligible to vote, but only 6.6 million were registered and only 4.3 million actually voted, according to the National Association of Latino Elected Officials. Next year, according to projections by Pachon, the nationwide Hispanic vote may reach 5.5 million.

"It doesn't take many to be called 'the critical few,'" Republican political consultant V. Lance Tarrance Jr. recently observed. He noted that with support for both parties evenly balanced nationwide, it is possible "for the Hispanic vote to become the balance of power for the next decade."

■ THE CHANGING FACE OF THE U.S.

The U.S. Hispanic population rose from 4 million in 1950 to 27 million in 1995—about one in every 11 Americans. It will rise to 95 million in 2050, or about one in every four Americans.



■ DELAWARE'S HISPANIC PEACE CORPS

GEORGETOWN, DEL.— This sleepy courthouse community dates back to the presidency of George Washington, and has been known for a century as a gateway to southern Delaware's ocean beaches. But change with a heavy Spanish accent has come to this unassuming town of 6,000 souls.

Starting about 1989, Hispanic migrants began showing up to seek work at the half-dozen poultry and food processing plants that lie within a 20-mile radius of town. What started as a trickle soon became a steady stream. Most came from an impoverished rural region of Guatemala long torn by civil war.

For the expanding chicken industry, the development is a godsend. The newly arrived Latinos uncomplainingly perform onerous—and sometimes hazardous—jobs in mostly nonunion processing plants that are unable to recruit sufficient numbers of American-born workers.

William Satterfield, executive director of Delmarva Poultry Industry, a Georgetown-based trade association, says "a lot of positives" came with the addition of the workers from Central America. But, he adds, "The companies are not recruiting in Mexico or Guatemala. It's a word-of-mouth network that is sending workers up here."

For the once preponderantly white community, however, the arrival of the Hispanics—who now comprise 30 percent to 40 percent of Georgetown's population—was a rude shock. The newcomers were, at first, mostly young men who settled in crowded housing in an older neighborhood that became littered with trash. They spoke no English and had little formal schooling in Spanish. Their cash wages became an inviting target for muggers and unscrupulous landlords. When not

working or sleeping, many loitered on street corners drinking beer and whiskey. Those who bought cars were frequently pulled over for traffic violations.

"There was like a civil war here, because the town was accusing the poultry industry of bringing all these problems and there was nobody who could communicate with the Hispanic community because it had no leaders," recalls Gonzalo Martinez, a Chilean-born lawyer who lives in nearby Lewes.

So Martinez eased into the vacuum.

Slowly at first, and then jumping in with both feet, he became a full-time volunteer coordinator between the growing Hispanic community and the town.

Martinez is not unique. He is representative of a phenomenon being seen across the country in cities and towns struggling to integrate poorly educated Latino immigrants from peasant backgrounds into the U.S. middle class. Spanish-speak-

ing professionals—most immigrants themselves—are stepping forward to bridge the gulf between new arrivals and longtime residents. They form a volunteer army that helps ameliorate Third World kinds of problems in the United States.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Indeed, in tiny Georgetown, a remarkable cast of helpers from all over the Spanish-speaking world, Delaware, and all walks of life has surfaced to pitch in. Some are U.S. citizens raised near the Mexican border or in Puerto Rico. Others are foreign nationals from Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Spain. They include doctors, merchants, teachers, police officers, and clergy. Some were brought in because of their fluency in Spanish; others were already residing in the area. Taken together,

they help perform a variety of tasks that help integrate the Central Americans into their new Delaware home.

Initially, churches and social service agencies were the only ones trying to bridge the gaps between Georgetown's Guatemalans and the rest of the town, but their efforts were piecemeal. Martinez, an official of the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington for 23 years, entered the scene in the early 1990s and emerged as an ambitious problem-solver.

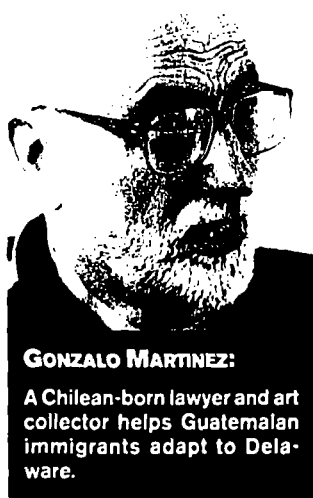
A lawyer by trade, Martinez did not intend to perform good works for the Hispanic poor when he retired to the Delaware Shore. An art collector whose maternal grandmother came from a wealthy Guatemalan family, he moved in 1989 to fashionable Lewes—25 miles north of Georgetown—to remodel a large house and hobnob with Sussex County's affluent artsy set.

He lived in the area several years before becoming aware of the isolated and problem-plagued Hispanic population of Georgetown and surrounding Sussex County, home to an immigrant Hispanic population estimated to exceed 15,000. After assisting with smaller projects sponsored by a local arts council and the county's AIDS committee, Martinez decided to plunge in as a full-time volunteer in chief.

Since then, he has worked closely with a remarkable assortment of Hispanic allies. Early helpers included Antonio Asión, a Cuban-born Delaware state trooper, and Elba Quiles, a former high school principal from San Juan, Puerto Rico, who runs a program of free English-language instruction at the community college.

Quiles, who left Puerto Rico in 1991 to be close to her son, a physician practicing in Lewes, has recently expanded her program to include Spanish classes for local Anglos. "Because of the needs of professionals here, I'm now giving two evening classes for people who work with Hispanics. My students include a radiologist, several nurses, and a couple of social workers," she notes.

Pilar Gomez is another member of Martinez's network of allies. A Spaniard, Gomez moved here after



RICHARD A. BLOOM

GONZALO MARTINEZ:

A Chilean-born lawyer and art collector helps Guatemalan immigrants adapt to Delaware.

her husband took a job in the area. She has since divorced and launched a career as the organizer for the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.

Gomez initially worked for an area landlord helping Hispanic tenants who were unfamiliar with such basics as the use of modern household appliances. "That drew me to get more involved," she recalls. "I related to them, because when I first arrived in this country, I didn't know any English and nobody was there to help me."

The presence of so many Hispanic immigrants has brought a demand for more Spanish speakers in the private sector as well, and many of them are professionals, who add to the town's mix. Georgetown is home to a large Perdue Farms Inc. processing plant and distribution center, where nearly half the workers are Latinos. The plant's supervisory ranks are dotted with college-educated Hispanics, who have become part of the town's professional middle class.

Even statewide media outlets are beginning to notice what is happening here. The state's largest newspaper, *The News Journal* in Wilmington, has assigned Bolivian-born Patricia Rivera as its Georgetown correspondent. Rivera's husband, a Spaniard, is a superintendent at the Perdue plant. Another Spaniard, José M. Somalo, a Perdue foreman, and his Mexican wife, Rocío Flores, publish a local bilingual monthly newspaper, *Hoy en Delaware*.

SUCCESS STORIES

Out of this synergy between an earlier generation of Spanish-speaking professionals and the later working-class immigrants from Central America is emerging a middle class of Hispanics who are, in turn, helping their more recently arrived colleagues. One of Elba Quiles' prize students, for example, is Maria Mendoza. She and her husband came to

Georgetown 10 years ago as migrant farm laborers. Both decided to stay and take year-round jobs in chicken processing plants. After five years of poultry work, however, Mendoza quit to study English and pursue an associate degree in human resources at Delaware Technical and Community College.

The Mexican-born Mendoza, 32, now works as a Vista Volunteer directing English literacy efforts to the local Hispanic community and, more recently, conducting welfare-to-work seminars for non-English-speaking recipients of government aid. After living for years in a trailer on rented land, she and her husband, who still works for the poultry industry, have purchased their first home in a Georgetown subdivision. "Yes, we're getting a house," Mendoza says with barely concealed glee. "We're so excited."

Julio Herrera, 27, who came here from Guatemala five years ago, is also trying to help the newer arrivals. A quality control supervisor at a poultry plant, Herrera helped found and now heads a Guatemalan self-help association that, among other things, conducts trash collection drives as a gesture of good will toward the larger Georgetown community.

Herrera has something to celebrate, too. He was recently granted permanent legal U.S. residency after a multiyear struggle to petition for political asylum. He had help in his legal battle from Pilar Gomez and Jim Lewis, an Episcopal minister who has a grant from a du Pont family foundation to work with area immigrants.

This is not unusual among Georgetown Hispanics, many of whom fled the Guatemalan civil war earlier this decade because they were persecuted for either opposing the government or declining to take sides. Many, although not all, come here illegally and try for asylum.

In fact, one of the major missions of La Esperanza, one of two community centers set up in Georgetown by Gonzalo Martinez, is to help Georgetown's Guatemalans fight deportation proceedings and seek legal residency. Two full-time experts at La Esperanza help with immigration problems.

GIVING AND GETTING

Not only have the lives of the immigrant Guatemalans been transformed through this community outreach, so too have the lives of the outreachers.

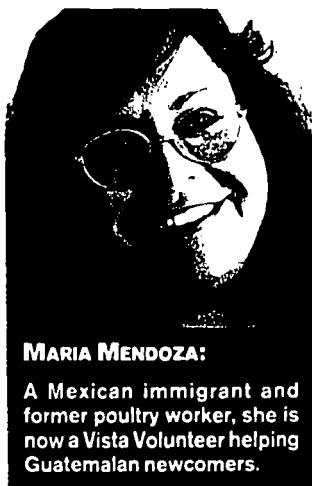
Martinez looked to Delaware for art and leisure and found, instead, a career as community leader. The list of his accomplishments and contributions, brought about through his organizational or fund-raising talents, is impressive: two community service centers, and the role of unpaid director of the first; two state-of-the-art preschool facilities; and the El Centro Cultural, an arts organization that stages Christmas pageants and an annual Georgetown Hispanic Festival.

Martinez's proudest accomplishments, however, are the early childhood development centers—Primeros Pasos, opened in 1997 for children up to the age of five, and Primeros Pasitos, opened in 1998 for infants and toddlers. Although the centers can serve only a fraction of Georgetown's Hispanic baby boom, they are models for the public school system.

In this process of stumbling onto a second career, Martinez has infiltrated Delaware's power structure. He has been appointed to gubernatorial commissions, speaks frequently with the state's lieutenant governor, and socializes on a first-name basis with heads of area poultry companies.

This arts aficionado turned social worker says he is happy with his new life. As a retiree, he has plenty of time to give, and he refuses any payment for his endeavors. As he sees it, "I'm giving back the money my wealthy Guatemalan grandmother took to Chile."

Research for this story was supported in part by the Urban Institute.



MARIA MENDOZA:

A Mexican immigrant and former poultry worker, she is now a Vista Volunteer helping Guatemalan newcomers.



SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS/PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD KOCI-HERNANDEZ

INCOME DISPARITY:

Since 1980, the earning power of Hispanic workers has dropped 11 percent relative to earnings of all other workers.

PROGRESS, YES, BUT LATINO INCOME STILL LAGS BEHIND THAT OF WHITES AND BLACKS, AND EDUCATION MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

The Economics of Being Hispanic

■ BY JOHN MAGGS

Are Hispanics the new underclass of a prosperous America? Broad and detailed statistics on the economic status of Hispanics are in short supply, but what numbers there are indicate that Hispanics are increasingly stuck on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. And although this status is partly due

to a steady stream of recent immigrants who lack the basic tools to succeed in an Information Age America, the relative position of Latinos economically seems to be dropping even as native-born Hispanics are making up a larger share of the Hispanic population.

The causes of this disparity are many, but chief among them are lower high school and college graduation rates for Hispanic-Americans, and a changing economy that marginalizes low-skilled, low-education workers. Despite this bad news for Latinos, new research shows that successive genera-

tions of Hispanics can overcome many of the disadvantages faced by their parents and grandparents. And, despite popular suspicions that Hispanic immigrants are taking away jobs, depressing wages, and draining tax dollars, the evidence suggests otherwise.

THE NUMBERS

Over the past two decades, a period of unprecedented Hispanic immigration, the relative economic status of Hispanics in America has been dropping steadily. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, median weekly earnings in 1998

for a full-time worker 16 years of age or older were \$572, or about \$30,000 a year. The median for a Hispanic worker, in contrast, was \$398, or about \$21,000 per year, just 69.5 percent of the median for all workers. This percentage has been falling steadily since 1980. That year, when workers were taking home weekly earnings of \$292, Hispanics were earning \$230, or 78.7 percent of the median. In 1985, when median weekly earnings were up to \$378 for all workers, Hispanic earnings were only \$292, or 77.2 percent of the median. The relative earnings of Hispanic workers have been declining ever since, to last year's 69.5 percent level. (*See chart, p. 2360.*)

That's an 11 percent drop in the earning power of Hispanics, relative to all Americans, in 18 years. The depth of that decline seems even more dramatic when compared with the relative earning power of another minority group—blacks. Over the same 18-year period, when the relative earning power of Hispanics was falling steadily, the relative earnings of black workers were virtually unchanged, and hardly fluctuated in any year.

In 1980, black workers had median weekly earnings of \$232, amounting to 79.4 percent of the \$292 earned by all workers. Fast-forward to 1998, and the relative amount of black earnings has barely changed, rising slightly to 79.7 percent of that for all workers. Throughout that period, the ratio of black earnings to the national average never changed by more than a few tenths of a percentage point.

But consider how Hispanics did compared with blacks. In 1980, black and Hispanic workers had almost exactly the same median weekly earnings—\$232 for blacks and \$230 for Hispanics. By 1985, a small gap had appeared—blacks earned \$300 and Hispanics earned \$292, or 97.3 percent of black earnings. The gap widened. In 1990, Hispanic earnings were 94 percent of blacks'; in 1998, they were 87 percent. That change, 12 percent over 18 years, is almost exactly the same amount by which Hispanic earnings declined compared with the national average during the same period.

So during a generation of great economic turmoil and growth for the United States, although Hispanics emerged as the ascendant ethnic minority, they also steadily lost ground economically, compared with other Americans and with those previously stuck in that low rank. Americans have prospered in those nearly 20 years, but some more than others: Earnings by all Americans and by blacks nearly doubled in that generation. Hispanic earnings rose too, but 20 percent less than that of whites and blacks.

EDUCATION LAGS

There are no easy answers for this phenomenon. It is tempting to conclude that recent waves of immigration, both legal and illegal, are responsible, because recent Hispanic immigrants are mostly poor and take the lowest-paying jobs when they arrive. But against this backdrop of ris-

ing Hispanic immigration in the 1990s has been a much larger increase in the overall population of native-born Hispanics. At current birthrates and levels of legal and illegal immigration, more than three times as many Hispanics are born in the United States each year as are added from immigration. Simply blaming the lagging earnings of Hispanics on the disadvantages of recent immigrants is not enough of an explanation.

A major factor seems to be education, or the lack of it. According to a study in the December 1998 *Population and Development Review*, a New York-based academic journal, the proportion of adult immigrants without a high school education has been rising since

1980; by 1994, they numbered about a third of all immigrants in the United States, or 5.1 million workers. That's a small proportion of the total U.S. work force of well over 100 million people, but immigrants represent 30 percent of all U.S. workers without a high school diploma.

Another factor hurting Hispanic earnings is the changing economy, which demands that workers have more education if they are to get ahead. Although some immigrants are foreign-born doctors or computer programmers bringing their skills to U.S. shores, most new arrivals are part of the low-skilled work force—indeed, they have come to dominate it. Between 1980 and 1994, the number of native-born low-skilled workers dropped from 20 million to 13 million.

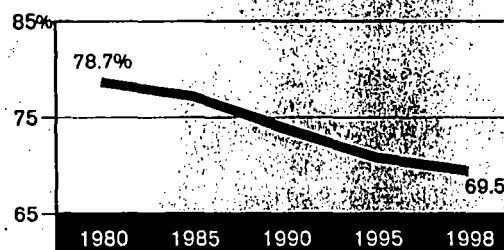
And as improved living standards become more dependent on education and skills in an information-based economy, immigrants (half of them Hispanic) are falling further and further behind. In 1980, the poverty rate for immigrants was 15.6 percent, not much more than the 12.2 percent poverty rate for native-born Americans. By 1994, the poverty rates for immigrants had grown to 22.7 percent compared to 13.9 percent for natives. Here's why: For immigrants without a high school diploma, the poverty rate rocketed from 20 percent in 1980 to 36 percent in 1994. Changes in the U.S. economy have made education and English-language skills more vital than ever. The lack of English proficiency tends to work against low-skilled workers in the Information Age more than it did in previous generations, when manufacturing jobs didn't necessarily require much in the way of language skills. Those immigrants without education and English are more likely to be trapped in poverty.

It is impossible to say exactly how much of the

FALLING BEHIND

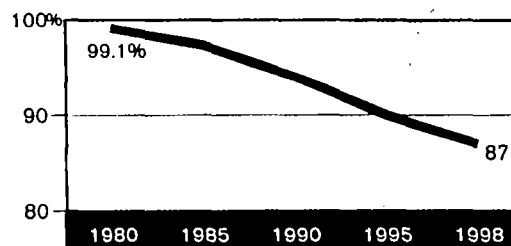
Median weekly earnings for Hispanic workers, although they have risen in nominal terms, have dropped steadily in the past 18 years in relation to median weekly earnings for all American workers. This chart shows, in percentage terms, how median weekly earnings for Hispanics compared with those for all American workers.

HISPANIC EARNINGS COMPARED WITH ALL WORKERS' EARNINGS



Meanwhile, Hispanics also lost ground relative to black workers. This chart shows, in percentage terms, how median weekly earnings for Hispanic workers compared with those of black American workers.

HISPANIC EARNINGS COMPARED WITH BLACK EARNINGS



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor

low-skilled work force is made up of recent Hispanic immigrants, but new research by Jeffrey S. Passel of the Urban Institute in Washington indicates that Hispanics are much more likely to lack basic education than the next-largest immigrant ethnic group—Asians.

Passel said that sharp differences between Asian and Hispanic immigrants' earnings are due almost entirely to disparities in educational attainment. Hispanic immigrants earn about two-thirds of what is earned by "third-generation" white workers, whom Passel defines as those whose parents were born in the United States. But Asian immigrants earn much more—95 percent of what whites earn. The source of this disparity is clear: Only 41 percent of Hispanic immigrant workers are high school graduates, vs. 84 percent of Asian immigrants. Among third-generation whites, 92 percent complete high school.

The gulf is even more dramatic among the college-educated. Asian immigrants have an even higher college graduation rate—42 percent—than third-generation whites' 30 percent. Only 5 percent of Hispanic immigrants graduate from college, all but shutting out millions of other Hispanics from the credential and skills that are increasingly the means for escaping poverty in America.

Passel said there is some good news for Hispanics in his research, however. The disadvantages that plague Hispanic immigrants recede sharply for their children and grandchildren. For U.S.-born children of Hispanic immigrants, or for children who were less than 10 years old when they arrived, the benefits of an American education close the wage gap to 90 percent of the earnings of third-generation whites. Unfortunately, third-generation Hispanics don't make further progress, earning the same 90 percent achieved by their parents, he said.

This is again mainly due to the lag in the college graduation rate for Hispanics, which is only 19 percent for second-generation Hispanics and 13 percent for third-generation Hispanics. The wage gap reflects the education gap—third-generation whites are more than

twice as likely to graduate from college, and third-generation Asians three times as likely. This huge difference seems to point to a continued lag and perhaps even a widening of the earnings gap for Hispanics unless more of them can graduate from high school and college. Passel's research will be detailed in a study to be published this fall by the Urban Institute.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

A question separate from how well Hispanics are doing is what impact Hispanic immigrants have on the U.S. economy. Some Americans view immigrants as a pool of cheap and conscientious workers in a tight labor market—one in which arduous or distasteful

There are winners and losers from immigrant labor, however. The winners include business owners and higher-skilled workers whose pay is boosted, since low-wage immigrants allow capital to be used more productively. More generally, benefits are extended to all consumers who buy goods and services that are cheaper because of immigrant labor. The losers are less-skilled workers who compete with immigrants for jobs and wages.

However, empirical research indicates that the damage to the losers is very slight, and is overwhelmed by the benefits to others. The NRC study estimates that immigrants depressed the wages of other lower-skilled workers by only 1 percent to 2 percent in the 1980s, while boosting wages for higher-skilled workers and benefiting consumers by a much larger amount.

Even in those areas where large numbers of immigrants compete with other lower-skilled workers—in Los Angeles, for example—research shows little impact on native-born workers. Although some observers have argued that blacks suffer disproportionately from competition with immigrants, this is not true, according to the council's study. In fact, the main vic-

tims are earlier waves of immigrants.

Despite suspicions that immigrants are a fiscal burden on government, they are actually a net revenue generator, through the taxes they pay on their income and spending. The revenue produced by immigrants in two immigrant-rich states—New Jersey and California—reduced federal taxes by \$2 to \$4 a year for each American household nationwide, the study found, even allowing for the cost of education and welfare payments.

Gary Burtless, an economist at the Brookings Institution, a think tank in Washington, says he tends to think that the disadvantages Hispanics face—even after several generations in the United States—will diminish over time. The United States, almost alone among developed nations, confers one advantage that tends to reduce the disadvantages faced by immigrant groups—full citizenship for anyone born here. "It is a powerful force," said Burtless. ■



BRIGHTER FUTURE:

After only one generation, Hispanics earn about 90 percent of what whites earn.

jobs are especially hard to fill. Others see immigrants taking away jobs from American-born workers, depressing wages, and becoming a burden for federal and local governments.

An influential work on this debate is *The New Americans*, a 1997 study by the government's National Research Council. The study argues that immigration provides clear benefits to the U.S. economy. First, by boosting the supply of labor, immigration adds to U.S. output, providing more wealth for all Americans to share. Also, a larger labor pool allows workers to specialize and be used more productively, the study says. Overall, the actual gain from immigrant labor in an \$8 trillion economy is minuscule—between \$1 billion and \$10 billion a year—but a clear plus

RICARDO A. BLOOM

Boomers, Say Hola

■ BY JULIE KOSTERLITZ

At the same time that America is getting browner, it is also getting grayer. This may not be a happy convergence.

Here's why: The retirement of the baby boomers will leave fewer workers to support the burgeoning costs of public programs for the elderly, such as Social Security and Medicare. At the same time, a growing share of those workers will be

minorities—especially Hispanics—who tend to earn low wages. That's bound to raise questions of fairness and of public priorities.

Some futurists predict that economic and fiscal strains will take on cultural and political overtones, resulting in a war between the generations suffused with racial tensions.

That provocative vision was first articulated by a new breed of Hispanic activist in the mid-1980s. In California, "what we will see from the year 2010 onward is essentially an age-ethnic stratification. Anyone age 65 and older will likely be Anglo, while younger people will likely be non-Anglos," David Hayes-Bautista told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1987. Hayes-Bautista, the director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health, at the University of California (Los Angeles), told *The San Diego Union-Tribune* that "either minorities are going to have to have a greater income level or the elderly are going to have to take smaller pieces of the economic pie."

Fiscal conservatives, libertarians, and young professionals quickly seized on the warning to argue for an overhaul of entitlements for the elderly. "By the second decade of the next century, an unprecedented proportion of the elderly population will lack any blood relation-

ship to younger Americans, and what's more, the generations will be increasingly estranged as well by differences of race and ethnicity," wrote a then-31-year-old political analyst, Phillip Longman, in a dire 1987 book, *Born to Pay: The New Politics of Aging in America*.

Longman argued that Social Security ought to go only to the needy—an approach that has since fallen out of favor among Social Security's critics. But critics today seize on the same demographic facts to argue for "privatizing" Social Security—that is, diverting some or all of payroll taxes into private retirement accounts that can be invested in the stock market, which promises greater returns over the long haul.

In a report issued last year, William W. Beach, director of the Center for Data Analysis at the conservative Heritage Foundation, contended that Social Security is an especially bad deal for Hispanics because the payouts are getting ever more meager relative to taxes paid, and because keeping the system solvent would require either major benefit cuts or a 40 percent tax increase between now and 2050. "The declining rates of return and mounting tax burdens implied by the current system disproportionately affect the comparatively youthful Hispanic population," he

wrote. In 2050, the report noted, the government estimates that Hispanics will comprise almost 25 percent of the 18-to-66-year-old population, but just 17 percent of those age 67 and over.

Privatization ought to hold a special appeal for Hispanics, he argued, not only because it could provide them more money in retirement, but also because it could offer them a vital opportunity to acquire and pass on wealth—and thus join the mainstream of American economic life.

Statistics do tend to show that Hispanics retire with far fewer assets. Hispanic households headed by adults over age 70, for example, have only one-eighth the financial assets of whites (not including the value of a home), says James P. Smith, a senior economist at RAND, a think tank in Santa Monica, Calif. Smith argues that Social Security may in fact play a role in discouraging saving among those with low wages.

Thus far, however, the privatization push has failed to catch fire with either ordinary Hispanics or the major advocacy groups. As relative newcomers, Hispanics tend to be more preoccupied with issues that address their immediate needs and concerns—welfare reform, affirmative action, education, immigration, and civil rights.

**HISPANIC WORKERS
IN THE NEXT CENTURY
WILL BE CRUCIAL TO
PAYING THE
RETIREMENT COSTS
OF BABY BOOMERS.**

NEXT GENERATION:

Hispanic groups are just beginning to focus on their interests in the Social Security reform debate.



from Social Security. Fernando Torres-Gil, associate dean of the School of Public Policy and Social Research at UCLA, calls Heritage's comparisons between Social Security and privatization "gross oversimplification."

Rodríguez fears that letting individuals invest a share of their own wages will mainly benefit those with high salaries and investment savvy. Hispanics, most of whom know little of Wall Street and whose ranks include many immigrants deeply mistrustful of banks and financial institutions, would, he argues, be left behind. Lacking other assets, he said, they simply can't afford to risk their old-age security in the stock market. "The fact

Indeed, it was a 30-something white guy, Richard Thau, executive director of Third Millennium—the self-styled lobby for Generation X—who convened the first major conference of Hispanic advocacy groups on Social Security reform, just a little more than two years ago.

Although Third Millennium supports sweeping reforms, including partial privatization, Thau says his goal is not to proselytize but to be inclusive. "I'd been attending any number of symposia, and came to the conclusion that those involved in the discussion on aging were almost exclusively Anglo men over the age of 50," he said, adding that Third Millennium held similar conferences with African-American and women's groups, among others.

But as Hispanic advocacy groups begin focusing on the issue, most of them—with the exception of business-oriented groups—say they oppose privatization and want reforms that preserve Social Security's basic structure.

That's because Hispanics as a group rely far more heavily on Social Security for retirement income than does the population as a whole: Just 9 percent of all couples age 65 and older rely on the program for all of their income, but nearly a quarter of Hispanic couples do.

And, as a group, Hispanics tend to

get more from Social Security—relative to what they paid in—than either whites or blacks. That's because the program is comparatively more generous to low-wage workers and to those with longer life expectancies. Hispanics, according to government statistics, live longer than other ethnic groups, and thus collect more benefits. Some Hispanic scholars dispute that, however, saying the government's data on Hispanics' life expectancy must be flawed. Hispanics' poverty, hazardous occupations, and poor access to health care all suggest a shorter-than-average life expectancy.

The privatizers' promise of greater riches in retirement does have some appeal to Hispanic groups. Despite Social Security, nearly one in four older Latinos lives in poverty—more than two and a half times the poverty rate for elderly whites, and just below the rate for elderly blacks. The claim by conservatives that the Social Security program is not a good deal "is not completely untrue," said Eric Rodríguez, a senior policy analyst with the National Council of La Raza.

But the Heritage analysis has come under a barrage of criticism from liberal analysts and Social Security's own actuaries for, among other things, overstating the possible returns from individual accounts and understating the returns

that [Social Security] is guaranteed and that it is progressive is very important, because their earnings and incomes are very low."

Still, Hispanic leaders praise conservatives for reaching out to them when others did not. "Though I do not agree with them, Third Millennium and Heritage have put this issue on the agenda, and I appreciate that," said Torres-Gil. These leaders say they are educating their members on the issues and will insist on having more say in the Social Security reform debate.

But Hispanic leaders are also recasting the generational arguments to advance their own priorities, including better health care, education, and job training. In a sense, they're making Hayes-Bautista's original argument all over again.

"If the retired Anglo community will not support education for Hispanic children, why should those Hispanics as workers support generous" cost-of-living increases for retirees, asks Harry P. Pachon, president of the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, a Hispanic-focused think tank with offices in California and Texas.

Indeed, says Pachon, Hispanics' poor job prospects are "a recipe for inter-ethnic tensions just within the work force itself."

The Education Challenge

■ BY SIOBHAN GORMAN

The half-paved road that leads up to Kelly Elementary School is lined with single-bedroom, wood-frame houses that sleep families of six to eight people and lack running water.

Located in the Las Milpas *colonia*—an impoverished

border community—in the city of Pharr, Texas, the neighborhood struggles with gangs, domestic violence, and an unemployment rate exceeding 45 percent. At Kelly, 99 percent of the students are Hispanic; few students enter pre-kindergarten speaking English; and 84 percent come from families with low-enough incomes to qualify for the free or reduced-price lunches offered under a federal program. But despite all their problems, inside the school walls, children are learning.

"It was an oasis compared to everything around it," said Rosalie O'Donoghue, a former educator who was part of a team of evaluators who awarded Kelly a 1997-98 national "distinguished school" award, one of five awarded to schools in Texas by the U.S. Department of Education.

Schools such as Kelly, made up mainly of immigrants' children, usually start miles behind the starting block. Each year, they face unpredictable enrollment numbers and flocks of students who do not speak a word of English at home. In addition, immigrant communities tend to have low incomes and are not a popular destination for teachers, especially good ones.

But Kelly's students are doing well. More than 90 percent of them are passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills test. The key seems to be Kelly's energetic yet flexible

emphasis on basic reading skills, frequent diagnostic tests, increased parental involvement, a strong principal, and a school district that has kept teachers' salaries competitive.

But the school's progress is recent. Four years ago only 68 percent of Kelly's students passed the Texas assessment test, a result that prevented the school from achieving the second highest of four academic ratings from the state. The explanation: Many of the kids just couldn't read. With little supervision at home and no after-school options, most Kelly students went home to a television set. They would return to school the next day minus homework and books, but able to summarize the plot of that

afternoon's *novelas*—Spanish soap operas.

Kelly faced other handicaps no different from those of many other schools that serve immigrant families. Annual budgets are based on the number of students enrolled the previous year, so a school with an unpredictable and growing enrollment is perpetually underbudgeted, said Rodolfo O. de la Garza, a University of Texas (Austin) government professor who specializes in Latino issues. At Kelly, which the state regards as a "rapid growth" campus, the student population swelled to 800 last year, finally prompting the school district to move half of the children to another, newly created elementary school.

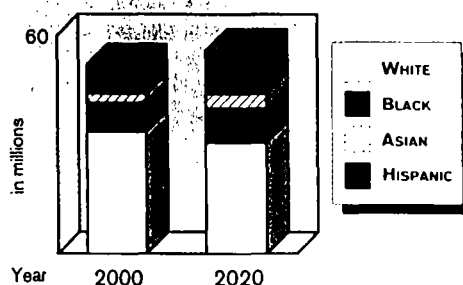
In communities such as Las Milpas, where Spanish is the only language spoken at home, schools need to adapt their curricula and budgets accordingly. They need sets of books and teaching materials in two languages, as well as teachers trained in teaching children English while they're also teaching them math, science, and history. And de la Garza has found that even when schools recruit properly trained bilingual teachers, sometimes those teachers overcompensate for the students' problems by expecting less from them.

With students growing up in a Spanish-speaking community, it also becomes more difficult to con-

ONE TEXAS SCHOOL IS MAKING PROGRESS DESPITE LONG ODDS, BUT HISPANIC CHILDREN CONTINUE TO LAG IN SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT.

MORE HISPANIC STUDENTS

This chart represents the projected population growth for children ages 5 to 17.



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

vince them that learning English is important. "They speak English here in school, but they go home and it's Spanish all the time," said Trine Barron, the principal of Kelly Elementary. "We have to do a lot of motivating just to get them interested in English."

Attracting good teachers and retaining them are also problems. "The holding power of a low-income school district makes it very difficult to compete," said Oscar M. Cardenas, a senior director in the Texas Education Agency's Office for the Education of Special Populations.

Barron said her school has been blessed with a district superintendent who has made teachers' salaries a priority and has kept them competitive with those of surrounding areas. The starting salary in the Hidalgo Independent School District is \$28,240; teachers also get bonuses every five years.

After climbing for nearly a decade, Kelly students' reading scores plateaued four years ago, and curriculum tinkering, such as adding a computer-based reading program, had not helped much. Barron decided it was time for drastic action. Because reading was the school's weak point, she dedicated two hours of classroom time each day to reading, and started using Reading Recovery, a curriculum that has been successful with many kinds of students across the country. The program, which requires specialized training for teachers, consists of daily intensive 45-minute, one-on-one sessions with students. At Kelly they're usually conducted in Spanish.

Since the adoption of Reading Recovery, the school's passing rate on the Texas assessment test for reading has shot up from 68 percent to 91 percent. Now some of the kids who lagged far behind in reading are among the school's top readers, Barron said.

And two years ago, the Hidalgo School District began requiring schools

TOUGH CLIMB:

Throughout the 1990s, Hispanic students have scored about 10 percent lower than non-Hispanics on national tests.



RICHARD A. BLOOM

to administer diagnostic tests in reading, math, writing, social studies, and science every six weeks. Teachers report back to the district on each student's progress and the areas in which children need help. Students who show deficiencies on the tests attend daily after-school tutoring that targets the concepts that are troubling them.

The other major change at Kelly was an increased emphasis on parents. Kelly parent Norma Dominguez started a parental involvement program four years ago, and it now holds monthly meetings at the school and at parents' homes, in addition to offering field trips and English-language programs.

In the first year, the number of parent volunteers in Dominguez's program at Kelly grew from two to 15. It has leveled off at 25, which is still small for a school that had 800 students. But Dominguez says the program's outreach efforts have made many more parents comfortable with the school. She estimates that 80 percent of them are illegal immigrants who feared the school would contact

immigration officials. A few years ago, parents would set foot on campus only when their children got in trouble, but now, Barron said, "they've become a lot more comfortable coming in. They see us as partners."

Perhaps one of the keys to Kelly's success is the willingness of administrators and teachers to try new things. This school year, which began on Aug. 10, Barron has a new experiment in the works. She has restructured the day to allow students reading at the highest levels to go home an hour early. Barron hopes that the smaller number of students for that last hour will enable teachers to offer more specialized attention to slower readers.

While Kelly Elementary's experience shows that a focused effort can bring low-performing Hispanic children up to speed, it is the exception and not the rule. Throughout the 1990s, Hispanic students in grades 4, 8, and 12 have scored about 10 percent lower than non-Hispanic white students in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress test.

And the demographic challenges are considerable. The Hispanic school-age population is growing faster than that of any other ethnic group. Census figures predict the Hispanic school-age population will rise 51 percent between 1995 and 2010, and the white school-age population will decline about 6 percent.

But Hispanic leaders note that immigrants come here not only for jobs but also for the American promise of universal education, and the country would do well to meet that need.

"Education has been the fundamental consistent policy concern of Mexican-Americans since the 19th century," de la Garza said. "Their ability to realize that objective has been limited, and then success at realizing that objective has been limited, but they have always tried to pursue it despite their own lack of education."

**PATRIOTIC GROUP:**

When Army Staff Sgt. Andrew Ramirez was captured in Kosovo, Latinos in East Los Angeles rallied around his family.

Not Enough GI Josés

■ BY SYDNEY J. FREEDBERG, JR.

HISPANICS COULD FILL THE MILITARY'S RECRUITMENT GAP, IF THEY COULD FINISH HIGH SCHOOL IN GREATER NUMBERS.

Look at the names on the Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Or the names of the three soldiers captured by the Serbs during the Kosovo campaign: Stone, Gonzales, and Ramirez.

By these and many other measures, Hispanics are one of America's more martially inclined ethnic groups. Hispanic leaders point proudly to Hispanics' commitment to military service. In Defense Department surveys, Hispanic youth consistently indicate above-average interest in enlisting. There's just one problem: Hispanics are actually underrepresented in the ranks.

Only the Marine Corps is home to the same percentage of Hispanics as the general working-age population,

just under 12 percent. All of the other services fall short. New classes of recruits coming into the military are somewhat more representative—preliminary figures show the Navy's 1998 recruiting class yielded full representation—but the Army and, especially, the Air Force still lag.

And at a time of large shortfalls in military recruiting, the mystery of the missing Hispanics is no longer just an issue of ethnic equity, but a national security matter as well. The most man-

power-intensive service, the Army, expects to fall more than 7,000 recruits short this year, said Army Secretary Louis Caldera, himself a Latino. "We'd be OK if we were getting our fair share of the Hispanic-American market."

So what's the problem? Hispanics, after all, were bloodily over-represented in the Vietnam War, accounting for a quarter of combat casualties. But unlike the massive, mostly drafted force of that era, the modern military recruits almost exclusively among high school graduates and cities many of the best ones with offers of college aid. Today, the Pentagon rejects most high school dropouts out of hand. That means, lamented Rep. Ciro Rodriguez, D-Texas, "that half of Hispanics can't even participate." In Texas public high schools, 54 percent of Hispanics drop out nationwide, 50 percent do.

The hard fact is that Hispanics are

the worst-educated group in the United States—and today's military is the best-educated in American history. Any serious solution must address that fundamental mismatch.

But how? There is no consensus, even inside the Pentagon. The point man on the issue is Caldera, a West Point graduate and former Army officer who came to the Defense Department after a career in California politics. The controversial centerpiece of his program: recruiting more high school dropouts who possess GED certificates.

JOHNNY GET YOUR GED

The military does not take high school dropouts without credentials. But what it does take, cautiously and in limited numbers—no more than 10 percent of recruits under Pentagon policy—are holders of the General Educational Development certificate. Devised for the military by the American Council on Education in 1942, the GED has become widely accepted in the civilian world as a rough equivalent of a high school diploma. Some 800,000 people take the test every year.

The Army has already increased its intake of GED recruits to the maximum. But Caldera does not want simply to take more GED-holders: He wants to make more. For high school dropouts with no criminal record, no drug problems, and good scores on military entry exams, a pilot Army program will pay for enrollment in GED programs—in return for their enlisting once they pass. The goal, Caldera said, is “to expand the market that we are recruiting from by looking at individuals who today we can't recruit, and turning them into individuals that we can.”

But over the years, the military has had well-founded reasons to limit recruitment of GEDs.

First, experts disagree about the GED's ability to measure academic achievement. The American Council on Education says its test is a good barometer of skills: it boasts it raised standards two years ago so high that a

third of traditional high school graduates can't pass. But critics charge that the test still takes a “lowest-common-denominator” approach.

What really worries the military, however, is not intelligence, but persistence. Many dropouts are bright, but all are proven quitters, the logic goes. If they dropped out of high school, they'll probably drop out of the military as well, wasting recruiters' time and the armed forces' training dollars.

Statistics support this common-sense conclusion. Combining data from all the armed services from 1988-94, the attrition rate for enlistees with high school diplomas—those who flunk basic training, get discharged, or other-

the Hispanic community, many dropouts—far from being slackers—left school to take a full-time job to help support their struggling families. The military can sort out the most motivated by looking at legal records, work history, psychological exams, and aptitude tests. And, under the new program, candidates cannot just cram for the GED exam, because the Army will require them to take remedial courses.

Although examining other criteria shows “some promise,” said Janice H. Laurence, an analyst at the Human Resources Research Organization in Alexandria, Va., “the educational credential has been the single best predictor” of whether a recruit will quit or stick with it. Statistically speaking, she said, everything else is “iffy.”

But answering “what-ifs” is why experiments are conducted in the first place, and Congress is so far letting Caldera proceed. “There are still some pretty rigorous recruiting standards,” said Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., chairman of the Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee. “I approve of this program. [though] we'll have to watch it very closely. For the time being, I'm satisfied.”

Hispanic members of Congress are more than satisfied with Caldera's program. Of the Texas delegation's five Hispanic Democrats, Caldera's program won plaudits from all four interviewed: Rodriguez, Rep. Solomon P. Ortiz, Rep. Silvestre Reyes—all members of the House Armed Services Committee—and Rep. Charles Gonzalez. Hispanic activists also praise Caldera's plan. Said Jess Quintero, national secretary of the Hispanic veterans' group, American GI Forum: “Other leaders have talked about it, but he put a plan into action.”

But is Caldera lowering standards? “Compared to what?” responded Lawrence J. Korb, a former assistant secretary of Defense who is now with the Council on Foreign Relations, a



NEW METHODS:

Army Secretary Louis Caldera and Air Force personnel chief Ruby DeMesme are trying new ways to recruit more Hispanics.

wise quit before their three-year term is up—is 29 percent. For enlistees with GEDs, it's 49 percent.

But Rep. Rodriguez said that “a damn survey” does not tell the whole story and that undoubtedly some GED-holders have the dedication to succeed in the military. Rodriguez should know. A ninth-grade dropout himself, he went on to college, not to mention Congress. “You've got to be able to look at the individual,” he insisted. “We're not asking to lower standards, but we are asking them to look at multiple criteria.”

That is Caldera's strategy. The Secretary believes the Army can pick and choose from among GED-holders. “You can segment that group,” he said, “and take the cream of the crop of the non-high-school graduates.” Especially in

think tank in New York. "Compared to the last couple of years, sure; but compared to the force that won the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War, no." The weaker economy and shrinking military of the early 1990s made recruiting easy, allowing the military to raise its standards to historic highs. Korb argues that during the 1980s, the military accepted more recruits who had not finished high school and more people with lower entrance exam scores. "If you went back to the . . . '80s quality [standards]," said Korb, "you could solve this very, very quickly."

GROUNDING

Not a chance, said Ruby B. DeMesme, the Air Force assistant secretary for manpower. "We are not considering lowering our quality standards."

And those standards have plenty of room to drop. Although the Pentagon lets each service take as many as 10 percent of its recruits from the ranks of GED-holders—as the Army does—the Air Force takes less than 1 percent, a number that upsets Hispanic lawmakers. Complained Rodriguez: "The hardest nut to crack is that Air Force."

Of all the services, the Air Force has the best-educated personnel and the worst underrepresentation of Hispanics. According to the Air Force's latest figures, 5.3 percent of enlisted personnel and just 2.2 percent of officers are Hispanic. Because it depends on temperamental, cutting-edge technology, the service always insisted on high school graduates, and it got them, drawn by the glamour of that same technology. For 20 years, the Air Force flew past every recruiting target.

But that in itself was a problem. The Air Force never developed a strategy to recruit more Hispanics, because it never needed a strategy to recruit anyone. The service did not even advertise on television. The Air Force essentially let Hollywood and word-of-mouth do its work for it and reaped the population that walked in the door. Said DeMesme: "We were actually having to turn away people, so we didn't think it

was necessary to get more people interested."

That has changed. This year, the Air Force might miss its annual quota for the first time in 20 years. Change is in the air. "The Air Force has not traditionally used paid advertising," said DeMesme. "We have begun to, [including] bilingual kinds of messages. . . . We haven't used posters where you see Hispanics flying airplanes a lot; we're going to do more of that."

But "simply advertising more aggressively . . . is not going to be producing the improvement and the turnaround they should be striving for," fretted Norman Heitzman, a Defense Department analyst on loan to the Hispanic advocacy group National Council of La Raza (itself a sign of how seriously the Pentagon takes the issue). To change who comes in, said Heitzman, the military must commit to change itself.

OPPORTUNITY OR EXPLOITATION?

The Marine Corps' success, said Heitzman, begins at the top, with a strong commitment to innovation from senior service leaders. "When I've gone to meetings with the Marine Corps that have focused on this," he said, "You've had [Gen. Charles C. Krulak,] the commandant of the Marines, sitting right there."

While Hispanics' affinity for the Ma-

rine Corps dates at least to Vietnam—"Hispanics want to be macho men, and I don't blame 'em," said Rep. Ortiz—the four-year tenure of Gen. Krulak, which ended June 30, saw a sharp increase.

"The secret," said Krulak in an interview, is "letting the Hispanic population know that we are not, I say again not, going in to take their kids from the educational system." Krulak asserts that parents will not encourage their children to enlist if they see the services as dead-end jobs for dropouts; but if they view a tour of duty as a bright kid's path toward college and a good job, the parents will be on the recruiters' side.

Although Krulak hesitates to criticize the Army, he is "worried" by the plan to target GED-holders: "The signal they're sending is, 'OK, don't worry about getting out of school, because the Army will come along and give you the opportunity.'"

But Hispanic members of Congress say that pursuing Krulak's logic to its extreme would mean not even having a GED for dropouts. In the Hispanic community, those dropouts are already there; opening up opportunities to the nongraduates should hardly encourage more youths to quit school, Rodriguez said. Indeed, both Ortiz—a dropout himself—and Reyes used the Army as their ladder up.

Some critics have said that military recruiting among Hispanics amounts to an exploitive "economic draft" of the underprivileged. "The answer to those that would worry about exploitation," Reyes replied, is, "you get much more out of it than you lose." Reyes and three of his five brothers joined the Army. If he hadn't, he said, "I probably still would be on that farm."

And the military needs Hispanics as much as they need it. "Sometime early in the next century, a quarter of the nation's population is going to be Hispanic," said Caldera. "A quarter of the soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen [will] have to come from the Hispanic population. So it's important that we start figuring out how to penetrate that market today."

WANTED: MORE HISPANICS IN UNIFORM

Hispanics make up about 12 percent of the military-age population but a far smaller share of the military force, except for the Marine Corps.

PERCENTAGE OF HISPANICS AMONG:

Civilians 18-44 years old	11.9%
Marine enlisted personnel	11.6
Navy enlisted personnel	8.5
Army enlisted personnel	7.0
All services enlisted personnel	7.0
Air Force enlisted personnel	4.8
Civilians 18-24 years old	14.5
Marine recruits	12.3
Navy recruits	10.2
Army recruits	9.6
Air Force recruits	6.8

SOURCES: Department of Defense, National Council of La Raza, from 1997 data

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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Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education, September 1996

Issues and Recommendations for the Attainment of Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

To reverse a legacy of neglect and to ensure Hispanic Americans equitable opportunity in educational attainment, it is important to form partnerships among all levels of government, the public and private sectors, the community, teachers, administrators, students, and parents. All are equally challenged to take a role in addressing the educational issues facing Hispanic American education, and all must learn to work together toward a common goal of excellence for all students.

The identification of the issues, policy areas, recommendations and research directions by the Presidential Commission and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans responds to the President's charge. We list the most important areas for ongoing improvement in the education of Hispanic Americans. Effective solutions and practices, and insightful scholarship are addressing some of these issues. It is our intention to widely disseminate, through electronic and printed media, this call for action, effective practices, models and scholarship as well as the Federal Agency Inventories, thereby creating a national database, accessible to all, on Hispanic American education.

Issues and Policy Areas

As described in this report, the issues affecting Hispanic American education are numerous and alarming. For the purpose of presenting recommendations, the following issues must be addressed:

- Improving the quality of instruction at every point along the educational continuum: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, High School, Postsecondary, and Adult Education;
- Improving the condition of schools;
- Increasing access to postsecondary institutions, and providing appropriate support;
- Improving the knowledge, skills, and cross-cultural competencies and effectiveness of teachers and administrators;
- Designing and promoting appropriate use of testing and assessment to enhance high quality instruction;
- Targeting appropriate levels of financial, human, health, and material resources toward Hispanic Americans;
- Challenging Federal, state, and local agencies to provide Hispanic Americans with equitable opportunities;
- Challenging the Department of Education to re-work the funding formulas and institution eligibility criteria so that HSIs can benefit from Campus-Based-Programs like work-study and supplemental educational opportunity grants;
- Challenging the corporate sector to provide Hispanic Americans more support and opportunities to enter all sectors of the work force and at every level; and

- Identifying and implementing future directions in research based on systematic collection of data targeted on specific program improvements affecting Hispanic educational outcomes.

Recommendations

To address these issues and policy areas, effective educational models must incorporate high-quality standards, equitable financial support, and diverse language and cultural knowledge. Parent and school collaboration must be specified in all plans of action; and the following principles should guide the implementation of recommendations:

- Government, at all levels, in partnership with local Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities, must assure that schools ensure the attainment of quality educational outcomes by Hispanic students;
- Long-term, strategic plans must be developed through collaborative approaches with the public and private sectors at the local, state, and national level to monitor and to ensure a high standard of educational attainment among Hispanic Americans; and
- Inter-Federal-agency coordination must be strongly promoted to maximize the pooling of resources and delivery of services.

The following is a description of specific recommendations.

Corrective action at every point along the educational continuum: Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Adult Education.

- Direct the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to work closely with community-based organizations to improve the participation of Latino preschoolers and their parents in early childhood programs;
- Increase the number of public, nonprofit, private, and community programs that provide intervention with parents during pregnancy incorporating health care, education, parenting education and childcare to provide an even start for Hispanic Americans;
- Monitor, research, collect, analyze, and report relevant data for every program affecting Hispanic American education;
- 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;
- Promote multilingualism as a national resource for all Americans;
- Identify successful dropout prevention programs for Latino students and implement these programs in school districts with the greatest need; and
- Establish programs that will train and prepare young adults (through school-to-work) and adults for a technology driven workplace.
- Provide access to technology resources in public places, such as schools and libraries.

Facilitate access into postsecondary institutions and provide appropriate support.

- Support Hispanic graduate students in targeted fields especially mathematics, the sciences, health related professions, the humanities, and in fields of anticipated faculty shortages;

- Commit special initiatives and resources to Hispanic Serving Institutions;
- Increase support for two-year and community college programs with concentrations of Hispanic students, and strengthen guidance and other support systems to facilitate transfer from community colleges to four-year colleges;
- Identify exemplary transfer programs that lead Hispanic students to the attainment of bachelor degrees;
- Ensure collaboration among Federal agencies regarding outreach and support programs for undergraduate and graduate Hispanic students; and
- Facilitate collaborations between businesses and higher education institutions, in order to provide apprenticeships, mentoring relationships, and summer training opportunities for Hispanic undergraduate and graduate students.

Build capacity in the education professions.

- Launch a national professional development program for elementary, middle school, secondary, college and university faculty that focuses on increasing the participation and success of Hispanic students in postsecondary education;
- Link loan forgiveness programs and scholarships to a national initiative which will encourage Hispanic students to become teachers and educators; and
- Launch a national program that equips educators across all content areas with the knowledge and skills to effectively teach bilingual and multicultural students.

Promote the design and appropriate use of testing and assessment.

- Establish a national standard which makes clear that a single measure of student achievement does not adequately assess a student's knowledge and capability;
- Ensure fair testing practices that take in consideration issues of language and culture; and
- Establish a national monitoring system to identify the misuse of testing and assessment that tracks Hispanic students into low-level curricular sequences and inappropriate placement in special education.

Challenge each Federal agency.

- Establish programs to upgrade the Hispanic American hiring and promotion system, from internships through senior executive service positions;
- Facilitate, promote, and monitor the progress of Hispanic education initiatives;
- Ensure the equitable allocation of resources in public school funding for academic support;
- Enforce the Federal requirements for desegregation;
- Monitor adherence to Federal requirements for the provision of equal educational opportunities for students with languages other than English;
- Direct Federal agencies to provide Hispanic Americans with equitable educational opportunities related to the agency's mission and services;
- Identify the appropriate office and staff in each Federal agency to respond to Executive Order

12900, Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;

- Establish a data system to track the number of participants and awards distributed for research and development, program evaluation, training, facilities and equipment, fellowships, internships, recruitment, student tuition, scholarships, private sector involvement and administration to institutions of higher education (two-year and four-year), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), school districts (K-12), Hispanic serving school districts, and organizations serving Hispanic Americans;
- Increase the grant award rate for Hispanic Serving Institutions from all Federal departments and agencies;
- Establish a Federal agency collaborative working group to identify, build, and complement successful, existing programs;
- Specify responsibility, data collection, procurement and contract considerations, and profile improvement at management and senior executive levels in the renewal version of Executive Order 12900;
- Establish the office of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans as a permanent, on-going collaborative effort between the Executive Branch and the Department of Education; and
- Prepare a plan of action to correct Hispanic participation performance in Federal agencies, below the 10 percent level.

Future Research Directions

There is a growing body of research on the education of Hispanic Americans. However, there is much more to learn and to implement. What follows is a brief listing of relevant issues for immediate, action-oriented research.

Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, High School, and Adult Education.

- Discover what can be done to promote inter- and intra-governmental agency collaborative approaches that promote preschool programs for Hispanic children;
- Explore to what extent early childhood bilingual programs enhance children's entry and success in later schooling;
- Investigate how distance-learning technologies can be utilized to prepare Hispanic preschoolers to begin school ready to learn;
- Analyze how teachers can be trained, in order to understand and to incorporate new knowledge, into their classrooms — knowledge which leads to an understanding of how ever-changing educational practices can be prescribed and implemented; and
- Determine which strategies for change are most effective and what resources are required to maintain exemplary learning environments that effectively integrate linguistic and cultural factors.

Access into Postsecondary Institutions and Appropriate Support

- Analyze the points of entry and exit into postsecondary education for Hispanic students;
- Identify factors and interventions that influence and predict Hispanic student's decisions to remain or to leave postsecondary education;

- Identify the most effective proactive approaches for early outreach to middle schools and high schools, matriculation between two- and four-year institutions, and persistence interventions, including how these vary by Hispanic group, region, and background;
- Analyze the financial support structures that best assure the successful completion of postsecondary education for Hispanic American students; and
- Analyze the enrollment and graduation rates and student persistence factors of HSIs both on the continental U.S. and on the island of Puerto Rico.

Building Capacity in the Education Professions.

- Determine how intellectually stimulating opportunities can be provided for educators to grow as professionals to improve pedagogy and to influence the expectations held by instructors about minority student performance.

Use of Testing and Assessment.

- Explore what impact assessment reforms have on Hispanic student achievement.

Targeting Civil, Financial, Human, and Material Resources Toward Hispanic Americans in the Federal work force.

- Determine what organizational, social, attitudinal, and political factors promote or obstruct effective Federal initiatives toward more inclusive approaches and programs with Hispanics as employees and as the recipients of agency-funded programs.

Conclusion

In response to President Clinton's charge and in response to the commitment demonstrated by Secretary Riley, this report focuses national attention on the education of the Hispanic American community in the United States. By synthesizing public hearing testimony, expert panel deliberations, research, and inventories of Federal agencies, it reports on the educational disparity between Hispanics and non-Hispanics precisely to illuminate the gravity of the Presidential challenge.

The Commission calls upon the nation to improve education for Hispanic Americans. This call to action goes out to Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike — rich, middle-class, and poor — to work in partnership with the leadership and resources of government and the private sector.

The nature of the problem with the education of Hispanic Americans is rooted in a refusal to accept, to recognize, and to value the central role of Hispanics in the past, present, and future of this nation. It is characterized by a history of neglect, oppression, and periods of wanton denial of opportunity.

The successful resolution of what has become nothing less than a national crisis is embedded in the collective and collaborative response of the nation; and it must be characterized by the affirmation of the value and dignity of Hispanic communities, families, and individuals.

There are serious shortcomings in the public education system that directly lead to unacceptable dropout rates, exceedingly low numbers of college graduates, and an overall denial of educational excellence to Hispanic Americans. While certain academic gains can be measured with some groups of Hispanic students, there remain enormous gaps between Hispanic American students and other American students on specific measures of educational attainment.

Unequal educational outcomes diminish the nation's ability to compete in the global economy, thus weakening its national fabric by not utilizing all of its human capital. The nation essentially is being

robbed of the full intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of a major segment of the American population, Hispanic Americans.

To reiterate, the essential purpose of this *Call to Action* is to compel local, state, and Federal policy makers to take serious and immediate action to improve the educational attainment of Hispanic Americans. To help reach that goal, this report has provided an overview of both the demographic and cultural composition of Hispanic Americans and the current state of education for Hispanic Americans. Through specific findings and recommendations, the report has responded to the President's charge by providing information to help re-focus the nation's policies and resources that will be needed to counter the consequences of ignorance and inattention.

Since 1983, the educational war conducted on behalf of children in public schools is slowly being won for many students, but not for all. To win that war, this work requires commitment, as a nation, to provide the best education possible to all U.S. citizens. The Presidential Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics is aggressively and affirmatively committed to keeping the nation alert. The United States should not tolerate the loss to our society of any more generations of children of any cultural, racial, or linguistic background. Excellence and equity must be inseparable benchmarks for the education of all of our nation's children. This report, therefore, is not the last word on what concerns Hispanic Americans. On the contrary, this report is just the beginning.

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State of Education...



Endnotes

National Policy Discussion on Assessment

Accountability measures for schools, teachers and students—linked to an expectation that all students can achieve to high standards—hold significant promise for our nation's youth, particularly Hispanic youth. The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans recognizes the importance and value of standards-based reform but is also deeply concerned about the potentially inappropriate use of testing by states and school districts.

Despite the potential for meaningful reforms to benefit all children, the White House Initiative is also increasingly concerned—indeed, at times, alarmed—over the implementation of some education reforms. In particular, the rush to establish statewide tests as a single measure of mastery of coursework is of great concern. In many such cases, students will be held accountable even if they have not had the kind of instruction or support they need to allow them to succeed. This problem is particularly notable (and unacceptable) in cases where other students held to the same standard—often, not minority—have access to exemplary curricula, well-trained teachers, and the kind of learning environments that foster success.

To understand more about the effects of standards, assessment and accountability on Latino students, the White House Initiative launched a four-part series of policy seminars in 1999. This series was offered in cooperation with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education and facilitated discussion from state and local education leaders, legal scholars, and education experts from around the country. The series was intended to create a public dialogue about the strengths and challenges posed by the use of stan-

dard-based tests on Hispanic students, consider the risks and limitations, and provide information to help guide states and school districts on some promising practices. Following is a description for each of the four policy seminars. Each seminar was moderated by Sarita E. Brown, Executive Director of the White House Initiative.

Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier [4/7/99]

This seminar laid the groundwork for subsequent discussions on the standards movement and its impact on the educational attainment of Hispanic students with a national, legal and political perspectives.

- Norma Cantú, Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education;
- Robert Schwartz, President, Achieve, Inc.; and
- Raymund Paredes, Vice Chancellor, University of California-Los Angeles.

Assessment as a Learning Tool: From Hope to Reality [5/5/99]

This seminar addressed the use of assessments as a learning tool and included a discussion of testing practices and accountability systems that promote educational excellence, including teachers.

- Sonia Hernandez, Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education, and member, President's Advisory Commission;
- Ana Maria Schuhmann, Dean, School of Education, Kean University, Union, New Jersey; and
- Arthur L. Coleman, deputy assistant secretary, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

Current Policies and Practices in Assessing English

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Language Learners [6/10/99]

This seminar addressed the controversy that continues to surround language in the United States. Speakers discussed the impact of current national, state and local policies as well as the effective practices of educators that promote educational excellence for all students.

- Delia Pompa*, Director, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, U.S. Department of Education; and
- Mary Ramirez*, Director of Language Equity Issues, School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

A Look at Current State Practices [7/20/99]

This seminar focused on the efforts of state and local policymaking and the challenges they face as states progress toward full implementation of education reform. They described current strategies to provide all students in their system, and specifically Hispanic students, equal and equitable access to rigorous academic standards and instruction.

- *Norma Cantú*, Assistant Secretary, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education;
- *Joyce Benjamin*, Associate Superintendent, Oregon Department of Education;
- *Jessie Montañó*, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Teaching, Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning;
- *Linda Mora*, Assistant Commissioner for Accountability and Assessment, Texas Department of Education; and
- *Susan Scalifoni*, Chief of Staff for Educational Services, Houston Independent School District, Texas.

The policy seminar series also complimented work by the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence

for Hispanic Americans and its Assessment Committee. On September 15, 1999 the Commission held a press conference and released a report "Testing Hispanic Students in the United States: A Report to the Nation" addressing the issue in more detail. The Committee is co-chaired by Commissioners Erlinda Archuleta from the Colorado Department of Education and Deputy Superintendent Sonia Hernandez of the California Department of Education.

"The purpose of this seminar series is to discuss publicly suggestions to ensure that Latino children reap the benefits of standards-based reform. By focussing on methods of accountability that serve the learning needs of Latino children, we hope to make the promise of reform real." —Sara E. Brown, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

This summary of the series provides many of the observations and concerns raised during discussion. It is intended to inform state and local discussions and prompt policies that advance fair and equitable accountability efforts that ultimately lead to educational excellence for all students, particularly Latino youth and those with limited English proficiency.

Education of Hispanics

The education of Hispanic students creates a great opportunity and an increasing challenge for schools throughout the United States. It is projected that by the year 2005, the Hispanic population will comprise the largest minority in the United States (13 percent of the population). Latinos are also one of the youngest population groups in the United States (1/3 of Latinos are under 18 years of age). Today, Latino students compose about 15 percent of the K-12 population, and it is expected that by 2010, they will represent about 25 percent

of that population.

While the Latino population continues to grow, the educational attainment of the Hispanic community continues to lag behind the rest of the nation, on average. The achievement gap between Hispanic students and their peers is the result of multiple factors, among them the low participation in pre-school programs, segregation in “resource poor” schools, high drop-out rates, low family incomes, and limited English proficiency.

It should be made clear that not all Latino students are “limited English proficient”, or “English language learners”. However, about 75 percent of English language learners are Hispanic [NCES: 1998 Condition of Education]. This factor complicates the educational assumptions and expectations the educational community has for Latino students.

What can be done to ensure that all Latino students graduate from high school, graduate from college, and secure high-skill, high-wage jobs in the next century? A combined effort involving parental involvement, adequate educational resources, quality teaching, and student support services are all essential. Another crucial element that can contribute to the improved educational attainment of Latino students is an equitable and quality educational system.

For the past several years, the nation has engaged in a movement to set standards for what students should know and be able to do that poses great opportunities for Latino students.

The Standards Movement

The standards movement is an attempt to refocus schools on their core academic mission, to bolster student skills and

knowledge, and establish a powerful way of holding schools, students, and teachers accountable for student learning to high standards. By setting standards, states and school districts can identify what students are able to do at discrete points during their education. In turn, educators, policymakers, and the public can use standards to determine whether students and schools are meeting desired expectations and how much progress schools and teachers are making in helping students achieve the desired standards.

To assess student performance, experts are currently developing standards-based tests for implementation. However, some of these tests are being used to determine grade advancement or graduation. This use of tests for “high-stakes” (such as grade advancement or graduation) has many Latino educators and policymakers concerned about the accurate use of tests and how they are being implemented and interpreted, particularly for students still learning the English language. These tools have not been “stress tested” with the vulnerable Latino population; yet, in some cases, students are being impacted by high stakes test use.

Setting High Standards for All Students

Setting high standards for all students publicly recognizes and affirms that all students can achieve to high levels. Standards and accountability are powerful vehicles that can help close the performance gap between white and minority students and between rich and poor school districts. Assessment and accountability tools help paint the picture of how far and how fast we need to go to improve student achievement so that no student is left behind. They tell us what the most important deficiencies are that need to be remedied, help evaluate and explain the effects of various interventions and help determine which ones can lead to ongoing, continuous improvement.

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INSERT “WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE FOR STANDARDS TO WORK FOR LATINOS”

The Promise of Standards-Based Reform

For standards to be effective, states and local school districts must invest appropriate resources to ensure that all students are provided with equitable opportunity to meet rigorous and challenging standards in all content areas. In the language of the standards-based reform, **content standards** are locally developed statements about what students must know and be able to do in education disciplines such as English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. **Performance standards**, set by states and local school districts, measure how well students should be expected to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in reaching content standards.

One of the most promising features of the standards movement is that it holds schools and students accountable for how well they can demonstrate increases in academic achievement. States and school districts are in the midst of an evolution in how they manage and motivate institutions and educators to get better results for a broader range of students. Accountability measures are helping to examine progress being made in schools, by individual students, and by groups of students, including low-income and minority student populations. These measures can help identify what methods are working or need improvement, determine what targeted interventions might be made when progress toward the standards is lagging, and outline the kinds of steps that should be taken when schools chronically fail.

States and school districts are increasingly moving toward assessing students on the knowledge and skills they are ex-

pected to acquire. They are developing and implementing a variety of approaches to measure performance, including standardized tests, portfolios and other forms of assessment activities that require students to not only choose the best answer, but also explain the reasoning behind the answer or solve a problem. These performance assessments allow students to demonstrate and teachers to accurately describe what students know.

As a tool of accountability, assessment systems have a number of invaluable uses—they help determine how resources should be spent; they also provide a diagnostic evaluation of what extra help and tutoring students need and where teachers need to focus more attention or need more professional development. These assessments are also a tool to inform both teaching and learning. However, assessments are being used increasingly by states and school districts to make high-stakes decisions about whether a student should move from grade to grade or graduate from high school, which is of great concern.

Standards and Civil Rights

Standards can form the basis for extending a civil rights perspective to the instruction of all children, including youth from low-income and language minority families because standards-based instruction makes it clear that all children need to be brought to observably high levels of performance. This school reform approach highlights disparities among groups of students and the schools' ability to support them and provides a legal, as well as educational, way to address fundamental fairness that focuses on results and not inputs.

Tests are only effective tools when used appropriately. The tools we use to make potentially life-changing decisions about

an individual's future must be legally defensible and educationally sound.

“All tests are not created equal: You cannot begin to evaluate the soundness of any test without first understanding how the results will be used. For example, a test of Limited English Proficient students in English may be appropriate for diagnostic purposes or informing instruction, but not appropriate for making a promotion decision based upon a determination about their math skills.”—*Arthur Coleman, deputy assistant secretary, Office for Civil Rights.*

Over the past decades, accountability tools have been misused to exclude students from access to rich course content or to make decisions about students' futures, for which the tests were not designed. The misuse of tests is a particularly sensitive topic for students still learning the English language. How can we be sure that Latino young people and others are tested fairly and that the results of those tests are interpreted accurately and used appropriately?

States and school districts need to be sure that the tests are implemented and interpreted fairly. That means that students should have multiple test-taking opportunities and time to master standards before they are measured on what they know. There must be alignment between what is taught and tested, and testing strategies must take into account the language in which the student learned the material; a highly relevant factor in determining the language in which the student should be assessed. Provisions, such as adequate time, should be made to ensure that English language learners can dem-

onstrate what they know on the tests. In addition, tests must be validated for the purposes for which they are used and high-stakes decisions should not be based only on one test but on multiple factors, such as multiple test scores, grades and evaluations. Commissioners note that one cannot begin to evaluate the soundness of any test without first understanding how the results will be used. For example, a test of LEP students in English may be appropriate for diagnostic purposes, to inform instruction, or as placement and exit criteria for instructional programs (such as gifted and talent, Title I or bilingual education), but not appropriate for making a grade promotion decision.

The National Context: Avoiding Backlash to Assessments

Discussions on equitable assessment of student performance whose native language is not English is particularly timely and important. Education leaders are worried about the backlash to standards as large percentages of students, not just minority or low-income students, fail state standards-based tests. At the 1999 National Education Summit, the nation's governors, together with education and business leaders, launched a re-examination of the effectiveness of the standards movement and began to address problems likely to arise now that 48 of the 50 states have approved standards to hold students accountable for what they should know.

In New York, for example, fewer than half of the state's fourth graders met competency standards on the state's performance-based reading and writing test. The test was developed as part of an effort to raise standards for all students in the state. In fact, in New York City, which enrolls more than a third of the state's public school students, two-thirds of the

75,000 test takers did not meet the minimum standards.

In Virginia, officials have raised the stakes for students with new accountability measures (Standards of Learning). Starting in 2004, students will need to pass an exam in order to graduate. By 2007, low-performing schools will lose accreditation if 70 percent of their students fail to pass the exit exam. However, Virginia has a long way to go in meeting its goals. In January 1999, the state announced that 97 percent of public schools had 70 percent or more students fail the new state exam. In the first round of high-stakes student achievement tests, given in spring 1998, only 39 of the state's 1,800 schools (2.2 percent) met the performance goals on exams linked to the state's Standards of Learning. Given that the majority of schools are failing the exam, there is concern that students will be accountable even before schools.

With rigorous assessments being introduced across the nation, many more students from all parts of the country and in all categories may fail standards-based tests, and states as well as school districts will have to address the fallout. In particular, as we experience a decline in the test results among the previously defined "best" students, we must be concerned with the likely effect these tests will have on students who have struggled to move from grade to grade or even to stay in school. Efforts to introduce high-stakes testing without paying attention to minority and low-income populations could result in forcing Latino and other students to endure limited progress in closing the achievement gap.

Some observers note that progress in raising achievement for minority students is a key part of a state's accountability system. Only a few states, such as Texas and North Carolina,

stand out for making progress in closing the performance gap revealed by the scores of minority and disadvantaged students on statewide exams.

In Texas, for example, the passing rate for Hispanics on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) rose 21 percent--from 41 percent to 62 percent--between 1994 to 1997. Texas students also made the most dramatic gains among the 39 states that participated in the fourth grade math portion of the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Texas' 11-point overall improvement in scores was the largest of any state in the nation. Further, the state's black and white students had the highest average scores of any state, while its Hispanic students ranked sixth of Latinos in any state.

Politics and the Standards Movement

One of the major challenges confronting the standards movement is keeping politics out, and relying on what works to guide decision-making.

"California's standards movement became an ideological battleground. Decision on content standards was based on ideology. The standards advisory group to the governor worked on two sets of standards—one for reading/language arts and one for math. The first ended up promulgating phonics rather than a mix of phonics and whole-word, because of pressure from conservatives. Math became "drill-and-kills." In the domain of science, the majority recommendations were dropped in favor of a set advocated by one of the governor's appointees. The advisory group was disbanded before it even considered such enormous issues as LEP testing and the opportunity to learn standards."—Raymund Paredes, vice chancellor, University of California, Los Angeles, and member, CA Commission on Standards.

On-going assessment should drive the process of educational

decision making by helping to identify the appropriate interventions, teaching strategies, supports, and other factors, improve the education system, and increase student achievement.

Standards and Parent Involvement

“Accountability is the biggest hope for parents to push for their children, giving them information to ask how their children are doing and why.”—*Delia Pompa, Director, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs.*

Under a standards-based approach, schools must respond to the needs of individual students, so they do not become in danger of falling behind academically. This approach can lead to more direct intervention and assistance to students who need it the most. However, this approach can only have limited success without the involvement of parents in the education of their children.

Standards create an accountability mechanism for parents to monitor their child’s education. “We need to know more about how tests are being used and the quality of the tests being implemented... We need to know that tests are valid and reliable and are used for the purposes for which they were designed. We must be sure the tests have been fully evaluated and are appropriate for the new uses states are considering.” Sonia Hernandez, California’s deputy superintendent of public instruction. Parents should pose the following four questions to those managing their children’s schools:

1. If you test my child against standards, can you

assure me that his or her teachers actually taught the material that the test measures?

2. Can you assure me that my child’s teachers are able to teach the content captured by the standards and that they have been properly trained and placed?
3. If my child is in danger of not meeting the standards and there will be consequences, will you be able to warn us early enough so that we can intervene?
4. What support and extra help does the district provide for children in danger of falling behind; and would my child qualify to receive help were they in danger?

Test Use and Quality

The implementation of assessments, especially for Latino children, raises issues of usage and quality of the tests being implemented. Several factors must be considered:

- **The type of tests:** Tests not based on common standards are problematic. These tests provide little information that is helpful in guiding a teacher’s instruction and therefore the student’s education.
- **The quality of tests being used:** In considering quality, the validity and reliability of tests must be examined. Many states are not taking a close enough look at these aspects of tests.

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The purpose of the tests: Test publishers may be developing tests that do not match the uses that states are targeting. For example, some tests are being used to make promotion decisions although they were not developed for this high-stakes purpose.

The abuse or misuse of tests by states: Many states are implementing assessment and education policies using tests in a manner not appropriate with the purpose for which the tests were created.

What Needs to Be in Place for Standards to Work for Latino Students?

In order for high standards to work, we need to ensure that three basic supports are available to all students. These include:

- 1. Adequate resources, teacher quality, and curricula** that enable students to achieve high standards;
- 2. Fair and accurate performance measures** to ascertain whether students are achieving desired results; and,
- 3. Effective interventions and educational strategies** to ensure that students who are not yet meeting high standards can succeed.

1) Adequate Resources, Teacher Quality, and Curricula

Adequate Resources

Hispanic students attend schools likely to have large classes,

inadequate learning materials, underprepared teachers, and limited access to rigorous courses in core academic subjects. These factors obviously limit the quality of education they receive and causes great concern over student accountability to attain high standards

Teacher Quality

“...the least qualified teachers are in our poorest and most needy schools,” *Ana Maria Schuhmann, dean, School of Education, Kean University, Union, New Jersey*. USE AS SIDEBAR

Ensuring that all students have access to qualified teachers is particularly difficult.

“Teachers are the most important variable that influences student achievement...[M]ost teachers are not prepared or supported to ensure that students achieve the new higher standards. This is compounded by the fact that the least qualified teachers are in our poorest and most needy schools. Teachers are also less qualified to work with students who speak another language at home, despite the fact that such students represent one out of five children.” *Ana Maria Schuhmann, dean of the School of Education, Kean University, in Union, New Jersey*

Over the next several years, the nation will have to hire more than two million teachers to replace those in the profession who are leaving through retirement or attrition and to meet the needs of an expanding student population. [Source??] Further complicating this shortage, the nation also faces severe shortages in teachers who specialize in math and science and special education. In addition to needing qualified teachers in key academic subject areas, students also need access to teachers who can use students’ native languages and intro-

duce aspects of their cultures into the learning program. Further, poor urban and rural districts face an even more dramatic shortage of qualified teachers.

In conjunction with meeting these shortages, the nation must also raise the skills and knowledge of the three million teachers currently in the classroom.

Curricula

Researchers say that when the curriculum is well-taught, content presented in the primary language can be easily transferred to English as the students' language skills develop. But the process takes time. Research indicates that, in the early grades, the reading and writing skills of students still learning the English language are 50 percent behind students for whom English is their native language. Due to limited resources, lack of well-trained teachers, and other factors where Hispanic students are enrolled, English language learners must work twice as hard as native speakers because they are simultaneously learning the language as well as the ability to read. As a result, many Hispanic students lag behind in their education and find it difficult to attain a quality education. In fact, Hispanic high school students drop out of school at double the rate of non-Hispanics, and many attribute this to the lack of encouragement, engagement and support Latino students receive in the education system.

3) Effective Interventions and Educational Strategies

A growing body of research identifies the characteristics of schools that are effective in educating minority and disadvantaged students and English language learners. One study, *Dispelling the Myth: High Poverty Schools Exceeding Expectations*, (Education Trust, 1999) analyzed survey data

from 366 top-performing high-poverty elementary and secondary schools in 21 states and found six important characteristics of these schools:

- Extensive use of state and local standards to design curriculum and instruction, assess student work and evaluate teachers;
- Increased instructional time for reading and mathematics;
- Substantial investment in professional development for teachers focusing on instructional practices that help students meet academic standards;
- Comprehensive systems to monitor individual student performance and provide help to struggling students before they fall behind;
- Parental involvement in efforts to help students meet standards; and,
- Accountability programs with real consequences for adults in the school.

All of these factors taken together are far more important than any single factor for raising performance. In the rush to set high standards, policymakers cannot forget that Latino students, like other students, need comprehensive help beyond language acquisition.

To that end, in addition to developing standards-based accountability efforts, a growing number of states and school districts are funding summer school programs and special tutoring in their commitment to prepare students to perform successfully as the schools raise educational standards and eliminate social promotion.

“We need to design instructional systems that neither stigmatize children who cannot be promoted nor subject them to the same instructional experience twice. Given that academic content standards are being held constant, the way they are met and the time it takes to meet them must be allowed to vary.”—Robert Schwartz,

President, Achieve, Inc.

Lessons from Research and Experience

Many of the challenges that Hispanic young people face on standardized state assessments have largely to do with how they learn language and become literate. There is growing agreement about this process that should have a profound importance in setting testing policies. The following are several important issues to consider.

How Do Students with Limited English Proficiency Gain Literacy Skills? According to the National Research Council (NRC), school-age children with limited English proficiency should learn to understand and speak English before learning to read it [“Start Early, Finish Strong”]. Initial reading instruction is most effective in a student’s first language, therefore, teachers should speak and use books and other materials in the student’s first language. Children who can read in any language are readers and there is no reason to repeat the entire process of reading instruction if a child simply needs to learn English. To facilitate an understanding of English, teachers must assess the student’s reading skills and abilities in the primary language and help transfer those abilities to reading in English.

***[Bring in something about the strong performance of students in bilingual settings. NABE states that students have

the ability to outperform on tests when in good dual-language or bilingual programs, so don’t just link success to standards; the importance of standards is their use to identify deficiencies in resources or knowledge that can be addressed]****

When Should English Language Learners Be Tested?

Most students cannot be validly tested until they have had at least three years of exposure to English, and even in those cases research indicates that they will need additional time, repeating of directions, oral reading of questions, and other accommodations until they have been determined to have truly acquired language proficiency.

In What Language Should Students Be Tested? There is a general consensus that states and districts should take into account the language of instruction in determining the language of testing. In addition, testing in Spanish or another language should not exempt students from opportunities to participate in tests administered in English. The school system must be accountable for providing students with assessments that accurately indicate what students know and are able to do in the core content areas.

If states are to test all students, they should develop benchmarks for English language acquisition that take into account the education strategies used to teach non-English speaking students as well as opportunities for students to learn the material on which they will be tested.

Can students be tested more fairly in Spanish in some subjects than in others? Research does not systemically indicate that some subjects are best tested in Spanish, although it is generally accepted that subjects such as social studies are more dependent on language than other subjects such as math-

ematics. But even in mathematics, many word problems could pose difficulties for students who are not native to the language of the test. In general, there is no answer or “one-size-fits-all” approach, and the use of multiple indicators will most likely yield the best description of a student’s true knowledge and skills.

Any accountability system should underscore the importance of the Title I language about inclusion of broad groups of students in the regular mainstream tests across content areas. States or districts should constantly reemphasize the importance of including students in the same assessments and encourage the most accurate data collection for all students, which also entails using accommodations for students still learning English. It is important to note that institutional accountability for English language learners goes beyond just providing accommodations. Educators have the responsibility to address inclusion in the broadest sense, beginning with the development phase of the assessment system through administering, scoring, and reporting.

Can Standardized Reading Tests Be Used to Determine English Language Proficiency? Measuring reading ability and English language proficiency are two separate issues. The use of standardized tests for reading in English is not appropriate for measuring student progress in language development because the tests are created to evaluate the ability of native language speakers.

“It is very important to distinguish between tests which measure English literacy (often called English language proficiency tests) and those which measure English language arts (ELA). It is true that in the early grades, much of ELA and especially reading tests are devoted to decoding etc., which are basic aspects of English literacy proficiency. However, beginning in about 4th grade and becoming in-

creasingly so in the later grades, ELA is less about decoding or basic literacy assessment and more about literature and other aspects of language arts and advanced comprehension. For example, first, a 9th grade ELA test may very well evaluate what a student knows about Shakespeare. This is **not** the same as evaluating literacy for 9th graders.

ELA tests do have some literacy evaluation components. However, especially for older students, this evaluation is often of a more advanced type of literacy assessment than the evaluation of basic literacy acquisition. For instance, most ELA tests for older students (grades 5 and up) assume a certain floor level of literacy. The types of reading or other literacy components being measured in these tests, then, identify nuances in reading or literacy which are typically acquired by older students who have been reading for some time and for whom English is their first language. Evaluation of the acquisition of these nuances and skills is not the same as measuring the acquisition of basic literacy skills. A student getting a 0 on this type of ELA test may or may not have mastered basic literacy.” (Kopriva, 1999.)

Confusion between assessment of language arts and assessment of literacy can also lead to unnecessary prohibition of accommodations. If basic literacy is the focus, tests should be expected to evaluate basic literacy, regardless of grade level. If ELA is the focus, some accommodations might make sense, and it should be clear that lack of mastery of advanced literacy does not mean students do not have basic literacy.

Is Gaining Reading Proficiency More Important than

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Keeping at Grade Level in Other Subjects? For LEP students, it is important to master English and stay on grade level with course content. If these are both not explicitly encouraged then it is often implicitly understood that one is more valuable than the other. This is the cycle that often leads former LEP students into lower tracked academic classes in high school, and eventually higher drop-out rates. While English acquisition is very important, equally important is staying on grade level in core academic subjects.

Currently most states stress this dual goal more than in the past but still have a long way to go. In fact most educators focus only on ELA content area and therefore staying on track in the other content areas may not be seen as an equally important priority.

Testing Standards for Bilingual Americans: “An Unknown Degree of Error”

This fall, testing experts will release the fourth edition of *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (Standards)*, which provides regulations and policies in the development and use of tests in the United States.

The 1985 edition, published by the American Education Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council of Measurement, includes a profound acknowledgement. “For a non-native English speaker or for a speaker of some dialects of English, every test given in English becomes, in part, a language or literacy test of English.” Basically, this means that for bilinguals who have been exposed to another language, every test, except a test of En-

glish language proficiency, contains an unknown, though systematic, degree of error. Such tests, in effect, are biased because they may not be measuring accurately whatever is being measured. Accordingly, *Standards* calls for special attention to these issues in test development, test use, and test interpretation. It is also recognized that bilingual individuals vary extensively in their functional, academic and literate use of each language separately or simultaneously. Also, cognitive processing in the weaker language is more fragile and can be slower. Language background, in effect, is an important consideration in all aspects of testing and test validity.

With respect to using tests that are in the primary language of bilingual individuals, *Standards* makes several key pronouncements:

- Translating a test does not guarantee that the test items will have the same degree of difficulty in the other language. For example, a straight translation of a second-grade test of reading ability will not necessarily yield a second-grade reading test in the other language.
- Tests for gauging English language proficiency are vitally important for making educational placement decisions. However, to be accurate, these tests must assess multiple dimensions of language ability.
- Testing agents must make a distinction between “naturalistic” uses of language and more formal, cognitively demanding uses. Because of these “special difficulties” attendant on the use of tests with persons who have not had adequate exposure to the language of the test, *Standards* suggests that more testing and observations be done with them.

The 1999 edition reaffirms the principles of the 1985 stan-

dards. The new standards suggest that accommodations be undertaken with English language learners and, because cultural factors can also affect test scores, attention be paid to these factors. The new standards break new ground along several dimensions. They describe several types of modifications that may be necessary for English language learners: using only sections of the test that match the linguistic proficiency of the test taker, changing the test and response formats, administering the test in a different context, and allowing more time for taking the test. Most of these modifications are currently under study.

A new directive in *Standards* calls for taking into account a determination of both language dominance and language proficiency. Consideration should be given to the possibility that bilinguals may have domain-specific competencies in one or both languages (???). It is recommended that an individual's degree and type of bilingualism be understood in order to use test results properly.

Extensive attention is given to the process of administering tests and to the possible impact of test-giver variables (culture, bilingualism, gender, time limits and use of interpreters). A crucial principle is recommended for testing English-language learners: give them enough time to finish the test and to show what they know and can do.

Of the 11 standards in the new chapter "Testing Individuals of Differing Linguistic Backgrounds", five are new:

- When there is empirically based doubt about a test, validity studies should be conducted with the relevant linguistic groups;
- The test should be given in the most proficient language

of the test taker (when such tests are available in both languages);

- Tests in another language should have evidence of validity and reliability before making inferences about scores;
- Equivalence across dual language versions of the same test should be supported by psychometric evidence of such equivalence (e.g., construct, reliability, validity);
- Interpreters should be competent in both languages, be competent in interpretation, and be competent in testing and assessment procedures.

From: *Testing Hispanic Students in the United States: Technical and Policy Issues*, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, September 1999, by Richard A. Figueroa and Sonia Hernandez (unpublished).

Model State Practices

Several states and school districts are sensitive to the concerns raised in the last section and have developed useful policies and thoughtful assessment programs that promote achievement rather than punish students.

Oregon

In 1991, **Oregon** enacted one of the most comprehensive standards-based reform laws in the country, requiring, among other things, valid and reliable assessments of its 500,000 students. Known as the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, the initiative led to the development of curriculum goals, content standards, performance standards and indicators aligned with the new performance-based assessments.

The system offers assessments in English and Spanish to accommodate those limited English proficient students among the state's 4,000 Hispanic students. The tests are given in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 so that school officials know early on what students can and can't do. Students who achieve the grade 10 performance standards in academic content areas will receive a Certificate of Initial Mastery. Students who achieve grade 12 performance standards in academic content areas and achieve career-related learning standards will receive a Certificate of Advanced Mastery.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the assessments, rather than translating the English test into Spanish, the state created a Spanish-language test with questions that matched the psychometric properties of the English version. The test is designed to measure student progress and diagnose areas where more help is needed. Questions that could not be matched have been dropped from both tests. Teachers can decide on a case-by-case basis which students will take the Spanish version of the test. Further, students who are not literate do not take the test.

Texas

The **Texas** Education Agency is using one of the most stable yet flexible assessment programs to monitor the progress of three million students in 1,042 districts served. The school accountability system, established in 1992, addresses the state's concern over twin issues of equity and excellence for all students while also ensuring that what gets tested is what gets taught. Student performance is measured through the state's assessment system as well as on the basis of information collected from teachers.

“[Texas] is committed to equity and excellence for all. In 1992, the state established a school accountability system. The system actually pulled together components that had been established earlier. Components include student assessments as well as information collected from teachers. The accountability system was designed to (a) help improve student performance, (b) help districts plan, and (c) permit flexibility in the ways districts teach the state curriculum. The 1992 system has remained stable across both Democratic and Republican administrations.—*Linda Mora, assistant commissioner for accountability and assessment, Texas Department of Education*

“Testing begins in 3rd grade but students are given multiple opportunities to pass a high-stakes test,” said Linda Mora. “Schools are required to offer special assistance to students who initially do not pass. Thus, intervention will be early.” The high school test, she said, does have consequences—a student cannot enter college without passing it.

The accountability system was designed to help improve student performance and to help districts plan their school improvement strategies, while permitting districts greater flexibility in teaching state-mandated curriculum. Individual school results on student performance are publicly reported along with attendance figures and the drop-out rates.

What is particularly unique about the Texas system is that, to be considered successful, a school or district must not only succeed in reaching high standards for its students as a whole

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but for distinct subgroups of students by race, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Taking advantage of the state system's flexibility, **Houston's** school district has opted to maintain its own accountability system. Under the district system, low-performing schools are required to work with Targeted Assistance Teams dispatched from the district to help the school develop a plan of action for improving student test scores. This direct assistance is triggered automatically and is designed to provide schools with the kind of technical assistance they need to align staff development with content and performance standards, while holding local officials responsible for their students' academic success.

The system enables district officials to monitor each school's progress over time and actively intervene to improve the schools when needed. The accountability system and the targeted assistance teams have, together, enabled schools to determine the kinds of resources and staff development activities that would make the biggest difference in student learning.

Minnesota

In **Minnesota**, the absence of a statewide curriculum left state officials in the dark when it came to knowing the performance levels of their school districts. To remedy the problem, the state implemented a new statewide assessment system, prompting district officials to reexamine the scope and sequence of their curriculum. The state is currently developing performance-level benchmarks.

The new statewide accountability system factors in programs for economically disadvantaged students and those with limited English proficiency. A new English language skills test will be used to determine when LEP students are ready to participate in the statewide assessments, which are administered in English.

Worrisome Policies

Observers note that while model practices are being developed, there also are some policies and practices that are particularly worrisome. These include requiring English-only tests for high-stakes decisions; providing no support for students to achieve new standards and requirements; and using tests that are not aligned to what is taught and learned in school.

Typically poor policies for English language learners focus solely on making up for deficits in English language proficiency and at the same time sacrificing progress in content areas. In some cases, schools attempt to immerse students in English as a Second Language classes and nothing else, so that students do not get the content they need in academic courses. Also, there have been instances of school districts using English oral proficiency as a prerequisite for important courses. Schools must not use lack of proficiency as a way to deny access to courses that meet graduation requirements.

Basic Questions for Educational Decisionmakers

During the White House Initiative's four policy seminars, observers noted some simple questions to use to determine how well or poorly tests work. Educational leaders should be able to answer the following questions:

- Are students being afforded or denied educational opportunities based on test scores?

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- Even if not used for such high-stakes purposes, do assessment systems that influence decisions about allocation of resources, interventions designed to promote better learning, and guidance provided to parents about their children's progress take into account all students?
- Are there inequities in the treatment of students or disparity in the performance of particular groups of students? What are the explanations for those disparities?
- Is the test used with other information to make high-stakes decisions or is it the sole criterion?
- Are there educationally—and psychometrically—sound foundations for the judgments made about students when those judgements are based upon test scores?

Emerging Questions

There are several fundamental areas in testing where policymakers disagree among themselves and where practice and researchers are at odds.

Who Should Be Tested? While many observers argue that all students count and must be counted, a new report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) indicates that of the 49 states with student assessments, 29 states exempt limited-English proficient students from all assessments, and 11 states exempt these students from some assessments [SOURCE?]. Only four states do not allow exemptions for students with limited English abilities, according to the CCSSO.

For example, Maryland allows a one-year-only exemption from its assessment program and Kentucky exempts students with limited English proficiency if they have been in the schools less than two years. Texas permits school districts to exempt

Spanish-speaking students up to three times before requiring the assessment.

If states are allowed to decide whether or not these students should be tested, state education agencies will shy away from including all students. States and local agencies must work together to create assessments that make pedagogical and academic sense for all students.

How High Should We Set the Bar? Some states, such as New York, have introduced standards that are benchmarked to the most rigorous in the world, while others, such as Texas, have developed a means to gradually raise the rigor of their assessments.

How Should Test Scores Be Used in High-Stakes Decisions? Today, 20 states have established high-stakes assessments for students. While state policymakers appear intent on using test scores alone to determine who moves along in the educational system, many observers argue that decisions about whether to pass a student from grade to grade should not be made on a single set of test scores. Tests should be one instrument among many. Multiple indicators, including teacher judgments and evaluations, grades, other tests, can help determine if a student knows what he or she should know at a certain grade level.

The White House Initiative's Standards and Assessment Agenda

Over the next nine months, the President's Advisory Commission and the White House Initiative on Educational Excel-

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lence for Hispanic Americans will continue to build upon, inform, and contribute to the many efforts designed to promote high standards for all students, including Latinos.

In its role as an advisor to the Clinton administration, the President's Advisory Commission will further explore the effects of standards on students learning English and the impact of federal programs, such as Title 1, on the achievement of Latino students. The Commission will also work closely with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights to help ensure that ELL students are afforded educational opportunities guaranteed under federal law and that tests used to make high-stakes decisions are fair and accurate.

Beyond these efforts, the White House Initiative sees three key areas of work that need to be addressed:

- **Further examination, research and dissemination of promising practices** concerning the administration, interpretation, and use of tests for English language learners. We particularly need to know more about what accommodations are most effective and what are the best practices that can help ensure valid decisions about placement, promotion, and graduation. A new tool kit for school districts seeking to better meet the needs of English Language Learners is now being developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. This tool kit will help make best practice everyday practice in schools.
- **Promote better public awareness** about the complexities of standards-based reform initiatives and issues surrounding the use of high-stakes tests for English Language Learners. A new resource guide on

high-stakes testing being developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights will create a foundation for continuing a national dialogue, awareness and understanding.

- **Foster stronger engagement with state and local leaders** about the importance of using tests in ways that are valid and reliable and about the need for more equitable opportunities for Hispanic students to achieve desired results.

Researchers, educators, and leaders of the Latino community must compel state and local leaders and the public to face the reality about the growing percentage of students who are still learning English and what can be done to ensure that they not only master English but succeed in core academic courses necessary for careers and further education.