



NEWS RELEASE

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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Latino Policymakers Convene in Nation's Capital to Strategize on Closing the Education Gap for Latino Students

Los Angeles, CA – More than fifty elected officials from across the country, including state legislators, municipal officials, community college trustees and school board members, attended the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund's *Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades and 4th Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education* in Washington, D.C., this week to strategize on closing the education gap for Latino students.

At the NALEO Educational Fund's *Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades*, Latino state legislators from across the country held a congressional-style hearing on Capitol Hill to learn from some of the nation's leading early education policy experts about the demonstrated benefits of high quality early education programs and their potential to close persistent school readiness gaps for Latino students.

Expert testimony at the Legislative Hearing included a national overview and summary of new research findings on the effectiveness of an approach focusing on the critical Pre-K to 3rd grade for Latino students, the showcasing of case studies demonstrating how this approach is succeeding in states nationwide, and innovative ways to deliver effective programs and services in the midst of the economic downturn and budgetary constraints many states now face.

The *Legislative Hearing* inaugurated the *4th Annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education*, an intensive, three-day seminar in which participants learned more about education issues and how to create cross-jurisdictional approaches to eliminating the academic achievement gap for Latino students. Both the *Legislative Hearing* and *Summit* are part of the NALEO Education Leadership Initiative (NELI), a unique program designed to enhance the governance and education policymaking skills of Latino elected officials.

“As America’s second-largest and fastest-growing population group, the Latino community’s success is vital for the well-being and prosperity of the nation,” states Arturo Vargas, Executive Director of the NALEO Educational Fund. “Through their participation at the *Legislative Hearing* and *Summit*, Latino elected officials will be better equipped to address the challenges they face in providing every child in their communities with a quality education.”

“As the leading organization that promotes the advancement of governance and policymaking success of Latino elected and appointed officials, the NALEO Educational Fund, through events like the *Legislative Hearing* and *Summit*, is actively working to serve a cadre of Latino public officers and civic leaders committed to closing the achievement gap for Latino students and improving American society,” concluded Vargas.

About the NALEO Educational Fund

The NALEO Educational Fund is the leading organization that empowers Latinos to participate fully in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. The NALEO Educational Fund is a national non-profit, non-partisan organization whose constituency includes the more than 6,000 Latino elected and appointed officials nationwide.

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