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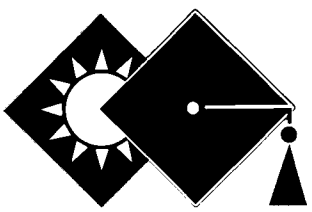
ABSTRACT

In September 1995, the U.S. Secretary of Education invited seven individuals to take part in a special project to study the problem of Hispanic student dropout. The Secretary's charge to the Hispanic Dropout Project incorporated the goals of increasing public awareness about Hispanic dropout issues; developing policy-relevant recommendations at local, state, and federal levels; and supporting development of a stakeholder network to continue the project's work. To achieve these goals, the project commissioned 9 papers on Hispanic dropout issues, held open hearings in 10 cities, visited school and nonschool sites that were developing promising practices in Latino education and dropout prevention, held press conferences, and reviewed relevant educational research. This final project report reflects the knowledge and views of various individuals and constituency groups that hosted site visits, presented testimony, and participated in open discussions. Their evidence confirms that popular stereotypes blaming school dropout on Hispanic students, parents, or language are untrue. Such misinformation excuses inaction by turning Hispanic students into victims. Many findings and recommendations in the report are not new; they reflect what researchers have been saying for years about school effectiveness, reform, finance, and equity--messages that the nation, with few exceptions, has failed to heed. Sections detail findings and recommendations related to students; parents and families; teachers; schools; school district, state, and federal policymakers; community-based organizations, business, and the larger community; and researchers. Appendices overview the project; and list persons and organizations providing testimony, sites visited, and programs reviewed in commissioned papers. (Contains 140 references.) (SV)

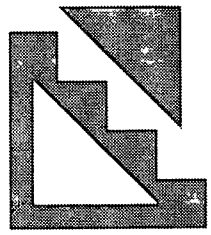
NO MORE EXCUSES

The Final Report of the Hispanic Dropout Project



HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT

This report was prepared by independent researchers.
The views expressed herein are those of the researchers.



NO MORE EXCUSES

THE FINAL REPORT OF THE HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT

Hispanic Dropout Project Members

Walter G. Secada, *Director*
Rudolfo Chavez-Chavez
Eugene Garcia
Cipriano Muñoz
Jeannie Oakes
Isaura Santiago-Santiago
Robert Slavin

February 1998

Dear Secretary Riley:

It is with a sense of great urgency that I forward to you the final report of the Hispanic Dropout Project, *No More Excuses*. With this report, we have fulfilled the charge that you gave to us in our letters of appointment to the project and at our meeting on September 18, 1995.

Since we first met with you, thousands of this nation's Hispanic students have left school without a diploma. Some left because they felt that other life options were more viable; others left because they felt that they were being pushed out; and still others left because of family obligations. Yet almost all these students left school because no one had established individual relationships with each of them, communicated high academic expectations to them, and provided them with meaningful opportunities to achieve those expectations.

We mourn their truncated education. We worry about their future lives, their unfulfilled dreams and aspirations, their access to this nation's most cherished democratic institutions, and their full participation in the economic, labor, social, and other spheres of life. We share with you a concern for the impact of their inadequate education on this nation's economic and social systems. And we are outraged at the conditions that made possible such a shocking state of affairs in the first place.

In our report to you, we note that parents, teachers, and other school personnel have central roles in supporting this nation's Hispanic youth to complete school and to have a worthwhile education in doing so. What is more, we outline steps that need to be taken by policy makers, the business community, and the larger voting public to support the work of our nation's schools in educating and graduating their Hispanic youth. These efforts will require a concerted and long-term investment of human and fiscal resources; the problem of Hispanic school dropout will not be solved within an election cycle nor within a time frame that lends itself easily to political grandstanding and sound bite news reporting.

For all of us in the project, it has been an honor to serve the nation in this effort. What is more, we feel an obligation to the countless people who shared their expertise with us, who testified at our open hearings, and who hosted our visits to sites around the country. We feel an even stronger obligation to the younger siblings of the dropouts with whom we spoke and, in general, to all Hispanic students whose educational experiences are less than what should be their due in a nation that prides itself on the treatment of its children. We stand prepared to support meaningful follow up to this project. The time for excuses is over; there is much work to be done.

Sincerely yours,

Walter G. Secada
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Director, Hispanic Dropout Project

Contents

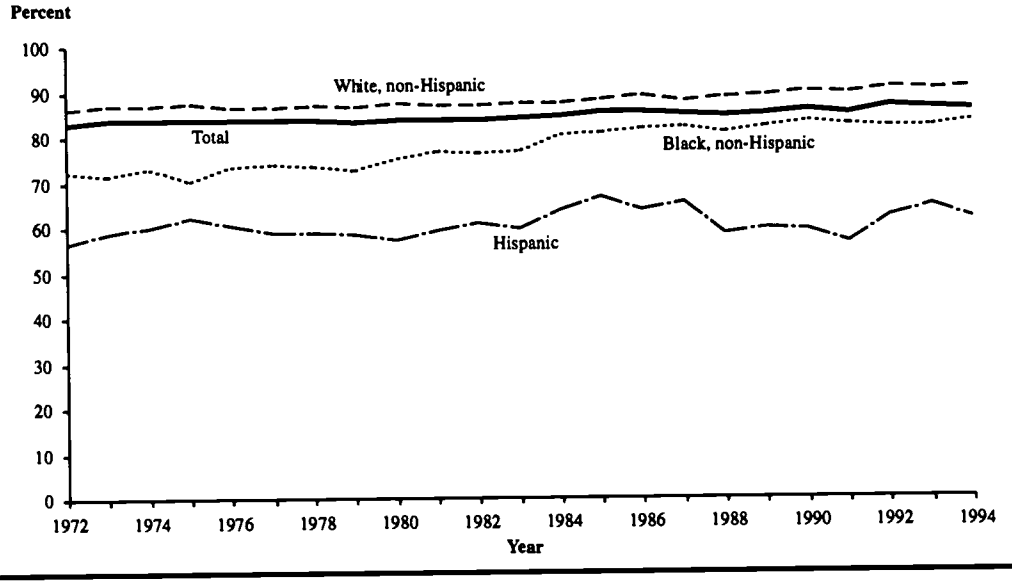
The material in this report that is marked by the icon at left or that is boxed represents the views of those we heard in the field and the knowledge of those whose work we consulted.

BACKGROUND

Nearly one in five of our nation's Hispanics between the ages of 16 and 24 who ever enrolled in a United States school left school without either a high school diploma or an alternative certificate such as a GED, according to the most recently available data from the United States Census Bureau. If we consider all of this nation's Hispanics, including immigrants who never enrolled in U.S. schools, the Hispanic dropout rate reaches a staggering 30 percent. While accounting for just 56 percent of all U.S. immigrants, Hispanics account for nearly 90 percent of all immigrant dropouts.

While the dropout rate for other school-aged populations has declined, more or less steadily, over the last 25 years, the overall Hispanic dropout rate started higher and has remained between 30 and 35 percent during that same time period. As a result, today's dropout rate for Hispanics is 2.5 times the rate for blacks and 3.5 times the rate for white non-Hispanics. Moreover, of Hispanics who have ever enrolled in U.S. schools, proportionately more of them seek alternative high school diplomas than do whites; that is, they may get high school diplomas, but even Hispanics who get diplomas are more likely to leave school in order to do so.[1] The situation is far more serious than any of these odds and rates suggest because they apply to a rapidly growing number of our nation's students.

High school completion rates for all 18- through 24-year-olds, by race–ethnicity: October 1972 through October 1994

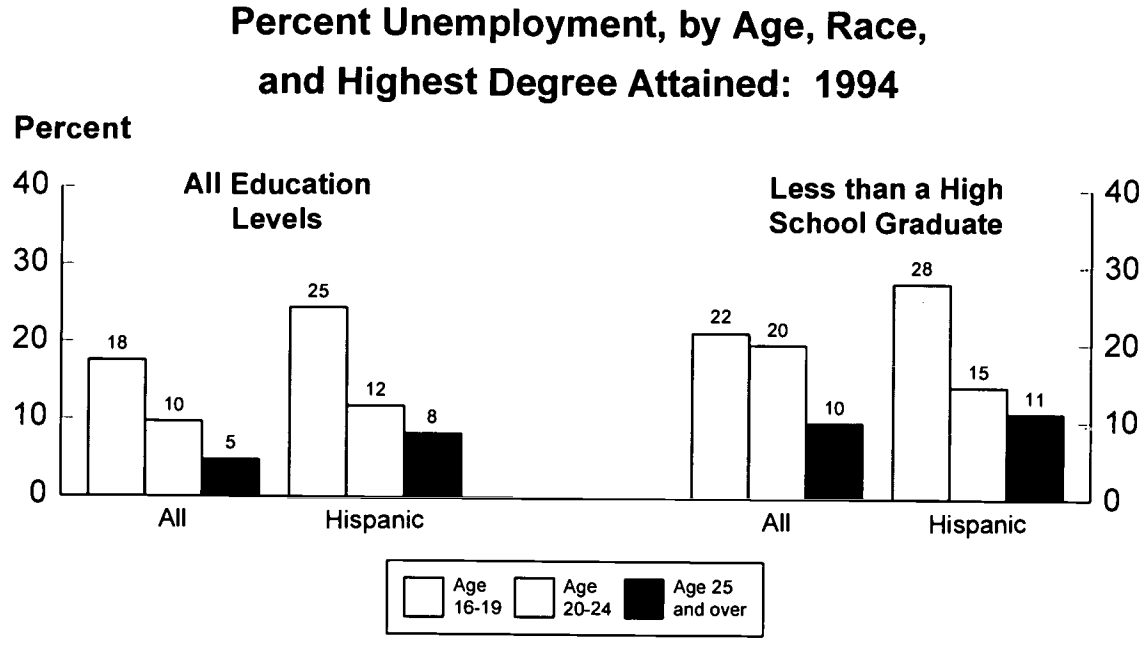


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, October (various years), unpublished data.

As with other students, the odds of school completion rise for Hispanics with gains in factors such as family income and parent education. Nevertheless, reports and studies document that gaps in school completion rates between Hispanic and non-Hispanic students remain even after controlling for the social class background of students, for their language proficiency, and for their immigrant status. *Regardless of your position in society, if you are an Hispanic student, you are more likely to drop out of school and not earn a diploma than if you are a non-Hispanic American in a similar position.*[2]

For students, dropping out forecloses a lifetime of opportunities—and in turn makes it far more likely that their own children will grow up in poverty and be placed at risk. For business, this means a lack of high-skilled employees, fewer entrepreneurs, and poorer markets. For communities, this cumulates the risk of civic breakdown. The high-wage low-skill factory jobs that lifted generations of Americans from poverty and empowered them to buy homes, send their children to college, and take care of themselves and their families are little more than a memory in our age of the silicon chip and global economy. In economic progress, as in strategic security, education is truly America's first line of defense. In other words, *the career and employment prospects for dropouts are dismal.*

Hispanic dropouts are more likely to be unemployed.



Source: NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1995.

"Those who do not complete high school face difficulties in making successful steps in other transitions to adult life." In National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1994* (NCES 96-863), p. 51. Washington, DC: United States Department of Education

As Thomas Jefferson said, education is the anvil of democracy. More than ever before, democracy depends not on 30-second sound bites from politicians on the cutting edge of rhetoric, but on an informed citizenry who can see through the spin and choose effective options to solve our nation's problems. From toxic waste to environmental protection to economic progress, understanding these issues is fundamental. Dropouts have among the lowest voting rates and among the lowest levels of civic participation. Lack of an informed, active citizenry is dangerous to the American prospect.

According to the United States Census Bureau, Hispanics are projected to become the largest ethnic minority in the United States by the early twenty-first century. If our country stays on its current path, the low rate of Hispanic school completion means that a large segment of the country's soon-to-be largest minority group will be underprepared for employment, for making personal choices, and for engagement in civic life as is required for this democracy to grow and adapt as the founders intended it to. Dropouts diminish our democracy, our society, and their own opportunities.

"Students...see dropping out as wrong; they see it as representing failure, a problem. This is of interest because it tells us that these Latino students (who are still in school) do not want to drop out. This counters the assumption of many who argue that Latinos are not really very interested in finishing school."
In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (pp. 89-90). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

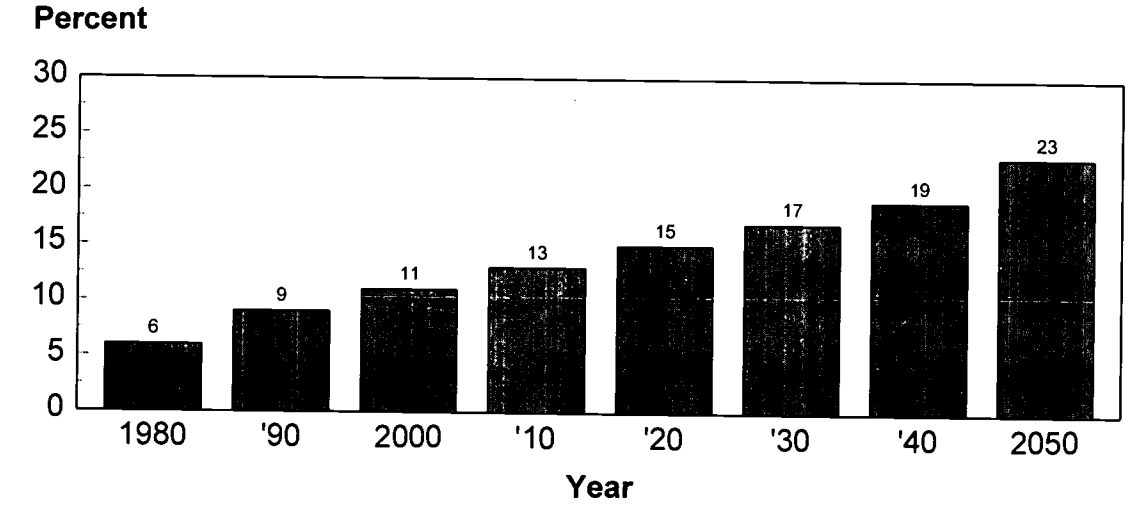
Dropping out is not a random act. According to some observers, school dropout is the logical outcome of the social forces that limit Hispanics' roles in society. Many Hispanic students live in the nation's most economically distressed areas. They attend overcrowded schools in physical disrepair and with limited educational materials. They see the devastating effects of their elders' limited employment opportunities and job ceilings. Hispanic students encounter stereotypes, personal prejudice, and social bias that is often part of larger anti-immigrant forces in this society. For many Hispanics, the United States does not appear to be a society of opportunities. Not surprisingly—faced with evidence of lingering institutional bias against Hispanics—these students figure: *The American Dream is not for me. Why bother?* And, of course, they drop out.

Hispanic school dropout has been portrayed as all of the above, and more. Although various aspects of this crisis have been highlighted by different researchers and writers, all agree on one thing: *The Hispanic dropout rate is shockingly and unacceptably high.*

If the nation does nothing, this unacceptable state of affairs can only worsen. The Census reports that because of demographic growth there will be at least a million more elementary students—many of them Hispanic—in our schools by the end of the decade. Without quick and concerted intervention, technology, trade, and changing policy will increase the number of children, many of them Hispanic, growing in poverty. Without adequate funding that is *effectively* used—particularly in the high-poverty schools attended by many Hispanic children—classes will become

Hispanics were about one of every ten Americans in 1990—and may be one of every five in 2050.

Hispanics as a Percent of Total Population: 1980 to 2050



Note: These projections come from the middle of three series of projections.

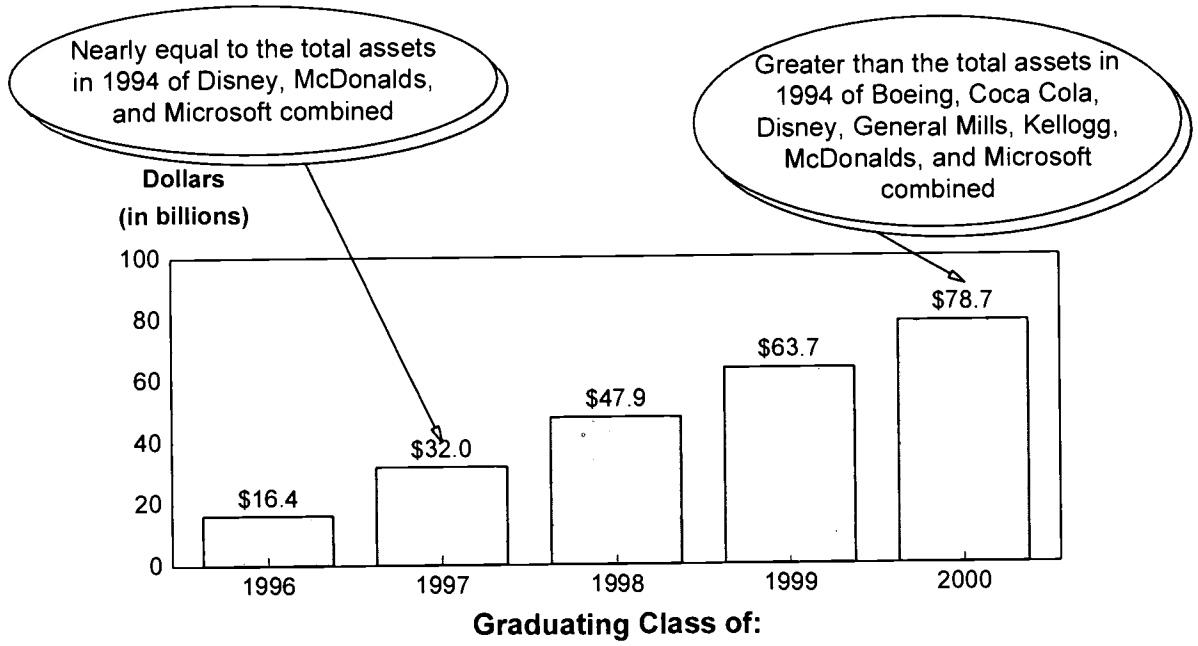
Source: Bureau of the Census, *Population Projections of the United States, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1992 to 2050*, 1992, and Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1995*, 1995.

even more overcrowded than we have witnessed recently, instructional materials will be increasingly out-of-date, and schools' ability to attract and hold effective teachers will decrease. Although connection between students and their teachers and role models is important, the number of minority college students entering teaching is declining. There are shortages of teachers with meaningful proficiency in more than English. The retirement of the large proportion of current teachers originally hired to teach the baby boomers will intensify attrition of the teachers with the most classroom experience.

If the same proportion of Hispanic students is still dropping out tomorrow, America will have many more dropouts—at a time when education is crucial for employability. America's young people are not going away. If they drop out at the rates that their older siblings do today, the consequences to this nation and its institutions will be devastating.

This is also an opportunity to make a difference. We know much about what works and can build on this know-how. Effective teaching and schools change lives. Support and professional skills development for today's teachers and for the large number of teachers who must be hired in the next handful of years can make much of the difference.

If all Hispanic students completed high school, the lifetime earnings gain would be large.



Source: Department of Labor, *Report on the American Workforce,* 1994, and the "BusinessWeek 1000," BusinessWeek, March 27, 1995.

The Hispanic Dropout Project

In September 1995, United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley invited seven individuals to take part in a special project to study issues related to the problem of Hispanic student dropout. The secretary's charge to the Hispanic Dropout Project—as this effort came to be known—incorporated three broad goals: (a) to increase public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout; (b) to develop a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, community, business, and other stakeholder groups; and (c) to support the development of a network of stakeholders interested in this issue to support actions taken after the project ended. Because the Hispanic Dropout Project is not a federal commission, we were not invited to make recommendations addressed to the federal government. In spite of this limitation on the project's scope of work, we realize that many recommendations are more likely to be implemented with supporting action by the federal government, as well as by state and local governments, school districts, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties.

Final Report

This report constitutes the Hispanic Dropout Project's culminating activity. It is intended to raise public awareness of the issues of Hispanic student dropout. This report contains our findings and recommendations at local, state, and national levels, and is addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups.

Throughout the entire project, we tried to reflect the knowledge and views of the various individuals and constituency groups that hosted our site visits, provided witness to what is happening in our nation's schools, and participated in our open discussions on these matters. With their varied experiences and broad range of views, these students, parents, teachers, volunteers, social service and business representatives, and other concerned citizens have been working on improving the education of Hispanic students. Their actions and words breathe life into the stolid statistics found in so many research studies. They make the facts matter.

"My parents sacrificed a lot for me. That's why I want to make good. For my kids to start somewhere higher than I did." Student leader at HDP student leader forum, New York City

What we saw and what people told us confirmed what well-established research has also found: Popular stereotypes—which would place the blame for school dropout on Hispanic students, their families, and language background, and that would allow people to shrug their shoulders as if to say that this was an enormous, insoluble problem or one that would go away by itself—are just plain wrong.

"I got throwed out, mainly." Arnie (former 10th-grade student). In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p.167). New York: Cambridge University Press.

We in the Hispanic Dropout Project developed a new appreciation for Yogi Berra's "*déjà vu, all over again.*" Much of what we have to report to America is *not* new. The roots of our findings run deep through the decades of extensive research gathered in many parts of the nation (see Appendix E for a bibliography). Much of the work on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, and dropout prevention applies; but then, so does much of the work on effective schools, school restructuring, school finance, and equity. Over the years, many of our findings have been repeated by Hispanic and non-Hispanic researchers, practitioners, and advocacy groups.

What troubles us and adds to our collective impatience in submitting this report is precisely that so much of this has appeared so often in the research literature and has been urged so often by those who care about student outcomes. Yet the nation has failed to put this knowledge to work in more than a few sites. There are lighthouses and beacons of excellence, yet policymakers and schools keep missing the message, sailing through the daily grind of ineffective and alienating practices, and piling up on the shoals of failure. Our nation's children, its most valuable resource

for its future, pay the price. We have tried to mix research that identifies what works in preventing school dropout with our other activities and to synthesize our findings in a form that can provide a basis for concerted action.

"Dropping out is sometimes a healthy response to an intolerable situation."
Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

We were also struck by the misinformation and myths about Hispanic dropouts. These myths excuse inaction by turning children, parents, and their communities into victims so that educators dare not aspire to Hispanics' achieving educational excellence lest they be accused of blaming the victim. These myths also excuse inaction by demonizing Hispanic students and dropouts, their families, teachers, schools, districts, the state, business, and the community—thereby undermining the basis for teamwork. The stereotype that demonizes Hispanics raises the question: What can be accomplished with a demon who cannot or will not understand, who does not want to learn, who is antisocial and untrustworthy, and who just doesn't care?

"College is for the good, American persons, but not for me. I didn't think that I could have part of the American dream." Student testimony, Albuquerque

One goal of this report is to debunk these stereotypes, myths, and excuses. Published research, the testimony we gathered, and the sites we visited clearly show that something can be done about Hispanic dropout. The nation's task is to ensure that what works for Hispanic excellence in education is not confined to isolated research studies or limited to a few lighthouse programs.

Each of the following sections focuses on the role of key actors in solving the problem of Hispanic student dropout: the students themselves; their parents and families; their teachers; schools; policymakers at the district, state, and federal levels; and business and the extended community. Each section also discusses the excuses commonly used to justify inaction and the ways that our findings contradict the myths on which the excuses are based. We end each section with a list of recommendations for that actor.

Change for the better can begin with the actions of any adult player. But the actions of all the players must work in concert to produce a move forward, to support change in other arenas, and to achieve longer lasting and more extensive improvements in Hispanic dropout rates than can be achieved through solitary action.

HISPANIC STUDENTS

"People need to respect and like children. I have seen teachers say things to kids that no one should have to put up with." Speaker at HDP public hearings, San Diego

Hispanic students deserve to be treated as if they matter—as if they have abilities and talents to contribute to our society and as if they can be responsible for achieving excellence given the chance to do so. The Hispanic Dropout Project has two major findings and recommendations involving Hispanic students:

- Schools and their staffs must connect themselves to Hispanic students and their families, provide Hispanic students with a quality education based on high standards, and provide backup options to move past obstacles on the way to achieving those high standards.

- Students and their families deserve respect. In order to accomplish the first goal, schools, their personnel, policy stakeholders, and the larger society must have respect for these children. In many cases, this means fundamentally changing people's conceptions of Hispanic students and their families. This country's Hispanic students are *ours* and they are *smart.* Hispanic families have social capital on which to build. Hispanic students deserve meaningful opportunities to learn and to succeed in later life. They deserve support in school.

"They treat you with respect here. They talk with you individually. Not just about school, but what's on your mind. I get respect from the tutors. I get it and try to give it back." Student in an alternative placement program, Las Cruces

To think of and portray Hispanic students as poor things who cannot achieve—as "pobrecitos"—is patronizing and wrong. Treating students and their families as deviant or deficient blames the victim and just doesn't work. Neither belief is correct or helpful in designing programs and intervention strategies.

"The respect and value in which students were held was [sic] extremely important in separating the schools with low Latino dropout rates from those with high rates." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform, p. 79). New York: Fordham University.

Some stereotypes that have been used to blame Hispanic students for dropping out of school suggest that they do not care about school, do not want to learn, do not come to school ready to learn, use drugs, belong to gangs, engage in violence, cannot achieve, have cultural backgrounds that are incompatible with schools, do not know English, are illegal immigrants, and in general, do not merit help or to be taken seriously. Alternative stereotypes portray Hispanic students as victims who, unable to do much about their conditions, cannot help but drop out of school.

According to the these latter myths, Hispanic students can do little or nothing about their education because they are poor, are the children of drug users, are victims of violence and abuse, do not speak (read or write) English well, encounter cultural barriers in school or in the larger society, or, through no fault of their own, lack some essential ingredient for success.

"My life, my heritage has been a cycle of poverty, of goals that were never achieved. I want to break that cycle. I want to achieve for my family, so that my parents can be proud of me." Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

Contrary to both sorts of myths, the vast majority of Hispanic students want to learn. They value education and try hard to do well in school. As is the case for the larger society, there are a small number of Hispanic youth who engage in antisocial behaviors. We do not condone such behaviors: If such youth are to succeed not only in school, but also later in life, they must change, and we must help them to change.

"I want to be a change agent. Things don't have to be like these stereotypes." Student at HDP student leaders forum, New York City

On the other hand, beliefs that paint Hispanics, en masse, as social misfits say more about how whole groups of people can be stereotyped in our society than they do about the vast majority of individuals within those groups. The Hispanic students (and their families) whom we encountered did not give up in the face of the barriers rooted in personal and institutional forms of bias and outright racism that they encounter. Instead, they worked hard to overcome those barriers.

"A persistent theme. . .is the observation that our educational system requires failure of some in order to assure success for others. . . . We spend enormous amounts of money and time locating children that we perceive as predestined for failure, often because they do not meet the expectations of the cultural patterns of the mainstream." In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (pp. 2-3) New York: The Falmer Press.

Stereotypes hold that much should not be expected of Hispanic children, as if providing them with challenging opportunities to achieve educational excellence will only drive them out of school in increasing numbers. Quite the contrary: The Hispanic Dropout Project found that Hispanic students are most likely to learn when curricular content is challenging and meaningful. In visits to early childhood, elementary, and alternative high school programs, we observed that Hispanic students were very engaged when working with such content.

In our visits to less effective schools, many older students complained about being bored and not challenged in their classes. They complained of dull, dumbed down, and irrelevant curricula. The clear message they had internalized was one of low expectations, worsened by unpleasant, adverse physical circumstances and overcrowded classrooms. Students and dropouts alike com-

plained that they could not ask questions and get them answered in class, leading them to believe that their teachers did not really care about them.

"Perhaps the most important step in fostering adolescent development and achievement is the improvement of education. ... Changes in policy are important only if they contribute to more effective school and classroom environments in which students are strongly motivated to work hard at challenging learning tasks." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 205). Washington, DC: National Academy Press

The existence of such schools and classrooms raises the question: Why would *any rational person* stay in such a setting? Students' reports to the Hispanic Dropout Project and our own observations during site visits corroborate what is reported in the research on tracking and on the instructional quality of lower tracks—that is, the everyday in-school experiences of too many Hispanic students fail to engage their minds. In contrast to their criticisms of their secondary schools, many students interviewed by the Hispanic Dropout Project praised volunteers and teachers in their schools and in alternative placements who made course work relevant to their lives and, thereby, compelling enough to make them want to achieve.

"What is there to hope for? If I get out of school, what kind of a job will I get?" Speaker at HDP hearings, San Antonio

Students often complete high school because it promises opportunities—such as a good job, a military career, or postsecondary education. For too many Hispanic students, these futures don't look like realistic options. Hispanic high school students look around themselves only to see that their siblings and older friends who just graduated are earning less than their classmates who dropped out and have been working a couple of years. Many Hispanic students often need to contribute materially to their families, and this need for a paycheck often causes even successful students to respond to daily crises rather than to maintain a future orientation. If students need jobs to meet their responsibilities, schools should help them get part-time job placements and work with businesses to develop effective schedules and learning opportunities that help students, their employers, and the schools. The workplace, in its turn, needs to change from being a threat to a student's learning and finishing school to being an effective part of a high-quality education for a non-traditional student.

"In general, there appears to be a powerful economic incentive for students to finish high school. But is this economic incentive similar for Hispanics and Chicanos as for Whites and other groups? Recent data suggest that the answer may be no...unemployment rates in October 1985 for White youths who dropped out of high school during the 1984-85 school year were almost twice as high as for high school graduates from the year before who were not enrolled in college. But for Hispanics, dropouts had an unemployment rate only slightly higher than high school graduates." In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of*

research and policy issues. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 77). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

The point is that schools and adults can help students envision better lives, help open options, and provide the connections that strengthen learning and build futures that work. To achieve these goals, the Hispanic Dropout Project—based on our observations and research review—recommends the following minimum set of guarantees for students:

1. ***Each individual Hispanic student should have someone who understands how schools work and who is willing to take personal responsibility for ensuring that the student makes it in and through school.***

Hispanic students who stayed in school (despite peer pressure, economic pressure, and other factors that pushed out many of their friends) often pointed to someone in that school—a teacher, coach, some other school staff member, someone from the larger community—whose personal interest in their finishing school nurtured their individual sense of self-worth and supported their efforts to stay in school.

"Students often say that one significant person took an interest in them." Testimony at HDP open forum, Las Cruces

2. ***Hispanic students should receive a high-quality education that guarantees that all students leave third grade able to read. They should experience curricula that are relevant and interesting, convey high expectations, and demand student investment in learning. They should understand the options that are available to them so that they can make informed decisions about their lives. They should be able to envision their futures with confidence based on an education that provided them with the tools needed to make their visions into reality.***

"The first task should be to determine what kinds of education and training would be appropriate in terms of enhancing their ability to live productive lives within this society. . . . Some of the successful dropouts designed their own curriculum: they enrolled in a training program for mechanics, got on-the-job training in supervising others, took a full-time job in a hosiery mill, but found time to complete a GED. For these subjects, the "school" they created for themselves could tolerate them and they could tolerate the intellectual and attitudinal discipline. One challenge is for schools to create opportunities within the context of the standard curriculum...The second and related comment concerns the school and behavioral problems cited by the dropouts themselves. They typically attribute leaving school to specific difficulties they had with the standard curriculum and/or school restrictions." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 186). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Junior high school is too late to *begin* dropout prevention efforts. Successful experiences must begin in the early grades and continue throughout Hispanic students' schooling. On the other hand, early interventions, *by themselves*, are not enough. Later efforts should build on the successes of early interventions.

"The national investment in Head Start and other early intervention programs, while laudatory, constitutes only a first step in the solution." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (p. 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Older students who had dropped out of school often thought that they had no other choice. School personnel either did not know about or did not tell students about alternative programs because of fiscal pressures to remain quiet about those programs. A former dropout quit his original school because, as he starkly put it, "It was either school or dropping out." He entered an alternative school only because a friend told him about it.

"Interventions must be intensive, comprehensive, coordinated and sustained. Anything less is naive and will show only marginal results. There is no 'cure all' or 'fix the kid' phenomenon. ... When special intervention is stopped before high school graduation, one can expect high-risk youth who have become successful to once again be at risk for school failure and drop out." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A67.

A former dropout stated that one reason many Hispanics leave school is that they believe that the American dream is for someone else, not for them. The effective dropout interventions that we reviewed included all students in that dream. They provided Hispanic students chances to meet and talk with Hispanic college students and successful Hispanics, and to visit college campuses. Successful interventions also helped students to plan for life after high school in work, the military, or continuing education.

Hispanic youth need to be coached, not rescued. They should be able to take credit for what they achieve. They need encouragement and opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and later lives, to set long-range, real-life goals, and to take the steps needed to achieve those goals. Adults who advocate for students, who encourage students to dream about their futures, who mentor students on how to achieve those dreams, and who hold students accountable for their actions can provide needed support for students to make their dreams come true.

3. Schools should be responsive to the behaviors and needs of individual children. They should target Hispanic students for pro-social roles.

When respect, responsibility, membership, and opportunities for leadership are denied to students by their schools, then gangs and antisocial behaviors often fill the gap. The most effective schools that we visited gave students opportunities to assume important roles in school and in helping other students. They expected and often received the best from their Hispanic students. Effective schools also realize that real students have real problems; and hence, they provide flexibility, support, and backup strategies to turn things around when problems arise. For children, schools and effective support networks can make an important difference.

"Explicit in good practice models is the recognition that young people, like all people, need to feel a sense of comfort and need to be offered a sense of autonomy in order to profit from program teachings and experiences. . . . Consistent demonstrations of caring and high expectations for young people are also a prerequisite. Many programs are also providing young people with choice and 'voice' regarding program operation, and, in response to the racial and ethnic diversity of adolescents, many practitioners incorporate cultural traditions and values into programs." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 219). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

4. ***Hispanic students have the right to schools and classrooms that are safe, healthy, free from intimidation, and inviting—that is, where their language and culture are treated as resources.***

National statistics show that many Hispanic students attend some of the most dangerous schools in America. Schools should provide students with positive and appealing alternatives to joining gangs or engaging in other antisocial behaviors. What is more, school should be a place where a student's language and cultural backgrounds are treated with respect.

"I would have been worse off if I had stayed in school. Others have dropped out to try to help their own futures." Testimony at HDP forum, Albuquerque

5. ***Hispanics' schools should have the resources necessary to provide safe environments and a high-quality education.***

Troubled schools lack basic resources. From fights breaking out due to jostling in overcrowded halls, to filthy restrooms, to long-ignored fire hazards, the basic infrastructure for effective schooling is too often missing from the schools attended by Hispanic students. Outdated textbooks, laughable lab facilities, antiquated libraries, and the absence of a challenging academic curriculum and the requisite instructional resources all bear the implicit message that these children just don't count. America cannot afford this.

"In Maryland, for instance, the one inner-city district (Baltimore) and five rural districts each spend less than $4,500 per student, compared with three suburban districts that spend $6,000-$7,500 per student. Thus, schools in the poorer Mary-

land districts have about $45,000-$60,000 less each year for each classroom of 30 students than schools in affluent districts. Per pupil expenditures directly affect the availability of textbooks, laboratory equipment, resource rooms, library books, and a range of other educational resources. . . . In one national survey, for example, in districts with more than one-third of the students from families below the poverty line, 59 percent of fourth grade teachers reported a lack of resources, compared with 16 percent in districts with no students below the poverty line." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (pp. 106-107). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Hispanic parents and families are frequently perceived as being indifferent to their children's education, moving too frequently, not speaking or wanting to learn how to speak (read, or write) English, and being too undereducated to properly educate their children. Likewise, parents and families are often portrayed as victims unable to do anything about the racism they experience and unable to understand American cultural norms. Parents are said to be ignorant, poor, products of bad schools, in conflict with their children, and in general, culturally deprived.

The schools that we saw working effectively with Hispanic parents prove that these stereotypes and descriptions are wrong. Our observations are backed up by the testimony of countless parents, both individually and through the community-based organizations they participated in, and by the extensive research on the importance of effective parent involvement. Large-scale national studies and targeted research show that, contrary to stereotypes, Hispanic parents and families highly value learning and seek to effectively support their children in school. What students told us reinforced the research.

> *"There were deep chasms in the relationship and communication between school and home. School personnel had many negative misconceptions about the motivations and values of parents. There was widespread belief that parents did not sufficiently value education and that they were unwilling to give sufficient time to rearing their children and participating in school activities. On the other hand, we found most parents to be fearful and alienated from school authorities while at the same time assigning expertise and responsibility to school personnel for educating their children. However, when parents were approached with a genuine desire to serve them and their family, we found that almost all parents were exceedingly open to suggestion and to becoming more involved in directing their adolescent and monitoring school performance.* **Parents, far more than school or community personnel, were willing to implement suggestions from project researchers."** In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A66 (emphasis added).

Hispanic students, whether they stayed in school or had dropped out and then returned, almost unanimously reported that they wanted to "make it" as a way to thank their parents and families for the sacrifices that they had made on the students' behalf. These students wanted to make their parents proud of them. They wanted to better themselves and did not want to disappoint their parents by quitting school. In addition, one-time dropouts spoke about their parents' disappointment in them as well as the love, support, pressure, and encouragement that they received from their parents at first to stay in school, then to return to school, and always to try hard and to learn.

The Hispanic Dropout Project's hearings were attended by Hispanic parents who were anxious about their children's educational futures. Many of them had found out about the hearings by word of mouth. Their testimony demonstrated their readiness to be involved in their children's education.

"Many high-risk children and their parents are blamed and not treated with respect by educators. Highest risk students and their parents are very responsive to genuine and meaningful offers of help despite cultural, language, and economic barriers." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A69.

Parents said that, in order to be involved, they must often overcome school resistance and hostility to that involvement. At almost every site that we visited, Hispanic parents said that their children's schools did not take them or their concerns very seriously. One mother recounted being told of her child's suspension hearing just 30 minutes before it was held. Risking her job, she rushed to the school, only to wait all morning in the school office and to be told abruptly that the meeting had been postponed. One father did, in fact, lose his job because of the time he spent trying to keep his daughter from being, in his words, pushed out. Another mother, in flawless English, reported how her child's principal would not speak directly to her, supposedly because her accent made it too difficult for school personnel to understand her.

"Schools also differ on the extent to which parents are involved in school decision making, conferences with teachers, and home-school instructional programs. Over the past decade, studies consistently demonstrate the positive effects of such programs on student achievement, yet parents from low-income neighborhoods, especially racial and ethnic minorities, are least likely to participate. The reasons for this lack of participation include not only the lack of funds, but also different levels of school commitment, cultural and language barriers, and time constraints and stress on poor working families." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 108). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Although community groups and activists expressed anger—sometimes bordering on rage—at how schools treat parents, they also expressed determination to press on with their efforts to ensure that parental concerns would be heard. What is more, parents found help and strength by joining and working with such groups.

Hispanic parents spoke eloquently about their dreams and wishes for their children's futures, and the roles that schools must play in educating their children. In a Head Start program, in community and recreation centers that provided social services for students, and in community action groups—all visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project—parents volunteered as tutors, instructional assistants, fundraisers, program implementers, and in many other roles.

When Hispanic parents see clear benefits to their children from their participation and when parents are given meaningful roles and responsibilities, many parents will do more than asked to do. One of the few longitudinal studies of a successful dropout prevention program reported that Hispanic parents cooperated much more readily with the program's recommendations than did the schools and the teachers.[3]

Strategies That Families Use To Keep (Hispanic) Adolescents in School

1. Maintain parent in charge;
2. Recognize a two-way influence [between parents and their children];
3. Set limits;
4. Monitor [their children's] actions, whereabouts, feelings;
5. Draw the line about peers;
6. Send continuous positive messages [to their children];
7. Stay involved in school.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 12-14). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project finds that empowering parents to support their children's education and to work for better schools is fundamental.

1. Hispanic parents and families need to negotiate their children's education system.

In today's world, Hispanic parents must advocate for their children because no one else will—or can—do the job as well as they. Beyond individual advocacy, parents can find strength through active membership in church and community groups that rely on their size and political clout to ensure that parents' concerns are taken seriously and that provide necessary services such as recreational and after-school tutoring programs.

"To better understand how both schools and families influence achievement and dropout behavior, one must focus on the interaction between families and schools. This may be particularly important for understanding the achievement of Chicano children. For instance, research suggests that in the U.S. lower social class children in general and Hispanic children in particular often face learning environments in school that foster poor academic performance and may be dysfunctional to the type of learning style and reward structure found in the home."
In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues*. In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 75). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

2. ***Schools should recruit Hispanic parents and extended families into a genuine partnership of equals for educating Hispanic students.***

The most impressive schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project aggressively recruited parents to work with them in educating their children. Parent roles were authentic and appropriate. For instance, school personnel helped graduating students and their parents to understand and to fill out various financial aid forms for college. At the same school, parents whose children engaged in inappropriate behaviors were helped to recognize how their own behaviors enabled their children to avoid responsibility. When those parents knew what to look for, they monitored their children's behaviors and held them accountable for avoiding antisocial activities and for getting to school on time. These parents' behaviors show that they understood that their advocacy for their children and their partnership with the school continued at home by the parents' fulfilling their side of the bargain.

Conversely, schools that were less successful or seemed to be actively pushing students out were also those schools which, by their messages and practices, seemed to actively blame parents and families for their children's failures. Parents bitterly complained about such schools.

"The bottom line: the local school board and local power brokers should not disenfranchise parents. They should give them the power to run their schools for their neighborhoods." Testimony at HDP hearings, San Diego

3. ***Hispanic parents should be helped to envision a future for their children and a reasonable means by which to plan for and achieve that future.***

One of the most powerful incentives mentioned by Hispanic students was their parents' and families' determination that these students have better lives than the older generation had. Parents want better lives for their children; schools should help parents learn what is available for their children and help parents provide these opportunities for their children. That parents can motivate their children and that schools can provide information about opportunities for students should provide the basis for the aforementioned partnership.

"My mom was always supportive of me. She pushed me to go to school. She wouldn't let me stay home. So, I ditched. Finally, she saw the problem and took me out of the school. But she pushed me to go to another school until this place [an alternative school setting] helped me to graduate." Former dropout at HDP open forum, Albuquerque

TEACHERS

Teachers and other school staff can and must make a difference in students' lives. In spite of this imperative, many teachers feel powerless. Excuses such as "The problem is too big for one teacher. How can I, a single teacher, hope to overcome the effects of students' backgrounds?" are common. This particular excuse portrays teachers as helpless when dealing with students who are not ready or do not want to learn. Hispanic students are said to lack something (usually English); their aspirations or those of their parents are said not to support schooling.

"Teachers only want to teach from 8:00 to 3:00. They just follow the contract." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Teachers' overcrowded classrooms are said to be the reason that they can attend to just so many students. Hence, a type of academic triage results: Some students must be sacrificed so that others can be taught. Not surprisingly, those who are sacrificed are portrayed as uneducable.

"There is no support from teachers for the students. Teachers don't believe in the students. One of the main problems I saw in high school is that teachers don't want to pay attention." Student in alternative placement, Las Cruces

On the other hand, Hispanic students at project hearings across the country leveled the most damning charge possible against some of their teachers: "They just don't care."

Neither extreme is the rule. During Hispanic Dropout Project open hearings and visits to schools, we encountered many teachers who made a difference in their students' lives. These caring individuals were trying their hardest to help Hispanic students succeed. Some had developed teaching practices designed to engage their students. Others provided counseling and mentored students. All constantly worked to improve how they taught their students. All communicated a deep sense of caring, high expectations, respect, and commitment to their students.

"I saw how teachers invested in me. I felt like a person. The teachers' personal investment in me meant so much to me." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

Excellent teachers are very aware of the challenges that their students face. They are very realistic about students' individual situations. What seemed to distinguish teachers who made a difference from those who did not was that the former teachers used knowledge of Hispanic students' academic, social, and psychological characteristics as a foundation and a source of competence on which to build. These teachers passionately believed that, because of their teaching and personal concern for their students, they made a difference in their students' lives. Students and parents agreed.

"I got to know them [personnel at an alternative setting] as family. They showed

me different things that I could do besides drop out. So I went back to school and finished in three years." Former dropout at HDP public forum, Albuquerque

Students reported that teachers who really cared about them as individuals often provided them with the inspiration and personal support needed to get through hard times. When asked why they stayed in school, students (many with friends who had dropped out of school) pointed to a teacher or other school person as having taken a special interest in them and nurtured their dreams for the future.

Less successful teachers do not really understand their Hispanic students' lives. They do not use what they know about their students as a foundation on which to build. Instead, they use what they know about their students to explain away failure.

"The school staff was extremely resistant to change and to being challenged by change. School problems were perceived to be caused by deficiencies on the part of students and parents. The need for fundamental change was believed to reside within students and parents." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A65-A66.

Students know the difference and respond positively to the good teachers that they encounter. Instead of scurrying out of class as soon the bell's ringing marked its end, students with effective teachers would stay to ask a question, to discuss a new insight about the day's work, or simply to share something that had happened outside of school with the teacher. We saw such student behaviors in secondary mathematics classes, in alternative school settings, and with middle-school generalist teachers.

"Even when a school was not particularly sensitive to Latino cultural differences — as was the case at School B — the critical difference was whether the school's staff thought the student was worth teaching." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 79). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Hispanic students and their parents expect teachers to engage students in challenging content. In contrast to their complaints about low tracks, low expectations, and dumbed-down, boring and irrelevant curricula, Hispanic students and their parents who were interviewed by the project praised teachers who made material interesting and relevant. The students craved being challenged by their teachers.

"At School D, students would begin by hiring teachers who care and by making classes more fun. They would remove a large number of the faculty and replace

them with teachers who are patient and interested in the needs of all the students, not only a select few. Importantly, they would provide the school with more bilingual teachers." In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 86). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

Students expected teachers to help them with the subject matter. Many students complained about not getting help when they needed it and, as a result, becoming frustrated. They talked about raising their hands or calling for help during class but not getting assistance because the teacher was busy with someone else. Students realized that large class size and the fact that secondary teachers teach many courses militate against teachers being able to help them.

Teachers may send unintentional messages to students when they fail to respond directly to requests for help. Some students interviewed by the project, for instance, reported that their teachers suggested that they get academic help from a tutoring service which met during breaks and after-school. Such help is too little and too late for a student who, because of frustration, has given up trying to understand. To the student who recounted that "My teacher told me she was too busy and that I should get help from the school's tutoring service," the teacher had simply dismissed her request.

"Student preferences are viewed by school staff as non-essentials, which contributes to student alienation." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), p. A68.

When asked about the features of alternative schools or programs that they most appreciated, almost every student pointed to the personalized relationships that they developed with their teachers and the individualized attention that they received. Many students realized that this attention was possible because of the smaller class size. These students also spoke about the mutual respect and caring that developed between themselves and the schools' staffs. This respect was communicated to the students in countless ways by adults who provided mentoring. A volunteer at a social service agency would tell students that, like them, he too had dropped out of school but had later achieved his goals by believing in himself and being persistent. A retired teacher insisted that all of her students could learn to read, and she provided them with the support to do so.

"Many disadvantaged youth feel ignored or unimportant in school—as if no one at school cares about them. . . . [Intervention] efforts [typically] rely upon three broad strategies: (1) strategies to link students to adults in the school, including mentor programs and efforts to reorganize school schedules to promote closer contact between teachers and students; (2) strategies to link students to other students in the school, including extracurricular activities and orientation pro-

grams; and (3) strategies to link students to the school as an institution, including fair and equitable policies and greater student choice over their school programs." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A: M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

1. ***Teachers should teach content so that it interests and challenges Hispanic students. They should help students to learn that content. They should communicate high expectations, respect, and interest in each of their students. They should understand the roles of language, race, culture, and gender in schooling. They should engage parents and the community in the education of their children.***

Effective instruction requires knowing the student and tapping into her or his strengths and interests to trigger learning. Effective teachers use parents as allies to extend learning outside the classroom. They provide parents with a stream of timely feedback and help parents see concrete ways of extending their children's learning outside the classroom. Teachers who are not familiar with the lives of their students, their words, and their backgrounds find it hard to be highly effective.

"Make class interesting." Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

As project members have seen, under schoolhouse pressures, harried teachers may find themselves unintentionally sending the wrong message. Teachers need to monitor themselves or receive inservice training to ensure that Hispanic students and their families receive the message that they are really wanted in the classroom and in school, that excellence is within their reach, and that success depends on working together.

2. ***Teachers should become knowledgeable about and develop strategies to educate Hispanic students and to communicate with their parents. Teachers should receive the professional development needed to develop those attitudes, knowledge, and skills.***

Ongoing professional development should help teachers learn about their students' backgrounds and interests, curriculum adaptation, and other instructional strategies for heterogenous student populations. Teachers should be familiar with the implications of second language acquisition for student learning and how to adapt instruction for students of varying levels of English language proficiency. Teachers' knowledge of their students' cultural heritage and the implications of language loss are important for effective teaching and the creation of well-functioning home–school linkages.

"Teachers were asked to organize their classrooms into small groups which eventually became cohesive work teams with full control of their own writing activities. They would explore possible topics, research them, develop data gathering instruments such as surveys and interview protocols, conduct interviews with peers and adults, discuss findings and finally write cooperatively extended

and complex essays. The students discovered that writing was no longer a futile school exercise designed by teachers for their own purposes, but a meaningful activity and a means of exchanging important ideas and specific audiences and for expressing their own feelings. Students realized that their individual and collective voices can make a difference in public opinion and in the quality of life at school. Thus Chicano high school students not only significantly sharpened their communicative skills but realized that these skills are a powerful instrument in voicing individual and collective concerns. Teachers would often express their surprise: 'I am impressed. Look!', they said as they shared their students' compositions. A teacher wrote in her diary: 'This [the unexpected high performance of students] was a very successful lesson for me in many ways. It furthers my belief that if what is taught is important in the mind of the learner, much more will truly be learned.'" In Trueba, H. T., Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (Eds.) (1989). *What do anthropologists have to say about dropouts?* (p. 34) New York: The Falmer Press.

Often, teachers in high-poverty schools are the last to receive high-quality professional development on new instructional approaches, curricula, and unbiased ways of assessing students. They should be the first to get these opportunities.

"Why should I want to be a teacher? Look at the conditions we're taught in."
Testimony at HDP student leader meeting, New York City

SCHOOLS

Schools are the most important focal point for dropout prevention. The research on dropout prevention, effective schools, and restructuring schools, and the Hispanic Dropout Project's commissioned papers—all conclude that schools do, in fact, matter in students' lives. In the course of our explorations, we found powerful and personalized evidence that schools matter *positively* in keeping Hispanic students in school and in helping them to achieve academically. The most impressive schools that we visited were those where teachers and staff worked together to personalize each student's school experience. Teachers collaborated to ensure that no Hispanic student fell through the cracks, either academically or psychosocially. Spanish-speaking staff were respected for their ability to communicate with students' parents; indeed, many of these schools aggressively recruited multilingual, multiethnic staff who could relate to their students and parents.

> *"The key finding from our research is that effective schools provide at-risk students with a community of support. School as a community of support is a broad concept in which school membership and educational engagement are central. School membership is concerned with a sense of belonging and social bonding to the school and its members. Educational engagement is defined as involvement in school activities but especially traditional classroom and academic work. . . . Schools successful at dropout prevention created a supportive environment that helped students overcome impediments to membership and engagement."*
> In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 223). London: The Falmer Press.

The Hispanic Dropout Project saw secondary schools and an entire school system in which Hispanic students graduated in greater numbers than in similar schools; these examples challenge the myth that secondary schools are doomed to be cold and impersonal places for students or that they are too difficult to change into personalized and caring places. We also visited elementary and middle schools that made special efforts to ensure that all their children learned how to read, achieved academically, and became better connected to their school. Recognizing the real-world challenges that their students faced, principals, teachers, and other school staff spoke with determination about Hispanic students learning, about not losing students, and about always trying to do better. Teachers at one elementary school, for instance, said that they were relentless in ensuring that all of their Hispanic students—even students who did not speak English—could read by third grade.

Moreover, out-of-school alternative programs for students who could not attend regular school used the latter as reference points by providing a curriculum that mirrored what was offered in regular schools, by tutoring and helping students with their homework, and by helping to return students to their original schools. Their services, therefore, were linked to the school and its education programs.

"Latinos at these schools "know the deal." They know when they are getting a good education and when they are not. They also have some pretty good ideas on how to improve education. . . . The bottom line in this report is that: good neighborhoods or bad: good schools = success, bad schools cause dropouts."
In Rodriguez, C. E. (1992). *Student voices: High school students' perspectives on the Latino dropout problem* (p. 99). (Report to the Latino Commission on Educational Reform). New York: Fordham University.

On the negative side, the research literature paints an unflattering portrait of schools that do nothing to improve their dropout rates, that use some subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) means to encourage Hispanic students to leave school, and that deny Hispanics educational opportunity. The staff at such schools behave as if the students (and their parents) are so rife with social problems that there is nothing that they can do. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard some school and district staff claim that schools could do very little to reduce the Hispanic dropout rate because of student poverty, lack of student readiness or desire to learn, language, excessive student mobility, excessive costs, lack of qualified staff, lack of knowledge about the real causes of the problem, lack of parental concern, parental aspirations that do not include school, and earlier efforts that have failed. Schools, according to these individuals, can do very little about the larger social ills that befall their students. The literature is clear: Schools where such beliefs are the norm are not likely to be very successful either in ensuring that large numbers of their Hispanic students graduate or in educating many of their students very well.

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from students, parents, and community activists who said that school conditions made dropping out an inevitable outcome and logical choice for students. In these schools, staff were said not to care about Hispanic students; policies involving discipline and grading were applied in a biased manner; tracking and other forms of ability grouping were used to write off whole segments of the student body, not to improve educational opportunities; and the general attitude seemed to be: "Ignore the problem and it will go away." Schools may in fact *try* to make the problem go away. For instance, we heard about schools using Hispanic students' excessive absences to suspend students rather than to conduct formal suspension hearings on more serious charges. Many Hispanic students and parents charged that rules were being enforced unfairly.

"I was absent 27 times in one class, 36 in another. They only checked things out when I was dragged into the principal's office with red eyes. 'Look at these absences.' [they said]. Well, it's about time you noticed!" Testimony at HDP open hearing, Las Cruces

Overcrowding and the quality of a school's facilities affect a school's ability to keep its students. One mother complained that the building code had been waived for the city's schools. This meant that dilapidated schools—located primarily in the inner city—would not have to be brought up to code. According to this mother, the district's newer schools, which were being built in its wealthier neighborhoods would, of course, be built according to code. Another parent noted that her son was one of over 2,000 students in a building designed for 1,500. She talked

about the heat, noise, and deteriorating conditions at this school where large males could not help but jostle one another as they went from class to class. Because of the heat and noise, tempers would flare, fights break out, and students would be suspended. As this mother observed, the step from suspension to dropping out is very small. The Hispanic Dropout Project heard about secondary schools enrolling 40 students in a class, but having 30 chairs. In at least one case, teachers were told not to worry because not all the students would show up. "What sort of a message does this send to the school's students?" asked a graduate from such a school.

"We need smaller classes. With 34 students in a class, teachers don't have time to listen to you. During my freshman and sophomore years, my math classes were small. During my junior year, I was put into large classes. Things got harder for me to learn and the teacher couldn't help me. I was an honors student; remedial classes are even bigger. My sister was in a class with 40 kids. There are 4 to 5 kids for a microscope. We don't have enough books, so they tell us, 'Go to the library [to get books].' We don't have enough chairs in our classrooms, so we have to sit on the floor. We can't even Xerox a poem by Shakespeare. This sends a strong message to the student: 'You're not important'" Testimony at student leader meeting, New York City

There are too many wrongheaded solutions to the issues of low student achievement, retention, excessive student absence, and eventually, student dropout. Tracking, grade retention, and remedial coursework are too often used to write off students considered too difficult to handle. Too many schools focus their efforts on students' acquiring English to the detriment of their learning content. Schools seldom help Hispanic students develop a sense of their own future or provide them with information needed to make informed decisions about their education programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found five characteristics of schools that make a difference in their students' education. *First*, these schools have very high academic and behavioral standards for their students. *Second*, they communicate those standards clearly, and they provide access to and support students in meeting those standards—that is, they provide students with many opportunities to succeed in meeting these high standards. *Third*, schools that make a difference connect their students in meaningful ways to adults. In spite of their size, secondary schools can adopt strategies—such as a school within a school, a group of teachers accepting responsibility for the same students, everyone on staff agreeing to "adopt" some students, older students mentoring younger students—to increase the personalization that students need to experience. *Fourth*, these schools connect their students to possible futures in college and the work force. *Fifth*, they provide families with useful information about how their children are doing and about their futures. Rather than accepting the myth that parents do not care, good schools adopt the position that parents need information in order to make informed decisions that affect their children. Aspirations are not enough. For schools to make a difference, they must provide ways for students and their families to achieve those aspirations.

"Educational engagement is a complex process that involves more than simply 'motivating' students. Promoting engagement requires attention to student char-

acteristics, the tasks students are asked to perform, the school environment in which work takes place, and the external environment that influences the student and the school itself. . . .In spite of conditions outside the school that weaken student engagement, there are practices that educators could implement to substantially strengthen it. The level of engagement. . .could be increased if specific impediments under the control of educators were addressed. . . . (1) Schoolwork is not extrinsically motivating for many students because achievement is not tied to any explicit and valued goal; (2) The dominant learning process pursued in schools is too narrow in that it is highly abstract, verbal, sedentary, individualistic, competitive and controlled by others as opposed to concrete, problem-oriented, active, kinesthetic, cooperative and autonomous. Because of these qualities, the dominant mode of learning stifles the likelihood of intrinsic rewards for many students. (3) Classroom learning is often stultifying because educators are obsessed with the 'coverage' of subject matter; this makes school knowledge superficial, and also intrinsically unsatisfying, thereby preventing students from gaining the sense of competence that ideally accompanies achievement." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (p. 179). London: The Falmer Press.

Although we were impressed with the preschool and early childhood education programs that we visited, we would caution that, by themselves, these programs are not enough. First, Hispanic access to high-quality early childhood education programs is limited. According to Head Start data, there simply are not enough programs to meet demand. Second, the research has failed to produce substantial evidence that the effects of early childhood interventions persist very long after the program ends. Schools need to provide consistent and ongoing support throughout grades K–12.

We were impressed with the quality of the alternative programs that we visited; however, we caution that alternative programs can become little more than holding pens for their students and that these programs cannot replace schools. Schools could learn from the quality programs that we visited. Students recounted that they were treated with respect and warmth in their alternative settings. Just as important, staff at such places accepted their students' experiences yet encouraged students to consider the *consequences* of their actions. To the staff, that a student had skipped school a lot, been suspended from school, or had dropped out did not mean that the student was fundamentally flawed. Rather, that a student had behaved inappropriately meant that there were consequences. Personnel in alternative settings helped students learn from their actions, and overcome, avert, or reverse the worst of those consequences. The challenge is for Hispanic students' regular schools to become more like these alternative placements and other schools that do a good job at retaining and educating their students.

Actions the Schools Need to Take
[To Keep Latino Students In]

1. Focus on student learning
2. Meet basic needs
3. Use a variety of teaching techniques
4. Make material meaningful to students
5. Make scholastic standards clear to all
6. Allow no student to fail
7. Use tests as milestones
8. Make participation in school work more rewarding than skipping
9. Make skipping difficult
10. Value persistence and hard work
11. Make schools accessible to parents
12. Assume responsibility for educating all students
13. Mobilize resources to link school and work.

In Romo, H. D., & Falbo, T. (1996). *Latino high school graduation: Defying the odds* (pp. 15-19). Austin: University of Texas Press.

The most shocking of our findings is the rarity of outstanding schools and programs like those we visited. Although the project visited many sites that featured impressive programs, those programs served a very small number of Hispanic students, and they are at variance with the average educational experiences of Hispanic students. However, there was little about those schools and programs that could not be replicated elsewhere.

1. Schools should emphasize the prevention of problems. They need to become more aggressive in responding to the early warning signs that a student may be doing poorly in, losing interest in, or in some other way, becoming disengaged from school.

Elementary schools should ensure that all children know how to read by third grade and that they are learning mathematics with understanding. Middle and secondary schools should build on the successes of elementary schools.

Schools should be alert to early warning signs of student disengagement. If, for example, a student has two unexcused absences in a row from school, parents should be contacted by a live person—by phone or even by a home visit. The immediacy and personalization of the contact make a difference.

1. Schools should be held accountable and should hold themselves accountable for growth and progress of all students.

2. School procedures, practices, and policies must be individualized and personalized for high-risk youth.

3. Effective middle-school interventions for high-risk youth must address simultaneously the three contexts of family, school, and community through an independent, school-based, case management approach.

4. System reforms of schools must not only change organization structures and practices, but more importantly, must change adult attitudes and behaviors to be more compassionate and nurturing toward high-risk youth.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Drop-out prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A69-A70.

Minorities are overrepresented in special education programs. Schools should ensure that their assignment practices are valid; more importantly, they should emphasize the interventions that prevent such placements.

2. ***Schools, especially high schools, need to personalize programs and services that work with Hispanic students.***

Strategies that could be adopted by a high school trying to personalize its programs and services include the reduction of individual class size, reduction in the number of different classes that teachers must teach, creation of schools within schools or of a smaller high school for all but a few highly specialized classes, the creation of houses or academies within a large high school, team-teaching involving fewer students, teachers serving as counselors for or "adopting" a few students, and older students serving as mentors for younger students.

3. ***Schools should be restructured to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curricula. They should reconfigure time, space, and staffing patterns to provide students with additional support needed to achieve.***

School restructuring needs to attend to the nature of the curriculum that is provided to students so that all students encounter a curriculum that is demanding, interesting, and engaging.

"A positive school climate—one in which students feel 'membership' in their schools and in which they perceive that teachers care about them as individuals—

is considered a prerequisite for student engagement in either academic or vocational learning. The large size of many high schools is seen as a strong institutional barrier to a positive school climate. In large schools, teachers are most likely to form close supervisory relations with only the most accomplished students, while others (most often minority students and low achievers) remain isolated from ongoing adult attention. . . . Available evidence indicates that low-achieving students are most likely to prosper in smaller schools. Accordingly, some districts have created alternative schools and schools-within-schools to make schools feel smaller." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 207). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Secondary and junior high schools should eliminate their lowest tracks. Relative to advanced placement tracks, low-track classrooms are overcrowded, have the least qualified teachers, have the fewest resources, and experience a low-level curriculum focused on remediation to the virtual exclusion of any new or interesting content. If tracking is to be anything for large numbers of Hispanic students other than the final stop en route to being pushed out, these conditions must change.

Hispanic students should be recruited actively into the highest tracks and provided with the support to succeed. In addition to placing students in more demanding curricular settings, schools should provide added support for students such as libraries, after-school programs, individualized tutoring, counseling, and social service referrals.

"Those programs that are most effective are the ones that are least like school. They meet the needs of the learner according to when the learner needs to learn. They provide flexibility. High schools need to become more like this." Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

The changes that we recommend above are not difficult nor are they expensive. What they require is a commitment by school personnel to provide educational opportunities to all their students.

4. Schools should replicate programs that have proven effective. In addition to using new funding, schools should redeploy existing resources to run these programs.

The Hispanic Dropout Project found programs and efforts that have proven effective or show promise for improving Hispanic student achievement and lowering the dropout rate. Schools do not have to reinvent these programs. They should be prepared to adapt existing programs to the needs of their students and to local conditions. Appendix F provides a list of programs identified as effective in the project's commissioned papers.

Effective Dropout Prevention Strategies

Counseling services and adult advocacy for students are key elements of any particular dropout prevention initiative.

At the elementary level, providing after-school tutoring and enrichment that are directly related to in-class assignments and having in-class adult friends (e.g., trained volunteers or helpers) appear to be effective approaches.

At the middle level, team teaching strategies, flexible scheduling, heterogeneous grouping of students, and provision of as-needed counseling assistance are especially useful strategies.

At the secondary level, paid work, embedded in activities that prepare and monitor students' on-the-job experiences, appears to be a critical component to keeping students in school.

In programs where dropout recovery is an emphasis, flexible class schedules assist students who need to work or meet personal commitments during regular school hours.

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations) (p. 7). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Although any program has start-up costs and schools are strapped for resources, many programs visited by the project and reviewed in its commissioned papers can be implemented through a combination of new and old funding, and a reconfiguration of existing roles and responsibilities.

5. *Schools should carefully monitor the effectiveness of their programs and continuously try to improve them or to replace them with more reliable strategies.*

School effectiveness in reducing Hispanic dropout rates or in increasing student achievement will not be accomplished overnight. The most impressive programs visited by the project had been developed and improved over the years by their staffs. Over the years, these schools and programs had carefully recruited staffs who supported their mission and respected their students; they fine-tuned their strategies for teaching students and for preventing dropout; they recruited parents into partnerships; they developed credibility and support within the Hispanic and business communities; they were entrepreneurial in raising funds to support their efforts.

In talking with members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, school personnel and concerned community people highlighted many well-meaning efforts. Yet they were unable to provide convincing, research-based evidence that their programs were reaching targeted students or that the programs were effective. Schools and others should monitor their efforts, keep what works well, modify what could be improved, and discard what does not work.

"Our recommendations for restructuring schools have called for greater coordination of educational resources and their delivery to students. Restructuring schools must lead to improved management of the educational experiences of students, whether at the classroom, school, district, state, or federal level. Restructuring the relationships among schools, families, and communities must result in the same type of improved management of the educational and social resources delivered to disadvantaged youth. At a time when the gap between available resources and needs is growing, we must obtain as much leverage as possible from all of the resources at our command. The coherent, mutually reinforcing mobilization of school, family, and community resources may be our best hope for addressing the problems of disadvantaged students. We simply cannot afford duplication, lack of coordination, and piecemeal approaches if we wish to have an impact on the problem." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 197). New York: Teachers College Press.

6. Schools and alternative programs should be better coordinated.

Students noted they often had a hard time making the transition from an alternative program back to school. Personnel working in alternative programs had similar concerns about schools' lack of cooperation with their efforts to provide students with a meaningful education until they could return to school.

DISTRICT, STATE, AND NATIONAL POLICIES

School districts, states, and the nation as a whole influence whether Hispanics drop out or stay in school. School districts' influence is felt through their governance of schools, recruitment of a workforce, and the professional development that they provide to teachers. States exert influence through their education policies, assessment and accountability programs, and teacher certification requirements. The nature and quality of national debates involving education influence funding and other forms of legislation.

"If we're the future, I don't see why we [funding for schools] have to be cut. It's the future of the whole country." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard some individuals link Hispanic education to debates about immigration—both legal and illegal—and to language policy. As a result, debates about what to do to solve a problem turn into debates about deeply held beliefs involving noneducational matters. Such unrelated beliefs interfere with the development of a coherent education policy at all levels. The following is a sampling of beliefs that are obstacles to solving the problem of Hispanic dropout: (a) until we really understand the full extent of the problem, we can do nothing; (b) this is a local school problem that does not lie in the domain of state or other policy levels; (c) there are a few successful programs, but they cannot be scaled up; (d) these are not our children, hence, it is not our problem; (e) the problem is short term and will go away when something else (typically, immigration policy) is taken care of; and (f) serious efforts to solve this problem cost more than the public is willing to spend.

Once again, our findings contradict such wrongheaded beliefs. For instance, at the most impressive sites that the project visited, language policy and immigration issues had been depoliticized for the cause of education. Districts decided that, in order to educate their students, they had to recruit teachers who could communicate with them and with their parents, that is, with the district's ever-changing clientele. These districts hired teachers and administrative staff who spoke Spanish and who were familiar with Hispanic culture. Their schools developed programs that built on students' native language and their real-world knowledge in the various subjects in order to prepare them for life in America—for higher education, jobs, careers, and citizenship. There were no questions about using and, in many cases, developing children's native languages and home cultures because this was what the children brought to school with them. Also, there were no questions that children would become literate in English and learn to high standards.

"Chapter 1 and dropout prevention programs are the traditional means for providing extra assistance to the most needy students. However, they are often de facto lower tracks for students who have been retained." In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 206). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Schools and programs were very creative in finding new sources of funds and in redeploying existing monies for dropout prevention and education improvement efforts. Although the project was impressed by the sheer amount of volunteerism and creative funding employed by every site and program that its members visited, every single program and alternative school was severely underfunded and living a hand-to-mouth existence. Programs had waiting lists. Alternative schools—with their relatively small student-to-teacher ratios—felt that they were always on the chopping block due to their costs and their districts' ongoing budget problems.

On the other hand, the conditions that we witnessed at many sites recalled for us what many of those we interviewed told us—that dropping out under such conditions is a healthy response. Children and their families should never be subjected to such unhealthy conditions that they would feel they had no other choice but to drop out in order to protect their well being. Classrooms and schools where instruction and proper attention to children's needs are inhibited due to overcrowding, lack of equipment and supplies, rundown buildings, and overused, out-of-date textbooks are all unhealthy conditions that no country with high expectations for learning for all children should expect any of its children to tolerate.

Likewise, given the few resources that are available for professional development to upgrade teachers' skills for working with changing populations of students, it is not too hard to see why some school personnel respond to their Hispanic students with neglect if not actively push them out.

"When a student fails a class or two, some people want that student to drop out. He's taking space that someone else who wants to succeed could have." Speaker at student leader meeting, New York City

The project heard from parents, teachers, and other school personnel about contradictory guidelines and policies that are too complex for parents to understand and too time-consuming for them to follow. For instance, one district often informs parents about their children's educational problems and possible program options by using a multi-page check-off form that includes special education, Title 1, bilingual education, English as a second language, socio-psychological and behavioral problems and counseling, achievement, and excessive absence or tardiness. Though convenient for the district, these forms confuse parents who are too overwhelmed to ask for clarification about what the form means. Confronted with such forms, policies, and guidelines parents feel discouraged from participating in decisions that affect their children's schooling.

"Another surprise was the readiness of school administrators to administratively transfer students to another school for behaviors associated with school disengagement and dropout—high absenteeism, disruptive non-conforming behavior, or poor academic work. Case studies in other schools have documented how often and in what ways school administrators actively 'got rid of troublemakers.'. . . Special education law and due process were frequently ignored by either blatant noncompliance or by conforming to the letter of the law but not the intent or spirit of the law. . . . There was deep resistance by the school to provide more than 45 minutes of resource help despite youth's failing multiple classes. Most often it

was 'regular' education personnel who were responsible for making suspension and disciplinary referrals about special education youth. In general, these personnel were more exclusionary and alienating in their approach than inclusionary and engaging. Frequently, the 'letter of the special education law' framed actions as opposed to the 'spirit' of the IEP process. . . . Frequently, when a youth was having difficulty in school, especially in terms of behavior problems, the school would place the students on home or independent study. . . . Unfortunately, we found that almost every single youth placed on independent study, where they came to a center to receive and turn in assignments completed at home, did not produce enough school work to earn any credits toward graduation." In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A66-A66.

District and state policies can provide incentives for schools to ignore student difficulties—if not to actively push students out. For instance, many states provide funding based on a one-time student count that takes place early in the year. Parents and school personnel reported that prior to the student census, schools actively try to keep students. After the schools have their monies, they can simply ignore student tardiness, absence, truancy, and other behaviors that lead to dropout. Not only are there no sanctions when schools rid themselves of such "bad" students, there are positive consequences, especially for overcrowded schools. When students leave overcrowded schools, the benefits include smaller classes, additional resources for the "good" students who remain, improved performance on mandated assessments and on other indicators of school productivity, less stress on the overall climate of the school, and a reduced administrative burden. Moreover, safe in the knowledge that a new crop of students will enter in time for next year's census, the school has no reason to recruit students who leave into already overcrowded alternative programs.

Districts and states also provide incentives for schools to exclude Hispanics from their accountability systems by focusing solely or mostly on achievement as the major accountability item and then allowing schools to exclude students who are identified as limited English proficient, in need of special education services, or through some other categorical marker. The exclusion of such students and the sole focus on test data allow, if not encourage, schools to hide many of their lowest-achieving students.

"The city, state, and others allow bad conditions to continue. They set the codes and allowable noise levels in schools. The district gets waivers from the state so that untrained teacher aides can become teachers." Testimony at HDP open forum, San Antonio

Districts may overenroll high school students, under the presumption that not all students will come to class. Such a practice sends strong messages to students that they are not expected to attend. Teachers also receive the message that some students are not expected to come to class

and that they are not expected to teach all of their enrolled students. It should not be surprising when students and teachers comply with these messages.

Recommendation 1: Districts should establish strong permanent alternatives as part of a comprehensive strategy of dropout prevention. Alternative schools should be high-status organizations receiving resources commensurate with the tasks they undertake and the success they demonstrate.

Recommendation 2: Districts, in cooperation with state departments of education, should establish special alternative schools for at-risk students with a clear mission that includes experimentation, curricular innovation and staff development.

Recommendation 3: State policy should require each school system to establish a Management Information System that provides basic and common data on all students.

Recommendation 4: State policy should require schools to examine the effects of course failure, grade retention, out-of-school suspension and other practices that appear to impact negatively on at-risk students.

Recommendation 5: State and local policy should encourage the decentralization of large schools and school systems, creating smaller units characterized by site-based management.

Recommendation 6: State and local policy should encourage the development of new curricula and teaching strategies designed for diverse groups of at-risk students.

Recommendation 7: State and local policy should develop mechanisms to hold schools accountable for their dropout rates through a system emphasizing outcomes and results.

Recommendation 8: Cities should develop broad-based community partnerships aimed at serving at-risk youth.

In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of support* (pp. 225-236). London: The Falmer Press.

1. ***Districts should inform students and parents of their policies in ways that are clear and easy to understand. Policies should not be overly complex, nor should administrative procedures discourage parental participation. Parents should be warned, well in advance, when their children's behaviors are deemed unacceptable to the district. Districts should enforce their policies fairly and equitably. If a student is charged with a serious infraction, districts should not bypass due process by also charging the student with something that is unrelated but easier to substantiate.***

2. ***States should analyze their policies to remove incentives for schools to ignore, if not push out, students who experience trouble. State policies should be rewritten with an eye towards encouraging schools to do all they can to retain students. District and state accountability and incentive systems should encourage schools to keep students through high school graduation.***

Report cards of school effectiveness and other efforts by districts and states to hold their schools publicly accountable should not be limited to overall levels of achievement. They should include information about students who were excluded from the tests, student completion rates, attendance statistics, and student enrollment in various tracks. Schools and Hispanic parents should know how Hispanic students are doing.

"We recommend four strategies for moving decisions to levels where information on student performance and behavior is available: (1) revising rules and programs to promote flexibility; (2) using goal setting to enhance the discretion of local educators; (3) creating self-contained teaching/learning units, to allow educators to make decisions about deploying resources to meet student needs; and (4) providing educational resources above those thought minimally necessary, thus allowing educators some discretion in addressing emerging needs."
In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 161). New York: Teachers College Press.

3. ***In light of the ongoing standards movement, districts and states should develop standards for school conditions, class and school size, and in general, student opportunity to learn. Districts should restructure schools that are too large and impersonal into smaller-sized units. Districts' and states' oversight and accountability mechanisms should ensure that Hispanic students participate in the ongoing reform agendas. Reform agendas—especially high-stakes testing programs—should be explained to the parents of Hispanic students, and their input solicited. High-stakes testing programs should be monitored to ensure that they are implemented equitably so that Hispanic students have a fair opportunity to show what they know and can do.***

4. ***Districts and state education agencies should design comprehensive strategies for dropout prevention that are tied to the states' standards and that take account of students' differing needs at different points in their lives.***

Well-meaning advocates for one or another intervention targeted for a specific age-group often seem to promise more than they can accomplish. No single strategy—be it early childhood intervention, Title I, bilingual education, alternative education, curriculum reform, student tutoring and mentoring—can by itself solve the problem of student dropout. The most successful schools visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project used multiple approaches across pre-K–12, and even provided support for older people to return to school to obtain a high school certificate.

5. ***School districts and state education agencies should evaluate currently funded dropout prevention efforts against curricular and student learning standards, and they should provide support for those efforts to continuously improve.***

6. ***As schools become better able to respond to their diverse student populations, programs should be redirected so as to (a) reconnect students who have been placed on the borderline between success and failure and (b) provide alternatives for students who, for whatever reason, prefer to take alternative pathways to a high school credential.***

7. ***Districts and state education agencies should provide lifelong learning opportunities so that people past school age can still acquire a high school credential.***

Society cannot afford to give up on people who, for whatever reasons, have dropped out of school. They should be encouraged to and provided with multiple opportunities to return to school and to graduate.

"Prior policy has always been focused on prevention. What about people who have dropped out? What should we be doing about the people who are the victims of previous policy and inaction?" Testimony at HDP open hearing, New York City

8. ***Districts, state education agencies—indeed, all of society—need to target their resources strategically and to invest more money in helping schools, particularly urban schools, to provide their Hispanic students with opportunities to learn. For example, additional resources could be tied to (a) schools' implementation of programs that have been proven effective or (b) the expansion and continuous improvement of a promising program that is already in place.***

Because existing resources need to be directed more strategically, schools and districts should carefully evaluate their programs and engage in continuous improvement of their best practices. School districts should redirect monies strategically from programs that are not working (and that seem unable to work) to implementing and improving school-based programs that do work.

Schools—especially urban schools in conditions of poverty—need additional resources. There is no way to improve the physical plant of run-down schools, to reduce class size, to target much-needed resources, to purchase basic supplies and new books, to reform curriculum, and to provide professional development for teachers without an increased investment in those schools that educate our poorest children.

"The formal institution that directly affects virtually all adolescents is school. Schools are critically important because education is the means by which individuals from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds can build the skills and credentials needed for successful adult roles in mainstream American life. . . . Because of residential stratification, most of these adolescents attend schools with the fewest material resources. In 1991, for example, per pupil expenditures in the 47 largest urban school districts averaged $5,200; in suburban districts, the figure was $6,073. Although an $875 per pupil funding gap may not appear significant, in an average class of 25 students, the difference is almost $22,000—enough to hire an aide, provide special instructional materials or computers, pay significantly higher teacher salaries, or improve a dilapidated classroom. When the relatively greater need of urban chil-

dren for special services is taken into account (for health needs, language instruction for non-English-proficient students, etc.), the resource differences are even more critical. Differences in funding of this magnitude can make a clear qualitative difference in the total educational experience. Traditional education practices contribute to the high rates of failure for low-achieving students. Historically, schools have addressed the diversity of student achievement by tracking students into homogeneous ability groups and by retaining students who fail courses because of poor attendance, grades, or test scores. Contrary to expectations, these practices have consistently shown negative academic and social consequences for low-achieving adolescents."
In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 7). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Districts and school personnel may balk, at first, at the idea of redirecting existing resources. The larger society might have concerns about investing more money than is currently the case in the education of poor Hispanic children. Yet, if monies could be invested strategically in order to provide Hispanics with high-quality education programs in the first place, then schools and society would save on the long-term costs of their failure to have educated these children properly.

9. Schools, districts, and state education agencies need to develop better management information systems that follow students more accurately and efficiently.

In order to plan, monitor, evaluate, and improve dropout prevention programs, people need information about students who leave school. Such information is simply not available. Current policy is focused on students who stay; hence there are few incentives for schools or districts to worry about dropouts. Without such basic information, it seems impossible to envision the development of any comprehensive set of interventions.

Knowing annual dropout rates of high school students is a start, but ultimately inadequate for planning and monitoring programs. Where possible, districts should follow groups of students from first through twelfth grades.

10. Schools and districts must diversify their teaching workforce to include people with the knowledge, language skills, and backgrounds that will enable them to better connect with Hispanic students and their parents.

Beyond having role models, Hispanic students need to encounter teachers who communicate trust and confidence, who can understand what students are experiencing, and who can guide and support students. Hispanic students reported establishing mutually respectful relationships with Hispanic teachers, with non-Hispanic teachers and volunteers who themselves had dropped out of school but still managed to further their education, with retired teachers who communicated a sincere confidence in students' intelligence and ability to succeed, and with other adults whose own life experiences validated them in the students' eyes. Such teachers were in short supply in these children's schools.

"In contrast to Coleman et al.'s 1966 finding of no consistent differences in the quantity and quality of school inputs for predominantly majority and minority schools, the analyses presented in this paper reveal substantial within district variations in four types of school inputs: teacher test scores, years of education, teacher experience and class size (student-teacher ratios). The statistical models presented in this paper document a sorting of school inputs based on campus racial/ethnic and socio-economic composition. In particular, the models suggest that teacher ability, measured with both verbal and written proficiency scores, decreases with campus percentage black and Hispanic and increases with the campus percentage of higher income students. . . . Texas teachers employed in schools with high fractions of disadvantaged minority students have fewer years of education and less experience and have more students in their classes." In Kain, J. F., & Singleton, K. (1996). *Equality of educational opportunity revisited.* (Paper presented at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Symposium.) Cambridge: Harvard Institute of Economic Research.

In addition, schools need teachers who can understand and talk to Hispanic parents. Parents respond best to people they know outside of school such as their neighbors and other parents, to people who treat them with respect, to people who speak Spanish or at least do not denigrate their accents, and to people who clearly show that they care for their children's academic success.

Diversifying the teaching workforce will occur only when people with broad experience, knowledge, and dispositions to work with Hispanic students are recruited into and successfully complete certification programs. Schools of education, school districts, state education agencies, state boards of education, and postsecondary education's governing bodies have important roles in diversifying the teacher workforce.

11. Schools and Colleges of Education should recruit people into the teaching profession who will diversify its ranks. They should develop course work, practica, student teaching, and other experiences that will help all preservice teachers to succeed with Hispanic students. The governing bodies of postsecondary education institutions should require that their faculty be able and willing to prepare teachers to teach Hispanic students.

Recommendation 1: Put the services in rather than pull students out.

Recommendation 2: Deliver the services without calling attention to the fact that special services are being provided.

Recommendation 3: Deliver the services within a supportive climate that includes adults as student advocates.

Recommendation 4: Provide students with substantive incentives to participate.

Recommendation 5: Carefully select, train, and support the staff persons providing the services .

In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 8-10) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

12. *Teacher certification bodies should insist that entering teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to work with a diverse student body.*

Because it is within the power of state boards of education to set minimal requirements for entering teachers, they should use those requirements to pressure universities to update their teacher preparation programs so that new teachers will be better able to, in the long run, teach Hispanic students. In addition, the certification bodies should update their rules and regulations so as to encourage the creation of a diverse teacher workforce.

13. *Bilingual education, the education of Hispanics, and the education of immigrants should be depoliticized.*

Many schools that were successfully keeping Hispanic students in school relied on bilingual education and incorporated Hispanic culture into their functioning. On the other hand, schools can also use programs for limited English proficient students to deny such students access to a mainstream education. In other words, bilingual education, English as a second language, and sheltered English instruction are but the means to an end—keeping students in school in one case, denying them educational opportunity in the other. Schools and districts should choose among program models and adopt those characteristics that best suit their unique situations.

"There is a need for broader recognition that the achievement of educational and social potential is not just an individual affair. It also involves the constraints of the peer groups in which the youths are embedded, and the constraints of the schools they attend. When schools segregate or cluster individuals who share low standards of accomplishment (or expectations for school dropout), they explicitly help bring about those outcomes. To keep educational opportunities open, there should not only be challenges for achievement, but ample assistance and support to ensure that each student will reach adequate standards.

The curriculum should include information that is not only preparatory for subsequent accomplishments; it should place the information in the context of living.

In plans to prevent serious problems of behavior, at-risk youths should be kept in the conventional system, not excluded from it. Exclusion serves to exacerbate problem behavior by the selective isolation of the individuals from the rules and standards of conventional society.

In the inner city and elsewhere, schools and the values they represent constitute safe havens for many students. In cases of children of privilege, the school is more typically an extension of the rest of the individual's life experience. For seriously disadvantaged youths, the haven might serve a unique function. This function must not be compromised, and society must ensure that access to schools remains open and safe, including zones around schools and places within it." In Cairns, R. B., & Cairns, B. D. (1994). *Lifelines and risks: Pathways of youth in our time* (pp. 191- 193). New York: Cambridge University Press.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESS, AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY

Community-based organizations, the business community, chambers of commerce, and other agencies can play mutually reinforcing roles in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Businesses and chambers of commerce—which are rightly concerned about the productivity and quality of the local workforce—should provide work experiences that support students' staying in school, provide incentives for students to continue their education, and encourage their employees' participation in all facets of the community's schools. Community-based organizations—which are concerned about the overall quality of life for Hispanics in the local community—should advocate for their members' concerns in the schools and seek support from business for the education programs that they provide to students.

"We [schools] can't do it alone. We have a hard time educating the kids who are staying in school." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

The thoughtful comments that we heard at the project's hearings and the activities that we witnessed provide ample counterevidence to those who would assert that groups outside the school have little or no role to play in addressing issues of Hispanic dropout. Latina businesswomen became active friends, role models, and mentors to younger Latinas. Chamber of Commerce members mentored and tutored students, volunteered in schools, and served on advisory boards and committees. Community-based organizations advocated on behalf of parents and provided education services that paralleled and supported Hispanic students' school experiences. Representatives from across the local community participated in local self-study efforts to improve the schools' responsiveness to their Hispanic clientele. We visited some alternative, out-of-school programs that were financially supported by local businesses. Some businesses and chambers of commerce provided scholarships for Hispanics to go on to college. These individuals and agencies maintained long-term, personal commitments to students.

"We should encourage businesses to help link parents with schools." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

However, we also heard of cases where the conditions of employment interfered with Hispanic parents' ability to participate in their children's education. Parents often noted that more of them would have come to the project's open hearings, but friends, family, and neighbors could not get off from work. Similar to earlier stories of parents who risked, and in some cases lost, their jobs to take an active role in their children's education, one parent testified about leaving his daughter at school every day at 8:30 a.m. If anything happened before he left work in the late afternoon, that parent could not go to the school without risking his job.

1. ***The local business community, chamber of commerce, and community-based organizations should work together to help to keep students in school. Coalitions of community-based organizations and businesses should monitor local conditions to ensure that Hispanic***

students receive the high-quality education that they deserve. These same coalitions should advocate at local, state, and national levels for the improvement of the educational conditions of Hispanic students.

In addition to in-school tutoring and out-of-school mentoring programs, financial assistance, and other forms of volunteerism, businesses should offer school-to-work apprenticeships and internships that integrate productive work and schooling for Hispanic students who wish to stay in school but feel pressure to contribute to their families. Businesses could also provide space and financial, managerial, and other forms of continuing assistance for school- and community-based alternative programs.

"Increase the credits that are offered to corporations for kids who are adopted and given the opportunity to work. Corporations should get involved. They should help with parent training and provide teacher training." Speaker at HDP open hearing, San Diego

2. ***Businesses where students work should provide incentives and support for their students to complete and to continue beyond high school.***

Many Hispanic students work out of basic economic necessity. Carefully designed school-to-work programs that balance between academic demands and the needs of the workplace can help students meet their economic and educational responsibilities by strengthening the connections between what students study and how it is applied in the workplace. Businesses must avoid encouraging or allowing students to work excessive hours that would endanger their school completion. Instead, employees of older secondary school students should provide flexible work schedules, tutoring, study time during work hours, mentoring, individual and family referrals to social service agencies as needed, incentives, and other supports so that students can finish high school. If a person cannot finish high school, then the business should encourage that student to obtain a GED.

Businesses where Hispanic students work should also develop scholarship and other financial assistance programs that encourage students to pursue postsecondary education.

3. ***The business community should implement policies that encourage parents to take time off, as needed, to go to parent–teacher conferences, to participate in school governance activities, and the like.***

Businesses should include paid leave for participating in school activities as part of their overall compensation package for workers.

"The majority of projects offered academic skills and counseling, and many offered a wide range of additional services, combined in a variety of ways within and across 'project components' (i.e., discrete programmatic activities for specific groups of students. Many projects were considered to offer comprehensive

services...academic, counseling, social support, and, for components serving grades 6 and higher, vocational/career)." In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (p. 2) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

4. ***The business community in conjunction with community-based organizations should support schools in their missions.***

Businesses and community-based organizations have expertise to share with schools on fund raising, needs assessment, strategic planning, and day-to-day management. They should study the physical plant and other resources of their local schools. As necessary, these organizations should press for increased financing of schools that is targeted to the identified needs and for ensuring that Hispanic students receive high-quality programs. They should also help schools to design and implement continuing improvement programs.

5. ***Community-based organizations should continue to include the concerns of Hispanic parents in their service and advocacy activities.***

We visited adult literacy programs, early childhood interventions staffed by parents, out-of-school tutoring offered by adults in the community, social service referrals, and mentoring efforts initiated by community-based organizations. In addition, many of these organizations encouraged parents to visit their children's schools and advocated for the school to take their parents' concerns seriously.

"We point out the need within communities to develop comprehensive, clear plans for delivering services to the disadvantaged. Most communities lack a coherent policy on what services are needed, who should be receiving them, and who is responsible for delivering them. An explicit policy with clearly stated goals, that takes into account the bureaucratic and administrative complexities characteristic of contemporary social service delivery, can help insure that individuals do not fall through the cracks in the social machinery." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 196). New York: Teachers College Press.

6. ***Businesses should band together to support local research, development, and the dissemination of effective programs for enhancing student achievement and graduation rates.***

Businesses at sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project supported the development of dropout prevention programs. At a few sites, local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce also supported systematic research into those efforts. One national corporation supported the dissemination of a program that it had helped to develop.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Hispanic Dropout Project heard from representatives of many programs whose developers and staff showed an impressive commitment to improving the educational opportunities of Hispanics and to reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Unfortunately, many of these programs found themselves in constant financial turmoil, in part due to their inability to provide convincing evidence that they were accomplishing their goals. The innovative ideas found in these programs are seldom tested; and hence, they face the skepticism of schools, the public, and funding agencies. Although we made the conscious decision to solicit the input of program developers and others involved in Hispanic dropout prevention in crafting these recommendations, we believe that they too should be subjected to rigorous empirical testing.

Student 1: "The differences between us and them [friends who have dropped out]? They haven't had the opportunities I've had—in life or in school. They're still young, still partying, acting like teenagers. I'm getting on with my life. They're struggling."

Student 2: "Well, it's okay to party. You just have to take responsibility for your own life." Testimony at HDP meeting with students, Albuquerque

1. There should be sustained evaluations of promising programs and dropout prevention practices.

Many programs and sites visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project did not have adequate research-quality evidence of their effectiveness. Given how these programs emphasize helping students, it is not surprising that scarce resources were not diverted into collecting and analyzing program-effectiveness data. On the other hand, it is difficult to recommend programs to others without empirical evidence that they make a difference. Moreover, such performance data are fundamental to continued program improvement. Program funders and designers should include evaluation components to identify effective programs that could be replicated elsewhere and to support ongoing improvement.

"Another community influence on dropout behavior is peers. Recent research reveals that peers exert a powerful influence on children, especially teenagers. Although the influence of peers on dropout behavior has not been the subject of much study, ethnographic studies report that dropouts of all ethnic backgrounds are more likely to associate with other youth who drop out or have low educational aspirations." In Rumberger, R. (1991). *Chicano dropouts: A review of research and policy issues.* In R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success: Research and policy agendas for the 1990s* (p. 76). Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

2. There should be coordinated, sustained, and systematic programs of research that investigate the times and the mechanisms through which students of different backgrounds disengage from school.

Much research on student dropout is fragmentary, based on a single study, and seldom links purported causal agents with the evaluation of an intervention. For instance, we do not fully understand the complex relationship between pregnancy and a female's decision to leave school. Research can help schools to understand the mechanisms by which dropout occurs and to take steps to remove barriers to student engagement.

"The relationship between Latino children and the schools is a disconnect." Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

3. ***Research and development should focus on identifying and developing Hispanic students' knowledge and interests, and on working with and strengthening the supportive social networks found in these students' extended families.***

Much of the at-risk and dropout literature is based on assumptions that Hispanic students and their families do not know very much, are missing some important competencies, lack certain traits, or have some fundamental flaw that needs fixing. The recommendations growing out of such research are predictably bereft of helpful ideas: Fix the flaws; if the flaws can't be fixed, despair.

On the other hand, the schools we visited and the more relevant and recent research literature try to identify what students know and what their families can do to support their education. Student knowledge (including knowledge of their cultures and bilingualism) and interests (including problems that are relevant to them) provide the basis for research and development in pedagogical practices (curriculum, teaching, and assessment), teachers' professional development, and school reform. Parental concerns about and caring for their children should be the basis for the research and development that seeks to build vibrant home–school partnerships.

"The most effective thing is **contact** *between students and the institution on a regular basis. Systematic, deliberate, ongoing contact with kids."* Testimony at HDP open forum, New York City

4. ***Dropout prevention programs that are proven to work should be sustained and disseminated. The education research and development infrastructure should include a component for transferring such programs from development to widespread implementation.***

Increasing America's Hispanic school completion rates cannot be a stop-and-go operation. In view of the urgency for proven dropout prevention programs, it is shocking to note that one of the most impressive programs found in the research literature no longer exists. This program was based on solid research, and had shown strong and sustained effects. Too many programs are developed to demonstrate a point and subsequently cease functioning when the developers or program funders move on to other tasks and priorities. The support for dropout prevention efforts that are shown to work should no longer come from demonstration monies but from the basic funding for the nation's schools.

"Three factors importantly affected the replication activities at various of the sites and may have inhibited the effectiveness of projects for students. These factors included: the fit of models to the replication sites; the extent of principal buy-in to the replications; turf considerations." In Rossi, R. J. (1995). *Evaluation of projects funded by the school dropout demonstration assistance program: Final evaluation report* (pp. 13-14) (Volume 1: Findings and recommendations). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

5. ***The population of Hispanic students who are limited English proficient should be taken into account in local, state, and national efforts to (a) improve and reform the education system, (b) evaluate the impact of schools and of categorical programs, and (c) implement accountability systems for schools.***

As noted above, the exclusion of Hispanics from such efforts contributes to their being invisible and, by extension, to schools not being held accountable for their educational success. One strategy for including Hispanic children that should be explored is the use of their native language for gathering information in those efforts.

"I knew of no alternatives. Either you go to school or you don't. Or you go for a GED, and that's not as good. I was never told of the alternatives." Former dropout at HDP open forum, New York City

6. ***Research is needed on preservice and in-service teachers' beliefs, knowledge, skills, and professional development as related to the education of Hispanic students. Moreover, research should include attention to issues surrounding the diversification of the teacher workforce.***

Teachers are central in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. Teachers themselves, schools, and policymakers need to better understand the processes by which teachers can make a difference in their students' education.

7. ***Better data on student dropouts should be gathered at all levels: local, state, and national.***

Although available data clearly document the crisis of Hispanic dropout, one of the most common complaints we encountered involved the quality of data on student dropouts. The nation needs clear, commonly accepted, and stable definitions of dropout that allow for comparisons across states, that allow schools to decide if they should adopt a program that was effective elsewhere, and that provide policymakers and parents with a clear sense of how many students are dropping out of school and when they begin to drop out. Such information is fundamental to improving education at all levels. Hence, it should be systematically gathered, analyzed, and reported at local, state, and national levels.

"I want to give back to my family. As a Dominican woman, I am *going to make it. Make my parents proud that their sacrifice was worth it. I'm going to go back to my community and show them,* I made it." Speaker at HDP student leader forum, New York City

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

We, the members of the Hispanic Dropout Project, submit this *Final Report* to the United States Secretary of Education, with an urgency born of recognizing the devastating personal, social, and civic consequences that will accrue if Hispanic dropout rates do not improve.

> *"The income stratification that concentrates large numbers of low-income students into poorly funded schools is followed by instructional stratification, most often on the basis of prior performance. Low-achieving students are likely to be exposed to instructional practices—tracking and grade retention—that deny them educational opportunities, stigmatize them, and contribute to their sense of uncertainty and alienation. Many disadvantaged adolescents are unable to overcome these conditions. Students from low-income families are far more likely to receive bad grades or be held back, and as much as three times more likely to drop out before completing high school, than the children of more affluent families: 'consigning them to lives without the knowledge and skills they need to exist anywhere but on the margins of our society, and consigning the rest of us to forever bear the burden of their support.'"* In Panel on High-Risk Youth, National Research Council. (1993). *Losing generations: Adolescents in high-risk settings* (p. 103). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

The overall school completion rate has steadily increased, with some fluctuations, over the last 40 years: in the 1950s, an average of 40–50 percent of all students did not finish high school; in 1972, the overall dropout rate for people between 16 and 24 years of age was slightly less than 15 percent; in 1994, it was 11.5 percent. The gap in black–white school completion rate has been steadily closing over the past 20 years *through an increase in school completion by African Americans*: in 1972, about 21 percent of black, non-Hispanics between 16 and 24 years old had dropped out of school; in 1994, that rate was 12.6 percent—a drop of between 8 and 9 percentage points. In contrast, over the same time period, the average rate of white, non-Hispanic dropout decreased from approximately 12.5 percent to 10.5 percent—just 2 percentage points. In spite of this overall improvement in the school completion rate, the dropout rate for all Hispanics ages 16 to 24 in the United States has consistently hovered at between 30 percent and 35 percent. *There is no reason to expect that this unacceptably high rate of dropping out among Hispanic students will diminish on its own without major changes in our schools and society.*

The Census Bureau reports that there will be at least one million more elementary school students in our nation's schools by the end of the decade. Without adequate funding, classes will become even more overcrowded. Teachers hired to teach the baby boomers will be retiring in unprecedented numbers over the next decade. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to educate and recruit a *diverse* teaching workforce over the same time period.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that ours is not the first report to note this consistent disparity in school completion rates. Under previous Republican and Democratic

administrations, researchers, policymakers, and community advocates have spoken out about these disparities. Yet because little has been done to address them, the problems they identified have become a crisis that threatens this nation's well being.

"Programs for disadvantaged youth include those that aim to enhance the relevance of school to the students' future. If it is true that working- and lower-class adolescents believe that the social conformity and academic achievement demanded in school are not clearly linked to their future status in society, then efforts to establish this linkage in the minds of students should be successful in promoting academic achievement and educational attainment." In Natriello, G., McDill, E. L., & Pallas, A. M. (1990). *Schooling disadvantaged children: Racing against catastrophe* (p. 136). New York: Teachers College Press.

We submit this report with impatience because we know that, when the nation decides that something is a problem and sets its mind to do something about that problem, it moves—though often slowly—to solve the problem. The nation and its schools have risen to the challenges of dropout prevention for students in general, improving overall student achievement, starting to close the racial achievement gap, and starting to close the mathematics achievement gap between males and females. Critics from opposite ends of the political and educational spectra have often written as if there has been very little progress or even deterioration in our educational progress—as if the nation and its education systems were incapable of developing a consensus to do something about vexing social problems. The evidence clearly shows quite the contrary: *The nation and its schools can rise to the challenge when we set our collective will to do so.*

Improvement in overall school completion, student achievement, and the achievement gaps has taken decades. Progress in these areas could not be seen or measured in terms of election-year cycles or other yardsticks used by those seeking immediate payoffs or simple solutions. What is more, efforts to identify *the* cause for such trends—as if a simple, magic pill could be found—have been unsuccessful. We speculate that these improvements can be traced to a combination of factors. First, there has been a gradual change in the nation's beliefs so that high dropout rates, low achievement, and race- and gender-based achievement gaps have become unacceptable: Our expectations of minorities and women have risen. Second, the nation has developed a complex network of curricular and teaching innovations, school-based programs, community-based efforts, and other structural changes for educating students.

"No single model can encourage membership or respond to the specific educational needs and desires of all at-risk youth. . . . A multiplicity of interventions is required. Even then, however, some students may continue to resist the efforts of teachers whom they see as representatives of an opposing culture. . . . Many students are in fact willing to enter into the relationships with their teachers that foster social membership in the school. They become partners in the experience of 'us and us'. . . Overcoming their sense of incongruity, formerly at-risk youth discover that their teachers can also be friends, and schooling can thus be a positive rather than an aversive experience." In Wehlage, G. G., Rutter, R. A., Smith, G. A., Lesko, N., & Fernandez, R. R. (1989). *Reducing the risk: Schools as communities of*

support (pp. 203-204). London: The Falmer Press.

We submit this report with a sense of urgency and impatience precisely because of the slow pace of improvement. Hispanics confront too many excuses for the country's inaction regarding their educational status. Ways to improve the schools that Hispanics attend and solutions to Hispanic dropout are known; they should be implemented on a large scale. There are dozens of proven, replicable programs capable of increasing Hispanic students' achievement, increasing their high school completion, and increasing their college enrollment—we visited many of them. *Only a lack of political leadership, will, and resources keeps the nation from solving the problem; there is no shortage of effective models.*

The solutions that we propose in this report support one another. Our recommendations should be implemented together if the nation is to make a significant impact in reducing the Hispanic dropout rate. It would be most unfortunate if those who read our report were to selectively interpret our findings and recommendations as meaning that before they can do something, someone else must fulfill a specific task. We cannot stress enough: *Everything must work in synchronization.*

Youth are influenced by their family, school and community contexts. High-risk youth are most often required to function in contexts that are dysfunctional or antithetical to the nurturing and support children require. Consequently, if an intervention is expected to succeed it will have to address all three contexts in such a way as to enhance the effectiveness of the contexts and to increase the coordination and communication between contexts. . . . Effective middle school interventions must accomplish six functions.

(a) Frequent (in some cases hourly but generally daily or weekly) and on-going (sustained throughout the school year) monitoring of the youth's school performance.

(b) Close teamwork with parents including parent training in terms of being an effective educational consumer and issues with raising a teenager.

(c) A case manager is essential to coordinating services provided and linking school, home and community together into a cohesive structure for the youth.

(d) The intervention must respond to the individual needs of youth and must be sufficiently flexible to personalize the educational experience.

(e) A social cognitive problem-solving approach that teaches the youth and parents how to effectively handle short- and long-term challenges is highly effective in making high-risk youth less impulsive, more independent and more goal oriented.

(f) The intervention must actively attempt to change the youth's expectations and vision of the future from one of probable failure and hopelessness to one of hopefulness and possibility.

In Larson, K., & Rumberger, R. (1995). *ALAS, Achievement for Latinos through academic success* (Dropout prevention and intervention project targeting middle school youth with learning disabilities and emotional/ behavioral disorders at risk for dropping out of school. Project evaluation: 1990-1995), pp. A67-A68.

Why, then, the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion? Many explanations have been offered: student characteristics such as social class, language, and achievement level—especially among recent immigrants; school-based forces such as student retention, ability grouping, and tracking; and nonschool forces such as family and/or neighborhood violence and criminal activity, lack of community-based economic opportunity, and the historical social and political oppression of different ethnic groups. Many of these "reasons" have assumed mythic proportions. They are used to explain a phenomenon that is portrayed as too large and too complex for schools to address. In short, these reasons have become little more than excuses for our schools' and society's failure to act.

The evidence that we have presented in this report clearly contradicts this counsel of despair. At our hearings around the nation, we heard Hispanic students, their parents, and community leaders tell us unequivocally that they care deeply about their schools. Through their words and actions, many school personnel, community representatives, and business people have shown that something can and must be done.

We propose an alternative reason for the persistent gap in Hispanic school completion: *Hispanic dropout rates have remained largely an invisible problem to all but Hispanic students, their parents, and their communities.* Although many researchers and a few policymakers have known about the problem, discussions of Hispanic dropout have often been submerged in discussions of dropouts in general, the education of ethnic minorities in general, or politicized debates about immigration, language, and bilingualism.

"You have to do it for yourself. In spite of all the obstacles, I had to overcome all of the people who said that I couldn't make it. Also, bring someone along with you. My sister, who dropped out, will come back to school. She sees I'm going to graduate. That encourages her." Participant at HDP student leader forum, New York City

Attention to Hispanic school completion must become a salient part of the national agenda on education. To reverse the long-standing disparity in school completion between Hispanics and other groups will require the long-term, sustained attention that other issues have received. That this crisis has remained largely invisible results in inaction and allows the many excuses for doing nothing to go unchallenged. At a time of a dramatically increasing need for a well-educated citizenry, the nation cannot afford, nor can it tolerate, the persistently high rate of Hispanic dropout. We, as a people, need to say: *No more excuses, the time to act is now.*

NOTES

[1] Relevant data can be found in National Center for Education Statistics, 1996a, table 14 and 1996b, table 101, and United States Department of Education, 1997, pp. ix, 2, 23, 29, 30, and 32. A comprehensive list of research studies and reports that were reviewed in the preparation of this report appears in Appendix E.

When drawing on work by others, this report uses the terms for racial and ethnic group membership that are found in those documents. We are well aware that the validity of racial and ethnic categories is undergoing scrutiny for a variety of reasons. First, the use of blood quantum to determine a person's ethnic or racial membership—which, historically, was the foundation for the creation of such categories—has been quite thoroughly discredited, even before recent developments whereby increasing numbers of people (especially children) trace their ancestry to multiple ethnic and racial sources. Second, people's self-described membership in ethnic and/or racial groups varies across generations, within an individual's lifetime, and even depending on the term that is used. Third, people who belong to ethnic groups engage in complex and elaborate methods for judging the validity of a person's claim to belong to or even to opt out of a group.

On the other hand, a person's skin color, facial features, names, accents, and other physical characteristics are used by other people as indicators of that individual's ethnic and racial group membership. In its own turn, this ascription of race and ethnicity has important social consequences for the person regardless of her or his desire to be treated as an individual. Hence, although we must use these terms, we do so advisedly and with great caution.

[2] See Hispanic Dropout Project, 1996; NCES, 1996a.

[3] See Larson & Rumberger, 1995b, p. A66.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
An Overview of the Hispanic Dropout Project's Activities

To achieve its three goals of (a) increasing public awareness about the issues of Hispanic dropout, (b) developing a policy-relevant set of recommendations at local, state, and federal levels addressed to school personnel, families, and community, business, and other stakeholder groups, and (c) supporting the development of a network of stakeholders who would take action after the project's end, the Hispanic Dropout Project engaged in six activities prior to writing this report. All six activities are related directly to the above goals and their results are reflected in this report.

First, we commissioned four technical papers to inform our own thinking and, eventually, the thinking of others who wish to learn more about the issues surrounding Hispanic dropout. The first paper, by Hugh Mehan, was entitled *Contextual factors surrounding Hispanic dropouts.* The second paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón, and Richard Durán, was entitled *Effective programs for Latino students in elementary and middle schools.* The third commissioned paper, by Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin, was entitled *Effective dropout prevention programs for Latino students.* And the fourth technical paper, by Rudolfo Chavez-Chavez, was entitled *A curriculum discourse for achieving equity: Implications for teachers when engaged with Latina and Latino students.*

Second, the project commissioned five nontechnical reports by Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood for use in increasing public awareness and for providing examples of how local policies and local programs might be used to increase school completion by Hispanics. Entitled *Advances in Hispanic Education*, the series was written for general audiences of school personnel, parents and their children, school board members, state and federal policy makers, community representatives, business people, and other stakeholders. These reports provide nontechnical information about issues in Hispanic dropout and about exemplary school programs for increasing Hispanic student achievement and for preventing dropout.

Third, in order to learn about the issues of Hispanic dropout as seen by the people who are most directly affected by student dropout and who are trying to do something about this crisis, to seek input from the field to the development of its recommendations, and to support the creation of a network of stakeholders, the Hispanic Dropout Project held open hearings and heard testimony in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Houston, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; Toledo, Ohio; Calexico, California; and Las Cruces, New Mexico. We interviewed and listened to varied groups of Hispanic students: students who had graduated, were still in school, had left school and had returned, or were enrolled in dropout prevention programs. Specialty and regular classroom teachers, principals, curriculum specialists, program directors, superintendents, other school personnel, parents, community activists, youth- and social-service agency representatives, police representatives, business

people, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and concerned citizens—over 300 people—participated in these sessions. A list of their names appears in Appendix B.

In addition to making oral presentations, many people submitted written comments, program documents, and other written materials to the Hispanic Dropout Project. A list of people, organizations, and projects submitting written materials to the project comprises Appendix C.

Fourth, in order to ascertain how promising programs actually work in their day-to-day practices, we visited school and non-school sites that were developing such practices for educating Latinos and dropout prevention efforts in Albuquerque, Calexico, Houston, Las Cruces, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, San Antonio, and San Diego. We reasoned that there would be an above-average awareness of issues in Hispanic dropout at these locales because of their large Hispanic populations. A list of sites that we visited appears in Appendix D.

Sites included whole-school and districtwide programs, alternative secondary schools, mentoring and tutoring programs taking place both in and out of school, and supplementary in-school programs. Dropout prevention efforts focused attention on academics, school attendance, peer relationships, and socio-psychological needs, either singly or in some combination. Interventions ranged from pre-school, early childhood programs, to alternative high schools, GED efforts, and community college-based programs that continue to provide educational opportunities to Hispanics. The people who supported, ran, worked for, and volunteered in these programs included parents, school personnel, community activists, college and other students older than the individuals receiving the services, business people, and concerned citizens. Often, workers and volunteers were themselves Hispanics, had been dropouts, knew someone whom they wished had these opportunities, or had some experiences that enabled them (the volunteers and workers) to relate to their students on a personal level.

The fifth project activity was to hold press conferences and meet with the media during visits to the above-mentioned cities. The intent of this last activity was to increase public awareness about issues of Hispanic dropout. Hispanic Dropout Project representatives were interviewed by local and national news organizations. Newspaper articles appeared in the Albuquerque *Journal*, Albuquerque *Tribune*, El Paso *Times,* Houston *Chronicle*, Kansas City *Star*, Las Cruces *Sun News*, Miami *Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*, New York City *El Diario/La Prensa*, Portland *Oregonian*, San Antonio *Express News*, San Diego *Union*, Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Silver City *Daily Press*, Tampa *Tribune*, *USA Today*, and the Associated Press. Local affiliates of Univision in Houston, New York City, and Miami, of NBC in Miami and San Antonio, and of CBS in Albuquerque, and local radio and television stations in Albuquerque, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York City, and San Antonio carried stories about Hispanic dropout and interviews with the project's members.

Sixth, Hispanic Dropout Project members reviewed the research on the education of at-risk and disadvantaged students, dropout prevention, and related topics. A list of research, policy documents, and other materials that we reviewed appears in Appendix E.

Appendix B

People Who Provided Public Testimony and Otherwise Participated in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Site Visits

Community Focus Meeting
Education Service Center (Region XX)
1314 Hines Avenue
San Antonio, Texas 78208

December 11, 1995
2:00-4:30pm

Magdelena Alvarado
Kevin C. Moriarty
Chuck Rodriguez
Rev. John Moder
Kimeer Jones
Gloria Zamora
R. A. Marquez
Jerry D. Allen
Ramon A. Guerra
Diana Lam
Patricia Karam
Isabel Salas
Irene Chavez
Juan Sepulveda
Shari Albright
Gilbert Garcia, Jr.
Richard Clifford
Joe Rubin
David Samrad
Bertha C. Franklin
Pilar Oates

Community Focus Meeting
University of Houston
4800 Calhoun Street
Houston, Texas

December 12, 1995
2:00-4:30pm

Gloria Gallegos
Sylvia C. Peña
Jerome Freiberg
Irma Guadarrama
Kip Tellez
Emilio Zamoros
Angela Valenzuela
David Arredondo
Joe Stubbs
Hulberto Saenz
Albert Leal
Debra Basisiera
Tom Carrizal
Guadalupe San Miguel
A. R. Warner
Peter Linden
Manuel Rodriguez
Ben Marquez
Jaime E. De la Isla
Maria M. Rustonji
Melba J. Hamilton
Diane Sirna Mancus
Phyllis Gingiss

Community Focus Meeting
Calexico High School
1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, California

April 24, 1996
2:00-4:00pm

Patricia Levy
Hortencia Armendariz
Arminda L. Romero
Gary Watts
Gloria Celaya
Sandra C. Lopez
Gilbert Mendez
Harry Pearson
Roberto Moreno
Pat Peake
Mike McFadden
Paula Wilkinson
Cecilia Castaneda
Carmen Durazo
Rachel Aguilar
Yvonne Cardona
Dana Sue Gonzalez
Elvia Contreras
Pablo A. Macias
Luz C. Paredes

Yolanda Islas
Rosa A. Vargas
Carmen Chapa
Alicia Fuentes

Community Focus Meeting
University of California
9500 Gilman Drive
San Diego, California

April 25, 1996
2:30-4:30pm

Judy Leff
Nancy Cunningham
Rafael Hernandez
Irene Villanueva
Cynthia Gutierrez
Margaret Gallego
Olga Vasquez
Jose Smith
Paul Espinoza
Maria Nieto Senour
Andrea Nieto Senour
Ricardo Stanton-Salazar
Yolanda Hernandez
Juan P. Leyva
Linda Nolte
Ana Slomanson
Richard Barrera
Luis Cerda
Marcia Venegas-Garcia
Mike Rodirguez
Diego Bavalos
Mario A. Chacon
Robert Gira
Kathy Deering
Cecil Lytle

Community Focus Meeting
University of California
Sunset Village Complex
Los Angeles, California

April 26, 1996
2:30-4:30pm

Mary Lou Gomez
Mario Chiappe
Larry D. Kennedy
Marlene Wilson
Bruce McDaniel
Lloyd Monserratt
Eliseo Davalos
Carla Vega
John Rios
Moises Valez
Raul Ruiz
Martha Sanchez
Virginia Martinez
Andres F. Castillo
Frank DePasquale
Cherie Francis
Hal Hyman
Raymond Paredes

Community Focus Meeting
Miami Dade Community College
Wolfson Campus
Miami, Florida

May 9, 1996
2:00-4:00pm

Rachel Porcelli
Susan McCallion
Betty Mallory-Colson
Denayl Serralta
Manuel Perez-Leiva
Magdi Amador
Ana Miyares
Javier Bray
George Suarez
Randy Egues
Cora Mann
Kevin Prescott
James Moore
Rosa Royo
Maria C. Mateo
Julie Palm
Carlos Seales
Orlando Blance
Javier Vazquez
Blanca Torrents Greenwood
Liliana Wolf
E.D. Taylor
Mike Lenaghan
Carrie Montano
Virginia Bustillo
Rosario S. Roman
Carlos F. Diaz
Byron Massialas
Diane Cole
Dorothy W. Graham

Zaida G. Olmsted
Samuel Gonzalez
Enrique Serna
Tony Vivaldi
German Izguierdo
Ray Zeller
Albert Rivera
Irene Secada
Nick Arroyo
Bill Primus
Lianne Acebo
Ramiro Inguanzo
Catherine Matteo
Bill Renuart
Joan Friedman
Alex Martinez
Nick Barakat
Eugenia Russell
Martha Young
Isabel Gomez-Bassols
Madeline Rodriguez
Rosa Castro Feinberg
Roger Cuevas
Hector Hirigoyen
Jose Vicente

Education and Hispanics:
Solving the Equation
Hearing Sponsored by the Ohio
Commission on Spanish-Speaking Affairs
Toledo, Ohio

May 30, 1996
9:00am-4:00pm

Andrea Loch
Amando P. Bejarano
Diana Flores
Irma Coah
Roberto Gonzalez
Irene Hernandez
Frederick S. Garcia
Ruth G. Garcia
Margaret A. Williams
Cynthia Arredondo
Oscar Hernandez
Deborah Ortiz
Linda Arranado-Well
Manuel Caro
Elenea Caballero
Carlos A. Caro
Ramon Perez
Consuelo Hernandez
Dan Fleck
Maria Chavez
Manuel Vadillo
Joseph Mas
Richard Daoust
Robert E. Ranchor
Pat Kennedy
Raquel Bravo
Mickey Avalos
Dal Lawrence
Rudolph J. Chavez
Craig Cotner
Ricardo Cervantes
Robert Torres
Michael Thomson

Community Focus Meeting
Maria de Hostos Community College
475 Grand Concourse
Bronx, New York

June 12, 1996
10:00am-12:00pm

Tony Baez
Daralyn Calderon
Felipe Colon, Jr.
Ruth Coronado
Lorraine Cortez Vazquez
Rudy Crew
Joseph DeJesus
Rafael Diaz
Ariane Franco
Michele Gataldi
Rafael Gomez
Guillermo Linares
Lyzeth Martinez
Nancy Lopez
Mariella Martinez
Michael Mena
Aneudy Perez
Luis Reyes
Daniel J. Rivera
Maria Rivera
Sonia Rivera
James F. Rodriguez
Laura Rodriguez
Theresa Rodriguez
Yadira Santana
Yonathan Santana
Maria Santiago Mercado

Claire Sylvan
Silvio Torres Saillant
Jensy Ureña
Nicholas West
Alexander Betancourt
Rosa Agosto
Peter Martin
Victoria Sanacore
Laurel Huggins
Denise Diaz
Wilfredo Frarcia
Enrique Carmona
Garciano Matos
Annette Hernandez

Community Focus Meeting
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

August 12, 1996
2:00-4:30pm

Jose Armas
Peter Horoshcak
Emma Lou Rodriguez
Alex Sanchez
Merryl Kravitz
Belinda Pacheco-Laumbach
Gloria Tristani
Loretta Armenta
Frances Gandara
Carlos Atencio
Bianca Ortiz y Wertheim
Julia Lerma
Moises Venegas
John J. Lopez
Felipe Gonzales
Maria Dolores Velasquez
Karen C. Sanchez-Griego
Robert W. Chavez
Gerald Hunt
Eddie Lucero
Eligio Padilla
David M. Gallegos
Penny Smith
Liz Ethelbah
Kathy Carpenter
Richard R. Romero
Jean Salas Reed
Cathy Alva
Angela Gonzales
Marcia Hernandez
Phil Davis
Dolores Chavez de Paigle
Evangeline Sandoval
Tasia Stockham
Robert Velarde
Jery Ortiz y Pino
Fred Griego III
Dolores Herrera
Tom Savage
Andres Valdez
Patrick McDaniel
Marisol Aviles
Jenny Vigil
Jackie Rider
Veronica C. Garcia
Tirzah Alva
Tally Archuletta
Evelyn Fernandez
Cahty Lucas
Pat Bonilla
Claire Jenson
Flora M. Sanchez
Susan Bender Benjamin
Nancy Sanchez
Ida S. Carillo
Miriam Martinez
Stephanie Gonzales
Genaro Roybal
Theresa M. Lucero
Patricia Barela
Rommie Compher
Linda Valencia Martinez
Michael J. Gadler
Lynne Rosen
Nana Almers
Virginia Duran Ginn
Patricia Chavez
Cecilia M. Sanchez
Santos G. Abeyte
Ida S. Carrillo
Virginia M. Trujillo
Gilbert Gallegos
Marjorie Schmedt
Art Morales
Joseph P. Arellano
Raul Candelaria
Frank Duran
John Leahigh
Nan Elsasser
Natalie Meneses
RoseAnn McKernan
Oralia Zuniga Forbes

Barbara Lynn
Aurora Jane Sweeny
Bianca Ortiz Wertheim
Christine Trujillo
Maria A. Rodriguez
Steve Griego
Joseph Torres

Community Focus Meeting
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

August 12, 1996
2:30-5:00pm

Nena Singleton
Leonel Briseno
Ray Francis
Lewis Spencer
Mary Jane Garcia
J. Paul Tayor
Rosalia Gallegos
Averett S. Tombes
Martha Montoya
Angelo Vega
Felix C. Vega
Karl Hill
Michelle Valverde
Robert Oyas
Sam Barba
Ernest Viramontes
Maria Stops
Esther Aguirre
Debbie Rhinehart
M. L. Gonzalez
Steve Trowbridge
Vodene Schultz
Cecil Shultz
Lena N. Parsons
Mike McCamley
Juan Sanchez
Ray Sandoval
John Lyle
George Duran
Ruth Cartelli
Trula Holstein
James O'Donnell
Saehint Sarangam
Sam Baca
Ann Nance
Janah O. Garcia
Cathy Provine
Ana B. Spencer
Mary Helen Garcia
Cristina Barrera
Juan Franco
Aida Delgado
Len LoPresto
Liz Gutierrez
Steve Ramirez
Alma A. Barba
Samuel Reyes
Cheryl H. St. George
Marcie Graham
Jane L. Gonzalez
Marsha Buchanan
Arminda H. Hernandez
Rosalie A. Gallegos
Eric Cress
Martha Cole
Richard Melendez
Ana Spencer
Carlos Provencio
John Allen Lyle
Laura Gutierrez Spencer

Appendix C
People and Organizations Who Presented Handouts to the Hispanic Dropout Project

Abraham Lincoln Community High School, Los Angeles, California.

ALAS (Achievement for Latinos Through Academic Success), University of California, Santa Barbara.

Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Alternative Resources, Changing Adolescent Behavior, Ontario, California.

ASPIRA of New York, Brooklyn, New York.

AVANCE, Family Support and Education Programs, Houston, Texas.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Program, San Diego, California.

Berriozábal, M. P., San Antonio, Texas.

Board of Education of The City of New York, New York, New York.

Calexico Unified School District, Calexico, California.

Center for Applied Linguistics, Program in Immigrant Education, Washington, District of Columbia.

Children's Aid Society, New York, New York.

Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Columbia University, New York, New York.

COPS/METRO, San Antonio, Texas.

Communities in Schools of New Mexico, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Cuban American National Council, Inc., Miami, Florida.

Dade County Public Schools, Dropout Prevention Programs, Miami, Florida.

De Jesus, J. N., New York, New York.

Dewitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York.

Durocher, E. N., New York, New York.

Gira, R., San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Business Group, Miami, Florida.

Hernandez, L., Hostos Community College, Bronx, New York.

Home Economics Department, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science, Bronx, New York.

HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) Corporation, Vancouver, Washington.

Houston Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), San Antonio, Texas.

Kravitz, L., New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, San Diego, California.

Lennox School District, Lennox, California.

Little Havana Institute, Cuban American National Council, Miami, Florida.

Lincoln Senior High School, Los Angeles, California.

Mains Elementary School, Calexico, California.

MANA de Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mar Vista High School, Imperial Beach, California.

Mathematica Research Policy Institute, Inc., Washington, District of Columbia.

Mesilla Alternative Learning Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Miami Beach Senior High School, Miami Beach, Florida.

National Diffusion Network, The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program, Washington, District of Columbia.

National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina.

New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

New Mexico MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Mexico Youth at Risk Foundation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

New Workplace for Women Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Office of the Superintendent of Bronx High Schools, New York, New York.

Padilla-King, T., Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Project GRAD, Houston, Texas.

Project GRADS, Portales, New Mexico.

Re: Learning New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Research Triangle Institute, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

San Andres High School, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

San Antonio Board of Education, San Antonio, Texas.

San Antonio Education Partnership, San Antonio, Texas.

San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego, California.

Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists, San Antonio, Texas.

South Beach Alternative School, Miami Beach, Florida.

Southwest Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas.

Starbase Kelly Youth Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Success for All, Houston, Texas.

Success STARtS with Hope!, Miami, Florida.

Systemic Initiative in Mathematics and Science Education, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Texas Interfaith Fund, Alliance Schools Project, Houston, Texas.

Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

United Services Automobile Association (USAA), Mentor and Junior Achievement Program, San Antonio, Texas.

Vasquez, O. and M. Cole, Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, La Jolla, California.

Young, M., The Little Havana Institute, Miami, Florida.

Wechsler, N. M., DeWitt Clinton High School, The Bronx, New York.

Youth Development, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Zamora, G., Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, San Antonio, Texas.

Appendix D
Sites Visited by the Hispanic Dropout Project

CALIFORNIA

Aurora High School
(alternative school)
641 Rockwood Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Patrick Peake
619-357-7410
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

AVID Program
Mar Vista High School
505 Elm Avenue
Imperial Beach, CA 91932-2099
Principal: Gloria Samson
619-691-5400
Site Visited: April 25, 2996

Calexico High School
1030 Encinas Avenue
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Harry Pearson
619-357-7440
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

La Clase Magica
St. Leo's Mission
936 Genevieve Street
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Contact Person: Vicente Leal
619-481-6788
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Lennox Middle School
10319 Firmona Avenue
Lennox, California 90304
310-206-4624
Contact Person: Hal Hyman
(Center X - UCLA)
Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Lincoln High School
3501 North Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90031
Principal & Contact Person: Lupe Sonnie
213-223-1291
Site Visited: April 25, 1996

Neighborhood House Head Start Program
St. Leo's Mission in Eden Gardens
936 Genevieve Street
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Site Coordinator: Amie Khalssa (site director)
619-792-1996
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

Newcomer Program
Mains Elementary School
655 Sheridan Street
Calexico, CA 92231
Principal: Gloria Selaya
619-357-7410
Contact Person: Emily Palacios
619-357-7351
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Fifth Dimension
Boys & Girls Club
Lomas Santa Fe Branch
533 Lomas Santa Fe
Solana Beach, CA 92075-1323
Contact Persons: Duncan Smith or
Raul Castillo
619-755-9373
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

The Magical Dimension
Skyline Elementary
606 Lomas Santa Fe
Solana Beach, CA 92075
Principal: Kevin Riley
619-794-3920
Site Visited: April 24, 1996

FLORIDA

Allapattah Middle School
1331 NW 46 Street
Miami, FL 33142
Principal: Alex Martinez
305-634-9787
Teacher: Nick Barakat
Host & Escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Math Supervisor, Dade County Schools)
305-995-1921
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Little Havana Institute
300 SW 12 Avenue
Miami, FL 33130-2002
Director: Martha Young (Cuban American National Council)
305-642-3484
Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade County Public Schools, Head of Psychology Department for Alternative Programs)
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

Miami Beach Senior High School
2231 Prairie Avenue
Miami, FL 33139-1595
Principal: Bill Renuart
305-532-4515
Mathematics Department Chair: Joan Friedman
Host and escort: Hector Hirigoyen (Mathematics Supervisor, Dade County Schools)
305-995-1921
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

South Beach Institute
920 Alton Road
Miami Beach, FL 33139-5204
Director: Eugenia Russell (Adult Mankind)
305-673-4782
Host and escort: Isabel Gomez Bassols (Dade County Public Schools, Head of Psychology Department for Alternative Programs)
305-995-1260
Site Visited: May 11, 1996

NEW MEXICO

Cornerstones
Old Dona Ana Church
Dona Ana, NM 88032
Contact Person: Pat Taylor (Site Coordinator)
505-647-6611 (beeper)
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

MESA Program
Washington Middle School
1101 Park Place SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102-2967
Contact Person: Evangeline Sandoval (MESA Director)
505-262-1200
Site Visited: August 13, 1996

Mesilla Valley Youth Foundation (a.k.a. Court Youth Center)
401 West Court
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Contact Person: Irene Oliver-Lewis (Director)
505-541-0145 or 523-0935
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

San Andres Alternative Learning Center
Highway 28
Mesilla, NM 88046
Contact Person: Eric Cress (Principal)
505-527-6058
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Social Services & Tutors Assisting Youth (S.T.A.Y.)
221 North Downtown Mall
Las Cruces, NM 88001-1213
Contact Person: Leonel Briseno (Program Coordinator)
Site Visited: August 14, 1996

Youth Development Inc.
Rio Grande High School
2300 Arenal SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105-4180
Contact Person: Robert Chavez
505-831-6038 or 768-6051
Site Visited: August 13, 1996

NEW YORK

DeWitt Clinton High School
100 Mosholu Parkway South
Bronx, NY 10468
Principal: Norman Wechsler
718-543-1000
Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Martin Luther King High School
65th & 66th
New York, NY 10023
Principal: Stephanie Ferrandino
212-501-1300
Site Visited: June 12, 1996

Hostos Lincoln Academy of Science
Eugenio Maria de Hostos Community College
475 Grand Concourse, 2nd floor
Bronx, NY 10451
Director: Michael Cataldi
Outreach Program
Director: Michael Cataldi
Sites Visited: June 12, 1996

TEXAS

AVANCE
2001 Rainbow
Houston, TX 77023
Contact: Carmen Cortes
310-825-2494
Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
Kazen Middle School
1520 Gillette
San Antonio, TX 78224
210-924-9021
Contacts: Linda Cantu &
Maria (Cuca) Robledo Mercel
210-684-8180
Site Visited: December 11, 1995

COPS Project
Lanier High School
1514 West Durango
San Antonio, TX 78207
Contact: Sister Consuelo Tovar & Joe Rubio
210-222-2367
Site Visited: December 11, 1995

***Success for All* Program**
Browning Elementary
607 Northwood
Houston, TX 77027
Principal: Olga Moya
Contacts: Joseph Stubbs and Phyllis Hunter
713-892-6025 and 713-892-6024
Site Visited: December 12, 1995

Appendix E
References

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Appendix F
Programs Reviewed in the Hispanic Dropout Project's Commissioned Papers

Contacts for Information on Elementary Academic Achievement Programs Reviewed by Olatokunbo S. Fashola, Robert E. Slavin, Margarita Calderón and Richard Durán (1996)

Accelerated Schools
Claudette Spriggs
National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project
Stanford University
CERAS 109
Stanford, CA 94305-3084
415-725-7158 or 415-725-1676

Bilingual Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (BCIRC)
Margarita Calderón
3001 Cabot Place
El Paso, TX 79935
915-595-5971

Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)
Elizabeth Fennema or Thomas Carpenter
University of Wisconsin Madison
Wisconsin Center for Education Research
1025 West Johnson Street
Madison, WI 53706
608-263-4265

Complex Instruction/Finding Out/Descubrimiento
Elizabeth G. Cohen
Stanford University, School of Education
Stanford, CA 94305
415-723-4661

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP)
Clare Heidema, Director, CSMP
2550 South Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014
303-337-0990 Voice mail 303-743-5520
FAX 303-337-3005

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD)
H. Jerome Freiberg
University of Houston
College of Education
Houston, TX 77204-5872
713-743-8663

Direct Instruction/DISTAR/Reading Mastery
Association for Direct Instruction
805 Lincoln
Eugene, OR 97401
541-485-1293

Early Intervention for School Success
Dean Hiser
200 Calmus Drive
P.O. Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
714-900-4125

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI)
Ethna R. Reid
Reid Foundation
3310 South 2700 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84109
801-486-5083 or 801-278-2334
FAX 801-485-0561

Goldenberg and Sullivan
Claude Goldenberg
Department of Teacher Education
California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90840
310-985-5733
FAX 310-985-1543

Group Investigation
Mark Brubacher
416-394-3402
Kemp Rickett
416-393-9565

Helping One Student to Succeed (HOSTS)
William E. Gibbons, Chairman
8000 N.E. Parkway Drive, Suite 201
Vancouver, WA 98662-6459
206-260-1995 or 800-833-4678
FAX 206-260-1783

Jigsaw
Spencer Kagan
Resources for Teachers
27134 A Paseo Espada #202
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
1-800-WEE-COOP

Learning Together
Roger T. Johnson and David W. Johnson
The Cooperative Learning Center
60 Peik Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-624-7031

Maneuvers With Mathematics (MWM)
David A. Page or Kathryn B. Chval
The University of Illinois at Chicago
851 Morgan Street
(m/c 249) SEO 1309
Chicago, IL 60607-7045
312-996-8708

Multi-Cultural Reading and Thinking (McRAT)
Janita Hoskyn, National Consultant, McRAT Program
1019 Ronwood Drive
Little Rock, AR 72227
501-225-5809
FAX 501-455-4137

Profile Approach to Writing
Jane B. Hughey, Dixie Copeland
1701 Southwest Parkway, Suite 102
College Station, TX 77840
Phone or FAX 409-764-9765

Project ACHIEVE
Mary Fritz
Urbana School District 116
1108 West Fairview
Urbana, IL 61801
800-ESL-PROG (375-7746)
FAX 217-344-5160

Project ALASKA (Alaska Writing Program)
Nikin McCurry
Yukon Koyukuk School District
Box 80210
Fairbanks, AK 99708
800-348-1335
FAX 907-474-0657

Project BICOMP
The Bilingual Integrated Curriculum Project
Lorie Hammond
Washington Unified School District
930 West Acres Road
West Sacramento, CA 95691
916-257-2237 or 916-371-7720
FAX 916-371-8319

Project CELL
Computer Education for Language Learning
Celia Edmundson
Irvine Unified School District
5050 Barranca Parkway
Irvine, CA 92714
800-237-CELL or 714-733-9391
FAX 714-733-9391

Project CEMI
Computer Education for Multilingual Instruction
Iris N. Dias
Turbano University-Department of Education
Box 3030, University Station
Guarbo, PR 00778
809-734-7979, Ext 4940
FAX 809-743-7979, Ext 4944

Project GLAD
Guided Language Acquisition Design
Marcia Bretchel
17210 Oak Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-843-3230
FAX 714-843-3265

Project GOTCHA
Galaxies of Thinking and Creative Heights of Achievement
Nilda M. Aquirre
K.C. Wright Administration Building
ESE Department -9th Floor
600 S.E. 3rd Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
305-767-8519
FAX 305-765-6017

Project MORE
Model Organization Results of Eastman
Diana Hernandez
Los Angeles Unified School District
Language Acquisition and Bilingual Development Branch
1320 West Third Street, Room 131
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project PIAGET
Promoting Intellectual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming
Kriste Falla-Serfass
The Bethlehem Area School District
1400 Lebanon Street
Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-865-7880
FAX 610-861-8107

Project PIAGET
Thomas D. Yawkey
The Pennsylvania State University
165 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-863-2937
FAX 814-863-7602

Project PUENTE Outreach: A Bridge Between Communities
Debbie Clarke
Healdsburg Union School District
925 University Street
Healdsburg, CA 95448
707-431-3480
FAX 707-433-8403

Project SEED (Berkeley, California)
Helen Smiler, National Projects Coordinator
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite K
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-644-3422
FAX 510-644-0566

Project SEED (Dallas, Texas)
Hamid Ebrahimi, National Director
3414 Oak Grove Avenue
Dallas, TX 75204
214-954-4432

Project SLICE
Systematic Linking and Integrating of Curricula for Excellence
Beverly R. Taub
Freemont Unified School District
Office of Federal and State Projects
4210 Technology Drive
Freemont, CA 94538
510-629-2580
FAX 510-659-2532

Project TALK
Tutors Assisting with Language and Knowledge
John Golden
Aurora Public Schools
Bilingual Education Center
15701 East First Avenue, Suite 115
Aurora, CO 80011
303-340-0764
FAX 303-340-0868

Project TWO-WAY
TWO-WAY Bilingual Immersion
Rosa Molina
San Jose Unified School District
River Glen Elementary School
1610 Bird Avenue
San Jose, CA 95125
408-998-6420
FAX 408-298-8377

Reading Recovery/Descubriendo La Lectura
Carol A. Lyons, Gay Su Pinnell, or Diane E. DeFord
Reading Recovery Program
The Ohio State University
200 Ramseyer Hall
29 West Woodruff Avenue
Columbus, OH 42310
614-292-7807
FAX 614-688-3646

Reciprocal Teaching
Anne Marie Palincsar
University of Michigan
4204c School of Education Building
610 East University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

School Development Program (SDP)
Ed Joyner
Child Study Center
School Development Program
230 South Frontage Road
P.O. Box 20790
New Haven, CT 06520-7900
203-785-2548
FAX 203-785-3359

Sheltered English Approach (SEA)
Alice Petrossian
Glendale Unified School District
Special Projects
223 North Jackson Street
Glendale, CA 91206
818-241-3111 Ext 301
FAX 818-246-3715

Skills Reinforcement Project (SRP)
Elizabeth Jones Stork, Director, IAAY Western Region, and Deputy Director, CAA
Johns Hopkins University, Western Regional Office
206 North Jackson Street, Suite 304
Glendale, CA 91206
818-500-9034
FAX 818-500-9058

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournaments
Anna Marie Farnish
Center for Social Organization of Schools
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
410-516-8857
FAX 410-516-8890

Success for All/Lee Conmigo
Robert E. Slavin
Johns Hopkins University
Center for Social Organization of Schools
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
800-548-4998
FAX 410-516-8890

Contacts for Information on Secondary Dropout-Prevention Programs Reviewed by Olatokunbo S. Fashola and Robert E. Slavin (1997)

ALAS
Katherine A. Larson & Russel W. Rumberger
University of California
Graduate School of Education
Phelps Hall
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

AVID
Mary Catherine Swanson
Director, AVID program
San Diego County Office of Education
6401 Linda Vista Road
San Diego, CA 92111-7399
619-292-3500

California Post Secondary Education Commission
Third Floor
1020 Twelfth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-3985

Coca Cola Valued Youth Project
Linda Cantu, Project Director
Intercultural Development Research Association
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
5835 Callaghan, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
210-684-8180
210-684-5389

GRAD
J.L. Ketelsen
P.O. Box 2511
Houston, TX 77001
713-757-3563

SCORE
Sharon Marshall Johnson
Orange County Department of Education
200 Kalmus Drive
Post Office Box 9050
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-9050
714-966-4394 or 714-966-4388
Fax 714-662-3148

Upward Bound
David Goodwin
U.S. Department of Education
600 C Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202
202-401-0182

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