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English-only tests criticized

By Anjetta McQueen, Associated Press, 09/16/99

WASHINGTON - Schools may be violating the rights of millions of Hispanic children by applying English-only tests that determine whether a student moves ahead or even graduates, a presidential panel said yesterday. It urged the Education Department to investigate.

"State education leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

The Education Department does investigate such cases, said Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the civil rights branch. About 20 percent of the 5,000 cases filed each year specifically relate to laws that prohibit racial or linguistic discrimination against students, he said.

The department is investigating two cases related to testing and language ability, in Nevada and in Texas. Murphey said he could not discuss the cases or disclose the parties.

A 1974 Supreme Court ruling requires schools to help students with limited English.

However, opponents of bilingual education argue that accommodating children on high-stakes tests will ultimately hurt them.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," said Jorge Amselle, vice president for education of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington group that opposes bilingual education and affirmative action. "The purpose of education in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society, and that requires mastery in English.

"To say that a student should be able to do math and science and read and write in English is simply a matter of accountability, not a matter of discrimination," he added.

But the presidential panel said that states' approaches to nonnative English-speakers are too vague for tests that are often tied to a child's promotion or graduation.

Nineteen states require students to pass tests before they receive high school diplomas, and seven more plan to follow suit by 2003.

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school diplomas, and seven more plan to follow suit by 2003.

"Nevertheless the resulting data are often used to hold students accountable for their own success, rather than the educators," said the report by the panel, which was created in 1990 by President Bush.

The group, which issued its first report in 1992, is charged with finding ways to increase Hispanics' involvement in federal education programs and targeting educational gaps.

Educating the nation's 3.4 million Hispanic children properly is more important than ever, the panel says, as their enrollment grows but their achievement does not. Hispanics are projected to become the nation's largest minority group by 2010. But in scholarship, Hispanic children are slipping behind. Young ones perform half as well as their native-English-speaking peers.

This story ran on page A10 of the Boston Globe on 09/16/99.
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DRAFT

**Our Nation on
the Fault Line:
HISPANIC AMERICAN EDUCATION**

**A REPORT TO THE NATION:
TESTING HISPANIC STUDENTS
IN THE UNITED STATES**

**The President's Advisory Commission on Educational
Excellence for Hispanic Americans**

September, 1999

**Prepared by: Richard A. Figueroa
University of California, Davis**

**Sonia Hernandez
California Department of Education**

**The President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for
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**White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic
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There is no more promising reform in public education today than the standards-based movement. It is the most widely accepted school change process which offers the greatest probability for leveling the playing field for all children by clearly stating expectations for instruction, assessing the progress of each child toward achieving the standards, and holding schools accountable for student learning. Where these three core elements of a standards-based system are in place, all students begin to experience success as never before. This is especially true for the growing Hispanic student population in America which has been traditionally excluded from access to rigorous mainstream instruction.

But in the current rush to implement world class standards supported by systems of accountability in the nation's public schools, state education leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate testing information. Hundreds of thousands of Hispanic students, many lacking functional fluency in English, are assessed with a myriad of tests entirely in English and, oftentimes, only in English. The resulting test data gleaned from the administration of these tests is used for student promotion or retention, for high school graduation, generally for high stakes decisions --but rarely for the purposes of true accountability. When it comes to holding schools accountable for the academic achievement of our students, states allow Hispanic youngsters to become transparent inside the very system charged with educating them.

State policies often require that Hispanic students be assessed in English with tests they may not even understand or with alternative but less rigorous tests in Spanish whether or not they are receiving instruction in that language. Neither approach produces accurate information about student learning. Nevertheless, the resulting data is often used to hold students accountable for their own success, rather than the educators or the systems of public schooling. **Who should be responsible for what Hispanic students learn in school?** The answer is simple: students, educators, and parents all must share the responsibility. **But what kinds of**

assessments should be used to provide accurate information about what students have have been taught? Regrettably, the answer to this question is not as simple. It will be explored in this document.

For now, students bear the weight of academic success or failure, with few exceptions, on the basis of one or possibly two test scores. Where exemptions from testing exist, Hispanics disappear from the accountability reports which trigger both positive and negative consequences for the responsible adults in the system. Thus more than two million Hispanic students in the US are underrepresented or absent from the rolls of students who are counted and who, therefore, count.

As America enters the new millennium, deliberate action by policymakers at every level must be taken to include the country's fastest growing and soon-to-be largest minority within the bounds of systems of accountability using accurate information for decisionmaking. It is our belief that Hispanic students, whether they are English dominant or English Language Learners, should be tested with appropriate test instruments in order to be included at all times in the states' accountability systems. If this does not occur, Hispanic children will not benefit from the powerful and promising standards movement.

The purpose of this report is twofold: (1) to bring attention to the growing crisis of the invisible Hispanic students in public education to the nation's leaders and (2) to provide guidance to the nation and the states on taking the necessary steps to rectify the conditions which allow Hispanic students to be wrongly measured and unaccounted for in their own schools. It is our intent to help education leaders in this country choose wisely for the sake of the children.

The Commission Assessment Committee
The President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence For
Hispanic Americans

Washington, D.C.
September 15, 1999

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The testing of Hispanic children has made some progress in the 20th century. The areas where there has been significant progress is in the empirical documentation of the impact of *bilingualism* on test scores and on the development of policies and precautions associated with the testing of bilingual students. However, there has not been much progress in actual test development and technology in any area of testing with respect to these students. This is true to some extent because the demand by schools, districts, or states for the development of such testing technology has not materialized.

On the basis of current practice, policy, and available research, six options appear to exist for states, districts, and schools concerning the measurement of Hispanic English Language Learners:

- 1) tests can be administered in English which have been normed on student populations unlike the students who are given the tests,
- 2) testers can be given "cultural training" so that they can interpret the tests in ways that appear to be more valid,
- 3) accommodations in the tests and the testing environments can be provided without regard for possible negative impact on student scores,
- 4) a moratorium on the use of individual scores for any high-stakes assessment can be put in place until research sorts out the complex issues associated with testing Hispanic students,
- 5) tests can be used for holding systems legally and politically accountable for the educational decisions that adversely impact Hispanic students as demonstrated in differential, negative outcomes,

6) local norms can be developed in order to compare students against students with similar cultural, linguistic, and scholastic experiences, and/or

7) school systems can be supported to provide equitable opportunities-to-learn for Hispanic children across the United States thereby meeting the crucial assumption of tests that all students receive similar educational experiences.

At present, only the first three options are in use. None of these, however, can demonstrate that they are free of significant degrees of bias, unfairness, or denial of substantive due process. The fourth option has been suggested but has received virtually no support or even discussion.

The fifth option has not really been tried in the last decade, but it remains a plausible response to political attacks, such as California's Propositions 227 and 209, that are already inflicting harm and damage to Hispanic children. In Kern county in California, for example, the school board has decreed that Hispanic children must learn English in three months and then receive their education in English. The impact of this decision will be evident in the tests administered in English.

The sixth option may well be the most immediately relevant for both test developers and Hispanic communities in the United States. But there is a great deal of opposition from both political and professional interests. Legitimate norms will provide comparisons among children with generally similar educational experiences and backgrounds in local communities. They may be seen as sources of reverse discrimination. In employment testing, the courts have refused to accept group specific norming because of issues related to reverse discrimination. Ironically, the intellectual community has not been so reluctant. The National Council on Measurement recommended this as a solution to the bias that employment tests affect job applicants with differential opportunities-to-learn. Education, however, has always occupied a different status with the courts with regards to testing. The issue of group norms in all aspects of schooling should be studied and debated.

The seventh is the best option, although in some cases, it may take several generations to accomplish. It is the option that best

explains why tests have become such an obstacle for Hispanic communities. The primary problem with tests is not necessarily the tests alone. It is the educational context in which they are developed, used, and studied. Historical and contemporary data have clearly documented that in the United States public education has not worked very well for Hispanic children. Tests only perpetuate many of the barriers that Hispanic children face in schools.

One important and positive observation that can be made from the review presented in this document is that the testing community is beginning to realize the problems associated with testing Hispanic students are far more complex than ever imagined. While much research and development is needed to resolve the issues related to the availability and use of valid and reliable test instruments, one significant solution to the problems engendered and embodied in current test programs resides in changing the educational experiences of Hispanic children. As greater emphasis is placed on opportunities-to-learn, more Hispanic families will accept the challenge to help their children excel academically.

A compelling example of what this may entail was described by Garcia and Otheguy in 1987. They set out to answer four research questions in a study of "seven private, but low-tuition, non-elite schools in Dade County, Florida." They were "run by and for Cubans." The parents of the children were predominantly from working-class and middle class income levels. They were, in effect, similar to families of Hispanic children in urban school districts. The four research questions were typically those that preoccupy educational researchers about bilingual children in US public schools: Should Spanish be used? How is language dominance measured and used? When do you use English? In which language is reading taught? They were unable to answer these research questions. The following are the reasons for their failure.

"When majority educators look at the education of Hispanic children in the United States, they focus on their linguistic deficits. Discussions about the education of these children begin and end with the issue of the English language, or how they lack it, and how best to give it to them ...However, when Hispanic parents and educators in control of the education of their own children think about the educational process, they ask different questions. They ask questions about the way to educate their children, about pedagogy, instructional

strategies and teaching methods, about curriculum and materials. We asked them about language, they told us about education.. Spanish naturally belongs in ethnic schools that are controlled, staffed and run by the Hispanic community, so there is no need to question its role in public education..

Those of us in public education need to learn from these educators that substantive high expectations do matter; that bilingualism and biliteracy are obtainable if one holds both children and teachers unequivocally responsible for obtaining them; that initial literacy in two languages is possible and doesn't have to be limited to Spanish; that advanced literacy in two languages is possible and doesn't have to be limited to English; that in US society all children acquire English naturally and that therefore English acquisition should not be the main focus of education; that parents and community do matter for education; that when they are in control...the results are ultimately superior; that the context of a child's home culture is essential..; and that continuity with the intellectual and social climate of the home is of paramount importance if the school is to help children develop and foster their intellectual and social growth."

(pg. 99-100)

Until such time as the US educational system achieves a modicum of equity in how it distributes resources, cultural capital, and the application of high standards across all school districts, tests and test scores will continue to show massive technical problems. They will continue to impede the progress of Hispanic communities. Tests will work when the public education of Hispanic children becomes equitable, democratic, and effective.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

I. The starting point for the reform of unfair testing of Hispanic students is not the tests alone. It is the instructional context. Until there is equity of standards, curricula and resources throughout schools, districts, and states, tests will be used to continue to promote inequitable educational opportunities in this country. Tests will continue to be used to blame Hispanic students for low test scores and will be used to deny them equal opportunities.

II. The US Department of Education should take a leadership role in supporting research that will provide more than surveys of existing practices. It should seek to find answers to questions that are barriers to the accurate and appropriate assessment of Hispanic students. Such research should include:

(a) research to determine whether Hispanic English Language Learners can be validly and fairly assessed with tests normed on monolingual students,

(b) comprehensive longitudinal research to investigate evidence of bias in tests used on Hispanic students, and

(c) the research agenda by the National Research Council found in its report, "Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children."

III. The US Office of Civil Rights should investigate the use of tests with Hispanic students, especially English Language Learners.

OCR should determine whether the "disparate treatment" legal analysis under Titles VI and IX applies to Hispanic students with tests and testing and, further, it should investigate the testing practices of the states and the National Assessment of Educational Progress as they affect Hispanic students.

IV. Schools, districts, and states should avoid the following:

(a) using translated versions of tests; there is little evidence that the translated versions of tests have the same technical properties of the original,

(b) using interpreters in the administration of tests to Hispanic students who are English Language Learners; this practice destroys standardization and may lead to invalid inferences and conclusions;

(c) depending on excessive testing in attempting to determine the profile of students where current testing technology is inappropriate and insufficient; and

(d) using diagnostic tests administered to Hispanic students to make high stakes decisions, including high school graduation, promotion, or retention.

V. The NAEP should be modified to make it relevant and useful for Hispanic students, and issues related to cultural factors in achievement testing should be investigated and applied to the NAEP and other large scale testing systems.

VI. Test developers and publishers should be required to provide empirical evidence to support claims of equivalence between English and Spanish versions of tests.

VII. Research should be funded to determine the impact and use of diagnostic personality tests and occupational interest tests on Hispanic students.

VIII. Test scores of Hispanic students should be normed at the school or district level rather than the state or national level in order to ensure relevant interpretations and comparisons.

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But in the current rush to implement world class standards supported by systems of accountability in the nation's public schools, state education leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate testing information. Hundreds of thousands of Hispanic students, many lacking functional fluency in English, are assessed with a myriad of tests entirely in English and, oftentimes, only in English. The resulting test data gleaned from the administration of these tests is used for student promotion or retention, for high school graduation, generally for high stakes decisions --but rarely for the purposes of true accountability. When it comes to holding schools accountable for the academic achievement of our students, states allow Hispanic youngsters to become transparent inside the very system charged with educating them.

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At present, only the first three options are in use. None of these, however, can demonstrate that they are free of significant degrees of bias, unfairness, or denial of substantive due process. The fourth option has been suggested but has received virtually no support or even discussion.

The fifth option has not really been tried in the last decade, but it remains a plausible response to political attacks, such as California's Propositions 227 and 209, that are already inflicting harm and damage to Hispanic children. In Kern county in California, for example, the school board has decreed that Hispanic children must learn English in three months and then receive their education in English. The impact of this decision will be evident in the tests administered in English.

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Achievement testing gets its day in court

A key Texas case goes to trial as minority groups seek to stop a school reform trend

BY BEN WILDAVSKY

If the White House has its way, every state will eventually require high school students to pass exit exams to graduate. Twenty-six states already require or have approved these high-stakes tests, and Education Secretary Richard Riley last week said the sooner they're all on board the better.

But if lawyers for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund have *their way*, at least one state—Texas—will have to end the practice. In a federal lawsuit that goes to trial this week in San Antonio, MALDEF argues that the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills is unfair to thousands of Hispanics and blacks. Despite rising test scores in Texas—and a narrowing gap between minorities and whites—minorities still fail the graduation-level TAAS in disproportionate numbers and can't get high school diplomas as a result.

The MALDEF lawsuit is just the latest in a string of recent controversies over race and testing. All raise the same central question: As standardized tests are increasingly used to gauge and improve student performance—with real-world consequences for those who don't measure up—will historically lower-scoring blacks and Hispanics get a raw deal?

Airing the arguments. In February, five civil rights groups sued the University of California-Berkeley, charging that it discriminates against minority applicants by relying on Advanced Placement courses and SAT scores in the admissions process. A month later a federal judge in Philadelphia ruled that the National Collegiate Athletic Association's test-score eligibility requirements for

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freshman athletes are racially discriminatory. More recently, the architects of the SAT floated the notion of giving extra credit to poor and minority test takers.

National tensions between promoting high standards and ensuring racial equity are on display within the administration. Riley, a former South Carolina governor, said last week he once opposed high school exit exams "because minority students really had less chance to succeed in the days immediately following integration."

But today, he believes such tests "can help stimulate new efforts to raise up minority achievement if we give every student the individual supports they need to pass the exam." Still, his own department fueled the testing debate a few months ago when its civil rights branch circulated a draft guide on the use of standardized tests.

Critics said the document seemed to put secondary schools and universities on notice that using standardized tests for admissions, placement, or graduation decisions might run afoul of federal civil rights laws because of the tests' disparate racial impact.

Adding to the debate: Just hours before Riley's speech advocating more testing, the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans issued a report critical of such testing for Hispanics. The panel called for a federal civil rights investigation of the practice and proposed that Hispanic students' scores be measured against those of their local school or district rather than compared with state or national norms.

"The administration seems to be moving down two divergent tracks on their use of tests," says Jon Fuller, a lobbyist with the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. "On the one hand, you have the Office for Civil Rights and various advocacy groups saying we may be overusing tests and they're having a disparate impact on minorities. On the other hand, this is an administration that's been pushing standards, and they spell standards T-E-S-T."

Arthur Coleman, deputy assistant secretary for civil rights at the Education Department, insists the civil rights branch is not necessarily against the use of standardized tests. He points out that the Office for Civil Rights did not scrap the test after the Texas NAACP filed a complaint with the department in 1995 alleging that the TAAS discriminated against minorities. Instead, it reached an agreement with the Texas Education Agency that preserved the test but provided for remedial help, multiple chances to retake the exam, and assurances that all kids would be provided with the curriculum and teaching needed to pass the test.

The department cut a similar deal following a complaint about Ohio's graduation requirement and has two investigations underway into graduation tests in North Carolina and Nevada.

"The devil is in the details," Coleman said. "How do you implement a system of accountability and ensure that you're doing so in a nondiscriminatory way?"

In Texas, the MALDEF lawsuit argues that the "life opportunities of thousands of students, the vast majority of whom are Hispanic or African-American, should not hinge on a single test." It notes that Mexican-Americans and blacks make up about 40 percent of Texas high school seniors but more than 80 percent of those who flunk the last-chance administration of TAAS in 12th grade. The group says minority students have been failed by school systems that provide them with inferior curricula and second-rate teachers.

"We have good kids with good grades and good activities who can be kept out of getting a job and kept out of getting into college just because of the TAAS," says MALDEF attorney Al Kauffman. "We don't think it accurately reflects what minorities know."

Study period. Assistant Attorney General Geoffrey Amsel, the lead lawyer representing the state in the case, says the Texas Education Agency has bent over backwards to make sure all pupils have an opportunity to study the eighth- and ninth-grade-level reading, math, and writing on which they're tested. Any student who doesn't pass the exit exam when it's first given in 10th grade gets plenty of remedial help, he says, noting that pupils have eight chances to pass. Of 212,773 members of the class of 1999, 5,461 students—less than 3 percent—had not passed the TAAS by the end of the school year.

Amsel points to rising pass rates to buttress his case. The initial Hispanic pass rate, for instance, has jumped from 34 percent in 1994 to 64 percent in 1999. "What the evidence is going to show is that exactly the opposite of a disparate impact has occurred," he says. "More of these students are succeeding."

At Fox Technical High School in downtown San Antonio, across from the city public library building known as the "red enchilada," Principal Joanne Cockrell says she sees standardized testing as the friend, not the enemy, of the poor, minority kids who make up most of her student body. Since she took over the once failing school four years ago, there's been a dramatic turnaround in test scores. Students receive intense coaching in areas of weakness pinpointed by the TAAS.

"If given the proper chance and the proper instruction," she says, "they can accomplish anything anyone else can."



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HOLD FOR RELEASE

Wednesday, September 15, 1999 10 A.M.

Contact: Sheppard Ranbom
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**States and Districts Should Move Carefully in Using High-Stakes Assessments
For Latinos, President's Advisory Commission Warns**

*State Testing Policies Subject to Bias, Unfairness, and Potential for Misuse;
Burden of Accountability Placed on Students, Not Schools, Reports Allege*

*Two Million Latino Students Underrepresented or Absent from State Testing Programs
That Could Lead To Improvements in the Quality of Education for Hispanic Youth*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – September 15, 1999 – At a time when nearly 20 states have established high-stakes tests for students to advance from grade to grade or graduate from high school, the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans warned states and school districts to avoid discriminatory practices in testing that adversely impact students still learning English.

A report prepared for the Commission's Assessment Committee says that states and school districts are pursuing a series of questionable policy options, each of which is subject to "significant degrees of bias, unfairness, or denial of substantive due process." The paper, prepared by Sonia Hernandez, California's deputy state superintendent of education, and Richard A. Figueroa of the University of California at Davis, argues that in their rush to set world-class standards, state leaders "have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high stakes decisions based on inaccurate data." The test data, the report says, is used to determine student promotion or retention for high school graduation, but rarely for genuine efforts to hold schools accountable. "When it comes to holding schools accountable for the academic achievement of our students, states allow Hispanic youngsters to become transparent inside the very system charged with educating them," the report says.

In a separate briefing document released today, the President's Advisory Commission, established by President Clinton in 1994 to guide federal policy aimed at bolstering Latino success in school and college, lauded the nation's movement to raise standards for students. But the Commission noted that despite its "fervent belief in the promise of meaningful reforms that can benefit all our children, we are greatly concerned—increasingly alarmed—with the way in which some of the reforms are implemented. In particular, the rush to establish a statewide test as a single measure of mastery of coursework is of great concern in the many cases where students to be held accountable have not had the kind of instruction that they should have had to allow them to succeed."

According to the briefing document, *Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier*, many of the new tests have not been sufficiently "stress tested" with the nation's most vulnerable population. While many Americans are growing concerned about a potential "train wreck" when too many students from middle-class backgrounds fail to meet high standards being established, efforts to introduce high-stakes testing without paying attention to minority and low-income populations are likely to adversely affect the Latino population still struggling to master the English language.

In the early grades, research indicates that the reading and writing skills of students still learning English are 50 percent behind students for whom English is their native language. When it comes to learning to read, students learning English have to run the 150-yard dash, while native speakers of English have only to run 100 yards, the White House Initiative says. Many Hispanic students never even complete the race. Today, Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics. Half of the Latino community's adult population is functionally illiterate.

According to estimates from the U.S. Department of Education, there are some 3.4 million Latino students still learning English. Most of these students are educated in five states – California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois – but English language learners are present in almost half of the nation's school districts. In ten states, (Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee), the population of students still acquiring English more than doubled between school years 1992-93 and 1996-97.

Worrisome Policies

The briefing document summarizes much of the research on how Hispanic students learn language and become literate. Based on practice, policy and available research, the paper prepared for the Commission's Assessment Committee by Figueroa and Hernandez identifies several possible options for states, districts, and schools concerning the measurement of Hispanic English language learners.

- 1) Tests can be administered in English which have been normed on student populations unlike the students who are given the test;
- 2) Testers can be given "cultural training" so that they can interpret the tests in ways that appear to be more valid;
- 3) Accommodations in the tests and the testing environments can be provided without regard for possible negative impact on student scores;
- 4) A moratorium on the use of individual scores for any high-stakes assessment can be put in place until research sorts out the complex issues associated with testing Hispanic students;
- 5) Tests can be used for holding systems legally and politically accountable for educational decisions that adversely impact Hispanic students as demonstrated in differential, negative outcomes;
- 6) Local norms can be developed in order to compare students against students with similar cultural, linguistic, and scholastic experiences; and
- 7) School systems can be supported to provide equitable opportunities-to-learn for Hispanic children across the United states thereby meeting the crucial assumption of tests that all students receive similar educational experiences.

Unfortunately, the paper says, only the first three options – the most limited of all – are in use, while the other four options have received no support or discussion or, in the case of crating equitable opportunities to learn, may take several generations to accomplish.

At the news event, Commissioners identified unacceptable practices that harm Latino students and students still learning English. 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 solely focus on making up for deficit in English language proficiency at same time sacrificing progress in content areas. In some cases, schools attempt to give students a full dosage of English as a Second Language 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 completion of 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.

Promising Practices

The Commission also pointed out promising efforts in states in school districts that use thoughtful assessment programs to propel achievement rather than punish students.

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

The **Texas** Education Agency is using one of the most stable yet flexible assessment programs to monitor the progress of three million students served 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 information collected from teachers. 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 but for distinct subgroups of students by race, ethnicity and socio-economic status.

In **Minnesota**, the absence of a statewide curriculum left state officials in the dark when it came to knowing what was going on in 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.

Basic Questions for Educational Decisionmakers

The Commission has identified 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?

- Even if not used for such high stakes purposes, are all students included in 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.
- Are there inequities in treatment of students or disparity in 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 decisions are based upon test scores.

New Areas of Work

In its role as an advisor to the Clinton Administration, the 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 also will work closely with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to help ensure that ELL students are afforded educational opportunities guaranteed under federal law and that the use of tests to make high-stakes decisions are fair and accurate.

Beyond these efforts, three key areas of work 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 that can help make best practice everyday practice in schools.
- **Better public awareness** about the complexities of standards-based reform initiatives and issues surrounding the use of high-stakes tests for students with limited facility in English. A new resource guide on high-stakes testing being developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights will be a foundation for continuing dialogue and understanding.
- **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.

The Commission also challenges researchers, educators, and leaders of the Latino community to "compel state and local leaders and the public to face reality about the growing percentage of students who are still learning the language 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."

Copies of both documents are available from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 5E-110, Washington, D,C, 20202, telephone: (202) 401-1411.

For Q+A.

Test development - support development of valid tests?

Include time of when students should be tested
→ 3 years - as research shows

APRESS

Is this a White House - white House position? (not been discussed with on board by Has the WH been consulted with students)

Message: - Don't give invalid tests - invalid b/c of theory {English language learners
- support accountability & high-stakes testing

Are these valid tests? Yes. But not being used for that which they are designed.

→ Texas system -> Double-edged sword: ① Display like all schools to some extent.
② Give cert. of attendance to students when they leave HS educ. that they received money comparable.

the next: K-12 school
with + language dev't
teachers who are certified

→ Texas got very good play by the Commission

* Proposal is at odds with WH proposal: we are not at odds with President's proposal. we are at odds w/ technical issues related to tests. Our issue is using data correctly & holding schools accountable. And we want investment.

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**States and Districts Should Move Carefully in Using High-Stakes Assessments for Latinos,
President's Advisory Commission Will Warn**

*Prominent Educators, President's Commission Members To Make Policy Recommendations,
Release Briefing Paper on Wednesday, September 15, 1999, at the National Press Club*

WASHINGTON – At a time when nearly 20 states have established high-stakes tests for students to advance from grade to grade or graduate from high school, the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans will warn states and school districts to avoid discriminatory practices in testing that adversely impact students still learning English.

According to estimates from the U.S. Department of Education, there are some 3.4 million Latino students still learning English. Most of these students are educated in five states – California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois – but English language learners are present in almost half of the nation's school districts. In ten states, (Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee), the population of students still acquiring English more than doubled between school years 1992-93 and 1996-97.

The President's Advisory Commission will recognize the importance and value of standards-based reform, but will express concern about the way in which some of the reforms are implemented. Commissioners will identify unacceptable practices that harm Latino students and students still learning English and will provide guidance for effective policies.

In addition, The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, which was established by President Clinton in 1994, will release a briefing paper, *Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier*. The paper will summarize the perspectives of federal, state, and local educators and policy regarding the challenges in implementing standards-based reform with a focus on Latino students.

In the early grades, research indicates that the reading and writing skills of students still learning English are 50 percent behind students for whom English is their native language. When it comes to learning to read, students learning English have to run the 150-yard dash, while native speakers of English have only to run 100 yards, the White House Initiative says. Many Hispanic students never even complete the race. Today, Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics. Half of the Latino community's adult population is functionally illiterate.

**The media is invited to a news briefing in the Murrow Room of the National Press Club,
529 14th Street, 13th Floor, from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.** Speakers at the event will include:

- Erlinda Archuleta, director, Regional Education Services, Colorado Department of Education
- Sonia Hernandez, deputy superintendent, California Department of Education, member, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;
- Ana M. "Cha" Guzman, chair, President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;
- Sarita Brown, executive director, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;
- Other members of the President's Advisory Commission.

PACHA Issues

9/15/99

- Thousands of students in NYC are mistakenly covered to need summer school training
- We believe in high-stakes testing - but in schools, not children. Kids being retained, but schools are
- If kids are not tested, they will be left out → resources go to that which is held accountable. Schools need to be accountable for testing of Hispanic kids.
- Strong support for standards-based movement
- "Crising crisis of invisible Hispanic students in nation's schools"
- ~~Category~~ Categorically. We believe in standards-based tests. ⁽¹⁾ Assessments that are culturally & linguistically important. ⁽²⁾ We ~~believe~~ believe in accountability ~~system~~ that includes all systems
- Leveling of playing field to make all students ready for tests. Teachers that are highly accomplished & experienced
- Near standardized - not diagnostic - tests for promotion, retention & HS graduation.
- URGING: ⁽¹⁾ research in appropriate norming pop. for students ⁽²⁾ OCR - pay attention to what is happening - state by state investigation of testing for Latinos
- ⁽³⁾ will be releasing a report call to action on testing & Latinos
- Those kids who are counted, count. (accountability system)
- For students who are Eng.-large proficient, we are covered with equality at schools

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Opening Doors to Scholastic Success

Put money into kindergarten and elementary grades.

Sunday, December 5, 1999; Page B08

Friday morning in my son's second-grade class is a hectic time. His teacher tries to manage a class of 23 -- some of whom won't sit still, others who can't complete simple tasks, a few who show the benefits of preschool preparation.

To help these children and all other Montgomery County students, School Superintendent Jerry Weast recently issued a "call to action" outlining a plan to raise the academic bar for all students and close the minority achievement gap. Not a moment too soon.

Growing enrollment, increasing poverty, high mobility and a growing number of English-language learners have changed the face of county schools. In 1973 Montgomery schools were 90 percent white; now they are 50 percent white. The number of kids on free and reduced-price meals was 5 percent in 1973; now it's 23 percent. The number of children enrolled in English for speakers of other languages has gone up 60 percent in 10 years.

More important, the achievement gap between African American and Hispanic children and students who are white or Asian has become a chasm. About three-fourths of white and Asian students are meeting third-grade reading standards, while fewer than half of African American and Hispanic children are succeeding.

We must develop accountability at all levels; improve and support teachers by providing additional time and resources for professional development; and expand our parental and business involvement in the classrooms.

We also must focus our attention on early childhood. Collaborative efforts between our school system, the Department of Health and Human Services and the nonprofit community hold out the best opportunity for success. But within the school system, we must strengthen the kindergarten curriculum, expand all-day kindergarten programs to the schools that face the most challenges and reduce class size at our neediest schools to 17 students per teacher in first and second grades and 15 to 1 in kindergarten.

The most important thing we can do to improve student achievement is to put money in kindergarten and elementary schools. A landmark study in Tennessee showed that gains made in these early years continued into high school, especially for minority and low-income students, with special-education enrollments, grade retentions and

disciplinary measures decreasing and graduation rates increasing. Such results have encouraged California, Wisconsin, Nevada and other jurisdictions to begin to reduce class sizes in the early grades.

Class-size reductions and all-day kindergarten may mean relocations or asking principals and staff to use space creatively. But preliminary estimates suggest that the cost would be less than one percent of the annual county operating budget. It would be money well spent, not because it's the latest fad in education reform but because it works.

-- Steven Silverman

a Democrat, is an at-large member of the Montgomery County Council.

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Survey Portrays Hispanic Poverty

In Alexandria, A Stark Picture Of Growing Group

By Leef Smith

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, December 9, 1999; Page V01

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Alexandria's Hispanic population is growing and includes more immigrants from Central American countries than ever before. The population struggles with English and is relatively poor, and the majority of adults have limited education, according to the results of a survey of the city's Hispanic residents released last week.

The survey, conducted from 1998 to 1999 by nonprofit groups led by the Alexandria United Way and in conjunction with community organizations, local government and private citizens, is intended to give local agencies and policymakers current information about the changing Hispanic community.

The goal of the effort, which took three years to conceptualize and complete and included interviews with nearly 500 residents, was to update a survey done 10 years earlier, and by doing so, help service providers and planners increase outreach opportunities and improve programs and services, officials said.

"We wanted to see where immigrants were coming from and what the population looked like to better understand the Alexandria community," said Patrice Linehan, a volunteer with United Way and research coordinator for the survey. "We didn't want to know just about the needs, we also wanted to know more about the people."

Alexandria's population, according to census data, is 60 percent white, 22 percent black, 12 percent Hispanic and 4 percent Asian. The Hispanic population has grown dramatically since 1980, when census figures showed that Hispanics made up only 4 percent of the city's population.

The population of school-age Hispanic children has grown even more rapidly--from 4 percent in 1980 to 23 percent today. The city's Hispanic community is largely concentrated in the West End and Arlandria.

While the majority of those who completed the survey--about 64 percent--said they had not completed high school, adults placed a high priority on their children's education and said they expected their children to finish high school, and 67 percent said they expected their children to attend a four-year college.

Among Alexandria's new Hispanic residents are families that come from Central and South America--particularly El Salvador--according

to the survey, which shows that the new immigrants are mostly young adults with elementary school age children. Most come to the United States with no more than eight years of schooling, cannot understand English and have few job skills.

Officials said the language barrier and lack of job training make it hard for many immigrants to find employment. According to the study, the per-capita income of Alexandria's Hispanic community is \$7,306, and nearly half of those residents go without health insurance for themselves and their families.

"We have confirmed what we long felt, that Alexandria's Hispanic population is poorer than we really imagined," said Howard Spiegelman, chairman of the assessment study committee and director of community resources for Alexandria schools. "The level of poverty all around was surprising."

Language proficiency--both English and Spanish--surfaced as a major problem for the city's Hispanic residents, the vast majority of whom said they needed help speaking, reading or writing English. In addition, 28 percent said someone in their household needed help reading their native Spanish, and 25 percent said help was needed with writing it.

"It's becoming very evident to us in the school system and the city how many parents are illiterate in their own language," Spiegelman said, adding that the schools will sometimes send information, written in Spanish, home to parents who can't read it. In turn, the parents can't help their children learn to read or write in Spanish or English. "Often the children help the parents."

The survey data, officials said, depict a community in need of special services, and those services are not reaching enough people.

The survey found that English as a Second Language classes were used by 43 percent of the households that need help reading, writing or speaking English. Services to help find medical care were used by 22 percent.

However, 30 to 36 percent of households reported needing, but not using, ESL classes, other education classes, job training or employment services, information on public benefits and services to help find health care.

Asked why they didn't take advantage of such services, 36 percent said they didn't know where to find help; 30 percent said they had no transportation; and 27 percent said they had no child care.

While the overall population of Alexandria had a median household income of \$61,408 in 1996, the survey found that the median Hispanic household income was \$30,000. At the time of the survey, the unemployment rate for all city residents was 2.1 percent, while the unemployment rate for Hispanics surveyed was 12 percent. Of those who were employed, 66 percent held full-time jobs.

Asked why members of their households were out of work, 36 percent said they couldn't find child care. Others cited age or disability, lack

of job skills, inability to speak English or no work permit or transportation.

Of those who completed the survey, 60 percent of the households reported receiving assistance from federal or state programs for low-income residents. Forty-four percent of respondents said their children received subsidized school lunches.

Ricardo Drumond, a Latin American affairs specialist for Alexandria's Department of Human Services, worked on both the 1989 survey and this latest effort, which he said was done to educate the community, citizens and policymakers alike.

"One of the goals when we worked on the survey was not to editorialize, Drumond said. "We wanted to present something that was unbiased, so people could draw their own conclusions."

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*White House Initiative on Educational Excellence
for Hispanic Americans*

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September 16, 1999, Thursday, PM cycle

SECTION: Washington Dateline

LENGTH: 613 words

HEADLINE: Education panel says use of English-only tests unfair to students

BYLINE: By ANJETTA McQUEEN, AP Education Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

As more Hispanic children enter the nation's schools, educators debate whether they could be hard hit by high-stakes English-only tests.

A presidential panel on Hispanic education says such tests, often used to move children ahead or graduate them, may violate the rights of millions of Hispanic children. Others still say any accommodations could cheat them out of a fair assessment of their abilities.

"State education leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, released on Wednesday. It urged the **Education** Department to investigate.

The **Education** Department is currently investigating two cases related to testing and language ability, said Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the civil rights branch. Murphey said he could not discuss the cases, in Nevada and in Texas, or disclose the filing parties.

About 20 percent of the 5,000 cases filed each year specifically relate to laws that prohibit racial discrimination against students, he said. A 1974 Supreme Court ruling in essence includes language ability in that ban by requiring schools to provide help for students with limited English.

However, opponents of bilingual education argue that accommodating children on high-stakes tests will hurt them in the long run.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," said Jorge Amselle, the vice president for education of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington group that opposes bilingual education and affirmative action. "The purpose of education in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society and that requires mastery in English.

"To say that a student should be able to do math and science and read and write in English is simply a matter of accountability, not a matter of discrimination," Amselle added.

There is no one national measure of how well a schoolchild is learning. Nearly every state has developed its own achievement tests to gauge progress in core subjects such as math and reading - and the tests vary.

The presidential panel said current state approaches to students who are not native English speakers are too vague for tests that are often tied to a child's promotion or graduation. Currently, 19 states require students to pass tests before they receive high school diplomas; seven more plan to follow suit by 2003.

The Hispanic education panel, which was created in 1990 by President Bush, issued its first report in 1992. The group is charged with bolstering Hispanics' participation in federal education programs and targeting ways to eliminate educational gaps.

Educating the nation's 3.4 million Hispanic children properly is more important than ever, the group says, as such students' enrollment grows but their achievement does not.

In 10 states, the number of children who are not native English speakers more than doubled from the 1992-93 to 1996-97 school years. And 70 percent of those children are Hispanic.

But in learning, Hispanic children are slipping behind. Young Hispanic children perform half as well as their native-English-speaking peers. Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics.

Even well-to-do families will produce dropouts if English is not learned, the panel said.

The panel praised states such as Oregon, which offers its 4,000 Hispanic students tests in English and Spanish; the tests are matched carefully and questions that cannot be matched in both languages are dropped.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 1999



Search: General News;president's advisory commission, education

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Example: House of Representatives

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September 16, 1999, Thursday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part A; Page 3; Metro Desk

LENGTH: 785 words

HEADLINE: CALIFORNIA AND THE WEST;
INQUIRY INTO ENGLISH-ONLY TESTS ORDERED;
EDUCATION: PRESIDENTIAL PANEL SAYS USE OF SUCH EXAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH
LIMITED PROFICIENCY IN THE LANGUAGE MAY VIOLATE THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS. IT
CALLS FOR A PROBE.

BYLINE: RICHARD T. COOPER, TIMES STAFF WRITER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

In a report likely to add to controversies already swirling around California schools, a presidential advisory commission said Wednesday that making children with limited English skills take tests written only in English and using the results to decide such pivotal questions as promotion or graduation may violate their civil rights.

The commission called on the U.S. Department of **Education**, which is charged with enforcing federal civil rights laws as they apply to schools, to investigate such uses of so-called English-only tests.

"State **education** leaders have compromised the future of Latino students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

The **Education** Department reacted cautiously to the latest news from what has become treacherous territory in both policy and political terms because it is part of the larger realm of bilingual **education**.

"We appreciate the attention to this area," department spokesman Rodger Murphey said. "We will look at this report, as well as the body of information we collect, as we plan our . . . activities."

Murphey said the department's Office of Civil Rights Compliance has previously investigated and pursued cases involving the testing of students with limited English skills and is developing cases in Texas and Nevada. He declined to provide details on the pending investigations.

The issue of English-only tests for students with limited proficiency in the language is particularly sensitive in California. More Latino children with limited English proficiency are enrolled in schools here than in any other state. And standardized tests, many of them English-only, are likely to play important roles in new educational policies that are being formulated.

Under a new policy mandating an end to social promotion, for example, school districts are in the process of developing criteria to be applied to students in the second, third, fourth, fifth and eighth grades. English-only tests are likely to be part of such criteria.

Testing also will play a role in the state's new accountability system for rating the performance of individual districts, though final decisions on exactly how such data will be used have not been made.

State Supt. of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin said she agrees that using English-only tests is "a serious problem for children who have been in school a short period of time." She favors giving such tests to students with limited English proficiency only after they have attended U.S. schools at least two years.

"Some rule of reasonableness should apply," she said, calling use of English-only tests with children new to the language "ham-handed."

But she said that, as a result of the controversy over bilingual **education**, "right now California is confused. A lot of people in Sacramento are like deer in the headlights."

Assemblywoman Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) is the author of a bill on Gov. Gray Davis' desk that would limit the use of English-only tests in measuring school districts' performance.

"Testing scholastic aptitude in English when students haven't had a chance to learn the language in which the test is written is unfair," she said.

Critics of bilingual **education**, on the other hand, argue that children with limited English skills will suffer in the long term if they are permitted to continue learning and being tested in their native languages.

In Washington, the Center for Equal Opportunity, headed by former Ronald Reagan administration official Linda Chavez, has been among the leading critics of using bilingual strategies for Spanish-speaking students.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," Jorge Amselle, the center's vice president for **education**, told Associated Press. "The purpose of **education** in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society, and that requires mastery in English."

Echoing that view, the panel said that even children with limited English who are not troubled by poverty will fail to succeed in school if they do not learn English.

Under a 1974 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, schools are required to provide assistance to students with limited English skills. But the extent of that assistance and its duration remain matters of dispute.

The **Education** Department investigates language issues under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

*

Times staff writer Richard Lee Colvin in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 1999

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September 16, 1999 Thursday, CHICAGO SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 24; ZONE: N

LENGTH: 442 words

HEADLINE: ENGLISH-ONLY SCHOOL TESTS CHALLENGED;
HISPANIC RIGHTS MAY BE VIOLATED BY CRITERIA FOR PROMOTION, PANEL SAYS

BYLINE: Associated Press.

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

English-only tests that determine whether a student moves ahead or graduates might violate millions of Hispanic children's rights, a presidential panel said Wednesday. It urged the **Education Department** to investigate.

"State **education** leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans**.

The **Education Department** does investigate such cases, said Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the civil rights branch. About 20 percent of the 5,000 cases filed each year specifically relate to laws that prohibit racial discrimination against students, he said.

The department is currently investigating two cases related to testing and language ability, in Nevada and in Texas. Murphey said he could not discuss the cases or disclose the parties.

A 1974 Supreme Court ruling requires schools to provide help for students with limited English.

However, opponents of bilingual **education** argue that accommodating children on high-stakes tests hurts them in the long run.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," said Jorge Amselle, the vice president for **education** of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington group that opposes bilingual **education** and affirmative action. "The purpose of **education** in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society, and that requires mastery in English.

"To say that a student should be able to do math and science and read and write in English is simply a matter of accountability, not a matter of discrimination."

There is no one national measure of how well a child is learning. Nearly every state has its own achievement tests to gauge progress in core subjects such as math and reading, and the tests vary.

The presidential panel said state approaches to students who are not native English speakers are too vague for tests that are often tied to a child's promotion or graduation.

"Nevertheless, the resulting data are often used to hold students accountable for their own success, rather than the educators," said the report by the Hispanic **education** panel, which was created in

1990 by President George Bush. The group, which issued its first report in 1992, is charged with bolstering Hispanics' participation in federal education programs and with finding ways to eliminate educational gaps.

Hispanics are expected to be the nation's largest minority group by 2010.

FEDERAL GROUP REPORT ISSUE MINORITY HISPANIC EDUCATION

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 1999



Search: General News:president's advisory commission, education

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September 16, 1999, Thursday

SECTION: NEWS Pg. A-7

LENGTH: 667 words

HEADLINE: Panel says tests hurt Hispanic students; English-only format faulted as narrow

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS

BYLINE: Anjetta McQueen

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- English-only tests that determine whether a student moves ahead or even graduates may violate millions of Hispanic children's rights, a presidential panel said yesterday. It urged the **Education Department** to investigate.

"State **education** leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

The **Education Department** does investigate such cases, said Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the civil rights branch. About 20 percent of the 5,000 cases filed each year specifically relate to laws that prohibit racial discrimination against students, he said.

The department is currently investigating two cases related to testing and language ability, in Nevada and Texas. Murphey said he could not discuss the cases or disclose the parties.

In California, educators are creating a high school exit exam, which should be ready in about three years. Plans are for the test to be given in English only.

Rosalia Salinas, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment for the San Diego Office of **Education**, believes that if these tests are to accurately reflect student knowledge, they should not be limited to English.

"It's important for us to also have a way of measuring the actual knowledge a student might have in areas such as mathematics and science and that the language issue not be the sole determinant of whether or not that student has knowledge," she said.

A 1974 Supreme Court ruling requires schools to provide help for students with limited English.

However, opponents of bilingual **education** argue that accommodating children on high-stakes tests will hurt them in the long run.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," said Jorge Amselle, the vice president for **education** of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington group that opposes bilingual **education** and affirmative action. "The purpose of **education** in the United

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Educating the nation's 3.4 million Hispanic children properly is more important than ever before, the group says, as such students' enrollment grows but their achievement does not.

Hispanics will become the nation's largest minority group by 2010. In 10 states, the number of children who are not native English speakers more than doubled from the 1992-93 to 1996-97 school years. And 70 percent of those children are Hispanic.

But in learning, Hispanic children are slipping behind. Young Hispanic children perform half as well as their native-English-speaking peers. Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 17, 1999



Search: General News;president's advisory commission, education

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September 20, 1999, Monday, FINAL

SECTION: EDITORIAL. Pg. A9

LENGTH: 392 words

HEADLINE: FOR ALL STUDENTS, THE KEY IS ENGLISH

BODY: A presidential panel is woefully shortsighted to conclude that Hispanic students' rights are being violated when they're required to take tests in English to qualify for a high school diploma.

The President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans has reported that Hispanic students' future has been compromised by requiring them to demonstrate enough English fluency to take tests in English.

Quite the contrary. There should be no confusion on this point: What surely compromises a Hispanic student's future is failing to teach that student to function in English.

As Jorge Amselle, vice president for education of the Washington-based Center for Equal Opportunity, put it, "The purpose of education in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society and that requires mastery in English. To say that a student should be able to do math and science and read and write in English is simply a matter of accountability, not a matter of discrimination."

Insisting on accountability by educators to teach Hispanic students English is the best thing that could happen to them. They have every right to expect to have been educated to function in English when they graduate from high school. To excuse them from English-speaking requirements is nothing short of fraud.

Nevertheless, the misguided panel members want the U.S. Department of Education to investigate whether Hispanic students' civil rights have been violated by requiring them to take tests in English.

The panel would have been wiser to insist the department investigate cases where students' civil rights had been compromised because they were not required to learn English.

The department already is investigating two cases of alleged civil rights violations related to testing and language ability in Nevada and Texas. And more such complaints can be expected as the nation, like this state, moves to require students to demonstrate competence in core academic subjects before they are certified as having mastered high school subjects.

Such complaints also are to be expected in this state, which has a rapidly growing Hispanic population. Nationally, Hispanics will become the nation's largest minority by 2010.

The sooner this matter is resolved to require Hispanic students to learn English, the better.

NOTES:
Editorials

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

TYPE: EDITORIAL

LOAD-DATE: September 21, 1999

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The Seattle Times

September 16, 1999, Thursday Final Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A8; ACROSS THE NATION

LENGTH: 759 words

HEADLINE: NATIONAL-SECURITY PANEL SEES TERROR FOR DECADES TO COME

BODY:

WASHINGTON - Americans are feeling increasingly secure, but they shouldn't, says an independent panel set up by the Pentagon.

Citing dangers ranging from "mass disruption" by attacks on information systems to "mass destruction" from nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists, the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century paints a frightening picture of the next quarter-century.

"Americans will become increasingly vulnerable to hostile attack on our homeland, and our military superiority will not entirely protect us," said the commission, headed by former Sens. Warren Rudman, R-N.H., and Gary Hart, D-Colo.

At a news conference releasing the first of three planned reports, Rudman cited "the spreading ability of terrorists to strike Americans at home and abroad."

Panel members said America needs to restructure forces to meet 21st-century challenges, a topic the panel will continue to address. It will propose a national strategy next year and offer final recommendations to achieve national safety to the next president in 2001.

Presidential panel assails use of English-only testing

WASHINGTON - A presidential advisory commission said yesterday that making children with limited English skills take tests written only in English and using the results to decide such pivotal questions as promotion or graduation may violate their civil rights.

"State education leaders have compromised the future of Latino students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

The commission called on the U.S. Department of Education, which is charged with enforcing federal civil-rights laws as they apply to schools, to investigate such uses of so-called English-only tests.

FCC enhances 911 service, OKs GPS use for cell phones

WASHINGTON - A new way of linking satellites and cell phones in an emergency received a big boost yesterday from the Federal Communications Commission.

By a 5-0 vote, the commission allowed introduction of cell phones that use Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites to flash their location to 911 operators.

About 70,000 callers a day use cell phones to reach 911, but many don't know their exact location.

Vice president goes on attack against rise of cyberstalking

SAN DIEGO - State and federal laws should be stiffened to outlaw online stalking, according to a new U.S. Justice Department report that warns the practice is on the rise.

"Cyberstalking is a very serious new problem confronting us in the information age," said Vice President Al Gore, who requested the report in February and released it today.

"Cyberspace should be a place for learning and exploration, not a place for fear," he said at a meeting with victims of online stalking and their family members.

Two-thirds of states have no laws that cover stalking on the Internet or through other electronic communications means, the report found.

Medicare expenses to soar for patients who use HMOs

WASHINGTON - Millions of Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in health-maintenance organizations will be forced to pay much more for their health care next year, particularly for prescription drugs and visits to doctors' offices.

The higher charges - in some cases tripling the cost for retirees to visit a doctor and setting strict caps on prescription benefits - were disclosed yesterday by the Health Care Financing Administration, which runs Medicare. They seem sure to set off a new round of debate about medical costs, the role of HMOs and the way society should pay for the health care of an aging population. The higher costs possibly could increase political support for President Clinton's proposal to offer drug benefits under Medicare.

Although HMOs have been warning that benefits were likely to be trimmed in 2000, the size and scope of the increases were unanticipated.

Drugs OK'd to fight cancer, help kidney transplantation

WASHINGTON - The Food and Drug Administration approved two new drugs, one for breast-cancer patients whose tumors have spread to the lymph nodes and one to help prevent kidney-transplant rejection.

Ellence, known chemically as epirubicin, was approved today for treatment of node-positive, early-stage breast cancer.

Yesterday, the FDA approved Raparnunc, calling it an important addition to the immunosuppressants available for kidney transplants.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 18, 1999



Search: General News:president's advisory commission, education

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September 16, 1999, THURSDAY, FIRST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A4

LENGTH: 420 words

HEADLINE: HISPANIC STUDENTS HURT BY ENGLISH TESTS, PANEL SAYS

BYLINE: The Associated Press

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

English-only tests that determine whether a student moves ahead or even graduates might violate the rights of millions of Hispanic children, a presidential panel said Wednesday in urging the **Education Department** to investigate.

"State **education** leaders have compromised the future of Hispanic students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

The **Education Department** does investigate such cases, said Rodger Murphey, a spokesman for the civil rights branch. About 20 percent of the 5,000 cases filed each year specifically deal with laws that prohibit such discrimination, he said.

The department is investigating two cases in Nevada and Texas related to testing and language ability. Murphey said he could not discuss the cases or disclose the parties.

A 1974 Supreme Court ruling requires schools to provide help for students who speak limited English. Opponents of bilingual **education** argue that accommodating children on high-stakes tests will hurt them in the long run.

"You want to make sure kids don't graduate with a degree that they can't even read," said Jorge Amselle, vice president for **education** of the Center for Equal Opportunity, a Washington group that opposes bilingual **education** and affirmative action. "The purpose of **education** in the United States is to prepare students to survive and succeed in this society, and that requires mastery in English."

But the presidential panel said state approaches to students who are not native English speakers are too vague for tests that are often tied to a child's promotion or graduation. Currently, 19 states require students to pass tests before they receive high school diplomas; seven more plan to follow suit by 2003.

"Nevertheless the resulting data are often used to hold students accountable for their own success, rather than the educators," said the report by the Hispanic **education** panel, created in 1990 by President Bush.

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But in **education**, Hispanic children are slipping behind. Young Hispanic children perform half as

well as their native-English-speaking peers. Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics.

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 1999



Search: General News;president's advisory commission, education

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Example: House of Representatives

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

September 16, 1999, Thursday Final

SECTION: News Pg. 7

LENGTH: 115 words

HEADLINE: Panel chides states for English-only tests

SOURCE: Journal Sentinel wire reports

DATELINE: Washington

BODY:

A presidential advisory commission said Wednesday that making children with limited English skills take tests written only in English and using the results to decide such pivotal questions as promotion or graduation may violate their civil rights.

The panel called on the U.S. Department of **Education** to investigate.

"State **education** leaders have compromised the future of Latino students by making high-stakes decisions based on inaccurate and inadequate information," said the report by the **President's Advisory Commission** on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

Milwaukee Public Schools requires students to pass an English-only test before graduating.

LOAD-DATE: September 17, 1999



Search: General News;president's advisory commission, education

To narrow this search, please enter a word or phrase:



Example: House of Representatives

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September 16, 1999, THURSDAY; ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. A13

LENGTH: 292 words

HEADLINE: ENGLISH-ONLY TESTS UNFAIR TO STUDENTS, PANEL FINDS

COLUMN: AROUND THE NATION

SOURCE: Wire services

BYLINE: FROM NEWS SERVICE REPORTS

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

English-only tests that determine whether a student moves ahead or even graduates may violate millions of Hispanic children's rights, a presidential panel said Wednesday. It urged the **Education** Department to investigate.

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"Nevertheless the resulting data are often used to hold students accountable for their own success, rather than the educators," said the

report by the Hispanic education panel.

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: September 16, 1999



Search: General News;president's advisory commission, education

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The Ledger (Lakeland, FL)

September 19, 1999, Sunday

SECTION: News; Pg. A14

LENGTH: 585 words

HEADLINE: STATES REACT TO TESTING BIAS AGAINST HISPANIC STUDENTS

BYLINE: CATHERINE HOLLINGSWORTH Ledger Washington Bureau

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- Faced with steady increases in Hispanic student enrollment due to the Latino population boom, many states are seeking an academic system that better suits Spanish speakers, with an emphasis on bias-free tests.

Between 1992 and 1997, the number of Latino students still not fluent in English more than doubled in Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and a few western states, according to government data compiled by the **White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans.**

By 2050, one in four school-age children will be Hispanic, Census Bureau projections show. At that rate, schools across the country are bound to be faced with the challenges of educating Latinos, many of whom are enrolled below grade level, have high drop-out rates and low literacy levels.

The Latino population boom in general may be a wake-up call for some school districts.

"If it's not really having some impact now, it will. So they best be paying attention," said Sonia Hernandez, a member of the commission and co-author of a recent report on test bias against Hispanics.

Testing can be a major challenge for schools because of language and cultural barriers, the White House report said.

The report released Wednesday found that too often Hispanic students are made to take tests they do not understand, and alternative tests are not always available.

Only a few states are making progress in this area of eliminating test bias, with Texas and other Southern states leading the way.

"There are states that we believe are making a good-faith effort to retain Spanish-speaking students," Hernandez said.

North Carolina and Texas have closed the gap between the state exam scores of minorities and the rest of the student population. Alabama and Texas give non-English speakers multiple opportunities to pass high-stakes tests required for promotion or graduation.

Oregon created a Spanish version of its state test, and Minnesota developed a pre-test to determine whether limited English speaking students are ready for standardized tests.

But overall, states could do a better job of educating Hispanics, the commission said. It plans to conduct a state-by-state analysis of states' efforts in the coming months.

"In Alabama, we face the challenge of finding teachers who are bilingual," said Dianne Courtney, a specialist in federal education programs at the Alabama Department of Education.

There are only enough resources to offer bilingual instruction during summer school, she said. The state also is hard pressed to find college education programs that certify teachers in bilingual education.

Shortage of funding for language programs is yet another challenge facing school districts with growing Hispanic enrollment.

The North Carolina Legislature for the first time last year provided funding for English-language programs. These programs, which provide tutoring in English and help students with study skills, previously had been funded solely through federal and local sources.

"We're finally having recognition from the state that these students should get a level playing field," said John Wilson, executive director of the North Carolina Association of Educators. "The state never really had addressed this issue."

The difference now is lawmakers are paying attention to the changing demographics, Wilson said. "You can see that the numbers are driving people to make better decisions about individuals," he said.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 20, 1999



Search: General News;white house initiative on educational excellence for hispanic...

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Example: House of Representatives

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September 22, 1999

Hispanic Students 'Left Out' By High-Stakes Tests, Panel Concludes

By Mary Ann Zehr

Washington

Hispanic students are not being tested properly, nor are their scores on standardized tests being used for the right purposes, a presidential advisory panel concluded last week.

Members of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans said that while they wholly support the drive for standards-based school reform, they are not happy with how the educational needs of Hispanic students are being addressed within the movement.

More Information
"A Report to the Nation: Policies and Issues on Testing Hispanic Students in the United States" is available free from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans by calling (202) 401-1411.

"The assessment dialogue that has been going on in this country has not sufficiently included the Hispanic community," Ana M. "Cha" Guzman, the vice president of Austin Community College in Texas and the chairwoman of the commission, said at a press conference here last week. "If our children are not being tested [properly], they will be left out."



Ana M. "Cha"
Guzman

The 22-member commission, which was appointed by President Clinton in 1994, published its conclusions in "A Report to the Nation: Policies and Issues on Testing Hispanic Students in the United States." The 97-page report calls on the Department of Education's office for civil rights to look on a state-by-state basis into possible discriminatory practices in the testing of Hispanics.

Commission members speaking at the press conference emphasized what they see as a need for developing better tests for assessing Hispanic students, particularly those with limited proficiency in English. In addition, they said, test scores should be used to hold schools accountable for providing an adequate education to Hispanic students.

Until those issues are resolved, Hispanics' test scores should not be used to keep them from being promoted or from graduating, commissioners argued.

"The high stakes have to be on the schools and school districts and not on children," Ms. Guzman said.

Kenji Hakuta, a professor of education at Stanford University, agreed with the commission's main recommendations.

"It's not appropriate to have the high stakes applied to students until the problems can be addressed," he said.

Mr. Hakuta noted that nearly half of the nation's Hispanic students are considered not proficient in English, and that about 75 percent of students who fall under that category are in high-poverty schools.

Lawsuit in Texas

But Kati Haycock, the director of the Washington-based Education Trust, which aims to improve the academic achievement of minority and disadvantaged students, disagreed with the panel's view that individual students shouldn't be held accountable for their test scores.

"It's a little overly simplistic to say schools can be held accountable without high stakes for the kids," she said. "At the high school level, if there are no incentives for students to work hard and meet standards and do well on a test, they won't."

Ms. Haycock agreed with the commission, however, that state and national testing authorities have no excuse for not having developed better tests to assess students who are learning English.

"The need for better exams has been clear for at least a decade," she said. "There's clearly a need to put some big money fast into developing decent assessments for Spanish-speaking kids."

The report is being released at the same time that the debate over standardized testing of minority students is heating up.

A lawsuit challenging the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills was expected to go to trial this week in the U.S. District Court in San Antonio.

In the suit, *GI Forum, et al. v. Texas Education Agency, et al.*, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund has taken the lead in claiming that the state's use of the TAAS as a graduation requirement discriminates against Hispanic and African-American students. The rationale is that minorities haven't received an education in Texas equal to that of other students.

"The main goal would be to stop the use of the exit test for getting a

high school diploma," said Alicia Maldonado, the senior director of communications and public policy for MALDEF. "If you're testing kids on certain kinds of information, they need to be getting that instruction. We say they're not."

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EDUCATION DAILY

The education community's independent daily news service

Riley Pushes AP Courses, Smaller High Schools

Education Secretary Richard Riley on Wednesday mapped out a plan to reform education for adolescents, calling for increased access to demanding classes, smaller high schools and greater parent involvement.

"Every high school in America should be offering Advanced Placement (AP) or other advanced courses in the core subjects within the next two years," Riley said yesterday in an address before the National Press Club, his sixth straight year of addressing journalists there.

"I remain deeply concerned that we continue to shortchange many of our young people," Riley said, "particularly our minority young people, by not even giving them the opportunity to stretch their minds."

He lamented that 49 percent of the nation's high schools offer AP courses (only 10 percent of all students take such courses), but noted that President Clinton has proposed to spend an added \$20 million on AP test fees in fiscal 2000.

Schools, Classes: 'Size Matters'

The Clinton administration, since the April 20 mass murder at Columbine High School, has promoted smaller high schools and smaller classes not only as a method of improving instruction, but also of interacting more personally with adolescents and preventing violence.

Riley yesterday asked high school educators to "give students a connection. That's hard to do when we are building high schools the size of shopping malls. Size matters."

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Riley noted, published a study recommending that students learn best in high schools with no more than 600 students. Acknowledging budget realities that make schools of 2,500 students more economical, Riley called for "schools-within-schools ...

(more on p. 2)

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High-Stakes Testing Hurts Latino Students, Group Says

In the push to set higher standards, states and school districts should avoid discriminatory testing practices that hurt Hispanics and other students learning English, says a White House advisory panel for Hispanic-Americans.

Nearly 20 states have adopted high-stakes tests as a sole measure to determine whether students advance to the next grade or graduate high school, said the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans, established by President Clinton in 1994.

But in a report released yesterday, the panel said it wants states and districts to focus reforms on improving schools—instead of taking measures against students who don't pass high stakes tests by ending social promotion and withholding diplomas.

In addition, the group called for the creation of "linguistically and culturally appropriate" tests it said would help Hispanic students meet standards.

"The standards-based movement is the first opportunity we've had in years to bring our children up to par," said Erlinda Archuleta, a

(more on p. 4)

Riley Pushes AP Courses, Smaller High Schools (Cont.)

and mak[ing] sure that every high school student has an adviser for all four years."

He said he would support plans in Congress that would promote the hiring of counselors in schools; President Clinton wants schools to counsel all children who are suspended or expelled (ED, June 2).

Language Excellence

Breaking new ground, Riley also proposed to require every high school graduate to demonstrate fluency in a foreign language.

"We should begin teaching foreign languages in our elementary schools, and then in middle schools and high schools," he said.

Without proposing to test students in foreign tongues, Riley did endorse exit exams for high school graduates, proposing that high schools run review courses—similar to legal courses offered to people taking a state bar exam—that would help students prepare for high stakes tests.

To promote this focus on tougher academics and foreign languages, Riley proposed that parents stop allowing their teenagers to work 20 hours each week in part-time jobs, saying research shows that such labor harms kids' academic performance.

Life After High School

Gerald Tirozzi, now NASSP executive director and until recently the Education Department's K-12 policy chief, welcomed Riley's focus.

"We just have to attack the status quo," Tirozzi said. "We have to reform American high schools, and it can't be piecemeal."

In a statement, NASSP urged that districts stop "warehousing" students in overcrowded, alienating schools that lack mentoring services and high standards.

Riley had picked up on this theme, calling for schools to experiment with a reform promoted as part of the High School That Works program, which is supported by the Southern Regional Education Board in 500 Southern high schools. Freshmen in the program, with help from their parents and an adviser, write a six year plan that addresses high school academics and life after graduation.

"The young people," Riley said, "get the message that they have new and high horizons, and that going to high school has a higher purpose."

Patricia McNeil, the Labor Department's assistant secretary for employment and training, endorsed such six-year planning as an effective reform for students who are not bound for college, but headed into the workforce instead. And she stressed that AP courses, as recommended by Riley, can be critical even to children in vocational education tracks.

"Every kid needs to be prepared for college, whether they go or not," McNeil said. "They need to be prepared ... Employers give that message loud and clear." —William J. Cahir

Resources

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House Oversight Panel Blasts AmeriCorps, Again

Despite plans to change its management and accounting systems, accountability problems persist for the agency charged with overseeing the AmeriCorps program, which recruits 17- to 24-year olds for national service.

In a hearing Tuesday before the House Education and the Workforce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, lawmakers questioned the chairman of the Corporation for National Service, Bob Rogers, about a slew of internal audits that have unveiled numerous examples of AmeriCorps volunteers receiving work credit for inappropriate activities.

"The corporation is not only failing to root out waste and fraud on its own," said Rep. Peter Hockstra, R-Mich., the subcommittee's chairman. "It is failing to pursue collections on fraud identified by the inspector general."

AmeriCorps, started in 1993 by President Clinton, gives high school students vouchers—worth up to \$4,725—that can be used to pay for college, job training or student loans in exchange for one year of volunteer work that provide a tangible benefit for the community. AmeriCorps prohibits the credits from going toward any paid job or political activity.

However, since its inception, the program—currently funded at \$428.5 million—has had numerous problems accounting for its funding on the state and local levels, drawing criticism from Republicans in Congress.

Decentralized Structure

At the hearing, Rogers said that past mismanagement can be explained by the peculiar structure of the program.

Two-thirds of AmeriCorps funding goes to state commissions, which in turn send the money to local AmeriCorps projects. As a result, the Corporation for National Service does not directly oversee individual projects.

"The Terre Haute matter is an excellent example of how the challenges of a devolved and decentralized structure manifest themselves," he said.

Rogers was referring to a recent report in the *Terre Haute Tribune Star* that found Indiana

students receiving AmeriCorps credits for anything from singing in a church choir to holding jobs at a summer camp.

Although Rogers insisted that the Indiana program is an isolated example of mismanagement, testimony from Luise Jordan, the inspector general for the Corporation for National Service, indicates that the kinds of problems in Terre Haute persist at other sites as well.

Jordan sharply disagreed with Rogers, and told the congressional panel that the lack of a direct contractual relationship does not relieve the corporation from oversight responsibilities. In a recent audit of 40 AmeriCorps sites, her office found:

- Participants on the corporation's database did not correspond to the membership rosters at some sites;
- Program officers were unaware of prohibited activities in the AmeriCorps legislation at seven sites; and
- Not all sites had a process to review education award certificates.

One of the IG's audits even revealed that a participant received work credit for a job at McDonald's.

To correct accountability problems, the Corporation for National Service plans to unveil a Web-based accounting system that will eliminate the error-prone paper filing method it uses today to account for hours logged in the program.

It has also recently implemented a new financial records system to make records more accessible to outside auditors.

While Jordan testified that she had no evidence the oversight problems would be corrected by recent management changes the corporation is in the process of implementing, Rogers was more optimistic.

"I believe we are making progress," Rogers said. "There is still a long way to go, but this is a good year for it." —Eli J. Lake

High-Stakes Testing Hurts Latino Students (Cont. from p. 1)

member of the panel. "But our students are being tested in English, for which many do not have the fluency."

Good And Bad Testing

While advocating testing policies it deems fairer, the panel called for ensuring that more Hispanic and minority-language students are included in tests. Often, English language learners are exempted from testing.

"If our children are not tested, they will be left out," said Ana Guzman, chairwoman of the panel and vice president at Austin Community College in Cedar Park, Texas. "Resources go to who is held accountable."

The panel outlined several practices it said harm Hispanic students and students learning English, including: requiring English-only tests for high stakes decisions; providing inadequate support to achieve high standards; and using tests not aligned to school curricula.

The group also recommended several courses of action for states and districts, including testing in Spanish, special accommodations on tests for students still learning English, and efforts to ensure that schools which teach large populations of those students have qualified teachers and equitable resources.

Delaying Accountability?

On the surface, the panel's findings would seem to be in conflict with the Clinton administration's push to get schools to adopt higher standards and end social promotion.

But Mike Cohen, a senior adviser to Education Secretary Richard Riley, said the administration has always supported "valid and reliable" tests, inclusion of all students in testing, and testing in a diagnostic fashion to help improve schools. "To do this in a sound way, there ought to be multiple measures [besides tests]," he said.

He also pointed to a recently released Education Department guidebook that advises schools to end social promotion only after providing tutoring and other services to help students meet standards, a phase-in that could take up to five years (ED, July 1).

But Jorge Anselle, vice president of the Center

for Equal Opportunity, a group that opposes minority preferences, defended high-stakes decisions as a method of forcing schools and students to improve. "How are we going to end social promotion without high-stakes decisions on tests?" he asked. "You can't have it both ways."

He also frowned on testing students on some subjects in native languages while they learn English. "Tests in English should be mandatory because that's the standard," he said. "All [native-language tests] will do is delay the acquisition of English." (more)

Test Snafu Ruins Summer For New York City Kids

Thousands of New York City public school students were improperly required to attend summer school as a result of scoring glitches on a high-stakes test, the city schools chancellor admitted Tuesday.

As part of New York's get-tough policies to end social promotion, 35,000 students attended summer school this year after getting low scores on a spring achievement test. But a mistake made by test publisher CTB/McGraw Hill may have improperly compelled up to 3,000 students to attend summer school.

CTB/McGraw Hill said the mistake affected scores in other districts, but those districts didn't use the test in a high-stakes capacity.

Testing critics argue that the snafu is another reason why high-stakes testing is unfair. In fact, test publishers recommend against high-stakes policies and say districts should weigh other factors besides test scores in determining promotions, such as class work and teacher judgments.

A similar error occurred recently with California's state assessment, the Stanford 9 Achievement Test. Test publisher Harcourt Education Management improperly classified 300,000 English-proficient students as students still learning English, resulting in vastly inflated scores for English learners (ED, July 1).

—Jonathan Fox

High-Stakes Testing Hurts Latino Students, Group Says (Cont.)

The presidential group's findings echo complaints embodied in a lawsuit filed in October 1997 by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a Latino civil rights group, against the Texas Education Agency.

In Texas, students must pass the three-part Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exit exam to graduate—with no exceptions.

Suing on behalf of seven students who flunked the test, MALDEF alleges it discriminates against minorities because the state doesn't provide all students an equal opportunity in education, while many schools don't teach all the material on the test. The case goes to trial Sept. 20.

Texas officials deny that the exam is discriminatory, and say test items are vigorously screened and field-tested for bias. (Members of the presidential panel said they want the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights,

which enforces civil rights laws pertaining to education, to conduct similar inquiries.)

Opinions Vary On Texas

But not all Hispanic advocates agree that Texas is failing its minority students. Many educators praise the state for its requirement that schools raise standards for students in aggregate as well as groups of students divided by race, ethnicity and income status.

"Of any state that's doing a lot of things right, it's Texas," said Sonia Hernandez, California's deputy state education chief and member of the panel, who nonetheless disapproves of the state's high-stakes graduation exam.

"Educational Standards, Assessment and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier" is available from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202; (202)401-1411; or on the Internet at www.ed.gov/offices/OEIA/Hispanic.

—Jonathan Fox

Treasury, ED Launch Student Loan Debt Ad Campaign

In conjunction with the Education Department, the U.S. Treasury has unveiled a new advertising campaign aimed at getting delinquent student loan borrowers to pay off their debts.

The ads will start on local radio stations this month in Austin, Texas, encouraging delinquent debtors to call a toll-free number—1-800-IWILLPAY—or access the Web site www.1800iwillpay.com. Austin was chosen because of its large student population, among other things.

In the ad, a voiceover relays the message: "We believed in you and gave you a government student loan to help make your dreams possible." The ad later says ED and the Treasury are "here to work with you no matter how far behind you might be."

Dean Blamacl, who heads the project for the Treasury, says the advertisement was designed to send two messages: "One is to inform the public of the government's debt collection

policies, and [the other is] to set a tone for current students."

The new initiative is an outgrowth of the 1997 Debt Collection Improvement Act, which gave the Treasury the authority to deduct government debts from a debtor's tax refunds. That bill also requires the government to enhance efforts to collect on overdue loans.

In the ad, a voiceover relays the message: 'We believed in you and gave you a government student loan to help make your dreams possible.' The ad later says ED and the Treasury are 'here to work with you no matter how far behind you might be.'

To date, the student loan program is responsible for \$24 billion in unpaid loans to the government, or a little less than half of the Treasury's entire debt portfolio, according to the Treasury's estimates. —Ell J. Lake

N.H. District Sued Over Basketball Player's Injury

A female student is suing a New Hampshire school district because she sustained permanent leg injuries during a basketball game that erupted into a scuffle.

Shaker Regional School District and the Town of Belmont had fought a lower court ruling that allowed the suit filed by Nancy and Charles Hacking Jr. on behalf of their daughter Chelsea.

The New Hampshire Supreme Court cleared the way for the suit last May, when it ruled that the district is not immune from being sued because the coaches and referees present may have been negligent in not stopping the game when it appeared out of control.

Chelsea was a sixth-grade student at Canterbury Elementary School in January 1995. During a basketball game against Belmont Elementary School, her family alleges that "referees, coaches, instructors, and employees of [the school district] permitted the game to

escalate out of control," according to court records.

Belmont players reportedly twice knocked Chelsea down and repeatedly stepped on her left leg, causing her to need surgery and other medical treatment. She will require ongoing medical care to treat her permanent injury.

The school district had argued the family could not sue the district, or the coaches or referees in charge of the game, because it has 11th Amendment immunity from lawsuits. The 11th Amendment protects the government from lawsuits except in cases of gross negligence.

In *Hacking v. Town of Belmont* (97-682), the New Hampshire high court ruled that the harm Chelsea sustained was not "an ordinary risk inherent in the game of basketball that Chelsea or her parents would have known or appreciated." The school district did not appeal the high court's ruling.

—Esmeralda Barnes

Pa. College Not Liable For Baseball Player's Injuries

A Pennsylvania college is not responsible for injuries a visiting student baseball player sustained during a game in which he tripped on a warped section of the field.

A trial court granted Geneva College's pretrial motion to dismiss the case, and the Superior Court of Pennsylvania agreed.

Jason Zachardy, a starting center fielder for Point Park College, and his teammates were scheduled to play a game in April 1994 at Geneva College in Pittsburgh. As he pursued a fly ball during the game, he tripped in a hole in

the grassy field and twisted his right knee, sustaining a severe injury.

Zachardy sued Geneva College, claiming it had a legal responsibility to maintain the playing field. But the college argued that the student had no case because he was aware of the risks of playing baseball.

In *Zachardy v. Geneva College* (98-1684), the Superior Court agreed with the trial court's holding that Zachardy "knowingly proceeded in the face of an obvious danger."

—Esmeralda Barnes

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**WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS**

**Educational
Standards,
Assessment, and
Accountability:
A New Civil Rights
Frontier**

Summary of a policy seminar series

The policy seminar series was held in cooperation with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education.

Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability:

A New Civil Rights Frontier

The education of Hispanic students is an increasing challenge for schools in the United States. Because of the large percentage of Latino women in their childbearing years, the Hispanic population, which grew by 50 percent during the 1980s, is expected to continue to increase dramatically in the next decade. By the year 2010 Hispanics will comprise the largest minority in the United States and a majority in four states.

But as the Hispanic population continues to expand faster than other subgroups of the nation's population, the educational attainment of this community has persistently lagged well behind the national average. In the early grades, research indicates that the reading and writing skills of students still learning the English language are 50 percent behind students for whom English is their native language. When it comes to learning to read, students learning English have to run the 150-yard dash, while native speakers of English have only to run 100 yards. Many Hispanic students never even complete the race. Today, Hispanic high school students drop out at double the rate of non-Hispanics. Half of the Latino community's adult population is functionally illiterate.

The gap in achievement between Hispanic students and their peers is not just a matter of poverty. The cultural and language backgrounds of students still learning English have a profound impact on student learning. Even among students from wealthy backgrounds, Latinos who have limited facility in speaking and writing English are twice as likely to drop out of school as African-American or white students, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

What can the nation do to ensure that all Latino students graduate from high school, graduate from college, and secure high-skill, high-wage jobs in the next century?

For the past several years, the nation has been in the midst of movement to set standards for what students should know and be able to do that poses great opportunity for Latino students.

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 students and adults 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. Educators, policymakers, and the public can use standards to determine whether students and schools are reaching desired expectations and the progress schools and individual teachers are making in helping students achieve the desired standards.

Leaders of the Hispanic community are concerned that standards-based tests being developed and implemented to determine which students will advance from grade to grade or graduate are still a relatively new tool in the apparatus of school reform. They have yet to be "stress tested" with this most vulnerable population. Many Latino

educators and policymakers are particularly concerned about how tests will be implemented and interpreted, particularly for students still learning the English language.

To understand more about the effects of standards, accountability and assessment on Latino students, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans in 1999 launched a series of four policy briefings to identify the challenges posed by testing to this important population, assess the risks, and guide states and school districts on best practices. (See sidebar on Page 4.)

The White House Initiative recognizes the importance and value of standards-based reform but is also deeply concerned about the potential abuse of testing by states and school districts. The Initiative believes that 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."

But despite its fervent belief in the promise for meaningful reforms that can benefit all of our children, we are increasingly concerned—indeed, at times, alarmed—with the way in which some of the reforms are implemented. In particular, the rush to establish a statewide test as a single measure of mastery of coursework is of great concern in the many cases where students to be held accountable have not had the kind of instruction and support that they should have had 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 environment that fosters success.

This paper summarizes many of the observations and concerns raised in the seminars as a means to better inform state and local discussions and influence policies that advance accountability efforts that are fair and equitable and can lead to educational excellence for all students, particularly those with limited English proficiency.

The National Context: Avoiding Inevitable Backlash to Assessments

The issue of whether we can fairly assess the performance of students whose native language is not English is particularly timely and important as the nation's governors prepare to re-examine the effectiveness of the standards movement over the past few years. Later this month, governors, education leaders, and business leaders will get together in a national summit to discuss what can be done to make standards more effective and to address problems likely to arise as states hold more students accountable for what they should know. Education leaders are worried about the backlash to standards when large numbers of students, not just minority students, fail the state testing programs.

In New York, for example, fewer than half of the state's 4th graders met competency standards on the reading and writing test, 96% part of an effort to raise standards across the board. 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 minimum standards.

In Virginia, officials have raised the stakes for students with new accountability measures. Starting in 2004, students will need to pass an exam in order to graduate and by 2007, low performing schools will lose accreditation if 70 percent of the students fail to pass the exit exam. But in January 1999, the state department announced that 97 percent of public schools failed the new state tests. In the first round of high-stakes student-achievement tests, given in spring 1998, only 39 of the state's 1,800 schools—or 2.2 percent—met the performance goals on exams linked to the state's Standards of Learning.

With rigorous assessments being introduced across the nation, many more students—not just those from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds—will fail, and states and districts will have to address what to do about these high-stakes results.

But if we expect a great train wreck for the passengers, who until now have been riding in the Club Car, what is the likely effect of these tests on students who have had to struggle to stay on board?

Only a few states, such as Texas and North Carolina, stand out in making progress in closing the gap in performance of minority and disadvantaged students on state-wide exams. In Texas, for example, the passing rate for Hispanics on TAAS rose from 41 percent to 62 percent from 1994 to 1997. Texas students also made the most dramatic gains among the 39 states that participated in the 4th grade math portion of the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress. The state's black and white students had the highest average scores of any state, while its Hispanic students ranked sixth. The state's 11-point overall improvement was the largest of any states.

Some observers note that progress in raising achievement for minority students is a key part of the state's accountability system.

Efforts to introduce high-stakes testing without paying attention to minority and low-income populations could have the result of forcing Latino and other students to ensure that continued progress in closing the achievement gap will be possible.

National Policy Discussion

To explore some of these questions and understand more about the potential effects of the standards movement and high-stakes testing on Latino students and the nation as a whole, the White House Initiative convened a series of four seminars. The seminars were initiated in conjunction with the Assessment Committee of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans to begin examining the impact of standards-based reform on all students, particularly on Hispanic students.

The Assessment Committee, co-chaired by Commissioner Erlinda Archuleta from the Colorado Department of Education and Sonia Hernandez, Deputy Superintendent of the California Department of Education, met with the executive Board of the Commission in

January to discuss the impact of educational standards and assessments on Hispanic students.

The series and collected testimony from state and local education leaders, legal scholars, and education experts from around the country. Seminars included:

- ***Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier***, held April 7, laid the groundwork for subsequent discussions on the standards movement and its impact on the educational attainment of Hispanic students.
- ***Assessment as a Learning Tool: From Hope to Reality***, held May 5, addressed the potential of assessments as a learning tool and included a discussion of testing practices and accountability systems that promote educational excellence.
- ***Current Policies and Practices in Assessing English Language Learners***, held June 10, further addressed the chronic controversy that continues to surround the issue of language in America. Speakers discussed the impact of current national and state policies as well as the effective practices of educators that promote educational excellence for all students.
- ***A Look at Current State Practices***, held July 20, focused on states and local policymakers. The panelists addressed the challenges they face as states progress toward full implementation of educational reform. They also described the specific work and strategies they are currently implementing to provide all students in their system, and specifically Hispanic students, equal and equitable access to rigorous academic standards and instruction. (A list of speakers at each seminar is included at the end of this document, and their comments are included throughout.)

The Promise of Standards-Based Reform

In the language of the standards movement, **content standards** are locally developed statements about what students must know and be able to do in various 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 those content standards. 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.

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. Accountability systems help identify what is working and not working, informs teaching and learning, who should be rewarded, what targeted interventions might be made when progress toward the standards is lagging, and the kinds of steps that should be taken if schools continue to chronically fail.

States and school districts are increasingly moving to measure progress toward achieving high standards assessing students on the knowledge and skills they are expected to know. They are developing and implementing a variety of approaches to measure performance, including standardized tests, performance assessments, portfolios and other forms of assessment activities that require students to not only choose the best answer, but also to explain the reasoning behind the answer or solve a problem. These performance assessments allow for teachers, parents and students to demonstrate or accurately describe what students know. As the 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 where students need extra help and tutoring and where teachers need to focus more attention or need more professional development. They are a tool to inform both teaching and learning. Increasingly, assessments are being used 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.

“If you don’t have high standards and aligned assessments you don’t have school reform. Raising expectations for all students is essential.” –*Sonia Hernandez, Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education, and Member, President’s Advisory Commission.*

One of the major challenges confronting the standards movement is keeping politics out, and relying on what works to guide decisionmaking. Assessment should be used on an ongoing basis to drive the process of educational decision making and identify the appropriate interventions, teaching strategies, supports, and other factors that inform the process, improve the system, and increase student achievement.

“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.*

The effort to set high standards for all students is to publicly recognize and affirm 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 to be remedied and help evaluate and understand the effects of various interventions that can lead to ongoing, continuous improvement.

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. That is because standards-based instruction makes it clear that all children need to be brought to observably high levels of performance. The approach to school reform highlights disparities among groups of students and the schools' ability to support them and provide a legal – as well as educational – way to address fundamental fairness that focuses on results and not inputs.

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

Under a standards approach, schools must respond to the needs of individual students, lest they become in danger of falling behind. Standards also allow parents to pose the following four questions to those managing their children's schools:

- ◆ If you test my child against standards, can you assure me that the teachers actually taught the material and the test measures it?
- ◆ Can you assure me that teachers are able to teach the content captured by the standards—that they have been properly trained and placed.
- ◆ If my child is in danger of not meeting the standards and there will be consequences, will you be able to warn me early enough so that we can intervene?
- ◆ What support and extra help does the district plan to provide when you tell me that my child is in danger of falling behind.

The implementation of assessments, especially for Latino children, is cause for a great deal of alarm in terms of how tests are being used and the quality of the tests that are being implemented. Several factors must be considered:

- **The quality of tests being used:** When you look at quality, you need to examine validity and reliability. Many states are not taking a close enough look at these issues.
- **The purpose of the tests:** Test publishers are not necessarily developing tests that are not appropriate for the uses that states are selecting. For example, making promotion decisions.
- **The type of tests:** The extent to which tests are language-laden, not based on standards is a problem. There is little information that these tests provide that can help guide instruction for a teacher.

- **The abuse or misuse of tests by states:** Many states are implementing policies that do not appropriately use these tests

Sonia Hernandez, Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education, and Member, President's Advisory Commission.

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

If high standards are to work, we need to ensure that there are three basic supports available to all young people. These include:

- 1) **Adequate resources, teaching, and curriculum** 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 students who are not meeting high standards can succeed.

1. Necessary Inputs: Adequate Resources, Teaching, and Curriculum

The percentage of Hispanics living in poverty is three times greater than that of whites. Hispanic students attend schools where there are likely to be large classes, inadequate learning materials, underprepared teachers, and limited access to rigorous courses in core academic subjects.

Ensuring that all students have access to qualified teachers is particularly difficult. In the words of one speaker, Ana Maria Schuhmann, Dean, College of Education, Kean University, New Jersey: "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 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."

"The least qualified teachers are in our poorest schools," *Ana Maria Schuhmann, Dean, College of Education, Kean University, 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. That is the equivalent of hiring every doctor in the United States two and a half times over. At the same time, the nation faces severe shortages in math and science fields, special education, and in geographic locations. Poor urban and rural districts face a dramatic shortage of qualified people. In addition to having qualified teachers in key academic subject areas, students also need access to teachers who can use the students' native language and introduce aspects of their culture into the learning program.

Meanwhile, the nation must also raise the skills and knowledge of the 3 million teachers currently in the classroom. A recent survey of more than 4,000 teachers by the U.S. Department of Education reveals that most teachers have limited preparation in the content we want our young people to know. Only 20 percent of teachers surveyed said they were confident in using new technologies or working with students from diverse backgrounds, with limited proficiency in English or with disabilities. The study indicates that only 38 percent have an undergraduate or graduate major in an academic field and just 22 percent of elementary school teachers have a degree in an academic field. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching have focused on creating incentives to bring more talented people into the profession; strengthen initial licensure into the field by raising testing requirements; and providing more opportunities for teachers to learn from experts and each other at the school site.

Good teaching will have limited influence on students if they are not taking challenging courses. In the past 20 years, buoyed by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students taking core academic courses. From 1984 to 1994, the proportion of high school graduates enrolled in core academic courses, and studied advanced mathematics and science courses increased dramatically.

A new study by the Department of Education found that the completion of a solid academic core in high school is correlated more strongly with college degree completion—especially for African-American and Latino students—than high school test scores, grade point averages, and class rank. According to the study, finishing a course beyond the level of Algebra 2 (for example, trigonometry and precalculus) more than doubles the odds that a student who enters postsecondary education will achieve a bachelor's degree.

Unfortunately, minority and economically disadvantaged students are still far less likely to have access to Advancement Placement courses and rigorous mathematics courses that are considered gatekeepers to success in college. A recent law suit filed by the Southern California chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, for example, charges that high schools with predominantly minority student populations offer fewer opportunities than schools with mostly white students to enroll in AP courses, making it more difficult for blacks and Hispanics to achieve success in college. The AP program allows high school students to earn college credit by taking yearlong courses in certain subjects and passing standardized tests in them. The College Board, the New York City organization that sponsors the SAT, offers the program.

In California, the program is especially important, the ACLU argues, because the University of California system gives extra weight to grades in AP classes when making admission decisions.

2. Fair and Accurate Performance Measures

The push for higher standards has brought considerable attention to the issue of testing and its effect on the 3.4 million Latino students still learning the English language. The issue does not just affect the five states—California, Texas, New York, Florida and

Illinois—that have the largest Latino population; it has national repercussions. The population of English-language learners is expected to grow rapidly in the next few decades and to have an increasing affect on education's data driven decision-making in a growing number of States. English language learners are present in almost half of our nation's school districts. In ten states, (Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Idaho, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina and Tennessee), the population of students still acquiring English more than doubled between school years 1992-93 and 1996-97.

Standards-based tests being developed and implemented to determine which students will advance from grade to grade or graduate are still a relatively new tool in the apparatus of school reform. They have yet to be “stress tested” with young people still learning English, 70 percent of whom are Hispanics. “The implementation of assessments, especially for Latino children, is a cause for a great deal of alarm,” warns commissioner Sonia Hernandez, California’s assistant superintendent of public instruction. “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 and are appropriate for the new uses sates are considering.”

Tests are tools that are bad or good depending on how they are used. 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.”—Art 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 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 that the student learned the material, a highly relevant factor in determining the language in which the student should be assessed. There also should be provisions, such as adequate time, made to ensure that English language learners can demonstrate what

they know on the tests. (See sidebar on Standards for Testing.) In addition, tests must be validated for the purposes for which they are used and high-stakes decision should not only be based on one test but on other 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. A test of LEP students in English may be appropriate for diagnostic purposes, informing 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 promotion decision.

3. Effective interventions

A growing body of research identifies the characteristics of schools that are effective with minority and disadvantaged students and English language learners. A 1999 report by the Education Trust, *Dispelling the Myth: High Poverty Schools Exceeding Expectations*, identifies the characteristics of top-performing high-poverty schools. Analyzing survey data from 366 elementary and secondary schools in 21 states, the study found six important characteristics of these schools.

- Extensive use of state/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 that focused on instructional practices to 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 get students to meet standards; and,
- Accountability programs with real consequences for adults in the school.

Observers note that all of these factors taken together are far more important than any single factor in raising performance. In the rush to set high standards, 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 combination with efforts to raise 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 the 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 to 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.

How Do Students with Limited English Gain Literacy Skills? School-age children with limited English learn to understand and speak English before learning to read it. Therefore, the National Research Council (NRC) suggests that initial reading instruction is most effective in a student's first language and teachers should speak and use books and other materials in the student's first language. The NRC concludes that 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 and understanding of English, teachers must assess the student's reading skill and abilities in the primary language and help transfer those reading abilities to English.

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. Reading, writing and listening skills don't really emerge in *any* student until after the fifth grade.

According to researchers, the ability of limited English proficient students to listen in English is about 80 percent of native-English speakers. Their reading and writing skills in English are still less than 50 percent of their English-speaking counterparts.

When Should English Language Learners Be Tested? According to experts in the field, 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 system must be accountable to provide students with assessments that provide valid and reliable results that accurately describe what students know and are able to do in the core content areas.

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

Can students be tested in some subjects more fairly in Spanish than other subjects? Experts say there is no systematic research that indicates that some subjects are best tested in Spanish than others, although it is accepted as truth that subjects such as social studies are more dependent on language than other subjects such as mathematics. But even in mathematics, there are many "word problems" that could pose trouble to students who are not native to the language of the test. In general there is no answer or "one-size-fits-all" approach that will work in every case, and the use of multiple indicators will most likely yield the best description of a students true abilities.

Can Standardized Reading Tests Be Used to Determine English Language Proficiency? Researchers contend that measuring reading ability and English language proficiency are two separate issues. Standardized reading tests in English are not appropriate for measuring student progress in language development because they are tests for 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 increasingly 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 test 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, identifies 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 assessments 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 Keeping at Grade Level in Other Subjects? For LEP students, it is important that they 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 eventual higher drop out rates. So, while English acquisition is very important, so is staying on grade level in core academic subjects.

Currently most states are stressing this more than in the past but we have a long way to go and in fact most educators talk only about the ELA content area. They should also

stress the other content areas, or staying on track in the other content areas may not be seen as an equally important priority.

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 administration, scoring, and reporting.

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* that provide regulations and policies on 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 English 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, the Standards call for "special attention" to these issues on the part of 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, the *Standards* make 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, 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, the Standards suggest that more testing and observations be done with them.

The 1999 edition reaffirms the principles of the 1985 standards. Precautions regarding processing speed factors are also raised. The new standards suggest that accommodations should be undertaken with English language learners and notes that cultural factors can also affect test scores and attention also should be paid to these factors. But the new standards break new ground along several dimensions. The new standards 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 these Standards calls for taking into account both a determination of 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 on "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, Sonia Hernandez.

Model Practices

Several states and school districts are sensitive to these concerns and have developed useful policies and thoughtful assessment programs that propel achievement rather than punish students.

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

The **Texas** Education Agency is using one of the most stable yet flexible assessment programs to monitor the progress of three million students served 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 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.

The accountability system was designed to help improve student performance, 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 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 and while holding local officials responsible for their students' academic success.

The system enables district officials 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.

In **Minnesota**, the absence of a statewide curriculum left state officials in the dark when it came to knowing what was going on in 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 solely focus on making up for deficit in English language proficiency at same time sacrificing progress in content areas. In some cases, schools attempt to give students a full dosage of English as a Second Language 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 completion of 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 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?
- Even if not used for such high stakes purposes, are all students included in 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.
- Are there inequities in treatment of students or disparity in 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 decisions are based upon test scores.

Emerging Questions

There are several fundamental areas 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 indicates that of the 49 states with student assessments, 29 states exempt limited-English proficient students from all assessments, and 11 states exempt them from some assessments. Only four states do not allow exemptions for students with limited English abilities, according to the Chiefs.

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 we let states decide whether or not these students should be tested, state education agencies shy away from including all students. Must be combination of states and local agencies to create an assessment that makes pedagogical and academic sense.

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 as the sole criterion. Tests should be one instrument among many. There are multiple indicators that can be used to assure if student knows what he or she has to know, including teacher judgments and evaluations, grades, other tests.

The White House Initiative's Standards and Assessment Agenda

Over the next nine months, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence 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 Initiative will further explore the effects of standards on students learning English and the impact of federal programs, such as Title I, on the achievement of Latino students. The Initiative also will work closely with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights to help ensure that ELL students are afforded educational opportunities guaranteed under federal law and that the use of tests to make high-stakes decisions are fair and accurate.

Our work is guided by the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment, which has established a Forum on Educational Excellence and Testing Equity, that brings together experts and stakeholders to identify the issues, problems and promising practices that should be promoted to ensure that tests designed to measure student progress toward achieving high standards are used appropriately.

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 that can help make best practice everyday practice in schools.

- **Better public awareness** about the complexities of standards-based reform initiatives and issues surrounding the use of high-stakes tests for students with limited facility in English. A new resource guide on high-stakes testing being developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights will be a foundation for continuing dialogue and understanding.
- **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 reality about the growing percentage of students who are still learning the language 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.

Policy Series on Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier

1. *Educational Standards, Assessment, and Accountability: A New Civil Rights Frontier*, Wednesday, April 7, 1999.

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

2. *Assessment as a Learning Tool: From Hope to Reality*, May 5, 1999.

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

3. *Current Policies and Practices in Assessing English Language Learners*, June 10, 1999.

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

4. *A Look at Current State Practices*, Tuesday, July 20, 1999.

- 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.

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

Wednesday, September 22, 1999

2:00 p.m.

TO DO:

OACTUS FOR
MACIA

- I. Discussion of Initiative Report, and current limited dissemination of same.
- II. Discussion of possible need to re-visit Executive Order 12900.
- III. Discussion of how best to utilize Commission.
- IV. Discussion of Barbara Chow's memorandum outlining proposals for action.

Assessment + Recommendations
on the part of the
ROGERS
Committee
and A 'new' AD IMPROVING
RESPONDING AGENCIES

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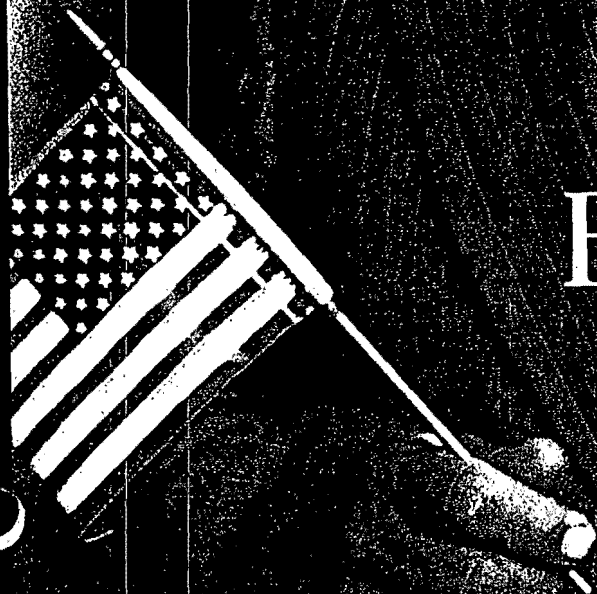
National Journal

THE WEEKLY
ON POLITICS AND
GOVERNMENT

They are both more,
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America's future.

A SPECIAL REPORT

Beyond the Myths: Hispanics in America





LIANA MELO DEL RIO

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 Mirror*, 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 pluming 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 quota-like 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 programmatically 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 F. 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.



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.

CARLOS RIOS



JOSI GAVIL

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 downtown 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.

His 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-blue-collar 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 illegal 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.

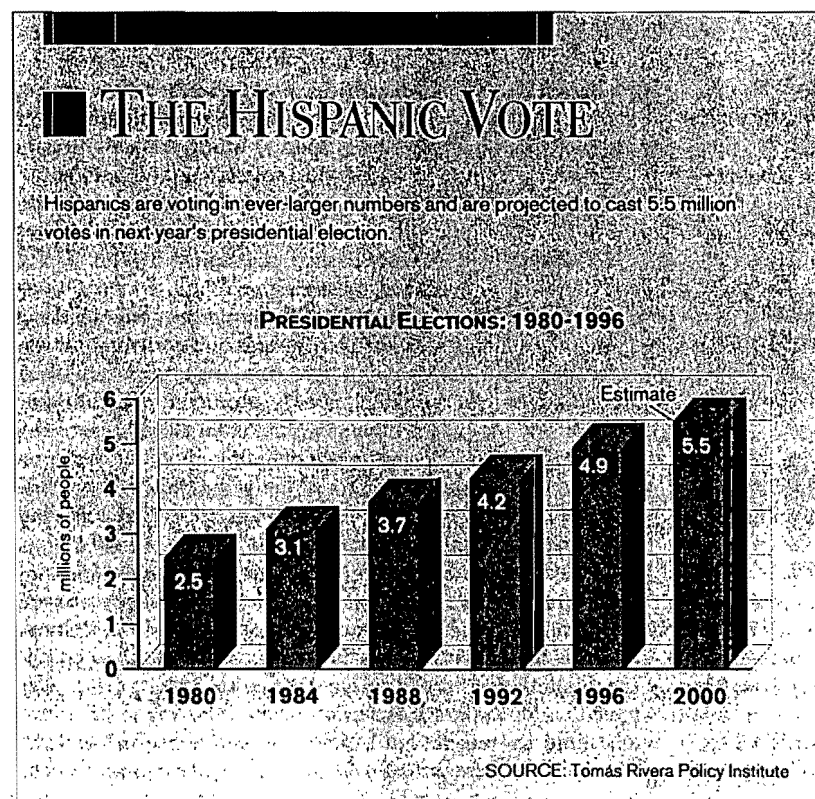
EDUCATION IS KEY

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



ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ DUARTE

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

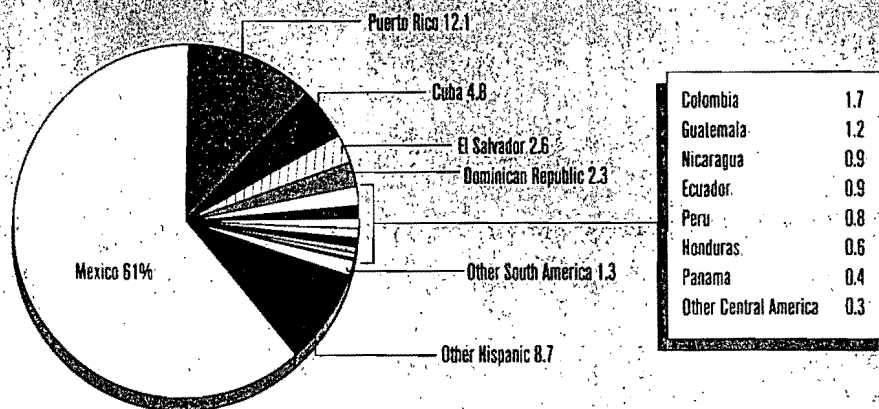
repeat of 1996—when GOP contender Bob Dole won only 21 percent of the Latino vote.

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.

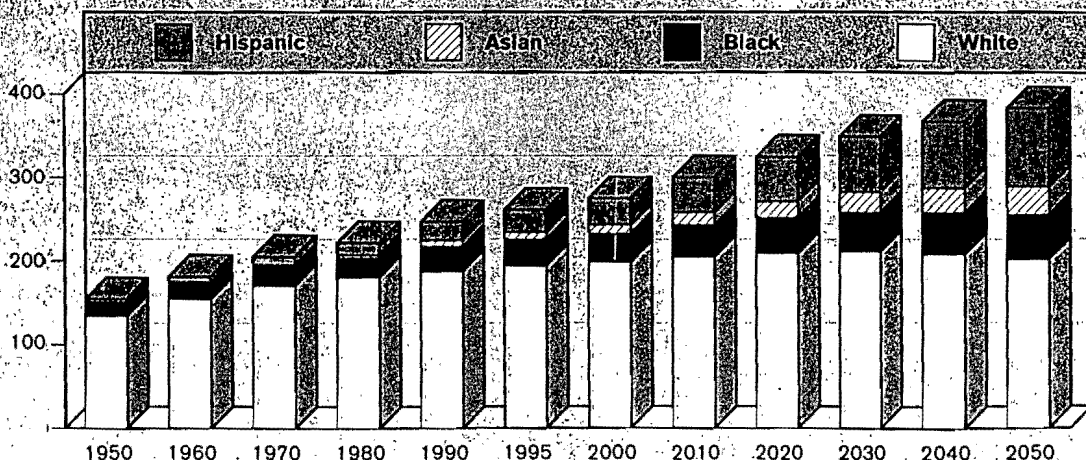
"Traditionally, Latinos are more conservative," Roybal-Allard explained, adding that Democrats will have to overcome "the unfortunate perception that they are anti-business" if they expect to compete for middle-class Hispanic votes.

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



GONZALO MARTINEZ:

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

RICHARD A. BLOOM

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, Rocio 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.

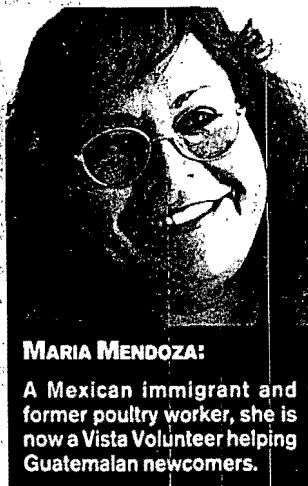
Martinez looked to Delaware for art and leisure and found, instead, a career as community leader. The list of his accomplishments and contributions, brought about through his organizational or fund-raising talents, is impressive: two community service centers, and the role of unpaid director of the first; 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/RICHARD KOGI-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.

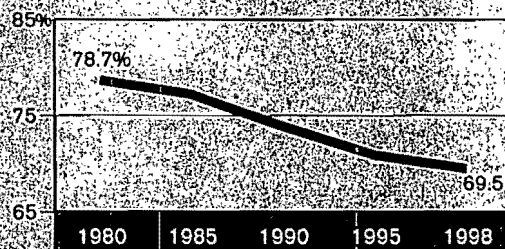
And as improved living standards become more dependent on education and skills in an information-based economy, immigrants (half of them Hispanic) are falling further and further behind. In 1980, the poverty rate for immigrants was 15.6 percent, not much more than the 12.2 percent poverty rate for native-born 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

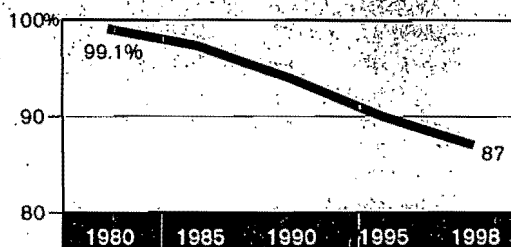
Median weekly earnings for Hispanic workers, although they have risen in nominal terms, have dropped steadily in the past 18 years in relation to median weekly earnings for all American workers. This chart shows, in percentage terms, how median weekly earnings for Hispanics compared with those for all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

RICHARD 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.



RICHARD A. BLOOM

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 Rodriguez, 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

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."

Rodriguez 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

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 Tomás 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

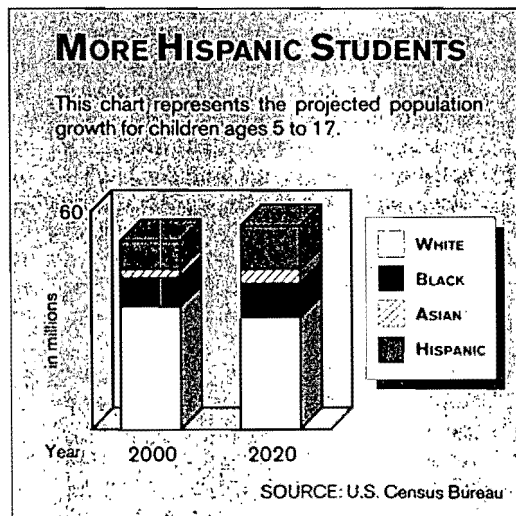
afternoon's *novelas*—Spanish soap operas.

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.



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.

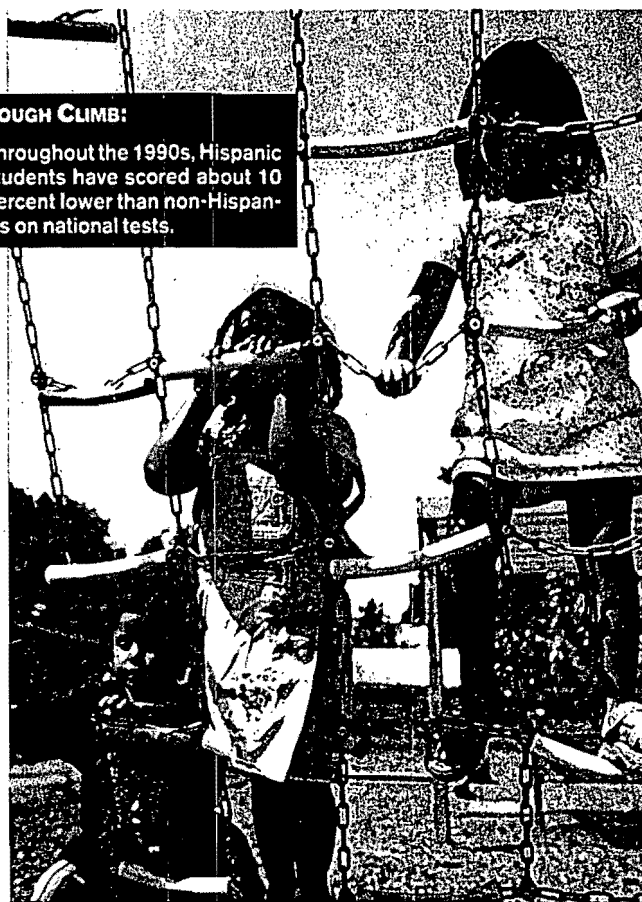
After climbing for nearly a decade, Kelly students' reading scores plateaued four years ago, and curriculum tinkering, such as adding a computer-based reading program, had not helped much. Barron decided it was time for drastic action. Because reading was the school's weak point, she dedicated two hours 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.

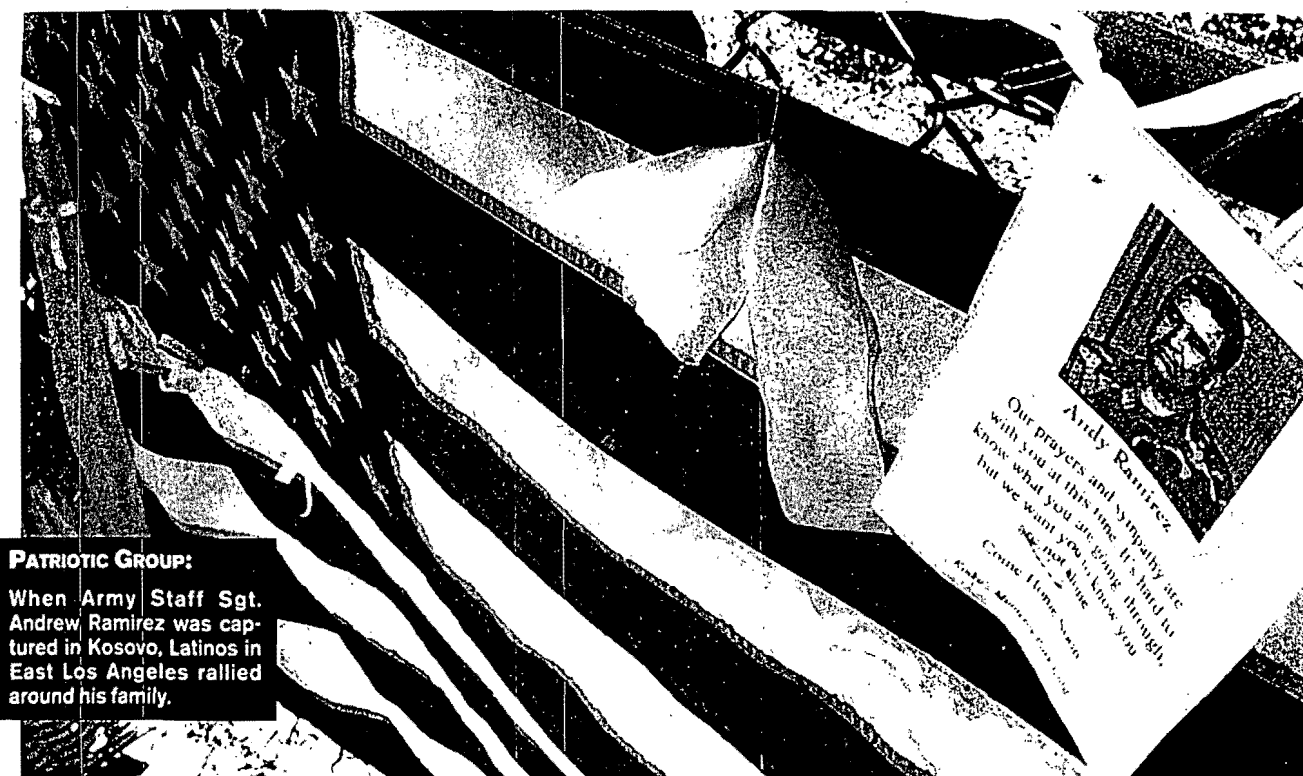
While Kelly Elementary's experience shows that a focused effort can bring low-performing Hispanic children up to speed, it is the exception and not the rule. Throughout the

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 54 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 their 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 main-

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 entices 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-



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

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

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."

GROUNDED.

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."

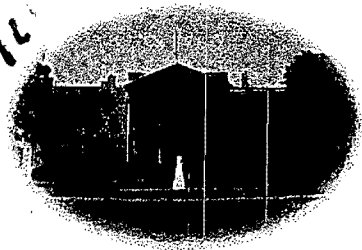
WANTED: MORE HISPANICS IN UNIFORM

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



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE

ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION UPDATE — Fall 1999

Looking Towards a New Century

By Ana M. "Cha" Guzman—Chair,
President's Advisory Commission

As the Commission and its partners prepare to move the cause of Hispanic learning and achievement into a new century, we must recognize how far and how fast we have come in making quality education for Hispanics a national priority. From the 1996 release of our report, *Our Nation on the Faultline: Hispanic American Education* to the over \$500 million commitment of FY99 appropriations, we have seen real progress. This past year has been a milestone in our efforts to leverage government support to our cause. We have worked to foster government commitment to Hispanic education and employment not just at the federal level but at state and local levels as well. We have focused on the role of Latino parents in encouraging academic success. And we have studied the effects of education reform and the practices of assessment on Latino students.

Our goals are unchanging. We labor to level the playing field and bring educational opportunity for hundreds of thousands of bright and capable Latino students in cities, towns, barrios and migrant camps around the country. We know that in less than 15 years, a quarter of America's youth population—ages 5 to 18—will be Hispanic. Our agenda

today will help to determine the quality of life for all Americans in the next century.

As the term of the Commission comes to an end, we believe it is time to plan a National Meeting on Latino Educational Excellence for Spring 2000. Its purpose is three-fold:

- ★ to consider the impact of past and current White House Initiatives on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans;

- ★ to take stock of the strategies and organizations that improve educational opportunities for Latinos;

- ★ to focus on what we

still need to do, not as a Commission or Initiative but as a community and a nation, to improve educational opportunities for Latinos throughout the country.

Yes, our scope is ambitious but we will focus on the outcomes and their impact on our community. We envision our National Meeting as an opportunity to embrace our partners in corporations, foundations and federal agencies as well as in community-based organizations and the education community.

We hope you will join in this effort.

Ana M. Guzman

★ A CALL TO CONVENE ★
A National Meeting on
Latino Educational Excellence
SPRING 2000
Watch for details at:
www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/Hispanic

First Lady's Convening

Hillary Rodham Clinton opened the first-ever White House Convening on Hispanic Children and Youth on August 2, 1999 with a call for action. "There are many who promise to fight for children and the schools they attend," she said. "But, I am reminded of something my mother taught me growing up: 'Watch what they do, not what they say.'"

With action in mind, the convening brought together not only scholars and politicians, but community activists from around the country. Their purpose was to examine the many challenges and opportunities facing Hispanic young people, particularly in the areas of early childhood development, educational attainment, and adolescence.

What Works For Latino Youth



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

This convening also highlighted promising efforts across the country
continued on page 7

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**Hispanic Education Action Plan (HEAP) Strategies and Implementation
DRAFT 12-28-99**

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 serves 3.3 million Hispanic students, approximately 30% of all students participating in Title 1. Hispanic participation has increased by 72% (up from 1.9 million) in 1993-94. This increase appears to be attributable to the increase in schoolwide programs, funding increases, and more clear requirements that LEP students must be served under Title 1.

Strategy 1:

Ensure that schools are held accountable for improving the academic performance of Hispanic students, by enforcing the Title I requirements for state 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.	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.	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	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
6	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
7	March 2000		• Develop follow-up and technical assistance plan for states needing assistance in improving services to and assessment of LEP students.	OESE
8	October 2000		• Ensure appropriate consequences for states failing 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. complete.)	OIIA and OERI
8	First year report-March 2000		Evaluate the effectiveness of Title I in serving LEP students through the National Longitudinal Study of Schools (NLSS). First year Title I data collection complete.	PES
9	February 2000		Develop plan for ongoing technical assistance and outreach to school districts with large or fast growing Hispanic student populations.	OESE and OBEMLA

Bilingual and Immigrant Education

FY 1999 Increase	FY 2000 Request	FY 2000 Appropriations
\$25 million	\$380 million (for bilingual and immigrant education programs; \$25 million for bilingual education professional development and \$10 million for instructional services)	\$248 million (\$24 million increase)

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

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 showed that for 91% of projects, at least two-thirds of LEP students made gains in oral English proficiency.

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 - 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

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 successfully complete 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 3 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 Conference-may 2000		• Provide improved technical assistance to CAMP grantees.	OESE
3	May-June 2000		• Award new CAMP grants and host meeting 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 meeting 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 to 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 and 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 community.	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)	

Objective:

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

Performance Indicator:

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		• Improve customer service to ensure the provision of high quality technical assistance (based on best practice)--workshops, dissemination of best practices and examples of effective programs and partnership efforts--particularly in supporting improved services for Hispanic adults.	OVAE
2	RFP- November 1999	√	• Develop quality application and plan for outreach and competitive review of proposals to provide financial support innovative adult education programs that focus on developing English language literacy and providing civics education.	OVAE

TRIO

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

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

Performance Indicator:

- The proportion of underserved students--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 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.

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 out and serving underserved populations, including Hispanics, those who are recent immigrants, have limited English proficiency, or have a disability.	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, those who are recent immigrants, have limited English proficiency, or have a disability.	OPE