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More than a Diploma

Strategies to Improve the Educational Attainment of Latino Students

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INTRODUCTION

My interest in education began when I was a student at John Adams Middle School in Los Angeles. A major education issue at the time was Proposition 187. In essence, the Proposition attempted to deny any public services, including education, to illegal immigrants. The Proposition did not pose any threat to me and this led me to believe that none of my friends were going to be affected by it as well. However, I soon learned that many of my friends were vulnerable to the Proposition's passage because they were undocumented students. Proposition 187 did pass, but it was ultimately deemed to be unconstitutional by the California State Supreme Court.

The passage of Proposition 187 opened my eyes because I never thought that the people it was going to hurt were the same individuals that I attended school with. In the past, I had always considered politics to be something that was distant from me and that would never affect me, but Proposition 187 made me realize that I was wrong. Consequently, I began to notice other problems that were present in public schools, but at the age of twelve I considered the problems to be too large in scope for me to do anything about them.

The concern over issues affecting education was still in my mind when I began to attend high school. By then, however, I was ready to get involved in these issues. In the ninth grade I had an English teacher; he was a new teacher with innovative approaches on how to help students get a proper education. One of those approaches came into fruition and it was called the Early College Academy Program. The program was composed of a series of academically challenging workshops and courses that enabled students to develop their skills. The program also had a network of supportive teachers, counselors,

me and another student to develop a project that informed English learners and undocumented students about their options after high school. The program consisted of developing an advocacy campaign that gave students the necessary information to apply for college and scholarships. I went from one school to the next informing students about Assembly Bill 540. This legislation, which passed in 2001, enabled undocumented students to pay in state tuition at any college or university in California, rather than the far more expensive out of state tuition. Many of the undocumented students I spoke to had no idea that they could apply to college. Both CHIRLA and I were glad to have been involved in the project and despite the fact that the project was small, it was something that would not have been done otherwise.

The time I spent interning at CHIRLA gave meat an and I were gl436.74013377 bee42.959,5 Talso.

The overall purpose of this study is to demonstrate how Latino students can excel in education despite present barriers. Fre

Research Question:

Despite the barriers that many Hispanic students encounter while receiving an education, there are many students who are overcoming such barriers and are actually excelling in school. This project will try to discover and answer the issues that revolve around the proceeding question:

Does the Effective Schools model that emphasizes responsibility for student learning and strong instructional leadership, among other variables, provide an effect framework to help Latino students overcome these barriers?

CHAPTER ONE: THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

The attempt to create a school system

traditions of the West" (Rothstein, pg. 101). Critics of bilingual education consider "English only" or mainstream classes as the best teaching approach for all students, regardless or their background. Proponents, on the other hand, affirm that bilingual education was created because schools realized that teaching students in their native language was a legitimate need and essential for the comprehension of English as a second language.

The earliest Supreme Court ruling concerning language instruction was *Meyer v*. *Nebraska*, 1923. Essentially, the Supreme Court declared that Americans had the unequivocal right to preserve their native languages and for "teachers in public and private schools to teach these languages to children" (Mitchell, et. al., pg. 91). The right to teach students in their native language was greatly supported by both private and public schools, yet it was a right that schools did not strictly adhere to.

It was not until 1974 in the *Lau v. Nichols* case where the Supreme Court addressed the question whether public schools had the affirmative task of providing specialized educational services to students who were not native English speakers (Mitchell, et. al., pg. 91). In the *Lau v. Nichols* case, the Supreme Court affirmed a regulation from 1970 that was promulgated by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), which interpreted the 1964 Civil Rights Act as "applying to persons having a 'language deficiency' when protecting against prejudice based on 'natural origin'" (Mitchell, et. al., pg. 91). The 12,M

access to school academic programs' (Mitchell, et. al., pg. 91). The ruling held in the *Lau v. Nichols* case was interpreted as requiring schools to develop bilingual instructional programs that utilize children's native language for instruction (Mitchell, et. al., pg. 91).

The development of bilingual education programs allowed several Latino students to develop a greater understanding of course material and the English language. Yet the opposition toward bilingual education still remained and language instruction programs were heavily scrutinized. Despite the evidence demonstrating that students who could not apply their native language towards the mastery of academic disciplines learned at a lower rate than students in bilingual classes, critics still believed that language instruction was a failure and a waste of money (Mitchell, et. al, pg. 92). Such hostile attitudes eventually lead to the creation of Proposition 227, a state initiative aimed at terminating bilingual education in every public school in California. (Proposition 227 will be discussed later in the chapter.)

The Leticia A. Network

Like bilingual education, the thought of immigrant students enrolling in institutions of higher learning has always been seen negatively by some politicians, policy makers, and a significant number of Californians. Presently there are several guidelines and requirements that prevent qua

of financial aid provided by the state. There was a time, however, where undocumented students did not have to worry about their immigration status in order to attend the college of their choice. In 1982, in the case of *Plyer v. Doe*, the Supreme Court ruled that all undocumented children have the right to a free public education (Soto, pg. 35). The Supreme Court felt that it would be unfair to deny undocumented children the right to an education simply because their parents made the decision to enter the country illegally (Soto, pg. 35). Due to this federal law, public schools were prohibited from doing the following (Morse & Ludovina, 1999):

deny admission to students on the basis of undocumented status

treat a student fundamentally different from others to determine residency

engage in any activity that might intimidate, or would make families fearful as a

consequence of their status

require students or parents to reveal or document their immigration status require Social Security numbers from all students

reveal the status of children and their families to the Immigration and Naturalization Service

As a result of these federal provisions, all children, documented or not, were entitled to a free public education from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Plyer v. Dough* allowed undocumented students the ability to receive a free public education. Still, the case failed to address whether undocumented students had the right to receive financial aid when deciding to atternaeTj0.0006 Tc 0.t

from establishing instate residency for tuition purposes (Soto, pg. 37). Consequently, every UC campus began to adopt the Bradford order in the fall of 1991 and newly enrolled undocumented students could no longer be classified as legal residents for tuition purposes.

California Community Colleges (CCC) were not sued in either of the Leticia A. or Bradford cases, but they interpreted the Bradford ruling through policies established in February 1992 that distinguished current and future enrollees. The community college policy allowed current enrollees to maintain their resident status. New enrollees, however, were subject to the Bradford order. In addition, community colleges also set guidelines that enabled undocumented students, who have taken steps to acquire legal residency, opportunity to qualify for instate tuition (Soto, pg. 37).

In the spring of 1992 the California Student Aid Commission (SAC), which is responsible for state financial aid programs, also adopted the Bradford order. This halted the awarding of Cal Grants or any financial aid granted under the Leticia A. policy to undocumented students (Soto, pg. 37).

The last institution to adopt the Bradford order was the California State University System (CSU). The adoption of the Bradford order by CSU began when the American Association of Women (AAW) and other anti-immigrant groups (Federation for Immigration Reform, California Coalition for Immigration Reform, Valley Citizens for Fair Immigration) sued the CSU in the Superior Court of Los Angeles by asking the court to require CSU to adhere to the Bradford order and terminate the implementation of the Leticia A. policy (Soto, pg. 38). The AAW won its case against the CSU Board of Trustees on January 17, 1995 and the CSU began to implement the Bradford order

immediately; and both current and newly enrolled undocumented students were ineligible for state financial aid and had to pay out of state tuition (Soto, pg. 38).

The Bradford order may have ended the eligibility of undocumented students to receive financial aid. However, in January 2001 then governor of California, Gray Davis, signed Assembly Bill 540 (AB 540). Under AB 540 undocumented students who graduated from any California high school can qualify to pay instate tuition as long as they can prove they have been in the country for at least three years.

Proposition 187

During the decade of the 1990's California was a very hostile environment for illegal immigrants. Such sentiment was reflected in several statewide initiatives that were aimed at controlling the flow of immigrants into the country. One of the first initiatives was Proposition 187.

Proposition 187 was a product of California at a time when illegal immigrants were considered to be a burden to the state. According to the 2000 Census, between 1990 and 2000 there were approximately 6.8 to 8.8 million immigrants living in the United States. Opponents of illegal immigration also claimed that illegal immigrants were costing California \$5 billion annually. Many Californians felt that illegal immigrants were taking jobs away from legal residents and American citizens (Davis, 1999). These anti-immigrant attitudes laid the groundwork for Proposition 187; a state wide initiative placed on the ballot in 1994 and strongly supported by former Governor Pete Wilson. Immigrant supporters considered the Proposition to be a direct attack on the Latino immigrant community because it attempted to deprive any public service, including education to immigrants. In opposition to the measure, many immigrants and community

leaders held protest rallies, marches, and organized school walk-outs.

As previously mentioned, Proposition 187 attempted to deny any public services to illegal immigrants in several ways, including:

Barred aliens from state public education, which included K-12 and higher education. (This would have excluded 308,000 students from schools.)

Required that documentation be provided and legal status verified for individuals seeking non-emergency healthcare services.

Required the status of individuals seeking cash benefits to be verified.

All public service providers must report suspected aliens to the Attorney General.

Individuals utilizing fake documentation will be charged with a state felony.

The protests held by groups opposing Proposition 187 did not ultimately influence the outcome of the election, which was passed by a margin of nearly 60% to 40%. Fifty out of the fifty-eight counties in the state voted for the measure and the exit polls indicated that 64% of Whites, 57% of Asians, 56% of Blacks, and 31% Latinos all voted in support of the measure.

Although Proposition 187 passed by a wide margin, its enforcement was challenged and delayed. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) did not comply with the proposition because 88% of its students were Latinos and at least 50% of them were of immigrant descent or immigrants themselves. If the school district adhered to the Proposition's clauses, a minimum of 20% of its entire student body would have been forced out of school and funding to LAUSD schools would have decreased due to their absence. Moreover, to implement such provisions school officials felt that schools would become an extension of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) if they

followed the following guidelines set by the measure. These included:

By January 1, 1995 schools were required to verify the legal status of students enrolling in the district for the first time.

By January 1, 1996 schools were required to verify the legal status of current enrollees.

If an enrollee was found to be undocumented, schools would have 45 days to report the case to the INS, the state superintendent of the public institution, California Attorney General, and the affected parent or guardian.

After 90 days of educational instruction schools were required to transfer the student to a school in the student's country of origin.

While Proposition 187 was seen as a direct threat to immigrants, it was never implemented as the measure was ruled to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1998 (Soto, pg. 38).

The ruling by the Supreme Court to declare Proposition 187 unconstitutional eliminated any actual harm that the measure could have caused the immigrant community. Nevertheless, many immigrant parents feared sending their children to school since they assumed they could be questioned and possibly deported. This resulted in parents temporarily losing their trust in schools.

Proposition 209

The hostility toward immigrants and the Latino community in California did not stop after Proposition 187. In fact, in 1996 anot

Californian voters voted for the measure, while only 46% voted against it (Houston, 1996). As a result, public colleges and universities were forced to abandon policies that secured admittance for minority students and minority enrollment began to decline. Students affected by Proposition 209 felt that the measure was racist and would prevent minority students from attending college. Yet proponents of the measure – which included several minorities – stated that allowing under-qualified students to attend college would hurt them in the long run and je

provided for bilingual education, overlook the demands of parents who want their children taught in English (Navarrette Jr., 1997). Unz's arguments about an English-only approach making assimilation easier and leading to affluence even got the support of Jaime Escalante, a former math teacher in a predom

In response to the adoption of Proposition 227, the LAUSD devised two models geared for teaching students who had not yet become proficient in English. The two models were known as "Model A" and "Model B." Here is a description of both models:

Model A: in this model students are enrolled in "English-only" classes and receive minimal instruction in primary language from a teacher's assistant.

Model B: in this model students are enrolled in "English-only" classes and receive minimal instruction in primary language from a bilingual teacher.

In spite of Proposition 227, several programs have been introduced in order to help students reach adequate levels of performance. These programs offer innovative roaches and even require the participation of parents. Many of these programs are in their initial phase as pilots, but they have demonstrated promise in a very short time. The details of such programs will be discussed in a later chapter.

Closing Thoughts

The state initiatives and policies discussed in this chapter have all affected Latinos and the immigrant community negatively. Supporters of such policies have frequently argued that these polices were created to assure that students would get the best education possible, yet in the end some students have been hurt. These policies and initiatives also created a loss of trust in schools by both Latino students and their parents. Consequently, members of the Latino and imb

involve up to 80 multiple choice questions, and another section that asks students to complete two essay questions. The Exit Exam takes place over a three day period and students are given several opportunities to pass the exam if they fail on their first attempt. Even with the ability to take the exam several times in order to pass it, Duke Helfand, a L.A. Times reporter, states that only 48% of students in the class of 2004 have passed both the English and Math portions of the exam. In another study conducted by Helfland two years ago, the numbers for Latinos were even lower since only 30% passed both portions of the exam (Helfand, 2002). Education officials state that part of the reason why failure rates are high is because the sc

make sure more students pass. This would mean that schools must try to do better than they did with the class of 2004, where only 64% of students passed the English section and 44% students passed the math section on their first try. In subsequent attempts as many as 20% of the class of 2004 still failed. Still, there has been some improvement due to intensive preparatory programs, since 79% of students of the class of 2005 have passed the English section and 60% have passed the math section (Helfand, 2003).

The problem of low test scores is not limited to high schools. Elementary schools have also had their fair share of problems with exams. In recent years, however, elementary schools have usually outperformed middle schools and high schools in state admi

220,000 students from failing schools could transfer if they chose to do so, but the lack of funds presents the district with the inability to provide enough room for transferring students. The "No Child Left Behind" law also requires failing schools to provide staff development and increase student tutoring, but it does not provide these schools with the funds necessary to do so (Hayasaki, 2003). Moreover, the district is unable to transfer students because most schools have already reached their maximum student capacity and have become what are known as track schools. Track schools were created in an effort to relieve the number of students attending a school at one time.76sone tim

learning other vital material that is not covered in exams (Traub, 2002). Latino students, especially those who have not yet mastered the English language, have a hard time with exams because there have been several instances where students have passed their English Regents diploma test examinations in order to graduate, but are unable to receive a high school diploma because they have not passed the E.S.L. (English as a Second Language) test, which covers material that students have not been exposed to (Winerip, 2003).

State education officials expect teachers to aid all students in order to increase their performance in exams. This task has been very hard for many teachers to achieve because they believe that school districts do not provide them with all the materials necessary to improve student test scores. Additionally, teachers argue that the number of students in class is too large and prevents them from giving students the required amount of attention that is necessary in order to improve their test scores.

Class Size and Teacher Quality

The lack of teachers, including qualified ones, is a problem that has plagued the LAUSD for quite a while. Schools that often face the greatest teacher shortage are predominately composed of Latino students, yet the state has taken several steps to alleviate the problem. California has spent \$8 billion since 1996 to have one teacher for every 20 students from kindergarten through the third grade (Pierson, 2002). This rush to hire more teachers has resulted in the employment of too many under-qualified instructors "and disappointing academic results" (Pierson, 2002). Though California may have had an overabundance of under-qualified teachers in other times, current studies show that California is experiencing greater teacher shortages today. Presently, the state

has fewer teachers for every 1,000 students or 25% fewer instructors compared to the rest of the nation (Smith, 2003). California also lags far behind other states in counselors, 46%; librarians, 56%; and other support positions, 56% (Smith, 2003).

Like the rest of the state the LAUSD suffers from severe teacher shortages, which have been further increased due to recent budget cuts in education. In an effort to alleviate some of the shortfall created by the state's budget deficit the LAUSD decided to administer a \$70 million budget cut that included a decrease in the number of teachers. Furthermore, this \$70 million dollar cut has resulted in a student increase in classrooms that has some teachers teaching 35 to 45 students. Many teachers in the district already have classes with about 40 students. Special education classes have 14 students and the student to teacher ratio for remedial courses has increased from 15:1 to 20:1 (Giordani, 2002). The present teacher shortage is also attributed to the high rate of teacher turnover. Several teachers stop teaching or leave to other schools because they are in search of a higher salary or because they unsatisfied with the support their current school provides. A large portion of educators who share this lack of satisfaction are Bilingual Education instructors, who constantly complain about not being given the proper support and materials in order to help students -most of whom are Latino- achieve English proficiency. Thus, the lack of teachers -qualified or not- is a problem that largely affects Latino students since they compose most of the schools that face these problems. This in turn may create an environment where both teachers and students are unable to reach their full potential whether they want to or not.

Social Promotion

Critics of public education often claim that school systems fail due to the

practices performed in schools. One practice utilized by critics to demonstrate the weakness and inefficiency of school districts, like the LAUSD, is social promotion. Although social promotion no longer exists, when it did many education officials believed that the act of promoting students, whose achievement was below satisfactory levels, to the next grade was responsible for creating a society in which high school graduates were unable to read, write, or compute. The argument in favor of social promotion claimed that the practice was utilized in order to boost the self-esteem of failing students. However, many officials, including former Mayor of New York Rudolph Giuliani, stated that social promotion "may sound right, it may be kind, but it is cruel" since it puts off a problem that will worsen in the future (Rothstein, pg. 93). Others like Sandra Feldman, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, believe that holding students back a year is also unacceptable. Instead, Feldman suggests that better school programs and better qualified teachers is the solution that can allow students to be eligible for promotion. The suggestions given by Feldman decrease the number of students that are held back, but these suggestions do not take into consideration that several districts, including the LAUSD, are unable to provide enough qualified teachers and quality school programs due to a lack of funds.

immediate implementation would have caused 40% or 280,000 students to be retained.

Thus, the formal termination of social p

retained. Teachers who deal with Latino students, who lack English fluency, also tend to have lower expectations from them and focus more on the mistakes made by the students. The retention of Spanish speaking students due to placement in mainstream classes is in a larger part due to the failure of schools to inform parents about waivers, which allow students to be enrolled in bilingual classes. In summary, it has become clear that the elimination of bilingual education programs a

have trouble as soon as they enter the educational system because the school wants to place them in special programs" (1999). Davison also noted that in several instances schools made the mistake of placing Latino students, who were fluent in English, in bilingual education programs "on the assumptions based on surname and physical appearance" (1999). This problem, however, is not only exclusively linked to Latino students, since black students were also noted for having been placed in remedial classes and special programs based on their race. The expectation of failure held by principals and administrators forces Latino students "to opt out of mainstream education in favor of alternative schools, GED programs, or job corps" (Davison, 1999). These same programs are at times poorly designed and lead students to failure (Balousek, 2003). Race also influences teachers when deciding whether to take the time to teach a student or not. Davison affirms that some teachers would not bother to instruct a Latino student if they knew that he came from a migrant household. The reason for this is because teachers would feel it was a waste of time to deal with a migrant student who would leave once the harvest season concluded. The low expectations held by educators toward Latino students, also leads students to believe that college is beyond their reach. For instance, in his book entitled Small Victories, Samuel Freedman notes that schools "serving a student body that is overwhelmingly poor and nonwhite" habitually encounter military ads that encourage students to enlist (pg. 21).

The negative views held by instructors and counselors towards Latino students also leads them to downplay the culture of the students and thus leads them to believe that Latino students are not suited for college (Solorzano & Solozano, 1995). Schools where such ideas are held usually have fewer college programs or shy away from them.

Counselors also tend to discourage Latino students by advising them to set lower expectations for themselves after high school graduation and to enroll in less rigorous college institutions (Sykes, 2003). Besides discouraging Latinos to attend college, college counselors have also given preferential treatment to students whom they believe are college material. Students who receive preferential treatment from college counselors are usually the first to have access to college scholarships and are among the first to be enrolled in high school courses that are required to attend college.

Low teacher expectations often influence students when deciding to attend college or not and in most cases students fall victim to the attitudes of their instructors and decide not to attend college. However, there have been several instances where teachers help those students, otherwise labeled as lost causes, attend college. Occurrences like these result due to teachers who decide to be mentors for several Latino students (King, 2003). Latino students who are encouraged to perform well in school and who are guided by teachers are also more likely to enroll in advanced high school courses. Some instructors have taken upon themselves to enroll Latino students in advanced placement courses because of the low number of Latino students present in these classes. Hence, instructors such as these try to do away with preconceived notions and the effects of a deficient public education system by focusing their attention on Latino students who may have difficulties in school.

Closing Thoughts

With the numerous examples given above one can note that problems found within a classroom have more implications than initially thought by some education officials. The previous section explained how state initiatives affected the educational

experiences of Latino students. This section attempted to show how some of those initiatives influenced some of the structural and cultural problems within schools. It was also revealed how the negative attitudes held by teachers can affect the academic path of Latino students. The positive influence of encouraging teachers was also shown to greatly improve the academic performance of Latinos. Nevertheless, teachers realize that there is only so much they can do to help Latino students inside of school. Educators are unable to help them with problems that Latino students encounter outside of school in their homes and on the streets; these problems at times have more of an impact in a student's education than any problem found within the walls of a classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PROBLEMS AT HOME

The previous chapter focused on the problems that have plagued Latino students in school. These problems have ranged from the elimination of bilingual education programs to the prejudices held by teachers and school administrators toward Latino students.

students from a middle class background. While many, like Jonathan Kozol, would argue that an increase in funding for inner-city schools would alleviate the problem, others believe that though disparity in school funding does play a role in creating such inequality it is still unable to "bridge the abyss between the children of middle-class and poor parents; for poor children grow up in a world without books and stimulating games and where their natural curiosity is regularly squashed and they are isolated from life beyond their neighborhoods" (Traub, pg. 57). Besides having limited resources, education analysts, such as Traub, argue that students have difficulties in school as a result of inadequate social capital. Social capital refers to the benefits created by social bonds and it is defined in relation to the "norms, the social networks, the relationships between adults and children that are of value for the children's growing up" (Traub, pg. 57). Social capital is essential, since the support of a strong community can help a child develop social capital in numerous ways. However, institutions in the inner city usually disintegrate and cause mothers to keep their children locked inside due to fear for their safety. In that setting, social capital barely exists (Traub, pg. 57).

The absence of social capital is considered to greatly affect the success of Latino students in school, yet policy makers and education analysts also believe that Latino students, and others living in the inner city, are surrounde

in school, allowing them to bequeath more human capital to their own children" (Traub, pg. 57). Though it is uncertain whether some Latino families lack the human capital necessary to enhance the success of their children in school, it should be noted that these families are composed of parents who did not readily have access to education and in spite of this, such families have been shown to have a high regard for the value of education that they try to instill in their children (Trueba, 1997).

Education is valued highly by many parents of Latino children, but in some instances parents fail to express such value to their children. This in turn causes children to adhere more to the values of their peers. Additionally, educators and policy makers believe that the people students hang out with, both during and after school, can matter more than what happens in the classroom (Traub, pg. 57). Being heavily influenced by peers, especially those who might be a negative influence, can cause children to develop an "inner city culture." Developing an inner city culture can lead to "the pathology of the ghetto," which causes students to carry a stigma of racial inferiority that leads to self destructive behavior, including violence, alcohol, drug abuse, and family breakdown (Traub, pg. 57). This pathology is also described as an oppositional culture that readily accepts failure and believes that it is fine to do poorly in school (Massey & Denton, pg. 164). A low regard towards education is also due to a lack of support networks that aid students in their academics. Students who stay away from support networks -where and when they are present - do it because they consider the relationship with their peers to be more important (Rothstein, 2002). The oppositional culture or inner city culture is also described by Oscar Lewis who sees it as an adaptation and reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, "capitalistic society... It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair that arise from the realization by the members of the marginal communities in these societies of the improbability of their achieving success in terms of prevailing goals," Lewis argues (pg. 220).

Analysts, policy makers, and education officials believe that the oppositional culture must be elim

de Souza Briggs as follows:

- Social leverage -- social capital that helps one "get ahead" or change one's opportunity set through access to job information, say, or a recommendation for a scholarship or Ioan. This form is about access to clout and influence.
- 2. Social support -- social capital that helps one "get by" or cope. This might include being able to get a ride, confide in someone, or obtain a small cash loan in an emergency. Although people at all income levels need social supports, coping capital is especially vital to the chronically poor; as it routinely substitutes for things that money would otherwise buy. Some of the most important supports we all rely on, though, are emotional and not material.

It should be noted, however, that although these two forms of social capital overlap in key ways- a supportive relative, for example, may provide one with child care so that one can get an education to get ahead (de Souza Briggs, pg. 179). Initially, adolescents who moved to other neighborhoods had trouble in their new school, but after their first year their grades improved dramatically. Movers were also more likely to finish high school, graduate from college and obtain employment.

The programs aimed at moving Latinos and students of other ethnicities out of the ghetto and into better neighborhoods have beneficial results for those who participate in them. The opposition for these programs is also great because they are compared to school vouchers. Education groups state that these programs give preference to some students over others because these programs are not large enough to help every student in need. Critics also state that these programs neglect the inner-city because they only extract individuals.

home; and patriarchal family structures. Additionally, the model

these thriving students is to become a solid source of income for their families, while providing themselves with a better way of life. Some La

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

So far, the first three chapters have focused on the problems that affect the educational experience of Latino students. Examples have been given to demonstrate why Latinos have a hard time performing adequately in school. To help Latino students with their struggles, several policies have been crafted, but they ultimately fail because they assume that Latino students, like their white counterparts, are situated on a level playing field. This study identified problems in areas that are not usually noted by policy m

schools. Researchers labeled the high performing schools as effective (Solorzano & Solorzano, pg. 303). In theory, the effective schools model does not reject the idea that family social class correlates with a student's achievement, "but challenges the position that the correlations are the result of minority and lower income student attributes, as is argued in the genetic and cultural determinist models" (Solorzano & Solorzano, pg. 303). It rather focuses on differences in schools such as structural (i.e., how a school is organized), resource and process (i.e., programs available in schools and how they are administered), which are characteristics of the school determinist model. In the end, researchers were able to develop a profile of five school-related variables that distinguish effective from non-effective schools. These five variables, as stated in the previous chapter, were (1) high expectations and responsibility for student learning, (2) strong instructional leadership, (3) emphasis on basic skill acquisition, (4) frequent monitoring of a student's progress, and (5) an orderly and safe school environment (Solorzano & Solozano, pg. 303).

What follows is an in depth description of each variable and how they can be adopted by LAUSD schools to improve the educational performance of their students. Practices created by ERIC (Educational Research and Improvement Center) will also be utilized in order to promote the achievement of Latino students. The descriptions will also include examples and suggestions to meet the specific needs of Latino students attending schools in the LAUSD.

1. High expectations and responsibility for student learning

The third chapter illustrated several instances where school counselors and teachers held low expectations toward Latino students. These expectations resulted in

students performing poorly or being enrolled in courses that did not prepare students for college. Education researchers have discovered that lower teacher em her e

responsibility for student learning. For this to hold, ERIC suggests the following:

Teachers should teach content so that it interests and challenges Hispanic students. They should communicate high expectations, respect, and interest; understand the roles of language, race, culture, and gender in schooling; and engage parents and the community in the education of their children. Teachers should receive professional development to promote their ability to develop and use strategies that facilitate student learning and communication with Hispanic families. (ERIC, March 2000)

In order for this approach to work teachers in the LAUSD must work collaboratively to assure that their instruction is offered to every single student. This would mean that female students should not be alienated from certain courses (i.e. science and math courses) due to their gender. Similarly, courses geared toward female students should also be open to male students. To further assure that a student is learning ERIC suggests the following:

Each Hispanic student should have an adult in the school committed to nurturing a personal sense of self-worth and supporting the student's efforts to succeed in school. (ERIC, March 2000)

Having supportive individuals in schools has been proven to help the academic performance of Latino students. Evidence suggests that Latino teachers usually take the role of supportive adults to high school students, which in turn causes students to increase their academic performance. Schools in the LAUSD could benefit by following the example given by Lennox Middle School (Lennox, CA), which created the "Adopt a Student" program that provides an hour a day of teacher student-contact. Schools could also create programs where students in higher school grades adopt students in lower grades and aid them with any problem a student might have.

Ysleta Elementary (El Paso, TX), also serves as an example of a school that is committed to the education of its students. In an effort to ensure that students were learning, receiving a balanced curricula, and building social capital teachers at Ysleta

Elementary aligned their curricula with one another and abandoned the practice of placing all classes of the same grade level in adjoining sections of a building. As an alternative, Ysleta created vertical teams of teachers, from kindergarten through the fifth grade, who plan together and teach in a common area (CO, pg. 1997). The teams allowed teachers to develop personal relationships with students over six years of age and this allowed teachers to make sure that the students

an additional effort to support teachers when they are gearing their students towards college. This would mean that a principal would actively support teachers who are seeking to organize externships, internships, and college fairs for their students. Additionally, principals should require graduating students to create a "senior portfolio" which includes the following items:

Résumé

A minimum of two letters of recommendation

A minimum of two awards received by the student

A personal statement and or biography

A "senior portfolio" is an important item because it will familiarize students with the kinds of documents that jobs require. This item is also vital for students who may not be considering college immediately after graduation. Several high schools in the LAUSD do not require students to submit a "senior portfolio" before graduating because they are under the impression that students will do it on their own. Nevertheless, if a student is not required to submit a portfolio the student will usually not do it.

Principals must also make sure to include parents as part of a student's educational experience. Many parents feel like outsiders because their child's school is not welcoming. Thus, principals should create activities and an environment that will enable parents to be actively involved. (The details of parent involvement will be discussed later.)

3. Emphasis on the Acquisition of Basic Skills

Schools that have difficulties improving the academic performance of their students frequently do not know what they want to do or what direction they want to take. In order for schools to be effective they must stress an academic program, have clear academic goals, show commitment to reach those goals, form an environment where the

goals can be achieved, and take responsibility for achieving those goals (Solorzano & Solorzano, pg. 306). More importantly, the goals that a school is attempting to reach should be defined by principals, teachers, community members, parents, and students. If this is done nurturing environments will be created for students both in and out of school. In determining the progress of students towards a set of established goals, many believe that minority students should be evaluated with other tools besides traditional standardized tests (e.g. performance based, portfolio).

students to acquire higher order skills like problem solving, critical thinking, logic, and creativity. Moreover, schools offering bilingual education programs (which have been

rather than as a supplement to it. To further increase the acquisition of skills of every student ERIC suggests:

All students should have access to a high-quality, relevant, and interesting curriculum that treats their leavailable options for their lives, and demands student investment in learning. Schools should have high quality up to date resources necessary for an effective education. They should reconfigure time, space and staffing patterns to provide students with the supports they need to achie

mean that both teachers and counselors would have to create an environment where negative attitudes that hold Latinos in low regard are eliminated. Motivating students to enroll in harder courses (i.e., honor and advanced placement courses) would insure that

schools do not limit their goals to basic skill acquisition but also aim them at developing higher order skills. Teachers instructing English-learners should attempt to include material that is part of the school's overall curriculum. Doing so will prevent English-learners from feeling out of place once they are immersed into mainstream classes.

Schools should monitor a student's progress with repeated measures for identifying problems early and prescribing individual solutions to solve them Monitoring, assessment, and evaluation instruments and processes should be linguistically and culturally sensitive to Latino Students

To further assure that schools are adequately monitoring the progress of students, Eric suggests the following:

Schools should replicate effective programs by monitoring the effectiveness of programs and trying to improve them and replace them with more reliable strategies.

Schools should emphasize the prevention of problems, and be aggressive in responding to early warning signs that a student is disengaging from school.

Schools and alternative programs should be coordinated. (ERIC, March 2000)

Besides following the suggestions offered above, schools in the LAUSD should work to make sure that programs are coordinated so that they do not interfere with one another.

For instance, "Open Court" is a program that has helped many elementary students improve their scores on standardized tests, yet at times teachers are unable to cover the

5. Orderly and Safe School Environment

If students are to improve their academic performance they must feel comfortable in the school setting. It is for this reason that schools must assure that they provide an orderly and safe school environment. For schools in the LAUSD serving Latino and other minority students the following should be considered:

Increase in hall monitoring: at times many students fail to grasp the subject matter in class because it is easy for them to wander the school's halls and avoid class

Keeping an eye on intruders: schools may have the problem of individuals entering the campus to disrupt students. If this is the case schools should increase their monitoring

Establish a sense of community: schools would find in it their interest to develop relationships with parents and community groups in order to develop a safe community in and out of school

Staff stability: schools must attempt to keep teacher transient or turnover rates to a minimum and avoid becoming a dumping ground for problem teachers from other parts of the district

Respect in the classroom: teachers must make every student feel comfortable inside of the classroom in order for them to perform adequately

Students attending LAUSD schools should feel comfortable and be part of an environment where learning and personal growth is prioritized and encouraged:

Schools (especially high schools) should be safe and inviting places to learn. They should personalize programs and services that succeed with Hispanic students, give them the opportunity to assume positions of leadership and responsibility (to counteract the lure of gangs), target them for prosocial roles, and protect them from intimidation. (ERIC, March 2000)

As mentioned before, high school principals should strive to create opportunities for students that can enable them to be better prepared for college. Creating opportunities where students can have internships or externships will develop the confidence of students, allow them to communicate easier with others, and it will also place them in leadership positions. Teachers should also make sure that certain students are not being disrespected in the classroom by other peers. English language learners are usually prone

to disrespect by others when they have difficulties communicating in English; teachers must make sure that instances like these do not occur so that English language learners are not discouraged from speaking English.

Other Related Factors: Parent Involvement

The five variables or characteristics of the "Effective schools" model do not originally include parent involvement, but the model does consider it to be a vital component of any school attempting to follow the effective schools model. The involvement of parents in the education of Latino students is vital, especially since Latino parents usually have higher aspirations for their children than White parents (Solorzano & Solorzano, pg. 307).

Schools should recruit Hispanic parents and extended families into a partnership of equals for educating Hispanic students. Parents should be helped to envision a future for their children and a reasonable means by which to plan for and achieve it. Schools should work to overcome stereotyping that prevents the staff from assuming that parents have an investment in their children's achievement. (ERIC, March 2000)

Schools in the LAUSD can create great outcomes for their students if they worked with a core group of parents that utilize a peer approach to involve other parents, while being sensitive to their schedule when meetings are to be arranged (i.e., scheduling some meetings on weekends). Schools should promote the goal of graduation to maintain the focus of students and work with parents to assure their child will graduate. Promoting such a goal will "inoculate students against the negative social messages their ethnicity provokes" (ERIC, March 2000).

Schools can also follow the example of the Garden Grove Unified School District, where a center costing nearly \$2 million was created (Luna, 2003). The center allows students to work alongside their parents while learning. Besides serving families from

Range of services:

Pre-college program

Educational Strategies:

The key element of a college preparation program is the ability to provide students with the information and experiences necessary for post-secondary attainment. An effective program uses a wide variety of teaching strategies to offer students different types of relevant experiences and to ensure learning, including the following: direct teaching in a variety of content areas, summer enrichment programs, individual and group counseling, tutoring, college visits and courses, peer and adult mentoring, and motivational speakers. (ERIC, November 2000)

The suggestions mentioned above would increase the effectiveness of college programs. Schools in the LAUSD, however, should make an attempt to include parents in the programs; since many Latino parents do not know how the college preparation process operates. Including parents will also allow them to may sure that their children are making efforts to successfully complete the college preparation program.

Types of Support

Academic Support:

In order for a college program to be effective students must be provided with rich academic content and promote their intellectual development (Oesterreich, 2000):

Pipeline courses:

These include algebra, geometry, calculus, biology, chemistry, and physics so that students gain the knowledge necessary for standardized testing; a transcript for a well-rounded, competitive college application; and the skills to succeed in college courses. Close monitoring of students' selection and successful completion of the courses should begin as early as junior high school. (ERIC, November 2000)

College counselors should make sure that students are enrolled in the courses necessary to attend college. Schools should also make sure that students are not tracked into courses that do not enrich and prepare the students to attend college. Increasing the number of Latinas in pipeline courses should also be a goal for many high schools. Finally, certain courses required for college are not offered in some high schools;

therefore high schools should provide students with all the accommodations necessary for students to take them at a local community college.

Study Skills:

Students need to master strategies to excel in these pipeline courses. Workshops and courses teach how to take notes, study, and complete homework assignments. Supportive networks, such as peer study groups and one on one tutoring provide additional learning opportunities. Supplemental coursework adapted to students' particular learning needs augments existing curricula. (ERIC, November 2000)

To prevent students from losing the skills acquired during school, track schools need to hold classes during vacation breaks. Doing so will prevent students from losing newly acquired skills over the break period. This period would also be ideal to have English-learners focus on catching up on any material that they had difficulties with.

Test Preparation:

Many students are now required to negotiate high school, college, state, and nationally developed high stake tests to ensure admittance into higher education. Thus, the most useful college preparation programs offer courses or workshops that focus exclusively on a student's preparation for each required exam. (ERIC, November 2000)

LAUSD schools need to focus on preparing students for the S.A.T. exam, since it is the exam that most colleges require for admission. In addition, students need to be informed about fee waivers because the price of the exams discourages students from taking it. Undocumented students may also shy away from taking the exam because the exam application asks for a social security number. Counselors need to tell students in this situation, that providing a social security number is optional and that the Educational Testing Service (ETS) also provides special pin numbers.

High Expectations:

Students in college preparation programs for minority youth in low-income neighborhoods, traditionally stigmatized as "at-risk," should be viewed as highly talented individuals who can achieve their goals. Thus, programs for them should be geared

Cultural Affirmation:

For minority students from low-income neighborhoods, success in school and college

Aid Application Process:

Filling out financial aid packets and meeting deadlines for scholarships, loans, and grants are crucial for securing necessary funding for college. Simply making forms available and deadlines explicit is important, but programs which help families negotiate the mass paperwork, including reproducing tax forms and preparing applications for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Pell Grants, and scholarships tend to secure more funding for students. (ERIC, November 2000)

Latino parents should be informed of every step that is necessary in order for their

attend, since they are the ones that are going to attend it.

College Visits:

Opportunities for students to participate in university life, programs, and resources are essential elements of college preparation programs. Programs partnered with universities or colleges can offer summer enrichment programs enabling students to live and study on campus. College classrooms can be the site of an after-school program, a test preparation module, or an enrichment course. Students can utilize computer rooms, the library, and sports/exercise equipment on campus. Programs that cannot directly use higher education facilities can take students in college trips and to local college fairs and recruitment presentations. (ERIC, November 2000)

Programs should attempt to include every type of student in college visits. Usually many college programs only tend to invite students that are well on their way to attend college, while ignoring those who are undecided about enrolling in college. Students, who are uncertain about attending college, will tend to decide to apply once they have visited a college campus. Programs would also find it beneficial to include parents of Latino students on college trips, since it will also expose them to the college environment and possibly eliminate any uncertainties they have about their children attending college.

Necessary Competencies

Social and Cultural Capital:

Student differences in social and cultural capital create differences in college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. Social capital for students preparing for college is the availability of information-sharing networks about college and financial aid. Cultural capital is the value placed on obtaining a college education, and the information available about the means of acquiring one. Effective programs create this capacity by teaching social norms, values, and expected behaviors necessary for college admittance and persistence. (ERIC, November 2000)

Programs should use the values of Latino students to let them know that the college environment is adequate for them. More importantly, programs would find it advantageous to let Latinos students develop networking relationships with Latinos who have graduated from college as well as students who are currently attending college.

So,c -0.0005Tw 1e2 Critique:

lead many readers to conclude that no viable solutions can be found for these problems. Nevertheless, the strategies and solutions offered in this chapter can enable Latino students to succeed in school despite the present barriers. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, many solutions offered to help alleviate the problems encountered by Latino students depend too much on money or ignore the input of teachers, students, or parents. The recommendations suggested here depend on teachers, students, parents, and community members in order to be effective and were created with their input in mind. If all of the groups mentioned above participate and make a collaborative effort to make these recommendations work, strong social networks will be created and these networks will create nourishing environments for students both in and out of school. These same social networks will also be responsible for enabling Latino students to overcome barriers, excel in school, and ultimately attend college.

- -10 students were in advanced placement courses
- -10 students were in honor courses
- -15 students were in regular courses
- -15 were in English as a second language (E.S.L.) courses

The students who were part of this study were selected based on the courses they were enrolled and on their willingness to share their educational and personal background. I wanted to get a broad perspective of the overall educational experience of Latino students, which is why students from every honor, advanced placement, regular, and bilingual course were selected. I also wanted to include the voice of both genders in this study. As mentioned before, the fifty students were split up into groups of ten to make five focus groups and they participated in numerous confidential interviews that spanned for a period of five months.

The study also had the input of ten teachers and fourteen parents. Thomas Jefferson High School was the only school that had four teachers participate in the study; only two teachers were interviewed at each of the other three high schools. Each teacher only took part in one interview. Of the ten teachers that participated:

- -Five were male and five were female
- -Three were Black
- -Two were Asian
- -Two were White
- -Three were Latino

The fourteen parents that were included in the study were Latino and they were divided into two groups of seven to create two focus groups. Parents were only asked to participate in one confidential interview.

Teachers: All of the teachers agreed that emphasis on basic skills should be one of the main priorities of a school. However, they felt that they did not have enough time to help every student strengthen their basic skills.

Parents: Most parents stated that they highly valued basic reading and writing skills. In addition, they stated that they often talked to their children's teacher in order to develop strategies to enhance the basic skills of students.

-Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress:

Students: Students stated that they felt state administered exams are too long and sometimes too frequent. They also said that they disliked the fact that some teachers were adopting teaching strategies where they would only teach to the test.

Teachers: Many teachers felt that some tests were to frequent and they disliked the fact that some tests took three days to be completely administered.

Parents: Many parents disliked the fact that their children had to take several exams. Many also worried that their children experienced high levels of anxiety before taking an exam.

-Orderly and Safe School Environment:

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