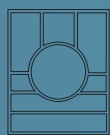



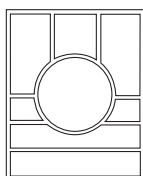


The New Latino South and the Challenge to Public Education

Strategies for Educators and
Policymakers in Emerging
Immigrant Communities



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Founded in 1985, the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute advances critical, insightful thinking on key issues affecting Latino communities through objective, policy-relevant research, and its implications, for the betterment of the nation.

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November 2004

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The New Latino South and the Challenge to Public Education

Strategies for Educators and
Policymakers in Emerging
Immigrant Communities

Andrew Wainer



The Tomás Rivera
POLICY INSTITUTE

Acknowledgements

This publication was made possible in part by grants from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Coca-Cola Foundation, the First Data Western Union Foundation, and the Coors Brewing Company. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the authors.

We would like to thank staff from the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) for their support, including Celina Torres for her research support in Arkansas and Georgia and Robert Esqueda who created the tables and charts for the report. Thanks to: Dr. Harry Pachon, Dr. Louis Tornatzky, Dr. Jongho Lee, Dr. Elsa Macias, Dr. Louis DeSipio, Dr. Estela Mara Bensimon, Dr. Rodolfo de la Garza, Hayley Buchbinder, and Andrea Gutierrez for their valued input on the report.

Special thanks to Milie Ravanel of the North Carolina Center for International Understanding and Beth Arnow, ESL Coordinator for Gwinnett County Public Schools, who were particularly helpful in launching our research in the Wake-Durham and Atlanta areas, respectively.

The authors are indebted to the scores of respondents from new immigrant communities who participated in the research for this report. We hope they feel that the final result was worth their time and effort.



The Center for Latino Educational Excellence (CLEE) was established as a major initiative of the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute in the spring of 2002 to help improve educational attainment and achievement in Latino communities across the United States. Through its policy research, CLEE seeks to provide guidance for Latino leadership — across public, non-profit, and private sectors — on how to better the current systems of education that are, on many levels, failing Latino youth and adults.

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Executive Summary

The lack of resources devoted to educating Latinos¹ in emerging immigrant communities is generating negative educational outcomes and de facto educational segregation in the South. While Latino immigrants continue to dominate employment in the meat processing, service, and construction sectors in these communities, they are underrepresented on local university campuses and their K-12 academic achievement scores remain substandard.

Field interviews with scores of respondents in several case study sites indicate that Latinos often have the highest dropout rates and lowest educational achievement scores among all ethnic/racial groups in emerging immigrant communities. Secondary education data at the state and local level support this assertion. One of the specific shortcomings created by the lack of resources invested in immigrant education is a weak local research-base from which education policymakers and practitioners can draw. Without the training and models they need, educators and administrators in emerging immigrant communities are often overwhelmed by the rapidly changing ethnic and socioeconomic background of their students. They have too few solutions—based on research in similar communities—at their disposal.

This report serves as a resource for these educators and administrators working in schools with little or

no history of educating immigrant students. Our goal is to assist them to conceive and implement innovative strategies for promoting academic success among Latino immigrant students in new immigrant communities.

Our innovative strategies are drawn from local-level respondents in emerging immigrant communities and are intended for educators and administrators in areas undergoing the same or similar phenomena. Many respondents interviewed for this project said that educators simply "don't know what to do" with their classrooms that, in ethnic and linguistic terms, changed radically during the immigration boom of the 1990s. In order to fill this research gap, we identify four major immigrant education issues in new immigrant communities that have been problematic for educators and immigrant families:

- Parental Involvement
- Teacher Training
- Immigration Status
- Discrimination

Solutions to these barriers include such practices as hiring parent liaisons, implementing family literacy programs, and integrating bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) methods into classroom instruction. These barriers and the local strategies to overcome them are described in detail in Chapters 4-7. The policies, practices, and programs described have proven effective in communities with a particular set of demographics, resources, and socioeconomics. The strategies outlined in this report should be helpful to teachers and administrators in emerging immigrant communities in states like those examined in this study.

We also offer a set of policy recommendations and issues for further investigation aimed at researchers and grantors interested in continuing to study and work with emerging Latino immigrant communities.

¹ For this report, we use the terms Hispanic and Latino interchangeably in reference to persons tracing their ancestry to the Spanish-speaking regions of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Some of these issues include:

- Research and advocacy on proposed state legislation allowing academically qualified undocumented immigrant students access to in-state tuition rates at public universities.
- Continued research on inter-ethnic relations in emerging immigrant communities, particularly between African Americans and Latinos.
- Research and evaluation of immigrant student "newcomer centers" in

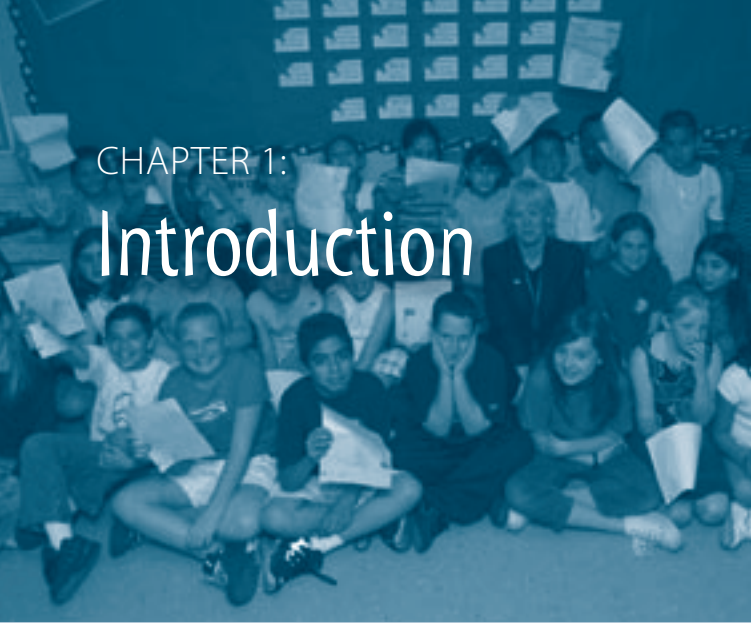
emerging immigrant communities and established immigrant gateway states and cities.

- Investment in a local infrastructure for training teachers how to successfully educate immigrant students in their communities.

These local, state, and national level recommendations are outlined in detail in Chapters 1–3, accompanied by a review of the demographic changes and educational achievement data of Latinos in several case study locations.

CHAPTER 1:

Introduction



Jackie Beasley, a principal at an elementary school in the Atlanta suburbs, has seen her student body change drastically in recent years. "About 12-15 percent of the student body used to be eligible for free and reduced lunch," she says. "Now it's 70 percent."

Her school has traditionally educated a white² and African American student body. Her colleagues note that the racial integration of the South during the 1960s was a difficult change for the community—one that still lingers. Nevertheless, the district is now undergoing an equally dramatic—and difficult—change. Beasley says that in 2004, 42 percent of her students spoke another language at home, mostly Spanish. As recently as 1991 her school district student body was 2 percent Hispanic, now it's 45 percent.

Beasley struggled during the Latino student influx of the 1990s. The change came rapidly. Every year there were more immigrant³ students, most of who could not speak English, had little formal education, and were unfamiliar with public education in the United States.

"Seven years ago I asked for help and found that we didn't have that many resources," Beasley said. The school system was unable or uninterested in reacting to the change. Beasley discovered that she would have to rely on herself to transform the school to meet the transformation of the student

body. "I received a grant from the Office of English Language Acquisition," Beasley said. "That seed money has governed the way that we do things."

Although she lacked local models for successful immigrant student integration, Beasley was raised in a large Eastern city with an ethnically diverse population. She used the federal grant monies and her own background to adapt the school to the needs of the new immigrant population. Beasley developed a variety of enrichment and extension activities for immigrant students and the children of immigrants: a Girl Scout club, called "Hermanitas" in Spanish, a Junior Achievement chapter, classes in art, technology, drama, and dance. "I wanted to expose children to things not in their purview; things they might not necessarily know about," she said.

Beasley also demanded that her staff take the extra steps and make the adjustments to integrate immigrant families into the life of the school by consistently seeking to involve parents in their children's schooling. Many parents, accustomed to arrogance, indifference, or ignorance from school officials, reacted warmly. "Parents slowly started to come in when they saw that I did not belittle them," Beasley said.

Today Beasley's school serves as something of a 24-hour community center for Latino immigrant families. In the early mornings, the school offers academic enrichment programs for students. One day during the week is spent in the school orchestra. Other early mornings are spent reinforcing math, reading, and problem solving skills. In the evenings the school provides a variety of seminars and classes for parents, including a seminar on buying a home. Beasley's educational commitment to immigrant students and their families is considered a model for other administrators in the school system.

² In this publication, the term "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites.

³ For this report, the term "immigrant" refers to children born abroad and the children of parents who were born abroad.

Still, the transformation of the school over the past decade leaves Beasley exhausted. "They didn't tell me how to do this in principal school," she says. "I don't know that most principals would do what I do. I have to work on it constantly."

Beasley's school is not typical in emerging immigrant communities in the South. Most teachers and school administrators experiencing similar demographic changes are at a loss on how to educate immigrant students effectively. Latino dropout rates are high and college attendance rates are low. Testing scores for Latinos are also typically far below district averages. Some educators and experts talk about a looming "education crisis" regarding Hispanic immigrant education in the South.

REPORT OVERVIEW

Our goal in this report is to offer these struggling immigrant educators and policymakers promising strategies and ideas on how to improve Latino immigrant educational outcomes. These programs, practices, and policies for immigrants are based on local examples like the one cited above. Our report draws on the literature regarding immigrant education and stresses the importance of issues such as parental involvement and teacher training. Nevertheless, the promising strategies that we document in this report are drawn from our case study sites in North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia. Programs and practices based on these models should be more relevant to educators working under similar circumstances and can be applied to other regions in the nation experiencing similar demographic changes.

We have divided the report thematically, focusing on the four major immigrant education barriers identified above. Chapters 4 through 7 each provide a discussion and analysis of the broad barriers to education in emerging Latino immigrant communities. Chapter 4 deals with parental involvement, Chapter 5 with teacher training, Chapter 6 with immigration status, and Chapter 7 with discrimination. Following the analysis of each education barrier, a list of promising strategies and programs are presented. These chapters form the heart of the report and

are presented for easy access by educators and administrators interested in finding solutions for their own classrooms.

These chapters are preceded by Chapter 2, "The New Latino South," which contains an overview of the growth of the Latino population nationwide with a focus on the South, specifically our case study sites in North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia. In this chapter, we also briefly review the research literature on emerging Latino communities. In Chapter 3, "Latino Educational Achievement in the South", we provide an overview of Latino education achievement measures nationally and in emerging immigrant states in order to place the issue in context. A review of the literature on Latino immigrant education in emerging immigrant communities is also provided.

We conclude the report in Chapter 8 with a synthesis of the issues facing educators in new immigrant communities and some options for policymakers, researchers, and grantors interested in further study and involvement in Latino education issues in emerging immigrant communities.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate readers' use of our promising programs, policies, and practices, an appendix is provided with a list of policymakers, administrators and educators in each case study site. These contacts should be useful for those interested in employing the recommendations presented in this report.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to presenting our research project methodology and data.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

Study Site Selection

The primary data for this report was gathered through three case site studies of public educational institutions in fast growing Latino immigrant communities. The three communities were chosen from the top 10 fastest growing counties from

1990 to 2000 in terms of the percentage of Latino population. Counties were identified using U.S. Census Bureau data from 1990 and 2000. The selected counties must have had at least 10,000 Latino residents in 2000 in order to qualify for inclusion on the list.

From the 10 counties identified, the final three study sites were selected due to their geographical diversity. The sites offered a unique mix of geographic, economic, and ethnic variety. Each study site consisted of two adjacent counties: Wake and Durham in North Carolina; Washington and Benton in Arkansas; and Hall and Gwinnett in Georgia. Although we didn't plan our research to be focused in the South, the fact that nine of the ten fastest-growing Latino counties in the United States are located there dictated that the primary data gathering occurred in this region. Within each of the selected counties, the school systems with the largest number of Latino students were selected for qualitative research and analysis.

We conducted interviews primarily with public educational professionals in each of the study sites. In addition to teachers and principals, other respondents included religious leaders, governmental officials, and immigrant parents and students. Respondents were employed from the preschool to university level, but most interviews were conducted among K-12 respondents in public school districts. Of the K-12 interviews, most of these were conducted with elementary school teachers and staff because most English language learners (ELL) nationwide are found in the early elementary grades (August and Hakuta 1997).

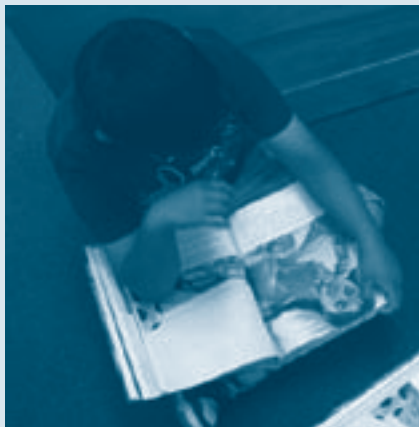
Identification of Respondents

In each study site, research was initiated with either one or two focus group sessions involving key immigrant education informants and experts

in each county. This included teachers, principals, parent liaisons, social service personnel, and Latino policymakers. We sought to include educators and administrators who possessed an overview of the immigrant education environment in each case study site. The goal of these sessions, which typically involved seven to 12 participants, was to help identify and organize the major barriers to immigrant education in each site and identify educational and social service respondents for subsequent in-depth individual interviews. The focus group sessions were also used to nominate effective teachers, schools, and programs that have employed successful practices in educating immigrants in emerging communities.

Researchers left each focus group with a list of teachers, principals, teaching assistants, district-level personnel and others identified by their peers and supervisors as providing exemplary services to immigrant students and the children of immigrants in their school system. The sessions were facilitated and recorded by Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) personnel and the results were subsequently analyzed in order to target respondents for individual, in-depth interviews.

The innovative strategies we have collected in this report have been identified as such by the respondents of our research. This report and the strategies included in it should be considered as an exploratory effort to identify effective educational practices for immigrants and their children in emerging immigrant communities. Although we are confident that the strategies we have identified can be translated to classrooms in other emerging immigrant communities, further research on how these practices are developed should be conducted in order to continue to build a research base on this issue. As more emerging immigrant states and communities collect achievement data on Latino students, this data should be used to begin a quantitative evaluation of these programs.



Data Collection

A total of 119 interviews were conducted in order to gather information on the most significant barriers to immigrant education and the effective practices used to address them. A total of 39 interviews were conducted at the Wake-Durham study site, 48 were conducted at the Washington-Benton study site and 32 were conducted with respondents from the Hall-Gwinnett study site. Most of the interviews were conducted at the respondents' workplace, typically a school or district office. Some interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. All interviews were conducted between June 2003 and March 2004.

Interviews were conducted in-person and over the phone, and averaged about 45 minutes each, although the interview duration varied considerably. Almost all the interviews were recorded. The interview protocol was semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions designed to encourage respondents to talk extemporaneously around various topics. The content of the questionnaires was steered by the results of the initial focus groups.

In addition to interviews, we also used a variety of secondary data from the U.S. Census Bureau, school districts, and states in order to help ground the report and findings in socioeconomic and demographic reality.

Data Analysis

Information gathered from respondents was transcribed and coded thematically based on the major immigrant education barriers identified in the focus groups for each study site. The prevalence of themes across interviews was assessed by a simple counting procedure. Among the many major barriers identified in the focus groups, the responses from the individual interviews on these barriers were reduced further to four themes that were then organized as the major immigrant education barriers for this report. Once the major immigrant

education barriers had been identified, we also sought innovative strategies from respondents. Many of the quotes from the interviews were directly incorporated into the report narrative. Quotes from respondents are used heavily in Chapters 4 through 7 and occasionally in other chapters. These quotes are often intertwined with the report authors' interpretations to form the narrative of the report.

Verification

We found remarkable consistency in the immigrant education barriers and innovative practices across study sites. The validity of respondents' information was ensured through obtaining information from a number of respondents in the same organization. For example, at one school a teacher, principal, student, counselor, and parents would be interviewed in order to provide a panoramic view of the programs and practices at the school. This also allowed researchers the opportunity to examine discrepancies among respondents. The report draft was also examined and assessed by a number of experts prior to publication.

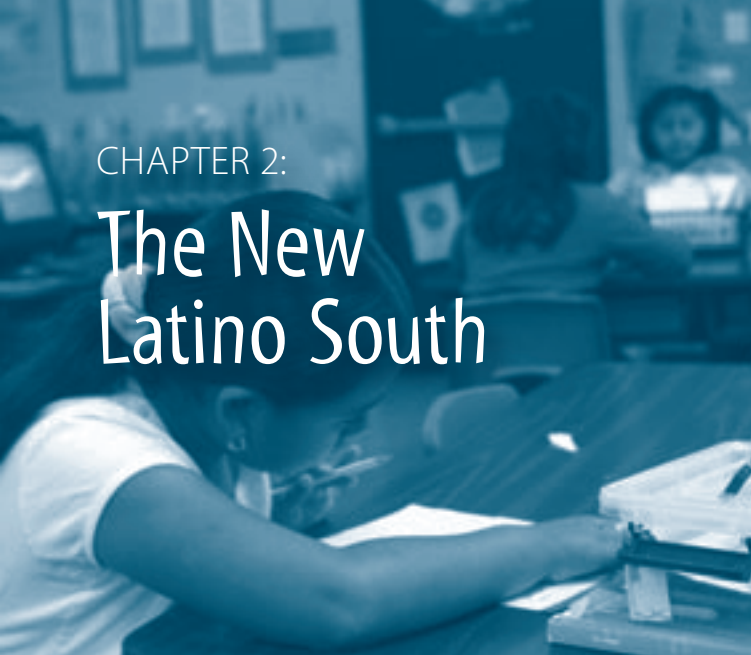
During the focus group sessions, the findings from previous sessions and results from other case study sites were presented for comparison and comment from respondents from other study sites. The consistency of the major barriers mentioned across study sites has given us confidence that these are the major issues that need scholarly and public policy attention.

Terminology

For this study, "innovative strategies" are defined as those programs and processes facilitating the social integration and academic success of immigrant children and the children of immigrants in emerging immigrant communities. These strategies increase educational equity and opportunity, improve inter-ethnic relations in schools, and involve immigrant families in the public education system.

CHAPTER 2:

The New Latino South



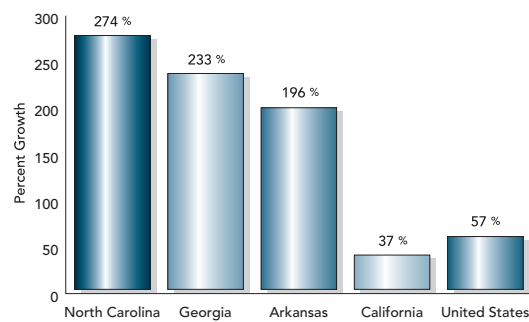
One of the major American demographic stories of the early 21st century is the growth and dispersion of the Latino population. This ethnic group has grown to be the second largest group in the United States (about 40 million in 2003) and is growing fastest in regions with little or no history of Latino settlement (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). No longer are Latinos concentrated in the West, South Florida, and a few major cities. Today, one might have a Latino neighbor in Dalton, Georgia, or Springdale, Arkansas.

As Table 1 indicates, Latinos are already the largest ethnic minority in many Midwestern and New England states. Nevertheless, their numbers are growing the fastest in the South. Although, still numerically small relative to the traditional immigrant gateway

states, the speed of immigrant growth in the South during the 1990s far surpassed the national average and the rate of traditionally Latino states. In fact, North Carolina, Georgia and Arkansas contained the first, second and third fastest growing foreign-born populations during the 1990s, far outpacing California and the national average (Table 2).

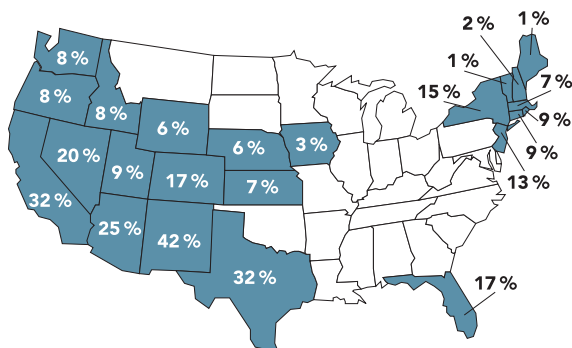
Due to local concentration, some Southern communities have undergone a more dramatic demographic change than the states as a whole.

Table 2
PERCENT GROWTH IN FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION: 1990-2000



SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

Table 1
THE LATINO DIASPORA IN 2000:
STATES WHERE LATINOS ARE THE
LARGEST ETHNIC MINORITY



SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

While the Hispanic populations of North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia, are still only about 3 to 5 percent Latino, in some counties, more than one of every five people is Hispanic where Latinos were almost unknown a decade ago (Table 3).

EMERGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES DURING THE 1990s

The growth and establishment of new immigrant communities—and particularly Latino communities in the South—has been explored by scholars since at least the early 1990s, coinciding with the region's Latino immigration boom (Bach 1993; Gouveia and Stull 1997; Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga. 2000; Torres 2000; Grey 2001; Murphy, Blanchard and

Table 3
TOP 10 FASTEST GROWING LATINO COUNTIES IN THE U.S. 1990-2000

COUNTY	STATE	1990 LATINO POPULATION	2000 LATINO POPULATION	NUMERIC CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE	PERCENT LATINO 1990	PERCENT LATINO 2000
Benton	AR	1,359	13,469	12,110	891 %	1 %	9 %
Forsyth	NC	2,102	19,577	17,475	831 %	1 %	6 %
Washington	AR	1,526	12,932	11,406	747 %	1 %	8 %
Durham	NC	2,054	17,039	14,985	730 %	1 %	8 %
Whitfield	GA	2,321	18,419	16,098	694 %	3 %	22 %
Gwinnett	GA	8,470	64,137	55,667	657 %	2 %	11 %
Mecklenburg	NC	6,693	44,871	38,178	570 %	1 %	7 %
Wake	NC	5,396	33,985	28,589	530 %	1 %	5 %
Hall	GA	4,558	27,242	22,684	498 %	5 %	20 %
Elkhart	IN	2,932	16,300	13,368	456 %	2 %	9 %

SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

Hill 2001; Caps, Fix and Passel, 2002; Portes n.d.; Suro and Singer 2002). Research varies greatly from ethnographies of new immigrant communities (Bach 1993; Gouveia and Stull 1997; Torres 2000; Grey 2001; Murphy, Blanchard and Hill 2001) to quantitative analyses of Census data illustrating the dispersion of Latinos from more traditional areas to the South (Caps, Fix and Passel, 2002; Suro and Singer 2002).

Although much of the ethnographic research and analysis is centered in the South, there are also case studies of the Midwest and Northwest (Gouveia and Stull 1997; Grey 2001). Other studies offer a statistical "map" (Portes n.d.; Suro and Singer 2002) of the changing demographics of Latinos in the United States and give explanations of why this change is occurring. Portes cites the U.S. labor shortage of the 1990s and labor recruitment in Mexico as the major engines driving Latino immigration to the South. In addition to jobs, Suro and Singer point to affordable housing and quality of life issues (schools and public safety) as drawing Latino immigrants. On these points, our research confirms the conclusions of previous scholars.

Even a superficial understanding of Latino immigration to emerging Southern communities would indicate that Latinos have journeyed there for

one major reason: jobs. It is no coincidence that the economic boom of the 1990s was accompanied by an immigration boom. The combination of Mexicans' desire for better wages and the Southern economy's desire to staff poultry processing plants, construction crews, and low-skill service sector jobs is the dynamic that created major Latino communities in the South. Occupational data from the U.S. Census Bureau highlights how labor-segmentation has led to Latino immigrants' domination of many low-skill industries in their new communities. For example, as of 2000, the population of Hall County, Georgia, was 20 percent Latino (U.S. Bureau of the Census) but Latinos made up 90 percent of all laborers in county meat processing plants (Census EEO Data Tool 2000).

While there is significant scholarship and consensus on the reasons for Latino immigration to the South, scholars are somewhat ambivalent about how Latino immigrants—and

While the Hispanic populations of North Carolina, Arkansas, and Georgia are still only about 3 to 5 percent Latino, in some counties, more than one of every five people is Hispanic.

immigrants in general—have been received in their new Southern homes (Duchon and Murphy 2001; Engstrom 2001). While the industries that have come to rely on Hispanic labor tend to promote the new immigration, Engstrom notes that local politicians sometimes sound the alarm against illegal immigration in order to advance their political careers (Engstrom 2001). Nevertheless, most scholars have not found consistent, overt racism against Latino immigrants in the South (Guthey 2001; Studstill and Nieto-Studstill 2001).

In spite of a general sense of tolerance, there are those who express outright hostility toward immigrants. Resistance from some whites who lament the loss of ethnic homogeneity has led to a number of civil rights issues. However, most of the day-to-day tension between immigrants and other populations is due to a lack of understanding. "The main block is not knowing what to do," one Atlanta area educator said. "The change has been so incredibly rapid."

Although there is some ambivalence among scholars regarding Latino immigrants' social integration in the South, scholars agree that their incorporation into

the public education system has been deeply flawed. We will address this issue in the next chapter following the summary of state and case study site demographic data found below.

Although there is some ambivalence among scholars regarding Latino immigrants' social integration in the South, scholars agree that their incorporation into the public education system has been deeply flawed.

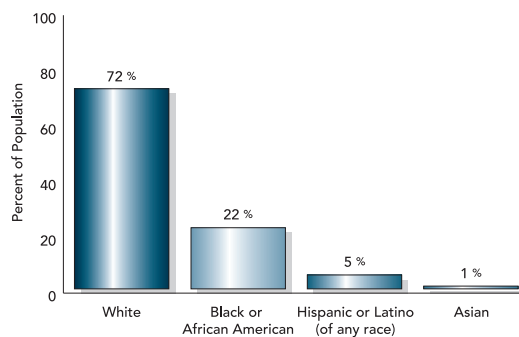
STATE AND CASE STUDY SITE DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARIES

Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

North Carolina was the capital of immigrant population growth rates in the United States from 1990 to 2000. The percentage growth in foreign-born

population during this period was 274 percent, making it the state with the fastest growing foreign-born population in the nation. The total foreign born population in the state is estimated at about 430,000, the vast majority of those being Hispanic (Capps, Fix, and Passel 2002). In 2000, the state population was 5 percent Hispanic (Table 4). Latino immigrants have come to North Carolina primarily for employment opportunities. The major economic endeavors for Latino immigrants upon arrival are meat and chicken processing, construction, the service sector, and agricultural labor.

Table 4
NORTH CAROLINA POPULATION PERCENT BY RACE: 2000



SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

Research Triangle Park, renowned for its knowledge-based, high-tech economy and prestigious research universities, includes the counties of Wake and Durham in central North Carolina. Latino immigration to Wake and Durham was directly related to and helped fuel the area's 1990s economic boom that drew immigrants from around the nation and the world. In 2000, Latinos accounted for about 8 percent and 6 percent of the total population of Durham and Wake County, respectively.

The Latino economic concentration is especially stark in Durham County, where 67 percent of all construction workers are Hispanic. In more upscale Wake County, Latinos gravitate toward the service industry where they account for 55 percent of all dishwashers in the county (Census EEO Data Tool 2003). In spite of their success in these manual trades, Latinos have yet to penetrate white-collar professions. For example,

only 2 percent of secondary school teachers in Durham County are Hispanic.

Wake County had the eighth highest rate of Latino population growth of any county in the nation from 1990-2000 (Census 2002). The Latino population grew 530 percent from 1990 to 2000, increasing from about 5,400 to 34,000. Durham County's Latino population is about half the size of neighboring Wake County, but it grew even faster—730 percent during the 1990s—making it the fourth fastest growing county in the nation in terms of Latino population. Durham's Latino community had only about 2,000 residents in the 1990 Census, but reached 17,000 by 2000.

Northwest Arkansas

Mexican immigration to Arkansas during the 1990s made it the fourth fastest growing state in foreign-born population for the decade (Capps, Fix, and Passel 2002). Overall, the state remains about 3 percent Hispanic (Table 5). Arkansas contains the smallest percentage of minorities of any of our three study site states, but the concentration of Latinos in certain counties means that these small overall state numbers are intensified at the local level.

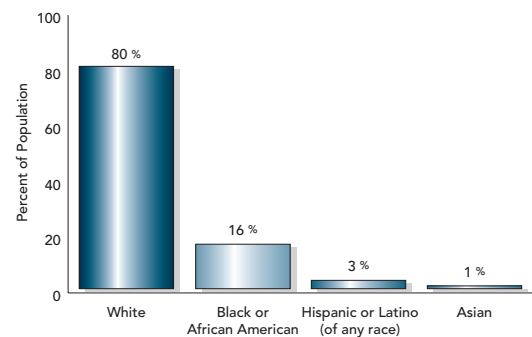
During the mid- and late-1990s a shortage of available workers, especially in the poultry processing industry, drew more than 25,000 Latinos to Benton and Washington counties, increasing their numbers by 881 percent and 747 percent respectively. This influx of Mexican immigrants gave Benton and Washington counties the 1st and 3rd fastest rate of Latino population growth in the nation from 1990-2000 resulting in Benton County's Latino population growing from 1,359 to 13,469 and Washington County's from 1,526 to 12,932. Latinos are now the largest minority population in both counties which previously had little experience with non-white residents.

Latino immigration to Northwest Arkansas differs significantly from North Carolina and Georgia. The region boasts the headquarters of Tyson Foods and Wal-Mart and many Latino immigrants to the Natural State find their way into the meat processing plants and distribution warehouses of these two corporate

giants. Thus, most Latino immigrants have opted for jobs in factories rather than in the construction and service trades. In Benton County, 73 percent of all butchers and meat processing personnel, and 41 percent of all packagers are Hispanic. Although Hispanics are also overrepresented in construction, comprising 17 percent of laborers, they are much less concentrated in this occupation than in our other two case study sites (Census EEO 2000).

Latino respondents who had worked for Tyson said they received fair treatment in the company's poultry processing factories. Although Latino respondents said the work in the poultry plants was difficult and low-paying, no respondent said they were the object of discrimination by coworkers or employers.

Table 5
ARKANSAS POPULATION
PERCENT BY RACE: 2000



SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

Respondents noted that other, smaller poultry processing companies sometimes treated employees poorly. But while Latino and white respondents confirmed that Tyson gave initial assistance to many of the Latino families that filled its processing plants, others said that after the families established themselves, assistance has fallen off. "They brought a lot of the families here," one white ESL coordinator said. "I haven't seen direct, tangible help recently." Wal-Mart has also been involved in funding programs although respondents said that immigrant issues were less of concern than other areas of community investment. "Wal-Mart is very generous with funding, but it is not geared to immigrants," one white university professor in Arkansas said.

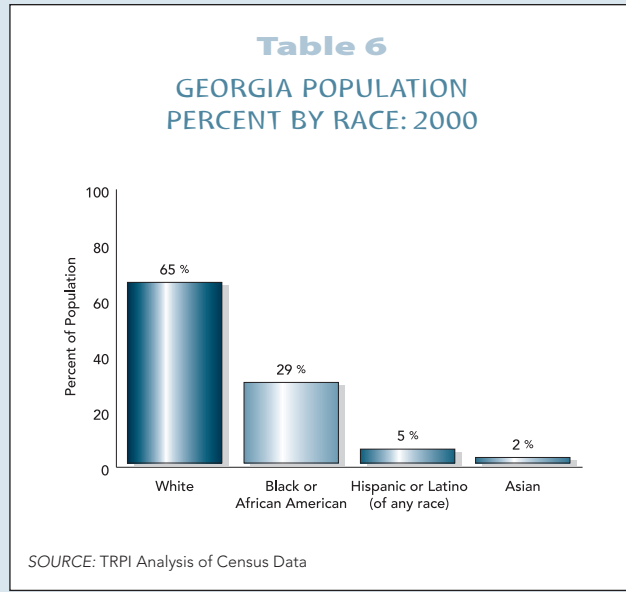
In addition to a different economic landscape, Northwest Arkansas differs markedly from North Carolina and Atlanta in its ethnic homogeneity. Prior to the mid-1990s, Northwest Arkansas was overwhelmingly white with little or no minority population. White respondents described the area as exhibiting more overt racism than in any of the other case study counties. Respondents have cited anti-immigrant rallies by the Ku Klux Klan and local police departments' targeting of immigrant motorists in Northwest Arkansas. In the latter case, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) intervened to stop the racial profiling.

Suburban Atlanta, Georgia

Georgia is the most demographically diverse state in our analysis, due in part to the fact that Atlanta has served as a magnet for immigrants from around the world since the 1970s. It contains the largest numerical Latino population of any state covered in our report. As of 2000, there were 435,000 Latinos in Georgia accounting for 5 percent of the total population (Table 6).

As in our other case study sites, Latino immigrants to the Atlanta area settled in the communities where they were most needed as laborers. They went to Hall County in order to live close to the meat processing plants located in that region and

which now are almost totally dependent on Hispanic labor. By 2000, Hispanics made up 90 percent of meat processing workers in the county. In Gwinnett County, closer to central Atlanta, immigrants found employment in the county's construction industry where they now dominate that trade, comprising 65 percent of construction workers (Census 2000 EEO Data Tool).



Although the overall growth of the Latinos in these communities has been dramatic, their impact on the public school system is even greater. It is here that most of these communities are experiencing the greatest changes.

Latino Educational Achievement in the South

In public policy terms, most of the communities in our case study sites were unprepared for such demographic change. This is especially true in the educational domain. The lack of effective intervention by public educational institutions is manifested differently at each level of bureaucracy. At the state-level, the political imperatives to provide sufficient resources to newcomers who cannot vote and wield relatively little economic power are weak. In states like Georgia, labels such as "undocumented" or "illegal immigrant" are still something of an epithet. On the other hand, in North Carolina, the state leadership has begun to include Latinos in the educational policymaking realm. The North Carolina State Board of Education includes one Hispanic member—of a total of ten—and the state's legislature and governor's office both have Hispanic affairs officials charged with representing Latinos' needs. But even when the state leadership signals its interest in Latino immigrants, resistance at the local level can stifle change.

One white immigrant educator from Georgia explained how immigrant students in her school are advised and tracked academically: "Unconscientiously, I suppose, we first look at socioeconomic level," she said. "We tend to expect more from kids with monied parents, just as we tend to not expect as much from lower SES [socioeconomic status] kids."

RESEARCH LITERATURE ON LATINO EDUCATION IN EMERGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The literature on Latino education in emerging communities supports our findings in the field. While scholars' findings point to a somewhat positive overall environment for Latinos in the South (with significant exceptions), Latino public education in emerging immigrant communities has been quite troubled (Dale, Andretta and Freeman 2001; Wortham, Murillo and Hamann, 2002). Although school systems have recovered somewhat from the initial immigration

shock of the mid-1990s, Hispanic achievement scores and dropout rates are alarming (see Table 7 on page 13) and educators and administrators continue to struggle to integrate Latino immigrants successfully into Southern educational institutions.

While communities generally acknowledge the economic value of Latino immigration, there has not been an appropriate allocation of resources and commitment to immigrant education. Respondents said that Mexican immigrants are thought of almost exclusively as manual laborers. As one Latino governmental official in North Carolina said, "Some people think they [Latino immigrants] are good for one thing, that they are temporary and when they do not need their labor any more, they will go back."

Prior ethnographic research has thoroughly documented the poor facilities, inadequate training, stereotyping, and neglect that are all endemic in immigrant education in the South (Wortham, Murillo and Hamann 2002). Scholars have ascribed these shortcomings to a lack of Latino political power in new communities (Hamann, Wortham and Murillo 2002), reactionary attitudes toward educational multiculturalism, or both (Beck and Allexshat-Snider 2002).

Educators in Southern school districts are not prepared to address the changes in their student population. Very few immigrant educators speak Spanish and many are not adequately trained in

English as a Second Language (ESL) methodology. There are a growing number of immigrant students in Southern classrooms who cannot understand the bulk of what they are being taught. From teachers' assistants to superintendents, the lack of cohesive, comprehensive plans to integrate im-

From teachers' assistants to superintendents, the lack of cohesive, comprehensive plans to integrate immigrant students into educational institutions is widespread.

migrant students into educational institutions is widespread. While some teachers and principals have been innovative in adapting their curriculum and methods to their burgeoning immigrant student populations, educational institutions as a whole have not responded effectively.

Given Latino immigrants' and the children of immigrants' alienation from school, the financial barriers to college, and the lure of immediate income from manual labor jobs, many are opting for low-skill professions with little hope of career advancement and further education. This pattern is supported by the regional economy: the huge corporations and small employers throughout the South whose profits derive from immigrant labor have generally not sustained a significant commitment toward the educational advancement of their workers' sons and daughters (Hamann, Wortham and Murillo 2002).

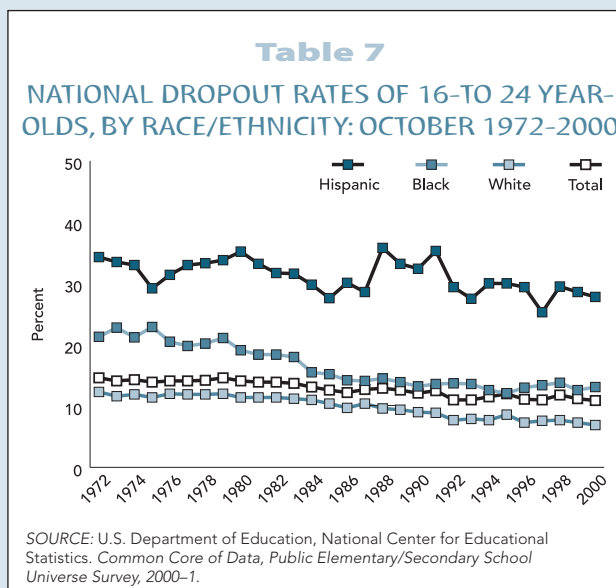
But if the crisis in Latino education in the South is widely recognized by scholars and educators alike, what is being done about it? There is significant research on immigrant integration (Grey 2001; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik and Queen 1998; Walqui 2000), but typically it does not focus on education (Grey 2001) nor does it take into account the particular social, political, and economic circumstances of new immigrant communities (Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik and Queen 1998; Olson, et. al. 1999; Spaulding, Carolino and

Amen 2004; Walqui 2000). Although some Southern educators and administrators are open to new ideas and strategies on how to educate Latino immigrants, there has been no major research on innovative immigrant educational strategies in the region.

NATIONAL LATINO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Nationally, Latino education achievement indicators are not positive. Dropout rates are high and educational attainment low. Latinos' educational achievement overall remains far below average (Tornatzky, Pachon and Torres 2003) and does not bode well for Latinos in emerging immigrant communities.

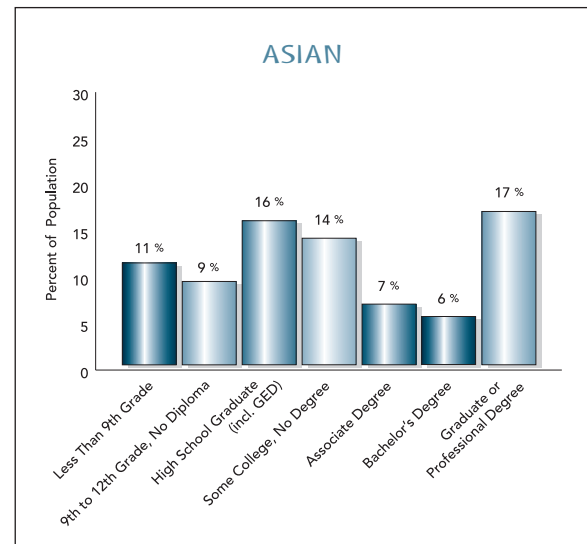
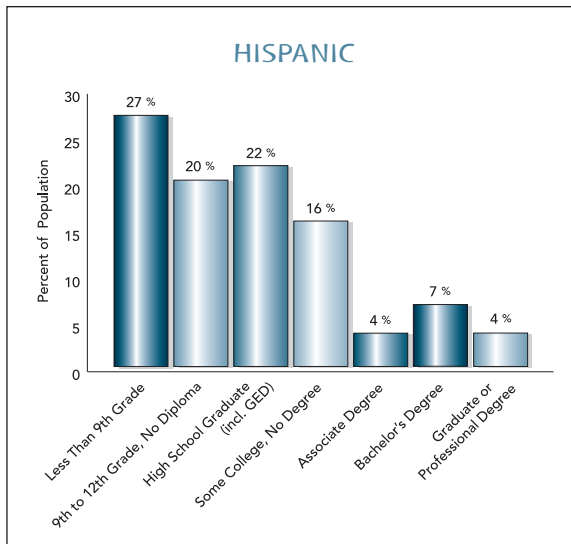
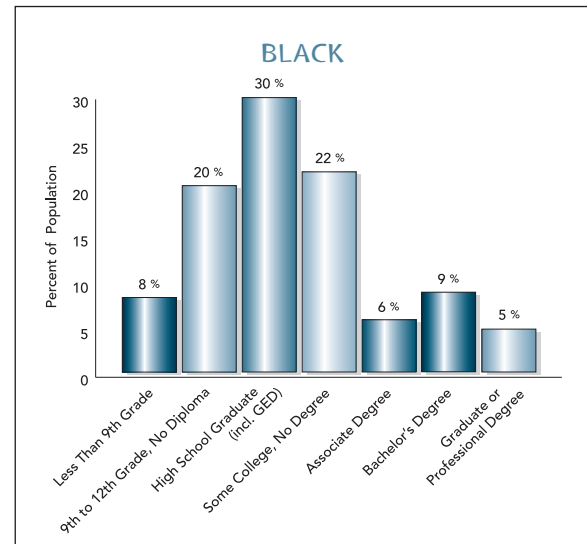
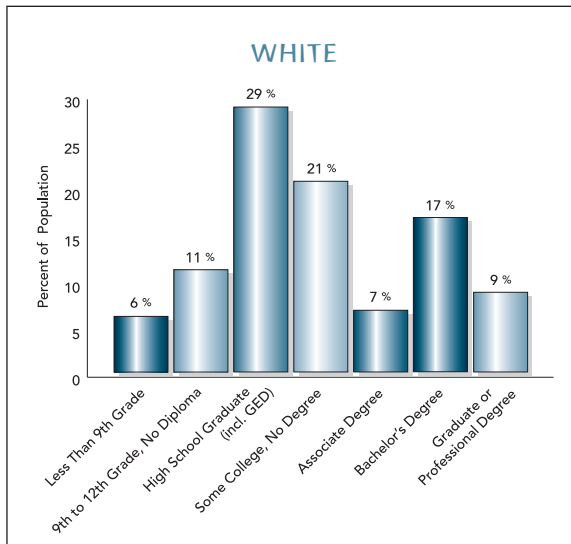
Latinos have the highest dropout rate—by far—of any ethnic group (Table 7). Nationally, the Latino dropout rate for 16-24 year-olds has remained around 30 percent throughout the 1990s, while the overall dropout rate has been about 10-15 percent. Latinos also tend to have the lowest level of educational attainment of any ethnic group (Table 8).



Since emerging immigrant states are at the beginning stages of Latino immigrant growth, they have the opportunity to avoid this national trend. By most measures though, Latino immigrant educational outcomes in emerging communities

Table 8

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER BY RACE



SOURCE: TRPI Analysis of Census Data

is comparable to or below national averages. According to interviews with teachers, principals, and policymakers, there has been a lack of educational comprehension of and commitment to immigrant families at every level—from the classroom to the superintendent's office. "It is a novelty in Georgia to have a program tailored to students that do not speak English," one Latino social service agency official from Georgia said.

LATINO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT IN PROJECT CASE STUDY SITES

Research Triangle Park, North Carolina

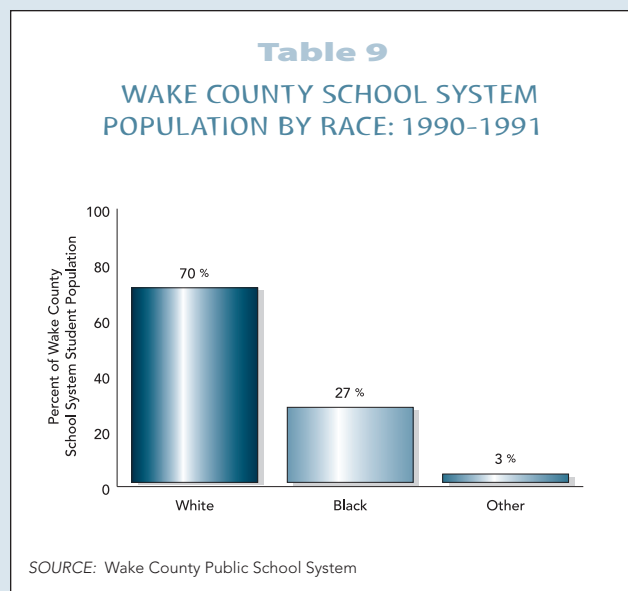
North Carolina's public schools have been heavily impacted by this rapid immigration, with Hispanics now comprising 7 percent of all students in the state's public schools for the 2003-2004 school

year. The percentage of Hispanic students varies from county to county and some school systems have been much more impacted than others (North Carolina State Board of Education 2003).

Some researchers cite a 38 percent graduation rate for North Carolina's Latino students (Greene 2001). Others paint a less bleak picture, citing an 8 percent Latino dropout rate compared to 3 percent for whites and 5 percent for African Americans (Glennie 2002). But in every case, Hispanic high school dropout rates in North Carolina are the largest of any ethnic group in the state apart from North Carolina's small Native American population (NC DPI 2002). Our interviews with respondents inside and outside the state's public education system indicate that many Latino immigrant students do not find a home in the state's K-12 public schools and end up earning their high school equivalency diploma through adult education programs offered at community colleges or through alternative programs within the school districts.

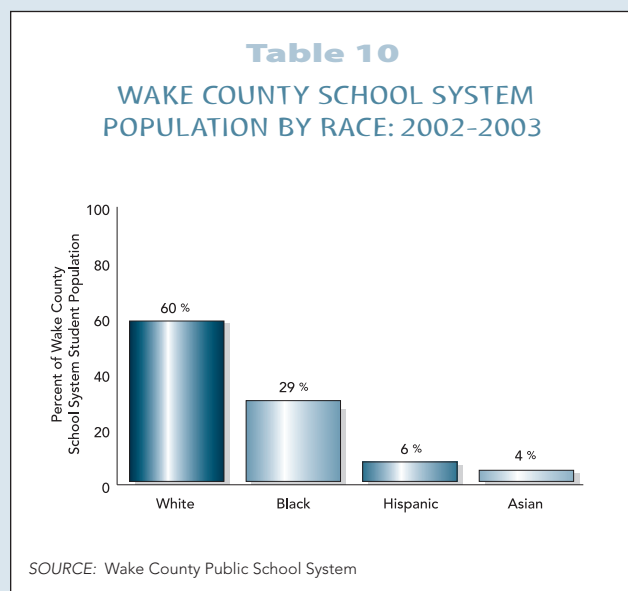
Demographic changes in the Wake and Durham public school systems mirrors that of the county as a whole. The Wake County Public Schools System, with over 104,000 students in 2003, is the second largest school district in North Carolina and the 27th largest school district in the nation (Wake County Public School System, 2003). Latino immigration is a large part of this student population growth. From 1991 to 2000, the system experienced a 597 percent increase in Hispanic students—the fastest growing ethnic group in the school system. Before the 1990s, the population of Latinos in the Wake County Public School System was negligible (Table 9). By 2003, Latinos accounted for about 6 percent of Wake County Public School System's student population (Table 10).

Durham Public Schools, while much smaller overall than the Wake County Public School System, is much more diverse with a student body comprised of 56 percent African American, 29 percent white, 9 percent Hispanic, 3 percent multiracial and 2 percent Asian American students out of a total enrollment of about 31,000. While almost all of the case study communities in this project have been ill-prepared to deal with their burgeoning immigrant



student populations, the Durham Public School system is also hampered by an unresolved history of racial conflict and animosity between African Americans and whites. "There have been deep racial divisions over the past decade...and that means that a lot of [immigrant student] issues that need to be addressed are not," said one white Durham Public School administrator.

Most Latino students in these districts tend to matriculate during the primary school years. Respondents said that Hispanic students view school as a "temporary experience" which hinders their integration into the school system and community.



"Most Hispanic students also do not consider North Carolina as their home," one white, Wake County Public School System official said. "Almost all of them say they expect to return to Mexico, although very few do so. Likewise, locals don't see many Latino kids as the future of the state because they believe they will leave. This view is shared by government institutions that do not see the need to invest in communities that they see as transitory." Another white Wake County Public School System official said, "The Wake and Durham county Latino communities only began to establish themselves in the 1980s. So it is a young community without many established leaders."

The lack of success in dealing with Latino immigrant student issues is evident in both school districts' Hispanic achievement scores, which tend to be among the lowest of any ethnic group. According to Durham Public School's own statistics for 2003-2004, 64 percent of Latinos in grades 3-8 read at or above grade level (Durham Public Schools, 2004). This is an improvement over the past seven years, but Latinos' scores in this area remain the lowest of any ethnic group in the system. Whites in grades 3-8 read at or above grade level at a 94 percent rate. About three-fourths of African Americans in the same cohort read at or above grade level.

Durham Public Schools is aware of an achievement gap between white students on the one hand, and African American and Hispanic students on the other. School Superintendent Ann Denlinger appointed a "Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force" in 2002 as a permanent standing committee to work toward raising achievement levels for all students. The task force's first annual report claims achievement scores among minorities have increased markedly over 1997 scores. Durham Public Schools has also implemented an "ESL Plan for Service Delivery" aimed to meet the needs of the more than 2,000 English language learner (ELL) students in the district. Although the initiative has resulted in innovative programs such as a newcomers center, respondents said that in general, programs to meet the needs of immigrant students are largely organized on an ad hoc basis.

Lagging Latino academic achievement in both districts is due in part to the lack of educational resources directed toward this area. The Wake County Public School System has 143 ESL teachers to teach 5,155 English language learners, or about one ESL teacher per 36 ELL students. In Durham, there is less capacity for ESL instruction. There are about 50 full- and part-time ESL teachers in Durham Public Schools serving about 2,250 English language learner students, or about one ESL teacher per 45 ELL students.

In contrast, there are 21,892 teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District with certification in cross-cultural language acquisition and development (CLAD) or bilingual cross-cultural language acquisition and development (BCLAD). This army of teachers serves 326,823 ELL students, resulting in about one certified teacher per 15 ELL students.⁴ In public schools in Dade County, Florida, ESL training is required of all teachers educating English language learners. It is apparent that in the school systems serving emerging immigrant communities, English language acquisition resources and training are insufficient for the growing student population when compared to school systems that have been dealing with ELL students for decades.

Generally, high dropout rates and low achievement scores characterize Latino academic achievement in our Wake and Durham county case study sites.

"Most Hispanic students...say they expect to return to Mexico, although very few do so. Likewise, locals don't see many Latino kids as the future of the state because they believe they will leave. This view is shared by government institutions that do not see the need to invest in communities that they see as transitory."

– Wake County school system official

⁴ Phone conversation with Oscar Lafarga, Coordinator, Language Acquisition Branch, Los Angeles Unified School District, April 5, 2004.

Officials in both districts have yet to produce a well-funded, comprehensive, district-level plan to deal with the educational crisis facing Latinos in each school system. However, a nascent network of nonprofit organizations, appointed governmental officials, and educators has started organizing in order to confront the Hispanic education crisis in the state. Especially noteworthy is the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals which organizes an annual statewide Hispanic educational summit. Individual educators and administrators have also been innovative in designing programs and practices to meet Latinos' particular educational needs.

While North Carolina Latinos have already begun the process of organizing for quality immigrant education, Latinos in our next surveyed study site, Northwest Arkansas, are less organized than their counterparts in Research Triangle Park.

Northwest Arkansas

Hispanics now account for about 5 percent of the state's 449,000 public school students. Teacher training and ESL capacity is a particular problem in Arkansas, more pressing than in North Carolina or Georgia. The state has a tradition of English-only instruction that legally limits the type of programs ESL educators can put in place.

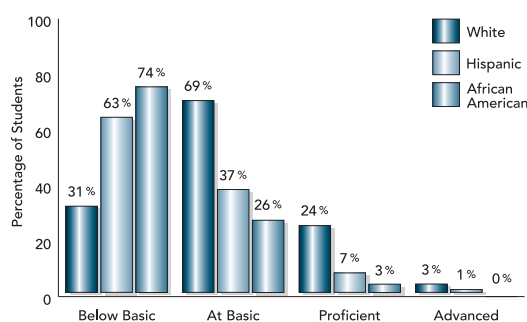
As of 2003, there were 21,660 language minority students in the state, with 13,778 of these not proficient in English. Furthermore, there has been a 154 percent increase in ELL students in the state since 1997. The vast majority (87 percent) of these students speak Spanish at home. State funding for these students is set at about \$4 million per year, with the per pupil level of funding falling as more ELL students enter Arkansas' classrooms. Arkansas also receives about \$1.2 million in federal Title III funds for these students (Guerrero 2003).

Unlike our other case study states, Hispanic immigrants in Arkansas have dropout rates similar to the state average. For the 2002-2003 school years

in Arkansas, Hispanics' dropout rate was 6 percent compared to whites who also had a 6 percent dropout rate.⁵

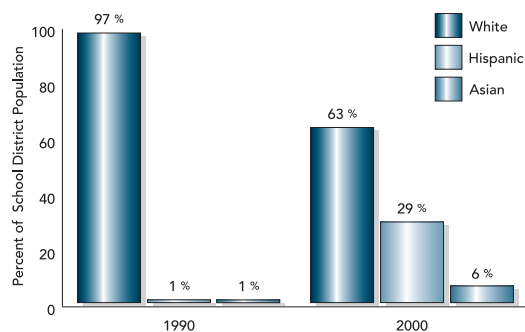
Latino academic achievement scores, while typically higher than those for African Americans, are well below the state average and those of whites. Almost 2 out of 3 Hispanic eighth-graders in Arkansas have "below basic" scores in mathematics for the 2002-2003 school year (Table 11). The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) defines

Table 11
MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT SCORES FOR 8TH GRADERS IN ARKANSAS BY ETHNICITY



SOURCE: Arkansas Department of Education

Table 12
SRPINGDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL POPULATION BY RACE: 1990 & 2000



SOURCE: Springdale Public Schools

⁵ This data was obtained from Arkansas Department of Education official Barbara Bankhead on April 8, 2004. The statistics were determined using the number of dropouts from grades 7-12 for each ethnic group divided by the total number of students from that ethnic group enrolled in Arkansas schools for that year. The following are the number of dropouts for each ethnic group for the 2002-2003 school year: Asian American—316, African American—5,367, Hispanic—1,319, and white—19,811.

basic achievement scores as "partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade." Only 8 percent of Hispanic eighth-graders scored at the "proficient" or "advanced" level in mathematics. Although generally higher than African American educational achievement scores, they do not compare well with the state average or with those of whites.



hampers the learning process in general and language acquisition in particular.

Respondents said that often students drop out because of familial economic pressure, or they don't graduate because they haven't had enough time to master English. Many students are expected to work while in school. This leads to lower grades and more dropouts, respondents

Demographic changes in Northwest Arkansas can probably best be viewed in its school districts which have been transformed over the past decade. Springdale Public Schools in Washington County has been transformed from a 97 percent white and 1 percent Hispanic student population in 1990 to being 63 percent white, 29 percent Hispanic, and 6 percent Asian in 2003 (Table 12). Almost one-third of the 13,700 students in the district are now English language learners, the highest number in the state (Springdale School District 2003).

The district continues to struggle to educate its Hispanic immigrant population. This group tends to be the lowest academic achiever in the district, scoring well below average on a number of measures (Springdale School District 2003). For the district's "end of course" literacy test in spring 2003, 22 percent of Hispanic eleventh-graders scored at a proficient or advanced level. The scores of white students were much higher, with 71 percent earning a proficient or advanced score. In general, across grade-level and subject matter, Hispanics are the lowest academic achievers in the district.

Respondents said many of the Latino families that settle in the Springdale area lack English language skills. "Eighty percent of parents do not speak the language," one white teacher said. "Their level of comfort with the school system is very low." Transience among immigrant families and students is also a problem according to respondents. Teachers and administrators said ESL students are likely to have higher mobility rates than non-immigrants. This

said. As with our other case study sites, some of the short-comings are due to a lack of native-language and ESL trained staff. The number of Hispanic and native-language staff in Springdale Public Schools has not kept up with student growth. About 5 percent of all staff is Hispanic and the vast majority of those are instructional assistants. There are five Hispanic ESL teachers and no principals (Springdale School District 2002).

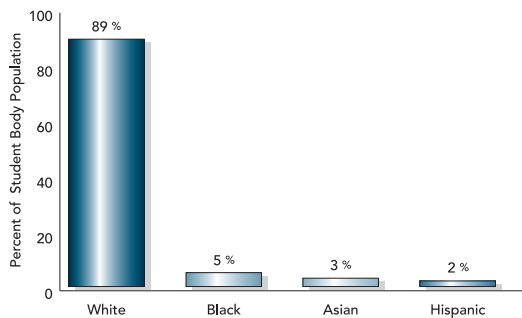
As in our other study sites, Hispanics have experienced difficulty making their way to local universities. While they now make up almost one-third of the K-12 student population in the public school system, the University of Arkansas in nearby Fayetteville has a 1 percent Latino student population (Newman and O'Leary-Kelly 2003). Hispanics have had more success with local community colleges, also in line with our other study sites.

Suburban Atlanta, Georgia

Georgia has the largest public school system among our study's three states with 1,496,012 students enrolled for the 2002-2003 school year and, like the other case study states, Georgia has declared English as its official language. The department of education's English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program has declared "English: The Language that Unifies U.S." as the department's slogan.

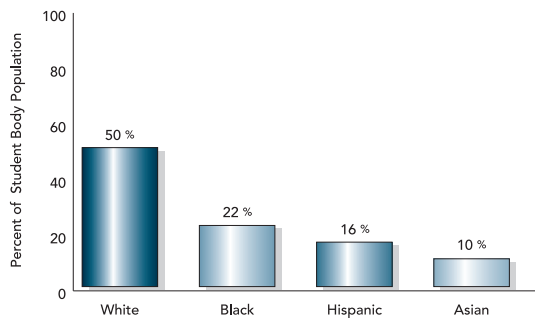
According to the Georgia Department of Education, 6 percent of Georgia's students are Hispanic and statistics on Hispanic academic achievement are not

Table 13
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL
POPULATION BY RACE: 1990



SOURCE: Gwinnett County Public Schools
 NOTE: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Table 14
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL
POPULATION BY RACE: 2004



SOURCE: Gwinnett County Public Schools
 NOTE: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

promising. The Hispanic graduation rate is 49 percent compared with a 63 percent average for the state overall and Hispanics have the lowest graduation rate of any of the state's ethnic groups. In fact, Hispanic achievement scores in almost every category and measure are the lowest of any ethnic group (Georgia Governor's Office of Student Achievement 2003).

In Hall County, Latinos are the only major immigrant group in the public schools; nevertheless, the Latino influx alone has transformed the student population. In the small Gainesville City School District, Latinos accounted for 47 percent of all students in 2004, an increase from 19 percent in 1994.

Tension between African Americans and Latinos is an enduring feature of this school district. Respondents indicated that some African American administrators believe that Latino students have received preferential treatment compared to African Americans. "There is a very established African American community here and they fought hard to be part of the city schools," one white school administrator said. "They see immigrants coming in and getting what they think are special classes." Latino and white respondents said that recent changes in the school district leadership have resulted in resources being diverted from immigrant education issues toward African Americans.

Closer to Atlanta, Gwinnett County has become more diverse than neighboring Hall County over the past decade. In addition to Latinos, Gwinnett has a larger African American and Asian American community and counts dozens of languages present in its schools. In 1990, whites accounted for 89 percent of all students in Gwinnett County schools (Table 13). In 2004, Asian American students account for 10 percent of all students in the district, Hispanics account for 16 percent of all students, African Americans account for 22 percent of all students and whites account for half (Table 14).

Given its more cosmopolitan social environment, one would expect schools in the Atlanta area to be the most prepared of our three case study sites to accept and integrate immigrants into the educational mainstream. Nevertheless, in Gwinnett County Schools, Hispanics are the least academically prepared of any ethnic group. In 2003, 42 percent of Hispanics "did not meet" eighth-grade English standards measured in competency tests administered by the state. These are the lowest scores of any ethnic group. Only 15 percent of Asian Americans and 9 percent of whites did not pass this test. Likewise, only 73 percent of Hispanics passed the 2003 state high school writing test. This is, again, the lowest score by far, with a 94 percent pass-rate for students overall. Hispanic academic achievement in Gwinnett schools is greatest during kindergarten and the younger grades and decreases as Latinos make their way through the public school system.

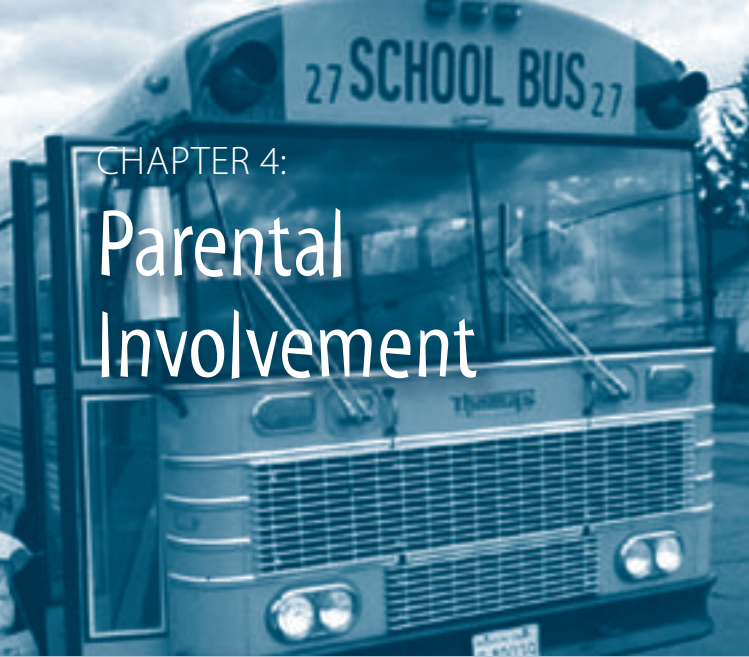
As was common with Latino immigrant students in our other case study sites, immigrant families

were constantly on the move looking for jobs and affordable housing. Respondents said this makes it difficult to establish long-term programs for immigrant families. "People move too much," one Latina school counselor said. "I started English classes for mothers with 15-20 people and ended with one."

The transition from their home country to the United States can also be traumatic for immigrant students, respondents said. "Some have no structured school routine and others have low self-esteem," one white ESL coordinator said. "There is a big focus on family and work so after school that is what they are focused on." A Latina assistant principal added, "Sometimes it is just priorities: food and shelter. They believe they will have to put that before their children's education."

In spite of the ethnic diversity of Gwinnett's student body, teachers remain overwhelmingly white (85 percent). Only 3 percent of teachers are Hispanic, a fact that can affect teachers' effectiveness with Latino immigrant students when they do not know about the students' home culture and do not share the same socioeconomic and primary language background as immigrant students (Walker-Moffat 1995).

It is important for observers to comprehend the socioeconomic and educational context of these new immigrant communities before delving deeper into the educational barriers and innovative strategies to better incorporate immigrant students. Now that we have presented an outline of the socioeconomic and educational environment for immigrants in each of our emerging community case study sites, we will continue by analyzing the major barriers to immigrant educational success.



CHAPTER 4:

Parental Involvement

Research indicates that significant academic achievement can be realized when parents or family members are involved in students' education (August and Hakuta 1997; Bermudez and Marquez 1996; Quezada, Diaz, and Sanchez 2003). As August and Hakuta state: "schools with comprehensive home involvement programs encompassing various types of home-school connections probably help families and children in a number of important ways." Educators from all three case study sites echoed this conclusion, adding that engaging immigrant parents is one of the most important challenges in emerging immigrant

[E]ngaging immigrant parents is one of the most important challenges in emerging immigrant communities.

communities. But even those educators that realize that engaging immigrant parents is important are unsure of how to do it. Although engaging parents from any cohort of students may be difficult, immigrant parents present a particular set of challenges to educators.

In our case study sites, outreach to immigrant parents is typically conducted on an ad hoc basis from school to school, if it is conducted

at all. "Well-established schools do a good job of outreach, but some are just groping for ways to cope with the influx of limited English proficient students," one white school district official from North Carolina said. Respondents from all study sites noted that schools with significant numbers of

Latino students lack printed material in their native languages that would give immigrant parents more access to and understanding of schools. Many school staff lack plans on how to involve immigrant parents. "Principals do not know what to do," one white principal from Georgia said, "or how to communicate with parents."

Immigrants' educational and socioeconomic background and their lack of experience with the United States' school system compounds the shortcomings of school districts' outreach strategies. Immigrant parents and school districts don't really know how to engage each other. Teachers and principals emphasized the difference of the educational system in Mexico where parents often defer to teachers and administrators as "experts". Teachers said many Latino immigrant parents come to the U.S. school system with "a very hands-off attitude" due to their experiences in Mexico and their own lack of education and self-confidence.

The chilly reception often received by immigrant parents in the schools exacerbates parents' timidity. "They don't feel related to the school. If they do not see familiar faces or feel welcome they are not going to come," one white principal from Arkansas said. Respondents expressed serious doubts about school districts' ability and willingness to reach out to immigrant parents. "Schools are so bureaucratic that it allows little impact from outside and many schools are not prepared for immigrant participation," one Latino administrator from North Carolina said, adding, "Parents are often not welcomed into schools; there are no resources to help them." Another Latino respondent said, "There are very few schools that the Latino community feels are welcoming and fair to its students."

In our study sites, much of what works in terms of getting immigrant parents involved is done independently from school to school and depends greatly on the personality of the principal at each school site. Some schools have a wide array of activities and outreach to immigrant parents while

Respondents said the lack of successful parent outreach was more a case of the schools “not knowing what to do” rather than “not wanting to do anything.” Bureaucratic inertia and school personnel’s inability to make necessary changes account for the bulk of problems.

others seem to operate in a perpetual “crisis management” mode, as one white school district official said.

Respondents said the lack of successful parent outreach is more a case of the schools “not knowing what to do” rather than “not wanting to do anything.” Bureaucratic inertia and school personnel’s inability to make necessary changes account for the bulk of problems. “What schools put in place is what they have always done and they are surprised when the Latino parents don’t show up, but they don’t have a clue how to attract them,” one Latino administrator from North Carolina said. In other cases, teachers fail immigrant students because of stubbornness and unwillingness to change. “Teachers are very defensive that they

are doing everything accurately, but they do not check to see that everything they are saying is being

understood,” one Latino state-level official from North Carolina said. This often leads immigrant parents to feel they can’t trust or count on the school staff involved in the education of their children.

Getting immigrant parents involved in schools is not easy. Given the lack of preparation of parents and schools for a partnership, solutions to this problem take commitment and perseverance. “It takes twice the effort on the part of schools to get immigrant parents involved,” one white teacher in North Carolina said. Most Latino immigrant families have long work schedules that cut down on the amount of time and energy immigrant parents are able to devote to activities in their children’s schools. Many emerging Latino communities also lack extensive public transportation systems, putting immigrant parents without cars at a further disadvantage.

Although typically there is a lack of a coherent strategy on how to engage immigrant parents, some school districts in emerging communities have taken steps to reach out to parents. Principals equipped to provide an optimal learning environment for immigrant students have many Spanish speakers on staff and teachers make house-calls with immigrant parents regularly, not only when there is a problem. Educators have employed a variety of practices, policies, and programs that have succeeded in engaging immigrant parents in their child’s education. Below we outline ten innovative strategies that have made a difference in terms of immigrant parent engagement with their children’s education.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING IMMIGRANT PARENTS

■ Schedule Flexibility

One ESL teacher from North Carolina said that “getting parents into the schools right away” is essential in building a long-term relationship with them. In order to do so, it is essential to provide an environment that is not only welcoming and comfortable, but one that is flexible. Given Latino immigrants’ long and varied work schedules, parents often need scheduling options for school meetings. One elementary school principal in Gwinnett County, Georgia, has increased parent participation in school events by offering a variety of time slots for parent-teacher meetings, providing interpreters at all meetings, and offering food and babysitting for parents at school gatherings such as open house events.

■ Communicating with Parents in Spanish

An ESL teacher trainer from the Research Triangle Park area attributes continuous contact with parents and providing programs and materials in Spanish as the key to engaging Latino immigrant parents. That includes providing translators for immigrant parents when they register their child for school and continues with offering bilingual “office hours” for immigrant parents every school morning in a “coffee shop” environment in the classroom. This gives parents, “a place to speak Spanish and understand the rules.” She also provides the parents of ESL students a separate orientation at the beginning of the school year in Spanish and holds bilingual PTA meetings throughout the school year. She has also created a handbook and video in Spanish for the parents of newcomers to help familiarize them with the school system.

■ Language Acquisition and Family Literacy Classes

Community colleges have proved to be the most successful venue for immigrant adults to learn English. In emerging immigrant communities, ESL classes are consistently filled with immigrant parents. In Washington County, Arkansas, community colleges in emerging communities have been successful in filling their classes by creating partnerships with churches, school districts, and industry. One program at the Northwest Technical Institute offers ESL classes at eight different locations throughout the community, in sites that are familiar and trusted by the Latino community, especially in churches. Classes are offered at a time determined by the needs of the students whom are interested in attending them and they can take place anytime from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Some courses are offered at company work sites and employees are given financial incentives to attend them.

In the Springdale Public Schools, in Northwest Arkansas, the parent center includes a lending library with materials in Spanish and outreach to immigrant parents on how to teach literacy to their children. More than half of the participants in this program are Latino and total enrollment includes 80 children and 75 adults. Some libraries also provide CD and tape players for students to take home to their families to listen to and practice with.

In Hall County, Georgia family literacy programs have been important in assisting immigrants and their children to learn English. The META (Mejorate Estudia Trabaja Alcanza Tu Sueno) program, funded by the Goizueta Foundation, involves participants whose children need literacy assistance most. Like most successful programs, this one involves the formal participation of parents with their children in schools. Parents spend three hours per week in their children’s school. They spend one half-hour with their child in class, one half hour in a parenting class and two hours taking English classes. Parents are learning English, becoming comfortable and familiar with the school, and learning parenting skills while at the same program. At times, social workers, school, or community representatives observe the adults when the work with the children to observe and advise. There is often bilingual staff on hand for these programs.

Providing reading material in Spanish at school libraries is also helpful for language minority students in emerging immigrant community school districts. In Rogers Public Schools in Northwest Arkansas, immigrant students and parents are offered a “bilingual story time” and schools teach stories with immigrant characters to all students. “We try not to single them out,” one ESL coordinator said of immigrant students. Nevertheless, the immigrant stories are relevant to newcomers’ lives and deal with themes such as the difficulty of adapting to a new culture and country.

■ Acclimating Parents to School Culture

Teachers and administrators said that adult ESL classes for parents have deepened their impact when combined with instruction about their children’s school system and classroom. One example from North Carolina is called Project HELP. All students in the program are parents. Participants meet at elementary schools for classes with a curriculum aimed at helping parents navigate the educational system. The

classes include topics such as how to enroll their children in school, how to communicate with teachers, information on the immunizations needed to enroll register for school, the meaning of grades, how to make an appointment with school officials, and how to conduct oneself in parent-teacher meetings. Most classes are organized upon request from an elementary school that has a large group of parents with this need.

Encouraging a proactive approach by ESL teachers is crucial to increasing immigrant parents' involvement with their children's education. One ESL teacher provides a weekly bilingual newsletter that contains information on such topics as parenting skills, helping children with homework, and explaining ways in which immigrant parents can participate with schools and the school district. More specifically, the newsletter gives instruction on how to use games to facilitate learning, how to motivate children for school, and how to create a structured time and space for homework. The newsletter is used to "educate parents" and to prove to them that even if they do not speak English, they can be engaged with their child's education in the United States. The newsletter "lets parents know that they can do a little, and if they do, children can get a lot out of it," the teacher said.

One elementary-level ESL teacher in Durham County, North Carolina increased Hispanic parent participation in the PTA meetings to a greater level than with non-immigrant families. This teacher held regular monthly meetings with Hispanic parents that drew 50-100 people per session. The meetings involved classes for parents on topics such as how they can help their kids achieve academically, legal issues, accessing health clinics, libraries, and other social services. He would also invite guest speakers from many of the service sectors to explain how to access them. "The most important thing is to make this a comfortable place for parents to be," he said. He also makes regular home visits to immigrant family homes, day or night, when there is a problem to be addressed.

Other social events for parents of immigrant children include bilingual potlucks and a parent training night where ESL teachers instruct immigrant parents on how to help their children with homework and facilitate their learning in the United States.

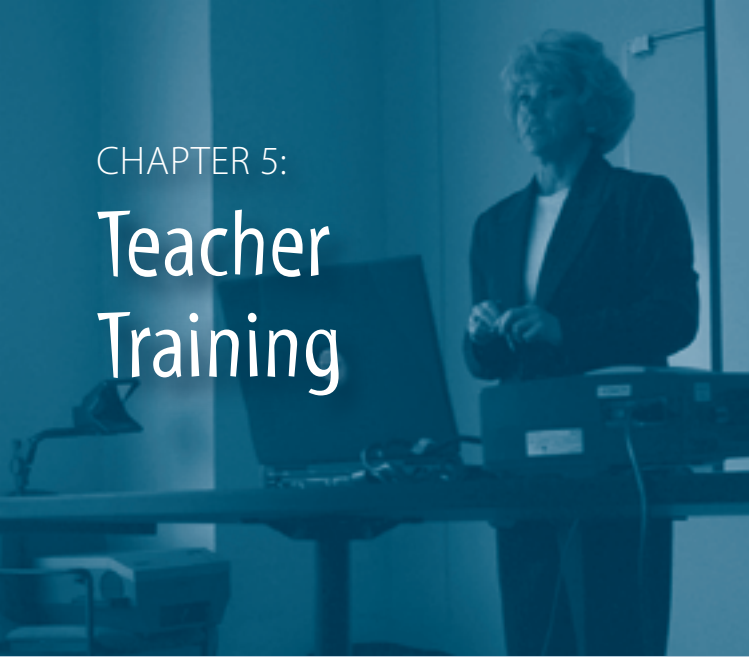
■ Partnerships with Community Organizations and Parent Liaisons

When teachers are not able to reach out to immigrant parents, parent/community liaisons are a good tool to use to fill the gap between parents and the school system. In the Springdale School District, located in Northwest Arkansas, the parent liaison plays a multifaceted role facilitating relations between schools, students, and families. He is a sort of "jack of all trades" teaching parents about the "chain-of-command" in school, assisting counselors in interpreting immigrant students' home country school transcripts, helping children get driver's licenses and enroll in school, and dealing with parents on discipline matters. He also helps ease misconceptions among staff regarding Latino parents and why they do certain things and not others. This liaison is fluent in the language of the immigrant population and intimately familiar with the culture of the immigrant community. He is very proactive, "if parents do not come to you, then you go to them," he says.

In Durham County, North Carolina the school district has established a partnership with a local Latino community organization — El Centro Hispano. Because this is an organization known and trusted by local immigrant families, the district has a much easier time registering their children than they would if it was done with district bureaucrats at the central office. The registration center at El Centro Hispano is staffed by Spanish-language personnel that understand the needs of immigrant families and are sensitive to newcomers' lack of knowledge of the United States public education system. This center is responsible for enrolling newcomers in school, conducting diagnostic testing, and determining which classes students should be placed in. The center serves as an information clearinghouse on school norms for immigrant parents. Parents receive information on school enrollment, busing, lunches, homework, grades, and other information needed to begin their children's education in the United States.

CHAPTER 5:

Teacher Training



One of the fundamental problems facing students in emerging immigrant communities is the paucity of educational personnel trained in ESL methodology, bilingual education, or Spanish. Although there is much scholarly debate on how to teach immigrant and English language learners, federal law dictates that if students cannot meaningfully and equitably participate in the English-only school environment because of limited English, they are eligible for special services (August and Hakuta 1997). The type of services offered should depend on the grade level, English language acquisition level of the students, and other factors decided by a teacher, school, and community. Research shows that academic

achievement for English language learners in "math and English language arts is facilitated by different approaches, depending on student background" (August and Hakuta 1997). Thus, effective programs for immigrant students vary greatly depending on local circumstances.

In some cases, ELL students are offered classes with significant instruction in their primary language (bilingual education), in others, the curriculum is delivered by teachers trained in

techniques on how to teach in English to a non-English-speaking class—usually described as English as a Second Language and its variants (Gilroy 2001). Although there is no academic general consensus on the best methodology for English language learners, some research indicates that Hispanic kindergarten and first grade students that received instruction in Spanish had higher reading comprehension scores than students who received academic instruction in English (August and Hakuta 1997). Thus, some use of the child's primary language in the classroom is generally thought to be beneficial to immigrant students who are English language learners.

Although the recommendation of a particular methodology for immigrant students is beyond the scope of this report, we offer some innovative strategies that should be transferable to similar school settings regardless of the details of its instructional model. Many of our innovative strategies incorporate characteristics identified by the 1997 National Academy of Sciences report on English language learners (August and Hakuta 1997). In that survey of research and programs for language minority students, the following attributes were found to create effective schools and classrooms: "a supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, ...some use of native language and culture in the instruction of language minority students, a balanced curriculum that incorporates both basic and higher-order skills, ...opportunities for student-directed activities, use of instructional strategies that enhance understanding, ...systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement" (August and Hakuta 1997).

One ESL coordinator in North Carolina said the school system is "just now beginning to focus on this [immigrant education] issue" years after the school system's awareness of the increasing immigrant population. This is not uncommon for school districts in new immigrant communities. Respondents inside and outside the school system

Respondents inside and outside the school system agreed that the lack of ESL and bilingual-trained teachers was a major barrier to immigrant educational success.

agree that the lack of ESL and bilingual trained teachers is a major barrier to immigrant educational success. "Coming into a new environment and not having someone speak their language is quite intimidating," one principal said.

The shortage of teachers trained to work with English language learners and immigrant students is a nationwide problem. According to a 1994 report by the General Accounting Office, 175,000 additional bilingual teachers were needed to adequately teach English language learners. In the decade since that report was issued, the amount of immigrant students in America's public schools has increased dramatically. As August and Hakuta state in their 1997 report, "there are large and increasing numbers of English language learners and few teachers specially trained to work with them."

We found this problem to be particularly pressing in Northwest Arkansas. "There is not enough bilingual staff in the attendance office, in the main office or in the counseling office," one Latino high school official in Arkansas said. "There is a lack of faculty when it comes to having that [bilingual] knowledge base." The shortage of bilingual and ESL-trained personnel results in some Latino students being bused to schools far from their homes because the schools closest to them are not staffed with adequately trained teachers.

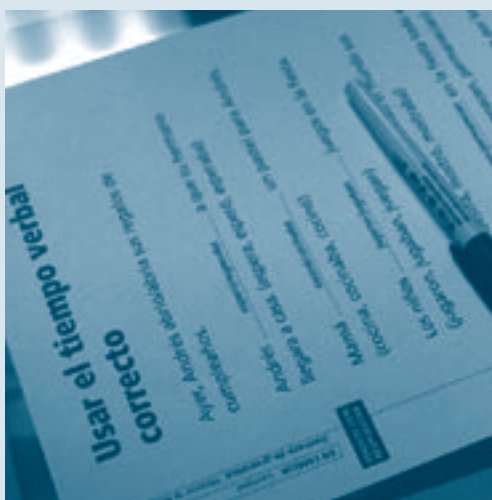
The teacher training shortfall is exacerbated by the inability or reluctance of some experienced teachers to adapt their methods and curriculum to their new student populations. "Award-winning teachers can have trouble teaching ESL, they need support," one white respondent in Arkansas said. These problems, combined with the lack of experience recruiting appropriate ESL teachers, makes increasing the number of ESL teachers a perennial challenge. "They do not know how to do the recruitment part," one Latina high school official in Arkansas said. "I know it sounds crazy but that's how it is in these communities. They are not getting a lot of people applying who are bilingual. There is a surplus of applications, but few in the ESL area." In one Northwest Arkansas school district with 25 percent Latino students, only 1 or 2 percent of staff speak Spanish, the respondent said.

The lack of ESL and native language staff means that some ESL teachers are responsible for up to 60 students at a time. School staff also said that each school was essentially "on their own" in terms of how to serve the immigrant. "Practices seem pretty much limited to each school site," one white principal in Arkansas said. State-level officials are even less sensitive and responsive to the need for curricular and methodological classroom reform than district-level officials, according to respondents.

Although there has been lobbying at the state level to allocate more money for immigrant students, this has been stymied by a "lack of resources and the weight of other priorities," one white respondent in North Carolina said, adding that with the current environment "there is not enough funding to make an impact for Spanish-speaking students in an English-speaking environment." Respondents said that they have seen Latino students go through some ESL programs for years without becoming proficient in English. Education officials are aware of the problem, but it is unclear if anything is being done to remedy it. The lack of learning that too often occurs with ELL students has led some school system officials to despair. "What we have to do is reach our regular classroom teachers and tell them that you can't just send Jose to the back of the room with crayons while teaching a math lesson. You have to teach them [ELL students] math too," one white ESL coordinator from North Carolina said.

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Some districts in emerging immigrant communities have dual immersion programs where all students in the school are taught Spanish and English. This program was roundly praised by respondents. But these programs tend to be rare or nonexistent because they require great commitment and persistence from



students, families, and teachers and they are not easy to setup or operate. "It is hard to find the bilingual personnel to staff an entire school, to have teachers who are committed to a half-Spanish and half-English speaking school. It's difficult to set up," one white administrator from North Carolina said.

The impact on ELL students when school districts cannot or will not create an adequate ESL infrastructure is devastating. "Many students' self-esteem is lowered and they feel isolated" because they do not understand what is going

on in class, according to one white respondent in North Carolina. Another respondent told a story of how, for weeks, a group of Latino students would walk in the front door of the school and exit directly out the back door, spending the day in the woods near the school. The respondent said it took weeks before the principal found out what was going on. This respondent said Latino students too often

feel, "real unhappy at school, they don't fit in, they are not successful there, it doesn't meet their needs, and they are not made to feel welcome."

There is clearly much room for improvement in terms of teacher training and program development and implementation for immigrant students and the children of immigrants. Nevertheless, there are many educators in emerging communities who have developed innovative strategies to deal with the changing demographics of the student population. The most relevant strategies are outlined below.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER TRAINING

■ District-Provided Workshops

Gwinnett County Public Schools in the Atlanta area offers a 30-45 hour course for content area teachers (non-ESL teachers) on the basics of immigrant education. The district provides this service free to all teachers interested in learning about language minority students. This is for content area teachers whom are not already certified in ESL, but may have language minority students in their classes. The program is divided into six modules that include:

- An overview of the stages of language acquisition and district policy and procedures regarding ESL students.
- Identification of ESL students according to state and district guidelines.
- The impact of culture on the educational process and how the prior experiences of students affect the way they learn. This includes practical suggestions and gives teachers hands-on experience on how to manage cultural diversity in the classroom.
- Instruction on major methods and strategies for the teaching and learning of ESL students. Specifies techniques for the teaching of reading, writing, vocabulary, and content area instruction. It also includes information to make classroom instruction more comprehensible for the language minority student.

- How to assess ESL students. This includes a discussion of authentic assessment techniques that benefit all students and provides practical suggestions on how to adapt paper and pencil assessment for language minority students.
- Instruction on how to retrieve, analyze and use electronic information in the area of teaching ESL students.

■ Peer Training

At one elementary school in Gwinnett County, Georgia, ESL certified teachers provide basic ESL training for teachers who are not ESL endorsed or trained in bilingual education. This encourages collaboration between ESL teachers and content area teachers and provides a more seamless instructional model to ELL students. According to experts on English language learners, a smooth transition between levels of language development class (e.g. between content-based ESL and sheltered instruction) is an attribute of effective education of ELL students (August and Hakuta 1997). If only ESL teachers are using special techniques to teach immigrant students, then immigrants are wasting most of the school day in classes that they cannot comprehend. At another middle school in the same school district, ESL teachers view themselves as "on-site resources" for teachers and staff without ESL training. "We give helpful hints to colleagues when they run into difficult situations," one white ESL teacher said. "They just know how to deal with them better when they consult us." As one white principal said, "ESL teachers should mirror and bridge everything that is going on in the regular classroom" so that ESL students' school day is unified and fluid. The previous two strategies can help minimize many of the problems scholars have identified with traditional teacher education programs (González and Darling-Hammond 2000).

- One white ESL teacher trainer in North Carolina goes far beyond a review of Mexican music and food in her cultural sensitivity training for teachers. She works at several schools where she provides training to all teachers, staff, and assistants about ESL educational issues and the legal requirements to educate undocumented immigrants. One technique used in these workshops is "comments heard in the community" which reviews some of the negative comments heard about Latinos' presence in the community and in the training for teachers and administrators. During the training, participants talk about the advantages of cultural diversity and the positive things brought to the United States by immigration. This training also includes a month-long, in-depth study of different cultures, which are then showcased at the end of the month.



CHAPTER 6:

Immigration Status

Legally, Latino students' immigration status does not have a direct bearing on their right to attend K-12 public schools. The 1982 Plyler v. Doe decision ruled that states may not deny a public school education to residents of a school district simply because they are undocumented immigrants. Nevertheless, not all educational administrators follow these guidelines. One Latino principal in Georgia said that some educational administrators see Latino immigrant students as a burden and will deny them enrollment to schools if they enter after the official school start date. She described their attitude toward Latino students as, 'Why should I enroll a student who will not get credit anyway and will probably cause problems.' Even if school administrators admit immigrant students, their immigration status continues to weigh on them. "Illegal students are stigmatized in the South," one Latino principal in the Atlanta area said. "Principals routinely push them out of schools because they don't have the legal support to fight against it."

In addition to this direct (and illegal) response to students' immigration status, undocumented students and families indirectly feel the impact of their immigration status constantly. "Most [immigrant] families are not documented and do not feel comfortable in school," one white social service provider in North Carolina said, "There is a lack of trust with schools and the teachers."

Undocumented students also find their educational opportunities greatly diminished upon graduation

from high school, regardless of their academic performance. Many respondents said that the inability of undocumented students to pay the out-of-state tuition fees charged to undocumented immigrants at four-year colleges effectively bars them from a university education. "The lack of higher education opportunities is going to lead to segregation," one white teacher in North Carolina said. It also contributes to the Latino dropout rate. "Students are put into special education, they don't get along with non-Latino kids, they can't go to college here, they can't understand the language, so they think 'What are my options?'" one white teacher in North Carolina said. Another white teacher from North Carolina called the out-of-state tuition fees, "a big brick wall at the end of the tunnel in terms of attending universities."

These barriers to a higher education, combined with other factors, push Latino high school students into the workforce before earning a high school degree.

The barriers against Latino immigrant students attending college are reinforced by the lure of the relatively high wages they can earn by entering the workforce. One white teacher stated bluntly, "Kids can earn \$20 an hour doing construction [or] go into school and be told they are dumb." These factors,

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and the fact that Latino immigrant families that come to these communities typically lack a tradition of higher education, means that the vast majority of Latino immigrants in emerging communities will not enter four-year universities. The dropout rate has reached such a level that the general consensus among respondents was that "something drastic must be done quickly" to stem the tide. There is a proposal in the North Carolina state legislature to give undocumented North Carolina high school graduates more access to state universities, but this legislation has little potential to be approved in the near future, Latino state governmental officials said.

Community colleges have been a refuge for undocumented students wanting to learn English, earn an alternative high school degree, or pursue post-secondary studies. Admission and tuition practices at local community colleges are still "unclear" as one respondent stated, but "people are working behind the scenes to get people admitted on an

individual basis." With the recent increased oversight of immigrants in the United States, even this informal route for continued education could end.

Community colleges' Workforce Development and Basic Skills divisions are filled with Latino adolescents and adults taking ESL courses and earning their high school equivalent degrees. Indeed, ESL student enrollment accounts for 51 percent of all Basic Skills students at Wake Technical Community College in North Carolina. Community colleges have demonstrated an openness and adaptability in meeting the needs of immigrants that has not been matched by universities or K-12 school districts. "We are always on the lookout for new opportunities for collaboration," one community college administrator said. In Wake County, the Basic Skills program collaborates with faith-based organizations, school districts, hospitals, corporations, and others to offer community-based learning for free to the immigrant community.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES REGARDING IMMIGRATION STATUS

■ Informing Legal Rights

One nonprofit organization in Durham County, North Carolina sends memos to schools reminding them that they are violating the law by not allowing immigrant children to register for public schools. This Latino organization has also created consciousness-raising programs on this issue using ads and seminars that have helped make schools aware that they are not allowed to turn away students for lack of Social Security identification.

Georgia State University in collaboration with MALDEF has created a promising program to inform immigrants of their rights in the educational realm regardless of their immigration status. Called the Parent-School Partnership, this curriculum-based program offers workshops for staff, parents, and students in elementary, junior high, and high schools with high concentrations of Latino students. The program teaches parents of their rights to an interpreter in the school setting and also about the long-term advantages to educational achievement in the United States. It also teaches parents how to access community resources. This program offers several college scholarships per year to Hispanic students, regardless of their immigration status.

■ Scholarships and In-State Tuition for Immigrants

Although undocumented immigrant students have the legal right to a K-12 education in the United States, higher education is a much more ambiguous and controversial area. Lobbying by local individuals and organizations has allowed undocumented immigrants who graduate from United States high schools the ability to attend community colleges at in-state tuition rates. "We can do this without making a big deal about it or ruffling any feathers," one white community activist in Northwest Arkansas said. In Georgia, the Goizueta Foundation has sent many immigrant graduates to college through their

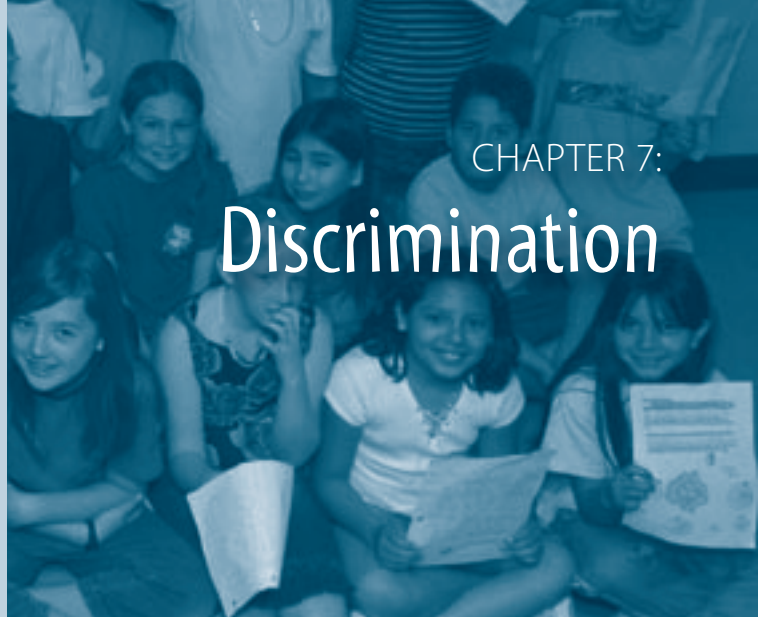
scholarships to undocumented students. In North Carolina there is a bill in the state legislature seeking to allow undocumented students in-state tuition at public universities if they fulfill a variety of residency requirements. The passage of such a law in all three of our case study site states would be immensely helpful to high-achieving undocumented immigrants seeking to further their education. Churches in North Carolina have also been helpful in seeking scholarships for undocumented students to attend private religious universities.

■ Newcomer Centers and Specialized Curriculum

Community colleges have been a refuge for undocumented students wanting to learn English, earn an alternative high school degree, or pursue post-secondary studies.

In some cases, adolescent, immigrant students with little or no English skills are well served by an informal "newcomer center" operated within junior high and high schools or at a separate location. These students feel the weight of their immigrant status and newness to the United States more than others and can benefit from special programs that provide them with the skills to eventually enter mainstream high school classes. Rogers Public Schools, located in Northwest Arkansas established such a school for students in grades 8-12. Coursework is specifically designed for students with minimal English skills. The immigrant students take classes with other immigrants who have recently entered the United States and are at similar language levels. All teachers at the academy are certified in ESL instruction and several teachers speak Spanish and have experience teaching abroad. Although students at this school—named the Rogers' English Academy—enroll in the regular high school system, they take about three courses, which last two hours per day, at the academy. Instruction includes English reading and writing, language development, math, science, Spanish, and a series of electives. Teachers are trained to help these older immigrant students adjust to their new environment in a supportive atmosphere so that they are able to enter mainstream courses as soon as possible. Students also have access to a Spanish-speaking counselor, administrative assistant, and nurse. Rogers' English Academy activities include a "dinner for families" that boasts a 95 percent attendance rate by parents. All materials sent home to parents are bilingual and the school also helps parents with some of their basic material needs such as clothes and food.

Discrimination



Discrimination is present in all three study sites to varying degrees, but is most marked in Georgia and Arkansas. Latino and white respondents said that hostility toward immigrants is typically subtle, representing more a lack of understanding and a fear of change, rather than a deep seated hatred of any particular ethnic or racial group. As one white principal in Georgia said, "We need to remind teachers that just because it's different doesn't mean that it's wrong." Change seems to be disturbing to longtime educators, many of whom became set in their classroom ways years ago. Respondents said it takes particular effort to get teachers and administrators to adjust to the new school demographics and it doesn't happen spontaneously. Usually, the retraining is led by a principal or district-level administrator.

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The importance of the school climate should not be underestimated when considering English language learners. As mentioned in Chapter 4, it is one of several attributes vital to immigrant educational success. The aforementioned National Academy of Sciences report on English language learners (August and Hakuta 1997) stated that "value placed on the linguistic and cultural background of English language learners, high expectations for their academic achievement, and their integral involvement in the overall school operation" are crucial to creating a successful learning environment for English language learners.

Although respondents said that schools tend to have less racial discrimination than their communities as a whole, students, teachers, and staff frequently mentioned discrimination as a significant barrier to Latino educational integration. One white principal in Georgia said some school administrators "automatically have a conversation about gangs with incoming Latino students even if they have nothing to do with gangs." Another Latino principal from Hall County, Georgia said that the racism problem in Hall County is "immense." He said racism is manifested in schools by "unfair placement, placing kids in remedial classes because they [teachers and administrators] don't understand their educational need, unfair discipline and grading policies that teachers and principals engage in."

Overall, respondents said that many of the residents and much of the infrastructure in the county has not acknowledged the Latino growth and has refused to deal with Latino immigrants as permanent, equal residents. "People need to open up their eyes," one Latina education administrator in North Carolina said. "We're not going anywhere and we need to do something about this situation."

Much of the hostility toward immigrants has to do with language. Many respondents said that English-speaking whites and African Americans in the area resented Spanish-language or bilingual signage at public buildings and had little patience when they encountered immigrants in the community with limited English skills. "People do not see bilingual skills as a positive," one Latino ESL teacher in North Carolina said.

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Many respondents inside the school system claimed that there was a systemic, although not overt, form of discrimination occurring against Latino students. "Latino students are in the cycle of permanent remediation classes and have become stuck in a lower-performing cycle because of the lack of services," one white principal in North Carolina said. "The district is creating a lower-performing subgroup," the principal said. Many respondents said that this problem is due to the lack of educational resources available to immigrant students. Respondents said the lack of trained ESL personnel and resources, the busing of students to ESL schools,

and the testing and assessment of non-English speakers with English language tests could result in "a major civil rights issue."

In some ways, Latinos' growing numbers are working against them in terms of their acceptance in the community. "Now that Latinos have become more visible there has been a lot less welcoming attitude," one white respondent from North Carolina said. "Latinos are still outsiders and in the very beginnings of becoming part of the state." In schools, respondents said that discrimination was communicated subtly by not allowing Latino students access to computers, clubs, and after school sports as much as other students. One respondent also said that ESL students tend to be in temporary classrooms rather than the regular buildings. "North Carolina was a very traditional state before this demographic shift," one white Carolinian stated. "And we are not the kind of people that have welcomed newcomers all of the time." Some schools have addressed racial issues and even brought in consultants to hold

workshops on the issue for staff, but this is done on a school-by-school basis, rather than coordinated at the district level.

Northwest Arkansas, which has the least experience dealing with a non-white population of all the study sites, reported serious problems with racism. "I don't think people have adapted very well," one white teacher said. "People have never been exposed to someone who is different than them which creates fear and misunderstanding." In one town in Northwest Arkansas, a multicultural center was shut down by community leaders before it "had a chance to make a difference." According to respondents, "there is resistance to reopening it."

Some teachers in emerging immigrant communities don't believe they should teach immigrant students and that it is the students' responsibility to learn English on their own. In some schools, teachers receive little ESL training. Other teachers, especially those with many years of teaching experience, take the attitude, "I've taught this way for 20 years and I don't see any reason to change, [since] I only have a few years toward retirement," respondents said.

Latino students echoed the concern of teachers and principals. "Latino students get picked on and are treated differently than whites," one Latino student in North Carolina said. "Other students get away with what Hispanic students cannot." Racism is identified as a problem in public schools by just about everyone, yet it is not being systematically addressed. "There is not any significant dialogue on this issue because people are scared to address it due to the fact that there are no programs or solutions," one Latino respondent from North Carolina said. "There is a real fear that we don't know how to solve this," she said.

Overt discrimination against immigrants is not expressed by the large majority of respondents in any of the study sites. In all study sites, immigrants are typically welcomed to enter the U.S. to perform work in the industries that need them, but moves toward the allocation of more educational resources to immigrant students are met with little enthusiasm. "When you talk about sharing what the government

provides to people, then forget it, because they are not citizens, do not pay taxes, are not from here," as one white respondent described the situation. The

view of immigrants as being limited to only a few industries and one economic level is a view shared by many.

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES REGARDING DISCRIMINATION

■ Role-Playing

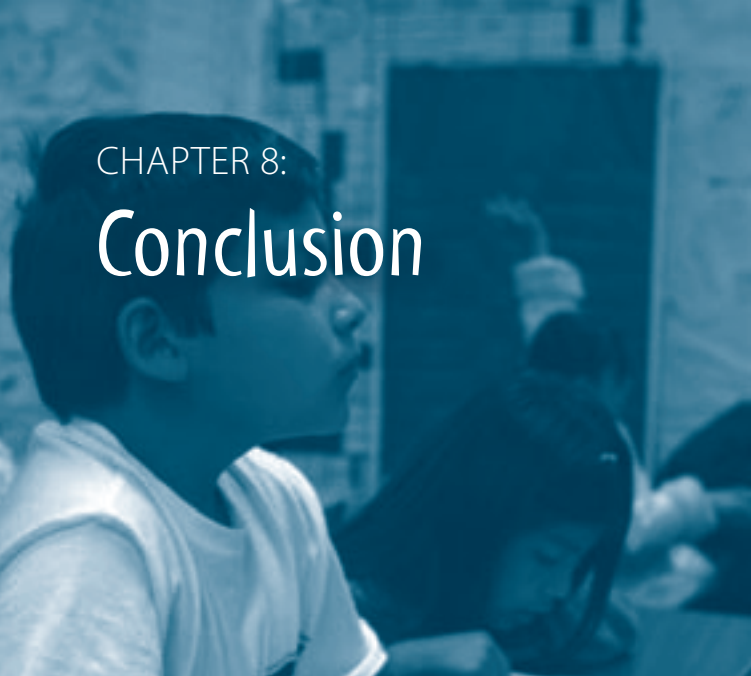
Although many schools in emerging immigrant communities do some form of cultural sensitivity training for teachers and staff, one ESL teacher in North Carolina focuses on providing such training to immigrant students' peers. This teacher uses role-playing in order to put non-immigrant students in the place of immigrant students for a day. During the exercise, signage and written material in the room is written in Spanish for example, and the teacher for that day is a native Spanish speaker. The Spanish-speaking teacher does the entire lesson in Spanish and uses visuals in order to involve the non-Spanish speaking students, much the way in which ESL teachers try and modify their classroom instruction for English language learner students. The teacher also plants Spanish speaking students in the class who are answering questions and understanding the entire lesson while others do not, in order to show how challenging it can be for any student to follow a lesson when he or she does not understand the language. At the end of the session a guidance counselor and social worker are brought into the classroom to lead a discussion reviewing the exercise with students and highlighting the challenges that ELL students face daily. This exercise is a basic role-reversal that gives a student a sample of what it is to be an immigrant ESL student in a school in the United States.

■ Multicultural Awareness

In multicultural classrooms "International Nights" have proved to be an effective way to encourage mixing among families from different ethnic groups. At one elementary school in Wake County, North Carolina, parents from the different nations bring dishes from their home country to the school for all to enjoy. The school engages in multicultural education throughout the school calendar year. These festivals can also include musical demonstrations, skits about life in the home country, and other forms of formal and informal cultural education. Although these events cannot make deep and long-lasting changes by themselves, they do serve as important "ice-breakers" and open the door to more sustained interaction and dialogue between members of different ethnic groups in the school environment. Other teachers in the Wake County Public School System embed cultural instruction in the language instruction of classes, including information on holidays. Immigrant students and the children of immigrants are also taught about American culture so "that they feel they are part of the school."

CHAPTER 8:

Conclusion



The story of immigrant incorporation in the United States is usually a conflictive one. This is certainly the case in new Latino communities in the South, where new immigrant groups are struggling to gain an economic and political foothold in areas previously unaffected by newcomers. Efforts toward winning educational resources and political power are encountering resistance from those groups who have held power over the long term and those who have acquired it more recently. Interviews with respondents indicate that while this may not be a conscious effort to deny immigrants the resources they need, the lack of attention given to immigrant education issues is a form of de facto resistance.

This same process is occurring across the nation, as Latino activists have noted.⁶ State-level restrictions

Education will continue to be one of the primary battlegrounds in immigrant integration in the United States.

on Latinos attending colleges, decreasing ESL funding at the district level, and English-only laws are all reactions to the growing presence and power of a growing immigrant group. Education will continue to be one of the primary battlegrounds in immigrant integration in the United States. "Schools

can be key sites for the construction of community identity and inclusion, but they can also be sites that exclude Latino newcomers through the persistence of non-responsive policies and the failure to build on newcomers' existing funds of knowledge" (Hamann, Wortham, and Murillo 2002).

At this point, the future of immigrant education in the South is unclear. Although dropout rates in some states remain dangerously high, some research indicates that new immigrant states have witnessed improving Latino achievement scores during the 1990s (Education Trust 2003). In the best case scenario, the substandard Latino academic indicators in these areas are transitory and as the community becomes more established, education indicators will rise. Data cited in the introduction shows that, by some measures, Latino educational statistics are comparable with Hispanic scores in traditional immigrant states. Still, Latino officials in these communities have noted that state and local policymakers are missing an historic opportunity to create a public education system that can break the national cycle of disappointing Hispanic academic achievement scores and high dropout rates. "The fact that Latinos have been in the state for such a short amount of time is something that policymakers have not seized upon," one Latino public policy official from Georgia said.

This lack of initiative by policymakers and educators could lead to a less desirable future where the growing ethnic diversity in the South is stratified by race, with Latinos at the bottom. Educational achievement has much to do with career advancement. National college attendance rates among Latinos are the lowest of any ethnic group and evidence in emerging immigrant communities is that this trend is being replicated at the local level (Table 15). Immigrant Latino college enrollment rates are particularly low.

⁶ Antonio Gonzalez, President, Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. February 26, 2004 at "Interpreting the Latino Experience in the U.S. Today" conference, University of Southern California.

Latino officials in these communities have noted that state and local policymakers are missing an historic opportunity to create a public education system that can break the national cycle of disappointing Hispanic academic achievement scores and high dropout rates.

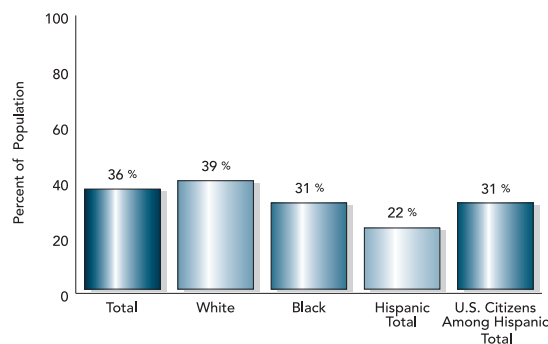
If the educational environment for Latinos in new communities does not improve, they will take their place as a permanent laboring class that is not expected to go to college, wield political power, or enter "white-collar" professions. For the future, it is unrealistic to think that the educational problems Latinos face in rural Southern communities will remain isolated. It is reasonable to assume that many Latino youth in Buford, Georgia and Springdale, Arkansas in 2004 will disperse to other cities and regions of the South in the near future. Thus, the issue of immigrant education should not be seen only as a local school issue, but one that has statewide and regional implications for the future.

In order to help interested private and public organizations contribute to Latino education in emerging communities, we conclude with some policy recommendations on how grantors might advance Latino education in emerging communities. This list is presented as a complement to the local strategies listed at the end of Chapters 4-7. Furthermore, a list of contact schools, organizations and individuals is presented in the Appendix for teachers, administrators, and grantors interested in contacting local personnel.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTORS, RESEARCHERS, AND POLICYMAKERS

There are several proposed bills in state legislatures seeking to allow undocumented students who have graduated from state high schools, the right to in-state tuition fees. According to respondents,

Table 15
ENROLLMENT RATES OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: 2000



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, *Common Core of Data, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey, 2000-01*.

the passage of such laws would increase college access to high-achieving immigrant students who currently cannot afford to pay out-of-state-fees. Further research and advocacy on this issue is timely and crucial to Latino immigrant enfranchisement in the South.

- In North Carolina, the contacts for this issue are: the Society of Hispanic Professionals, the Office of Hispanic Affairs in the North Carolina Legislature and Office of the Governor (see Appendix for all contact information in this section).
- In Georgia, the contact for this issue is the Goizueta Foundation. Information may also be sought from the Georgia State University office of Hispanic Recruitment and Retention.
- In Arkansas there are not as many organizations involved in this issue, but the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville conducts outreach to Latinos through its Office of Pre-College Programs.

Also needed is more research on inter-ethnic relations in emerging immigrant communities, particularly between Latino immigrants and African Americans. Although there is certainly discrimination and tension between the dominant white culture and Latinos; conflict between immigrants and African Americans is also a significant issue in emerging immigrant communities. Particularly in

North Carolina and Georgia. More research on the sources of this tension and the perceptions, attitudes, and opinions that fuel it would lead to a more harmonious environment for multiethnic schools and communities.

MALDEF is active in all three states and would be a good contact for starting to learn about racial and social justice issues in the region.

As discussed in Chapter 5, teacher training is a major challenge for emerging immigrant communities. The establishment of permanent centers or programs for the credentialing of teachers in bilingual or ESL education would take pressure off local school districts that cannot attract enough qualified teachers to instruct the growing numbers of immigrant students in each region. This would include the hiring of more experienced staff and teacher trainers and the implementation of a more rigorous course of instruction for teachers seeking training in ESL and immigrant education.

Below is a list of universities and organizations in each of our study sites that would serve as logical contacts regarding teacher training.

In North Carolina, Duke University and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill would be logical sites for the training of ESL credentialed teachers,

although this has not happened as much as it should in these institutions. The North Carolina State Board of Education, the North Carolina Society of Hispanic Professionals, and El Pueblo are good starting points for information on this issue.

In Georgia, Georgia State University and the Goizueta Foundation are good contacts.

In Arkansas, John Brown University has a program in ESL credentialing for teachers. The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville also offers ESL courses.

Like more established immigrant gateways, new immigrant communities are experimenting with newcomer centers to promote English language acquisition and social adaptation among adolescent immigrant students (Friedlander 1991). These centers have received positive reviews from teachers, parents, and students but there has been little evidence to support their assumed effectiveness in mainstreaming certain cohorts of Latino immigrant students. Others have criticized newcomer centers as promoting segregation among immigrant students.

In our North Carolina and Georgia study sites, these centers were not present, but Rogers Public Schools in Northwest Arkansas has established a newcomer school for immigrant students that has received preliminary praise from administrators and parents.

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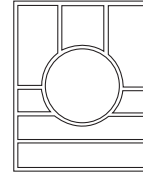
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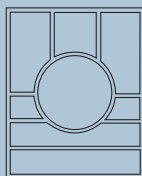
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