

OREGON LATINO EDUCATION SUMMIT
2010

LATINO SUMMIT REPORT

Edward M. Olivos
Associate Professor
Department of Education Studies
University of Oregon

Prepared for
Educación y Justicia Para La Raza (EJPR)

April 10, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population as well as the largest racial/ethnic “minority” group in the country. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2050, Latinos will make up approximately 29% of the U.S. population.

Historically, schools in the United States have been unwilling or unable to effectively address the needs and interests of its Latino student population in particular and of the Latino community in general. This concern is heightened by the fact that over the past ten to fifteen years the swelling numbers of our student population is largely attributable to one group – Latino students whose primary language is Spanish. Latino students are now over 20% (or one-in-five) of all students in U.S. schools (Fry & Gonzales, 2008).

The purpose of this report is to consider the academic performance of Oregon’s Latino student population through the eyes and ideas of various stakeholders who attended the Oregon Latino Education Summit on May 15, 2010 in Eugene, Oregon.

Participants at the Oregon Latino Summit identified the following key issues as requiring further discussion and **action** among stakeholders. Specifically, an analysis of the key issues demonstrates the following need to be addressed in order to improve the educational experiences of Latino students in Oregon schools.

1. Discipline: Over-representation of Latino students in suspensions and disciplinary issues.
2. School environments and community/parent engagement: Administrators in Oregon districts and schools generally see themselves as having engaging and welcoming environments this was contradicted by parents and students.
3. Expectations: There was a general concern over low academic and social expectations of Latino students and communities.
4. Student voice and affirmation: Students expressed wanting to find themselves in the curriculum. Their experiences in school, however, point to a Eurocentric curriculum which implicitly and explicitly negates the experiences and worth of non-White students and communities.
5. Language and cultural affirmation: Latino students’ language and culture is treated as a deficiency in schools, as a barrier to academic success.

For Oregon’s Latino student population, the following are just some of the factors that must be taken into consideration when addressing the concerns raised above:

- Access to quality research-based bilingual programs which are additive in nature
- Quality ESOL programs
- Teacher quality and preparation
- School and administration accountability
- Authentic and respectful parent and community involvement

The Oregon Latino Education Summit was organized by *Educación y Justicia para la Raza* (EJPR), a grassroots community based coalition based in Eugene, Oregon. EJPR came together in 2003 to address the concerns that members had about what the local school districts were doing and not doing to meet the needs of Latino children and their families. EJPR advocates for and works to achieve equity in education for Latino children and their families in Lane County Schools.

The following districts were represented at the Latino Summit: the 4J Eugene School District, the Springfield School District, the Bethel School District, the Medford School District, the Woodburn School District, the Salem-Keizer School District, and the Hillsboro School District. In addition, at the beginning of the summit, a panel consisting of Richard Lariviere (President, University of Oregon), George Russell (Superintendent, 4J Eugene School District), Susan Castillo (State Superintendent of Public Instruction), and James Garcia and Donna Koechig (Lane Community College) answered questions posed by EJPR members and attendees.

Oregon, like many other states throughout the United States, has witnessed unprecedented growth in its Latino student populations during the last 10–15 years. The purpose of this report is to consider the academic performance of Oregon’s Latino student population through the eyes and ideas of various stakeholders who attended the Oregon Latino Education Summit on May 15, 2010 in Eugene, Oregon.

During the 2010–2011 Academic Year (AY), there were approximately 115,103 Latino students enrolled in state public schools (or 20.5% of the total student population). This was a 123% increase since 1999 (when at 51,542, Latino students were 9.5% of total enrollment). The Oregon Department of Education projects that by 2020, Latino will make up approximately 28% of student enrollment.

Similar to other states, Latino students in Oregon are not evenly dispersed across the state. During the 2007–2008 AY for example, nearly half (49.8%) of the students were enrolled in just 10 school districts. The district with the largest share of the state’s Latino student population that year was the Salem-Keizer School District with approximately 11,897 students. This represented 12.5% of the statewide share and 29.4% of the district’s student enrollment (During the 2010–2011 AY, Salem-Keizer had 15,014 Latino students representing 13.1% of the state share and 37% of the district total). The district with the largest representation of Latino students was the Woodburn School District. The 3,843 Latino students made up 75% of the district’s student population. (During the 2010–2011 AY, Woodburn’s 4,163 students made up 76.7% of the district total).

It is economically incumbent on the state of Oregon to take responsibility in educating this growing community’s youth. Educationally, Latinos’ academic achievement is at or near the bottom in every indicator. Latino students in U.S. public schools continue to be one of the most significantly underserved groups. National data suggests that Latino students continue to significantly lag behind non-Latino white students in both academic achievement and attainment, with large shares of Latino students performing at below-basic levels of proficiency in math and reading (Planty, et al., 2008). This trend is also reflected in Oregon schools where 65% of Latino 4th graders and 47% of Latino 8th graders fall “below-average” in reading. In math, 46% of Latino 4th graders and 50% of Latino 8th graders fall “below-average.”¹

For Oregon’s Latino student population, the following are just some of the factors that must be taken into consideration when addressing their underperformance in schools, and the policies and practices that must be put into place to address them:

- Access to quality research-based bilingual programs which are additive in nature
- Quality ESOL programs
- Teacher quality and preparation
- School and administration accountability
- Parent and community involvement

The responsibility of educating Latino youth does not (and should not) rest solely on the laps of educators and the public schools, however. Therefore, on May 15, 2010, Educación y Justicia Para La Raza (EJPR), a grassroots community based organization, convened the first ever Oregon Latino Education Summit in Eugene. Participants in this summit came from a broad spectrum of stakeholder: educators of all levels (P-IHE), parents and community members, elected officials, advocates, business community, and students. Their goal was to share out pressing concerns and develop strategic action plans for supporting Latino student achievement.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1998–2007 Reading Assessments.

INTRODUCTION

LATINO EDUCATION SUMMIT

On May 15, 2010, educational leaders and representatives from the Willamette Valley and beyond convened for the first ever Oregon Latino Education Summit. This event was held in Eugene and was sponsored by Educación y Justicia Para La Raza (EJPR), the Oregon Department of Education, the Bethel School District, the 4J Eugene School District, and the Springfield Public School District.

The idea behind an Oregon Latino Education Summit was to bring together some of the best educational minds in the region whose interests and work specifically included promoting and advocating for the educational success of Latino students and communities. The Oregon summit was loosely modeled after the San Diego County (CA) Latino Education Summit which has been bringing together educators and education advocates for the last 20 years. Similar to the San Diego Latino Coalition on Education, sponsors of the San Diego County summit, EJPR seeks to improve the academic achievement of Latino students attending local districts through partnership, advocacy, and community organizing. Their goal is to address issues of educational equity, academic rigor, community access, parental involvement, teacher/school expectations, content standards and accountability, and English learners in the school system.

In addition to the districts mentioned above, the following districts also sent representatives: the Medford School District, the Woodburn School District, the Salem-Keizer School District, and the Hillsboro School District. In addition, a panel consisting of Richard Lariviere (President, University of Oregon), George Russell (Superintendent, 4J Eugene School District), Susan Castillo (State Superintendent of Public Instruction), and James Garcia and Donna Koechig (Lane Community College) answered questions posed by EJPR members and attendees.

The goals of the summit were the following—

1. To “educate” stakeholders and the general public on the status of Latinos and education in the state of Oregon (demographic and achievement trends)
2. To identify areas of weakness and strengths in the Oregon public schools
3. To identify key stakeholders to advocate for greater educational opportunities and accountability for Latino students and families
4. To stimulate and enhance Latino community participation in Oregon public schools
5. To establish local and statewide Latino educational coalitions, and decision-making and advisory committees to local districts
6. To develop a state-wide plan of action for addressing the critical situation of Latino educational underachievement in Oregon schools

LATINO EDUCATION SUMMIT FINDINGS

Participants in the Oregon Latino Education Summit were asked to identify past successes as well as possible opportunities for change and relevant barriers. From these discussions, participants then generated goals and plans of actions in stakeholder groups and in districts with the goal of returning to their regions to promote change and advancement for Latino students and communities. The following pages represent summaries of the discussions held during the summit break out sessions and not necessarily verbatim reports. They highlight the thinking of the stakeholder groups in general and the thoughts brought forth in the poster share out period at the conclusion of the summit.

The parents in general reflected a desire to have a more inclusive and welcoming educational experience for them and their children. They acknowledged the desire for educational equity with policies, programs, and practices which respect and promote their Latino values, culture, and language.

SUCSESSES

The parent strand shared successful and/or positive programs and initiatives taking place in individual districts throughout the Willamette Valley that enhance their and their children's educational experiences.

Outreach and Information: The parent strand noted that many of them feel a general frustration with the lack of communication or information coming from the school district in general and their children's school or children's teacher in particular. Thus, efforts by local educational institutions to improve communication pathways were acknowledged and appreciated. In particular, parents in the group made it a point to single out particular practices that they found useful. These included:

- Bilingual office personnel
- Bilingual student helpers in the office
- Weekly or monthly bulletins and written communications in Spanish
- Automated phone calls with bilingual information (or information in Spanish)
- Parent meetings and/or school events
- District level meetings for parents and students

Cultural Affirmation: Many of the parents felt that it was important for the school and school personnel to understand, acknowledge, and **respect** their culture and the contributions their culture and languages provide their children. Parents in the group highlighted efforts that they felt demonstrated efforts by the school and school authorities to learn more about Latino culture and to demonstrate respect. These included:

- Changing attitudes on the part of school administrators to learn more about Latinos and their culture
- Cultural program included an exchange with teachers from Mexico
- A multicultural club formed with the support of the Principal
- Hiring a bilingual administrator for the school
- Summer cultural programs for students

Academic and Social Support: Parents in this strand acknowledged the importance of having institutional supports in place which benefit both students and parents. They particularly felt strongly that before- and after-school programs provided necessary and welcomed additional resources for them and for their children to be successful in school. The following examples were provided:

- After-school programs for students (tutoring, homework help, etc.)
- After-school programs for parents (namely ESL or citizenship classes)
- Teacher assistants to help in the classroom with students having difficulty

OPPORTUNITIES

All break-out groups were asked to consider opportunities (or dreams) that would enhance the educational achievement efforts of Latino students and communities in their respective districts. The parent strand shared the following ideas:

Culture and Language: Parents noted that school districts, local schools, and educators were not capitalizing on opportunities to create a bilingual and bilingual society. Given that many students and communities have the possibility to become truly bilingual (multilingual) and bicultural (multicultural), parents felt that these resources were not being utilized. They felt that given the professional and economic importance of being fluent in more than one language, schools were not taking advantage of this opportunity. They noted that the following would assist school authorities in moving forward with these opportunities:

- More Latino or bilingual teachers
- More classes that focused on Spanish grammar and reading so as to create bi-literate students, not just bilingual ones
- Academic programs that focused on the skills and strengths of students (language, culture, etc)

Academic Achievement and Higher Education: Parents expressed a desire for their children to have greater opportunities to succeed academically and socially than they (the parents) did. They wanted their children to have access to opportunities that education should provide to all children regardless of social class, social identities, or social barriers. They included:

- Access to higher education
- Professional career opportunities
- Access to scholarships **regardless of immigration status**
- Better advising and direction (counseling) for students to achieve their academic and social dreams
- Better academic guidance so that students do well in school and have an opportunity to enter higher education

CHALLENGES

After brainstorming ideas about successes and opportunities (and dreams), the parent strand was asked to identify themes and/or issues which present real and concrete barriers/challenges to their children's academic success and their efforts to advocate for them. The parents produced a lengthy list (the longest of the previous) which included various topics.

Home/School Partnerships and Parental Engagement: Parents felt that one of the greatest barriers to their children's academic achievement and success in schools was the lack of authentic parental partnerships with the schools and with school authorities (teachers and administrators). The parents understood the strong association between healthy and productive parent/school relations and student academic achievement and social well-being. But, for a number of reasons, these relations did not exist or were weak.

- The parents need to be allowed to develop their own voice
- There is minimal or no translation at school functions
- Insufficient Spanish materials
- No bilingual personnel
- Funds are not directed toward involving parents
- Very little or no Latino parent/community representation at school functions
- Parents are precluded from visiting their children's classrooms
- Schools do not seek parental input when hiring teachers or school administrators
- Communication to the parents is not timely
- Parents receive very little information in regard to grades, attendance, or behavior
- Educators need to make home visits

Academic Quality: In addition to having poor home-school partnerships, the parents also raised concern about the quality of education their children were receiving. They expressed dismay that their children were being provided with an education that was lower in rigor, had less accountability, and fewer resources. They particularly felt that poor academic programs and low teacher and administrator quality affected their children's opportunities to be successful. The following were some of the issues that were brought forth in this strand.

- Poor academic advising by school counselors
- No bilingual school counselors
- Large classroom sizes (too many students)
- Very few bilingual teachers
- "Bilingual" teachers who are not bilingual
- A one-size-fits-all curriculum that does not validate or take into consideration Latino students
- Poor teaching quality and little oversight over bad teachers
- Teachers who can't control their classes or who don't supervise students
- No access to college level courses of foreign languages
- Narrow evaluation (testing) criteria

Institutional and Personal Bias: Parents raised concerns about bias against them and their children. In general, parents highlighted what they felt were factors that contributed to a negative school attitude against Latinos (racism or elitism).

- Administrators and teachers who do not understand or value Latino culture
- Teachers profile children based on their looks
- Low teacher and school expectations for Latino youth and communities
- Inappropriate discipline for students (too many suspensions or detentions for Latino students)

MOVING FORWARD

The parent strand felt very strongly about moving forward with improving their children's academic experiences in Oregon schools. They highlighted the need for collaboration and accountability and made some general suggestions of what they felt may help in this process to advocate for Latino children and their communities. These included (in addition to the items mentioned above):

- Additional supports (after- and before- school) for parents and students
- Viewing Latinos from a positive view rather than always from a deficit view
- Including the parents more and making greater attempts to reach out in their language while also respecting their culture
- Providing more and better bilingual programs
- Having schools expand their evaluation process so it does not overwhelmingly single out Latino students as failing
- School authorities should have higher expectations and respect for Latinos (students and parents)

School administrators had an opportunity to share out their thoughts and reflections about how they serve the Latino student and parent population. Administrators included site level administrators as well as district level superintendents from the Willamette Valley and Medford. Similar to the parent strand above, administrators identified successes, opportunities, and challenges.

SUCCESES

School administrators recognized practices and programs taking place in their districts and/or schools which demonstrated a commitment to Latino student academic success. They specifically identified model programs being implemented across the Willamette Valley to enhance Latino student achievement and Latino parent/community involvement.

Reaching Out to the Latino Community: School administrators highlighted programs that reached out to the Latino community in sensitive and meaningful ways particularly in regards to language and culture. They listed programs that support Latino parents in accessing school and community resources. These included:

- Expansion of cultural opportunities
- (English) language classes for all students and families
- Schools are welcoming to all families
- Parent involvement that is culturally specific
- Staff charged with parent communication
- Bilingual/Bicultural Staff
- Health screenings and assistance
- GED scholarships
- Family University/Universidad de la Familia
- “Upping” teachers’ cultural competency/awareness

Language as a Resource: School administrators acknowledged the importance of the students’ and parents’ native language, i.e., Spanish. They highlighted programs in place in particular districts which viewed the Spanish language as a resource for student success and parental involvement. These included both curriculum specific programs and approaches as well as extra-curricular events and activities.

- Dual immersion programs from neighborhoods and others through school choice
- Availability of Spanish materials
- Heritage language programs-literacy for native Spanish speakers-content delivered in the native language (Spanish)
- LUCHA-for Spanish Speakers
- Language classes for all students/all families

Student Support and Instructional Interventions: School administrators highlighted efforts in specific districts and particular schools aimed at providing either more instructional time or more instructional relevance for students who may be struggling in school. These included in-class interventions as well as opportunities outside of the school day for Latino students. For educators, opportunities were made available to improve pedagogical practices and cultural awareness.

- Differentiated/targeted resources to schools
- Targeted professional development
- Programs to access middle/high school students through pipeline programs, i.e., Ganas, Oregon Young Scholars, Puertas Abiertas, Brazo Unida, etc.

- Use of data to inform instruction
- IIPM-targeted data collection
- César Chávez Leadership Conference
- In school social/academic support
- SIOP for all teachers

OPPORTUNITIES

All break out groups were asked to consider opportunities (or dreams) that would enhance the educational achievement efforts of Latino students and communities in their respective districts. The school administrators' strand shared the following ideas:

Parent/Community Involvement/Engagement: Authentic and significant relationships between school authorities and bicultural communities are often elusive projects. Issues related to institutional bias, limited access and opportunity, assimilationist worldviews, and unwelcoming school conditions have all be documented in the research literature as precluding meaningful school-community-home relations (Olivos, 2006). School administrators expressed some opportunities they'd like to see in their districts and/or schools:

- Parent education-personal development to assist their students
- Bi-cultural liaisons at schools
- Open facilities to be more welcoming
- Expand to the broader community
- Increase engagement with Latino students, families, and communities
- *Educate and Inspire* program

Partnerships and Collaborations: School administrators shared that they would like to see greater collaboration with institutions outside of the K-12 system. This would include support and resources that would assist their districts and schools with their mission of educating all children. These included:

- Matching collaboration of schools/libraries
- Systematize university/school partnerships for professional development
- K-20 leaders should include professional development
- Transparent collaboration

In School Opportunities: School administrators shared ideas on some untapped opportunities that would benefit the academic opportunities of Latino students in their schools/districts. These included opportunities for Latino students to access academically rigorous courses:

- Credit/volunteering
- Pairing older kids with younger students to mentor
- Use of technology and data tools to build access and awareness
- Earlier sheltered instruction in K-12 (all teachers) using SIOP, GLAD, etc
- Provide opportunities for TAG/ELL students to access challenging courses and programs

CHALLENGES

The school administrator strand followed the same process as the other groups. After brainstorming ideas about successes and opportunities (and dreams), administrators were asked to identify themes and/or issues which present real and concrete barriers/challenges for Latino student academic success. The administrators shared concerns similar to the parent group (presented earlier) as well as additional challenges they feel their districts/school face in their task of educating Latino youth.

School Structures: The structure of the K-12 public school system has historically and systemically been unwelcoming and unresponsive to bicultural communities and students. Practices in place (such as tracking, testing, curriculum bias, teacher expectations, etc.) have proven ineffective for students of color yet they continue to function across the entire U.S. educational system. Administrators shared the following concerns regarding the structure of schooling.

- Rearranging structure of schools
- Educational equity
- Lack of knowledge that there are problems and concerns within district and schools
- Move the conversations to root causes
- Lack of accountability
- No pipeline to college and university success

A Culture of *Deficit Thinking*: Latinos and other bicultural students (and communities) have long been considered lacking or deficient in relation to middle-class white students (Valencia, 1997). Problems and deficiencies in learning are often presumed to originate in the home or native culture and not in the academic or social structures under which these children are asked to perform. This de-valuing of non-white cultures is often expressed in the reasons proposed for bicultural academic failure, in the remedial and compensatory educational programs designed to “change” bicultural students and their communities, and in the transference of accountability and responsibility. School administrators listed the following challenges.

- Assumptions that remain unchallenged/unchanged
- Need to address the culture of “whiteness”
- A culture of low expectations
- Research not based on the targeted populations
- Not many “additive” programs—subtractive deficit program
- No multiple opportunities to assess
- Assumption of a deficit population, poor research, white privilege, inappropriate instruction

School Staffing, Programs, and Practices: School administrators shared a list of challenges their districts/schools encounter in their efforts to equitably educate Latino children. These issues ran along staffing, programmatic, and policy lines. Some also included the general academic preparation and/or academic “awareness” of Latino students and parents. They included the following:

- College awareness
- College readiness
- High school readiness
- Access and motivation
- Empower parents to be advocates for their children
- Too strict of timelines to prepare improvement plans
- Social rather than fiscal leverage
- Increased graduation rates
- Staff development for ELL “really lacking”

- Engaging elected boards—OSBA (educate school boards)
- Look at international standards
- Professional development

MOVING FORWARD

The school administrators in attendance expressed a commitment to move forward in the effort to educate Latino youth. This included providing sound and academically effective programs and practices for this community. In addition to the issues raised above, school administrators felt that the following merit special attention to move forward in this task:

- Develop a meaningful and authentic relationship with Latino parents and the Latino community
- Increase in bilingual staff and personnel
- Increased staff development for teachers (multiculturalism, ELL, personal bias, etc)
- Increase collaboration with all stakeholders, including community members and elected officials
- Improve access to college preparation courses and advising (counseling) for Latino students

COMMUNITY MEMBERS STRAND

Community members also had opportunities to participate in the (Willamette Valley) Oregon Latino Education Summit. These folks represented members from community organizations, social service organizations, cultural organizations, etc. They expressed their particular interests, concerns, and ideas of how Oregon schools can better serve Latino students.

SUCCESES

Community members at the Oregon Latino Summit shared out what they felt were successes in their work as “outside” members who may or may not have children in the Oregon public schools. These folks expressed their desires to help local schools be successful in their endeavors to educate Latino youth. They also expressed a need to work with parents and students to organize and advocate when schools or districts are unresponsive.

Organization and Advocacy: Community members felt that their efforts to organize and collaborate across stakeholders were an important task of their work. This included providing services and connections for parents, forming an advocacy group, meeting with decision makers, and creating forums for communication.

- Educación y Justicia para la Raza (EJPR)
- Getting community members involved in the process
- Together all players involved
- Collaboration between schools and agencies

Working with Parents: Similar to the other groups, the community member strand acknowledged the vital importance of having parents involved in the education process. Their position, however, was that parents should not be present at schools at the whim of the school authorities (administrators and teachers) but as advocates for their children and their community. Since oftentimes Latino parents may be unaware or unfamiliar with the U.S. educational system, community members also expressed success in their work to help politicize the work of Latino parents in their interactions with schools.

- Family advocates
- Latino family nights
- Parent empowerment
- Latino Family Conference
- Families accessing library—collaboration
- Multicultural liaisons
- Bilingual-bicultural family advocates
- Mochila—orientation for parents to empower them to assist kids

In School Supports: Community members also highlighted what they felt were successes in their efforts to be bring more responsive or respectful programs to local schools. These included resources for Latino families and communities as well bringing problems to the fore that Latino (immigrant) parents may be too timid or hesitant to do.

- Acknowledge that there is a problem
- Visibility of Latino teachers and administrators
- Spanish for Spanish-speakers

OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY MEMBERS STRAND

The community members strand shared out their ideas of what they felt were opportunities that needed to be taken advantage of. The community members shared the following opportunities as important for Latino student success and authentic Latino parent engagement.

Tapping Latino Culture and Language: Community members felt that the Latino culture and the Spanish language are important resources for Latino students and that effort should be made to foment these. These resources can provide educators means to enhance the educational opportunities of Latino children in local schools by promoting policies, programs, and practices which are additive in nature.

- Dual language immersion—best practices and well implemented
- Puertas Abiertas
- More programs that promote cultural self-esteem
- Visibility for groups like MEChA

Partnerships and Collaborations: Community members also felt that their contributions to local and state-wide education issues could enhance partnership and networking opportunities. There was a particular emphasis on opening up school resources and school grounds to connect with the local community. These included:

- The Oregon Latino Education Summit
- Networking
- Opening schools to the community
- Neighborhood schools become community centers

Enhancing Educational Opportunities: Community members expressed that there existed opportunities within schools to enhance the educational experiences of Latino youth and parents via resources that provided access to technology and higher education.

- DREAM Act is an opportunity
- Access to technology
- Computer classes for Latino parents
- Bilingual teacher pathway programs
- Schools have computers and facilities
- Vision, passion to improve educational opportunities

CHALLENGES

Community members concluded by sharing out what they felt were challenges in school system. They identified barriers that they felt precluded Latino students and families from being successful in schools.

Need for a Bilingual and Bicultural School Context: The notion that the U.S. public schools fail to acknowledge the cultural capital of non-white communities resonated with the community member strand. Participants voiced concerns that school authorities (teachers, administrators, public officials, etc) do not value the contributions or presence of Latinos in their districts or schools. They expressed concerns about the lack of personnel in schools to assist the Latino community.

- Home language needs to be seen as an asset
- Need for bilingual/bicultural staff
- Bilingual, bicultural counselors, liaisons to work with community services

COMMUNITY MEMBERS STRAND

- Need to value culture and schools
- Bridging cultural gap
- ELL pull-out programs

Limited Parent and Community Engagement: A consistent theme that resonated throughout the summit was the issue of Latino parent engagement in schools. Many participants felt that the Latino parents were not as actively engaged in the schools as they should be. A variety of factors influenced this phenomenon.

- Opportunities for parents to learn English
- Families feel inadequate to help their students
- Need more adult education
- Communication issues
- Informing families about resources
- This is your school, make parents [feel] welcomed

Social Context of Education and Schooling: The community members' strand echoed earlier sentiments regarding acknowledging the social context of education and the public schools' responses to social challenges. More specifically, community members expressed concern about the organizational climate of Oregon school in relation to a social environment which tends to exclude Latinos from social and educational opportunities. Challenges acknowledged were:

- Structural changes in schools
- Funding cut-backs
- Class/poverty issues
- DREAM Act
- Need for jobs/economic security
- Generational poverty

MOVING FORWARD

After careful deliberation, the community members in attendance proposed several recommendations that (in their opinion) would improve the educational opportunities afforded Latino youth. The following recommendations were provided as a means of moving forward on this vital task.

- More bilingual/bicultural staff, this makes a difference
- More programs that welcome and empower Latino parents
- More collaboration between stakeholders on issues related to Latino education in Oregon

STUDENTS STRAND

Students from local (Eugene and Springfield) high schools also attended the Oregon Latino Summit. Their input was vital as it provided a first hand account of what Latino students experience in “typical” Oregon schools and the explicit and implicit messages they receive in regard to their inclusion at these institutions.

SUCCESES

Latino students in attendance provided a brief list of what they felt have been useful school or community initiated programs or events that have supported their efforts in schools. Some students, however, expressed that it is difficult to think of any Latino aimed “successes” in their schools.

Supporting Latino Success: Students acknowledged that support systems in place in particular districts and schools positively impacted their educational experiences. This included not only having programs designed to include them in academic and culturally relevant ways but also having qualified personnel to assist them in their journeys through the schools.

- Designated person that works with Latinos
- Bilingual recognition of achievement and pride
- Recognizing Latino effort in class
- Bilingual staff
- College success center
- Oregon Leadership Institute

The Presence of Latinos in Schools: The students acknowledged their growing presence in Oregon schools and efforts by select local districts and schools to support them in their academic trajectory. They viewed their growing presence at institutions of higher education and extracurricular activities as demonstrations of their integration into the fabric of society. Students felt strongly that efforts to acknowledge their presence and contributions in schools were positive steps toward including them in the educational process.

- Latino clubs
- Chicano/Ethnic studies
- MEChA (growing)
- More Latinos in college
- Latinos doing extracurricular activities

A Social Context for Learning: Students felt strongly about creating a social context that would benefit their success in schools. They acknowledged existing social anti-Latino sentiment but felt confident that their generation could do something (particularly as it relates to higher education) to push for more equitable conditions for Latino youth

- Hard to think about a success
- Pushing the DREAM Act

OPPORTUNITIES

For Latino students in attendance, opportunities that supported their academic success while affirming their cultural identity were the most welcomed. Seizing these opportunities required school authorities to recognize the valuable contributions Latino communities can make in regard to their history, culture, and language.

Latino Culture and Language as a Resource: Similar to the community members, the students felt that Latino culture and the Spanish language are important resources for their success and that efforts should be made to foment these. These resources can provide educators a means to enhance their educational opportunities by promoting policies, programs, and practices which are additive in nature.

- Having Latino classes (literature, history)
- Multicultural classes
- Make Spanish for native speakers more challenging
- Bilingual meetings

Organizing for Success: The students noted a series of organizations and events which they felt provided them with useful opportunities to succeed in schools and in local communities. They also acknowledged how these groups help not only students but their family and community as well. These organizations/events were firmly based in cultural affirmation and/or academic rigor and readiness. These included:

- Latinos Unidos Siempre (LUS)
- La Unidad Chavista de America (LUChA)
- Juventud Faceta
- Oregon Leadership Institute
- Upward Bound
- MEChA
- ALAS
- Raza Unida Youth Conference
- Student advisory

Enhancing Educational Opportunities: Students expressed that opportunities existed within schools to enhance their and their parents' educational experiences via resources that provided access to information and higher education.

- Hispanic academic outreach
- Success specialist
- Scholarship workshops
- Bilingual meetings
- Tutoring classes (after school bus)
- Career center
- Migrant program

CHALLENGES

Students in attendance concluded by sharing out a somewhat lengthy list of what they felt were challenges in school system. They identified barriers that they felt precluded them from being successful in schools. Many of these issues had also been identified by other stakeholder strands, as seen in the earlier pages of this document.

Exclusionary School Context: Students felt that policies and/or practices within schools excluded them and the Latino community. This was a consistent theme as students expressed feelings of discomfort or exclusion from the “mainstream” school culture. Some students felt that Latinos were constantly the “other” or the outsiders and did not feel like they belonged in the schools.

STUDENTS STRAND

- Language issues
- Racism at school (students that are new to the country)
- Not feeling comfortable, feeling like an outsider
- Discriminated, stereotyped
- Dealing with two different cultures
- Diversity
- Low expectations
- Peer pressure

Personal Relationships and Communication: For Latino students, building a relationship with teachers, counselors, and staff were important steps toward building a support system and network. Students felt, however, that these relationships lacked in their schools.

- Lack of information
- Support from staff
- Lack of bilingual staff
- Counselor not “checking up” on students
- Lack of teacher enthusiasm about teaching
- Information in English only

Social Context of Education and Schooling: Students in this strand echoed earlier sentiments regarding the social context of education and the public schools’ responses to social challenges. More specifically, the students expressed concern about the organizational climate of Oregon schools in relation to a social environment which tends to exclude Latinos from social and educational opportunities. Challenges acknowledged were:

- Resources
- Gangs
- Peer-pressure
- Lack of advance placement classes
- Students having to work after school

MOVING FORWARD

Students concluded by sharing their ideas on what they would like to see in order to improve the educational endeavors and efforts of Latino students. The students listed the items below as possible recommendations for action.

- Getting Dream Act passed.
- Recognizing Latino success/ effort at school.
- College and career success center.
- Awareness of economic challenges/ barriers.
- More bilingual/ bicultural staff.
- Community involvement.
- Latino focus.
- Latino parent associations.
- Multicultural/ Ethnic curriculum classes (Latino studies-history)

DISTRICT ACTION PLANS

After convening together in stakeholder groups, participants at the summit met within their individual districts to reflect on what they heard in the previous and to develop an action plan specific to each district's needs and assets. Below are the action plans (or goals) each district identified. Note: each district's action plans are formatted differently based on their discussion groups and how they chose to lay out their action plans.

Woodburn School District

Teachers:

- A place for parents to go and learn- parent school if night school- more than a family center (Prioritize needs)
- Each school to have a room where parents can check online/computer for their kid's school progress convenient hours (parent center).
- More bilingual staff and promote professional development multicultural etc.

Parents:

- More tutoring for all students at all levels
- Implement after school program for all students- that accesses student progress.
- Committee for parents and subcommittees for all school programs/creation of subcommittee. to inform all parents.

Students:

- More programs for adults (parents) to educate parents- i.e. Migrant Ed.
 - More multicultural classes
 - More recognition of students who are doing excellent
-

Eugene 4J School District

Students: Adding more multicultural content to make curriculum less Eurocentric; teach about recent history events; address language barrier with bilingual staff.

Administrative: Class for native speakers, direct communications with parents/school parent teacher conferences.

Parents: focus on communications- information, bilingual, parent/teacher, discipline process.

HOW WE WILL KNOW/ WHO WILL GET IT DONE

Armando: Contact superintendent

Linda/Carl: Email district 10 barriers to bilingual education

Parents: Will contact key administrators

Youth: Make contact with superintendent

Admin: email district to ID barriers to bilingual education.

Bethel School District

- Increase bilingual bicultural staffing all levels
- Increase parent/ community/ staff involvement through education, programming and inclusion outreach and partnership
- Increase collaboration across districts and systems, cities, community stakeholders to meet goals for students.

DISTRICT ACTION PLANS

Parents:

- Entablar comunicación con el director para formar un club multicultural.
- Trabajo académico para el alumno cuando esta suspendido.
- Tener en los distritos mas personal bilingüe y bicultural

Community:

- Systemic changes including programs that promote and value cultures and languages through bilingual/bicultural staff and well implemented dual language programs.
- Neighborhood schools that are used as culturally inclusive community centers offering services and classes that include and empower families and community.
- Collaboration, communication, and sharing of resources between all stakeholders.

Teachers:

- Active hiring of bilingual, bi-ethnic, and bicultural staff- teachers, secretaries, EA's, admin.
- Parent education and outreach classes that focus on pre-literacy and language skills; additionally, offering parents English/ computer classes and computer lab walk-in time in evenings.
- Developing/ increasing bilingual and dual immersion programs.

Students:

- Path to higher education for all students
- Bicultural/bilingual teachers/ administrators
- Multicultural/ethnic curriculum classes

Administration:

- Enhance teacher quality: hire bilingual/bicultural staff, training in cultural competency and instructional strategies (GLAD/SIOP)
- Develop formalized process to engage family's k-12: Student/family led support network, more staff dedicated to this work.
- Using data to monitor individual student progress and provide interventions/support.

Medford School District

Tres Metas

- Organizar, educar a los padres desarrollar mas relación entre los 4 distritos escolares en el sistema educativo usando "ALAS."
- Contratar personal bilingüe y bicultural en coordinación con el distrito, maestros, padres y estudiantes.
- Mas programas tutoriales después de escuela.

Salem-Keizer School District

Metas:

- Que se le de trabajo educacional al estudiante que este detenido o suspendido.
- Que haya personal bilingüe y bicultural aprobado por los padres para aumentar la comunicación directa entre escuela, padres y alumnos.
- Que se les de capacitación multicultural (cultural competency) para que los maestros sepan escuchar a las alumnos sin prejuicios y que no los limiten.

Plan de Acción:

- Formar grupos de padres (1 o 2 de cada escuela) para hablar con el/la superintendente regularmente.
-

DISTRICT ACTION PLANS

Springfield School District

Metas:

- Educational detention or academic.
- Better Communications between schools community and families, intergenerational and cross-cultural respect in a non-patronizing manner.
- Increase the amount of hiring bilingual/bicultural, multi-ethnic staff with inclusion of parents in the hiring process.

CONCLUSION

Several **key issues** emerged from the Oregon Latino Summit which requires further discussion and **action** among stakeholders. Specifically, an analysis of the key issues demonstrates the following need to be addressed in order to improve the educational experiences of Latino students in Oregon schools.

1. Discipline: Over-representation of Latino students in suspensions and disciplinary issues. Districts and schools need to assess their policies and practices (including those which are implicitly driven by social, institutional, and personal bias) and how these disadvantage Latino students.
2. School environments and community/parent engagement: Involving Latino parents in genuine and sincere ways is important for building trusting relationships between schools and the Latino community (Olivos, 2006). Administrators in Oregon districts and schools generally see themselves as having engaging and welcoming environments this was contradicted by parents and students.
3. Expectations: There was a general concern over low academic and social expectations of Latino students and communities. This was reflected in watered down curricula, limited access to college prep classes, and poor or non-existent counseling and career planning for Latino students.
4. Student voice and affirmation: Students expressed wanting to find themselves in the curriculum. Their experiences in school, however, point to a Eurocentric curriculum which implicitly and explicitly negates the experiences and worth of non-White students and communities.
5. Language and cultural affirmation: Latino students' language and culture is treated as a deficiency in schools, as a barrier to academic success. Participants at the summit expressed a desire to have their language and culture viewed through an additive lens. A demonstration of this would be access to heritage language courses or bilingual education.

There remains much to be done in terms of improving the academic achievement of Latinos in Oregon's schools. The Latino population is the nation's largest "minority" ethnic group and the Latino student population is on track to becoming the largest ethnic group in the public schools. In California, this community is already the largest student body in their public schools (Kane, 2010).

The discussions which took place at the Oregon Latino Summit reflect longstanding concerns by Latino education advocates and allies. Many of the concerns raised reflect a well documented literature base which situates the academic underachievement of Latino students within various contexts: Macro, Meso, and Micro (Padilla, 2007). This body of research and literature makes a strong case that Latino students and their families must navigate a very complex social system which affects their opportunity structure and the institutional climate which serves them. The outcomes of this complex structure have not always been welcoming to Latino students and have reflected negatively in their academic underachievement.

Members of EJPR and other local allies seek to continue this discussion and to reconvene allies in order to operationalize the plans of action articulated at the summit. In the meantime, EJPR acknowledges that the discussions held at the Oregon Latino Summit point to an urgent need for **systemic change** (i.e., increased professional development, additive curricula, greater accountability to community constituents, access to language and culture programs, high expectations for Latino students, greater communication with parents and community, etc.) (Cortés, 1986, Darder, 1991). This systemic change requires **significant restructuring in the ways that these systems operate**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oregon Latino Summit Steering Committee

Remie Calalang, Bethel School District
Angel Dorantes, University of Oregon
Francisca Leyva-Johnson, City of Eugene
John Lockhart, Pacific University – Eugene
Charles Martinez, University of Oregon
Edward M. Olivos, University of Oregon
Guadalupe Quinn, Immigrant Rights Advocacy Program (Amigos)
Lori Smith, Bethel School District
Maria Thomas, Lane County Department of Youth Services
Carmen X. Urbina, 4J Eugene School District

Special Acknowledgements

Colt Gill, Bethel School District
Tim Keeley, Bethel School District
Brian Flick, Meadow View School
Jose Manuel-Ibarra, Oregon Commission on Hispanic Affairs
Artemio Paz, Oregon State Board of Education
Richard Lariviere, President, University of Oregon
Susan Castillo, Oregon State Superintendent of Public Instruction
George Russell, Superintendent, 4J Eugene School District
James Garcia, Lane Community College
Donna Koechig, Lane Community College

Extra special thanks to the facilitators and volunteers who made the Oregon Latino Summit event possible.

Sponsors

Educación y Justicia Para la Raza (EJPR)
Oregon Department of Education (ODE)
University of Oregon, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED)
Bethel School District
Eugene 4J School District
Springfield School District
Lane Education Service District (ESD)

REFERENCES

- Cortés, C. (1986). The education of language minority students: A contextual interaction model. In California Department of Education, *Beyond language: Social and cultural factors in schooling language minority students*. Los Angeles: California State University, Los Angeles. Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Center.
- Darder, A. (1991). *Culture and power in the classroom: A critical foundation for bicultural education*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey Publishers.
- Fry R. & Gonzales, F. (2008). *One-in-five and growing fast: A profile of Hispanic public school students*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center.
- Kane, W. (2010, November 13). Latino kids now majority in state's public schools. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved November 27, 2010 from <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/11/13/MNIG1GBD0C.DTL>.
- Olivos, E.M. (2006). *The power of parent: A critical perspective of bicultural parent involvement in public schools*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.
- Padilla, R. (2007). *Camino a la Universidad (Road to the university). A report to Lumina Foundation*. Indianapolis, IN: Lumina Foundation.
- Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Provasnik, S., Kena, G., Dinkes, R., KewalRamani, A., and Kemp, J. (2008). *The Condition of Education 2008 (NCES 2008-031)*. National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
- Valencia, R.R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press.