

Summer 2010

Resources available for Latino parents in selected districts of the Seattle, Washington area

Morgan Beale
James Madison University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019>



Part of the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Beale, Morgan, "Resources available for Latino parents in selected districts of the Seattle, Washington area" (2010). *Educational Specialist*. 84.
<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019/84>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Specialist by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.

Resources available for Latino Parents
in Selected Districts of the Seattle, Washington Area

Morgan E. Beale

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Educational Specialist

Department of Graduate Psychology

August 2010

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Abstract	v
I. Introduction	1
II. Review of the Literature	3
No Child Left Behind and Its Implications	3
Latino and Caucasian Students in Washington State: Addressing the Achievement Gap	4
Parental Involvement: A Requirement of NCLB	6
Barriers in Latino Parental Involvement	7
Resources for Increasing Latino Parental Involvement	9
Statement of the Hypotheses	11
III. Methodology	13
Participants	13
Procedure	14
Instrumentation	17
IV. Results	23
V. Discussion	29
Discussion of Results	29
Implications for School Psychologists	35

Limitations of the Current Study	36
Considerations for Future Research	37
VI. Appendix A: Consent Letter	39
VII. Appendix B: Interview Questions	41
VIII. Appendix C: Site Coordinator Letter of Permission	42
IX. Appendix D: Summaries and Quotes of Responses Given	43
X. Appendix E: List of Resources for School Districts	49
XI. References	51

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographic Information on District Informants	14
Table 2. Summary of Total Student Enrollment for Caucasian and Latino Students	17
Table 3. Summary of Graduation and Dropout Rates of Caucasian and Latino Students in Select Districts	18
Table 4. Summary of WASL Reading and Writing passing percentages for 10 th grade Caucasian and Latino Students in Select Districts	20

Abstract

Research has established that diversity in student populations within U.S schools is increasing at a rapid rate. With Latino students constituting the fastest growing minority population, it becomes more important to establish a positive home-school connection with parents. In addition, while some progress has been made in closing the achievement gap between Caucasian and minority students, this gap continues to show minority students achieving at a rate much lower than Caucasian students. The current study examined what resources school districts offer for parents from ethnic and racially diverse backgrounds, specifically addressing Latino parents. Four districts were picked out of a random sample of 15 school districts around the Seattle, Washington area based off data comparison between Caucasian and Latino students in three areas measuring student achievement. One informant from each of these districts selected participated by answering a seven item, open-ended questionnaire completed through interview techniques. Overall findings support that, no matter how small or large the achievement gap is between Caucasian and Latino students in their district, informants are aware of the need to seek out additional resources and methods to include Latino parents in the educational system. Results also indicated that school systems need to provide more trainings to staff on the Latino culture, in order to learn better ways to communicate with them, give them the pertinent information they need to know about the school system, and to create a more welcoming school environment. Implications and limitations of the

current study and directions for future research are also discussed.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

School psychologists have an ethical obligation to participate in ongoing professional development to obtain new knowledge and to work towards becoming a culturally competent practitioner in the school setting (Bursztyn, Cajigas-Segredo, Esquivel, Hess, Ingraham, Lopez, Nahari, & Rogers, 1999). This is especially true as their school climate is becoming increasingly more diverse with the quickly changing demographics within schools. According to the U.S Census Bureau (2009), currently 15.1% of the total U.S population are comprised of people of Hispanic or Latino origin. This percentage constitutes the largest minority group population. As it is predicted in 2050, half of the total U.S population will be those of Hispanic or Latino origin. With that being said, it is a concern for educators that Latino students, in general, have the highest dropout rate in the U.S and make up the largest under-educated group in the U.S population (Tinkler, 2002). While there are numerous causes for a higher dropout rate and lower academic achievement, increasing parental involvement has been an effective intervention used in trying to close the achievement gap between Latino students and Caucasian students (Alvarez-Jimenez, Darnell, & Kuperminc, 2007).

Numerous studies have linked a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement (Tinkler, 2002). School districts around the country have created culturally sensitive programs for those families where English is a

second language in order to enhance parental involvement. For example, one particular system near Seattle, Washington, hands out welcome packets to new families in their language that includes a dictionary of school district terminology and programs, an overview of how the district is organized, and who to contact with specific questions or concerns (“Welcome,” 2009). Other school districts have a Family Support Worker Program, where these workers serve as a liaison among parents, staff, and social service agencies in order to provide appropriate community resources and to identify families needs (“Family Support,” 2009).

This study will focus on selected school districts around the Seattle, Washington area. Whether serving 2,000 or 45,000 students, all Seattle area districts offer different resources and/or programs to increase parental involvement, which ultimately can lead to higher academic achievement. Informants from selected school districts around the Seattle, Washington area will be asked to discuss what kinds of resources are currently available for parents in their district, specifically Latino parents. This data will then be compared by the researcher.

Review of the Literature

No Child Left Behind and its implications

According to Harris & Irons (2007), student achievement has been a growing concern across the United States for public school reform, as the achievement gap has continued to widen between Caucasian students and minority students. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was passed by former President Bush, with the goal of ensuring all children would receive a high quality education and also to hold schools accountable for making sure children were progressing (United States Department of Education, 2009). As part of holding schools accountable, NCLB also requires that school districts disseminate report cards to parents indicating which districts are succeeding and why (United States Department of Education, 2009). In the State of Washington, district report cards contain information on total school or district enrollment, gender, ethnicity, and Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) scores (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2008). NCLB also requires each student to take state assessments every year from grades 3-8 and grade 10. This is to be able to compare schools or districts to one another to see which ones are obtaining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in meeting state goals and which ones need further improvement (United States Department of Education, 2009). According to the State Education Data Center (2009), in order to further meet its goals, the NCLB public website allows users to use a link to navigate through specific states to find out relevant

information on a specific district or a school. This information includes, but is not limited to: community demographics, graduation rates, dropout rates, attendance rates, and WASL scores broken down by grade, ethnicity, and by which groups have met or not met AYP in all subject areas (reading, writing, math, and science).

Latino and Caucasian students in Washington state: Addressing the Achievement Gap

According to Frisby & Reynolds (2005), there is no consensus if the term *Hispanic* or *Latino* is the best or most appropriate term to use for those persons from Spanish speaking countries. These terms have been used broadly by the U.S. Census Bureau since the 1970's and for the purposes of this project, they will be defined as all Spanish-speaking people. In 2007, with Latino students making up 14% of the total student population in Washington State, use of the data available from NCLB becomes more important to utilize when working on measures to close the ever-present achievement gap (State Education Data Center, 2009). According to the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (2006), the number of Latino students has increased 25% over the past 20 years within the public school system. While Latino graduation rates have increased from 48.9% to 60.5% from 2003 to 2007, they still constitute the second lowest on-time graduation rates, only behind those of American Indian/Alaska Native students (State Education Data Center, 2009). A study conducted by the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (2006) lists many reasons for these poor graduation rates which include cultural differences and stereotypes, a lack of

parental encouragement, poor quality teaching, and poor English skills. In contrast, Caucasian students reported the second highest graduation rates at 75.6% in 2007, coming in second to Asian/Pacific Islander students (State Education Data Center, 2009).

Correlating with graduation rates, Caucasian students reported the second lowest dropout rates at 4.9%, falling behind Asian/Pacific Islander students (State Education Data Center, 2009). In contrast, the dropout rates for Latino students across all school levels in Washington State from 2007 indicate that they had an 8.1% dropout rate, which was the third-highest dropout rate in the state, behind those of American Indian/Alaska Native and Other Race (State Education Data Center, 2009). According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2009), barely half of Latino students earn high school diplomas with their peers. While there is no one reason they drop out, research has shown that difficulty transitioning to high school, lack of basic skills, and low attendance are all risk factors that can be a barrier to staying in school. Those that do drop out are in danger of limiting their chances to obtain a good job and a promising future, as many dropouts earn lower paychecks.

According to the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs (2006), WASL scores for Latino students are also below the state average. The WASL is a test used to meet state and federal testing requirements. It is administered every spring in grades 3-8 and 10 in reading and math, as well as in writing during grades 4, 7, and 10 and in science during grades 5, 8, and 10 (“Washington state assessment system,” n.d.).

A 2006 report indicated that while Caucasian students were meeting AYP goals on the WASL, Latino students did not meet AYP in reading and math combined in the past 6 years, indicating that steps need to be taken to close this gap (Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs, 2006).

Parental Involvement: A Requirement of NCLB

According to the United States Department of Education (2009), No Child Left Behind also requires schools to create new ways to increase parental involvement in their child's education. While parental involvement has many different definitions, generally it refers to a wide range of parental activities at school and in the home (Alvarez-Jimenez et. al, 2007). Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (2007) give examples of home involvement activities that include helping a child with homework, reviewing for a test, or keeping track of a child's progress. School involvement activities can include taking part in a parent-teacher conference, watching a performance in a school sport or club, or attending PTA meetings or Back-to-School nights.

Each school district has its own resources to help promote parental involvement. Most important, however, is the presence of a positive school environment or climate that helps to facilitate parental involvement. Hoover-Dempsey et. al (2007) support actions to achieve this climate such as accurately informing parents of their student's progress in a timely manner and demonstrating respect for questions asked by parents. Boulton (2006) identifies various ideas school systems can use when trying to obtain and/or increase

parental involvement. One idea is to invite the whole family to parent-teacher meetings at the beginning of the year. This gesture demonstrates that the school views the family unit as being important.

Boult (2006) also mentions the idea of distributing a welcome packet, in the parent's appropriate language, to families new to the school and/or district. Within this packet, maps of the school, important phone numbers, ways families can be involved in the school, and even community information are included to help familiarize families with the district and its policies. Conducting home visits is another direct approach to convey a welcoming school atmosphere to the families directly. A visit from a specific individual or committee sends a positive message to families to become involved in their child's education. This can be worthwhile for Latino parents, who might be more reluctant to want to intrude upon the school's decisions and authority.

Barriers in Latino Parental Involvement

Reports indicate a greater percentage of Caucasian parents attend typical school-related events, such as school meetings or volunteering, than Latino parents (Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). Other reports indicate that while Latino parents may not advocate for their children's education in ways seen typical in American society, they greatly value the educational opportunities given to their children (Behnke et. al, 2009). A study conducted by Solorzano (2007) asked Latino and Caucasian parents, which included mothers, fathers, stepmothers, grandmothers, or other relatives, what their

child's school could do better to involve parents. Common themes were to increase and improve parental involvement and to improve the communication between the home and the school. Latino parents specifically requested ways to improve communication between home and school such as sending home "more information in both languages" and to "be more specific with notes sent home."

While language barriers are often present to hinder parental involvement, other barriers could be present as well. According to Sosa (n.d.), time could affect Latino parental involvement, especially if both parents work. Latino parents may not be as involved as they would like as well because of long work hours and little free time to visit the school for a meeting with a teacher. For migrant families who have young children in the home, finding a caretaker to look after their children while the parent attends a school function could be difficult, especially since they may not have any other family within close proximity. Aside from harboring a cultural understanding that it is uncommon to interfere with school decisions, those parents who have received an education in a different country may not know anything about their child's school policies or procedures, which could then lead to school personnel, especially teachers, harboring more negative opinions about the lack of Latino parental involvement. For those parents who do attend parent-teacher conferences, Back-to-School nights, or even PTA meetings, the heavy use of jargon can cause further confusion and frustration in home-school communication.

According to Ramirez (2003), many view the term 'parental involvement' as referring to those parents who have the resources to attend school functions, while those parents who don't attend are viewed as uncaring. Latino families generally have high poverty rates and low socioeconomic status. While many of these parents are unable to come to their child's school for functions, whether it is because of time, transportation, or any other reason, it is commonly assumed by teachers and administrators that they have no desire to take part in their child's education. However, contrary to many educator's opinions and beliefs, most Latino parents want success for their children in school (Espinosa, 1995). Programs have been initiated in urban schools to include parents within their Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA), where the school has recognized the lack of transportation present that deters Latino parents and families from attending PTSA events (Ramirez, 2003). Schools also set up neighborhood meetings to encourage easier involvement for families with low socioeconomic standing (Ramirez, 2003).

Resources for Increasing Latino Parental Involvement

According to Diaz, Quezada, & Sanchez (2003), Latino parents tend to respond more positively to personal communication by the school, including invitations to have lunch with their child and having conversations on school premises with parents who are there to pick up their child before or after school. Research has also shown that one of the most effective methods of reaching out to Latino parents is to conduct home visits

(Claro, Gamarra, Parra, Pena, & Silva, 2008). According to Tinkler (2002), research has supported the use of home visits because Latino parents perceive the visits as an extension of courtesy by the school. Parents have felt that when school personnel, especially teachers, have taken the time to come to their house, it demonstrates that they do genuinely care about their children, which increases the parents' positive perception of the school. Having a home liaison worker or parent-coordinator that acts as a communication facilitator between the home, school, and sometimes community is another resource that is linked positively to Latino parental involvement. This liaison or worker usually is native to that specific culture and speaks the parents' language fluently, which can be helpful when taking other cultural considerations into perspective. One system in Virginia uses home liaison workers, who provide a variety of services. These services include interpreting during meetings, answering questions parents have, checking in on problem behavior, conducting their 'Welcome to School' orientations, and also connecting Latino families with any outside community resources the parents need (N. Barge (personal communication, March 11, 2009).

According to Claro et al. (2008), another way to increase Latino parental involvement is to send home bilingual newsletters that inform parents of upcoming events and school news. Other methods can include working with interpreters, scheduling regular activities or workshops in the schools that parents have expressed interest in, conducting regular trainings for school staff on the Latino culture, and having

ESL or Spanish language classes available for both parents as well as teachers. Another effective method includes parents of high school seniors acting as mentors for parents of incoming freshman, so that any concerns parents with new students have can be addressed (Ramirez, 2003). Because the extended family is just as important as parents for many families, schools can also invite these family members to events in the school and should be sensitive to include them in the education process (Tinkler, 2002).

Statement of the Hypotheses

The primary purpose of this study is to learn what resources select districts around Seattle, Washington are implementing to increase parental involvement, specifically for Latino parents. The goal is to meet with four district informants, chosen from a random selection of districts based on how small and large the achievement gap is between Latino and Caucasian students. The main hypotheses for this study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Informants from selected school districts with the smallest achievement gap between Latino and Caucasian students will report a greater number of resources available for Latino/Hispanic parents.

Hypothesis 2. Informants from selected school districts with the largest achievement gap between Latino and Caucasian students will report a smaller number of resources available for Latino/Hispanic parents.

Hypothesis 3. Informants from districts with the smallest achievement gap between Latino and Caucasian students will report a greater number of resources

available for families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Hypothesis 4. Informants from districts with the largest achievement gap between Latino and Caucasian students will report a smaller number of resources available for families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds.

Methodology

Participants

Eight random school districts within 60 miles of the Seattle, Washington area were researched by the examiner on demographic information. Areas looked at included student enrollment, on-time graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and 10th grade reading and writing WASL scores. Only reading and writing WASL scores were addressed, as it is a Washington State requirement that students pass both of these to graduate. Upon further review of the data, an informant was consulted in order to obtain appropriate contact names in order to gather information regarding resources available for Latino parents in their district. After meeting with the informant, seven more districts were added, increasing the total to 15 districts. Data on student enrollment, on-time graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and 10th grade reading and writing WASL scores between Caucasian and Latino students were compared amongst the 15 districts to determine which two districts showed the smallest and which two had the largest achievement gap.

For data analysis, the goal was to collect information from a minimum of four district informants. To account for attrition, research was requested for eight in case certain districts did not wish to participate in this project. Out of the eight, four informants from selected districts agreed to participate and are coded below (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Information on District Informants

	Smallest Gap	Smallest Gap	Largest Gap	Largest Gap
<u>School District</u>	I	K	O	F
<u>Title/Position</u>	Associate Superintendent/Chief Instructional Officer	Hispanic/Latino Coordinator	Migrant Education Supervisor	ESL Program Coordinator
<u>Length of Time in Position</u>	1 ½- 2 years	1 year	5 years	did not give

Procedure

Prior to the study, permission from the Institutional Review Board of James Madison University was given to conduct the research project. Eight random school districts around the Seattle, Washington area were researched through their district websites. The researcher also looked up total student enrollment, on-time graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and WASL scores for reading, math, and writing broken down by grade for each of these districts. Originally, data was only looked at for Latino students, but for the purposes of the study, data was compiled for both Latino and Caucasian students in order to address the achievement gap. Data from 2008-2009 was collected through online reports from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which broke down Washington State student enrollment, on-time graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and WASL scores in all subjects by district, grade, and ethnicity (see Tables 2-4). For WASL data, only 10th grade reading and writing scores

were analyzed, due to these assessments being a state requirement to graduate.

Information was gathered from the above four areas on Latino and Caucasian students and was put into an Excel document to compare which two districts showed the smallest achievement gap and which two showed the largest achievement gap. A problem recognized early when trying to determine which four districts were the most appropriate to include in the study was that no district would have the highest or lowest rates or scores for all measures. To determine which four districts to work with, the researcher compared statistics and rank ordered each measure amongst all 15 districts, using best judgment to determine which four were the most meaningful and appropriate for the study.

Information was also gathered from school personnel on appropriate district contacts, from which seven more districts were added to the study. Upon analyzing the additional districts' above statistics for Latino and Caucasian students, four district informants were emailed regarding the study in mid-May 2010. The consent form and questionnaire were attached in the email (See Appendices A and B). The consent form, in accordance with the direction of the Institutional Review Board at James Madison University, clearly indicated that informants were invited and encouraged (but not obligated) to participate in the study. An assurance of confidentiality was also included in the form.

Phone calls were made within three days of the email, unless an informant had

responded. Of the four emails sent, two forwarded the information onto a more appropriate informant and two emailed stating they would be happy to participate. Due to it being the end of the school year and not hearing back within a week from two original informants, the researcher continued to contact these informants, while emailing the next four informants. Of these next four informants, two did not wish to participate, one did not respond, and the other agreed to participate.

The data collection process took a month before all data was collected from the four informants. Data was obtained from three original informants and from one who was emailed after no responses were received from other informants. A variety of methods was used to obtain data, including one face-to-face interview, two interviews over the phone, and one through email. Face-to-face and phone interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes and, of these three, only two informants gave consent to be audio-taped. A letter of permission was also signed when meeting with the informant on district premises for the face-to-face interview (See Appendix C). Ideally, face-to-face interviews were wanted, so better information could be received and so the session could be audio-taped, if given the permission to do so. However, given the timing of the study, data was accepted whichever way was best and easiest for the informant.

Once all data was obtained, interview transcripts were created from the face-to-face and phone interviews and information emailed to the researcher was copied onto one page. For data analysis, the researcher used a pawing and cutting and sorting method to

find themes and subthemes within the information (Bernard & Ryan, 2003).

Instrumentation

Most of the information about each of the 15 school districts is public knowledge obtained from the districts' website or from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) website. The seven item questionnaire which consists of questions about parental involvement, what resources are available for families from diverse backgrounds, and what resources are available for Latino parents is a short and simple questionnaire created by the researcher. The few questionnaires available in the literature assessing parental involvement were not relevant or applicable to this study.

Table 2

Summary of Total Student Enrollment for Caucasian and Latino Students

<u>District</u>	<u>Total Students</u>	<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>
A	2,553	2,061 (81%)	225 (8.8%)
B	5,061	2,985 (59%)	362 (7.2%)
C	9,168	5,662 (61.8%)	584 (6.4%)
D	12,242	5,670 (46.3%)	2,169 (17.7%)
E	14,024	5,093 (36.3%)	2,442 (17.4%)
F	14,454	7,622 (52.7%)	2,654 (18.4%)
G	14,936	8,840 (59.2%)	2,484 (16.6%)
H	17,249	9,140 (53%)	1,359 (7.9%)
I	19,084	12,495 (65.5%)	2,081 (10.9%)
J	20,743	13,163 (63.5%)	2,172 (10.5%)
K	21,677	15,016	1,424

		(69.3%)	(6.6%)
L	22,440	9,689 (43.2%)	4,292 (19.1%)
M	27,444	13,348 (48.6%)	3,432 (12.5%)
N	29,500	14,097 (47.8%)	4,020 (13.6%)
O	45,968	19,933 (43.4%)	5,356 (11.7%)

Note. Above data reflects October 2008 enrollment. From “Demographic Information by District,” from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2009). Retrieved March 23, 2010, at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DataDownload.aspx>.

Table 3

Summary of Graduation and Dropout Rates of Caucasian and Latino students in Select Districts

<u>School Districts</u>	<u>On-Time Graduation Rates</u>	<u>High School Dropout Rates</u>
A		
Caucasian	80.4%	2.1%
Latino	73.7%	4.0%
<i>Difference</i>	6.7% > Caucasian	1.9% > Latino
B		
Caucasian	66.4%	4.5%
Latino	62.6%	5.1%
<i>Difference</i>	3.8% > Caucasian	0.8% > Latino
C		
Caucasian	89.9%	2.2%
Latino	66.0%	7.2%
<i>Difference</i>	23.9% > Caucasian	5.0% > Latino
D		
Caucasian	71.5%	6.4%
Latino	53.5%	8.1%
<i>Difference</i>	18.0% > Caucasian	1.7% > Latino
E		
Caucasian	83.5%	4.1%
Latino	67.9%	8.4%
<i>Difference</i>	15.6% > Caucasian	4.3% > Latino

F		
Caucasian	79.1%	2.8%
Latino	50.3%	8.0%
<i>Difference</i>	28.8% > Caucasian	5.2% > Latino
G		
Caucasian	84.6%	3.8%
Latino	63.1%	7.3%
<i>Difference</i>	21.5% > Caucasian	3.5% > Latino
H		
Caucasian	88.3%	0.8%
Latino	59.3%	2.3%
<i>Difference</i>	29.0% > Caucasian	1.5% > Latino
I		
Caucasian	83.8%	2.5%
Latino	81.2%	2.4%
<i>Difference</i>	2.6% > Caucasian	0.1% > Caucasian
J		
Caucasian	78.8%	5.6%
Latino	55.5%	11.9%
<i>Difference</i>	23.3% > Caucasian	6.3% > Latino
K		
Caucasian	71.4%	6.5%
Latino	59.7%	9.3%
<i>Difference</i>	11.7% > Caucasian	2.8% > Latino
L		
Caucasian	75.3%	3.2%
Latino	68.7%	4.9%
<i>Difference</i>	6.6% > Caucasian	1.7% > Latino
M		
Caucasian	79.3%	5.4%
Latino	65.7%	9.3%
<i>Difference</i>	13.6% > Caucasian	3.9% > Latino
N		
Caucasian	74.2%	5.5%
Latino	69.7%	7.3%
	<u>Graduation Rates (cont.)</u>	<u>Dropout Rates (cont.)</u>
<i>Difference</i>	4.5% > Caucasian	1.8% > Latino
O		
Caucasian	82.1%	3.7%

Latino	54.6%	11.7%
<i>Difference</i>	27.5% > Caucasian	8.0% > Latino

Note. Above data reflects the 2008-2009 school year. From “Graduation Rates by District,” from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2009). Retrieved March 23, 2010, at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DataDownload.aspx>.

Table 4

Summary of WASL Reading and Writing passing percentages for 10th grade Caucasian and Latino Students in Select Districts

<u>School District</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Writing</u>
A		
Caucasian	80.1%	98.6%
Latino	100%	90.9%
<i>Difference</i>	19.9% > Latino	7.7% > Caucasian
B		
Caucasian	62.0%	71.0%
Latino	57.1%	N/A (not enough #'s)
<i>Difference</i>	4.9% > Caucasian	N/A
C		
Caucasian	87.8%	91.2%
Latino	80.0%	88.9%
<i>Difference</i>	7.8% > Caucasian	2.3% > Caucasian
D		
Caucasian	75.8%	90.1%
Latino	65.9%	78.2%
<i>Difference</i>	10.1% > Caucasian	11.9% > Caucasian
E		
Caucasian	85.2%	86.6%
Latino	62.7%	58.0%
<i>Difference</i>	22.5% > Caucasian	28.6% > Caucasian
F		
Caucasian	89.4%	94.0%
	<u>Reading (cont.)</u>	<u>Writing (cont.)</u>
Latino	67.1%	76.1%

<i>Difference</i>	22.3% > Caucasian	17.9% > Caucasian
G		
Caucasian	59.3%	73.8%
Latino	41.3%	54.5%
<i>Difference</i>	18.0% > Caucasian	19.3% > Caucasian
H		
Caucasian	89.5%	94.5%
Latino	76.9%	78.1%
<i>Difference</i>	12.6% > Caucasian	16.4% > Caucasian
I		
Caucasian	54.2%	54.3%
Latino	41.8%	51.0%
<i>Difference</i>	12.4% > Caucasian	3.3% > Caucasian
J		
Caucasian	85.6%	89.3%
Latino	81.5%	80.5%
<i>Difference</i>	4.1% > Caucasian	8.8% > Caucasian
K		
Caucasian	66.7%	86.1%
Latino	54.3%	65.2%
<i>Difference</i>	12.3% > Caucasian	20.9% > Caucasian
L		
Caucasian	70.4%	70.9%
Latino	57.8%	60.5%
<i>Difference</i>	12.6% > Caucasian	10.4% > Caucasian
M		
Caucasian	79.5%	86.3%
Latino	56.1%	61.0%
<i>Difference</i>	23.4% > Caucasian	25.3% > Caucasian
N		
Caucasian	62.8%	72.4%
Latino	48.9%	53.9%
<i>Difference</i>	13.9% > Caucasian	18.5% > Caucasian
O		
Caucasian	88.9%	89.9%
Latino	68.0%	67.0%
<i>Difference</i>	20.9% > Caucasian	21.9% > Caucasian

Note. Above data reflects the 2008-2009 school year. From “District WASL Scores by Subgroup,” from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2009). Retrieved March 23, 2010, at <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/DataDownload.aspx>.

Data Summary

It should be noted that, for all 15 districts, data demonstrates that Latino students had a higher high school dropout rate than Caucasian students and that Caucasian students showed a higher on-time graduation rate than Latino students (see Table 3).

Data also supports Caucasian students having higher overall passing percentages on both the 10th grade reading and writing WASL (see Table 4). This information obtained through the OSPI website demonstrates that all districts were more similar than different.

Results

This section presents results of the current study, providing a summary of the open-ended information given by district informants and information surrounding the hypotheses.

Informant Responses to Open-Ended Questions about Resources available for Latino/Hispanic Parents in their Districts

Informants responded to seven open-ended questions regarding parental involvement and resources available to Latino parents in their school districts. A qualitative analysis was conducted and several themes were identified for each question. These questions are reviewed below. The method used for this qualitative analysis was the pawing and cutting and sorting method, which focuses on finding patterns and themes within text (Bernard & Ryan, 2003). Transcripts and information were read, reviewed, and highlighted and cut into meaningful piles. They were then compared to one another, both individually and within their groups, from which themes and subthemes were identified. Appendix D provides summaries of the responses given, as well as direct quotes by informants to these questions.

There were no similarities between informant responses on the first question regarding their definition of parental involvement. Of the four informants, three responded to this question. Some informants gave more of a description, whereas others gave a more generalized answer. An informant from a district reporting the largest

achievement gap noted the importance of parental involvement in the schools, but did not supply her own definition. Informants from districts reporting the smallest achievement gap noted the importance of having a welcoming environment for parents and also gave specific examples. These included the visibility of parents in schools and having a voice in their child's education.

Three of the four informants gave responses to the second question, looking at what their districts are currently doing to involve parents in the education process across all levels. One main theme was recognized throughout the transcripts and this was communication with parents through district employees, other parents, or community agencies. Informant I talked of holding sessions with the superintendent and community members and asking parents to fill out a survey regarding how they feel they're treated in the district and any other concerns they wish to bring up. Informant O discussed providing guidance to parents in the schools, specifically through other parents where they can address questions, changes, and what the district needs to improve on.

Regarding the question asking what districts were doing to involve families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, all four informants gave responses. A common theme identified was providing translator/interpreter services to families whose first language is not English. In terms of giving specific responses to this question, only informant I provided more in-depth information. An example includes engaging with families from diverse backgrounds to identify what are current barriers that cause them to

not feel welcome in the school system. Another interesting idea mentioned was increasing soccer programs at the middle school level, to try and have more involvement from other communities since soccer reaches across many cultures.

Because only one informant provided additional information on what districts were doing to involve parents and families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, hypotheses 3 and 4 were more difficult to address in this study. They will be discussed further in the discussion and limitations section.

All four informants responded to the question that asked what their district is doing to increase Latino/Hispanic parent and family involvement. Five themes were identified from the responses. The most frequent theme among all four informants was providing interpreters and translation services to parents, which is a common service provided within most school districts and supported in the literature. Other themes identified included providing translated documents to parents (informants F, O, and K), having parent home/school liaisons (informants F, O, and K), providing trainings for school personnel and parents (informants F and O), and offering English as a Second Language (ESL) classes (informants F and K). It should be noted that while only five main themes were identified, many individual district resources were mentioned by specific informants. Examples of these included providing home visits and hosting family nights with daycare services (informant O), establishing computer labs where parents can finish their educations (informant F), hosting Latino night in specific schools

to share and celebrate their culture (informant I), and offering monthly meetings for Latino parents for them to ask questions (informant K).

The results indicate that both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 were incorrect. Informants I and K, whose school districts demonstrated the smallest achievement gap between Caucasian and Latino students, reported a smaller number of available resources for Latino/Hispanic parents, instead of a greater number of resources. Hypothesis 2 was also shown to be incorrect, as informants M and O reported a greater number of resources available for Latino/Hispanic parents, as opposed to reporting a smaller number of resources given the larger achievement gap. These results will be discussed in more detail later in the discussion.

Regarding the question about what contributes to changes in the type and level of parental involvement from the elementary to the high school level, three of the four informants responded. Two themes were identified. The first theme noted by informants K and O is the issue of time. Consistent with the literature, Latino parents, in general, have limited free time to be able to be involved in school activities and organizations, like the PTA, due to long work hours or other reasons (Sosa, n.d.). The second theme identified by informants I and O is the institutional culture. The high school setting is vastly different than the elementary school setting and, for Latino parents new to the country, walking into a high school can be intimidating (informant I). Elementary schools also tend to do a better job reaching out to parents and families, but once students

go into middle and high school, the institutional culture has been that it's not the norm for parents to be as involved (informant I).

Three of the four informants responded to the question asking what efforts they want to see their district work towards to involve more Latino/Hispanic parents and families. One theme emerged from the information, which is to increase dialogue with Latino parents (informants K and I). By sitting down and talking with parents, whether on school premises or in their own home, school personnel can discuss how they can make them feel more welcome, what current barriers are, and what resources parents would like to have available to them. It should be noted that all three informants (K, I, & O) gave multiple, individual responses to this question, which will be described more in Appendix D.

Regarding the question addressing additional comments, suggestions, or challenges regarding Latino/Hispanic parental involvement in their respected districts, three of the four informants gave responses. Two themes were identified from informants. The first theme discussed by informants K & I is the issue of undocumented and illegal students. Both of these informants who have reported the smallest achievement gap discussed suspicions, as well as confirmations, of a fear of Latino parents getting involved in the school because they themselves are not a legalized citizen. The second theme brought up by informants I & O is the need for change in the educational system. In order to make Latino parents feel welcome and to increase

parental involvement, school systems need to change in order to reflect the current demographic makeup.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine what resources different districts around the Seattle, Washington area were providing or wanting to provide to Latino/Hispanic parents. This section provides a discussion of the findings of the study, with a particular emphasis on identified resources for parents from diverse backgrounds and Latino parents. Limitations and implications of the study and considerations for future research are also discussed.

Discussion of Results

Before discussing the current results, it is important to briefly describe the current study's definition of "achievement gap." Research has always shown discrepancies in state assessment scores, attendance rates, graduation rates, dropout rates, grades, and other measures between Caucasian and minority students. Discrepancies can be attributed to a number of factors including language, socioeconomic status (SES), cultural values, poverty, family values, etc. To address the achievement gap between Caucasian and Latino students, the current study only compared three measures: on-time graduation rates, high school dropout rates, and 10th grade reading and writing WASL scores. Caucasian and Latino students were compared to try and 'factor out' SES; however, many external factors, such as the ones mentioned above, could not be accounted for in this study.

Another factor that needs to be addressed is the method in which information was

obtained from informants, as well as the quality of the content received. Because the data collection process started so late in the school year, it was very difficult to get in touch with the eight selected informants. The majority of informants were emailed twice and called three times within a two week time frame. Despite this method, the majority of informants did not respond, did not wish to participate, or agreed to participate but then could not be gotten in touch with again. Of those that did participate, only informants I, K, and O provided information to all seven questions. Informant F only provided answers to the two questions pertaining to hypotheses 2 and 4 and this information was sent across different days in multiple emails. Responses to the other questions could not be obtained, due to non-availability with the end of the school year. So, while information was received from informant F relevant to the hypotheses, the data is still incomplete and insufficient. Incidentally, while all four informants gave examples of what resources their districts are implementing for diverse families and Latino families, the length of time these resources have been in place and their effectiveness were not addressed.

Results of the current study indicate nonsupport for hypotheses 1 & 2 and potential support for hypotheses 3 & 4. All informants reported providing resources for Latino parents and for parents and families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, informants I and K, whose districts showed a smaller achievement gap between Caucasian and Latino students based on the measures addressed, noted a smaller number

of resources available for Latino parents instead of a larger number. This could be the result of many factors. Informant I, who is an Associate Superintendent/Chief Instructional Officer, was not the original informant recommended to participate. Originally, district I's ESL Coordinator was asked to participate, but she referred informant I to take part in the study. Therefore, it is unknown who the 'best and most appropriate' informant was in this district, so a number of resources available to Latino parents could have been left out of the interview. It should be noted that informant I mentioned two specific resources available for Latino parents in the face-to-face interview. Informant K's interview took place over the phone and permission was not given to audiotape the conversation. Therefore, some resources mentioned could have been missed by the researcher, as the conversation was being typed while interviewing over the phone. Despite having to type out the conversation, informant K gave six specific resources available for Latino parents in her district. Some examples of resources included sending out newsletters in Spanish, offering classes to teach English to parents, and recruiting Spanish speaking parents to call other parents to get them acquainted to their child's school building.

Hypothesis 2, which stated informants in districts with the largest achievement gap between Caucasian and Latino students will report a smaller number of resources for Latino parents, was also not supported from the findings. Informant F, who emailed her answers pertaining to this question, gave 12 resources they offer to Latino parents, both

district-wide and at specific levels. District-wide examples include interpreter training, translating materials to Spanish, and purchasing translated school materials so parents can help with homework. Examples at the different school levels include training parents to be liaisons between the school and home, having ongoing partnerships with community agencies that work with the Latino population, and offering programs to discuss college information with parents. Informant O, whose district had the highest student population of 45, 968, also gave a high number of resources available to Latino parents. Her interview was also over the phone and permission was given for it to be audio-taped. Informant O listed 6 resources available, including providing training for parents to help as liaisons, trainings for Latino parents in different areas to help them understand school policies and to ask questions, and partnering with community educators and members that help facilitate Latino parental involvement. Providing home visits was another resource provided by informant O, which is heavily supported in the literature as a means to create a positive home-school connection with Latino parents (Tinkler, 2002).

It is believed that both districts reporting the highest achievement gap (F & O) have more resources available for Latino parents than were mentioned by the informants. Aside from receiving direct information from informant F, additional ESL teachers and staff were notified to provide information as to what resources were being provided in their specific schools. Also, because of the limited timeline to collect this information, informant F gave brief descriptions of current resources available district-wide. If

provided with additional time and asked at a different time of year, more detailed information is likely to have been provided. When conducting a phone interview with informant O, she mentioned that since working as the Migrant Education Supervisor she mainly works with high school Latino/Latina students in her district. While she gave many detailed and specific resources available to Latino parents, more resources might have been provided if she worked at different levels and was knowledgeable about those resources.

Despite having nonsupport for hypotheses 1 & 2, these results could also be accurate. School districts reporting a smaller achievement gap, who also reported having less resources for Latino parents, could be due to the available resources being effective. Districts with a larger achievement gap reported having more resources available for Latino parents, but perhaps certain resources are not effective in generating parental involvement in the schools. These two districts could be implementing multiple strategies to generate more Latino parental involvement, but this study did not address whether or not resources are being monitored for effectiveness.

Hypothesis 3, stating informants from districts with the smallest achievement gap will report a greater number of resources to parents from diverse backgrounds, was supported by the results. Both informants I and K, along with informants F and O, reported offering interpreter and translator services to parents and families. Informant I also gave four additional resources, including having open dialogue with parents to

identify barriers that get in the way of feeling welcomed and encouraged to access the system and establishing newcomer centers for new, non-English speaking families where they can go to get acquainted with the district. It is noted that informant K did not give any other resources, however, both informants listed five resources total.

Results for hypothesis 4 also indicate support, however it should be interpreted with caution due to lack of information from informant F. While information was obtained from informants that both their districts provide interpreter and translator services to parents and families, no additional resources were provided by informant F. This is believed to be due to time constraints and not thoroughly reading through the emailed questionnaire. Informant O noted additional resources being that her district provides translation in 10 different languages and also has a newcomer center where families come to get registered and to learn more about the district.

Pertaining to hypotheses 3 and 4, it should be noted that when conducting the different interview styles with informants on question three, informants tended to only give resources available for Latino parents instead of describing what was available to all parents and families from diverse backgrounds. Even when the researcher revisited the question, informants would start to give an example of an available resource and would then move on to just address Latino parents. Therefore, this probably also impacted the results and information on this question and hypotheses 3 and 4 should be interpreted with caution.

Implications for School Psychologists

School psychologists have an ethical obligation to advocate for the healthy development of children from diverse backgrounds. This includes promoting a high quality of services for each individual student, providing school-wide programs to increase awareness and acceptance of diverse individuals, making sure that all families, regardless of background, are involved in educational decisions regarding their child, and providing those parents unfamiliar with available options in their child's school appropriate and useful resources (Bursztyn et al., 1999). Results from this study provide useful insight as to what specific districts around the Seattle, Washington area are implementing to increase the level of Latino parental involvement. More importantly, each of the informants discussed the need to reach out to Latino parents, in order to better assist them in feeling welcome and comfortable in their schools. School psychologists are critical building team members who can collaborate with others to help bridge this communication, as well as gather information from Latino parents to make sure their needs are being met. This collaboration between school psychologists, school personnel, and Latino parents is essential as research has shown that a majority of Latino parents reported that they did not know what their children did in school and expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of communication from the school about their child's academic progress (Jones & Velez, 1997). By stepping in and being an advocate for Latino parents, families, and students, school psychologists can make sure Latino

parents' have a voice within their child's district.

Limitations of the Current Study

There are several limitations to the current study. First, the study was conducted within the last two months of school, when Washington State assessment testing was taking place and when most school officials are the busiest. This played a significant impact on the quickness in responses from informants, as well as their willingness to participate. If conducted at a different time of year, participation probably would have been higher.

Another limitation pertains to the informants themselves. Informants who would be the most appropriate persons were initially contacted after consulting with the researcher's internship colleague, who is the district's English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator. There is no way of measuring who the 'best and most appropriate' contact was within the selected districts and, in reality, there are probably multiple individuals who would have been appropriate informants. With 75% of the initially selected individuals deferring to another colleague, it is unclear if those who participated really were or were not the most appropriate contact in gathering accurate information on resources available to parents, parents from diverse backgrounds, and specifically Latino parents. Incidentally, information obtained from informants on resources available to Latino parents could have been underreported, as specific informants predominantly work with Latino students and parents at specific building levels.

The small sample size of four informants is also a limitation in this study, as well as the sample being one of convenience. This study only touched on specific school districts within a 60 mile radius of Seattle, Washington due to proximity to the researcher. Despite having the participation of two informants in two different groups, it was much harder to get participation from the four desired informants, from which this was a known challenge. If a larger sample size was obtained for this study, information provided could have been richer in content, from which many more themes would have emerged.

Finally, another limitation was the method in which data was obtained. Ideally, face-to-face interviews were encouraged, so richer information could be obtained. Realistically, data was gotten whichever way was easiest for the informant, through face-to-face, phone, or emails. Phone interviews limited the depth of data, as data could not be recorded verbatim and information through emails was limited in content and in detail. Additionally, information obtained through emails was limited to only answering two of the seven questions, making it difficult to analyze the data and find common themes.

Considerations for Future Research

Results of this study demonstrate the need for future studies which will address the numerous limitations found in this study. Follow up research looking at resources available for Latino parents should be conducted in other geographical locations to help generalize the results. Future researchers could also collect data from a larger sample

size, comprised of more than one informant from a district, to gain more input. Lastly, the questionnaire could be revised to focus solely on Latino parents and families so more information can be gathered about this particular culture.

Appendix A: Consent Letter

Consent Form

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Morgan Beale that is a component of her graduate thesis for her Educational Specialist degree in School Psychology. The purpose of this study is to assist the investigator in determining what different resources are available for Latino/Hispanic parents and families in your school district to help the investigators see if there is any predictability with these resources to parent involvement and, hence, academic achievement. This project is being supervised by Patricia Warner, Ph.D., of the Department of Graduate Psychology.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require approximately 30-45 minutes.

Potential Risks & Benefits

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study. Potential benefits from participation in this study include providing information that may result in the development of culturally competent programs for collaboration on a more positive home-school relationship in working to increase Latino/Hispanic parents and families involvement in their child's education.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. An interview format will be conducted between you and the examiner at a site within your school district that is convenient to you. The interview consists of seven open-ended questions surrounding overall parental involvement and specifically Latino/Hispanic involvement in your district. Interviews will be tape recorded, with your permission.

Confidentiality

A master copy of the participants' name and contact information will be kept in a secure location only accessible to the researcher. Once interviews are completed, the participants' identifiable information will be removed and be coded for data analysis. The results of this study may be submitted for publication in a professional journal and/or presented in poster format at a psychology conference. No identifiable information will be presented in the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. At the end of the study, all records will be destroyed. Final aggregate results will be made available to participants upon request.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Morgan Beale, Intern
Graduate Psychology
James Madison University
bealeme@dukes.jmu.edu

Dr. Patricia Warner
Graduate Psychology
James Madison University
Telephone: (540) 568-3358
warnerpj@jmu.edu

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. David Cockley
Chair, Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
(540) 568-2834
cocklede@jmu.edu

Giving of Consent

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about this study. I have read this consent and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I give consent to be audio taped during my interview. _____ (initials)

Name of Participant (Printed)

Name of Participant (Signed)

Date

Name of Researcher (Signed)

Date

Appendix B: Interview Questions

**Resources available for Latino/Hispanic Parents and Families in Selected Districts
of the Seattle, Washington Area**

<u>Name:</u>	
<u>Date:</u>	
<u>School District:</u>	
<u>Assigned school (s):</u>	
<u>Title/Position:</u>	
<u>Length of time in position:</u>	

How would you define parental involvement in your district?

Tell me what your district is currently doing to involve parents in their child's education across all levels (K-12)?

Tell me what your district is specifically doing to involve families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (e.g. send home bilingual packets, parent liaison workers, home visits, etc)?

What does your district do to increase Latino/Hispanic parent and family involvement in their child's education?

If you see differences in parent involvement of Latino/Hispanic parents at various levels, elementary to junior high to high school, what do you think may contribute to that change in the level or type of parental involvement?

What efforts would you like to see your district work towards to involve more Latino/Hispanic parents and families?

What other comments/suggestions/challenges do you have regarding parental involvement of Latino/Hispanic children in your district?

Appendix C: Site Coordinator Letter of Permission

Site Coordinator Letter of Permission

(Date)

Institutional Review Board
James Madison University
MSC 5728
JMAC-6, Suite 26
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Dear Institutional Review Board,

I hereby agree to allow Morgan Beale, from James Madison University to conduct her research at (School District Name/Location). I understand that the purpose of the study is to assist the investigator in determining what different resources are available for Latino/Hispanic parents and families in my school district to see if there is any predictability with these resources to parent involvement and, hence, academic achievement.

By signing this letter of permission, I am agreeing to the following:

- JMU researcher(s) have permission to be on (School District Name/Location) premise.
- JMU researcher(s) have access to the data collected to perform the data analysis both for presentation to the (School District Name/Location) and/or for publication purposes.

Sincerely,

Name of Authorized Individual, Title

Name of Off-Site Location

Appendix D. Summaries and Quotes of Responses Given

Question #1: *How would you define parental involvement in your district?*

Informant I

-have a welcoming environment for all families and parents

Informant K

-seeing the parents are visible at conferences, PTA events, after school things
-having a voice in their child's education

Informant O

-really focusing on it because we understand without the parents, it doesn't work

Question #2: *Tell me what your district is currently doing to involve parents in their child's education across all levels (K-12)?*

Informant I

-conducted a survey on how parents felt about our district, how they're treated, etc.
-superintendent created community sessions where everyone discusses information on how things are working

Informant K

-keep open communication between district and parents and community

Informant O

-provide guidance to parents in schools
-set it up so parents can talk with other parents in the schools, asking questions, etc.

Question #3: *Tell me what your district is specifically doing to involve families from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds?*

Informant I

-started an intramural co-ed soccer program at the middle schools to get more kids from other cultures involved since soccer reaches across many cultures
-have a minority achievement program under the YMCA, which is an after-school program for students of color where they get assistance in schooling
-some schools hold multicultural nights

-established equity and access advisory council that meets with families from diverse backgrounds to try to identify what barriers are that get in the way of people feeling welcomed and encouraged to access the system

Informant K

-offer interpreters to translate from parents from language bank

Informant O

-translate in 10 different languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog

-have newcomer center where new families come to learn information about district

Informant F

-have translators who work with families whose first language is not English

Question #4: *What does your district do to increase Latino/Hispanic parent and family involvement in your child's education?*

Informant I

-offer good translation services for our Spanish speaking population

-some schools have organizations or clubs, such as the Latin Image club, where they hold a Latino night every year to bring in families and students to celebrate their culture

Informant K

-“We try and interpret as much as we can in Spanish.”

-Office of Diversity offers monthly meetings for Latino parents, where they can come and ask anything related to our school district

-“I send out newsletters in Spanish.”

-have classes where we teach English to parents

-“we offer homework assistance for Spanish speaking kids at the Office of Diversity”

-have Spanish speaking parents come in every week to explain to other Spanish speaking parents what's going on in the building

Informant O

-“we conduct home visits, which are very important for parents so they get to know who their kids spend most of their time with”

-collaborate with Campana Quetzal, which is a group of Latino educators and community members who help facilitate parental involvement; they hire parents who do home visits and explain about the school system, how it works, what they need to know, and who they need to call when they have questions

- provide family nights and daycare because our parents don't have that access and they don't have the means
- our parents also help us pull other parents; they take trainings so they can go in and do home visits with us
- we have someone in every school who speaks Spanish
- we offer different training in different areas, such as intervention, truancy, and attendance, how to help your kids in math, science, and reading at home

Informant F

- offer 6 hour interpreter training for district staff called upon to serve as interpreters; they learned how to look for things that indicate high stress or discomfort for parents and how to handle sensitive information
- offer translations of elementary progress reports, back-to-school welcome packets, ESL program documents, and summer school information
- we schedule interpreters for elementary parent-teacher conferences in the fall
- our ESL program purchased VIACOM systems which provide live, simultaneous translations for parents during school events (ex: high school graduation)
- provide homework dictionaries in Spanish so parents can help their children
- one high school hosts 5 levels of adult ESL classes in partnership with a local community college
- provide means for parents to work on finishing their educations through ConevYt (educational portal sponsored by the Mexican government)
- offer English classes for parents
- sponsor Noche de Familia evenings, each covering a different focus such as college information or public schools offering technical training for high school students
- on-going partnership with Familias Unidas, who provide services in document translation, job search, etc.
- have a Hispanic Mom's club at one elementary school, where moms and some dads meet every Wednesday for an hour or two with the parent liaison and bilingual leader mom; parents bring food and have lunch at the school and feel comfortable bringing their younger kids; liaison works hard on having a specific topic to discuss with these moms, related to school, education, available resources, etc.
- participation in 'Readiness to Learn' grant, which provides small stipends to parents who serve as liaisons between the school and Spanish speaking families

Question #5: *If you see differences in parent involvement of Latino/Hispanic parents at various levels, what do you think may contribute to that change in the level or type of parental involvement?*

Informant I

-“I think it’s kind of been historic in what most of us experienced ourselves so sometimes we do what we learn you know.”

-“It might be somewhat institutional culture where elementary schools probably do a much better job reaching out and their touchy-feeling stuff with kids and families...and as kids have gotten into the middle and high school, it’s probably less because folks become a little more content oriented and I think that’s probably been the institutional culture that it’s not the norm that parents are more involved.”

Informant K

-“You know volunteering is such a luxury now...most Latino parents don’t participate because they said they don’t know English, so there’s a language barrier, and second reason was because their work hours are so intense.”

Informant O

-“Sometimes educators forget that they’re coming to us instead of we going to them. And parents in high school...there is more kids at the school, the buildings are huge, and they’re just new to the country and the whole system is kind of cold sometimes for parents to walk into the school because they feel intimidated.”

-“Our parents don’t have the time to do the PTA. They don’t have time to go on a field trip and things like that.”

Question #6: *What efforts would you like to see your district work towards to involve more Latino/Hispanic parents and families?*

Informant I

-“More dialogue with Latino parents and families. I would like to see if we could find the resources to have some kind of night..English language learning for parents that don’t have good skill sets in the English language.”

-“Have more study circles or forums where we sit with Hispanic and Latino families and talk about what’s working and what’s not working and what’s getting in the way...how we can help you have access to the school system and make you feel welcome and what are the barriers.”

-“Maybe get school officials to go to a neighborhood/home/house you know. Let’s say a Hispanic community. Invite us there for coffee hour where we sit in somebody’s home and have a conversation.”

Informant K

-“Offer more educational opportunities for them in math, reading, and writing. I mean education about what their kids are learning because parents don’t really know what’s going on.”

-“I wish we could offer more homework help to them because they don’t have the education. Many only went to third grade.”

-“Have more fun opportunities, like a potluck dinner.”

-“I want to take Latino students I work with who are really struggling to a university campus and career fairs so they can see what that’s about.”

-“Also educating parents on how to access college information because a lot of them feel like their kids cannot go on to college and I wish they could learn more about how to navigate the system.”

Informant O

-“Teach our own in the district here. Go to schools and talk about the culture...really try to understand what their culture is about.”

Question #7: *What other comments/suggestions/challenges do you have regarding parental involvement of Latino/Hispanic children in your district?*

Informant I

-“Their culture may be to respect and honor the institution of the school and so you let them do their thing and maybe not realize we want their involvement.”

-“I would also suspect that there are some families of the Hispanic or Latino background in which there may be family members in the home that are not legalized citizens and that causes a fear. It may be that some of the Hispanic/Latino families see school systems as an extension of the government and therefore the possibility of finding out about someone who is not a citizen, would school officials turn them in?”

-“Our educational system is built upon the old model of American education and so when you look at our instructional methodologies, our activities and sports, it’s based on a paradigm that was designed years and years ago and the world has changed. We need to reevaluate what we offer in terms of sports, activities, and clubs to better align with the current makeup of our school systems. And I think when you do that, you’re going to get more parental involvement. If we grow soccer to be a popular thing, I think you’re going to see more parents out at games and events. I mean that’s just an example, so I think some of the system changes need to happen that meet the needs of a variety of cultures.”

Informant K

-“The biggest thing I’m seeing is the kids who are my seniors. They look at me and say don’t tell anyone but I’m undocumented. That’s an area where I just don’t know what to do. Why not bring in an immigration lawyer to explain to them how this works up here.”

-“Everything is on computers, such as progress reports, and some parents don’t have computers at home.”

Informant O

-“If we want them to feel welcome in America, we have to adjust the system. This is the key, an open mind and understanding.”

Appendix E: List of Resources for School Districts

Resources available for all parents

1. Conducted a survey on how parents felt about our district, how they're treated, etc.
2. The Superintendent created community sessions where everyone discusses information on how things are working.
3. Set it up so parents can talk with other parents in the schools, asking questions, etc.

Resources available for families from diverse backgrounds

1. Started an intramural co-ed soccer program at the middle schools to get more kids from other cultures involved since soccer reaches across many cultures.
2. Have a minority achievement program under the YMCA, which is an after-school program for students of color where they get assistance in schooling.
3. Hold multicultural nights at select schools.
4. Established an equity and access advisory council that meets with families from diverse backgrounds to try to identify what barriers get in the way of people feeling welcomed and encouraged to access the system.
5. Offer interpreters to translate for parents.
6. Translate in 10 different languages, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Tagalog.
7. Have a newcomer center where new families come to learn information about district.
8. Have translators who work with families whose first language is not English.

Resources offered for Latino parents in select districts

1. Offer good translation services for our Spanish speaking population.
2. Some schools have organizations or clubs, such as the Latin Image club, where they hold a Latino night every year to bring in families and students to celebrate their culture.
3. Office of Diversity offers monthly meetings for Latino parents, where they can come and ask anything related to our school district.
4. Newsletters are sent out in Spanish.
5. Offer classes where we teach English to parents.
6. Offer homework assistance for Spanish speaking kids at the Office of Diversity.
7. Have Spanish speaking parents come in every week to explain to other Spanish speaking parents what's going on in the building.
8. Conduct home visits, which are very important for parents so they get to know who their kids spend most of their time with.

9. Collaborate with Campana Quetzal, which is a group of Latino educators and community members who help facilitate parental involvement; they hire parents who do home visits and explain about the school system, how it works, what they need to know, and who they need to call when they have questions.
10. Provide family nights with daycare services.
11. Have parents take trainings so they can reach out to other parents for home visits.
12. Have someone in every school who speaks Spanish.
13. Offer different training in different areas, such as intervention, truancy, and attendance, how to help your kids in math, science, and reading at home.
14. Offer 6 hour interpreter training for district staff called upon to serve as interpreters.
15. Offer translations of elementary progress reports, back-to-school welcome packets, ESL program documents, and summer school information.
16. Schedule interpreters for elementary parent-teacher conferences in the fall.
17. ESL program purchased VIACOM systems which provide live, simultaneous translations for parents during school events (ex: high school graduation).
18. Provide homework dictionaries in Spanish so parents can help their children.
19. One high school hosts 5 levels of adult ESL classes in partnership with a local community college.
20. Provide means for parents to work on finishing their educations through ConevYt (educational portal sponsored by the Mexican government).
21. Offer English classes for parents.
22. Sponsor Noche de Familia evenings, each covering a different focus such as college information or public schools offering technical training for high school students.
23. On-going partnership with Familias Unidas, who provide services in document translation, job search, etc.
24. Have a Hispanic Mom's club at one elementary school, where moms and some dads meet every Wednesday for an hour or two with the parent liaison and bilingual leader mom; parents bring food and have lunch at the school and feel comfortable bringing their younger kids; liaison works hard on having a specific topic to discuss with these moms, related to school, education, available resources, etc.
25. Participation in 'Readiness to Learn' grant, which provides small stipends to parents who serve as liaisons between the school and Spanish speaking families.

References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2009). *High school dropouts in America*. Retrieved April 26, 2009, from www.all4ed.org/files/GraduationRates_FactSheet.pdf
- Alvarez-Jimenez, A., Darnell, A.J., & Kuperminc, G.P. (2007). Parent involvement in the academic adjustment of Latino middle and high school youth: Teacher expectations and school belonging as mediators. *Journal of Adolescence, 31*, 469-483.
- Behnke, A.O., Choi, B.Y., Plunkett, S.W., & Sands, T. (2009). Adolescents' reports of parental engagement and academic achievement in immigrant families. *Youth Adolescence, 38*, 257-268.
- Bernard, H.R., & Ryan, G.W. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods, 15*, 85-109.
- Boult, B. (2006). *176 ways to involve parents*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Bursztyjn, A., Cajigas-Segredo, N., Esquivel, G., Hess, R., Ingraham, C.L., Lopez, E.C., Nahari, S.G., & Rogers, M.R. (1999). Providing psychological services to racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse individuals in schools. *School Psychology International, 20*, 243-264.
- Claro, C., Gamarra, A., Parra, E., Pena, A.M., & Silva, A. (2008, Winter). Communicating with Latino parents and families. *Communique, 37*.
- Diaz, D.M., Quezada, R.L., & Sanchez, M. (2003, September/October). Involving

Latino parents. *Leadership*, 33(1). Retrieved April 21, 2009, from

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_1_33/ai_109738570/?tag=content;coll

Espinosa, L.M. (1995). Hispanic parent involvement in early childhood programs.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. 3 pages. ED382412

Family support worker program. Retrieved March 17, 2009, from

<http://www.seattleschools.org/area/fsw/index.dxml>

Frisby, C.L., & Reynolds, C.R. (2005). *Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Harris, S., & Irons, J.E. (2007). *The challenges of no child left behind*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Hoover-Dempsey, K.V., & Sandler, H.M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99, 532-544.

Jones, T.G., & Velez, W. (1997). *Effects of Latino parental involvement on academic achievement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Chicago, Illinois.

National Education Association (2006). *A Report on the Status of Hispanics in Education: Overcoming a History of Neglect*. Retrieved May 7, 2009, from <http://www.cha.wa.gov/english/research.shtml>

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (2008). *Washington state report*

card. Retrieved April 21, 2009, from

<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?year=2007-08>

Ramirez, A.Y.F. (2003). Dismay and disappointment: Parental involvement of Latino immigrant parents. *Urban Review*, 35, 93-110.

Solorzano, L. (2007). *Access and barriers to parental involvement: Latino and Caucasian parent perceptions*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, James Madison University, Harrisonburg.

Sosa, A.S. (n.d.). *Involving Hispanic parents in educational activities through collaborative relationships*. Research in Practice, University of Texas at San Antonio.

State Education Data Center. (2009). *Schooldatadirect*. Retrieved April 8, 2009, at <http://www.schooldatadirect.org>

Tinkler, B. (2002). A review of literature on Hispanic/Latino parent involvement in k-12 education. Denver, CO: Assets for Colorado Youth. Retrieved January 23, 2009, from <http://www.assetsforcoyouth.org/products/latinoparentreport/latinoparentrept.htm>

United States Census Bureau. (2009). *Washington quickfacts*. Retrieved March 19, 2009, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53000.html>

United States Department of Education. (2009). *Facts and terms every parent should know about NCLB*. Retrieved April 26, 2009, from <http://www.ed.gov/nclb.overview/intro/parents/parentfacts.html>

Washington state assessment system. (n.d.). Retrieved April 26, 2009, from

<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/>

Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs. (2006). *2006 Washington state Latino/Hispanic assessment*. Retrieved April 2, 2009, from

<http://www.cha.wa.gov/english/archives.shtml>

Welcome to Bellevue schools. Retrieved March 17, 2009, from

<http://www.bsd405.org/default.aspx?tabID=106>