

# A Growing Population

## ► Hispanic students in U.S. schools and the implications for American education

From 1990 to 2006, the number of Hispanic students in U.S. public schools nearly doubled, accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollment. Approximately 10 million Hispanic students are enrolled in the public K-12 system, comprising nearly one-fifth of public school students in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2050, one in every three U.S. residents will be Hispanic.<sup>2</sup> The Hispanic school-age population (ages 5 to 17) will increase 166%, from 11 million in 2006 to 28 million in 2050.<sup>3</sup> Nearly 80% of English language learners are Hispanic native Spanish-speakers,<sup>4</sup> though not all school age Hispanic students are immigrants. The Hispanic population is not monolithic, but made up of many ethnic groups (the U.S. Census Bureau uses the terms “Hispanic” or “Latino” to identify persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish and other Hispanic descent).

### What's Inside

- How schools impact English language learners
- Latino students' college readiness
- Best practice in community-centered education

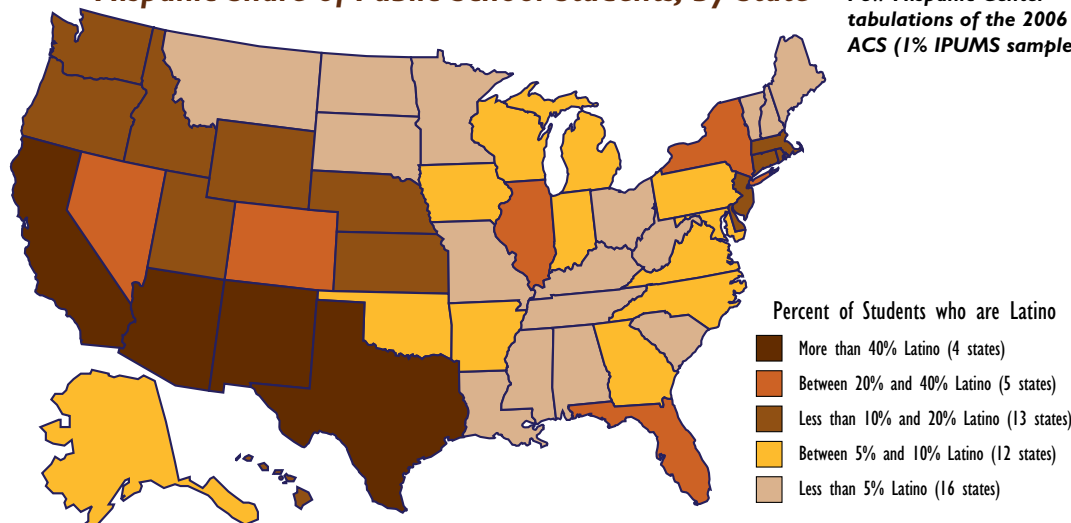
Hispanic students are becoming a larger segment of the U.S. public school population at a time when state and district education systems seek to ensure all students achieve and leave the K-12 system with the skills and competencies needed to enter the workforce and higher education.

Currently, Hispanic students are less likely than their non-Hispanic peers to complete high school. While the high school graduation rate for white students is 75%, only an estimated 53.2% of Hispanic students and 50% of black students who enter 9th grade will complete the 12th grade with a regular diploma. Hispanic students also are less likely than their white and black peers to enroll in advanced math and science courses.<sup>5</sup>

This issue of *The Progress of Education Reform* looks at three recent research studies on academic success for Hispanic students and offers insights on strategies that show promise in promoting greater educational attainment for Hispanic students.

**Hispanic Share of Public School Students, by State**

Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the 2006 ACS (1% IPUMS sample)



Source: Richard Fry and Felisa Gonzales, *One-in-Five and Growing Fast: A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students*, Pew Hispanic Center, August 26, 2008. <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/92.pdf>.

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# The Role of Schools in the English Language Learner Achievement Gap

Richard Fry, Pew Hispanic Center, June 26, 2008.

In this report, Fry builds upon two previous Pew Hispanic Center reports<sup>6</sup> and utilizes the U.S. Department of Education's newly available National Longitudinal School-Level State Assessment Score Database (NLSLSASD) to examine the role schools play in the English language learner (ELL) achievement gap. English language learners are students designated by public schools as students who cannot excel in an English language classroom. Rather than focusing on differences in characteristics of ELL students, this report focuses on the differences in the characteristics of the schools ELL students and other students attend.

While more than two-thirds of ELL students are educated in six large states, this study focused on ELL assessment test takers and schools in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida and Arizona (few Illinois public schools reported their ELL assessment scores in NLSLSASD, so it was excluded from this analysis). Public schools in these five states educated approximately 70% of the nation's ELL students.

When ELL students and white students attend the same schools, the measured difference in proficiency rates shrinks considerably.

## Key Findings

- ▶ ELL students who took proficiency assessments in these five states were highly concentrated in a subset of elementary schools and middle schools.
- ▶ On average, the schools in which ELL students are concentrated have a substantially greater proportion of students qualifying for free or reduced-price school lunches.
- ▶ ELL reporting schools had higher student enrollments and student-to-teacher ratios than non-ELL reporting schools (those schools with small enough ELL populations that they were not required to report assessment results for ELL students).
- ▶ When ELL students and white students attend the same schools, the measured difference in proficiency rates shrinks considerably.
- ▶ In the five states studied, the proportion of ELL students scoring at or above the proficient level on the state mathematics test is often below the proportion of black students scoring at the proficient level. ELL students are much less likely than white students to score at or above proficient — that gap measures in the double-digits.
- ▶ ELL students perform better on the state's standardized math assessment test if they attend a public school with at least a minimum threshold of white students.

## Implications

Although the Pew Hispanic Center, part of the Pew Research Center, does not take positions on policy issues, the findings of this study suggest that state and district policymakers examine policies that impact the concentration of Hispanic students in a relatively small number of schools — such as open enrollment and transportation. Addressing other school factors (school size, student-teacher ratios, services provided to schools with high proportions of students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch programs), rather than student characteristics, may assist ELL students, along with their non-ELL peers, to meet achievement goals.



## College and Workforce Training Readiness: State of College Readiness for Latino Students

ACT, Inc., Iowa City, Iowa, 2007.

This ACT report examines college readiness among Latino students using results from its EXPLORE test (for students in grades 8 or 9), PLAN test (for students in grade 10) and the ACT test (for students in grades 11 or 12). “Latino students” includes Mexican American/Chicano students, Puerto Rican students, Cuban students and students of other Hispanic origin.

In 2006, approximately 7% of ACT-tested high school graduates were Latino (about 85,000 students). Eight percent of 8th graders (about 39,500 students) who took EXPLORE and 7% of 10th graders (about 61,700 students) who took the PLAN test in 2006 were Latinos. This report examined the college readiness of Latino students who took these exams.

### Key Findings

- ▶ Between 2002 and 2006, Latino high school graduates increased academic achievement, as measured by increases in their average ACT Composite, English, Mathematics, Reading and Science scores, even with an increase in the number of Latino students taking the ACT exam.
- ▶ Latino graduates increased their preparedness for college and workforce training in English, mathematics and science, but not in reading.
- ▶ Slight increases were seen in the percentages of Latino high school students taking higher-level mathematics and science courses between 2002 and 2006. However, the number of Latino students taking the ACT-recommended core curriculum (four years of English, three years each of mathematics, science and social studies) decreased by two to three percentage points.
- ▶ Fewer Latino students are ready for college by the time they graduate from high school than expected, based on their performance on 10th grade assessments.
- ▶ More than half (57%) of 2004 ACT-tested Latino high school graduates enrolled in college the fall following graduation. ACT-tested Latino graduates re-enrolled at the same institution their second year at a similar rate as all ACT-tested graduates nationally.

### Policy Implications

The report identifies a series of recommendations for policymakers to consider:

- ▶ Encourage more Latino students to take the core curriculum and higher-level coursework in high school, particularly in mathematics and science.
- ▶ Review and evaluate the rigor and content of high school courses.
- ▶ Establish high expectations for Latino students and monitor their progress.
- ▶ Provide guidance to students on college preparation and appropriate high school coursework.
- ▶ Continue to evaluate and align the curriculum with high school standards and college and workplace readiness standards.

## Other Resources

### Coming Soon!

ECS is currently conducting a series of case studies to identify the characteristics of schools that have successfully integrated and sustained quality service-learning for Hispanic students. Findings to be released early 2009 at: [www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org).

### One-in-Five and Growing Fast: A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students

This report utilizes data from the 2006 American Community Survey and presents information on the demographic characteristics of Hispanic students in public schools.

<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/92.pdf>

### Hispanic Education in the United States

This 2007 Statistical Report by the National Council of La Raza provides a summary of data on Latino students in the education pipeline — from early childhood education through higher education.

<http://www.ncdr.org/content/publications/download/43582>

### ECS Issue Sites: Bilingual/ESL and Minority/Diversity

These ECS Issue Sites provide information on what states are doing, selected research and reading, and other relevant reports on bilingual/ESL and minority/diversity issues in American education.

<http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=16>  
<http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?issueid=84>

# Latino Families, Communities, and Schools as Partners in Education: Best Practice Models and Why They Work

Jose R. Rosario and Christine Wedam Rosario, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, September 2007.

To identify the characteristics of effective models, this study distinguishes between two types of strategies to address the educational attainment of Latino students: school-centered and community-centered approaches. School-centered approaches focus more heavily on the things schools can do internally (organizationally and instructionally) to meet Latino student needs, while community-centered approaches focus on what schools can do externally to “engage Latino families and other community stakeholders in the educational process.”

A body of research documenting school-centered approaches exists, so the authors focus on identifying best practice in community-centered models. To be included in this review, models must have documented success with Latino students and families, and the model’s approach must have been derived from research-based projects in predominately Latino communities.

## Key Findings

The study examined school-driven, community-centered models such as The School Development Program, Success for All and the Pilsen Education Network, as well as community-driven, community-centered approaches including community schools and small schools. Both types of community-centered models foster civic capacity — the ability to forge alliances among school, family and community in a common pursuit of student outcomes.

Eleven elements undergird community-centered models and begin to explain why these models seem to be effective for Latinos. These models:

- ▶ Foster a culture of authentic caring
- ▶ Build on language, culture and social capital
- ▶ Build personal relationships and a sense of community
- ▶ Go beyond individual students to explain achievement
- ▶ Create a vision of excellence, possibility and high expectations
- ▶ Share responsibility and accountability
- ▶ Create and ensure access to involvement opportunities
- ▶ Focus on prevention
- ▶ Program to outcomes
- ▶ Commit to the long-term
- ▶ Secure needed support.

## Policy Implications

This study shows that successful models for Latino students involve reaching out beyond the traditional school-centered models to engage both parents and larger communities in education. State leaders could highlight such models as potential approaches for schools needing improvement. In addition to suggesting these “comprehensive school reform models,” leaders could provide support for other best-practice models. Successful community-driven, community-centered models could be broadly highlighted and incentives provided for schools implementing these models with greater success for Latino students.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Fry and Felisa Gonzales, *One-in-Five and Growing Fast: A Profile of Hispanic Public School Students*, Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, August 26, 2008.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 Population Projections. <http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/012496.html> (accessed 10/08/2008).
- <sup>3</sup> Fry and Gonzales, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> Adriana D. Kohler and Melissa Lazarin, *Hispanic Education in the United States*, Washington, D.C.: National Council of La Raza, 2007.
- <sup>5</sup> Kohler and Lazarin, 2007.
- <sup>6</sup> Richard Fry, *How Far Behind in Math and Reading are English Language Learners?*, Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, June 6, 2007 and Richard Fry, *The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of U.S. Public Schools*, Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center, August 30, 2007.

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