

# Task Force on Quality of Life in Austin for Hispanics: Education Annotated Bibliography on the Achievement Gap for Hispanic Students

Measuring the Achievement Gap.....	1
Closing the Achievement Gap .....	3
Teachers .....	6
Treatment of Students .....	7
Community .....	8
Accountability.....	8
Reforming Schools.....	9
Bilingual Education .....	9
Successful Programs .....	10

## *Measuring the Achievement Gap*

### **“The Condition of Education 2005” (2005). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.**

This comprehensive report provides quantitative and qualitative analyses on the state of education in America, covering a broad range of topics, including: participation in education; learner outcomes; student effort and educational progress; contexts of elementary and secondary education; contexts of postsecondary education; and societal support for learning. Under each of these topics, specific indicators are established. Current and historical data are presented, much of which is disaggregated by ethnicity.

### **Lee, Jaekyung (2002). “Racial and Ethnic Achievement Gap Trends: Reversing the Progress Toward Equity?” Educational Researcher. 31:1, p. 3-12.**

This article looks at trends in the racial and ethnic achievement gaps (national average test-score differences based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and SAT results) over the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. The Black-White achievement gap narrowed significantly up to the mid-80s, but then stayed in some cases or returned to the levels of the late 70s or early 80s in other cases. The Hispanic-White test score gaps dropped relatively little, showing inconsistent gains and losses over the entire period. The study finds that conventional measures of socioeconomic and family conditions (educational attainment, income, poverty, single household), youth culture and student behavior (motivation and effort for learning, alcohol and illicit drug usage, crime), and schooling conditions and practices (instructional resources, teachers, course taking, dropout, segregation) do not fully account for the variations over the 30 year period.

“the Hispanic-White achievement gap never followed the same path, which could suggest that segregation was not associated with the Hispanic achievement gap to the extent that it was associated with the Black achievement gap.”

**Rumberger, Russell W. and J. Douglas Willms (1992). “The Impact of Racial and Ethnic Segregation on the Achievement Gap in California High Schools”. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. 14:4. p. 377-396.**

Significant differences in achievement levels across school districts and across schools within a district still exist after adjusting for differences in the background characteristics of students. This suggests that segregation can, but doesn't always, lead to achievement differences across schools and among different ethnic groups. The study finds differences among ethnic groups in the correlation between individual and family circumstances and student achievement. The results indicate that a significant portion of the achievement gap for Asians and Hispanics is attributable to their family and individual circumstances – parental education, rates of transience, and English proficiency. However, Blacks would continue to perform more poorly than other ethnic groups and Whites even if they had the same family backgrounds, rates of transience, and English proficiency. A school's average parental background has positive effects on individual student achievement; therefore, efforts to desegregate students are likely to reduce differences in achievement. The study can't say whether changing the distribution of resources would have the same result. They do find that forcing school districts to integrate is on the decline. Two different strategies are now being used by some communities: integrating housing in order to integrate schools and equitably redistributing resources among schools.

**Skrla, Linda, et al. (2002). “Educational Equity Profiles: Practical Leadership Tools for Equitable and Excellent Schools”. Draft for Comment, August, 2002. Presented at the convention of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, Burlington, VT.**

This paper discusses a work in progress of creating an educational equity profile to supplement equity audits in providing school leaders with a simple measure of equity within schools from readily available data. To accomplish systemic equity, assessment needs to move beyond the achievement gap measured by high-stakes testing to measure resource and opportunity gaps as well. They propose 12 indicators measuring teacher quality equity, programmatic equity and achievement equity in within schools and between schools in a district. They are working to provide a working model of the profile and benchmarks for the various indicators.

**Status and Trends in the Education of Hispanics (2003). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. NCES 2003-008.**

This comprehensive report provides quantitative and qualitative analyses on the state of Hispanic education in America, covering a broad range of topics, including: elementary and secondary school enrollment, grade retention and discipline, dropout and completion rates, and student performance; postsecondary enrollment and degrees conferred; and adult education. Hispanics have made gains in several key educational areas in the past two decades, but gaps in academic performance still remain between Hispanic and White students. In “Section II: Preliminary, Elementary, and Secondary Education”, the report provides indicators showing trends over time and among different school environments

for Hispanic students in participation, persistence, academics and achievement, social environments and parental support for learning, and student behaviors.

**Torres, Cruz C. (2005). “Hispanic Demographic Growth in Texas”. Texas A&M University.**

Presented to the Hispanic Alliance for Progress 2005 Policy Forum, this data presentation provides current information in a number of areas, including: population change and migration; household and labor force compositions; income levels and poverty status; and school enrollment and educational attainment. Latinos will play a central role in the future of Texas, but they will need to acquire additional social and human capital to fully contribute to the state’s prosperity.

*Closing the Achievement Gap*

**The College Board (1999). “Reaching the Top: A Report of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement”. College Entrance Examination Board.**

This report reviews the status of high achievers among minority students. It presents a review on research in the differences in educational outcomes among racial and ethnic groups in the US and what strategies are available for reducing these gaps. The report also provides recommendations for action specifically for elementary and secondary education, supplementary education, early childhood and parent education, minority leaders and parents, foundations and government agencies, business, and the news media – though the recommendations remain relatively broad.

**Hispanic Border Leadership Institute (2002). “A Compromised Commitment: Society’s Obligation and Failure to Serve the Nation’s Largest Growing Population.” Arizona State University.**

This report looks at Hispanic education in five states in the southwest. It provides a regional overview, but then gives good state-level data on Texas and the other states. It provides data on demographic, educational, and economic indicators, the social, political, and economic dynamics, and legislative action at the state level. The report also discusses more general legislative issues, political action, and recommendations for the state.

**Kober, Nancy (2001). “It Takes More than Testing: Closing the Achievement Gap”. Center on Education Policy.**

This report reviews studies and test data on the achievement gap for African American and Hispanic students. The report highlights trends, findings, and policy options that the author feels have not received proper attention in the current debate. The report goes on to make policy recommendations, encouraging schools and policymakers to approach strategies to close the gap with stronger and more comprehensive action.

Recommendations on raising achievement include: investing in teacher professional development, lowering class size in high-minority schools, increasing minority participation in challenging academic courses, implementing comprehensive, research-based models for school improvement, expanding access to high-quality preschool programs, providing extended learning and more intensive programs for students who are

having difficulties, and strengthening parent and community support for learning. Recommendations on improving equity between schools include: ensuring adequate supply of well-qualified teachers in high-minority and high-poverty schools, expanding access to advanced courses and rigorous instruction, provide additional resources to high-need schools, rallying parents and community leaders to support high achievement and offer enhanced learning opportunities, and addressing other disparities in curriculum, instruction, and facilities.

**President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2003). “From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.**

This final report of the President’s Advisory Commission indicates that a crisis still exists in the state of Hispanic education in America. However, several recommendations for improvement are presented, including: setting new and high expectations; supporting No Child Left Behind; reinforcing and expanding a high-quality teaching profession; developing a federal research agenda to identify the needs of Hispanic students; creating pathways to college graduation; and creating increased federal accountability and coordination.

**President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (2000). “Creating the Will: Hispanics Achieving Educational Excellence”. White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.**

This report is a follow-up to the Commission’s first report in 1996, “Our Nation on the Faultline”. The Commission finds that the concerted national action necessary to raise the level of educational achievement for Hispanics has not materialized. This report lays out a more targeted plan of action than the first report. It calls for recognition of the problem, replication on a large scale of effective practices and solutions, high expectations, and targeted technical assistance. The commission emphasizes high academic achievement and the results of high expectations for all Hispanic students. The report provides good information on the national level, and best practices and case studies for different sectors and for each level of education.

**President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (1996). “Our Nation on the Fault Line: Hispanic American Education”. White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. With an April 1998 Update to the Report.**

This report outlines the state of the educational attainment gap for Hispanic students and the implications for the economic productivity of the nation in calling for local, state, and national action. It outlines specific factors that contribute to educational disparities for Hispanic Americans, and provides recommended solutions to close the achievement gap. Some recommendations include:

- Report states that pre-school program enrollment is less than 15% currently, and that we need to provide pre-school education for all Hispanic American children who qualify.

- Target youth apprenticeship, mentoring, and career pathway opportunities for Hispanic Students.
- Increase the pool of Latino students eligible for higher education opportunities, especially in the sciences, health-related professions, mathematics, engineering, and education.
- Train teachers to deal effectively with multicultural populations and linguistic minority students
- Ensure adequate funding and proper implementation of Bilingual Education programs

**Romo, Harriett D. and Toni Falbo (1996). Latino High School Graduation: Defying the Odds. The Hogg Foundation Monograph Series. Charles M. Bonjean, ed. The University of Texas Press.**

This book reports on a four-year, longitudinal study of 100 Mexican-origin youth in Austin designated as “at risk” of dropping out by the state of Texas. Qualitative and quantitative data was gathered from the families, schools, and youth themselves through questionnaires, open-ended interviews, observation, and institutional information on students. The book focuses on seven key problems identified as critical to a student’s success or failure in getting a diploma, with a chapter discussing each: tracking of students, grade retention and high standards, gang involvement, teen motherhood, special needs of immigrant families, the GED, and administrative glitches and punitive school policies. They finish each chapter with recommendations for changes in school policies that would improve outcomes for future students similar to those students highlighted in each case. They also find that schools often overestimate the educational, financial, and emotional resources of parents, and while many individuals help particular students graduate on time, the school system as a whole often impedes student progress toward graduation.

**Thernstrom, Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom (2003). No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning. Simon & Schuster, New York, New York.**

This book explores the historical and social context of the racial achievement gap, the conventional wisdom on causes, and a look at various efforts to eliminate the gap. The authors emphasize the work of a few good schools that successfully serve highly disadvantaged kids. These schools are setting high academic and behavioral standards, are providing nonstop learning, and are working to change the culture of their students. These schools set social norms that create effective learning environments. Teachers work hard to instill the desire, discipline, and dedication to succeed. Every student is expected to work hard to acquire the skills and knowledge that tests measure. The authors also discuss the politics of school reform, the power of teachers unions, and the issues of performance, evaluation, and school choice, and the roadblocks facing real education reform. All of the successful schools the authors point to in this book are charter schools, with much fewer constraints than public schools in this country. Choice for teachers, students, and parents plays an important role in the success of these schools.

## *Teachers*

### **“Closing the Achievement Gap: Policy Implications for Teacher Quality, Curriculum and Teacher Expectations” (2004). The Education Alliance.**

This paper provides a review of recent literature on factors contributing to the racial/ethnic achievement gap, focusing on unequal expectations, academic curriculum, and teacher quality. It concludes with a list of policy implications addressing the factors of academic expectations and teacher quality. This is a good source to review current research being done and what the researchers are saying.

This report provides a meta analysis of several investigations into the reasons for the persistence of achievement gaps among student groups, especially poor and African American and Hispanic students. The analysis concludes that the gap is the product of a complex set of interactions among a combination of school, home, and community factors. The report focuses on two major contributors to the achievement gap: academic expectations and teacher quality, and it presents summaries of recent research that show:

- evidence that poor and minority students are subject to lower academic and social expectations, including lower grading standards, less access to advanced courses, limited curriculum, and less connection to school.
- despite a positive correlation between curriculum rigor and academic achievement, and although there have been large increases in advanced placement course taking and testing by all student groups, large differences remain for African American and Hispanic students. Some researchers attribute the persistence of this gap to student tracking, lack of encouragement, insufficient access to AP and other rigorous courses, and “dumbed down” curricula.
- a quality teacher in the classroom is one of the best ways to close the achievement gap. Unfortunately, several studies show that underqualified teachers are disproportionately assigned to teach in low performing and at-risk classrooms.
- teacher quality is positively impacted by such factors as certification status, a degree in the field taught, and professional development, when it is presented in a targeted, collaborative, and evaluated atmosphere.

### **Haycock, Kati (1998). “Good Teaching Matters: How Well-Qualified Teachers Can Close the Gap.” Education Trust, Washington, D.C.**

This article reviews a number of studies on teacher effectiveness and student achievement. It finds teacher effectiveness and placement to be the most important factor in the achievement gap for poor and minority students. The article first walks through several studies demonstrating the lasting effects effective and ineffective teachers have on the reading and math scores of students. It finds that teacher verbal and math scores and deep content knowledge are the best indicators of teacher effectiveness. Indicators related to teaching knowledge and skills don’t have a clear relationship with student achievement. The article then finds inequities in the distribution of least- and most-effective teachers across students and schools of different race and class. Modeling and exceptions-to-the-rule indicate that much of the achievement gap would disappear if the

distribution of teacher effectiveness was more equitable. The paper makes recommendations for raising the quality of teachers and for guaranteeing that poor and minority students have teachers that are at least as qualified as those teaching other students. Recommendations

**Russell, Jeanne (2005). "Teachers Figure into the School Gap". San Antonio Express News. May 22, 2005.**

This news article presents a summary of a statewide analysis of teacher data that shows that the least prepared teachers tend to end up in the most vulnerable schools. The Teacher Quality Index, devised by Ed Fuller, ranks schools on a 1 to 10 scale, assessing the school's percentage of beginning teachers, rate of teacher turnover, and percentage of teachers working outside their subject area. Each of these factors shows a statistically significant relationship with student test scores. The higher the TQI, in general, the higher the student achievement, even when comparing schools of similar demographics.

### *Treatment of Students*

**Noguera, Pedro A. and Antwi Akom (2000). "Disparities Demystified: Causes of the Racial Achievement Gap all Derive from Unequal Treatment". The Nation. June 5, 2000. p 29-30.**

Poor and minority children are consistently educated in schools that are inadequate in quality and funding. But there is a racial gap in achievement that is distinguishable from class. Middle class African American students, and often Latino students as well, still lag behind white students. Educational practices often favor white students and hinder the educational opportunities of African-American and Latino students. Students of color are more likely to be excluded from gifted programs and honors and AP classes. They are more likely to be turned away from advanced courses based on the recommendation of counselors and teachers even when they meet the criteria for access. They are also more likely to be placed in remedial and special-education classes, and to be subjected to school discipline. Disproportionate sorting practices also affect racial identities, making certain activities and courses seem safe and others off-limits. This affects peer support and exclusion, making it difficult for students to participate in courses and activities seen as 'white'. Studies have shown differences in study time and study habits for middle-class African-American and Latino students as well. Racial stereotypes and broader race relations also shape college and career aspirations, and subsequently influence priorities in school. One of the author's recommendations is "providing parents in low-income areas with the means to exert greater influence over the schools their children attend."

**Valenzuela, Angela (1999). Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring. State University of New York Press.**

This book presents the findings of a three-year ethnographic study of academic achievement and education among Mexican immigrant and Mexican American students at a high school in Houston, Texas. Valenzuela characterizes the school as processing their students in a subtractive manner that "divests them of important social and cultural resources, leaving them monolingual, English-speaking, neither identified with Mexico

nor equipped to function competently in the American mainstream,” and progressively vulnerable to academic failure. Valenzuela’s research suggests that schools are organized formally and informally in ways that fracture students’ cultural and ethnic identities, creating social, linguistic, and cultural divisions between immigrant and U.S.-born Latinos, and between the students and the staff. Direct consequences of these divisions are social relationships that are fragile or nonexistent, resulting in teachers who fail to create meaningful relationships with their students, students who are alienated from their teachers and other students, and a pervasive feeling among students and teachers alike, that no one cares. In this atmosphere of mistrust, real learning, says Valenzuela, is difficult, and the subtractive nature of schooling virtually assures that students will not succeed.

### *Community*

**Lopez, M. Elena (2003). “Transforming Schools Through Community Organizing: A Research Review”. Family Involvement Network of Educators, Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.**

This paper looks at the difference in approach between parent involvement and community organizing in engaging parents in poor performing schools and improving children’s educational outcomes. It discusses the strategies for community organizing around school reform and the accomplishments of these efforts.

**Mueller, Dan (2005). “Tackling the achievement gap head on: A background and discussion paper for community groups interested in helping all children succeed in school”. Wilder Research.**

This paper provides an overview of the income, race, and language achievement gaps in the St. Paul and Twin Cities metro area, the factors that contribute to the gaps, and a review of strategies recommended for closing the achievement gap for preschool and school-age children. It also provides information on strategies that have weaker and inconsistent evidence for effectiveness in closing the achievement gap. It concludes with a look at how community organizations have worked with public schools on the issue, lessons learned, and recommendations for future community efforts.

### *Accountability*

**Valenzuela, Angela, ed. (2005). Leaving Children Behind: How ‘Texas-style’ Accountability Fails Latino Youth. State University of New York Press, Albany, NY.**

While ‘Texas-style’ accountability claims to promote equity by making schools teach poor and minority children, the authors in this book argue that it fails Latina/o and other minority youth and their communities. The policy fails minority youth by exacerbating historic inequities through collateral effects of state policy and a failure to accommodate the needs and skills of English-language learners. They also argue that high-stakes test scores showing dramatic improvement in Texas are not reflected in nationwide test scores like the SAT or ACT and mask accelerating dropout and projected retention rates. They

argue that the accountability system is flawed for attaching retention, promotion, and graduation to a single measure of students' academic abilities, for attaching high-stakes consequences for schools and districts that encourages a test-driven curriculum, and for promoting a uniform and objectivist way of knowing. The result is the redirecting of school focus away from keeping kids in school and individualized attention to students.

### *Reforming Schools*

**Noguera, Pedro A. (2004) "Transforming High Schools". Educational Leadership. May 2004. p. 26-31.**

National studies have pointed to the following as causes of the problems facing high schools: organizational flaws including fragmentation, insufficient attention to quality control in programs and services, and a lack of coherence in mission; school curriculum offers a broad but disconnected variety of courses that lack depth and intellectual rigor; teachers tend to rely on a lecture format and emphasize delivery of content rather than mastery of knowledge and skills; pervasive student alienation, boredom, strained relations with adults, and anti-intellectual peer cultures; schools are too large and overcrowded. Major reforms being undertaken in high schools were standards-based accountability and efforts to personalize schooling. The successful cases were relatively small schools that had successfully created a positive school culture and developed high work expectations for all students, provided on-site, year-round professional development designed around teachers' needs, and required a high level of parent involvement. The schools took the time to make sure that teachers, parents, and students understood the purpose behind each reform strategy and had mechanisms in place to evaluate whether a reform was achieving its goal.

### *Bilingual Education*

**Genesee, Fred and Patricia Gándara (1999). "Bilingual Education Programs: A Cross-National Perspective". Journal of Social Issues. 55:4, p. 665-685.**

This article evaluates the effects of second-language immersion programs in Canada and dual-language bilingual programs in the U.S on prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping in K-12 students from minority and majority group backgrounds. The authors find that bilingual education has positive effects for intergroup attitudes, identity/self-esteem, language use, and in some cases affiliation and contact. However, they also find that changes in intergroup attitudes and behavior were not always sustained over the long term nor as substantial as might have been hoped. They also find that without sustained, explicit attention to societally based intergroup factors, teachers often re-create in the classroom unequal intergroup relationships that exist outside of school. With proper cross-cultural training, teachers are able to recognize unequal relationships among student groups in their classroom and develop alternative teaching strategies to serve different groups more equitably.

## *Successful Programs*

### **Brown, Sarita and Deborah Santiago (2004). “What Works For Latino Students”. Excelencia in Education, Inc., Washington, D.C., February 2004.**

This publication builds on the 1999 edition of “What Works for Latino Youth”. The primary purpose of this publication is to provide information about programs that are working for Latino students. What Works For Latino Students was presented to Hispanic educators and policy makers seeking to identify increased opportunities and achievement for Hispanic students. Many of the programs are cited as having a positive effect on Hispanic student achievement. Their research concluded the following as key characteristics of programs that work.

Successful programs:

- Provide parents with access to and information on the public school system.
- Have a significant Hispanic presence among the dedicated and professional staff, serving as mentors.
- Provide opportunities for small-group work, self-directed learning, peer-group activities and leadership opportunities.
- Offer comprehensive services to students and their families that assist in addressing the multiple needs and challenges.
- Integrate Hispanic culture into services and programs in order to assist students navigate cultural differences between their home, community and school.
- Have professional and capable leaders who develop strong networks with the community
- Provide bilingual services and information to students and their families
- Have staff who know their program goals and take steps to measure progress, confront obstacles, and implement policies to achieve these goals.

Several Texas based programs are profiled. These include: Avance family Support and Educational Program, Descubriendo La Lectura/Reading recovery, Project GRAD (Graduates really Achieve Dreams), Project SEED, SER Child Development Centers, Coca-Cola Valued Youth program and TexPREP (Texas Prefreshman Engineering Program)

### **Dispelling the Myth – Online. DTM 2.0. The Education Trust.**

<http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/dtm/> 10/27/2005.

This program provides information on high-performance and high-improvement schools for low-income and minority students by state. You can search for schools with similar demographics to a specific school but that have higher scores or made greater improvement, or you can search by specific demographic or achievement criteria. It provides score results for these schools by race, poverty, and subject matter.

### **Edcouch-Elsa High School/Llano Grande Center for Research and Development: “Edcouch-Elsa High School/Llano Grande Center” (2005). National School Boards Association, Alexandria, VA.**

[http://www.nsba.org/site/page\\_REN4.asp?TRACKID=&DID=539&CID=428](http://www.nsba.org/site/page_REN4.asp?TRACKID=&DID=539&CID=428)  
<11/18/2005>

Edcouch-Elsa Independent School District. <http://www.eeisd.org/> <11/22/2005>

**“Llano Grande Center’s Oral History Project Sparks Cultural and Economic Renewal in Texas’s Rio Grande Valley” (2003). The Rural School and Community Trust. <http://www.ruraledu.org/projects/project0400.html> <11/18/2005>**

**“Origins: The History of the Llano Grande Center”. Llano Grande Center for Research and Development. <http://www.llanogrande.org/origins.html> <11/18/2005>**

**“Small Towns, Big Dreams: In Dying Rural Economies, Youth Efforts Infuse New Hope and Money” (2001). What Kids Can Do, Providence, RI. <http://www.whatkidscando.org/smalltowns.html> <11/18/2005>**

“Relationships. That’s where educational reform begins. Relationships: building up trust; building up commitments; giving students and teachers and community people an opportunity to believe, to create change, to try something new. All this starts with one person getting to know another person – listening, talking, taking the time.” – Francisco Guajardo, Director

The Llano Grande Center for Research and Development has evolved from an oral history project into a regional intellectual and economic center for the Mexican-American communities of the Rio Grande Valley Delta area that has helped revitalize the region’s educational, cultural, civic, and economic life. It exists in an extremely poor area. 91% of families earn less than \$10,000 a year. Combined assessed valuation per student is \$24,223 (compared to \$802,612 in one of the wealthiest districts in the state). 40% of students migrate with their families based on crop schedule – the school population can expand or shrink by hundreds of students within a few weeks time.

It started as an oral history project that effectively changed the educational experience for students. It taught oral history research methods, created learning communities rather than teacher experts, moved students beyond viewing their communities as poor to find inspiration in the lives of elders; students recorded, archived, transcribed, translated, and edited for publication in English and Spanish. Work became material for students in all grade levels, and has since been reworked into fiction, art, drama, and photography and television projects.

The work connects schools to the community through documenting and celebrating its history, its members, and its identity. It changes students’ perceptions of their community. The work spurs community building activities and exchanges between communities inside and outside of school. It has also brought in additional funds into the community that support enhanced educational activities.

The project has since moved beyond oral history; analyzing needs for housing, education, and technology in the community. All the research work is pragmatically geared towards community and economic development. Alumni provide mentoring and technical guidance for projects. The project has intentionally developed a high tech component; digital storytelling, computer graphics, etc. – focus on acquiring 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills students will need in the future.

Joint teacher and alumni efforts to get students accepted with scholarships into the most selective colleges and universities.

**El Paso Collaborative for Academic Achievement (EPCAE):**

**Blot, Kevin J., Della-Piana, Gabriel, and Turner, Wyona. “The Development and Employment of Formative Evaluation Instruments to Enhance Students’ Opportunity to Learn” (1998). S4H, 1998 FIE Conference.**

**Navarro, M. Susana and Natalicio, Diana S. (1999). Closing the Achievement Gap in El Paso: A Collaboration for K-16 Renewal”. Phi Delta Kappan, 80:8.**

**Villa, Elsa Q. et al. “K-16 Partnerships: Casting a Broad Net for Filling the Critical Gaps in Engineering” (2001). T4E-10, 31<sup>st</sup> ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference, October 10-13, 2001, Reno, Nevada.**

“As a result of the preliminary sessions, 11 key leaders came together to form the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. Included among these leaders were the superintendents of the three districts mentioned above, the presidents of the El Paso community College and the University of Texas, El Paso; the executive director of Region 19, the Texas Education Agency’s regional service center; the lead organizer of the El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization, a grassroots organization affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation; the presidents of the Greater El Paso and El Paso Hispanic chambers of commerce; the mayor of the city of El Paso; and the county judge.”

Action agenda emphasized four priorities:

1. implementation of a high-quality standards-based curriculum and instruction program for all students, accompanied by professional development for school professionals to successfully implement such a program
2. preparation of the best teachers possible, who on completion of their university program are equipped with the skills and abilities needed to bring students to standards-level learning
3. leadership committed to high achievement among all students and to establish policies that support such achievement in school districts as well as in colleges and universities
4. engagement of the broad community to foster understanding and ensure support of renewal efforts

“The basic mission of EPCAE is to promote achievement standards that are ambitious, age appropriate, and consistent with national standards, so the progress of all students can be monitored rigorously and progressively. . . The EPCAE proposes that the opportunity to learn and to achieve such standards is grounded in alternative, standards-based teaching strategies that focus on the students’ active search for knowledge (e.g., construct, explain, converse, investigate) . . . ‘knowledge often should emerge from experience with problems. In this way, students may recognize the need to apply a particular concept or procedure and have a strong conceptual basis for reconstructing their knowledge at a later time’”.

One key component to the EPCAE is simultaneous renewal in K-12 and teacher education. UTEP teacher training has been completely revamped, and is very much field-based, linking new teachers to the changes taking place in area schools. Professional development has also prepared teachers and mentors to implement hands-on experimentation and cooperative learning in the classroom.

Another element in EPCAE’s work has been in demonstrating to students the connection between more rigorous and collaborative work in school and career

possibilities, especially in science and technology. “An array of programs provides rich venues for attracting young people into engineering-, technology- and science-related careers. These account for contact with over 8,000 young people every year – each with opportunities to explore a number of career-related options and to interact with professional engineers, scientists, undergraduate/graduate science and engineering students and university faculty.”

Test scores have shown a remarkable improvement in percentage of students passing math and reading exams, and considerable reduction in the minority achievement gap.

**“Equity-Driven Achievement-Focused School Districts” (2000). Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin, September 2000.**

This report describes an in-depth study of four school districts that had multiple indicators of widespread, equitable success for all student groups, including impressive gains in passing rates on all TAAS tests for 6 years and widespread improvement in academic performance. Major findings were distilled into five themes:

1. State context of accountability for achievement and equity. This became the basis of the successful changes in the 4 districts.
2. Local equity catalysts. These included federal and state policies and monitoring, and local activists or community groups concerned about inequitable student achievement.
3. Ethical response of district leadership. In response to the accountability system and local catalysts, a group of district leaders decided to develop a district in which all student groups achieve at high levels.
4. District transformation. District leaders understood they had to: change teaching and learning in the classroom, develop and promulgate shared equity beliefs, institute focused equity practices, use proactive redundancy to achieve learning goals, treat staff in a positive and supportive way, and adopt new roles for district staff. The focus of the central office became student learning, and district personnel understood that the way to improve student learning was to support and assist teachers and principals.
5. Everyday equity. The pursuit of educational equity and excellence became the focus of everyday schooling.

**Gándara, Patricia (2002). “A Study of High School Puente: What We Have Learned About Preparing Latino Youth for Postsecondary Education”. Educational Policy. 16:4, p. 474-495.**

This article analyzes results of High School Puente, a California program designed to increase Latino secondary students’ enrollment in college. The study finds significant improvements in preparation for college, attitudes and aspirations, and college going over non-Puente students. Puente students attended college at nearly double the rate of non-Puente students who started high school with the same grades and test scores.

**Gándara, Patricia, et al. (1998). “Capturing Latino Students in the Academic Pipeline”. From the California Policy Seminar Brief Series, May 1998.**

This report reviews three California school-based programs aimed at improving the rate of high school completion and college attendance among Latino students in different segments of the population (lowest achievers at risk of dropping out, underachievers with above-average test scores and the potential to take college-prep courses, and varied achievement levels to ensure high school graduation and college enrollment). All three programs set high academic standards and accompanied them with intense, student-centered institutional support. The most challenging implementation issues included crossing cultural borders among the various constituents, challenging tracking and related cultural beliefs, and fluctuating program support and school staff turnover. All three programs exhibited measurable successes.

**Gold, Eva, Elaine Simon and Chris Brown (2002). “Strong Neighborhoods Strong Schools: The Indicators Project on Education Organizing”. Research for Action and Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform.**

Over the past decade, community organizing for school reform has taken root. Community groups work at the neighborhood and policy levels to address a range of issues facing urban public schools, and their efforts have begun to pay off. This report provides an Education Organizing Indicators Framework that identifies the strategies and accomplishments of education organizing. It also describes a Theory of Change that illustrates how the work of community organizing groups leads to increased community capacity and subsequently to improved student learning. They argue that when reforming schools is accompanied by building strong communities, the institution of schooling is itself fundamentally changed, increasing the chances that reform efforts will be carried out and sustained. Community groups help bring new resources to the schools with the highest need, improve school climate, and create better conditions for teaching and learning.

**James, Donna Walker, Sonia Jurich and Steve Estes (2001). “Raising Minority Academic Achievement: A Compendium of Education Programs and Practices”. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.**

This report looks at 38 education programs that are providing measurable outcomes in improving academic achievement of minority students. The report provides an overview of each program, the components of the program, key findings, and contributing factors. The most frequent strategies of the programs studied include: program quality, academically demanding curriculum, professional development, family involvement, reduced student-to-teacher ratios, individualized supports, extended learning time, community involvement, long-term (multiple-year) supports for youth, and scholarships and/or financial support. The report also emphasizes the need for methodologically sound evaluations of educational programs that provide disaggregated data in order to adequately measure program effects on minority academic achievement.

**“LULAC’s Grassroots Approach to the Latino Dropout Problem: A Hispanic Education Summit”(2003). League of United Latin American Citizens.**

LULAC organized two summits – one in Cicero, Illinois in 2002, and another in Dallas, Texas in 2003 – to address the critical state of Latino education, particularly at the secondary level. The summit approach was beneficial in bringing together concerned citizens with school representatives and business and political leaders to share perspectives and to develop recommendations for improvement. LULAC hopes to organize other such summits across the country, to encourage the Latino community to voice its concerns and to hold school systems accountable.

**Miles, Karen Hawley and Darling-Hammond, Linda (1997). “Rethinking the Allocation of Teaching Resources: Some Lessons from High Performing Schools”. CPRE Research Report Series RR-38, Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.**

This study looks at the innovative ways in which five high performing public schools have organized their professional resources. The resource reallocation strategies they discuss include reduction of specialized programs, more flexible student grouping, structures to create more personal environments, longer and varied blocks of instructional time, more common planning time, and creative definition of staffing roles and work day. The authors then looked at the effects these strategies had on teacher resource distribution. Teachers and leaders stressed the following skill areas in successfully implementing these strategies: developing or learning new curriculum material and approaches; developing new instructional techniques to engage a wider range of learners; diagnosing the learning needs of a more diverse group of learners; assessing the progress of a wide range of learners on a variety of performances; working in teams; and supervising a teaching intern or aide.

**“Opening Doors: Promising Lessons from Five Texas High Schools” (2001). Charles A. Dana Center, The University of Texas at Austin.**

This project identified five Texas high schools with a majority of students identified as economically disadvantaged yet student achievement was above the state average as measured by the Texas Learning Index, the Algebra I End-of-Course Examination, or Advanced Placement enrollment and course offerings. Researchers then made two-day visits to each school where they conducted interviews, observed activities, and gathered planning documents and program materials. Key practices identified in all of the schools include: setting clear goals and establishing high expectations for student achievement (state tests, mastery of curriculum, and college preparation), using student performance data to guide instruction, focusing on instruction and individual learning, supporting teachers and enhancing collaboration, and fostering an environment of respect and affection for students.

**“Raising Minority Academic Achievement: The Department of Defense Model” (2003). The Program of Research on the Affirmative Development of Academic Ability. Teachers College, Columbia University.**

According to the NAEP 1998-2000, the average academic performance of all students in the Department of Defense Education Activity agency, the average academic performance of all students in DoDEA schools is high, and the performance of African American and Hispanic students is among the highest in the nation. The National Education Goals Panel commissioned a research group to study the schools and to identify policies and practices, which may contribute to the success of the schools.

Lessons to be learned from the schools include the following:

1. the value of high expectations for all and of clear goals and accountability measures
2. the utility of data to drive decisions for management, policy, and practice
3. the importance of quality of staff, compensation, instructional materials, physical facilities, and ratio of staff to students
4. the utility of centralized direction coupled with flexibility in the adaptation of teaching and learning to the special requirements of specific situations
5. the importance of shared responsibility and shared values—accountability, commitment, and discipline—across schools, their communities, families, and students
6. the importance of the involvement of parents with their schools and their active support of their students’ education
7. the active use of supplementary education including preschool and after school experiences

**Reyes, Pedro, Jay D. Scribner and Alicia Paredes Scribner, ed. (1999). Lessons from High-Performing Hispanic Schools: Creating Learning Communities. Teachers College Press, New York, New York.**

Using primarily qualitative case studies, this book analyzes high-scoring schools in the Valley. Successful schools had teachers empowered to match curricula to the unique needs of Hispanic students and instruction was interactive and student-centered. Adults and student peer groups shared common aspirations, goals, and visions of what should be expected of Hispanic students and their schools. Assessment was ongoing and advocacy-oriented. Teachers worked to empower students to become excited about and responsible for their own learning. The research led to the development of training modules (Reyes and Scribner 1996).

**Snipes, Jason C. and Casserly, Michael D. (2004). “Urban School Systems and Education Reform: Key Lessons From a Case Study of Large Urban School Systems”. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 9:2, 127-141.**

This study looks at Houston ISD, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Sacramento City USD, and the Chancellor’s District in NYC, all of which demonstrated improvement in overall student achievement and the narrowing of the minority achievement gap over at least 3 years. The authors highlighted the importance of establishing preconditions for reform – political and organizational stability and consensus on educational reform strategies. Strategies for success included specific student achievement goals with a set

schedule and defined consequences; accountability systems to hold district leadership and building-level staff personally responsible for producing results; focused attention on lowest-performing schools, including resources and quality teachers and administrators; adopting district-wide curricula and instructional approaches rather than allowing each school to devise its own strategies; consistent, centrally organized, thorough professional development and training; defining role for the central office that entailed guiding, supporting, and improving building-level instruction; data-driven decision making and instruction, including providing early and ongoing assessment data to teachers and principals; starting with reforms at the elementary grade levels; and providing intensive instruction in reading and math.

**Steinmetz, Leann E. (2003). "Fostering Preservice Teachers' Knowledge of Community: A School Community Project." National Social Science Association Journal, 20:2.**

This paper reports on the successes of a program to get undergraduate preservice teachers to look at community resources in their teaching. In providing a project to get Preservice teachers exploring the school community and its institutions and resources, the program encourages teachers to think about the community as a resource for their efforts in the classroom. It also pushes preservice teachers to explore schools and school districts outside of their own experience, helping to dispel prejudices and stereotypes about other areas of the city or region that might end up being potential employers.