



Winning the Future:

IMPROVING EDUCATION FOR THE
LATINO COMMUNITY



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Latinos are the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the U.S., yet have the lowest education attainment levels.

In his January 2011 State of the Union, President Obama made it clear that the most important contest this country faces today is not between Democrats and Republicans but with competitors around the world for the jobs and industries of our time. To win that contest and secure prosperity for all Americans, we must out-innovate, out-educate, and out-build the rest of the world. The Latino community is integral to this plan to win the future.

At more than 54 million strong, including nearly 4 million in Puerto Rico, Hispanics constitute the country's largest and fastest-growing minority group. They have had a profound and positive impact on our country through, among other things, their community's strong commitment to family, faith, hard work and service.... Our country was built on and continues to thrive on its diversity, and there is no doubt that the future of the United States is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community.

—President Barack Obama

According to the latest Census data, there are 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States, composing 16 percent of the total population and a significant portion of the labor force. When you add the nearly 4 million residents of Puerto Rico, the total number of Latinos surpasses 54 million. Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population increased by 15.2 million, accounting for more than half of the 27.3 million increase in the total population of the United States. In the coming decades, Latinos will continue to drive the growth of the labor force, as they will account for 60 percent of the nation's population growth between 2005 and 2050. In this way, Latino success in education and in the labor market is of both immediate and long-term importance to America's economy.

Latinos are a young population. There are 17.1 million Latinos ages 17 and younger in the U.S., which is more than 23 percent of this age group. In today's American public education system, Latinos are by far the largest minority group, numbering more than 12.4 million in the country's elementary, middle and high schools. Currently, nearly 22 percent, or slightly more than 1 in 5, of all pre-K–12 students enrolled in America's public schools are Latino.

Our nation witnessed a significant 24 percent growth in Hispanic college enrollment from 2009 to 2010, which led to a record total of 12.2 million 18- to 24-year-old students attending two- or four-year colleges in October 2010. Hispanics represented 1.8 million, or 15 percent of the overall student

enrollment. This increase in Hispanic enrollment establishes a record not only in the number of Hispanics attending college but also in the share of the student body population that they represent.

Yet, Latino students face persistent obstacles to educational attainment. Less than half of Latino children are enrolled in any early learning program. Only about half of all Latino students earn their high school diploma on

time; those who do complete high school are only half as likely as their peers to be prepared for college. Just 13 percent of Latinos have a bachelor's degree, and only 4 percent have completed graduate or professional degree programs.

Overall, Latinos have the lowest education attainment level of any group in the U.S.

President Obama's Vision for Education: 2020 Goal and the Latino Community

President Obama has challenged America to once again lead the world in the share of our population with a college degree by 2020. We cannot achieve this goal without significantly strengthening and expanding educational opportunities for all Latino students, from pre-K through college and career. Even though the total number of 18- to 24-year-old students enrolled in college set a record in 2010, the United States is ranked 12th in the world of the percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with an associate degree or higher. We need to redouble our efforts to meet the president's 2020 goal.

In his speech at the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce conference in March 2009, the president laid out his education agenda and the importance of education to the Latino community, and to all Americans. President Obama called for a focus on early learning, higher standards for student learning, effective teachers and school leaders, and innovation that builds on what works in America's classrooms. Improving education also means providing support to turn around low-performing schools, reducing high school dropout rates and strengthening higher education to increase rates of college attainment and completion so that every student can realize his or her full potential.



President Obama delivering the State of the Union, January 2011.

In his recent speech before a joint session of Congress regarding the *American Jobs Act*, the president also made clear that it is in our nation's best interest to continue to invest in our children's education. That is why, as part of the bill, the president proposes to invest \$30 billion to prevent layoffs of up to 280,000 teachers nationwide, while supporting the hiring of tens of thousands more. Moreover, \$25 billion will be invested in school infrastructures to modernize at least 35,000 public schools. For example, Nevada would receive approximately \$258 million to support up to 3,600 educator and first responder jobs; Colorado would receive approximately \$479 million to support up to 7,000 jobs; and Texas would receive approximately \$2.5 billion to support up to 39,500 jobs. The president also is proposing a \$5 billion investment in modernizing community colleges (including tribal colleges), thereby bolstering their infrastructure in this time of need while ensuring their ability to serve future generations of students and communities.

LATINO EDUCATION IN THE EARLY YEARS

The years prior to kindergarten are among the most significant in shaping a child's foundation for learning and school success. Research has shown that a child's learning begins at birth and takes shape as children are nurtured, challenged and engaged in high-quality learning environments and in relationships with parents and other caregivers. Compared to other minority groups, Latino children represent the largest segment of the early childhood population in the nation but are less likely than any other group to be enrolled in center-based early education programs. By age two, Latino children are less likely than their non-Latino peers to demonstrate expressive vocabulary skills. Preschool-aged Latino children also exhibit lower average scores in language and mathematics knowledge than their non-Latino peers.

A robust body of evidence and research demonstrates that high-quality early learning programs help children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. Disadvantaged children who have access to such programs—from birth through age 5—are more likely to improve their cognitive, social, emotional and language development. Later effects of high-quality programs are well documented to improve academic achievement, reduce the need for special education, increase employment and earnings, reduce crime and delinquency, and, ultimately, increase international competitiveness. Empirical studies have proven that investments in high-quality early learning are among the most cost-effective of any investment along the educational pipeline, returning as high as 15–17 percent on the investment each year. Yet less than half of Latino children are enrolled in any early learning program.

Accordingly, the president has launched a comprehensive zero-to-five plan—to dramatically expand early childhood education and continue to improve its quality—aimed at supporting the health, well-being, and future educational success of our children. The Obama administration has invested \$5 billion in early learning through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)* to bolster the existing framework of federal programs and services to reach our youngest children, including Head Start, Early Head Start, child care and services for infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. The 2011 continuing resolution, recently enacted by Congress, provides nearly \$7.6 billion for Head Start to maintain services for children added to the program under *ARRA*. The president's 2012 budget calls for an 11 percent or \$50 million increase for the *IDEA* Infants and Families programs (Part C) to help ensure that many of our youngest and most vulnerable children get off to a strong start.

A Race to the Top in Early Childhood Education

Each day, more than 11 million children under the age of 5 spend time outside of the care of their parents, and in a wide variety of environments—each of which should promote and encourage their early learning and development. The quality of early learning settings varies greatly, and despite some progress, early childhood education programs are held to inconsistent standards among and within states.

Without a uniform system of standards to guide the effectiveness of programs, it is often the most disadvantaged children who are left behind. By the time children are 3, disparities in early vocabulary growth between those whose parents are professionals and those from working class families amounts to more than 50 percent. Studies have documented a school readiness gap as early as kindergarten entry—and as wide as 60 percentage points—between children from the highest socioeconomic background and their peers from the lowest group.

Some states have made significant progress in shaping and developing early learning systems, and many have already begun to address the conditions necessary for promoting early learning and development. Leading

states that have embarked on reform report a need for more coordinated and integrated early learning services and programs, and a commitment to accountability and results to ensure that a system with multiple funding streams and settings improves outcomes for all children.

Recognizing that quality early education is an investment that pays off for years to come, the Obama administration extended the Race to the Top approach to early childhood education. The new Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) state-level grant competition, administered by the Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS), will invest \$500 million in states that are ready to take dramatic steps to improve the quality of their early childhood programs. This competition will be complemented by investments in Head Start and in child care, coupled with reform principles designed to strengthen the quality of early learning programs, to empower parents, and to improve school readiness outcomes for children. RTT-ELC will reward states that create comprehensive plans to transform early learning systems with better coordination, clearer learning standards and meaningful workforce development. States applying for challenge grants will be encouraged to: increase access to quality early learning programs for low-income and disadvantaged children; design integrated and transparent systems that align their early care and education programs; bolster training and support for the early learning workforce; create robust evaluation systems to document and share effective practices and successful programs; and help parents make informed decisions about care for their children.

Supporting Head Start

The president's 2012 budget request would increase funding for Head Start and Early Head Start by \$866 million for a total of \$8.1 billion. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the cognitive and social development of children through the provision of education, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. At the requested funding level, more than 968,000 children—more than 854,000 in Head Start and 114,000 in Early Head Start—can participate in the program, up from 904,000 in 2009. Thirty-six percent of the nation's Head Start children are Latino, the largest of any minority group in the U.S.



President Obama signs the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics' new executive order in the East Room of the White House, Oct. 19, 2010.

As part of a framework of maintaining historic investments and supporting critical reforms needed to raise the bar on quality in Head Start programs, the Obama administration is committed to policies that would require low-performing programs to compete for funding to ensure that children and families are served by the most capable providers. The administration supports a redesigned training and technical assistance system which would bring current research and the best evidence-informed practice into Head Start classrooms, including best practices for local programs to work with their local school systems to ensure that children start school

with the skills they need and that the gains children achieve in Head Start are sustained as the children leave Head Start and transition into schools.

Promoting High-Quality Child Care and Home Visiting

At HHS, the Administration for Children and Families is pursuing a comprehensive approach to helping more children in low-income families access high-quality child care. The most recent findings from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that the quality of child care that children received in their preschool years had small but detectable effects on their academic success and behavior all the way into adolescence. Despite the importance of quality, the research and data available indicate that the quality of our nation's child care, on average, is inadequate to support children's learning and development to help them succeed in school and in life.

The Obama administration has responded to these challenges by proposing principles for the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Block Grant that would better focus the federal investment in child care on quality. States are currently using CCDF to build an infrastructure for child care quality that spans a wide variety of child care, Head Start, prekindergarten, and after-school programs. These pathways to excellence ensure the health and safety of children in child care; ensure systems to rate and improve the quality of early learning programs; ensure strong professional development and supportive workforce initiatives; and ensure a child care subsidy system that is child-focused, family-friendly, and works in partnership with other child care providers. The President's 2012 budget would invest an additional \$1.3 billion for the CCDF for a total of \$6.3 billion, supporting a reform agenda focused on improving outcomes for children. Nineteen percent of the nation's child care subsidy recipients are Latino children.

The recently enacted Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) supports nurses, social workers or other professionals to meet with at-risk families in their homes and to evaluate the families' circumstances, and connect families to the kinds of help that can make a real difference in a child's health, development, and school readiness. Home visitors work one-on-one with families to provide health care, developmental services for children, early education, parenting skills, child abuse prevention, and nutrition education or assistance. Results include improved maternal and child health; prevention of child maltreatment; improvement of parenting skills; and greater promotion of children's cognitive, language, and social-emotional development.

The president's 2012 budget proposes \$350 million in mandatory funding for the MIECHV Program. These funds will go to states, territories, and tribes for evidence-based home visiting programs for low-income families in at-risk communities. Effective home visiting programs provide crucial supports to new and expectant families and can have powerful and positive impacts on both children and families.

Under the MIECHV Program, at least 75 percent of the funding must be used to support home visiting models that have been rigorously evaluated and shown to be effective. Up to one-quarter of the funds can be used to support promising approaches that will be rigorously evaluated to assess their impact.

REFORMING AMERICAN SCHOOLS FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Our public education system must have one goal—all students should graduate from high school ready to embark on the path to college and eventual careers. Recent evidence suggests that other nations' school children are outpacing those in American schools. Under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*; also known as the *No Child Left Behind Act*, or *NCLB*), the federal role in education is too rigid, punitive and prescriptive—resulting in shifting goals, uneven standards and low expectations for students and schools. To win the future, this has to change. Today's economy demands a workforce that is smart, skilled, creative and equipped for success in a global marketplace. America's future economic competitiveness is being decided every day, in classrooms across the nation.

Our nation faces a dropout crisis. When 25 percent of our students—almost 40 percent of our black and Hispanic students—fail to graduate high school on time, we know that too many of our schools are failing to offer their students a world-class education.

Currently, one in five students in the public schools system is Latino, yet almost half of Hispanic students never receive their high school diplomas. High dropout rates have limited the advancement opportunities of a population that is estimated to become the majority of the nation's labor force in less than 50 years. And Latino students often have less opportunity than their peers to take the challenging curricula—including advanced courses in mathematics and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses—that are often indicative of college success.

Reforming our schools to deliver a world-class education is a shared responsibility—the task cannot be shouldered by our nation's teachers and principals alone. The Obama administration recognizes the importance of the Hispanic community and its families in supporting their children's education, because a parent is a child's first teacher. We must support families, communities, and schools working in partnership to deliver services and supports that address the full range of needs of Hispanic students.

This effort also requires that we support innovative approaches to teaching and learning; bring lasting change to our lowest-performing schools; and investigate and evaluate what works and what can work better in America's schools. We must reform our schools to accelerate student achievement, close achievement gaps, inspire our children to excel, reduce dropout rates, and turn around those schools that for too many Hispanic students aren't providing them with the education they need to succeed in college or a career.

America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters And the race starts today. I am issuing a challenge to our nation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and nonprofits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students out-compete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential.

—President Barack Obama

Spurring a Race to the Top

Having emerged from the worst recession in generations, America must do what it can to broaden the recovery and spur job creation across the country. We also must look to the future and prepare to create the jobs and industries of tomorrow in an increasingly competitive global economy. Our prosperity and our children's well-being increasingly depend on making sure that students are smart, skilled, and creative; they must be able to solve problems, see patterns, and work with others. Because offering every child an education that connects them to the opportunities and jobs of tomorrow is critical to winning the future, the Obama administration's Race to the Top program dedicates \$4 billion to spur systemic reform and to embrace changes in state and local education policies and practices that will improve four areas of enormous importance to Latino students: adopting rigorous standards and assessments; recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers; turning around low-performing schools; and improving the collection and use of data to strengthen teaching and student achievement.

The 11 states and one district that have been selected as Race to the Top winners—Tennessee, Delaware, Rhode Island, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and the District of Columbia—reach approximately 22 percent of the nation's Latino student population. Five of the 15 states with the largest Hispanic populations won: Florida (3rd), New York (4th), Georgia (10th), North Carolina (11th) and Massachusetts (15th).



University of Texas at Austin students listen to President Obama speak on education.

The Obama administration has also awarded \$350 million to support states as they work to develop a new, next generation of college and career-ready assessments that are more rigorous than existing assessments that measure student growth, and that

are more useful to teachers, parents and students. From the beginning, these tests will be designed to fully include English learners (ELs) and to ensure that they are appropriately assessed. The 2011 continuing resolution, recently enacted by Congress, provides \$700 million for the Obama Administration to continue a Race to the Top in American education, including a new focus on improving early childhood education.

Creating Promise Neighborhoods

In September 2010, the Obama administration announced planning grants for 21 nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education under the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, a program designed to support a pre-K through-college continuum of services to meet the education challenges of students growing up in high-poverty communities.

The 2011 continuing resolution, recently enacted by Congress, provides \$30 million to support Promise Neighborhoods; President Obama's 2012 budget requests \$150 million for the program to support full implementation of Promise Neighborhood projects. Several Promise Neighborhood grantees are already

developing plans to improve the learning, educational success, and healthy development of students in Latino communities, including:

- The Eastside Promise Neighborhood project in San Antonio, Texas, where the United Way will enlist and engage partners to work with five schools and an early childhood center serving an ethnically diverse neighborhood with a Latino majority and a growing Mexican immigrant population. This project will improve parent engagement, provide professional development to preschool and school staff, and deliver resources for economic redevelopment and housing.
- The Community Day Care Center in Lawrence, Mass., which will work with several schools to develop sustainable educational supports and solutions in a community that is 68 percent Latino, and in which 40 percent of adults lack a high school diploma.
- Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission, which will work in the 30-block Boyle Heights area in Los Angeles, Calif., a community where more than 90 percent of residents are Latino and one-third of families are living below the poverty line.

Turning Around Low-Performing Schools

Approximately 5,000 schools, or 5 percent of the total, linger as persistently low-performing schools—schools that have failed to make academic progress year after year. At the high school level, roughly 2,000 schools—about 12 percent of all high schools—produce nearly half of our nation’s dropouts, and up to 75 percent of minority dropouts. As research clearly demonstrates, students that fall behind academically are more likely to drop out. Latino students experience an unacceptably high dropout rate—a challenge exacerbated by the middle school achievement gap and by the fact that more than one-third of Latino high school students are academically below grade level.

To help place a greater share of Latino students on track to college and careers, the Obama administration has dedicated over \$4 billion in School Improvement Grants to implement bold reforms that will transform one in 20 schools in America. These grants will provide up to \$6 million per school over three years to dramatically transform our nation’s lowest-performing schools into safe environments where students are learning. Nearly 1,000 schools across the country have received funding thorough the Obama administration’s School Improvement Program. Approximately 40 percent of these are high schools, and 22 percent serve middle school students.

Stimulating Innovation in Education

At the center of the president's strategy to win the future is the intersection of education, innovation and infrastructure. The growth industries of today and tomorrow require a workforce with unprecedented knowledge and skills and greatly improved adaptability. By aggressively pursuing new and better ways to educate and train our citizens, we can meet those requirements, leapfrog other nations, and reclaim global leadership in education.

This strategy for ensuring a world-class education for America’s students relies on three approaches to educational innovation being advanced by the Obama administration:

- **Fostering innovation and accelerating success.** The Obama administration’s Investing in Innovation Fund (i3), launched through the *ARRA*, dedicated \$650 million to support the development and scaling

up of innovative education models and solutions that help close the achievement gap and improve educational outcomes for high-need students. The Obama administration has proposed a permanent i3 Fund to provide competitive grants that will expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative and evidence-based practices and programs. The 2011 continuing resolution, recently enacted by Congress, provides \$150 million to support the administration’s continued efforts under the Investing in Innovation Fund.

- **Supporting, recognizing, and rewarding local innovations.** The Obama administration will encourage and support local innovation by creating fewer, larger, more flexible funding streams under *ESEA*, focused on areas integral to student success. This new structure will give states and school districts flexibility to focus on local needs.
- **Supporting student success.** Tackling persistent achievement gaps requires public agencies, community organizations, and families to share responsibility for improving educational outcomes for students. As Congress works to reauthorize the *ESEA*, the Obama administration will prioritize programs that include a comprehensive redesign of the school day, week, or year, as well as programs that promote schools as the center of their communities and that partner actively with community organizations. Investments in new models that keep students safe, supported, and healthy both in and out of school, and that support strategies to better engage families and community members in their children’s education, will help support the goal of helping all students graduate college and career-ready.

In addition, to address the underinvestment in learning technology research and development, the president’s 2012 budget invests \$90 million to create an Advanced Research Projects Agency for Education (ARPA-ED). ARPA-ED will fund projects performed by industry, universities or other innovative organizations, selected based on their potential to transform teaching and learning the way the Internet, GPS and robotics (all areas where the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, has had a profound impact) have transformed commerce, travel, warfare and the way we live our daily lives.

... If we raise expectations for every child and give them the best possible chance at an education—from the day they are born until the last job they take—we will reach the goal that I set two years ago: By the end of the decade, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

—President Barack Obama

Through a competitive preference to applicants who focused on serving English learners, current winners of the Investing in Innovation Fund have incorporated plans to improve the achievement of English learners, including:

- The Saint Vrain Valley School District in Longmont, Colo., which will implement a project to address the unmet needs of Latinos and ELs at Skyline High School and its feeder schools. Elementary students will improve their literacy skills through focused supports and expanded learning time; middle school students will improve their mathematics skills and knowledge with math labs and an augmented school year; high school students will have improved science learning opportunities through a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) certification track.

- The Exploratorium in San Francisco, Calif., which will work with Sonoma Valley schools on a five-year project to refine and implement a professional development approach to increase the percentage of elementary teachers who are highly effective in supporting the science learning of ELs.

A Great Teacher in Every Classroom and Great Leaders in Every School

Among all of the efforts at educational improvement in our schools, the interaction between teacher and student is a primary determinant of student success. Research shows that top-performing teachers can make a dramatic difference in the achievement of their students, and suggests that the impact of being assigned to top-performing teachers year after year is enough to significantly narrow achievement gaps. Additionally, a great principal can help teachers succeed as part of a strong, well-supported instructional team. We must do more as a nation to ensure that every student has an effective teacher; every school has effective leaders; and that every teacher and principal has access to the preparation, ongoing support, recognition, and collaboration opportunities he or she needs to succeed.

The key to student success is providing an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school. The president’s 2012 budget requests \$2.5 million for an overhauled teacher quality formula grant; will invest \$500 million in the Teacher and Leader Innovation Fund, a competitive grant program for

states and school districts with smart new approaches to strengthening the impact of school professionals; and will provide \$250 million for Teacher and Leader Pathways, a competitive program to support effective teachers and leader preparation programs. In addition, the president’s budget request contains \$100 million to help states and districts provide important information to principals and teachers about their progress in meeting their reform goals and improving outcomes for students.

If you want to make a difference in the life of our nation—if you want to make a difference in the life of a child, become a teacher. Your country needs you.

—President Barack Obama

As we learn what works, we also should reward those who are able to get extraordinary results from the dollars they spend. The Obama administration has proposed a series of low-cost incentive programs, including “pay for success bonds” that

provide funding only after results are achieved; prioritized cost-saving initiatives within Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation; and a new prize for state and local grantees with the greatest cost savings. The president’s 2012 budget also increases funding by \$100 million for 21st-Century Community Learning Centers, to support academic enrichment for children in high-poverty and low-performing schools.

Developing the Next Generation of Latino Teachers With Minority-Serving Institutions and the TEACH Campaign—TEACH.gov

Closing the achievement gap between African-American and Hispanic students and their white peers is a primary goal of the administration’s education agenda, and supporting the preparation of effective teachers for high-need schools is a key strategy toward reaching this goal. Nationwide, more than 22 percent of public school students are Hispanic, but less than 7 percent of teachers are Latino. Even worse, less than 2 percent of our nation’s teachers are Latino males.

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), which collectively prepare half of all minority teachers, can play a major role in developing the next generation of effective teachers for high-need schools including Latino teachers. While many MSIs struggle, a number of their preservice teacher training programs demonstrate better-than-average results despite being dramatically underfunded as compared to programs at non-MSI peer institutions. The president's 2012 budget proposes \$40 million in first-time funding for the already-authorized Augustus Hawkins Centers of Excellence Program for MSIs.

To inspire Americans to seek out employment opportunities in education, the White House, in collaboration with ED, launched the TEACH Campaign in September 2010. The TEACH Campaign, and its website, TEACH.gov, aims to increase the number, quality and diversity of candidates seeking to become teachers, particularly in high-need schools and subject areas, such as STEM, ELs and special education. The campaign also strives to connect aspiring teachers with information about the pathways to teaching, including preparation, certification, training and mentoring.

With more than 1 million teachers expected to retire in the coming years, the MSI Hawkins program and the TEACH Campaign provide avenues whereby 1.7 million new teachers can be recruited over the next seven years, particularly minority males, to pursue careers in the classroom.

Supporting English Learners

English learners are the fastest-growing student population in the U.S., comprising 4.7 million, or 10 percent, of the nation's students in grades K–12. A diverse group, they escape easy classification. Most ELs—approximately 78 percent—were born in the U.S., yet many have varying levels of English proficiency. In fact, 82 percent report Spanish as the language most often spoken at home.

Unfortunately, almost all ELs have faced significant barriers to educational attainment. More than two-thirds of ELs score below basic in reading and mathematics (72 and 74 percent, respectively), compared to their non-EL classmates. While there are certain practices that have been shown to benefit ELs, more research and evaluation is needed on the types of language instruction education programs that are most effective for English learners. Other challenges include the low numbers of English and a Second Language (ESL) teachers and the need for districts and schools to strengthen the ability of their classroom teachers to effectively address the needs of English Learners. Many states and districts do not have data systems to track ELs over time, making it difficult to use data to improve instruction. There are also tremendous inconsistencies within many states in the identification and classification of ELs.

Among other measures that have been used to improve and expand the education opportunities of ELs, the U.S. Department of Education awarded, in September 2011, a total of 42 National Professional Development Program grants totaling \$14.8 million to support professional development activities designed to improve classroom instruction for ELs. The grants were made to colleges and universities, in collaboration with state and local school districts, and were awarded to promising programs focused on helping educational personnel



President Obama meets with students in Los Angeles.

working with ELs to meet high professional standards, including standards for certification and licensure in language instruction educational programs. However, some states are showing progress in their efforts to change how EL services are delivered:

- Saint Paul Public School District, St. Paul, Minn., has focused on developing students' English language proficiency by significantly expanding its dual language programs over the past five years. Five elementary schools now have a Spanish dual language program. These dual language programs are successful in producing bilingual students who are bicultural and bi-literate. The district also has developed cultural components and parent outreach efforts for EL students and families and designed professional development opportunities for district staff. From 2002 to 2005, the percentage of EL students in the district who were proficient on the Minnesota's third-grade reading test increased from 30 percent to 52 percent. In 2005, the district's students outperformed the state cohort by 6 percentage points. In addition, from 2003 to 2009, EL students in Saint Paul Public Schools have consistently outperformed EL students statewide on a variety of tests. In the Council of Great City Schools' *Succeeding with English Language Learners 2009* report, the district was listed as having made among the best gains of the Great City Schools districts in closing the achievement gap between EL and non-EL students.

Accountability for ELs

The U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) reached a settlement agreement with the Boston School Committee that ensures English learner students will no longer be denied language support services based on a system that did not accurately assess or provide for their language needs. As a result of the agreement, more than 4,000 students who were inappropriately characterized as having "opted out" of EL services will now have EL and compensatory services made available to them. In addition, approximately 4,300 students who were improperly identified as non-EL students, will, for the first time, be offered EL services.

The departments of Education and Justice also entered into a settlement agreement on March 25, 2011, with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to ensure that the substantial number of Arizona's EL students receive the education services they need. The agreement requires ADE to revoke its one-question Home Language Survey (HLS), which failed to identify and serve all eligible EL students, and reinstate its three-question HLS so that all potential ELs are identified for assessment and services. In addition, ADE will reinstate its prior HLS policies and practice of giving teachers more flexibility in referring students to be evaluated for English proficiency. ADE has agreed that an answer other than "English" to any of the three questions on the HLS will trigger timely assessment of students' English language proficiency. To capture potential English Learners who are now registering for the 2011–12 school year, ADE will send a directive to each of its local education agencies (LEA) informing them of the reinstated three-question HLS, and explaining how to identify potential EL students among those students whose parents have already completed the one-question HLS. ADE also will train the LEAs with regard to these changes and monitor them over the next school year to ensure that they are appropriately administering the three-question HLS.

In the 2009–10 school year, the ADE reported almost 100,000 EL students, which reflected a decline of approximately 33,000 students from the prior school year. School districts attributed at least part of this decrease to the one-question HLS. The federal government's investigation determined that the one-question HLS failed to identify and serve eligible EL students—a violation of the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974* and Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. The investigation further revealed that the teacher referral

process for the one-question HLS unnecessarily delayed the identification of EL students, therefore delaying EL services and violating both laws.

Reforming *No Child Left Behind*

In March 2010, the Obama administration released *A Blueprint for Reform*, a 41-page outline for reauthorizing the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, also known as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*. First passed in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson’s war on poverty, the *ESEA*’s focus was, and remains, ensuring that low-income students have access to an excellent education. The current reauthorization of this law offers a major opportunity to re-envision the federal role in education by supporting innovation in states and districts through additional competitive grant funding and improved technical assistance and support, while still maintaining the traditional federal role of providing formula funding targeted toward high-need students.

Broadly, the Obama administration’s proposal is defined by three words: fair, flexible and focused. It



President Obama and Education Secretary Duncan meet with key education leaders in Miami.

proposes a new, fair system of accountability that holds everyone to high standards and gives greater flexibility and support to most schools so they can develop solutions that will work for their students, while focusing on persistently low-performing schools and schools with significant achievement gaps. It also emphasizes supporting schools and teachers in helping students reach high standards, while focusing on strategies to recognize and learn from success.

The Obama administration’s plans for the *ESEA* would maintain the foundational funding provided by the federal government to school districts serving high-need students—including the \$14.5 billion Title I formula program. At the same time, the administration has proposed a \$3 billion increase in K–12 funding under *ESEA*, and greater competitive funding to support states, school districts, nonprofits, and universities in developing and scaling up promising and proven approaches to long-standing challenges. These challenges include preparing and supporting teachers and leaders so they can be more effective, turning around low-performing schools, developing comprehensive approaches to meeting the full range of student needs, starting innovative new schools, and supporting high-quality instructional systems in literacy, STEM, and all the components of a well-rounded education.

To avoid sanctions under the current law, many states have lowered academic standards instead of making them more rigorous, and states spend billions of dollars every year on *NCLB*’s one-size-fits-all mandates. For this reason, the Obama administration is providing regulatory flexibility around *NCLB* if Congress does not complete work on a reauthorization bill to help support free-form efforts underway at the state and local level. Regulatory flexibility will not replace comprehensive reform, nor will it give states and districts a pass from

accountability. Instead, states, districts and schools will now have the flexibility needed to raise standards, boost quality and improve our nation's lowest-performing schools.

ENSURING SUCCESS FOR LATINOS IN COLLEGE AND CAREER

In today's global economy, a high-quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success. Over the next decade, nearly 8 in 10 new job openings in the U.S. will require some workforce training or postsecondary education. And of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in America, half require at least a four-year college degree. Economic progress and education achievement are linked; therefore, educating every American student to not only graduate from high school but also be prepared for college is a national imperative.

America once had one of the most educated workforces in the world, but, today, only about 40 percent of young adults have a college degree—ranking the United States ninth in the world in college completion. While close to 70 percent of high school graduates in the United States enroll in college within two years, only 57 percent graduate within six years. For low-income and minority students, the completion rate is closer to 45 percent. Students from low-income families are almost eight times less likely than their high-income peers to earn bachelors' degrees by age 24. Closing this college attainment gap is critical to restoring America's standing as a global leader in higher education. President Obama has articulated this as America's goal: to once again have the highest proportion of college graduates by the year 2020.

Building Latino Students' Skills Through Community Colleges

More than 50 years ago, President Harry Truman called for a national network of community colleges to dramatically expand opportunities for veterans returning from World War II. Today, faced with rapid technological change and global competition, community colleges are needed more than ever to raise American skills and education levels and keep American businesses competitive. Many Latino students earn their first college degree at America's community colleges, and this investment helps students receive relevant education and training to help increase their skills, or to prepare to attend a four-year institution.

Community colleges are the largest part of our higher education system, enrolling more than 6 million students, and growing rapidly. They feature affordable tuition, open admission policies, flexible course schedules, and convenient locations, and they are particularly important for students who are older, are working, need remedial classes, or can only take classes part-time. They are also capable of working with businesses, industry and government to create tailored training programs to meet economic needs such as nursing, health information technology, advanced manufacturing, and green jobs, plus they may provide customized training at the worksite.

Business and industry play an important role in training the workforce of the future and meeting the ongoing demands of the marketplace. Many community colleges are already working with businesses to develop programs and classes ranging from degrees to certified training courses for retraining and ongoing training for enhancing skills. Yet nearly half of students who enter community college intending to earn a degree or transfer to a four-year college fail to reach their goal within six years. President Obama has proposed new steps to ensure that those credentials will help graduates get ahead in their careers. The *Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA)* enacted last year includes a \$2 billion investment to help America's community colleges develop, improve, and expand education and career training for workers.

Latinos and Technical and Adult Education

During the past two years, there has also been an increase in the number of Latinos that have enrolled in technical education programs (89 percent in 2009–10 compared to 81 percent in 2008–09) with half of those enrolled having earned a postsecondary credential (compared to 54 percent nationally) and 73 percent of Latino students transitioning to further education or employment (compared to 74 percent nationally). During the 2009–10 program year, more than 2.3 million Latino students participated (took at least one course) in career and technical education, representing 19 percent of all students who participated in career and technical education nationally.

During the first two years of the Obama administration (2008–10), approximately 1.9 million Latinos enrolled in adult education programs to learn the English language and to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills. This constitutes 42 percent of the entire adult education enrollment of 4.58 million students. Latinos comprised 69 percent of the English literacy program enrollment.

Now is the time to build a firmer, stronger foundation for growth that will not only withstand future economic storms but one that helps us thrive and compete in a global economy. It's time to reform our community colleges so that they provide Americans of all ages a chance to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to compete for the jobs of the future.

—President Barack Obama

Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are essential to our higher education system and vital sources of strength for our nation's students. More than half of America's Latino undergraduates attend an HSI—that is, a public or private nonprofit college or university with a student body that is at least 25 percent Latino. HSIs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) serve a higher proportion of low- and middle-income students than their peer institutions, and together they enroll nearly 60 percent of the nation's 4.7 million minority undergraduate students. HSIs are committed to improving the lives of their students as well as helping revitalize the communities where they serve.

Graduates of these institutions are helping expand our economy and enriching all aspects of our national life. To prepare the next generation of great American leaders, President Obama has set a goal to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. Enhancing

education opportunities for Hispanics will be vital to achieving this objective, and we will need the continued leadership of HSIs to increase the enrollment, retention and graduation rates of our Hispanic students. Working together, we will open doors of opportunity for all our children and help them succeed on a global stage.

New policy efforts aimed at college persistence and completion will directly benefit the Latino community. Currently, Latino college enrollment is projected to increase faster than other groups—39 percent by 2017, compared to 5 percent for white students and 26 percent for African-American students. Latino enrollments in colleges and universities increased between 1980 and 2000, though a smaller proportion of Hispanics complete college compared to whites and blacks. Hispanic students are more likely than other students to be enrolled part time. In 2006–07, 43 percent of Hispanic undergraduates were enrolled part time. Most attend community colleges to obtain their associate or bachelor's degree.

HSIs play a pivotal role in the number of Hispanic students who receive postsecondary degrees. Although the 334 Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the nation accounted for only 5 percent of all institutions of higher education, in 2003–04, they enrolled 51 percent of all Hispanics pursuing higher education degrees in the U.S.

Through the *HCERA*, the federal government will invest an additional \$2.55 billion in MSIs over the next decade—including \$1 billion at America’s HSIs. This funding can be used to renew, reform, and expand higher education programs to ensure that Latinos are provided every chance to rise to their full potential, earn their degrees, and enter or reenter the workforce.

First in the World Fund

President Obama has requested nearly \$123 million in FY 12 for the first year of the First in the World Fund, which would apply the lessons of the successful Investing in Innovation Program to the challenge of improving college completion, particularly for minority and low-income students. First in the World would provide “venture capital” to encourage innovative approaches to improving college completion and increase capacity by: raising productivity and efficiency; providing research support to build the evidence of effectiveness needed to identify successful strategies; and providing resources to scale up and disseminate strategies that are working.



President Obama meets with students he singled out in a speech on education to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, after they submitted a video talking about their families’ economic woes and asked, “Is anybody listening?”

Latinos and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

If the United States is going to out-educate, out-innovate, and out-build the rest of the world and create the industries of tomorrow and the jobs that come with it, we must continue to invest in educating the scientists, technologists and engineers who will develop these breakthroughs. Twenty-first century jobs require more advanced skills and knowledge than ever before; a high school degree is not enough. Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce forecasts that 62 percent of the jobs in 2018 will require education beyond high school. Today, the 10 highest-paying college majors and fastest-growing occupations are STEM-related. Unfortunately, Latinos significantly trail other minority groups when it comes to STEM majors and graduates.

To change this situation, President Obama has challenged us to move from the middle to the top of the pack in math and science by 2020. Currently, U.S. students finish 21st of 30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in science literacy. America’s highest-performing science students rank 13th out of 30 OECD nations. In math literacy, U.S. students place 25th of 30 OECD countries, and our top math students are 23rd out of 30. The president also has set an ambitious goal of recruiting and training

100,000 new STEM teachers by 2020 to ensure Latinos, and all students, have great STEM teachers in the classroom.

The president's 2012 budget requests \$146 billion for research and development. In addition, *HCERA* guarantees \$1 billion over the next 10 years for HSIs for STEM-focused initiatives. In cooperation with ED, the National Science Foundation's Teacher Learning for the Future program will fund innovative efforts that design, develop, implement, and test new teacher-training programs. To bring undergraduates from groups historically underrepresented in STEM fields, the budget also doubles funding to \$26 million for an overarching, comprehensive science and technology workforce program. These programs will be developed in conjunction with a governmentwide effort to improve the impact of federal investments in math and science education by ensuring that all programs supporting K–12 and undergraduate education adhere to consistent standards of effectiveness.

Improving College Affordability and Access for Latino Students

Over the span of three decades, the real, inflation-adjusted cost of tuition for private four-year colleges has more than doubled. Meanwhile, public four-year institutions, while still much cheaper than private colleges, have nearly tripled in “sticker” price over this period. Of course, given various grants and adjustments that schools make based on individual circumstances, most students do not pay the “sticker” price of postsecondary education, but many families still find the “net” costs of college increasingly difficult to meet.

A new research study commissioned by the College Board, *Cracking the Student Aid Code*, has found that early awareness and a simplified student aid process are key to navigating the federal financial aid system, especially at a time when U.S. students and their families face rising college prices and stagnant incomes. Based on extensive focus-group and survey research with parents and students, the study found that nearly half of the parent respondents did not know the cost of attending a public college in their home state, and only 44 percent of Latino parent respondents were aware of the Pell Grant program.

Federal Financial Aid that Puts Students First: Strengthening Pell Grants

Making college affordable for all students is a top priority for the administration. By shifting the nation's student aid system to the Direct Loans program through the *HCERA*, Congress and the Obama administration put an end to wasteful subsidies to banks and used savings to strengthen and stabilize funding for America's Pell Grant recipients.

The investments in the Pell Grant under the *HCERA*, coupled with the president's previous investments, more than double the amount of funding available for Pell Grants, growing the award from \$4,730 in 2008 to \$5,550 today. By academic year 2020–21, it is estimated that more than 150,000 additional Pell Grant awards would be made to Latino students due to the changes in the law. The 2011 continuing resolution, recently enacted by Congress, maintains the \$5,550 maximum Pell award for low-income students, even in the face of intense budget pressure.

More Affordable Student Loans: Income-Based Repayment

The *HCERA* also provides student borrowers new choices in how they repay their loans, including an income-based repayment option to cap monthly repayments at 10 percent of income for borrowers after 2014, and to have loans forgiven after 20 years. Public service workers—such as teachers, nurses, and those in military

service—will see any remaining debt forgiven after 10 years. It is estimated that this expanded benefit will benefit approximately 143,000 Latino borrowers between 2014 and 2020.

Simplification of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid*

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education took action to reduce the complexity of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* and the amount of time necessary to complete it. The form now allows applicants to retrieve tax records electronically from the Internal Revenue Service, making it easier to complete the document. During the last two academic years, the number of federal student aid applicants increased by 35 percent—up from 16.4 million.

WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS

First established in September 1990, the Initiative was created to advise the president and the secretary of education on issues related to Hispanics and to address academic excellence and opportunities for the Hispanic community. In May 2009, Juan Sepúlveda was appointed executive director. José Rico joined as deputy director in January 2010.

On Oct. 19, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13555 renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. The office also convened more than 300 national leaders at its National Education Summit and Call to Action on Oct. 18, 2010.

National Action Network

In the Obama administration, the Initiative has created a national network of Latino leaders and key community stakeholders by convening more than 10,000 people in more than 100 communities in 35 states, including Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., in half-day Community Conversations. These Community Conversations served to reintroduce the office to the community, hear key challenges and priorities on the frontlines of the education system with respect to the Hispanic community, and enlist individuals and organizations to join the Initiative's National Action Network to partner with others nationwide to work on these issues.

White House Initiative Mission

To help restore the United States to its role as the global leader in education and to strengthen the nation by expanding education opportunities and improving education outcomes for Hispanics of all ages and by helping to ensure that all Hispanics receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for college, a career, and productive and satisfying lives.

The Initiative has significantly enlarged the reach and size of the national network through community organizing, technology, and social media approaches—webcasts, community watch parties, interactive Skype conversations, national conference calls, videoconferencing, Facebook, YouTube videos, and Twitter.

Public-Private Partnerships

The initiative's top priority is identifying, helping organize, and strengthening public-private partnerships aimed at community education reform initiatives that increase Hispanic education attainment levels, thereby contributing to President Obama's 2020 goal.

Based on the U.S. Hispanic demographics, in addition to other selection criteria, the initiative is currently focusing on the following 33 communities in 13 states. Tier 1 communities are public-private partnerships that already exist or are close to being formed. Tier 2 communities are those that have voiced a desire to develop public-private partnerships in the near

future.

The initiative is seeking other communities that are interested in creating public-private partnerships and joining the Initiative's national network.

Tier 1 Communities

- Phoenix, AZ
- Tucson, AZ
- Inland Empire, CA (Riverside, San Bernardino)
- Long Beach, CA
- Santa Ana, CA
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- Albuquerque, NM
- Las Cruces, NM
- Las Vegas, NV
- Providence, RI
- Rio Grande Valley, TX (Brownsville)
- San Antonio, TX

Tier 2 Communities

- Fresno/Merced, CA
- Salinas, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Sacramento, CA
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Denver, CO
- Bridgeport, CT
- Hartford, CT
- Orlando, FL
- Chicago, IL
- Kansas City, KS
- Kansas City, MO
- New York, NY
- Philadelphia, PA
- Austin, TX
- Dallas, TX
- El Paso, TX
- Houston, TX
- Laredo, TX

What the Latino Community Wants from the Public-Private Partnerships

Through our Community Conversations we found a general consensus as to what Latinos and community members require of the initiative in our public-private partnerships:

1. Education Department opportunities (i.e., grants, resources, partnerships);
2. Education opportunities housed at other agencies (e.g., Head Start, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; adult education and workforce development, U.S. Department of Labor; STEM-related programs, National Science Foundation, etc.);
3. Federal government opportunities for noneducation- focused issues critical to the community (i.e., health care, housing, community development, etc.);
4. Private sector, philanthropic and nonprofit opportunities;
5. An active National Network whereby communities can communicate with one another directly;
6. Policy input;
7. Community problem-solving assistance; and
8. Public-private partnership consulting (i.e., assistance with visioning, developing processes, operational goals and procedures, providing legitimacy to their efforts, and creating the public will, etc.).

White House Hispanic Community Action Summits

In July 2011, the White House Initiative, in collaboration with the White House Office of Public Engagement, hosted its first-ever White House Hispanic Policy Conference, “Winning the Future: President Obama’s Agenda and the Hispanic Community.” Individuals working on issues important to Hispanics were invited to Washington, D.C., for the two-day event, whose focus was to accomplish three key goals:

1. Interact with key decision- and policymakers in the Obama administration from a diverse array of policy areas;
2. Share concerns, constructive criticism, feedback and success stories with the administration; and
3. Find ways to collaborate with the administration and other leaders from across the country in addressing the needs of the Latino community.

As a result of the success of the conference, the White House Initiative was tasked with taking the concept to the road. These White House Hispanic Community Action Summits bring Hispanic leaders to administration officials with the goal of moving beyond talk to identify and develop new or expanded projects, public-private partnerships or any other action-oriented programs they choose. The theme for the summits is “Winning the Future: President Obama’s Agenda and the Hispanic Community,” a theme broad enough to capture any important policy issue for each community, such as job growth, education, health care, immigration and the environment.

The first half of each convening focuses on “Obama Administration 101” and administration initiatives. The second half models the Open Space Process that focuses on shared partnerships on community solutions. Open Space is a process designed to take care of the needs of every participant and to build on the many assets and talents that participants bring into the room. The typical conference questions—Who are the speakers? What is the agenda? How long do we have for each topic? Which workshops are being offered?—are irrelevant. The Open Space Process is a type of daylong coffee break—the part of a traditional summit during which time participants connect with others and discuss the issues most important to them.

To date, two such events have been held in Orlando, Fla., and Las Vegas, with several more scheduled to take place through 2012:

September 2011

- Orlando, FL
- Las Vegas, NV

October 2011

- Tucson, AZ
- New York, NY

- Las Cruces, NM
- Albuquerque, NM
- Denver, CO

November 2011

- Providence, RI

December 2011

- Miami, FL
- Phoenix, AZ

January 2012

- Tampa, FL

To date, more than 350 individuals have participated in the two-day summits.

THE ROAD AHEAD: A COMPLETE AND COMPETITIVE EDUCATION FOR EVERY LATINO STUDENT

Remarks by the President at the signing of Executive Order 13555 renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, Oct. 19, 2010

THE PRESIDENT: Excellent. Everybody, please be seated. Welcome to the White House, everybody. Thank you, Javier, for that outstanding introduction. I will not play you at chess. (Laughter.) You may not have won at the nationals, but you'd beat me. (Laughter.) And then Malia and Sasha would laugh about it. (Laughter.) We are very proud of you and we're glad you are here. Thank you also to the University of Texas–Pan American mariachis who performed for us. (Applause.) And hello to everybody across the country participating in watch



President Obama talks with Javier Garcia of Brownsville, Texas, before entering the East Room for the signing ceremony of Executive Order 13555 renewing the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, October 2010.

parties and in education reform efforts in your own communities. It's precisely that kind of participation—engaging the American people, giving all of you more say in the policies that affect your lives, and holding ourselves accountable to deliver real results in return—that is at the heart of a new Executive Order I'm about to sign to strengthen the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. (Applause.)

Now, before I sign this document, I'd like to acknowledge a few people who have been and will continue to be instrumental to our success: our Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Thelma Meléndez de Santa Ana—(applause)—our Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Eduardo Ochoa—(applause)—and our Assistant Deputy Secretary, Rosalinda Barrera. (Applause.)

I also want to thank Eduardo Padrón, the president of Miami Dade College, who has been a leader in my administration's efforts to strengthen America's community colleges. And because that's not enough, in addition to running a community college he's also agreed to serve as the chair of this initiative's Presidential Advisory Commission. So we are grateful to you. (Applause.) This will be a group of 30 Latino leaders who are going to make sure that, when it comes to our children's education, my administration hears the voices of the Latino community loud and clear.

And I also want to give a special recognition to our recently confirmed Ambassador to the Dominican Republic, Raul Yzaguirre. (Applause.) It was Raul's vision and tenacious commitment to equal education for all our people that helped this initiative become a reality back in 1990 under George H.W. Bush. And so we are very proud that he is here today to see that his work continues.

The question then back in 1990 is the same question we face now: How do we best improve educational opportunities and outcomes for our Hispanic students? Over the past year and a half, under Juan Sepúlveda's leadership—and Juan, thank you for your outstanding work—(applause)—over the last year and a half, this initiative has worked to gather the answers from those who know best: people in communities across this country. Juan hosted more than a hundred conversations. He's taken comments from more than 10,000

Americans. And he's worked with leaders from more than 30 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, to come up with real solutions that work best for our kids.

We know why this is so important. Today, Latinos make up the largest minority group in America's schools—more than one in five students overall—and they face challenges of monumental proportions. Latino students are more likely to attend our lowest-performing schools, more likely to learn in larger class sizes, more likely to drop out at higher rates. Fewer than half take part in early childhood education. Only about half graduate on time from high school. And those who do make it to college often find themselves underprepared for its rigors. In just a single generation, America has fallen from first to ninth in college completion rates for all our students.

Now, this is not just a Latino problem; this is an American problem. We've got to solve it because if we allow these trends to continue, it won't just be one community that falls behind—we will all fall behind together. At a time when the unemployment rate for Americans who've never gone to college is almost double what it is for those who have gone to college; when most of the new jobs that are being created require some higher education; when other countries are out-educating us today to out-compete us tomorrow; making sure that we offer all our kids, regardless of race, a world-class education is more than a moral obligation. It is an economic imperative if we want to succeed in the 21st century.

And that's why, when I took office, I set two big goals for American education. One was to make sure all our students, like the ones who are here with us today, receive a complete and competitive education from cradle to career. And number two, by the year 2020—the year Javier will graduate from college—America will once again have a higher share of college graduates than any other nation on Earth. That is our goal. (Applause.)

Now, improving educational outcomes for the Hispanic community is critical to reaching these overall goals. And reaching these goals is behind every battle that we've waged on behalf of our children's education since I took office.

We are expanding and reforming early childhood education so that our children aren't behind by the time they reach the schoolhouse door. We're challenging programs that don't measure up to compete for their funding, because if you're receiving tax dollars, you'd better be able to deliver results for our children.

We've launched a "Race to the Top," encouraging states to change their schools from the bottom up for all our children—black, white, and Latino alike. Already, 48 states and D.C. have competed to raise standards, improve curricula, and turn around struggling schools. And we'll take steps to recruit and train more good teachers, including bilingual teachers.

We're tackling the dropout crisis that affects the Hispanic community more than any other community. And we're challenging states and communities to turn around our 5,000 worst schools, including many of the ones that produce the most Latino and African-American dropouts.

To reach the second goal that I've set, leading the world in the proportion of college graduates, we're offering middle-class families the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which is a tax credit worth up to \$2,500 a year that's already helped put the dream of a college degree within the reach of more than 12 million students from working families.

We're upgrading our community colleges so that we can link students looking for work with businesses looking to hire. We're funding and implementing the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill so our veterans, including our outstanding

Latino veterans, can come home to the same chance to earn a college education as my grandfather had when he came back from World War II.

We're eliminating \$60 billion over the next decade in wasteful giveaways to banks that profited from a broken student loan system, and we're using that money to make college more affordable for millions of students. In fact, we estimate that these steps will make college more affordable for more than 150,000 additional Latino students.

And as I've said before, Congress should finally pass the *DREAM Act* [Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors]. I've supported this bill—(applause)—I have supported this bill for years, and I'll do everything it takes to sign it into law on behalf of students seeking a college education and those who wish to serve in our country's uniform.

We have to start turning around our troubled schools. Putting the dream of a college education within the reach of working families. Educating our kids—all of them—to graduate ready for college, ready for a career, ready to make the most of their lives. That's what we're doing. That is why we're here.

But while strengthening Hispanic education in America is the purpose of this initiative, it's not something that can fall on the Department of Education alone. I expect agencies across the federal government to take this initiative seriously and support its mission. And it's also not

something that government can do by itself. It's going to take all of us—the public and private sectors, teachers and principals, all of you at home at those watch parties, parents getting involved in their kids' education, and students giving their best—because the farther they go in school, the farther they will go in life, and that means the farther we'll go as a country.

I know there will be cynics out there who say that this improvement that we're seeking is not possible; that the reforms won't work; that the problems in our education system are too entrenched. It's easy to think that way. This initiative, for example, has been around for 20 years, and we still face many of the same challenges. And it's true, as I've said ever since I ran for this office—and as everyone here knows firsthand—that change is hard. Change takes time. Fixing what is broken in our education system will not be easy. We won't see results overnight. It may take years, even decades, for all these changes to pay off.

But that's no reason not to get started. That's no reason not to strive for these changes. That's a reason for us, in fact, to start making them right now. It's a reason for us to follow through. And as long as I'm president, I will not give in to calls to shortchange any of our students. (Applause.)

So in the end, this is about building a brighter future where every child in this country—black, white, Latino,



White House Initiative staff and 2009–10 summer interns at the executive order signing ceremony, October 2010.

Asian, or Native American; regardless of color, class, creed—has a chance to rise above any barrier to fulfill his or her God-given potential. It's about keeping the promise at the heart of this country that we love. The promise of a better life. The promise that our children will dream bigger, hope deeper, climb higher than we could ever imagine. That's the promise that so many of you work to advance each and every day in your own respective fields. And as long as I have the privilege of being your president, that's a promise that I intend to work to keep.

Thank you very much, everybody. Now I'm going to sign this initiative. Thank you. (Applause.)

###

APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL EDUCATION-RELATED INFORMATION

The following websites provide additional information and resource materials on the work, activities and programs of the White House Initiative and U.S. Department of Education.

- [White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics – Facebook Page](#)



Scan the bar code above with your mobile device to be taken directly to the White House Initiative’s Facebook page.

- [Executive Order Signing Ceremony – Video](#)
- [White House Initiative for Excellence in Education for Hispanics](#)
- [Es el Momento: Univision Education Town Hall with President Obama](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
 - [Discretionary Grant Applications](#)
 - [Race to the Top](#)
- [Federal Student Aid](#)

APPENDIX B: EXECUTIVE ORDER—WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 19, 2010

Executive Order—White House Initiative On Educational Excellence For Hispanics

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, to restore the country to its role as the global leader in education, to strengthen the Nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for Hispanics and Latinos (Hispanics) of all ages, and to help ensure that all Hispanics receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. At more than 52 million strong, including 4 million in Puerto Rico, Hispanics constitute the country's largest and fastest growing minority group. They have had a profound and positive impact on our country through, among other things, their community's strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and service. Many Hispanics contribute to this Nation bilingually in the English and Spanish languages -- a true asset for our country in an increasingly global, interdependent world.

Hispanic students are the largest minority group in our Nation's schools, numbering more than 11 million in our public elementary and secondary school system, and constituting more than 22 percent of all pre-K–12 students. Hispanic students face educational challenges of crisis proportions. Fewer than half of all Hispanic children participate in early childhood education programs, and far too few Hispanic students graduate from high school; of those who do complete high school, many are not adequately prepared for college. Only 12 percent of adult Hispanics have a bachelor's degree, and just 3 percent have completed graduate or professional degree programs. At the same time, large numbers of Hispanic adults lack the education or literacy skills they need to advance their careers; they also are less likely than members of other groups to have taken job- or career-related courses, with the exception of basic education classes, such as English as a second language.

Our country was built on and continues to thrive on its diversity, and there is no doubt that the future of the United States is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community. To reach the ambitious education goals we have set for our Nation, as well as to ensure equality of opportunity for all, we must provide the opportunities that will enable Hispanic students to raise their educational attainment at every level of the American education system. America's future competitiveness in our global economy will be substantially enhanced by improving educational outcomes for Hispanics.

Sec. 2. White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

(a) Establishment. There is established the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Initiative), to be housed in the Department of Education (Department). The mission of the Initiative shall be to help restore the United States to its role as the global leader in education and to strengthen the Nation by

expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for Hispanics of all ages and by helping to ensure that all Hispanics receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for college, a career, and productive and satisfying lives.

(b) Initiative Administration. There shall be an Executive Director of the Initiative, to be appointed by the Secretary of Education (Secretary). The Initiative shall be advised by the Commission established under section 3 of this order and supported by the Working Group established under subsection (c) of this section. The Department shall provide the staff, resources, and assistance for the Initiative and the Working Group. To the extent permitted by law, departments, agencies, and offices represented on the Working Group shall provide resources, including personnel detailed to the Initiative, to assist the Department in meeting the objectives of this order.

(c) Interagency Working Group.

(1) There is established the Federal Interagency Working Group on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Working Group), which shall be convened and chaired by the Initiative's Executive Director.

(2) The Working Group shall consist of senior officials from the Department, the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as such additional departments, agencies, and offices as the President may designate. Senior officials shall be designated by the heads of their respective departments, agencies, and offices.

(3) The Initiative's Executive Director may establish subgroups of the Working Group to focus on different aspects of the educational system or educational challenges facing Hispanics, such as early childhood education, K-12 education, higher education, career and technical education, language acquisition, and adult education.

(d) Initiative Objectives.

(1) To expand educational opportunities, improve education outcomes, and deliver a complete and competitive education for all Hispanics, the Initiative shall, consistent with law, promote, encourage, and undertake efforts designed to meet the following objectives:

(i) increasing general understanding of the causes of the educational challenges faced by Hispanic students;

(ii) increasing the percentage of Hispanic children who enter kindergarten ready for success by improving access by Hispanics to high-quality programs and services that encourage the early learning and development of children from birth through age 5;

(iii) implementing successful and innovative education reform strategies and practices in America's public schools to ensure that Hispanic students, like their peers, receive a rigorous and well-rounded education, and have access to student support services that will prepare them for college, a career, and civic participation;

(iv) ensuring that all Hispanic students have access to excellent teachers and school leaders, in part by supporting efforts to improve the recruitment, preparation, development, and retention of successful

Hispanic teachers and school leaders and other effective teachers and school leaders responsible for the education of Hispanic students;

(v) reducing the dropout rate of Hispanic students and helping Hispanic students graduate from high school prepared for college and a career, in part by promoting a positive school climate and supporting successful and innovative dropout prevention and recovery strategies that better engage Hispanic youths in their learning, help them catch up academically, and provide those who have left the educational system with pathways to reentry;

(vi) increasing college access and success for Hispanic students and providing support to help ensure that a greater percentage of Hispanics complete college and contribute to the goal of having America again lead the world in the proportion of college graduates by 2020, in part through strategies to strengthen the capacity of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, community colleges, and other institutions of higher education serving large numbers of Hispanic students; and

(vii) enhancing the educational and life opportunities of Hispanics by fostering positive family and community engagement, improving the quality of, and expanding access to, adult education, literacy, and career and technical education, as well as increasing opportunities for education and career advancement in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

(2) In working to fulfill its mission and objectives, the Initiative shall, consistent with law:

(i) help ensure that Federal programs and initiatives administered by the Department and other agencies are serving and meeting the needs of Hispanic children, youths, and adults;

(ii) work closely with the Executive Office of the President on key Administration priorities related to the education of Hispanics;

(iii) increase the Hispanic community's participation in, and capacity to participate in, the Department's programs and education-related programs at other executive departments and agencies;

(iv) advise Department officials and, through the Working Group, other agency officials on issues related to the Hispanic community and the educational attainment of Hispanic students;

(v) advise the Secretary on the development, implementation, and coordination of educational programs and initiatives at the Department and other agencies designed to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Hispanics of all ages;

(vi) encourage and develop partnerships with public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit stakeholders to improve Hispanics' readiness for school, college, and career, as well as their college persistence and completion; and

(vii) develop a national network of individuals, organizations, and communities to share and implement best practices related to the education of Hispanics.

(3) The Initiative shall periodically publish reports on its activities. The Secretary and the Executive Director of the Initiative, in consultation with the Interagency Working Group and the Chair of the Commission established under section 3 of this order, may develop and submit to the President

recommendations designed to advance and promote educational opportunities and attainment for Hispanics, including recommendations for short- and long-term initiatives.

(e) Collaboration Among White House Initiatives. The White House Initiatives on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Asian-American and Pacific Islanders shall work together whenever appropriate in light of their shared objectives.

Sec. 3. President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. There is established the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Commission) in the Department.

(a) Commission Mission and Scope. The Commission shall advise the President and the Secretary on matters pertaining to the educational attainment of the Hispanic community, including:

- (1) developing, implementing, and coordinating educational programs and initiatives at the Department and other agencies to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for Hispanics of all ages;
- (2) increasing the participation of the Hispanic community and Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the Department's programs and in education programs at other agencies;
- (3) engaging the philanthropic, business, nonprofit, and education communities in a national dialogue regarding the mission and objectives of this order; and
- (4) establishing partnerships with public, private, philanthropic, and nonprofit stakeholders to meet the mission and policy objectives of this order.

The Commission shall meet periodically, but at least twice a year, and may work through task forces composed exclusively of Commission members, as appropriate.

(b) Commission Membership and Chair.

- (1) The Commission shall consist of no more than 30 members appointed by the President. The Commission may include individuals with relevant experience or subject matter expertise that the President deems appropriate, as well as individuals who may serve as representatives of a variety of sectors, including the education sector (early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, higher education, career and technical education, and adult education), labor organizations, research institutions, corporate and financial institutions, public and private philanthropic organizations, and nonprofit and community-based organizations at the national, State, regional, or local levels.
- (2) The President shall designate one of the members to serve as Chair of the Commission, who shall work with the Initiative's Executive Director to convene regular meetings of the Commission, determine its agenda, and direct its work, consistent with this order.

(c) Commission Administration. The Executive Director of the Initiative shall also serve as the Executive Director of the Commission and administer the work of the Commission. The Department shall provide funding and administrative support for the Commission, to the extent permitted by law. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701-5707). Insofar as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.) (Act), may apply to

the administration of the Commission, any functions of the President under the Act, except that of reporting to the Congress, shall be performed by the Secretary, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 4. General Provisions.

(a) This order supersedes Executive Order 13230 of October 12, 2001.

(b) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
October 19, 2010.

APPENDIX C: SOURCES

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