

Hispanic Alliance Inc.

HISPANIC EDUCATION SYNOPSIS

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For

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are more than 45 million Latinos* in the U.S representing 15% of the nation's population. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos have accounted for more than half of all U.S. population growth since 2000. Projections show that by 2050 the Hispanic population will grow to more than 138 million or more than 30% of the nation's total population. Moreover, 22 million Hispanics are in the labor force,** making up one in three workers in the U.S. (Passel & Cohn, 2009). ***Foremost, Hispanic students make up about 20% of U.S. public school enrollment and thus constitute a large portion of the country's future workforce. However, 59% of Latino English Language Learners age 16-19 "dropout" of school (NCLR, 2009). In addition, almost 34% of the Hispanic population is under age 18 compared with 25% of the total population (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009). One in five Hispanics (21%) are under the age of 5 (NCLR, 2009). Only 53% of Latinos graduate from high school.***

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the State of Ohio the Hispanic population grew 55.4 % between 139,696 in 1990 and 217,123 in 2000. Hispanics accounts for 1.9 % of the state's total population and Latinos comprise the fastest growing segment of Ohio's population. In less than seven years, Ohio's Latino population grew another 30% to total 284,000 in 2007. ***Over 50% of Hispanics in the Midwest are under age 25 (BGSU, 2002). Essentially, this is the age range for K-12 and post-secondary education.*** This trend has significant implications for Hispanics in Ohio. The graduation rate last reported in 2006-07 in the State of Ohio Report Card for Hispanics was 67%. Such a gap must be reduced in order for Hispanics to play a larger, *positive* role in the State.

Fifty-one percent of the Latino population in Ohio resides in four counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain and Lucas. Cuyahoga County is home to the largest Hispanic population. Cleveland is located in Cuyahoga County; while the City's overall population decreased, losing almost half its population between 1960 and 2000, and an estimated 38,000 persons between 2000 and 2006 (Ahren & Salling, 2008); the City of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor Hispanic population grew by 54%, from 45,900 to 85,000 (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009). ***According to the U.S. census estimate, in 2007, Latinos made up 8.3 % of the city's population. Nearly 6,000 of the 48,000 student population in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) are Hispanic. The 2008-09 District Report Card reflects only a 33.7% Hispanic graduation rate.***

Latinos emerged from the 2008 elections as a powerful force, exhibiting record-setting political participation. There was an increase of 32% over 2004 elections and greater than 25% increase in Latino voter registration. Important to note, in 2008, 66% of Latino voters supported the Democratic candidate, compared to 59% in 2004 (NCLR, 2009). ***The new Congress must make Latino education reform a priority and it must focus on: Early Childhood, College Access and Education Funding.*** To cultivate an environment for producing quality graduates and workforce for our nation, graduation rates must be the basis of high school accountability and used in decision making about funding and K-12 interventions for low-performing schools.

In 2008, similar to other Americans, many Latinos found themselves in the economic and financial debacle. More so, Latinos now find themselves facing near double-digit unemployment, one in five homeowners is threaten by foreclosure, one out of three remain without a source of health care coverage and ***only 53% graduate from high school*** (NCLR Policy Brief, 2009). In fact, 87% of Latinos consider education critical to expanding life opportunities for their children (Perez, 2004), yet ***Hispanics are being left behind. Quality education is an American “right,” and our children deserve nothing less.***

⁺ The term “dropout” is placed in quotation throughout the document to reflect the offensive nature of the word; it places the blame on the victims. The term “pushout” is more appropriate for Hispanic students have been and are still systemically ignored and devalued until they become alienated and leave school (Ponciano, 1989).

* The terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” are used interchangeably by the U. S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Central and South American, the Caribbean (Cuban, Puerto Rican and Dominican), Spanish and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

** These data do not include the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico, or the 3% undercount for Latinos reported by the U.S. Census Bureau for the last decennials Census (U.S. Census Bureau 2003, 2004).

*** The National Center for Educational Statistics define individuals as “first generation” who were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, and one or both of their parents were born outside the 50 states or the District of Columbia. Individuals defined as “second generation or higher” were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia, as were both of their parents.

What is it that we *know*?

What is it that we must *stop* doing?

What is it that we need to *start* doing?

We *know*:

- ⇒ Hispanic students constitute USA future workforce
- ⇒ There is huge achievement gap between Hispanic and White students
- ⇒ Both Latino students and parent(s) are being left behind
- ⇒ Educational institutions have left teachers behind by not preparing them to grow and graduate students from poverty
- ⇒ It will take an *entire* community to transform the education system.

We must *stop*:

- ⇒ Placing blame anywhere, but especially on the Hispanic student and their parent(s)
- ⇒ Denying that the achievement gap is a not matter of race and class
- ⇒ Focusing *only* on preparing students for mandated exams
- ⇒ Making assumptions about a child's intellectual abilities based on economic status and/or linguistic ability
- ⇒ Being complacent to the "one size fits all" status quo educational system
- ⇒ Forgetting that education is a matter of national interest, public safety and global competitiveness.

We need to *start*:

- ⇒ Taking responsibility for educating ALL of America's children
- ⇒ Advocating for adequate funding for schools to effectively serve ALL students
- ⇒ Addressing the Hispanic "dropout/push-out" issue

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IMPACTING HISPANICS/LATINOS

Today the U.S. is nearly into the seventh year of the No Child Left Behind legislation, and at the midway point of the nation's goal to have students on grade level or more in reading and math by 2014 (DOE, 2009). Yet one must ask how is it that the world's "greatest nation" reached such a disappointing and embarrassing state to have to establish NCLB? More importantly, *how will Hispanics students ever catch-up?*

When looking at the educational system of the USA one must appreciate the fact that the system is over 100 years old and was created to support a workforce engaged in a waning agricultural era and emerging industrial age. A worker only needed a third grade level in reading and math to support the workforce needs of that era. The 100-year old educational system haunts the nation today; the system is broken and no longer suits the needs of students and a workforce engaged in this age of knowledge, technology and globalization.

After World War II, the United States' had the number one high school graduation rate. Today, we have dropped to number 21 among industrial nations. American students' rank 25th in math and 21st in science compared to students in 30 industrialized countries. Even America's top math students rank 25th out of 30 when compared with the best students across the globe. While America spends more money each year on education, we are losing more and more American students. Notwithstanding the consensus that no American student should be left out, written off or ignored, far too many of our poorest and minority students today still lack adequate resources to learn (Broad Institute, 2009).

What is the difference between educating middle-class, learning-ready students and those who are not?

Low participation in high-quality early childhood education programs and less access to rigorous and linguistically appropriate instruction as well as well-trained teachers are among the most pressing challenges that Latinos students face in our public education system (NCLR, 2009).

Adding to the problem is the difference between educating middle-class learning-ready students alongside those who are not. The home environment is substantially different between the well-to-do and the poor. Children learn different things in different socio-economic environments. For instance, there is a higher expectation for educational attainment in middle-class homes. Students are motivated to learn because they are taught that they're going to college, and trained for the rigors of college. When middle-class students are handed a textbook, they generally know what to do with the book to prepare for class. Also, a student is shaped by the working status of their parents and other adults in the same community. Children in wealthier environments are exposed to professional role models. When children do not witness family members preparing for and following a work ethic, then they are not going to develop that concept for themselves. What matters to a child's development is what they see and can emulate rather than what they are told to value and do.

Poor Latino families are often labeled as uncaring about education. Their children are stigmatized as quitters or intellectually inferior when they don't achieve in school. The fact is parents cannot give their children what they do not have, namely the tools (financial or knowledge of the education system) that will help their children achieve in school. They can't provide an extensive vocabulary, reading habits and discussions at the dinner table to add value to what they are learning in school. The legacy that poor Hispanic parents pass on to their children can best be described as deficits in their educational journey.

Adding salt to the wound, teachers assume there is someone at home who will help Hispanic students with their homework. Think again, there may not be. Creating and rewarding "study buddy" partnerships can help. Collaborating with community leaders and faith-based organizations to establish community homework centers is another viable strategy.

Very often, teachers who are not well prepared to deal with culturally and linguistically different, poor students make inaccurate assumptions about them. At worse, teachers may assume the lack of intellectual capabilities and refer the student for special education. Thus, Hispanics are at risk for over-referral in special education but also under-referral when a teacher assumes apparent learning difficulties are attributable to linguistic and/or ELL status (Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2003). Also, the teacher must understand how poverty contributes to mobility of students; CMSD reported a mobility rate of 33% having many students who attend three or four different schools in one year. This affects school

attendance, continuity of curriculum and can bring related unresolved discipline problems that hinder student learning.

Moreover, teachers who have been prepared in college to teach in middle-class institutions of learning; and are now faced with having to teach students who are not middle-class “learning-ready”. In essence, these teachers are being left behind as well, for they lack the resources and tools necessary to help close the achievement gap for Hispanic students. The additional factor of shuffling teachers around and/or letting go of the new more enthusiastic teachers due to budget deficits or low-performing school ratings exacerbates this problem. We are losing an entire generation because teachers are not prepared to educate the students they are assigned to their classrooms. While all children can learn, not all educators can teach. Teachers must increase their cultural competencies for closing the achievement gap of poor Hispanic students.

To what degree are Hispanics being left behind in education within the Nation, State of Ohio and the City of Cleveland?

SYNOPSIS OF THE NATION

There are more than 45 million Latinos* in the U.S representing 15% of the nation’s population. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos have accounted for more than half of all U.S. population growth since 2000. Projections show that by 2050 the Hispanic population will grow to more than 138 million, constituting over 30% of the nation’s total population. Moreover, 22 million Hispanics are in the labor force;** making up one in three workers in the U.S. (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Foremost, Hispanic students make up about 20% of U.S. public school enrollment and thus constitute a large portion of the country’s future workforce. They also represent the fastest growing segment accounting for 60% of the total growth in public school enrollment between 1990 and 2006 (NCLR, 2009).

Almost 34% of the Hispanic population is under age 18 compared with 25% of the total population (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009). One in five (21%) are under the age of 5 (NCLR, 2009). However, only 53% of Hispanic students graduate from high school and 59% of Latino

English Language Learners age 16-19 “dropout” of school (NCLR, 2009). For Hispanic College students; 53% fail to graduate and 47% graduate within six years (Hispanic News, 2007).

The costs of “dropping out” are born not just by individuals, but by the communities in which they live, and the rest of society. The potential economic benefit of improving students’ academic outcomes should be a wake-up call to the importance of reforming America’s high schools (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

High School “Dropout”

According to the *National Center for Education Statistics*’ report on “*High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States*” between October 2006 and October 2007, Hispanic students in public and private high schools were more likely to “dropout” than were White students. The overall 2007 status “dropout” rates: 5.3% for Whites and 21.4% for Hispanics. (NOTE: The status “dropout” rate indicates the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in high school and who lack a high school credential. High school credentials include high school diplomas and equivalent credentials, such as a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Furthermore, the report distinguishes between “status” (age range) and “event” (individual year) “dropout” categories. Also, “dropout” can occur as early as age 15. Refer to the report for additional dissection of data.)

In 2007, the “dropout” rate of students living in low-income families (\$18,390 or less in family income) was about 10 times greater than the rate of their peers from high-income families (8.8% vs. 0.9%). Males ages 16–24 were more likely than females to be high school “dropouts” in 2007 (9.8% vs. 7.7%).

English Language Learner (ELL), students who pursued a high school education past the typical high school age were at higher risk than others of becoming a “dropout”. The 2007 “dropout” rates for students in the typical age range for fall high school enrollment (ages 15 through 17) were lower than those for older students (ages 20 through 24). Specifically, 3.2% of 15- through 16-year-olds and 2.1% of 17-year-olds dropped out in the 1-year reference period, compared with 20.3% of 20- through 24-year-olds.

Some 37.5% of Hispanic 16- through 24-year-olds born outside the United States were status high school “dropouts”. Hispanics born in the United States had lower status “dropout”

rates than immigrant Hispanics: 9.8 % for “first generation” and 13.1% for “second generation or higher.”

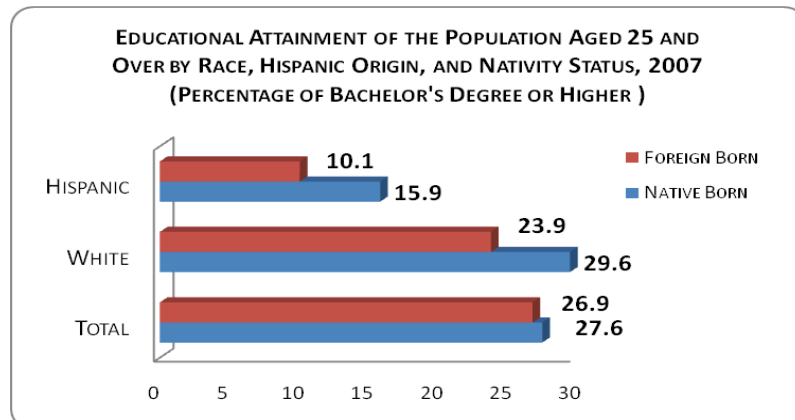
High School Completion

In 2007, completion rate among 18- through 24-year-olds not currently enrolled in high school was 93.1% for Whites and 72.7% for Hispanics. White and Hispanic females had higher status completion rates than their male counterparts. Specifically, 94.6% of White females and 77.6% of Hispanic females had completed high school in 2007, compared with 92.4% of White males and 68.1% of Hispanic males, respectively. (Note: 15-17 year olds are in pursuit of high school education; therefore completion rate examines age range 18-24, different than above “dropout” age range of 16-24yrs. Again, refer to full report for additional data dissection.)

Some 56.1% of foreign-born Hispanics ages 18–24 who were not currently enrolled in high school had completed high school. Compared to foreign-born Hispanics, status completion rates were higher for Hispanics born in the United States (85.9 percent for “first generation” and 85.1 percent for “second generation or higher”***), although in each immigrant category Hispanics were less likely than non-Hispanics to have earned a high school credential.

Furthermore, a recent national study revealed that 41% of Latina students do not graduate with their class in four years—if they graduate at all. Many Latina students face challenges related to poverty, immigration status, limited English proficiency, and damaging gender and ethnic stereotypes. And the high teen pregnancy rate for Latinas (53% by the age of 20) reflects and reinforces the barriers they face (National Women’s Law Center & MALDEF, 2009).

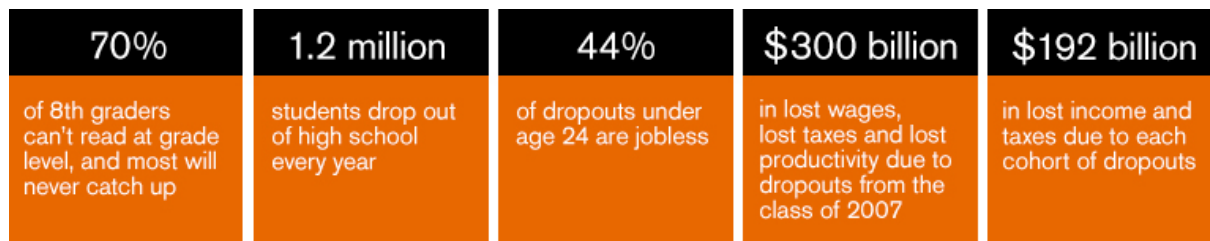
Post-Secondary/College



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007

Why examine educational challenges faced by Hispanics through socio-economic lenses?

The relevancy of education to public safety and global competitiveness, and the link between education and healthcare can no longer be ignored!



Source: The Broad Foundation and Broad Institute for School Reform

In addition,

- Sixty five percent of U.S. convicts are “dropouts” and lack of education is one of the strongest predictors of criminal activity.
- A “dropout” is more than eight times as likely to be in jail or prison as a high school graduate and nearly 20 times as likely as a college graduate.
- For each additional year of schooling, the odds that a student will someday commit a crime like murder or assault are reduced by almost one-third.
- Each year, the U.S. spends \$9,644 per student compared to \$22,600 per prison inmate.
- Increasing the high school completion rate by just one percent for all men ages 20 to 60 would save the U.S. up to \$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime (Broad Institute, 2009).

In the Health Policy Institute of Ohio’s report, “*Health Disparities in Ohio Report 2004-2010*”, health can arise from personal, socioeconomic, and environmental characteristics—variables that are external to the health care system and exist prior to the individual entering the system. Moreover, disparities in health status are known to correlate with income levels, adequacy and safety of housing, employment status, education level, lifestyle choices (e.g., tobacco use, alcohol use, diet, exercise), environmental conditions (e.g., air and water quality, pesticides, green space), and social conditions (e.g., crime rates, employment opportunities).

In essence, critical to the well-being of the United States is the well-being of Latinos.

If the U.S. is to compete globally it must have an educated and healthy productive workforce. It warrants mentioning again, one in three U.S. workers is Latino and Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the labor force. Therefore, Hispanics are integral to the nation’s economic prosperity! Yet, specific to this background paper, Hispanics are being left behind as they continue to encounter the inequities within the education system of the USA.

SYNOPSIS OF THE STATE OF OHIO

The national condition of Latino education ripples through the State of Ohio. Again, the potential economic benefit of improving students’ academic outcomes should be a wake-up call to the importance of reforming America’s high schools. “Dropouts” from the class of 2008 will **cost Ohio almost \$9.8 billion** in lost wages over their lifetimes (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009).

Overall Ohio 2008-2009 High School Completion Rate = 84.6% Note: Data for subgroups not segregated (Ohio State Report Card, 2008-09). Most recent record for Hispanic data was found in the 2006-07 State of Ohio Report Card; which reflected a 67% graduation rate (Ohio State Report Card, 2007-08).

The tables below reflect 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores.

Reading Achievement 2006-2007	Ohio 4 th Graders	Ohio 8 th Graders
	State % Proficient – Basic	
Hispanics	68%	65%
Whites	85%	85%

Math Achievement 2006-2007	Ohio 4 th Graders	Ohio 8 th Graders
	State % Proficient – Basic	
Hispanics	61%	56%
Whites	82%	78%

Source: Mapping Ohio’s Educational Progress 2008 (reflecting 2005-07 data)

Teacher Quality

One of the NCLB goals is to have Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) in Every Classroom and yet we see a disproportionate number of HQT when comparing middle-class schools to high poverty schools: In the State’s elementary schools, middle-class schools, almost a 100% of

teachers are classified as HQT, while in high poverty schools 89.5% are classified as HQT. In the State's secondary schools; middle-class schools had a rate of 98.8% HQT as compared to 87.2% HQT in high poverty schools (DOE-NCLB-OH, 2009). Most schools serving Hispanics throughout Ohio are high poverty schools; in Cleveland the entire district is classified as Economically Disadvantaged (Ohio DOE District Report Card, 2009). Clearly, there is a lack of high performing educators in low-performing schools serving Hispanic Students.

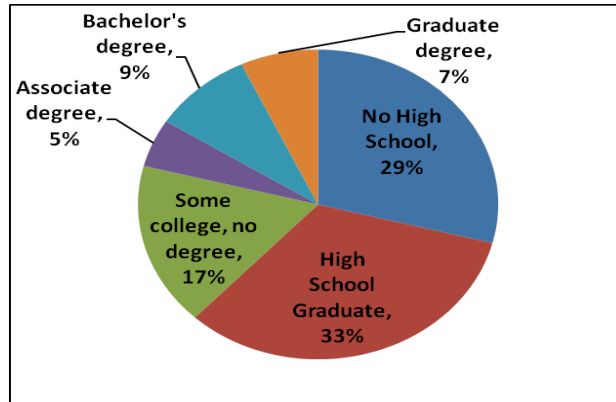
Educational Funding

To date, most studies of the equity of Ohio's school finance system have focused on the differences in expenditures among school districts. In essence, funding is not following the student nor can it be claimed to be focused on meeting needs of students who require valuable resources to succeed in school. "*Creating a World-Class Education System in Ohio*", a report commissioned by the Ohio Department of Education, concluded:

Though the State funds districts based on the number and needs of the students in them, districts may—or may not—distribute money in the same way. Districts, especially larger ones, tend to use staffing allocations to distribute funding. These allocations are often a result of central office decisions and collective bargaining agreements and do not necessarily reflect student need (Carr & Gray & Holley, 2007).

Post-Secondary/College

In Ohio, post-secondary educational attainment of Hispanics has been low. Only 5% have an Associate degree, 9% have Bachelor's degrees and 7% have a Graduate degree. Correspondingly, almost 14 percent of Hispanics have less than a 9th grade education compared to 4 percent for the State. The educational attainment of recent Hispanic adult immigrants tends to be lower than the educational attainment of all Ohioans (Ohio Dept. of Development, 2000-06).



Source: Ohio Dept of Development

SYNOPSIS OF NORTHEAST OHIO: CUYAHOGA COUNTY AND CITY OF CLEVELAND

Fifty-one percent of the Latino population in Ohio resides in four counties: Cuyahoga, Franklin, Lorain/Elyria and Lucas. Cuyahoga County is home to the largest Hispanic population. Cuyahoga County is projected to continue losing population for the next quarter century, declining from more than 1.31 million in 2006 to approximately 1.27 million. The City of Cleveland is located in Cuyahoga County and while the City’s overall population decreased, losing almost half its population between 1960 and 2000, and an estimated 38,000 persons between 2000 and 2006 (Ahren & Salling, 2008), in the Cities of Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor the Hispanic population grew by 54%, from 45,900 to 85,000 (US Dept. of Commerce, 2009). According to 2007 U.S. census estimate, Latinos made up 8.3 % of the city's population.

Out of the 48,000 students in the CMSD, 11.7% are Hispanic students. There are additional CMSD categories, where the Hispanic student population is undoubtedly present: Multi-Racial 2.7%; Students with Disabilities 5.3%; and, Limited English Proficient 21.8%. CMSD reports the district population as 100% Economically Disadvantaged. Moreover, the Hispanic student population is near or above 50% in at least seven schools (K-12th grades) located in the city’s neighborhoods identified as poverty zone areas where the majority of Hispanics reside. Most of these schools are among the lowest-performing schools within the district.

The school district’s Latino graduation rate in 2009 was only 33.7% compared to the White, non-Hispanic rate of 57.5%; this represents a gap of 23.8% (CMSD District Report Card, 2008-09). Lastly, in the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school year, Adequate Yearly Progress

(AYP) was NOT MET for Hispanic students’ proficiency in reading and math (Ohio DOE, District Report Card, 2009). The table below shows Ohio DOE 2008-2009 CMSD 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores.

Reading Achievement 2008-2009	Cleveland 4th Graders	Cleveland 8th Graders
	State % Proficient - Basic	
Hispanics	Not segregated	Not segregated
Whites	Not segregated	Not segregated
CMSD	54.4%	44.3%
State of Ohio	82%	72.4%
Math Achievement 2008-2009	Cleveland 4th Graders	Cleveland 8th Graders
	State % Proficient - Basic	
Hispanics	Not segregated	Not segregated
Whites	Not segregated	Not segregated
CMSD	43.2%	34.8%
State of Ohio	78.4%	70.6%

High School Completion

School Year	Rate	Percent of Change	Hispanic Graduation Rate
2000-01	36.10%	+2.4%	
2001-02	38.1%	+2.0%	
2002-03	40.80%	+2.7%	
2003-04	50.20%	+9.4%	
2004-05	51.8%	+1.6%	
2005-06	55.2%	+3.2%	
2006-07	62.3%	+6.9%	
2007-08	53.7%	-8.2%	Not Segregated
2008-09*	Not reported		33.7%

Sources: CMSD CEO Letter on District Report Card, May 2009

*OH DOE District Report Card (previous year not Segregated)

CMSD is focused on its model literacy program and on providing more tutoring for students so that they can be successful (Cleveland Magazine, 2009). However, more incisive engagement is necessary to further develop proactive Pre K –through 12th grade quality education strategies for Hispanics. Similarly, priority must be given to adequate preparation of the pressing five components of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) which remain a significant barrier for high school students (see section Best Practices and Strategies).

Post-Secondary/College

There are 19 four-year colleges in the Cleveland area. These schools range from large public colleges, like Cleveland State University, to any number of the smaller well-known liberal arts colleges. Cleveland has a thriving community college system as well as numerous privately run adult education programs. Since Cleveland is an economy in transition, adult education is taken seriously and can have important benefits professionally (Education-Portal.com, 2009). Notwithstanding the availability of higher education programs, Hispanic enrollment is dismal.

Hispanic Enrollment at Regional Universities			
	Total	Hispanics	Percent of Total
Ohio State University	50504	1263	2.5%
Kent State University	23622	307	1.3%
University of Akron	21049	210	1.0%
Source: Education-portal.com (2009)			

Hispanic Enrollment at Local Colleges and Universities				
	Total Enrollment	Hispanic Enrollment	Percent of Total	Year of data
Cleveland State University	15137	445	2.9%	Spring 2009
Cuyahoga Community College	23508	823	3.5%	Spring 2008
Case Western Reserve University	9738	195	2%	Fall 2009
Source: www.csuohio.edu; www.tri-c.edu; www.case.edu				

Given the low high school completion rate for Hispanics, these enrollment rates are not surprising. The whole spectrum of education from K-16 must be overhauled to dramatically move the needle for Hispanic student achievement and completion.

THE CULTURAL COMPETENCY GAP

Hispanics are a heterogeneous group not only in the varied cultural norms of respective countries of origin, but also in the different categories of students: Newcomer, Immigrant, First

Generation, Second Generation, Urban, Rural, Bilingual and/or English Language Learner (ELL). A key factor in improving education for Hispanics is to understand that they are very diverse and have a full range of learning needs. Hispanic students need teachers with diverse cultural competencies (see section on Best Practices and Strategies).

Often, teachers who are not well prepared to deal with culturally and linguistically different, poor students make inaccurate assumptions about these students. At worse, teachers may assume the lack of intellectual capabilities and refer these students to special education. Under-performing Hispanic students are at risk for either over-referrals to special education when teachers don't know what to do with them and under-referrals when a teacher assumes apparent learning difficulties are attributable to linguistic and/or ELL status (Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2003).

Moreover, teachers who have been prepared in college to teach in middle-class institutions of learning are now faced with having to teach students who are not middle-class "learning-ready". In essence, these teachers are being left behind as well, for they lack the resources and tools necessary to help close the achievement gap for Hispanic students. The additional factor of shuffling teachers around and/or letting go of the new more enthusiastic teachers due to budget deficits or low-performing school ratings exacerbates this problem. We are losing an entire generation because teachers are not prepared to educate the students they are assigned to their classrooms. While all children can learn, not all educators can teach. Teachers must increase their cultural competencies for closing the achievement gap of poor Hispanic students.

RESPONDING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

Graduation rates are an important indicator of school performance for parents, policymakers, and other concerned community members. As a result, graduation rates must be a cornerstone of high school accountability and used in decision making about the targeting of resources and interventions for low-performing schools. Holding schools, districts, and states responsible for aggressively increasing graduation rates, while improving student performance is necessary to discourage schools from "pushing out" students who might not score high enough on achievement tests (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009). The challenge is in giving the

student a reason to stay; naturally any student sensing they are not wanted will opt to leave school or shut down and become a problem in the classroom. We must be careful not to place blame on Hispanic students or their parents; they may be victims of educational malpractice. According to John Ponciano in his article, *Racism and the Hispanic High School Dropout*, “Institutional Racism is responsible for the high Hispanic dropout rate...”

When educators and school district administrators ignore or pay little attention to understanding the diverse needs of poor students they may become hostile or indifferent. In the end, educators may be tempted to engage in “push out” practices, which make students feel unwanted or undervalued. These students often find alternative venues for success in the streets. The following are results of “push out” behavior:

- Higher “dropout” rates and the socio-economic impact described in previous section.
- Over-referral of Hispanic students as “special education” or “severe behavior handicap”; oftentimes transferring these students to outside institutions or segregating them into separate schools within the district. Or, under-referral for assuming linguistic ability as the reason for what could be a real development disability.
- Students get targeted and recruited to attend charter schools, which were not held to any state accountability system; yet public funding followed the student. (Refer to The Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA) which provides updates on accountability of charter schools. Many charter schools have closed their doors. In the meantime, how many students did we lose between 2-5 years?)

While the debate continues on whether school choice is the answer to addressing quality education for all students, the cultural competency gap still exists. Today’s school choice option is important but to what degree are families educated on how best to exercise school choice options for students at the K-12 level?

Accountability at the college level is called for as well. Graduation rates are especially low for minority students and those from low-income families. Hispanics are not likely to go to college at all. Of the low numbers who go to college, over half fail to graduate. Those who do graduate take about 6 years to complete a four-year program. It is charged that most campuses do not feel a sense of urgency for addressing this problem (Hispanic News, 2007). Colleges are no more hospitable to Hispanic students than the high schools. Hispanic students find themselves caught between not being able to afford to continue their educational pursuits and stuck with

having to pay off tuition and loans without having achieved a degree. Hispanic students are faced with greater student loan debt due to having to take remedial courses and an extra year or two to earn their degree because of not knowing how, and being left alone, to navigate the post-secondary school system i.e., curriculum, course offering and scheduling etc. There is a need for all educational stakeholders to unite to respond to this tragic reality.

STRATEGIES FOR GROWING AND GRADUATING HISPANICS

**What steps can members of the Hispanic Alliance take to advocate for the success of
Hispanic students?**

Members of the **Hispanic Alliance** can engage in several ways at the local level to improve education for Hispanics:

- A. Practice transformational collaboration to advance education for Hispanics. Begin with supporting two longstanding and important community resources:
 - 1) **Esperanza, Inc.** the premier education organization in Northeast Ohio solely dedicated to education of Hispanics.
 - 2) **Spanish American Committee's** Early Childhood Initiatives dedicated to the vital preparation of Hispanic Pre-K students for academic success.
- B. Institutionalize the education community resolutions adopted at Cleveland's *Convencion Hispana 2008*:
 1. To decrease the high school "dropout" rate of Hispanic Students in the Northern Ohio Region.
 2. To establish an advocacy forum for a more effective and efficient interfacing between the Latino community and regional universities and colleges.

3. To support the expansion and strengthening of the Padres Unidos Organization to ensure accessible and equitable education for Latino students (Hispanic Roundtable, 2008).
- C. Review *Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan: Education and Community Services* by the City of Cleveland Planning Commission to gain a full understanding of the interlinking relevance of neighborhoods, educational sectors, business and industry, community resources, and the challenges and opportunities thereto. “The goal of Cleveland’s efforts in the area of Education & Community Services is to connect communities and their institutions in a manner that nurtures the physical, mental and spiritual life of all residents. The Connecting Cleveland 2020 Plan therefore sets forth a comprehensive set of policies for Education & Community Services that address key issues, along with strategies through which we might take immediate steps toward their implementation. It is imperative, given the seriousness of the situation and the implications of educational attainment for Cleveland’s future economic development, that interested entities work together under a coordinated plan.” (Access full report through website link under References section)
- D. Review “Best Practices and Strategies” section (below) to assist in creating meaningful and deliberate partnership to increase education attainment of Hispanics.
- E. Endorse the six recommendations by *The President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans*. After 18 months of meeting with experts, parents, teachers, students and business and community leaders, in 2003 the Commission issued its final report; *From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century*. Six recommendations (summarized below) are offered to help the nation close the achievement gap for Hispanic American children:
1. Set new and high expectations across America for Hispanic American children by: helping parent navigate the educational system, creating partnerships that can provide expanded options for children and implementing a nationwide public awareness campaign and motivation campaign aimed at increasing educational attainment and achieving the goal of college education.
 2. ...Full implementation of No Child Left Behind... meet or exceed the annual measurable objectives defined in each respective stat’s accountability plan.

3. Reinforce a high quality teacher profession by more fully preparing all teachers to address the diverse needs of their students....attract more Hispanics to the teaching profession and provide incentive and compensation for successful performance evident by improved student achievement. Launch a national study of the curricula, practica and teaching experience and the models used to integrate these preparation formats employed by colleges of education to prepare educators for ... instruction of diverse children.
4. Initiate a new coherent and comprehensive research agenda on the educational development of Hispanic American across the education spectrum from preschool through postsecondary.
5. Ensure full access for Hispanic Americans students to enter college and demand greater accountability in higher education for Hispanic (on time) graduation rates....increase development of retention programs...
6. Increase the accountability and coordination of programs within the federal government to better serve Hispanic American children and their families.

The members of the Commission recognize that the effort must be pursued by parents; faith-based, community and business leaders; educators; and public officials at the local, state and federal levels.

BEST PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES:

- A. Building Cultural Competency
- B. Parental Engagement and Latino Parent Involvement
- C. College/Post-secondary Education
- D. Community's Role in Hispanic Education Attainment

A. Building Cultural Competency

According to the article *Science Education for Hispanic Students* posted on West Virginia University website (www.as.wvu.edu/~equity/hispanic.html), "A key factor in improving education for Hispanic students is to understand that they are from different groups of people with different needs." The article provides methods to help keep teachers from displaying

racial or cultural “superiority”. Such an attitude can destroy a student’s self worth and can subsequently display itself as student apathy toward education. In other words, this point of view is what enables the practice of “push-out” and educators must be held accountable because providing quality education to ALL students is a matter of public safety, global competition and a matter of law.

The following is a summary of suggestions/methods from the article to help teachers and school districts improve education for Hispanic students:

Language Barriers

- Invite student and parent(s) to talk about what’s important to them (use translators when necessary)
- Communicate expectations early in the beginning and throughout the year
- Use a variety of instruction (interactive technology, cognitive coaching for critical thinking etc)
- Create an acceptance climate for all ethnic backgrounds without ignoring respective cultures.

Avoiding Bias

- Teacher must take an introspective look at their own cultural background, understanding the effects their biases have when interacting with students;
- Recognize and understand cultural differences, and biases students may have with each other;
- Treat differences with respect; intervene immediately – a zero tolerance policy for disrespectful behavior (from students and teachers alike);
- Value the varied experiences; avoid segregating groups;
- Demand the same level of excellence from all students;
- Help students and other educators *understand* potential cultural differences to avoid conflict;
- Understand the link between the students’ learning style and the teacher’s teaching style.

Classroom Strategies

- Connect content of course with student’s background; Integrate appreciation for cultural diversity into all classroom activities

- Set realistic and manageable goals; provide necessary resources
- Help students with difficult problem-solving situations; develop glossaries to support students and provide tasks that will allow them to incorporate new vocabulary.
- Interact with ALL students and provide opportunity for students to interact with each other.

Discussion and Interaction

- Equally call on minority students; pay equal amount of attention to all students
- Demonstrate sincerity; exercise patience; do not interrupt; do not criticize; give equal praise and encouragement to all students
- Have culturally diverse seating chart but have English language learners sit closer to the teacher
- Expect same amount of effort based on student's abilities and demand the same level of excellence (do not "dumb down" the curriculum).

Extracurricular Activities

- Consider using upper level minority student as tutors
- Establish in-service training programs
- Recommend and/or provide examples of periodicals related to course subject
- Encourage faculty to include minority students in sponsored clubs
- Provide access to external resources available to student: further exploration of course subject and/or positive social activities.

Institutional

- Assist institution develop a more positive attitude about the potential of diverse students
- Eliminate any culturally insensitive course material, tests and, policies and procedures that penalize certain races, cultures, sexes or disabilities.

Home and Family

There exists great strength in Hispanic culture due to the predominance of extended families. This family resource is essential in promoting a student's success, which is why parental and family involvement is critical to a student's academic achievement. The role a parent should play in their children's education encompasses more than just helping their child at home. Teachers must believe that parent involvement is needed for a school to succeed. Suggestions are summarized as:

- Include parents as classroom tutors, helpers and field trip volunteers; members of school decision making boards
- It is the teacher's responsibility to make the first contact early in the year with a student's parents, and this contact should be a positive one; share positive aspects of the student and favorable expectations and take time to find out more about your student
- Don't be hypocritical, by saying positive things to a parent about their child, but then acting in a negative manner towards the student in class
- Share information with parents; this builds trust and strengthens the home-school bond.

Personal

The factors that relate to Hispanic's success living in low socio-economic environments are called "resiliency factors." Resiliency is the ability to thrive, mature, and increase competence in the face of adverse circumstances or obstacles. This includes Hispanics living in low socio-economic environments. Students who are resilient must draw upon all resources: biological, psychological, and environmental. Schools are a valuable environmental resource which can also affect the psychological resource. Schools can promote resiliency through these four methods:

- Increase the student's self-esteem
- Stop the negative chain of events
- Provide an alternate route to success
- Remove the stressor

Again, one stressor teacher must understand is how poverty contributes to mobility of students; recall Cleveland Metropolitan School District reported a mobility rate of 33% having many students who attend three or four different schools in one year. This affects school attendance, continuity of curriculum and can bring related unresolved discipline problems that hinder student learning. To remove these stressors school districts must develop and deliver a uniformed curriculum and parent engagement process across the entire school district.

Stereotypes

Understand language has an affect on people especially students; do not use stereotypical and negative labels; such as economically disadvantaged, culturally deprived, under-privileged, dysfunctional family.

- "See beauty in every child; do not base it solely on physical attributes which are mainly dictated by White standards. Many teachers deem good looking children as intelligent" (Kuykendall). Look past physical attraction, gender and race to discover student's ability; do not be influenced by the initial performance of a student.
- Do not hold class or family status/income as a determining factor of a student's potential, and don't hold it against them
- Do not measure a student's academic success by their mastery of the English language.

Gender Stereotypes

The report *Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation*, describes particular challenges Latinas face in regards to the intersection of their ethnicity and gender; often influenced by family and societal expectations, and based on stereotypes of Latinas as submissive underachievers and caretakers.

- Discrimination based on ethnicity and gender: Teachers and classmates treat them differently—in both subtle and blatant ways—or have different expectations for them because they are Latina. This treatment makes them feel unwelcome at school and can affect their academic performance and graduation rates.
- Pregnancy and parenting responsibilities: These are “dropout” risk factors for almost half of the girls who “dropout” of high school. Latinas have the highest teen pregnancy rates and teen birth rates of any racial or ethnic group—almost twice the national average.
- Other caretaking responsibilities: Family care giving responsibilities—typically for younger siblings or elderly relatives—may fall more heavily on Latinas than on Latinos.
- Lower involvement in school activities: Latinas tend not to get as involved in school activities or sports as Latinos do, which disadvantages the girls in a number of ways.

Latinas are the fastest growing group of female school-aged youth. Latinas who “dropout” of high school encounter far more severe economic consequences - such as unemployment, low wages, and dependency on public support programs. This is a pattern that has serious and damaging repercussions for their future prospects and economic security.

The good news is that there is much that schools and policymakers can do to enable Latinas to overcome the barriers they face.

1. Invest in the Future of Latino Children
2. Connect Latinas with Role Models and Engage Them in Goal-Setting
3. Ensure That All Students Can Pursue and Are Prepared for Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities.
4. Ensure That School Environments are culturally Inclusive and Free of Race/Ethnicity and Gender Discrimination.
5. Help Latino Parents Get More Involved in the Education of Their Children
6. Improve Efforts to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Including the Provision of Comprehensive Sex Education to Students.
7. Support Pregnant and Parenting Students
8. Require Better Data Collection and Promote School Accountability.

B. Parental Engagement and Latino Parent Involvement

Research shows the importance of parental involvement and student success and it is a component of No Child Left Behind. However, many barriers arise when families, especially those who are new to this country, try to become more involved in their children's education and with their children's schools. Many parents experience language barriers, miscommunications that arise from different cultural perspectives on parent-teacher involvement and on how students learn, previous negative experiences with schools as students and parents, feelings of intimidation based on limited educational experience, and unfamiliarity with the U.S. school system. In addition, many low-income Hispanic families find the school system to be impersonal, insensitive to their needs and situations, and often disrespectful. Lastly, few teachers are explicitly trained in working with families (Golan & Petersen, 2002).

The Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) has been found to be effective at increasing parent's behaviors that support their children's education. PIQE understands the needs of immigrant parents are similar to those of U.S.-born parents (e.g., both desire information about school policies, school programs, and their children's academic and social progress, access to support services, and meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education), the

ways to meet these parents' needs effectively differ. Below are eight major categories identified within PIQE programs that led to more successful engagement of parents:

1. Address parents' direct needs: Offer programs in the parents' primary language, have child care available, and offer programs at convenient times.
2. Make personal connections: Strong personal outreach, warm and nonjudgmental communication, and the ability to convey respect for parents' feelings and concerns are essential for successful involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's education
3. Raise awareness and concern around student achievement and the need for parent involvement: Recognize that parental involvement may not be sought in school systems in other countries, and respectfully highlight the difference between those countries and the United States. Speak with a sense of urgency toward the need to support kids and help them get a better education. Raise awareness and concern by using case studies, other in-class exercises, and parents' comments to remind parents that they need to get involved.
4. Establish a clear and common goal: Create strategies to establish parental commitment to the school's parental involvement program and educational needs of their child.
5. Demystify how the school system works by providing basic information on school programs, policies, and staff and on how to advocate effectively for one's child.
6. Suggest concrete behaviors that parents can use to support their children's academic success. Such as establishing a regular time and space for doing homework, have their children read at least 20 minutes a day, limit television viewing, have the necessary supplies (pencils, paper, books) available at home, and model a desire to learn by reading and accessing community resources such as the local library.
7. Use methods that have been proven to support learning and increase the likelihood that new behaviors will be adopted: information-gathering and problem-solving strategies; Support and track the use of new behaviors, and use of visual aids.
8. Create a sense of community and a peer support network that will continue beyond the term of the class.

Summer Learning Loss

It is important for student and families to understand and reduce “summer learning loss”. According to The Johns Hopkins University's Center for Summer Learning (2009), the effort to keep kids learning during summer is based on research that shows that:

- ▶ Most students fall more than two months behind in math over the summer.
- ▶ Low-income children fall behind two months in reading while middle and upper-income peers make slight gains.
- ▶ By fifth grade, low-income children can be 2-1/2 years behind in reading.
- ▶ Only one in five children who receive free or reduced price meals during the school year gets them in summer.

A recent Johns Hopkins study found that 65 percent of the achievement gap in reading between poor and more advantaged ninth-graders is due to unequal summer learning experiences during elementary school years. That gap makes a difference in whether students decide to drop out or go on to college (John Hopkins University, 2009).

It will take at least six weeks of the new school year to catch-up from the two month summer break. Often teachers simply move on without taking the time to refresh last year's lessons, thereby leaving students at a disadvantage from day one, especially Hispanic students who may already be behind. To that end, assist parent(s) to establish home practices and to partner with neighborhood resources (libraries, faith based institution etc) to set-up learning environments to continue the learning process and avoid summer learning loss. It is imperative for the entire community to pull together to reduce summer learning loss

The Undocumented Student

Another reality faced by educators is that of undocumented children in the school system. According to the landmark case, *Plyler vs Doe*, although undocumented children are not legal residents of the US they have the right to attend public school. To remove stressor families' face with this reality the article *Undocumented Children in the Schools: Successful Strategies and Policies* (Hunter and Howley, 1990), offer the following suggestions as actions the school should avoid:

- Asking about a student's immigration status or requesting documentation

- Barring access to a student on the basis of undocumented status or alleged undocumented status
- Treating one student differently from others in order to determine residency, or on the basis of undocumented status
- Making inquiries of a student or parent that might expose the undocumented status of either
- Requiring undocumented students or their parents to apply for Social Security numbers as a condition of enrollment; nor monitor the completion or filing of application or forms

Moreover, meaningful benefits are what the right of access is all about. To that end, the article further suggests school staff:

- Understand the troubled nature of immigrants' daily lives
- Understand and actively provide the right of access as already established by law
- Establish a positive and safe school climate that is open and hospitable
- Provide counseling and guidance responsive to immigrants' lives
- Develop policies and practices that strengthens access to effective instruction
- Respect native languages and cultures and help immigrant students learn English well
- Hire, train and retain culturally competent staff
- Develop strong working relationships with immigrant families.

Lastly, school staff must understand the value immigrants bring to this nation of immigrants; again, Hispanics (many of whom are undocumented immigrants) constituent America's future workforce. Yet, teachers lose sight of the fact that increasingly it is the immigrant worker who is paying their paychecks and it is the same immigrant worker who will not benefit from the same benefits teachers are eligible to receive (i.e., worker's compensation, unemployment or social security).

Undocumented students lead lives under threat and suspicion, and is one of the reasons many "dropout" of school. The USA will not be able to compete globally sustaining the 59% "dropout" rate of Latino English Language Learners age 16-19 (NCLR, 2009), and educators have an enormous role to play in rewriting that future.

According to Pedro Noguera, a leading educational expert,

The reason some schools succeed at closing or at least reducing the racial disparities in achievement while the overwhelming majority fail has less to do with skill than with will. Whenever the educators refuse to blame others for low achievement or to make excuses for student failure but instead accept responsibility for their role, children benefit. The problem is not the kids or their parents, but the schools we send them to. Children know when they are taught by caring adults who believe in them; and will respond by displaying the qualities that are so essential to school success – self motivation, self discipline and resilience (Noguera, 2008).

He further goes on to share, what sets schools apart is the dedication and commitment of the educators who work at these schools and their deliberate approach in meeting the needs of the students they serve. Their typical strategies include:

- ⇒ Engaging parents as partners with explicit roles and responsibilities for the parent and the educator;
- ⇒ Strong instructional leadership focused on coherent curriculum and instruction supported by teachers;
- ⇒ A willingness to evaluate interventions and reforms to insure quality control;
- ⇒ A recognition that discipline practices must be linked to educational goals and must always aim at reconnecting troubled students to learning; and a
- ⇒ Commitment to finding ways to meet the non-academic needs of poor students.

Latino Parent Involvement

The role Latino parents have on the success of their child is another piece of the puzzle. Studies consistently find Latino students benefit from their parent's involvement and interest in their future. However, many feel that what they have to offer is not enough; despite the many barriers and challenges there are things Latinos parents can do to let their child know they care about their academic success:

- Emphasize early on the value of education; child value parents' opinion; let your child know what you expect from them
- You may not be able to help with homework but your child will be motivated by your morale encouragement and emotional support. Even more, get together with other

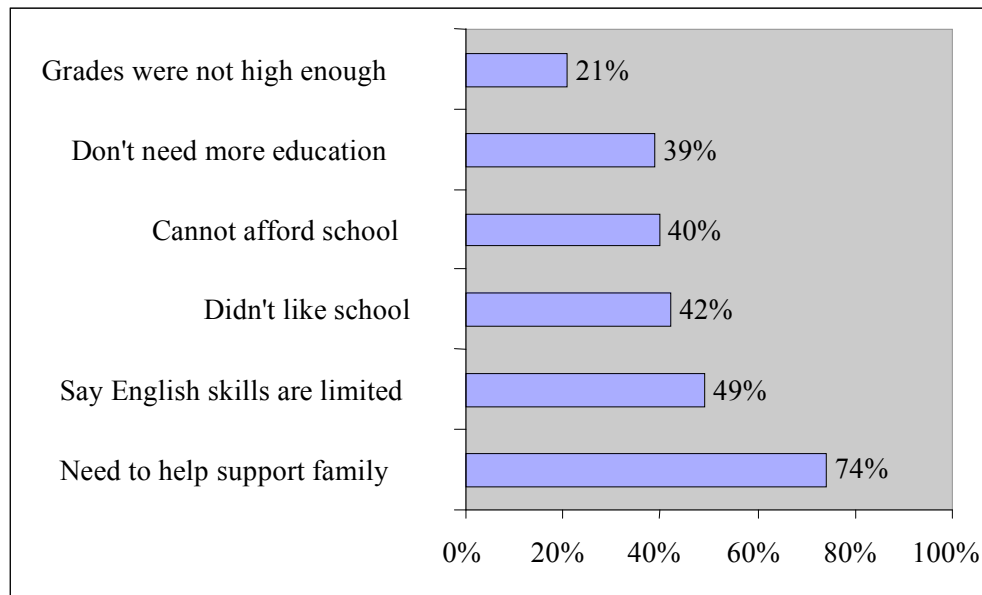
parents in your neighborhood, church or school community and find a volunteer tutor and/or hire a tutor, to help your child with their studies.

- Provide your child with a quiet place to study; monitor distractions (noise level, TV etc.)
- Tell them that you are proud of them; celebrate both large and small achievements.
- Keep an eye on your child's activities; monitor work, attendance, social life this support a higher value of academics and excellence (studies show students are less likely to “dropout” when monitored by their parents).
- Become involved in school activities with your child; especially parental engagement programs to learn how to navigate the education system to ensure your child's success
- Be a role-model; show your value for growth and development by reading and going to the library etc. (Bamaca, 2009)

C. College/Post-secondary Education

According to the newly release report from the Pew Hispanic Center, *Latinos and Education: Explaining the Attainment Gap*, two different gaps exists in educational aspiration toward a college degree or more: The first is between Hispanic young adults ages 18 – 25 (48%) and the general US population of that same group (60%). The second gap, even bigger, and largely explains the first gap is between young Latinos who are immigrants (29%) and those who are native born (60%). The report furthers finds a contradiction in the level of importance Hispanics place on college and actual educational attainment. The chart below begins to shed light on this contradiction by the reasons young Latinos give for not continuing their education.

Reasons Young Latinos give for not Pursuing College Education



Source: Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2009

The Hispanic Scholarship Fund in its report *Goal: To Double the Rate of Hispanics*

Earning a Bachelor's Degree, makes the following recommendations:

1. Raise public awareness of the need for greater investment in post-secondary education
2. Increase capacity of the nation's postsecondary institutions, especially those located in California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Texas.
3. Focus as much attention on keeping students in college as is currently given to preventing students from dropping out of high school
4. Coordinate intervention across levels of education (middle school through college)
5. Increase both the amount and the availability of financial assistance
6. Support expansion of high school, community and college-based programs for at-risk students
7. Support evaluations of existing programs and experimentation with new programs.


D. Community's Role in Hispanic Education Attainment

Latinos and other members of the community at-large can help to close the achievement gap by becoming a volunteer and/or providing other resources to local initiatives (listed below) focused on advancing education for Hispanics.

In addition, a viable strategy is joining or starting a reading discussion group on the important topics that are affecting education and how to grow and graduate students from low-socio economic backgrounds. Here are a few suggested authors and/or books to explore together with others members of the community:

1. Pedro Noguera (books): “Unfinished Business: Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Schools” and “City Schools and the American Dream: Reclaiming the Promise of Public Education”
2. Patricia Gandara *and* Frances Contreras (*book*): “The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies”
3. Stephen D Krashen (book): “Under Attack: The Case Against Bilingual Education”.
4. Crystal Kuykendall (books): “From Rage to Hope: Strategies for Reclaiming Black and Hispanic Students” and “Developing Leadership for Parent Citizen Groups”.
5. Gary R. Howard (book): “We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools (Multicultural Education Series)”
6. Xue Lan Rong and Judith Preissle (book): “Educating Immigrant Students in the 21st Century: What Educators Need to Know”
7. William Howell, Paul Peterson (book): “The education gap: vouchers and urban schools”

Below is a list of initiatives worthy of your support.

 **Esperanza, Inc.** (www.esperanzainc.org) is the leading educational organization for Hispanics in Cleveland with a mission to enhance educational and economic opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Esperanza vision is to be a model of academic and community excellence by:

- Motivating academic achievement;
- Enhancing the quality of economic and community life;
- Promoting continuity of community through leadership;
- Offering enriched educational services and opportunities; and
- Providing scholarship assistance.

Esperanza, Inc. “75 Ways for Getting Involved” is summarized under the following categories:

Learn about Hispanics and <i>Esperanza</i>	Host an <i>Esperanza</i> activity or meeting
Provide your time, services	Collaborate with <i>Esperanza</i>
Make a financial investment	Share resources and connections
Make in-kind donations, gifts	Adopt an <i>Esperanza</i> family or student
Support <i>Esperanza</i> ’s programs	Advertise with <i>Esperanza</i>
Sponsor an <i>Esperanza</i> Activity	Employ our students, graduates, parents
Create new revenue streams	Share and help implement your ideas...
Promote <i>Esperanza</i> and our programs	

✚ **Spanish American Committee** (www.spanishamerican.org) - *Early Childhood Enrichment Program/Initiatives*. The fully credentialed, licensed and state-certified bilingual Early Childhood program for preschool education and after-school learning modules offers instruction in Spanish during the morning and English in the afternoon. In collaboration with the state of Ohio, an Early Learning Initiative to help at-risk youngsters enter kindergarten successfully and meet childcare requirements of working families Early Childhood Development.

✚ The **Hispanic Roundtable’s Education Area Team** as it works to institutionalize Convencion Hispana’s education community resolutions (outlined above).

✚ Collaborate to complete the process for establishing an Ohio regional chapter of **ASPIRA** (www.aspira.org). In 2008, **The Cleveland Foundation** hosted the initial meeting with local Hispanic organizations and the Executive Director of **ASPIRA** to explore bringing **ASPIRA** to Cleveland. A memorandum of understanding had been drafted. Other communities, Lorain, Toledo, Columbus, also indicated an interest.

The May 2009 issue of *Hispanic Business Magazine* ranked **ASPIRA, Inc.** as the second largest US Hispanic non-profit organization. **ASPIRA**’s mission is to empower the Puerto Rican and Latino community through advocacy and the education and leadership development of its youth. Since 1961, **ASPIRA** has been working at the grass-roots level to provide programs that encourage Hispanic students to stay in school, prepare them to succeed in the educational arena, develop their leadership skills, and to serve their community. It is organized in eight states and Puerto Rico and has extensive national presence through its partnerships with hundreds of regional, state and local education CBOs. It currently serves

over 85,000 students each year through its **ASPIRA** Clubs in schools and its after-school education and guidance programs. **ASPIRA** is a very diverse organization working with substantial numbers of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Central Americans, Mexicans, and Cubans, as well as with African Americans, non-Hispanic whites, and Haitians, among others.

- ✚ Partner with **Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)** to develop proactive Pre K – through 12th grade quality education strategies. In the meantime, provide assistance to help CMSD address pressing issues.

CMSD is focused on its model literacy program and providing more tutoring for students so that they can be successful (*Cleveland Magazine*, 2009). However, five components of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) remain a significant barrier for our high school students. OGT readiness strategies include:

- The implementation of the Scope and Sequence Curriculum in 2008-09 to ensure that Ohio Content Standards are taught in a uniform manner to all 9th and 10th grade students.
- The implementation of OGT Intervention Services in all CMSD high schools before, during and after school and on weekends.
- Annual door-to-door visits to provide students and families with OGT readiness information and resources.
- Created a family-friendly guide to the OGT which was adopted by several inner-ring districts, picked up and widely distributed by Cleveland media.
- Replaced the night school credit model with a school-based after-school credit recovery model.
- Adopted Governor Ted Strickland's 'Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative' in all CMSD high schools, with great success.
- Implemented mandatory senior parent meetings to review graduation and college-entry requirements (CMSD CEO Letter, 2009).

- ✚ The new **Cleveland Center for Arts and Technology** – It is important to ensure a Hispanic presence as Cleveland replicates Bill Strickland's Manchester Bidwell Corporation located in

Pittsburgh, PA. The center, supported by the *Cleveland Foundation and the Manchester Bidwell Corporation*, will offer adult training in medical and office technologies that support local high-growth industries. It also will expose youth to learning through the arts in areas such as photography and digital arts. Additional interested partners include: the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

✚ **Cuyahoga Community College's Hispanic Council** – Created in 1992, the Hispanic Council (HC) facilitates the implementation of Hispanic initiatives to benefit Tri-C and the Hispanic community. It also advises the College on Hispanic issues and serves as a liaison between the College and the Greater Cleveland area Hispanic community.

The Council offers the following assistance:

- Support for admissions and registration
- Help with the financial aid process
- Link Hispanics with Tri-C programs, services, faculty and staff, including members who are bilingual
- Advocacy

It is important to note is that the **CCC Hispanic Council** is not simply a student club or group but an institutionalized office within the College with staffing and other resources available to them so that they may realize their mission.

CONCLUSION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief: Reducing the High School "dropout" Rate* summarizes strategies provided above within five broad strategies:

- Make it harder for students to "dropout" of school
- Address the underlying causes of "dropping out"
- Address the needs of the groups at highest risk of "dropping out"
- Strengthen school readiness
- Strengthen the skills and understanding of the adults who affect teen's motivation and ability to staying school.

This Synopsis on Hispanic Education is not a comprehensive analysis on education inequities but an overview of the issues Hispanics are facing and strategies to overcome education disparities. What is very clear is specific measures are needed to improve education of Hispanics. Because we cannot understand that which we cannot measure, data collection and program evaluation are two critical points to addressing education disparities. According to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2006), much of the information that has shaped education policy on this topic is anecdotal and important questions lack scientific rigorous answers. For years research studies have found Hispanic children are disproportionately represented among those who have difficulty in reading, math and general educational attainment. But there is a lack of hard data concerning how students from different ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds learn to read and write English proficiently. Existing national assessments and longitudinal data can be used to develop hypotheses about potential risk and protective factors.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), there are significant graduation gaps among student subgroups. To help close these harmful achievement gaps and raise graduation rates for all students, graduation rates must be disaggregated for both reporting and accountability purposes. Recall inconsistencies in State of Ohio and the CMSD report cards.

Furthermore, while it is important to continue to identify sources of disparities, it is equally important to investigate proactive, effective and efficient strategies that would reduce the need for costly and time-consuming interventions in the first place for both the education and healthcare domains.

Hispanics are the largest growing population in the United States of America. In this age of globalization, this nation can no longer be complacent with the status quo but actively pursuing innovative and unyielding solutions to eliminate educational disparities for all of its residents, especially Latinos. It is important to iterate the issues of the term “drop out”: The term is offensive and an educational malpractice against Hispanic students and their families who are further victimized from the collapse of the term “drop out” with “quitter”. John Ponciano in his article abstract, *Racism and the Hispanic High School Dropout* explains it best:

Institutional racism is responsible for the high Hispanic dropout rate in Michigan. The term "pushout" is more appropriate than "dropout" for these students who are systematically ignored and devalued until they become alienated and leave school. Negative expectations are broadcast to Hispanic American students as soon as they enter elementary school, where they are ignored in the classroom and placed in low-ability groups and their parents are discouraged from participation. The process of disengagement begins in middle and junior high school, when the self-image is buffeted by a conscious awareness that teachers do not care about them. The sense of alienation deepens in high school and participation in academic and extracurricular activities decreases rapidly. More Hispanics are victimized in high school Spanish classes, where their language ability is denigrated, than in any other single class. Recommendations for improvement are based on an ongoing in-service training program for all school personnel and the active involvement of Hispanic parents.

Education is an American issue that affects us all. Jobs are leaving this country and American employers say that students today lack the basic skills to do even the simplest jobs. Without dramatic changes, the U.S. economy will continue to suffer, crime will go up and our children won't be able to find a job or afford a house. Education is an issue that affects our national strength and security. If we do not create dramatically new opportunities to educate our youth, our standard of living will decline, our democracy will be at risk and we will continue to fall behind as other countries far surpass us (Broad Institute, 2009).

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to above **References and Bibliography of websites and publications**, the following list of resources has been provided for additional research and inquiry. Important to note, a variety of perspectives and opinions regarding education are reflected below to assist in further investigation of educational issues affecting Hispanics in the United States, the State of Ohio, in the City of Cleveland.

While there is wisdom in learning from the various viewpoints on what it will take to reform the educational system, be very mindful that the intent of each and every source is to “close the achievement gap” for Hispanics, hence, to strengthen the United States of America.

- ❖ Achieve, Inc. www.Achieve.org
- ❖ Annenberg Institute for School Reform www.annenburginstitute.org
- ❖ Council of the Great City Schools www.cgcs.org
- ❖ Education Trust www.2.edtrust.org/edtrust/
- ❖ Just for the Kids www.just4kids.org
- ❖ National Assessment of Educational Progress <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- ❖ National Center for Education Statistics <http://nces.ed.gov>
- ❖ National Center for Educational Accountability www.nc4ea.org
- ❖ No Child Left Behind www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml?src=pb
- ❖ SchoolMatters www.schoolmatters.com
- ❖ Teacher Union Reform Network www.gseis.ucla.edu/hosted/turn/turn.html
- ❖ U.S. Department of Education www.us.ed.gov/index.jhtml

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From Desegregation to Diversity. A School District’s Self Assessment Guide on Race, Student Assignment and the Law. Alexandria, VA <http://www.nsba.org/cube>

Ohio Retired Teachers Association (ORTA) STAND ON CHARTER SCHOOLS from 2008 ORTA Guidelines; Continue work with the Coalition for Public Education (CPE) in requiring fiscal and academic accountability for start-up charter schools. Support legislation that requires

more research on charter schools and increases accountability measures (academic and administrative) for them. <http://www.orta.org>

School Choice Ohio is a nonprofit organization that provides outreach to Ohio's parents and children, as well as to their legislative and community leaders, and encourages them to engage in the discussion about school choice, as well as dialogue about school improvement initiatives by focusing on four guiding themes: opportunity, education, outreach, and advocacy. The following is a list of educational research in Ohio and others can be found by visiting their website: www.schoio.org.

Friedman Foundation study of EdChoice (2008) Retrieved at <http://www.schoio.org/PDF/Friedman%20EdChoice%20Study.pdf>

Fordham "Fund the Child" (2008): Bringing Equity, Autonomy, and Portability to Ohio School Finance. Retrieve at http://www.schoio.org/PDF/Fund%20the%20Child%20Report_Fordham_2008.pdf

ASC School Choice Yearbook (2007) Retrieve at http://www.schoio.org/PDF/ASCYearbook_2007.pdf

Buckeye Institute– intra-district spending patterns unfair (2007) Retrieved at http://www.schoio.org/PDF/Shortchanging%20Disadvantaged%20Students_Buckeye_2007.pdf

Achieve Report (2007)
Retrieved at http://www.schoio.org/PDF/Achieve-World_Class_Ed_Ohio.pdf

Friedman study on segregation and Cleveland [voucher program] (2006) Retrieved at http://www.schoio.org/PDF/Segregation_Cleveland.pdf
