

KENTUCKY HISPANIC SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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Introduction and Background

There has been little research done on Hispanics in Kentucky schools. The data from the current study, while reflective of Kentucky schools, cannot be generalized to the rest of the United States. The purpose of this research was to survey the 174 Kentucky school districts to gather information on Hispanic school board members. The information was compiled from data collected from Kentucky school superintendents. The collected data will add to the information available to the Commonwealth, universities, school districts, administrators, teachers, and the public concerning Hispanic school board members. This research was a follow-up study to the research by Ballesteros and Wright (2008) and (2007).

According to the NSBA (2008), the Hispanic population will double from 15 percent to 30 percent of the population by 2050. This will create a significant shift in the role that Hispanics will play in American society. There will be more Hispanic students, teachers, administrators, and board members. The NSBA (2002) conducted a survey that concluded that school boards are somewhat less racially diverse than the nation as a whole, but more diverse than most state and national elective bodies. The survey revealed that 85.5% of the board members were white, 7.8% were African-American, and 3.8% were Hispanic. In large districts, that tend to be more urban and racially heterogeneous, more than 20% of board members were African-American or Hispanic. Small districts were found to be about 11% nonwhite. About four in five small district boards were at least 90% white.

According to recent data from the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (2007), there were 1,847 Hispanic elected school board members and

education officials nationally. This figure was up 49% from 1996. School board members comprise 36% of all Hispanic officials elected in the United States.

The NALEO report (2007) listed 5,129 Latinos serving in elected office in the United States. The following table showed the breakdown:

Latino Elected Officials by Level of Office: 2007

<u>Level of office</u>	<u>Number</u>
Federal	26
Statewide Officials (including Governor)	6
State Legislators	238
County Officials	512
Municipal Officials	1,640
Judicial/Law Enforcement Officials	685
School Board/Education Officials	1,847
Special District Officials	175
Total	5,129

About 3/4ths of Latino elected officials are male (69%) and (31%) are female.

Latino Elected Officials by Gender: 2007

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Number</u>
Male	3,555
Female	1,574
Total	5,129

This survey found there were no elected Latino officials in Kentucky in 1996. As late as 2007, there were only 2 elected Latino officials in Kentucky.

Objectives:

1. To add to the knowledge concerning Hispanic school board members in Kentucky;
2. To share this data with the Commonwealth, universities, school districts, administrators, teachers, and the public;
3. To add to the information on Hispanics in Kentucky obtained from two previous research studies by Ballestero and Wright (2008) and (2007).

Methods/Research Design:

The data for this research on Hispanic school board members was collected from the 174 school districts in Kentucky. Each school district Superintendent or his/her designee was asked to complete and return a survey to Morehead State's Department of Professional Programs in Education. Dr. Victor Ballestero and Dr. Sam Wright mailed and compiled the data for the survey. The first survey was mailed on March 12, 2009 and resulted in 130 returned surveys. A follow-up survey was mailed on April 20 and that resulted in 32 more surveys returned. This brought the total number of surveys returned from Kentucky school superintendents to 162, equivalent to 93.1% return. This percentage of returns was the highest of the three studies conducted by Ballestero and Wright (2009), (2008), and (2007).

Survey Results:

The first question is the key to this survey. It reads:

1. Are there any Hispanic school board members in your school district?

Yes_____

No_____ (Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope if you answered No)

All but one of the returned surveys checked No and returned the survey. Only one Hispanic school board member was located in Kentucky. The Hispanic board member was identified in Beechwood Independent School District in northern Kentucky. This board member has served for 10+ years on the board (Question 3). He is a male board member (Question 2). Beechwood Independent identified itself as an urban, (Question 4), wealthy (Question 5) school district. This is in line with the survey conducted by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (2007). There are approximately 900 Kentucky school board members and just one was identified as being Hispanic.

The other question on the survey that was revealing was Question 6:

Do you have a Hispanic school attorney? If you answer yes, identify man or woman?

No Hispanic attorneys were found in Kentucky by this survey.

Conclusions:

1. A clear majority of Kentucky school districts (161 or 99.4%) do not have any Hispanic school board members.
2. Only one school district in Kentucky has a Hispanic school board member.

Implications:

1. With 12,386 Hispanic students in Kentucky schools, the number of Hispanic school board members is unrepresentative of **this** growing segment of the population of the Commonwealth.
2. **We can't affirm that this is likely to change even if we consider the fast growth of the Hispanic population of Kentucky. Any likelihood of more Hispanics serving as school board members could happen in Louisville and Lexington; the two cities of Kentucky where the Hispanic population segment is growing at a faster pace than the rest of the state.**

References:

Ballesteros, V. & Wright S. (2008). The State of Hispanic Education in Kentucky School Districts. (Occasional Research Paper No. 14). Morehead State University, Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy.

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National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (2007). A Profile Of Latino Elected Officials In The United States And Their Progress Since 1996. Retrieved July 18, 2009 from: <http://www.naleo.org/downloads/NALEOFactSheet07.pdf>

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Appendix A:

**SURVEY
HISPANIC SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS**

1. Are there any Hispanic school board members in your school district?

Yes _____

No _____ (Please return the survey in the enclosed envelope if you answered No)

2. Identify the gender of the Hispanic school board members?

Men _____

Women _____

3. How many years have the Hispanic school board members served on your school board?

_____ 0-5 years

_____ 6-10 years

_____ More than 10 years

4. Identify your school district as either rural, small town, or urban?
(Select One)

_____ Rural

_____ Small Town

_____ Urban

5. Identify your school district in terms of wealth? **(Select One)**

_____ Wealthy

_____ Average

_____ Poor

6. Do you have a Hispanic school attorney? If you answer yes, identify man or woman?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Hispanic Man _____ Hispanic Woman

Appendix B:

March 12, 2009

Dear Superintendent:

The enclosed survey is written to collect information about Hispanic School Board members from Kentucky School Superintendents. This is information we plan to collect as a follow-up to the Hispanic data we have compiled over the past two years. The information we plan to collect will add to the data about Hispanic involvement in Kentucky education. The information from our past two surveys has been shared with Kentucky School Board Members and KASA members. Your help has been excellent and demonstrates the quality of Kentucky School Superintendents!

Please give us a few minutes of your valuable time to complete this short survey on Hispanic School Board members. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience in returning the survey. Please assist us by returning your survey by April 15. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

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