

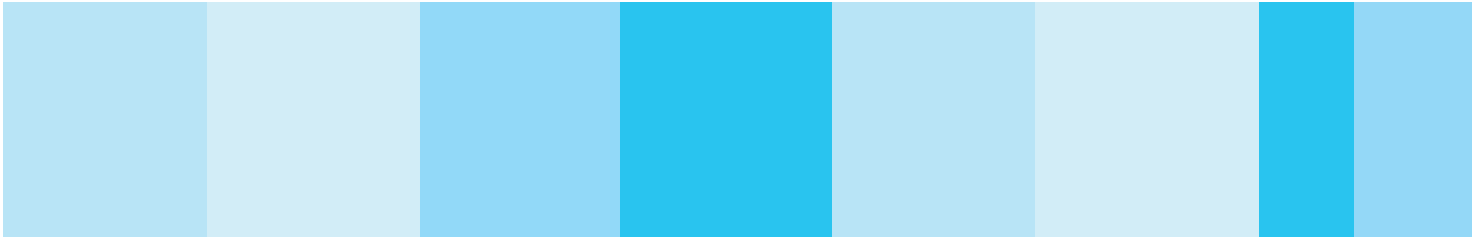


NALEO Education Leadership Initiative  
2nd Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education  
September 13-15, 2006  
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# A Word from the NALEO Educational Fund

At this Second Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education, it is safe to say that our progress may be catching up with our problems.

Good news is coming from those educators in schools across our nation. For instance, The Education Trust reports that the Latino-white gaps in reading and math are beginning to close at the fourth-grade level. More states are instituting preschool; more and more students are becoming “first in family,” attending college. In several states—Ohio, Kentucky, North Carolina—Latino students are beginning to outperform others. In Texas and Florida, data tracking student achievement has made enormous strides, making it possible to pinpoint where the flaws appear in the system—and to fix them. A striking victory came in Maryland, where State Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez was able to pass legislation that has the effect of forcing school systems to account for unacceptable rates of high school dropouts.

Those at the first Education Summit, held in September 2005, are the ones making this progress possible. Many are still out there working, and many returned this year with reports of progress and excellent new ideas. And newcomers joined us as we brought our message to Congress and heard from Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings on the opening day.

So while we have long known that we are the fastest-growing group in the nation, we may now have a chance at becoming the fastest-achieving group as well.

Yet we still see several points along what should be a smooth continuum from preschool to postsecondary—the P-20 pipeline—flashing danger signs. The leaps in elementary achievement die off when students are steered away from algebra and other rigorous curricula in middle schools. Undocumented students graduating from high school are left with no hope for college.

And as much as we care about our families, our students, and our constituents—as much as we praise every move forward whenever and wherever it comes—closing this gap has become an issue larger than any individual progress.

As many participants pointed out, American students overall and Latino students in particular are not achieving at the high levels needed to ensure international competitiveness. Without college and postgraduate degrees, to put it simply, they can not do the jobs. They risk becoming, instead of contributors to local economies, a burden to them. If the trend continues, the national economy will show the strain.

We have the opportunity to turn this trend around—to take the rest of the country with us as we push for educational equity and excellence for Latino children. You will find here the programs, policy, strategies and tactics to get it done. This is a critical opportunity to lead—and to set a path for our children to become leaders, as well. Let’s not miss it.



**Arturo Vargas, Executive Director**



About the NALEO 2nd Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education

For the second year, the NALEO Educational Fund has brought policy experts, education practitioners, and elected and appointed officials together in the nation’s capital to address the state of Latino education. The goal is strategic development of policy and practices that improve the academic achievement of Latino students. The Summit is also intended to give elected and appointed officials perspective of the current achievement gap, where challenges and successes lie, and what recommendations and federal legislation are currently being discussed. This report is a summary of the presentations and discussions that took place.



## Introduction: Building on What We Know

To look at specific aspects of the achievement gap, the conference was divided into six sessions, with several keynote addresses, special presentations, and discussion sessions from which arose several overriding issues, and a presentation of recommendations from participants. The following is a summary of the aspects discussed:

### Session I: The State of Latino Education

With Latinos the second-largest population group in the country, their educational achievement is a critical issue for all Americans. Progress is being noted in some areas, especially in elementary grades. However, the need for qualified teachers in largely Latino schools, the costs and other difficulties of getting students through a four-year college program, and the need for more and better preschool, are factors that contribute to achievement remaining low in many areas.

### Session II: The Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

This school-improvement program, up for reauthorization, has inspired many to make recommendations on how to “get it right this time.” While its objectives and intentions are praised, as well as the way it has driven valuable data collection, some see Latinos and English Language Learners and other Latino students falling through the gaps or even facing penalties as schools narrow their focus to reach metrics.

### Session III: Bilingual Education Policies and Programs that Work

Current figures indicate that students with limited proficiency in English make up more than 10 percent of the public school population across the nation, about 4 million to 5 million children. NCLB has brought attention to the progress and the achievement difficulties of English Language Learners, and there are many problems yet to be solved in NCLB assessment execution. Also, large gaps remain for early childhood and special education populations.

### Session IV: Working the P-20 Pipeline

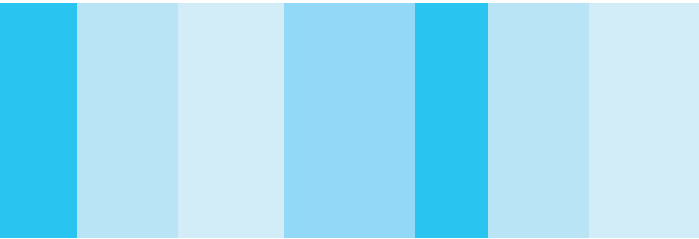
To keep a strong continuum from early education through postsecondary requires collaborative effort among many stakeholders, from parents to university professors to private foundations. Several success stories shared certain aspects: focus on high-school retention, dropout prevention and recovery, rigorous middle- and high-school curricula, aligning high school and college curriculum, establishing preschools, community involvement, and using strong data collection and tracking.

### Session V: Diplomas Count: Making Every Student a Successful Graduate

This session reported on the success of getting a state bill passed accounting for dropout rates, as well as emphasizing the importance of diplomas and college to any working future, looking at the what makes a truly valuable diploma, and tips on how to get similar legislation through.

### Session VI: Latino College Access: Trends and Solutions

Giving the national, state, and local perspective on college access and achievement, this session presented the critical nature of college preparedness and successful graduation. Programs that work were suggested, and barriers to Latino college attendance and ways to overcome them were discussed.



### Guide to Terms:

The following is a guide to several education-related acronyms used at the Summit and in materials:

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress, the measure of a school's success according to No Child Left Behind

ELL: English Language Learner

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

NCLB: No Child Left Behind, a federal program designed to improve school performance

P-20: From preschool to four-year college graduation and graduate/professional school (i.e., grade 20); a continuum of education that attempts to align learning beyond K-12

STEM: Science, technology, engineering, math—areas students are being urged to pursue to enhance national economic competitiveness

# Introduction

The Honorable John P. Bueno is President of NALEO and Senior Investment Analyst with JP Morgan Private Client Services. He began his career in public service at the age of 25 as Pontiac, Michigan councilmember, the second Hispanic elected to office in the city. By the time he left office, he was Council President Pro Tem. As NALEO President, Mr. Bueno is the first Republican and non-Mexican American (he is of Ecuadorian descent) in 28 years to lead the organization. He also serves on the Advisory Council of the National League of Cities (NLC) and is past president of the Hispanic Elected Local Officials (HELO) of the NLC. He is also Chairman of the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and board member for the Puerto Rican Cultural and Educational Center and the Tax Increment Finance Authority.

In the five years No Child Left Behind Act has been in effect, it is important to look at its progress, especially considering the upcoming reauthorization. To do this, Mr. Bueno asked Secretary Spellings to name one positive and one negative about NCLB. Her answer was succinct: Its greatest advantage is its focus on children previously ignored in the system, and its biggest challenge is the pace of progress in individual school districts. In her address, she brought out more specifics about these issues, as well as some insight into the program's future.

## Keynote Address:

### No Child Left Behind Shines a Bright Light on Children Once Ignored

One of the crafters of the No Child Left Behind act, The Honorable Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, also helped create policy on immigration, health, labor and other major areas as Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy under George W. Bush. Prior to her appointment as Secretary, in 2001, she was then-Governor Bush's Senior Advisor with responsibility for developing and implementing the Governor's education policy. Her work included the Texas Reading Initiative, the Student Success Initiative to eliminate "social promotion," and what is hailed as the nation's strongest school assessment and accountability system. She is noted for being the first mother of school-age children to serve as the nation's Secretary of Education; she herself attended public schools.

"Latinos are front and center in No Child Left Behind—and I think that's right and righteous," Secretary Spellings began, pointing out the many ways NCLB benefits English Language Learners and Latino children and their families since its launch five years ago.

With English Language Learners the fastest-growing student population in the country, schools and school boards need the "bright light" NCLB shines on their achievements, Secretary Spellings said. "Without considering the needs of every single student, and holding school districts and school boards accountable, we would not be where we are today. We're focusing on ELLs as never before."

She pointed to general signs of success attributed to NCLB, such as the overall 20-point rise for fourth graders on the National Educational Report Card. But, she pointed "we're on a journey, here—we're by no means satisfied. We have lots of work to do to serve these students more appropriately."

She announced to the group the new Title I regulations for Limited English Proficiency students in content proficiency, saying she had faced a great deal of pressure from many sides to "roll back the standards. People were saying, 'let's take three years, five years, 100 years before we're accountable for the needs of all students.' But the Department said two years—that's the standard. And we're not backing away from that."



“We’re only getting about half of our minority students out of high school on time. And 90 percent of the jobs of the future—health care, technology, science—require postsecondary education. Think about that disconnect between the opportunities for people and what’s being produced in our schools.”

**The Honorable Margaret Spellings**

United States Secretary of Education

However, that does not mean there is no room for flexibility and improvement in the program, Secretary Spellings said. To that end, the Department is partnering with about 20 states to test different policy models and assessment strategies in order to determine the best way to serve ELLs.

- **NATIVE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS:** “My home state of Texas thinks this is a smart strategy—we’ll look for the proof.”
- **PLAIN LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT:** “Are there better ways to measure content proficiency, through shortening sentences and other strategies?”
- **ACCOMMODATIONS:** These include use of dictionaries and additional time for testing.
- **SIMULTANEOUS CONTENT AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT:** This method is the most technically challenging and sophisticated, but has potential benefits if a single test can be used to measure both types of proficiency.

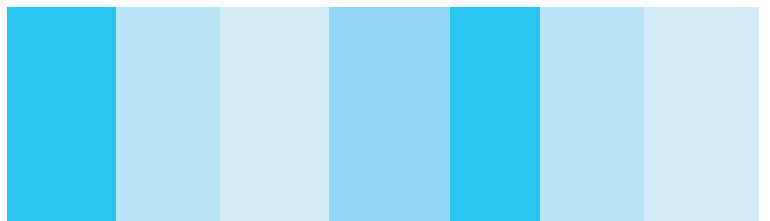
Secretary Spellings also spoke to the role of the federal government in education. “Our federal commitment has always been around the needs of the poor, minorities, and special education students. And this is becoming more important because there are more students with these characteristics in our schools today, so there are more federal resources flowing to meet their needs.”

She also distributed copies of the Tool Kit for Hispanic Families, created by the Department to inform parents about NCLB and give them activities to enrich education at every grade level and to hold schools accountable. NCLB is giving parents “more accurate, timely, meaningful information about the quality of their schools than ever before,” she said. “Without parents engaged, we can’t be fully successful.”

Finally, she said, “meeting basic grade-level standards is not an unrealistic expectation. We’re only getting about half of our minority students out of high school on time. And 90 percent of the jobs of the future—health care, technology, science—require postsecondary education. Think about that disconnect between the opportunities for people and what’s being produced in our schools.” The following factors can have an impact on this situation:

- **Teacher quality, especially incentives and strengthening exchange programs with Latin American teachers:** Secretary Spellings said the State Department has asked the Department of Education to lead delegations to pump up the exchange program, especially with regard to language proficiency, an area in which U.S. schools are not as advanced as other countries. Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East are priority countries. She pointed out that while teacher recruitment and benefits needed to be handled on a local level, federal Title II has a “large pot of resources” for professional development, and the House of Representatives recently passed a \$100 million teacher incentive fund to get good results in challenged communities.
- **Stronger focus on reading and math:** Science assessments are next to come on line for NCLB, Secretary Spellings said. She also pointed out that it is important to note that without proficiency in reading and math, children can not do science and social studies.
- **AYP myths and red flags:** Participants told of schools exemplary in most respects that can not achieve hit their AYP numbers. This is a red flag that schools ought to pay attention to, Secretary Spellings said. Disaggregating data by subgroups leads to many data points that can point to trouble spots. But there is a “mythology around accountability,” she said: “People talk about the one kid that came into the school halfway through the year and tested badly and caused the school to be rated badly. But that’s not the case, and you know it and I know it.” Required sample sizes of 30 to 50 students mean the sample size is valid.

- Pros and cons of growth model accountability: “I’m open minded, and that’s why I’ve allowed the pilot programs,” she said. But it is important to make sure the school has a foundation of data to compare with later years, in order to validly demonstrate growth. She pointed out “NCLB says we’re going to have grade-level proficiency by 2014. We may have to pick up the pace—get more than a year’s worth of growth in a single year for some students.” The grade-level proficiency target is not negotiable: “I’m not willing to say—and neither is Congress—that for some students, we’re not really ever going to get there.”



# Session I: The State of Latino Education

The Honorable Peter M. Rivera, Session I Chairman, has been a member of the New York State Assembly since 1992, serving areas of Bronx County. His family came from Puerto Rico to New York City when he was a child. He has been a police officer, detective, and Federal Agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency and is a lawyer. He is presently Chairman of the Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Developmental Disabilities, as well and serves on the Rules Committee. He is a Board member of the NALEO Educational Fund.

With Latinos the second-largest population group in the country, their educational achievement is a critical issue for all Americans. The first step in the Summit is to give elected and appointed officials perspective of the current achievement gap, where challenges and successes lie, and what recommendations and federal legislation are currently being discussed. This information is the tool they need to develop strategic plans in their individual communities.

As Session Chairman, Assemblyman Rivera opened with an anecdote indicative of possible trouble ahead for legislators on the state level: In New York, a parent group has been able to advance a lawsuit against the state legislature, claiming education funds had been distributed unfairly, based on geography and politics, not on need. Assemblyman Rivera pointed out that while the issue touches on legislative immunity, it also reflects two major phenomena: With the Latino population growing throughout the state, universities will need to prepare by 2015 for an influx of Latino students; and “our kids graduate at a slower rate—if they graduate at all.” Parents and other groups are taking notice—and taking action.

This New York snapshot was just one detail that reflected a larger reality: The future that educators have warned us about is as close as the next senior class. Continued disparities in educational resources and progress are leading to possible dire consequences:

- Anticipated lower graduation rates affect colleges, threatening their revenue stream and ability to expand or plan for new programs
- America faces a critical shortage of professional workers if current trends continue

Assemblyman Rivera has been working with several task forces to develop ways for more Latino students to graduate and have their needs met in college. So far, the groups have seen three initial areas for improvement:

- **REMEDIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**—Push these into the high schools to develop true college readiness
- **FINANCIAL AID**—Restore strength to grant programs
- **COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT**—Create an atmosphere where Latino students will feel a welcome part of the community

As Session I continued, presenters gave further insight into the current state in Latino education, challenges and possible solutions, and what is being considered at the federal level.

## “It Takes Courage to Break the Myths”

Dr. Paul Ruiz, is Principal Partner and a co-founder of in The Education Trust, is also co-founder of the organization, which offers advocacy, research and assistance to promote high academic achievement of students at all levels, from kindergarten through college. He has devoted more than 30 years to advancing education success for all students, with a particular focus on closing the Latino and African American achievement gaps. His current concentration with The Education Trust is in the Southwest region, working out of San Antonio to establish closer and more substantive working relationships between The Education Trust and local education and civic leaders.

Dr. Ruiz, began with some good news: For the first time in 30 years, research shows some achievement gaps are closing between Latino and other students. For instance, data from Maryland shows all groups improving—at least, until the 8th grade. Latinos are outperforming whites in some places, including Virginia and Ohio. “It proves that we can do this when there is a belief that it can be done,” Dr. Ruiz said. “People changed beliefs about who can learn—it takes courage to break the myths.”

### When Kids Are Behind, Schools Must Provide More Instruction and Support

- Kentucky provides extra time for struggling students in high-poverty schools
- Maryland offers extra dollars for 7th and 8th graders who need more support
- Indiana gives schools extra funding to provide instruction for students struggling to meet state standards

Dr. Paul Ruiz, The Education Trust, Inc.

Yet change is not coming quickly enough to head off the damage already done. “The story in the high schools is quite the opposite,” he explained. “If there is any national imperative, it should be to curb the horrific high school dropout rates.” While some advocate investing in upcoming generations, Dr. Ruiz noted that the nation can not afford to write off the present group of middle- and high schoolers. Improvement must be simultaneous at all levels.

Dr. Ruiz also exploded another myth: That Latino students do not attend college because they simply do not want to, or because “the culture doesn’t value education.” “Poll after poll says that’s not the case,” Dr. Ruiz said. “Nearly all Latino students say they plan on college—and parents almost universally aspire for their youngsters to go to college.”

“It’s not a matter of energizing the community to want college—the desire to go is already there. It’s our institutions that aren’t ready.”

And getting to college is only the beginning, Dr. Ruiz said, citing the situation in San Antonio’s community colleges: “Every September, 10,000 enter, and only 8,000 come out as graduates—and no one is asking why. It’s a big revolving door. As policymakers, we need to ask these colleges, ‘What are you doing with the money these youngsters invest when they come through your doors?’”

Dr. Ruiz pointed to several other systematic corrections that could close the gaps further:

- Look at the successful districts and borrow their strategies.
- Keep supporting No Child Left Behind, because it has made people aware of the gaps in Latino achievement and provides metrics. But without full funding, it cannot lead to change.
- Teachers matter: Get effective, experienced teachers into our classrooms, and make sure that students who are furthest behind get the best, not the least experienced teachers.
- Reconstruct remedial education: Students who are struggling need more challenging, accelerated learning, not less complex curricula.
- Keep strong data systems to track every student: Texas was often cited as an example of effective tracking children from preschool on.

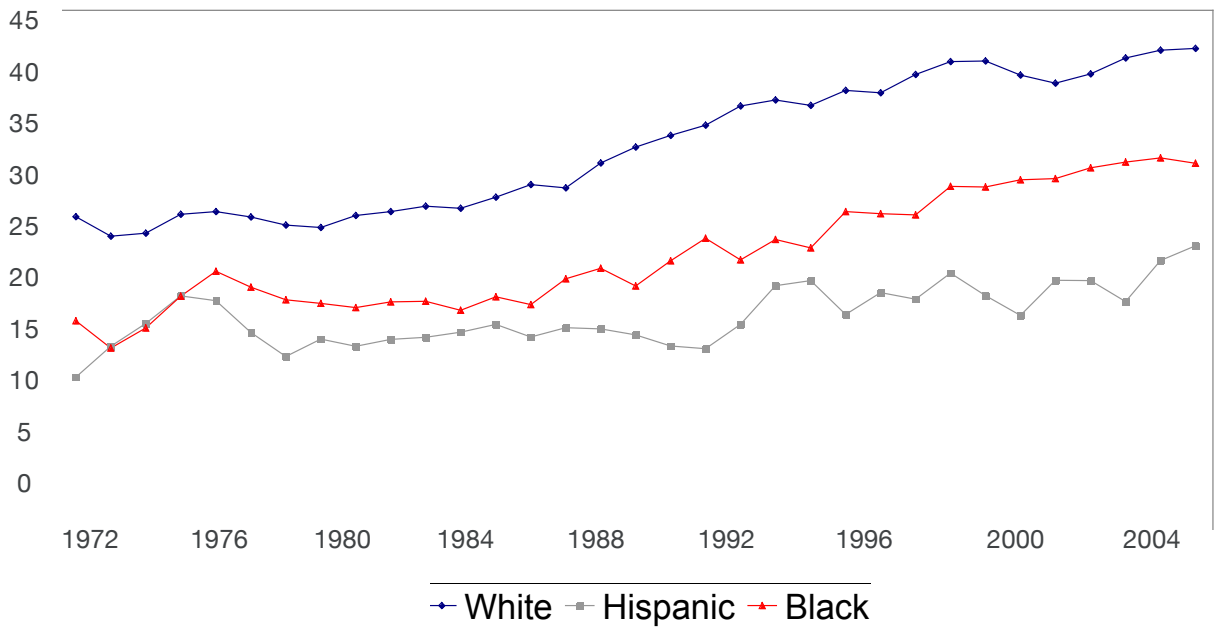
## Preparing Latinos for the Professional Workforce is Crucial to the Nation's Strength

Dr. Deborah Santiago is Vice President of Policy and Research for *Excelencia* in Education, a research and policy organization working to accelerate higher education success for Latino students, offering data-driven analysis and aligning with Pre-K through 12 strategies. Her extensive experience in the field includes serving as an analyst at the U.S. Department of Education and as Deputy Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

In her work with *Excelencia*, Dr. Santiago said she was struck by Census data showing that only 17 percent of professional and management workers are Latino. Yet professional occupations are the jobs of the future and those that fuel national progress. “In California, for example, the income tax base will decline if more Latinos don’t get professional jobs,” Dr. Santiago said. “It’s that simple.”

Part of this is because the overall Latino population skews young—40 percent in the United States are under 21. “Now is the time we can make that intercession,” Dr. Santiago said. “Think of this discrepancy as an opportunity.”

## College Enrollment Rates: Latinos Have Lowest and Wide Gap Remains



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics, 2005, Table 184

Dr. Santiago also pointed out that more Latinas are entering and graduating from college than Latinos. “This has serious implications in policy. In our outreach, we can’t neglect gender as a factor when we target our limited resources for use.”

- Many students continue to live with their parents, which limits their options in college attendance
- Latino students are twice as likely to apply for financial aid, but aid is awarded to them far less than to other ethnic groups
- Many students are part-timers and attend two-year institutions
- Many universities lack a social-cultural network ready to welcome Latino students
- There is a lack of alignment between high school completion and college readiness

Dr. Santiago said the solution starts with research. “Look at the gaps in your own area, for your district,” Dr. Santiago said. “Keep up with the data and reexamine it in 2010, 2015, and 2020.”

Leaders in school boards and at the high-school level should establish relationships with local colleges, Dr. Santiago said. “Develop an elective course on selecting and paying for college,” Dr. Santiago added. “A two-hour workshop is not going to cut it.”

## Setting Out a Senate Agenda for Advancing Latino Education

Mr. Roberto Rodriguez is Senior Education Advisor in the office of U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Ranking Member on the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. His legislative, policy, budget, and appropriations work includes focus on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Head Start programs. In his former role as Senior Education Specialist at the National Council for La Raza, Mr. Rodriguez facilitated development and evaluation of state and federal programs including NCLB.

Mr. Rodriguez outlined some issues currently under consideration in the Senate that affect education and achievement:

- **PRESCHOOL:** The evidence is strong that preschool can benefit not only academic progress but also life-success factors such as savings patterns, economic mobility and more, Mr. Rodriguez reported. While about 40 states have funded preschool, the Senate is studying and debating programs at the federal level. One concern is ensuring Head Start and Migrant Head Start identify and serve all children who have the need for these programs.
- **K-12 EDUCATION:** Important issues include teacher quality—“Latino students are disproportionately taught by unqualified teachers,” Mr. Rodriguez said. Another issue is funding for language instructional programs: “For the first time in this past year, every state and local district with a critical mass of ELLs received some funding to create instructional programs—but it’s not nearly where it needs to be,” Mr. Rodriguez said. Most important are solidifying funding for math and science education and ensuring NCLB assessments are accurate and useful. “We’ll be stuck in a catch-22 if we start making decisions based on data that might not be right,” he added.
- **HIGHER EDUCATION:** Mr. Rodriguez reaffirmed the Senator’s long commitment to Pell grants, need-based education funding, and reflected the general dismay over the program’s recent restrictions. “Twenty years ago we had 20 percent of students using student loans; now it’s 80 percent,” he said. Grant levels have been frozen for years and will only reach 9 percent of the 5 million students in need.

On the local level, Mr. Rodriguez urged officials to focus on retention and completion—areas where federal action can have little impact. Also, he advised local officials to collect data and publicly report it, to make the case for these federal-level education support.

## Keynote Address: Service Empowers Learning and Leadership

As Director for Education Leadership for State Farm Insurance, Ms. Kathy Havens Payne works directly with State Farm CEO and Chairman Edward B. Rust, Jr., in support of national business/education partnerships involved in systematic education improvement. Mr. Rust's educational leadership positions include Director of Achieve, the National Center for Educational Accountability and the National Teacher Hall of Fame. His many other service positions include his membership on the National Commission on No Child Left Behind and the Board of Directors for the Business Civic Leadership Center at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In addition to her support of Mr. Rust's work, Ms. Havens Payne serves on the NALEO Educational Fund's education advisory committee, the Board of Directors for Youth Service America, and the Business-Education Council for The Conference Board, as well as holding many other board positions. Once president of her local school board, Ms. Havens Payne was also a special-education teacher for 12 years.

Not many leaders have the background to address education issues from the multiple perspectives of the business world, as a former school board member, as a teacher, and as a parent. But from such experience, Ms. Havens Payne was able to draw out a practice that benefits all these stakeholders—and students as well: Service-learning.

While State Farm's role in education involves promoting systematic improvement and teacher quality, as well as devising practical ways to measure achievement, service-learning is "an old teaching strategy" that works, she said: "Young people can look out into the community and define what they need to change." It allows practical applications of fields from math to history—and empowers young people to be leaders, she added.

Ms. Havens Payne shared several examples of such change in action. In a Philadelphia school plagued by gang violence, students put their heads together to decide what could make their environment healthier. With health and nutrition research, they realized a healthier diet was something they could contribute to and control. The project grew from a small garden to a thriving organic vegetable business, teaching lessons in areas ranging from science to civic involvement to business along the way.

"The result: Attendance went up, satisfaction went up, lives were changed," she said. "They felt they had a role—that they were not just passive recipients of help, but change makers."

In another project, State Farm funded teen driver safety programs in an attempt to reduce traffic accidents, the number one killer of young people. With Project Ignition, young people themselves put out the safe driving message—and learned how great an effect they could have at the same time. With even more examples of programs that work, Ms. Havens Payne brought out some of the key ways service-learning can succeed at its full potential, affecting study in many subject areas as well as strengthening individual students and communities:

- Provide leadership opportunities. "We can't expect them to lead if we never give them the opportunity to do so," she said.
- Train teachers to use service-learning to fuel classroom achievement. She cited a virtual economies learning program that helped students achieve economic literacy, addressing real-world issues such as credit card debt.
- Empower young people to own the issues. The Youth Advisory Board at State Farm, for instance, learns about issues and decides how to direct funding—they themselves make the decisions. Another example was the effectiveness of peer-to-peer messaging for a seatbelt use campaign with Meharry Medical College; the group found that young people were the primary drivers of seatbelt usage.

Finally, Ms. Havens Payne urged participants to find out more about the Youth Advisory Board programs and consider applying for funding: [www.statefarmyouthadvisoryboard.com](http://www.statefarmyouthadvisoryboard.com).

# Session II: The Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind

Active for years with the Arizona School Boards Association and its Hispanic Native American Indian School Board Caucus, the Honorable Panfilo Contreras was named Executive Director in 1998. His community involvement includes acting as President of the Board of Directors of Hands Across the Border Foundation, a group promoting cultural and educational exchange with Mexican and Canadian schools. On a broader scale, he has served on the National School Boards Association Executive Directors Liaison Committee and the Leadership Development Subcommittee.

As one of the federal government's most sweeping changes to education in more than a generation, the No Child Left Behind Act affects every school and district in the United States. The Act's overall purpose is to ensure that children in every classroom enjoy the benefits of well-prepared teachers, research-based curriculum and safe learning environments. As it comes up for reauthorization, participants and presenters looked for ways to ensure no child truly is left behind.

Session Chair Contreras pointed to several areas that must be addressed in reauthorization to remedy the level of distrust on the part of parents and others who find a lack of transparency and clearly defined rules in NCLB procedures. First is the level of assessments: when students are tested, and in which subjects. Second, measurement is not consistent from school to school and district to district. There is also the issue of teacher quality—in the current structure, he said, “it's all about the test” and not about teacher ability.

“It is complex, but accountability matters,” he added.

## No ELL Left Behind: These Students Are Vital to Implementation

In her mission to disseminate policy and regulations for the 5.5 million non-English speaking students in the nation's schools, the Honorable Kathleen Leos, Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director, Office of Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education, has traveled to 35 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. As the Dallas School Board's Legislative Liaison, she co-authored the state's “No Exception” law, which mandates inclusion of all English Language Learners in the state's accountability system. She is also the founder of Basic English, Inc., a nonprofit agency whose mission is to transition non-English speaking families into speaking English without losing sight of their children's academic achievement. In her current role with the Department of Education, she helps create Federal-to-State-to-Local partnerships to ensure state agencies understand their responsibility to all students under the No Child Left Behind Act. Her numerous awards include the Ford Motor Company Hispanic Salute award, the Laura Bush First Lady Family Literacy Award, and the LULAC Award for Excellence in Education for Hispanic Students.

With 5.5 million non-English speakers in schools, Ms. Leos pointed out the urgency in finding out how they fit into NCLB implementation. “The law itself is focused on students, and that is where we must continue the conversation: What works and what doesn't work for our kids,” she said.

- Allow states to reward highly effective teachers
- Move accountability and assessments at the high school level
- Improve calculation of dropout rates (resolve the dispute over Texas' “leaver” code, to give one example)

Implementation of NCLB for ELL and Title III requirements is one of the most controversial and complex stages in the Act, she said, with questions about making separate assessments or rolling numbers together remaining. Ms. Leos informed the group that she has submitted a proposal to the Secretary for Congress to allow accountability language in Title III and in Adequate Yearly Progress that addresses ELL needs.

“The lack of good assessment is a very hot topic in reauthorization,” she said. “For me, NCLB and Title III are absolutely civil rights issues for our kids. We must have assessments and quality teachers. Paraprofessionals cannot deliver core subjects.”

## A “Failing” Label Can Preempt Success

Mr. Reginald M. Felton, Director of Federal Relations for the National School Boards Association, has a broad and long record of public service that ranges from being mayor of a small Maryland town to senior executive with the Department of the Navy to serving as president of the Montgomery County, Maryland, Board of Education, one of the largest in the nation, with more than 150,000 students and an operating budget of \$1.6 billion. Currently, his program areas include NCLB, IDEA, and Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as he develops and implements comprehensive legislative strategies and advocating at the federal level for critical issues affecting student achievement in public education.

The National School Boards Association supports the goals and objectives of NCLB, Mr. Felton said, but “we call it ‘The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly.’ We want to keep the good, fix the bad, and get rid of the ugly.”

“Many of our schools are not perfect, many may need improvement, but they should not be labeled as ‘failing,’ ” he continued. “Mostly, these are the schools with people of color, the poor, or those with disabilities. We need to ask: Is this program designed to help, or is it designed to label?”

Compounding the problem is “one-size-fits-all” federal legislation that doesn’t take into account resources of individual communities. Mr. Felton pointed out that only about 7 percent of school costs are covered by the federal government; the rest comes from state and local sources.

The NSBA position on reimplementation, excerpted for brevity, also includes the following:

- School Boards welcome increased accountability
- NCLB framework does not accurately assess performance
- New federal regulations have not adequately addressed implementation challenges, many of which are beyond the Secretary’s discretion
- Congress must address needed changes to prevent erosion of NCLB and public school credibility

Also very important, he said, is that “there cannot be unnecessary blame. We don’t want to hear ‘were it not for these students, our school would be high performing’.”

Although Education Secretary Spelling says NCLB is 99 percent perfect, Mr. Felton said, “No one in the trenches believes that.” He pointed to the No Child Left Behind Improvement Act (HR 5709), and asked for support for its program of comprehensive improvements rather than for further measurements.

He pointed out what educators say is a flaw in NCLB: students are permitted to leave underperforming schools, yet educators are seeing that only the high-performing students are exercising this option—leaving only lower-performing students behind, with fewer resources than before.

## Board of Education Actions (BOE)

- Define NCLB operational challenges and recommend specific legislative actions for state legislatures
- Formally adopt resolutions that request specific action from state legislatures
- Submit letters to the editors of local newspapers requesting specific actions to state legislatures and Congress
- Develop “real costs” in educating students and provide information to state legislatures on regular basis regarding effective returns on investments as well as any identified savings and reallocations
- Establish strong responsive grass roots program to influence state and federal legislation

*Reginald Felton, Director of Federal Relations, National School Boards Association*

## State Legislative Actions

- Consult with BOE prior to introducing state legislation regarding impact on public education
- Provide information to BOE regarding high priority issues before state legislatures that may affect public education
- Delegate maximum authority to local school boards in the implementation of educational programs
- “Check out the facts” before responding to constituents on public education issues

*Reginald Felton, Director of Federal Relations, National School Boards Association*

## Board of Education / State Legislature Joint Actions

- Partner to secure increased funding and political support for community education programs
- Issue joint letters to Members of Congress seeking federal support and funding for local/state projects
- Develop short term and long range plan to improve Pre-K - 16 educational services
- Host community meetings to engage residents and expand community support
- Clarify roles and responsibilities in resolution of education-related issues

*Reginald Felton, Director of Federal Relations, National School Boards Association*

## Getting It Fair, Getting It Funded: Refining No Child Left Behind

Ms. Antonia Cortese, Executive Vice President for the American Federation of Teachers, has a great deal of experience: She coordinates AFT's involvement with Special Olympics, as well as being a leader in the New York State Special Olympics. With AFT, she oversees the development of education policies and is chair of the union's Task Force on NCLB. Among other activities, she serves on the board of the Learning First Alliance, a national coalition of education organizations and is co-chair of the Child Labor Coalition.

There are areas in NCLB where all participants can agree there are problems, Ms. Cortese said, but there is also support for its potential and basic goals. AFT called its report on the Act, handed out at the summit and available through AFT, "Let's Get it Right," and that should be the aim for reauthorization.

Ms. Cortese pointed to several areas educators particularly want to fix. "The big complaint is the unfairness of the system to ELLs and disabled students," she said. "Teachers make great, meaningful progress, but they get no credit whatsoever. The 'failing' label is demoralizing."

AFT recommendations for improvement include the following:

- Give schools credit for progress towards proficiency, not just for meeting arbitrary benchmarks
- Prevent the narrowing of curriculum caused by focusing on only two subject areas; social studies and science are in danger of being phased out. In San Antonio, she said, one district took away recess to ensure they would be prepared for tests. "We want to make sure children get more of an all-around education," she said.
- ELLs must be included appropriately. "It can take five to seven years for them to catch up," she said. "They are tested before they are ready."
- Provide universal Pre-K, smaller class sizes, and more professional development.
- Improve teacher quality through incentives, better pay, and good working environment (physically safe, free of sewage and mold—a true problem noted in many classrooms, for teachers and students alike).

The strongest recommendation, met with applause at the Summit, was simple: "Fund us," she said. "NCLB must be funded at the promised levels. We're now \$40 billion behind what was promised."

# Session III: Bilingual Education Policies and Programs that Work

The Honorable Viola M. Garcia has been a trustee in the Aldine Independent School District since 1992 and serves on the board of the Texas Association of School Boards. As president of the Mexican American School Board Members Association, she implemented partnerships with NALEO, the Equity Center, the Intercultural Development Research Association and the Hispanic Border Leadership Initiative. Dr. Garcia is also Assistant Professor and Assistant Chair of Undergraduate Programs in the Department of Urban Education at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Current figures indicate that students with limited proficiency in English make up more than 10 percent of the public school population across the nation, Dr. Garcia reported—a number that translates to between 4 and 5 million children. Despite 100 years of bilingual education programs—including a long history of its use in Texas, she pointed out—English Language Learners (ELLs) lag far behind their peers. In seeking solutions, participants looked at the current state of bilingual education and the challenges for ELLs, as well as programs and policies that are working.

## A Changing Environment Calls for New Approaches

In giving her overview of the state of bilingual education, Ms. Leos constructed a picture of a very different and rapidly changing environment for ELLs. “Currently, there are about 440 languages spoken all over the United States,” she said. “States like Tennessee, where there had not been such growth before, now have rising rates of non-English speakers. ELLs are everywhere.”

With NCLB, the student population of ELLs could no longer be overlooked. Currently, Title III says all states must align all assessments—and these assessments must further be aligned with curriculum standards. Only five states could not get this done, Ms. Leos said. But teachers need to know how to align curriculum to two sets of standards for this to succeed.

Different states are taking different approaches to teaching ELLs, she said. Arizona, for instance, is doing structured language immersion; Massachusetts, bilingual classes; Florida is taking the more traditional ESL approach. At the assessment stage, there are also several approaches, including assessment with accommodations. Also, Parental involvement has been added to monitoring protocol—but Parent Information Resource Centers are not funded properly, she warned.

“We know from research that if students are placed in immersion programs they will test higher, but most states are not taking this approach,” said Ms. Leos. Schools are now asking teachers to teach language and content.

She reminded participants that their states have a great deal of information to share on strong instructional strategies and assessing what works.

## Keeping Momentum of Improvements Requires Constant Effort

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) has done extensive research in its education division on bilingual education, and Ms. Delia Pompa, Vice President of Education at (NCLR) has added her expertise in early childhood education and ELL students with disabilities to this resource. As Co-Principal of DMP and Associates, she worked with school districts, states, and advocacy groups to advance learning for ELLs and students with disabilities. She was also Director of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs in the U.S. Department of Education and oversaw Title VII implementation.

To frame the current picture of bilingual education, Ms. Pompa asked participants to look back about 30 years to measure change. Today, ELL students can outperform others; “bilingual education is no longer a question of ‘whether’ but ‘how,’” she said.

If ELL students are not doing well, the whole school is not doing well, she said, pointing to the importance of getting to goals, including AYP, of correct implementation of bilingual education. In addition, the same standards must be applied to ELLs as other students—something that is not always true. “We need high standards, with high support,” Ms. Pompa said.

Parents of ELLs cannot be left behind, either—they need to know what the standards are and whether schools meet them, as part of NCLB. “Accountability is a two-way street,” Ms. Pompa said.

Teacher preparation is a huge issue as well. Ms. Pompa pointed out that schools must pay attention to recruiting teachers that meet the NCLB provision: “They are not going to fall out of trees,” she said.

Lastly, successful schools are those that have constant review of resources. She recommends a regular “scan of parity,” asking the question: Are ELL students getting what they are supposed to be getting?

In early childhood education, there is a big gap to close, she said. Other key pieces currently often missing: special education, the arts, and libraries. Also, important to success are programs, such as after-school gatherings, college prep courses and advocacy networks.

## Special Presentation: Examples of *Excelencia*

The Honorable Sarita E. Brown is President and Founder of *Excelencia* in Education, a research and policy organization working to accelerate higher education success for Latino students, offering data-driven analysis and aligning with Pre-K through 12 strategies. With more than two decades in national academic and educational institutions and the highest level of government, she began her career at the University of Texas at Austin, building a national model promoting minority success in graduate education. She served as Executive Director of the White House Initiative for Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans under President Clinton. She launched *Excelencia* in 2004, and it has quickly become a watershed for talent and strategies in promoting Latino success in higher education.



“Currently, there are about 440 languages spoken all over the United States. States like Tennessee, where there had not been such growth before, now have rising rates of non-English speakers. ELLs are everywhere.”

**The Honorable Kathleen Leos**

Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director  
Office of Language Acquisition, U.S. Department of Education

## Models of Achievement, Made to Emulate and Replicate

As the Summit took place, *Exelencia* in Education was readying to announce the honorees of its Examples of *Ex-celencia* awards. The national program's goal is to identify, celebrate and promote programs that improve educational achievement for Latino students in higher education.

The awards were the brainchild of Ms. Brown and the *Exelencia* team and were formed to address two pressing issues. The first was that educators badly need models of programs that work, practically and effectively. The second was demographic: By 2025, 22 percent of the U.S. college-age population will be Latino, a level already reached in California, Florida, New York and Texas.

"Improving Latino student success in higher education is in the national interest," said Ms. Brown. "While Latinos are the nation's largest and fastest-growing minority group, Latino students lag behind other major racial and ethnic groups in educational attainment. Shining a spotlight on solutions that can help to correct this disparity is an academic and economic priority for our nation."

The program is supported by Sallie Mae Inc., UNIVISION, and the Lumina Foundation for Education.

In choosing nominees, Ms. Brown said, several factors were critical, but the most important was a measurable record of achievement in graduating Latino students. Other factors included strong leadership that focuses on Latino student achievement; equal emphasis on equity and excellence; a significant Latino presence among staff; and attention to integrating Latino culture into students' homes, community, schools and professions. For 2006, there were 42 total nominations, and 15 semifinalists were chosen.

Ms. Brown gave an overview of the record of success of the two 2006 winners, University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE) and Maricopa County Community Colleges' Achieving a College Education (ACE).

ACE aims to close the gap between high school and college with a concurrent enrollment scholarship program targeting "at risk" students who generally do not consider attending college. The program offers counseling and full scholarships to area community colleges and supports Latino students as they make their way from two- to four-year institutions. Successful tactics included creation of student cohort groups, family involvement, collaboration between institutions, and high academic standards.

The program netted a high school graduation rate of 88 to 96 percent—and college grade point averages of 3.1. The average for the general student population, Ms. Brown pointed out, is 2.81. Two participants have gone on to master's programs.

The MIE program at UTEP supports undergraduate and graduate education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The program began in 1995, using funding from the National Science Foundation and NASA designated to create new models for STEM achievement among under-represented minorities. Strategies included outreach to the Latino community, expanded undergraduate research, and infrastructure improvements.

The program has won national prominence, but more important, graduation rates and retention in science and engineering disciplines have improved. The University of Texas at El Paso now ranks among the top 10 institutions in the nation for awarding baccalaureate degrees to Latino students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines.

While it celebrates success, Ms. Brown noted that establishing “Examples” has not been without obstacles. The original plan called for nominations in graduate institution programs as well, but that proved unfeasible for this year. “There were far too few at the graduate level to make a decision,” she said, expressing her disappointment. “We don’t have large numbers of Latinos in the pipeline reaching graduate school.”

“These are our treasures and our champions,” she said. “You have the models—now there is no reason others can’t do it, too. It is there for us to accelerate—not simply close the gap, but accelerate.”

### What Works?

- Adequate funding
- Use of the native language
- High standards
- Appropriately prepared personnel
- Ongoing evaluation
- A good educational context

### What Can You Do?

- Monitor enforcement of current policies and laws
- Look for the impact on English Language Learners (ELLs)
- Be a cheerleader for successful programs
- Push for support programs
- Increase resources for bilingual education
- Build an advocacy network

*Delia Pompa, Vice President of Education, National Council of La Raza (NCLR)*



## Between Year 12 and 13 Lies A Chasm for Many Immigrants

Over and over at the Summit, the issue surfaced of education for immigrant children who have lived in this country nearly all their lives and have attended our schools and completed high school. Students who have successfully made it through years of education might hit a brick wall at the end of high school. They lack access and ability to enroll in college—in-state tuition rates, most private scholarships, even the ability to work through school—leaving their futures in limbo.

The DREAM Act, advocated by NCLR and the NALEO Educational Fund, would provide in-state tuition and a path to U.S. citizenship. This proposed solution is to some extent being eclipsed by a larger debate over immigration reform. In his keynote address, U.S. Representative Luis Fortuño cautioned that it is important to keep any solutions bipartisan in order to create a lasting solution.

# Session IV:

## Working the P-20 Pipeline

The Honorable Steve Gallardo, Arizona State Representative, school board member for the Phoenix Union High School District and NALEO Board Member, has a long history of public service. He serves on numerous boards and commissions, including the Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission, the DNA Task Force and the Arizona Civil Rights Advisory Board. Most recently, he has become the State Director for Voices for Working Families, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization organizing voting activity in key states.

Arizona Representative Steve Gallardo wove together the presentations on what was arguably the most complex topic of the Summit. Working to ensure the success of all Latino students must be a collaborative effort from pre-school or kindergarten through higher education. As such, elected officials must be equipped with the necessary tools to navigate through the systems in their respective districts, municipalities and states. Experts in the field presented promising practices on building and aligning P-20 efforts in their localities to ensure that students have the most opportunities to succeed beyond their elementary, middle and high school education. Two of the aspects he considers most important are university outreach to high school students and parental involvement. “Some kids just don’t see themselves as going to college. Even just taking them for a campus visit can make a difference. We need to reach out to students and show them that it is possible.”

Also, in high schools, parental involvement tends to fall off—it is a trend noted by any PTO (Parent Teacher Organization), he said. Such organizations need to work hard to keep parents involved.

### Alignment Key to Fixing “Leaks” in P-20 Pipeline

Mr. Alex Chough, Director, External Affairs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) works closely with corporate and private foundations to design and implement multi-site cluster evaluations of community and education partnerships that promote college access for low-income students. He also directs the NCCEP’s public policy efforts on key state and federal education policies that impact college readiness and success for underserved students, with a particular focus on the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). Prior to this, he was Management and Program Analyst at the Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education.

P-20 pipelines are transforming from an organic development in a “unique flavor” for every community to a legislated mandate that may be bound to a universal formula, Mr. Chough said in his analysis. “There’s a disconnect there—it may not reflect reality,” he said. Individual systems have a great deal of autonomy and independence. High school does not logically feed into higher education in all communities, he pointed out.

“If there is a pipeline, it’s leaking all over the place,” he said. The sites of greatest strain are at the pre-school level, between high school and college, and between two-year and four-year colleges—although some would add eighth and ninth grades to that list, because they set the stage for a path toward higher education.

“We can take those disconnected systems—and we won’t see them become unified—but we can ask them to align themselves along certain outcomes,” he said. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Bring together community leaders for a common reform agenda.
- Align academic standards at transition points.
- Align compatible data systems to do long-term longitudinal analysis. Mr. Chough pointed out that student mobility is actually very stable in the Southwest, and it has been possible not only to track student accomplishment long-term, but in some places to track the training of their teachers.
- Align teacher quality needed in the schools with what is being taught in the universities. Universities can work the pipeline in reverse, so to speak, going to schools to determine how they can create better teachers, who will in turn guide more students into the universities.
- Align public awareness efforts. According to Mr. Chough, students and parents alike are “riddled with misapprehensions about higher education,” from its value to its costs. “We need to change the way communities think about education.”

Challenges to fixing the “leaks” in the pipeline will be many. Energetic leaders rather than systematic change have largely spurred past efforts. People need to be aware that the work will go slowly—“if you’re working hard to get a six-year-old into a reading program, you’re not likely to see the results of that investment for some time,” Mr. Chough said.

He also urged participants to contact NCCEP with their ideas and best practices.

## Raise Expectations, Raise Hopes, and Make Sure They are Supported by All

Mr. Robert Rivera, President and CEO of Project GRAD USA, has been advancing the group’s mission of implementing its reform model since 1995, with his work with Project GRAD in Houston, and moved up to head GRAD USA, formed in 2001. He is the architect of the innovative Parent and Community Involvement Program for Project GRAD that includes the “Walk for Success” and “Parent University.” His nonprofit career with several organizations focused primarily on community improvements for minority and low-income residents.

Mr. Rivera walked participants through the process students in GRAD USA programs encounter through the pipeline and hopefully to college. Though the programs are not the same in every community, this captures the core of the experience. First, the student involved is usually lower-income; 50 percent are Latino. To give an example of the kind of expectations he encounters, Mr. Rivera told of a student whose parents had been incarcerated. When he was told about the scholarship program, he said he was looking forward to using the scholarship “after he got out of jail,” Mr. Rivera related. “So it’s primary to address the evil of low expectations.”

Next, a student will be supported by existing community assets, such as business leaders and parents associations. His or her teachers will get extra help in professional development—they are not be replaced or removed.

In the ninth grade, students will be promised a scholarship if they agree to some terms, including maintaining a 2.5 GPA. It is set at that level because “we want the middle-ground students to work hard, too,” Mr. Rivera said.

Meanwhile, parent engagement is pursued through conversations and presentations. Academic experts visit and talk about their work. Summer institute transition programs, taught by professors at local colleges, are held: “These are really rich, not just in academics but as an introduction to college life,” Mr. Rivera said. All who come in contact with the students—social services, school counselors—play some role in preparing students for college.

The last piece is college access: Campus tours, events where students work on college applications, and information about other scholarships and financial aid.

## What is P-20?

- P-20 refers to a representation of an integrated education system, which emphasizes continuity from pre-kindergarten through graduate school
- An operational reform that leverages existing assets, sets forth a common reform agenda, and capitalizes on the natural interdependencies between pre-K, K-12 and Higher Education
- Historically, P-20 initiatives emerged as local/regional voluntary alliances, although P-20 is now increasingly supported through state or local legislation, regulation, or executive order

*Alex Chough, Director of External Affairs, National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships*

## Why P-20?

- Latino students are the fastest growing population in schools today, with college enrollment rates increasing by 200% during the past 25 years
- Nationally, 10% of Latino high school graduates now attend college, with 50% of those students enrolled at HSIs
- Latino and low-income students are significantly less likely to complete a college-prep curriculum in high school than their non-Latino and middle and high-income peers
- Latino students and their families are likely to be out of the college information loop
- The disconnect between segments of the “educational pipeline” creates unnecessary barriers to student academic success

*Alex Chough, Director of External Affairs, National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships*

In implementing these programs, Mr. Rivera pointed to the following lessons learned:

- Persistence is essential. “Districts I’ve worked with are constantly under pressure to change strategies—there’s never enough time to let a strategy work out.”
- Connections matter: Schools under pressure to make academic standards can become isolated, Mr. Rivera said. But interest groups need to be engaged and connected to solve the attainment problem. “There’s a role for teachers, universities, corporations, community centers—everyone can play a role.”
- Start early: Creating a go-to-college culture can not start at the high schools. “Bombard them from pre-K on that there’s an expectation of a future that requires as much education as possible,” Mr. Rivera said. Then keep the message top of mind: Some schools hold “College Day” in which teachers dress in their colleges’ colors and talk about the importance of college through the whole day.
- Sustain the effort by creating an independent 501(c)(3).
- Engage parents: “Not just selling snow cones after school—this means serious educational discussions,” Mr. Rivera said.

## Another Stage to the Pipeline: The Innovative, Professional Workforce

Mr. Brian de Vallance, Director of Federal Relations for the Office of Governor Janet Napolitano of Arizona, is an attorney with an extensive background in federal, state, and local government as well as in technology and law enforcement issues. In 1999, he was appointed by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to direct the Department of Justice’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. His board service includes the Maricopa County Sports Commission and the Committee for Juvenile Justice Reform.

“Twenty years ago, the big issue when it came to education was jobs,” Mr. de Vallance said. “Now, there’s been a shift: The big issue is good jobs.”

Pointing out that the P-20 pipeline is about opportunity, he pointed out that it also gives schools, governments and policymakers an opportunity to reshape the debate. The Arizona governor’s office has tapped into that opportunity with an extensive P-20 program.

“The governor’s issues are competitiveness and invention,” he said. “The United States needs every single ready, willing, and able mind to help us educate and compete.”

“This doesn’t mean we expect every student to go to graduate school,” Mr. de Vallance said, “but we want to train students to be lifelong learners, able to adapt to constant change.”

“Imagine what’s happening to tools and processes in the workplace,” he continued. “None of this is about rote memorization, it’s about tech savvy.” Solving this problem requires strong buy-in from the workforce world. The temptation is to align education with workplace needs, but it must also be aligned with increased opportunities.

Recommendations and highlights from the state’s experience tackling the issue include:

- Schools need a longer day and calendar year in order to integrate more education into the school day.
- Eliminating inefficiencies from unconnected systems can also uncover resources.
- Employers have been telling schools that math matters, and it is time to do something about it. STEM-literacy jobs are growing four times faster than jobs in general (the discrepancy is because older jobs are transforming into STEM-literacy required jobs).
- Taking the last math class as a sophomore is not be sufficient for college preparation.

Arizona has formed the goal that the class of 2021 will be completely work- or college-ready, meaning employers and colleges will be happy and ready to work with them.

## Performance, Parents, and Proof: What It Took for Calexico

Mr. David Alvarez is Superintendent of the Calexico Unified School District. He has served as a Superintendent for more than 15 years in rural, urban, elementary and unified school districts. He began serving as a Superintendent at age 35. While putting himself through college, he was a classified employee—a custodian—and in the years of his subsequent career advancement has acquired multiple perspectives of the educational issues that make up a large district. He also runs a consulting firm specializing in financing and refunding projects for schools and public agencies, giving him expertise in bringing forth solutions to school building and budgeting issues.

In several references throughout the Summit, Calexico was cited as a success story. Here are a few reasons why: In 2006, 44 students were admitted to the University of California, 21 to Berkeley; 288 students went on to Imperial Valley College; 117 students had AP scores of 5, the highest achievable; three students were granted Gates Millennium Scholarships; and all 11th graders took the PSAT test.

The school system, on the Mexican border, is 98 percent Latino and 75 percent ELL. There is a significant and growing Chinese population as well. Student population is about 10,000 and anticipated to grow strongly; housing development is projected to double in 12 to 15 years. This is a profile that might stymie some districts, but Calexico turned these circumstances into achievement drivers. Here are some of the strategies and tactics used:

- Rigorous curriculum: Algebra I and II, Geometry and three years of Language Arts for all high school students, among other measures.
- Attention to policy: “We don’t do anything without a board policy,” Mr. Alvarez said. This keeps everyone on the same page.
- Administrators and teachers are a team: Teachers and principals alike must attend the parent training, for instance.
- Parent involvement is critical: Calexico uses the Padres Promotores outreach plan, with the idea that charismatic people from within the community holding informal chats and welcoming events is far more effective than “having someone come in with a suit and tie,” Mr. Alvarez said. PIQE (Parent Institute for Quality Education) is another important player; Mr. Alvarez reported that the high school recently had 112 parents enrolled in a nine-week training program. Every kindergarten parent must attend four hours of parent training. Parent training comes in again at the sixth and ninth grades, traditionally difficult transition times. Babysitting is often provided at events to keep participation high.
- P-16 Council established: Mr. Alvarez said the superintendents in the 15 school districts put aside turf battles and combined collective energies to develop a college-going culture throughout the region.
- Bring the community on board: Corporate and community groups have a stake; even the newspaper editor was part of the collaboration.
- Get university support: Calexico has funding as well as recognition and other assistance from the University of California.
- Put up your own money as well as seek funding: The P-16 Council is funded by a combination of grants, university money, and the district itself.
- Make writing a key component: Among a slew of programs to improve student performance in many subject areas was close attention to writing, through programs including Step-Up to Writing Project, ICOE Language Arts training for teachers, and Language Arts summer academies.
- You must have good data collection: Every move students made was recorded and analyzed to determine which programs produced the best results.
- Hold events and special programs: The district holds “Higher Education Week,” in which college recruiters and others meet with students and parents, among other activities.

## Opportunities for P-20 Action

- Aligning academic standards across transition points
- Aligning curricula and student-level assessments
- Aligning compatible data systems for student tracking and longitudinal analysis
- Aligning school-based and out-of-class programs and interventions
- Aligning professional development activities and needs

*Alex Chough, Director of External Affairs, National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships*

Finally, it is important to let students prove to themselves they are up to the challenge, and reward them when they make it. “We would not allow kids to drop these classes. Some of them need to come to my office if they want to drop an AP class,” Mr. Alvarez said.

Students compete to win at MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) and other math and science achievement programs. “Our expectation is that you’re going to come home with a first-place trophy,” Mr. Alvarez said. “And at MESA, we picked up 75 percent of the medals and trophies.”

“We recognize lot of folks and have a lot of celebrations,” he added. “When students receive letters of acceptance, we have a big banquet to let them know how proud we are of them being accepted to these major universities.”

## Keynote Address: The Honorable Luis Fortuño, Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Henry Fernandez is Executive Director, Scholarships, Outreach and Philanthropy at USA Funds®, where he oversees the \$18-million philanthropic programs helping Americans prepare, gain access to, and successfully complete higher education. These initiatives include USA Funds’ national scholarship program, support to other scholarship-providing organizations, outreach programs such as USA Funds Unlock the Future® for middle-school students and their families, and other endeavors that help families scale barriers to higher education. He is also a member of the board of the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, Indiana. Dr. Fernandez’ 25 years of experience in education include program director for Lumina Foundation for Education, director of the Peace Corps Fellows Program and program administrator for New York’s Teachers College, Columbia University. He serves on the board of directors for: the NALEO Educational Fund, the National Commission on African-American Education, Grantmakers for Education, and Advocates for Youth. He was an elementary-school principal and teacher and holds three master’s degrees and a doctorate.

Since his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2004, Representative Luis Fortuño has brought a great deal of attention to issues affecting both Puerto Rico and the intersection of education and economic development, Dr. Fernandez pointed out in his introduction. At the Summit, the position of Puerto Rico regarding voting power and statehood came up in several discussions and the current political state was explained and clarified. The people of Puerto Rico cannot vote for U.S. President. The Island is represented by an elected Resident Commissioner who votes at the Committee level, but has no vote in the full House. Dr. Fernandez pointed to Representative Fortuño's activities on the Education and Workforce Committee as being especially appropriate to his Summit address. Puerto Rico has no representation in the U.S. Senate. Participants also noted that with a population of about 3.8 million, the Island is certainly affected by education decisions.

## Keynote Address: To Close the Achievement Gap, First Fix the Readiness Gap

The Honorable Luis Fortuño, Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico, U.S. House of Representatives, was sworn in to his first term in 2005, as the first Republican elected to Congress representing Puerto Rico. He is on the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Education and the Workforce, and Resources as well as the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness and was Vice-President of the House Republican Freshman Class and Vice-Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference. Formerly a partner at a San Juan law firm, Representative Fortuño entered public service in 1993 after being appointed by the Governor as Executive Director of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company and President of the Hotel Development Corporation. He became Puerto Rico's first Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce the following year, developing and implementing large-scale reforms of Puerto Rico's tax, labor, corporate and commercial codes, aimed at facilitating business growth and job creation, reducing bureaucracy, and providing tax justice. Some of these initiatives included the adoption of the Uniform Commercial Code, the revamping of the General Corporations Law, an aggressive investment package to jumpstart the tourism industry, and the largest tax cut in Puerto Rico's history. At the time of Representative Fortuño's election to Congress, Puerto Rico's unemployment rate had reached its lowest level in over a generation. As a member of the Platform Committee at the Republican National Convention, he was successful in including the support for self-determination and eventual statehood for Puerto Rico in the Party Platform.

Representative Fortuño drew attention to several Congressional actions that "directly, positively impact the lives of children." While he lacks a vote in the House, he has been able to use his power in committee to drive some change. He also says he joins forces with other Latino elected officials across the aisle to get their support on measures.

While the achievement gap is the focus of the Summit, no less important is addressing the readiness gap. "Our students need to enter kindergarten with comparable competence in fundamental skills," he said. "We need to give our children the tools they need to become leaders."

He urged participants to look into the progress and provisions of the following legislation:

- School Readiness Act (HR 2123): Addresses Head Start and preschool programs, especially for children with Limited English Proficiency. Also requires Head Start programs be aligned with K-12 education goals.
- College Access and Opportunity Act (HR 609, S1614): This bipartisan effort fortifies Pell Grants, with several changes that can benefit Latino students. Grants will be available year-round, so students can enter the system after working or at any point that meets their needs. It also contains teacher-quality related provisions, to reward teachers who close the achievement gap. In addition, Representative Fortuño had successfully pushed for the inclusion of additional federal scholarship funds for students in the STEM (science, math, engineering, technology) programs. "We need this funding for STEM at Latino institutions," he said. "We need more scientists with Hispanic surnames."

While Representative Fortuño said he realizes the Spanish language is an essential part of Latino heritage, English-language proficiency is needed for success in the marketplace. “34 percent of LEP students before fifth grade speak Spanish,” he said, pointing to the effect on their middle- and high-school progress. “English proficiency is the key—it will open doors to a student’s economic future.”

He also asked participants to spread the word that the House Committee and other members of Congress want to know what is and what is not working in NCLB. On the question of unfunded NCLB mandates, he advised looking to areas in which there is a budget surplus—that is how the Committee found the money to add STEM-related scholarships, for instance.

# Session V: Diplomas Count: Making Every Student a Successful Graduate

The Latino dropout rate continues to be a major challenge around the country. However, the challenge is not only to produce more graduates but also to produce successful graduates. Many of those who do graduate find that they did not receive the skills they need to succeed in college or at work. Through the information sharing at this Summit, schools, organizations and government entities are developing policies that can support the effective reform and redesign of middle and high schools in order to raise student achievement and attainment levels.

## Successful Legislation Makes State Take a Hard Look at Dropout Crisis

The Honorable Ana Sol Gutiérrez, Maryland State Delegate, serves as a success story in closing the educational achievement gap for Latino and all students with her graduation rate formula legislation. As a member of the Maryland House of Delegates since 2003, she has forged alliances and brought in new legislation to affect education; before being elected to the House, she was an elected member of the Montgomery County Board of Education in Maryland, serving as both President and Vice President. She is also President and CEO of Sol Quality Systems, Inc., a small management and systems engineering business enterprise.

Several years ago, new Maryland State Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez saw that an important factor affecting academic achievement was inaccurate reporting of dropout rates. Students were “disappearing” from the educational pipeline—but the dangerously high number of Latino and African-American students alike being lost this way was hidden behind spotty data. She saw this discrepancy as an educational and civil rights crisis—and so did her African-American colleagues in the State House. Because she was the sole Latina in the House at the time, she strategized with the National Black Caucus of State Legislators to gain added clout for her issue.

This year, the bill took effect. It requires the state and local boards of education to collect and maintain data to calculate a graduation rate using a methodology that tracks cohorts of students as they enter ninth grade and measures the percentage who graduate with a Maryland high school diploma within four years.” Thus, the legislation addresses the need to hold schools accountable for graduating students on time, with a regular diploma—and prevents losing track of whom, precisely, is missing out. “Without good data, you can’t do good public policy,” Delegate Gutierrez said.

“Maryland is the first to codify the National Governors Association Graduation Rate Compact,” Delegate Gutierrez said. “But now that we got the really heavy lifting done, the difficult part is what comes next.”

While NCLB provides for many types of measurement, she says, there was no objective or metric simply stating that the ultimate goal is to get students to graduate with a regular high school diploma, making the legislation necessary. The AYP includes graduation rates, but NCLB lets individual states define the parameters. In one system she cited, administrators can mark more than 50 codes indicating why a student left school, but only three of these acknowledge that the student has dropped out. “It’s soft accountability—states can lie about graduation rates,” she said.

## What a Difference a HS Diploma Makes

<u>Cost Items</u>	<u>H.S. Diploma</u>	<u>No H.S. Diploma</u>
Estimated Lifetime Earnings and tax benefit	+\$260,000 income +\$60,000 taxes	-\$260,000 income -\$60,000 taxes Total loss of one cohort of 18 yr olds= \$192 billion or 1.6% GDP
Health Costs over lifetime	Better health, live longer	Increased dependency on publicly financial healthcare e.g. 2.3 billion over lifetime
Public Assistance Costs over lifetime	Savings of \$7.9 to \$10.8 billion a year	Higher risk of needing federal welfare, food stamps, and public housing
Crime and Incarceration	One % increase saves about \$1.4 billion/yr in reduced costs	More likely to commit crimes and be incarcerated
Voting Participation	More likely to vote	Three times less likely to vote than college graduates

*The Honorable Ana Sol Gutierrez, Maryland State Delegate*

She warned school board members who might institute graduation rate reporting that they might have to “take the heat” because the reality of dropout rates will become apparent. Included in the legislation is a requirement that the data must be posted and publicized on websites. “When the parents know that our Latino children are graduating at half the rate of the other kids, that will light a fire. Parents start to say, ‘Wait a minute, Mr. Principal, what are you going to do about this?’”

There are so many areas showing gaps in achievement, Delegate Gutierrez said, that you could really begin working in any area you might want: Preschool, Kindergarten, reading, transitions, college access and more. “I chose to focus on the high school experience,” she said. She currently sees that in many cases black and Latino students are not getting access to advanced placement courses, enrichment, and college readiness programs—their high school experience is dumbed down.

These divisions become apparent as early as the ninth grade, she says. “It’s the first marking period in the ninth grade that will tell you this kid is not doing well,” she said. “The school system itself is often counseling them that they aren’t going to make it—kids are getting the message to drop out.”

## “It’s As if 1,700 Latino Children Are Disappearing Every Day”

The Honorable Bob Wise is President of Alliance for Excellent Education as well as former Governor of West Virginia and a U.S. Representative. At the Alliance, he works toward policy to reform America’s secondary education system, ensuring all students graduate from high school prepared for success. He advises the U.S. Department of Education and organizations. Major initiatives he introduced include West Virginia’s PROMISE Scholarship program, which aims to keep students in the state for post-secondary education, establishing a character education curriculum, and instituting salary bonuses for certified teachers. In the U.S. House, he worked to preserve federal financial aid for college and instituted the first-ever federal Mental Health Parity program.

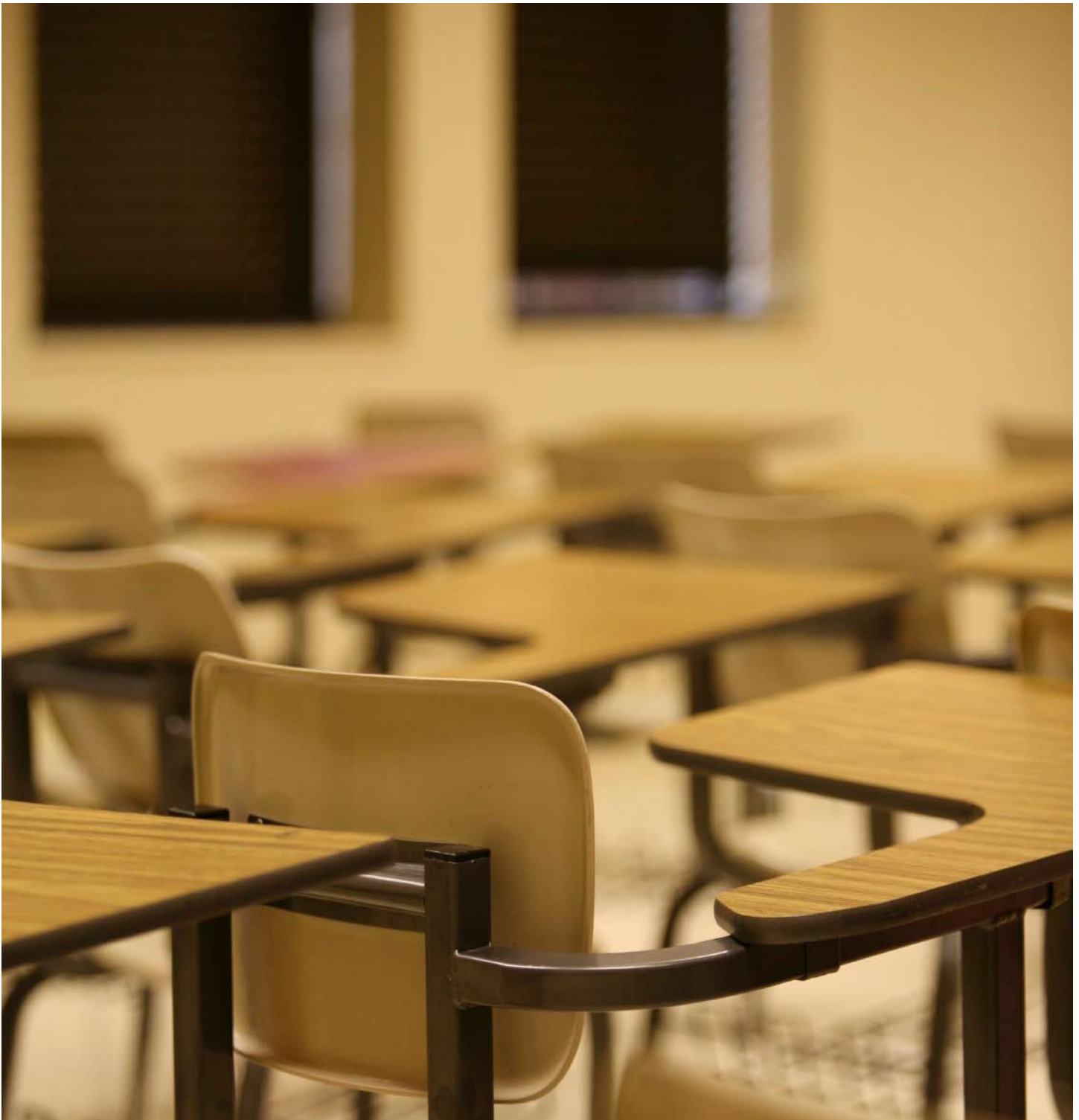
Governor Wise asked participants to imagine the public reaction if 1,700 Latino children disappeared each day: We would be appalled and seeking action, he said. Yet that number drop out every school day and little is being done. In effect, they do disappear, he said: They are relegated to the lowest-income jobs. And among students overall, “two out of three do not have the skills needed to function in our society.”

Whereas in the past a high school dropout might manage to find a way toward better employment, the jobs traditionally relied on are no longer open to them. In his home state of West Virginia, most miners have postsecondary degrees and many have graduate degrees, Governor Wise pointed out. Traditional vocational education in high schools is far more complex and must be based on better basic training for today’s employment—auto repair requires computer facility, for instance. “Students need a rigorous high school curriculum whether they chose to go into the workplace or to college,” he said.

### National High School Graduation Rates By Race and Gender

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
American Indian	47.5	42.7
Black	57.8	44.3
Hispanic	59.9	50.1
White	77.9	72.4
Asian	79.6	73.1
All	72.7	65.2

*The Honorable Ana Sol Gutierrez, Maryland State Delegate*



“If we cut the dropout rate in half, it’s like being able to announce a new industry, hiring 300 people at \$30,000 a year—it has that economic effect on the community.”

Governor Bob Wise  
President, Alliance for Excellent Education

## Ten Elements of a Successful High School

- **CHALLENGING CLASSES**
- **PERSONAL ATTENTION FOR ALL STUDENTS**
- **EXTRA HELP FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT**
- **BRINGING THE REAL WORLD TO THE CLASSROOM**
- **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**
- **A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**
- **SKILLED TEACHERS**
- **STRONG LEADERS**
- **NECESSARY RESOURCES**
- **USER-FRIENDLY INFORMATION**

**Governor Bob Wise, President, Alliance for Excellent Education**

Yet high schools feel the pinch acutely in trying to meet this need, he pointed out: Of Title I funds, 80 percent goes to kindergarten through fifth grade; only 7 percent goes to high schools. The Reading First program, for kindergarten through third grades, is funded at \$1 billion, but no federal money has been spent on reading up until last year, leaving students already in the pipeline in the lurch. By eighth grade, teachers are teaching content courses and do not expect to have to teach reading—yet many students need this remedial instruction. The point, he says, is not to take money away from these programs, but to make it clear that the federal government must maintain its investment in these areas for any lasting results.

Governor Wise pointed at three areas for reform:

- Better data, such as that generated by Delegate Gutierrez' legislation
- Attention to literacy at the high school level
- Creating a personal graduation plan for each student: The Alliance for Excellent Education has seen some remarkable turnarounds by addressing each student individually, preferably in seventh grade, looking his or her strengths and weaknesses and work with the student through the following years to meet the goal of graduation.

A significant motivational factor to improve high school education is bringing economic development and jobs to communities. "If we cut the dropout rate in half, we know that 60 percent of those students will find work—work at \$30 to \$35,000 a year, versus \$19,000 a year," he said. "It's like being able to announce a new industry, hiring 300 people at \$30,000 a year—it has that economic effect on the community."

The Alliance for Excellent Education is reporting on which states are counting graduation rates, he said. He also directed participants toward other materials on the Alliance's website, including an Action Matrix for Elements of a Successful High School, listing specific, practical action students, teachers, organizations, elected officials and others can take to help their schools toward excellence.

## Try This At Home: Getting Dropout-Rate Legislation Enacted

Distributed to NALEO Summit participants and widely available is model legislation based on that successfully passed by Maryland State Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez. Her advice: “Pick up the phone and call whoever represents you in your state. Tell them your governor has signed the NGA Graduation Rate Contract—and you have model legislation that they can simply drop their information into and take through legislation. It’s an easy next step we all can do.”

Seconding the motion was Governor Bob Wise, President of the Alliance for Excellent Education. As West Virginia governor, he said, “I had the chance to observe Delegate Gutierrez as she took this bill, as a single person, and pushed through two houses and past a governor who was not sure he wanted to sign it. She did it by building coalitions.” Part of coalition building is to recognize beforehand that for a local school board, it can be painful to have an accurate look at dropout rates, Gutierrez said. “But it gives you the tools you need to make the case for resources,” she stressed, telling of a program that was able to use the data to get money from the Gates Foundation, among others. It also is the starting point toward federal support, Governor Wise said. “Nothing happens federally that doesn’t happen first at the local level,” he pointed out, saying those at home have far more access and clout than any organization in Washington.

# Session VI: Latino College Access: Trends and Solutions

Session Chair Dr. Fernandez set the tone of cautious optimism and decided enthusiasm in this session on ensuring access to quality and affordable higher education opportunities. While national trends affecting Latino students, including rising costs, shrinking federal aid, and a poor record of high schools offering true college preparation may be disheartening, advocates in the field and in the colleges and universities are bringing back good news about what works. Institutes of higher education are strategizing back down the pipeline to reach students in earlier grades, and improving data systems and pathways between high school and college has become a priority. Most of all, a sense of urgency in improving college access and readiness in the name of national competitive and security can serve to spur new attention—and solutions.

Dr. Fernandez and the panel participants also expanded thinking on the benefits of going to college: “For every dollar spent on a child’s education, the community gets 12 dollars back,” Dr. Fernandez said. Burdens on states and municipalities decrease as people earn more, live longer, have better health, and attract more productive and cleaner industries and corporations—all economic benefits closely aligned with educational attainment. In the 1960s, he pointed out, the discourse was focused on the public benefits of education. Around the 1980s, this began to shift to focus on the individual benefits. Shifting back to emphasizing the argument that improving education improves community and economic life and generates resources could bear fruit in the form of resources to close the achievement gap.

## Educational Attainment is an International Issue

Dr. Dewayne Matthews is Senior Research Director at the Lumina Foundation for Education and leads the Foundation’s research on student access and success in postsecondary education. Dr. Matthews has served in higher education policy roles at the Education Commission of the States, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, and the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education. He started his career as a first-grade teacher in Taos, New Mexico. He holds a doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from Arizona State University.

Dr. Matthews provided a national and international perspective, opening his presentation with a chilling indication of the decay of America’s leadership in education. Statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)) that compared U.S. postsecondary attendance and completion with that of other countries show a steady decline from the peak achievements of those ages 55 to 64, educated in the 1960s, who made the United States number one worldwide in postsecondary degrees.

Since that time, our progress in gaining degrees has slipped continually, as other countries' degree numbers have risen, even those of developing economies. "Everyone else in the world continues to expand" in degree acquisition, while the United States now is nearly alone among industrialized nations to have fewer young degree holders than older ones, he said. "We'll need nearly 10 million degrees for us again to have the highest rate in the world."

"So the economic argument is easy to make," said Dr. Matthews. "But I like to make a different argument: What are these countries doing differently?" Through this approach, we can begin to regain our position and enhance it, he said.

What about individual states? Dr. Matthews pointed out that business leaders are realizing that it is not enough to compete with each other for economic advancement, but that they are also competing with Korea, Spain, and many others. He directed participants to the [higheredinfo.org](http://higheredinfo.org) website, where crosscutting information on graduation and retention rates is easy to find and use.

He noted some states that had made great strides, including Kentucky—"It has dramatically increased educational attainment and per capita income at a level much higher than what it costs to raise an investment in education," he said. "Improvement happens a lot faster than people realize," he said, pointing to data that show raising educational attainment can positively affect economic growth within five years.

Another OECD study showed "educational survival rates," i.e., the number of students entering college who graduate. Here, the United States ranks below many countries, including Mexico. "We send a lot of kids to college and we don't do as good a job of graduating them—and we're content with that, because we say, well, we provided the opportunity," said Dr. Matthews. But more important is providing the opportunity not simply to attend college, but to achieve success there, he added.

Cost is an important factor not just in access, but also in success: He directed participants to the *Excelencia* in Education report, *How Latino Students Pay for College*. Two striking differences in Latino enrollment are a disproportionate enrollment in two-year institutions and in private, for-profit educational institutions. A major issue to address for immediate success is making sure Latino students who attend two-year colleges have the opportunity to turn that into a way to move on—whether into the workforce or into four-year institutions.

### "Rigor, Relationships, Resources": A Proven Successful Approach

Mr. Carlos Valverde, Senior Education Policy Specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures, works on policy issues regarding college readiness, access, and success for minority populations. He also manages the Engaging Latino Communities of Education (ENLACE) project. Prior to this, he worked with hundreds of students and families in a four-state region as Regional Program Manager in College Prep and Scholarship Programs for the Daniels Fund, a Denver-based nonprofit foundation.

This self-proclaimed "high-school knucklehead" told a compelling story of how a single teacher can make a difference, but only if that teacher is backed up by a strong school and a coherent, committed program. As a freshman, he recalled, he was taken out of class for a special presentation on the Upward Bound program, a federally funded initiative for middle schools. He recalls being more interested in the girl sitting next to him than in the presentation, but said when they said they would offer money to those who could stay in school and get to college, it got his attention. When the leader asked what college each student planned to go to, he blurted out something he had heard in class earlier: Colorado College.

"That's right, homey," the leader said. "You're going to Colorado College."

“That was my first step in accessing college,” Mr. Valverde said. Any time the Upward Bound leader would see him around school, he would throw him a little reminder of his intention. “It was a relationship based on high expectations and challenge,” Mr. Valverde said. And it worked. He went on to earn his bachelor’s degree at Colorado College, and a master’s degree in Nonprofit Administration from Regis University.

The good news, he said, is that he is not atypical: College entrance rates for Latino students have risen in the past 25 years. High expectations and challenge are exactly what is missing and needed from high schools, he said, if they want to close the gap between grades 12 and 13 in the K-20 pipeline.

### Ideas to Create a Seamless Pathway

- Set standards at lower grade levels to prepare students for a rigorous HS curriculum
- Align HS graduation requirements with college admission requirements
- Create P-20 councils

*Carlos Valverde, Sr. Education Policy Specialist, National Conference of State Legislatures*

The first ingredient, he said, is a rigorous curriculum, which has been shown to contribute to college success: Latino students receiving a rigorous curriculum graduate from college at the same rate as white students do. Passing algebra in or before ninth grade has become a highly reliable indicator of college success. Yet, currently, only 20 percent of Latino students are completing a rigorous curriculum. He added that the numbers for African-American students are only at 23 percent, and even the comparatively better 40 percent rate for white students “is still unacceptable.” In addition to instituting a rigorous high school curriculum, higher standards must be set at lower grades, to prepare students for high schools.

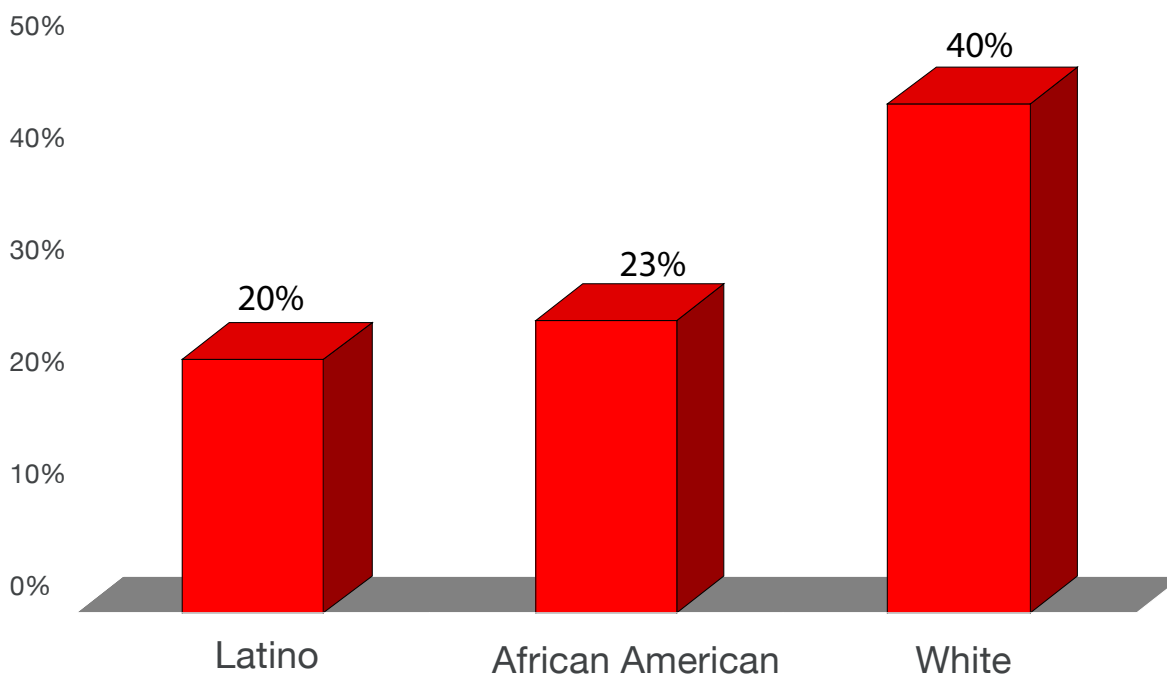
Next comes relationships: Teacher quality makes an enormous difference as early as the fifth grade, Mr. Valverde pointed out. He also noted that poor and minority students get far more inexperienced and out-of-field teachers. Along with other participants, he called for:

- More focus on teacher professional development, with stipends for training and higher-education partnerships
- Requiring middle- and high-school teachers to be certified in the areas in which they teach
- Supporting initiatives to develop tutoring and mentoring programs: “In Denver, we recruited 1,000 volunteers, with the goal of putting volunteers in every elementary school in the city,” he said. “It’s one more caring adult in the classroom to help the teachers.”

“Money matters, too,” he added, in his discussion of resources. “Latino children are three times as likely as white children to live in poverty.” He echoed The Education Trust’s declaration that schools must provide more support for children who are behind or at a disadvantage. Yet many states provide less funding on students in high-minority or high-poverty districts. Recommendations included:

- Rethink school funding formulas to eliminate gaps and ensure adequate resources for underperforming schools
- Invest in need-based financial aid programs
- Offer early aid commitments and tuition guarantees
- Allow in-state tuition for undocumented students

## Percentage of Students Completing a Rigorous High School Curriculum



*Source: Jay P. Greene Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates in the United States, Manhattan Institute*

## Drawing Strength from the Family Development Model

Dr. Joseph Castro, Executive Director, Office of Academic Preparation & Equal Opportunity, University of California at Santa Barbara, oversees and coordinates campus-wide P-20 academic preparation initiatives. He co-leads the ENLACE initiative and is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, where he teaches courses and conducts research. Prior, he was Founding Director of Academic Programs at UC Merced and Assistant Dean at the UC Berkeley Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy.

ENLACE, Engaging Latino Communities for Education, is a W.K. Kellogg Foundation initiative designed to strengthen the P-20 pipeline and increase college-going rates among Latino students. The partnership at the University of California at Santa Barbara is one of 13 nationwide and was instituted in 2005.

In 2005, only five Latino high school graduates enrolled at UCSB, Dr. Castro said—but that number could increase enormously if there were no achievement gap. He pointed out that an institution can become more diverse at the same time as it becomes more competitive.

At the core of ENLACE is a “family development model of outreach and service.” Academic rigor and culturally-tailored services are also key. The goal is to weave together multiple institutions and organizations with a common aim: increasing Latino college success.

## ENLACE Program and Services

Based on a family development model of outreach and service, ENLACE provides academically rigorous and culturally and linguistically tailored services to K-12 students, parents, and schools to help promote increased college-going among Latino students in our region:

- Academic Enrichment
- Student Mentorship
- College Awareness
- Leadership Development
- Family-School-Community Engagement

*Dr. Joseph Castro, Executive Director, Office of Academic Preparation & Equal Opportunity,  
University of California at Santa Barbara*

Some of the effective tactics used by the UCSB program include:

- Academic counseling: “We provide university-trained academic counselors who supplement the counseling and work as a liaison between the school and its partners,” he said, including bilingual and translation services. Funding comes from sources including Title I and Gear Up.
- Mentoring: More than 110 undergraduates have been trained to serve as mentors to families in the community. “They know what it’s like to be the first in the family to go to college,” Dr. Castro said. “Our mentors have a 100 percent graduation rate. Many are pursuing graduate school.”
- Parent leadership: *Padres Adelante*, an intensive 16-week program for Spanish-speaking parents to promote increased educational involvement, has proven popular and successful.

“The majority of 11th graders in our region are now on the college track,” Dr. Castro said. “That’s about five times the statewide average for Latino students.”



## The Changing Role of Parents

While participants at the 2005 Summit made the point that Latino educational achievement means family educational achievement, this year there was much evidence to back up how important parent and caretaker roles can be. First, participants were nearly unanimous in debunking the myth that “Latino families don’t necessarily expect their children to go to college.” Research presented by Dr. Ruiz of The Education Trust, for instance, showed that 94 percent of Latino parents plan on their children going to college. Secondly, nearly all programs proposed and reported on to close the achievement gap had a parental component. Here are just a few highlights:

- *Excelencia* in Education reports that home literacy activities are on the rise for Latino children, with 2001 figures indicating about 70 percent are taught letters, words or numbers before kindergarten.
- Upward Bound, cited as a spur to success by presenter Carlos Valverde of NCSL, includes home visits.
- ENLACE at UCSB piloted *Padres Adelante*, an intensive 16-week program for Spanish speaking parents to promote increased educational involvement.
- The Tool Kit for Hispanic Families created by the U.S. Department of Education gives step-by-step guidance to parents and caretakers.
- Recommendations by the American Federation of Teachers and others to improve NCLB include presenting assessment data to parents in an easy to use and understandable manner.
- Success story Calexico Unified School District included *Padres Promotores* programs for parents as well as “parents’ nights” to explain and encourage steps to college access.
- PIQE, Parents’ Institute for Quality Education, has taken a role in many California schools trying to improve access.

# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Steps to the Future: Policy and Action to Close the Latino Education Achievement Gap

In Strategy Groups following each information session at the summit, participants worked together reviewing information, sharing experience from the field and formulating solutions. The unique opportunity for elected officials, including state legislators, municipal officials and school board members to have informal practically-oriented discussions resulted in a number of workable action plans and policy recommendations. The following are their thoughts and ideas on the key educational issues facing Latinos across the country:

### No Child Left Behind Reauthorization

- Ensure elected officials at all levels of governance play a role in the reauthorization of NCLB
- Create regional school-board coalitions to help make recommendations heard
- Partner with the National School Boards Association and the organization's Hispanic Caucus to make concerns known at the national level
- Communicate ideas for improving NCLB to Latino state legislators and members of Congress
- Partner with unions and organizations that work on education issues, including NCLR, NABE, MALDEF, NAACP and other groups concerned about reauthorization
- Use the Internet to exchange NCLB policy ideas and recommendations with other elected officials

### Bilingual Education

- Provide stipends and extra funds for bilingual teachers
- Ensure bilingual students have well-prepared teachers
- Create an Assistant Superintendent position in school districts to improve bilingual education programs
- Encourage school districts to create a special division for English Language Learner (ELL) programs
- Develop a "Newly Arrived" Center to support ELL students and their families

### The P-20 Pipeline

- Begin with a review of existing and successful programs, including GEAR UP, Upward Bound, and ENLACE, to leverage advantages and lessons learned
- Make P-20 support a critical element in recruiting new and additional school board members
- Develop a Superintendent position in charge of P-20 issues
- Build pathways so that school Superintendents and college Chancellors can work together on P-20 plans and execution
- Create a P-20 Council in local school districts
- Use foundation and advocacy group research to ensure any P-20 system or program works in collaboration with existing federal programs
- Align P-20 programs with local, regional or national non-profit organizations and other community providers
- Engage the local business community as well as national corporations in mentorship and progress programs
- Partner with trade organizations and businesses to develop internship opportunities or certificate programs for students who wish to explore other career ladders

- The pipeline: Partner with elementary and middle schools to ensure the dialogue begins there
- Involve school support staff as mentors to help students identify strategies needed to attain career goals
- At local community colleges, begin formalized partnerships; allow high school students to participate
- Explore scholarship funding opportunities with local businesses and business interest groups
- Open more doors to the opportunity for students to take college-level courses in high school
- Hold regular P-20 conferences involving all stakeholders
- Use summers constructively: Create college programs at summer and athletic camps and invite students to take courses at colleges
- Educate students and parents to the reality of college life, using college tours and financial aid workshops
- Where high school programs such as band or art are being cut, engage community colleges to develop partnerships to fill the gaps
- Use the power of peers: Develop leadership programs and peer mentoring programs such as *Promotores Teen*

## Higher Education

- Make higher education a priority in local, state and federal budgets
- Focus on high school curriculum and teacher training, ensuring that both meet standards to get students college ready
- Provide tutoring for high school exit exams; develop “inter-sessions” with training to bring students up to par if they are behind on credits for graduation
- All school retention programs are not alike: Tailor retention programs to meet area students’ needs
- Adapt rigorous, college-ready high school curricula; establish a dual-credit program
- Begin at the ninth grade to create an early college program track
- Make summer school programs free and use them to advance students toward college
- To help students recover credits toward graduation, develop credit recovery programs with flexible hours; establish Saturday schools and online courses
- Partner with local businesses to create a high school-college-employment pipeline
- Reshape magnet schools and special academies as needed to ensure Latino students are attracted, welcomed and included in all such programs
- Fund college counselor positions in high schools; build pathways for counselors to share college information with the community
- Develop loan alternatives, such as matching funds, scholarships and grants

# Participants

## Arizona

Hon. Mary L. Duarte, Board Member, Picacho Elementary School District  
Hon. Steve Gallardo, State Representative, Arizona House of Representatives  
Hon. Adelita Grijalva, Board Member, Tucson Unified School District  
Hon. Cynthia Matus Morriss, Board President, Patagonia Elementary School District  
Hon. John Tameron, Board President, Cobre Valley Institute of Technology District

## California

Hon. Enrique Alvarado, Board President, Calexico Unified School District  
Mr. David Alvarez, Superintendent, Calexico Unified School District  
Hon. Arnulfo Cedillo, Board Member, Chabot-Los Positas Community College District  
Hon. Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez, Board President, Azusa Unified School District  
Hon. Oscar De La Torre, Board Member, Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District  
Hon. Felix Elizalde, Trustee, Alameda County Office of Education  
Hon. Geraldine T. Guzman, Board Member, Montebello Unified School District  
Hon. Dick Jaquez, Board President, Oxnard Union High School District  
Hon. Sonia Jaramillo, Board Member, Gonzales Unified School District  
Hon. Victor Perez, Trustee, Coachella Valley Unified School District  
Hon. Kathryn Ramirez, Trustee, Salinas Union High School District  
Hon. Maria Eugenia Sanchez, Board Member, Hollister School District  
Hon. Catherine Sepulveda, Board Member, Santa Paula Union High School District  
Hon. Phillip Tabera, Trustee, Salinas Union High School District  
Hon. Lillian Tafoya, Board President, Bakersfield City School District  
Mr. Scot Townsend, City Manager, City of Lindsay

## Connecticut

Hon. Felipe Reinoso, State Representative, Connecticut House of Representatives

## Illinois

Hon. Giraldo Rosales, Councilmember, City of Champaign

## Indiana

Hon. Henry L. Fernandez, Board Member, Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township

## Kansas

Hon. Delia Garcia, State Representative, Kansas House of Representatives  
Hon. Louis Ruiz, State Representative, Kansas House of Representatives

## Maryland

Hon. Ana Sol Gutierrez, Delegate, Maryland House of Delegates

## Michigan

Hon. Guillermo Lopez, Board Member, Lansing School District

## New Mexico

Hon. Nancy P. Gonzalez, Board Member, Questa Independent School District

Hon. Joe Guillen, Board President, Española Public Schools

Hon. Ralph Medina, Board Member, Española Public Schools

Hon. Patrick Romero, Board Member, Las Vegas City Schools

Hon. Maxine Wilson, Councilmember, City of Tijeras

## New Jersey

Hon. Mayra Arroyo, Board Member, Vineland Public Schools

## New York

Hon. Bethaida Gonzalez, Council President, City of Syracuse

## Nevada

Hon. Larry P. Mason, Board Member, Clark County School District

## Texas

Hon. Pat Campos, Board Member, United Independent School District

Hon. Viola Garcia, Trustee, Aldine Independent School District

Hon. Joe Gonzalez, Trustee, San Benito Consolidated Independent School District

Hon. George Hernandez, Board President, Donna Independent School District

Hon. Cruz Hinojosa, Board Member, Galena Park Independent School District

Hon. Joe Muñoz, Trustee, Hays Consolidated Independent School District

Hon. Victor Resendez, Board President, Harlandale Independent School District

Hon. Justin Rodriguez, Trustee, San Antonio Independent School District

Hon. Manuel Rodriguez, Trustee, Houston Independent School District

Hon. Carol Villareal, Trustee, San Antonio Independent School District



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