n spite of more than 30 years of educational reform, there continues to be a significant and persistent achievement gap between white, predominantly middle-class students, and their poor and/or non-white peers (Berman, Chambliss, and Geiser 1999). These disparities are particularly evident in lower graduation and completion rates (Rubanova and Mortenson 2001), accompanied by higher attrition (National Center for Education Statistics 1998), higher rates of discipline referrals (Townsend 2000), and disproportionate overrepresentation in special education and under-representation in gifted education (Donovan and Cross 2002). Even though a focus on educational standards and accountability systems appears to be raising passing rates across groups in many school districts (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, and Koschoreck 2001), concerns have been raised about the subgroups of students who either fail these tests or are not represented in these data because they did not take the test (Haney 2001, Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan, and Foley 2001; Valenzuela 1999). In other words, many schools and districts are still not achieving success with all students.

In their discussion of school reforms targeted at low achieving students, Berman, Chambliss, and Geiser (1999) identify several factors to explain why this “equity gap” persists. They challenge the tendency to locate the problem within the student (and family) or within the school without examining the interrelationships between school practices and student outcomes, and suggest that there is insufficient “exploration of the institutional and individual practices, assumptions, and processes that contribute to and/or fail to weaken these patterns” (p. 10). As a result, schools’ efforts to raise achievement may be based on assumptions that are undermined by educators’ deficit views and beliefs about the children who become the targets of reform (Valencia 1997; Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan, and Foley 2001). These deficit views are further reinforced when students from diverse cultural backgrounds do not respond to practices based on universalistic assumptions about how best to teach all students. As illustrated in figure 1, these teacher beliefs operate as a filter through which reform efforts are interpreted and implemented, often resulting in efforts which perpetuate disparities in academic outcomes between groups on the basis of culture, language, race, and social class. As suggested in figure 1, teacher beliefs permeate all aspects of the teaching-learning process, including curriculum, instruction, classroom management, and relationships with students and families. For instance the use of “best practices,” which measure success in terms of conformity to the values and expectations of the dominant culture, is likely to result in higher success rates for students and families who share these values. For these students, the cultural assumptions reflected in the instructional process are an extension of values and assumptions of their home and community. In contrast, students whose families do not share these values are likely to experience dissonance in the learning process, resulting in academic and/or behavior difficulties. If the cultural disparities between teachers and the

Do We Truly Believe “All Children Can Learn?”
IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM

Shena B. García and Patricia L. Guerra, The University of Texas at Austin

School Board Leadership Development Resumes
**EARLY START TO COLLEGE FOR 8TH/9TH GRADE LATINO STUDENTS**

HBLI Funded Project Begins

**From the Top**

These past few years and most recent months have been difficult for the nation. On the international front, the economy continues to be depressed, and as usual the people in most need are hurt the most. That is to say, services provided by government funds are eliminated and philanthropic organizations are hard pressed to respond as they would like or have in the past. Fortunately, there are state and national leaders and groups working to provide a counterbalance to these two onerous factors.

In the face of these tough times, HBLI has been able to not only hold its own, but push forward on its mission of working to improve the educational condition of Latinos and build hope, if not opportunity. How?

- **We continue through support from the Ford Foundation to offer leadership development seminars for Latino school board members. (See related story about our Phoenix December 2002 seminar, San Antonio work in January 2003, Albuquerque contact in March, and the Long Beach, CA, seminar in May.)**

- **With a new grant from the Lumina Foundation, we start a new effort called “Early Start to College.” Our work is directed to help primarily 8th and 9th graders and their parents to think and get ready for a college education. (See the related story.)**

- **In times when college admission standards are being raised and tuition are increasing and loan amounts decreasing, it is important to start early to get our children and their parents to plan for college.**

- **We continue to generate new knowledge and understanding about the problems Latino youth face in public schools. We have funded research project by Drs. Shernaz Garcia and Patricia Guerra, both at the University of Texas at Austin. (See the related story about educators’ attitudes toward students of color and their effect on learning.)**

- **We are in the planning stages of renewing our effort to train mid-level education managers to become leaders in community colleges. (See the related story.)**

- **We are adding new capability to HBLI in the form of members to the National Advisory Panel, new staff, expert consultation, and a new funding source. (See the related stories on these individuals and the College Board, Western Regional Office.)**

- **I end by pointing out our new logo. We believe the new logo symbolizes our renewed push. The rising sun in the logo for us represents a new day and new hope.**

**Leonard A. Valverde**

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**John Durán**

Philadelphia for the Covenant House, which recruited youth from the street into the classroom and eventually into careers. I was fortunate enough to go to school in New York with the Maryknoll Missioners where I was provided the opportunity to study international relations and policy. The program also provided me with the chance to visit the United Nations on several occasions to learn about Latin American politics. I continued work in Albuquerque as a case manager for a nonprofit agency, teaching independent living skills to youth that were aging out of the foster care system. I believe that the goal in working with youth is to help them realize the gift of self-empowerment. My experience and diversity will bring a range of ideas and action to the Early Start to College program. I look forward to working in the Phoenix area and believe that the Early Start to College program will help Hispanic youth achieve their full potential.”

**Jasmín De León**

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**Notes from the Executive Director**
The Mariachi Passion who performed at the Arizona leadership seminar reception.

Community College Leadership Academy Being Designed

with the arrival of our new ASU president, Michael Crow, comes new interest and focus. One of the new directions identified by President Crow is leadership development. Within the College of Education, our new dean, Gene Garcia, translated this new interest into two fronts: leadership development at the community college level and at the community college presidents. In the community college area, it was asked to assist in the design of the community college initiative. The impetus for HBLI to become involved was a grant from the Ford Foundation to provide leadership development to mid-level Latino administrators via the use of an in-service model (while on the job) design. This three-year project was very successful. Many of the participants moved on to become college presidents.

An executive advisory committee, consisting of ten persons (see list below), was assembled early on to conceptualize the Academy. As a result of two meetings with the executive advisory committee members and consultation with others (see list of nine below), the following constructs were agreed upon:

- The targeted population to be served will be women and persons of color currently employed at community colleges or with career aspirations of working at community colleges. The program will also target future leaders who may currently be working in professions outside of education but willing to change careers.

- Curricular focus will be on issues facing students of color, the best ways to provide services, especially instruction, how to better fund these new services, how to prepare faculty and staff to deliver such services.

- Academy delivery format: there will be two seminars per calendar year; each seminar to be 3-4 days long; intensive engagement, i.e., discussion, working groups, pre- and post-reading and writing via internet, i.e., chat rooms, links to Web pages, audiovisual via computer software, faculty designated as mentors and/or practitioners and noted scholars. This hybrid approach of on-ground and on-line instruction provides for ongoing professional development beyond the face-to-face experience.

- Participant benefits: Knowledge and skill enhancement to help leaders be more effective in their roles, networking and professional development with colleagues, identification for advancement by mentors (academy faculty), academic credit, possible admission into doctoral program at ASU.

- Two groups will guide the academy, a national advisory committee composed of prominent community college presidents and a smaller (in number) executive advisory committee.

It is anticipated that the first seminar will take place late in the calendar year of 2003. The cost of participation is to be kept to a minimum in order to facilitate greater access. To assure greater access and participation, technology will be used extensively, site location of seminars may rotate to states with large concentrations of potential participants, e.g., California and Texas.

Current activity is threefold:

- Finalize the conceptualization of the academy organization
- Expand the executive advisory committee and create a national advisory committee
- Seek and secure external funding

SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP

Continued from page 1

superintendent, and an understanding of the budget process. With these three key points, educated and objective decisions will positively affect the education of the children in their districts."

The California leadership seminar was presented May 2-4, 2003, in Long Beach California. Over 100 school board members from the Los Angeles, San Diego, and surrounding areas were contacted, and HBLI received responses from school board members in the following California school districts: Alhambra, Azusa, Charter Oak, Duarte, East Side Union High School, El Monte Union High School, El Rancho, William S. Hart School, El Monte Union High School, Jurupa, Little Lake City, Montecito, National, Santa Monica/Malibu, Santa Paula Union High School District, Sweetwater Union High School, and San Ysidro. Some of the presenters at the seminar were Mr. Sal Castro, school reformer, Dr. William Anton, former L.A. city school district superintendent, Dr. Forbes Jordan, professor of school finance at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Ms. Francisca Sanchez, assistant superintendent, San Bernardino County Office of Education, and Dr. Omar Lopez, College board consultant.

HBLI was well represented at the Mexican American School Board Association of Texas Conference in San Antonio in January 2003. Dr. Leonard Valverde was presenter at one of the breakout sessions; his topic was “To Improve Student Achievement a Plan is a Foundation.”

The New Mexico School Board Association held its 12th annual conference “Celebrating Educational Opportunities for Hispanic Students” March 21-23, 2003. HBLI was one of the exhibitors at the conference, and staff had the opportunity to meet with school board members from Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas.

For more information about our school board seminars (past and future), we refer you to our Web page: www.hbli.org under “Leaderships Seminars.”
Affirmative Action: Time to Advance Not Retreat

Leonard A. Valverde
Note: Abstract originally printed in The Hispanic Outlook magazine, April 7, 2003.

E
ev though Affirmative Action has not fulfilled its true purpose—to eliminate biased actions and compensate for unequal education—the current Republican administration wants to end it.

Even though university and college leaders have finally come to appreciate the value of applying Affirmative Action to create diverse student bodies and faculties, President Bush is moving to start the dismantling of a process initiated by executive order some forty years ago. This policy was resisted by institutions from the start, has been constantly challenged to date, and as a result diluted over its life span.

Even though Affirmative Action has not been embraced entirely and is opposed fiercely by many, it has prevailed fully by elected bodies and has benefited more to advance gender equity in higher education than racial equality. This policy has also been effective in efforts to work against it. In so doing, the attacks have become better disguised. For example, “As we work to address a wrong of racial prejudice, we must not use means to create another wrong,” states President Bush. But where was the wrong? The University of Michigan uses race as one factor in its admission criteria, as the U.S. Supreme Court curtailed affirmative action based on its 1978 Bakke decision. It does not have a quota system as the president mistakenly assumes and claims.

Although opponents to Affirmative Action claim to be in favor of diversity, they do not offer a stronger means to help reach the true intent of Affirmative Action. President Bush states that he is in favor of diversity, even racial diversity. Even though his conservative colleagues do not proffer an alternative, he calls for race-neutral admissions policies like the Texas 10 percent plan. When the results of the Texas 10 percent plan and the singler sister California 4 percent plan are examined, we see that Hispanic and African American admissions percentages are smaller than before the inception of Affirmative Action policies. So documents the current study conducted by Professors Robert Mayer and Larry Aron of Princeton University, titled, “Closing the Gap: Admissions and Enrollments at the Texas Public Flagships Before and After Affirmative Action.”

What meaning can we infer from the president’s challenge to the University of Michigan case? One meaning is his priority. Clearly, the current Republican administration places the needs and difficulties of persons of color and based on its 1978 Bakke decision. It does not have a quota system as the president mistakenly assumes and claims.

But will this “narrow challenge” as exposed by the Bush administration satisfy those who are anti Affirmative Action? Others and I think not. The former University of Michigan president, Mr. Bollinger, states that the “movement to rid campuses of diversity” will move on to challenge other educational programs, especially the awarding of scholarships based on need rather than merit.

Already we see state universities raising the cost of tuition to compensate for a bad economy and the growing trend of declining state funding. Federal loan amounts to students are currently inadequate to meet the rising cost of a college education. (A late 2002 study by the College Board reports this finding.)

As we go to press, the Supreme Court has heard oral arguments in the Michigan Affirmative Action case. The first reaction to the questions posed by the case is that there will be a likely 5 to 4 decision. Clearly, it is still too close to call as to whether the original decision will be reaffirmed, modified, or struck down.

A. Reynaldo Contreras, San Francisco State University

T
he successful education of culturally and linguistically diverse students is a complex endeavor that involves many factors and the acquisition of English. Schools that recognize students’ needs and provide the necessary leadership have invested in planning, implementation, and evaluation of quality instructional programs will address those needs. Unfortunately, many of our schools perpetuate negative stereotypes, thereby continuing to fail students. Latino students are the fastest growing diverse student group. As such, they are our most vulnerable.

Thus, as the debate over educational reforms continues, the focus on the role of culture and linguistic diversity remains an essential dynamic to the argument. Most attention remains focused on the language gap and the English language learners should be taught. Lost are questions of whether these students are actually learning, of educational and economic needs, and the quality of their school programs.

It is in this setting that Effective Programs for Latino Children enters into the discussion. The book highlights a variety of research projects that have sought to answer some of the more difficult questions concerning the schooling of Latino children. The chapters go far beyond issues of language to address more challenging questions having to do with dropout, transition, emergent literacy, and program quality that affect Latino student outcomes in American schools.

The first chapter evaluates elementary and middle school programs and describes their effectiveness in increasing their applicability to Latino students, their evaluations as compared to control groups, and the potential to replicate them. The authors identify 20 programs, which are divided into six categories: school-wide reform; cooperative learning methods; reading, writing, language arts; math, pre-school, and tutoring programs. Concise descriptions of the programs are provided along with evidence of their effectiveness. The authors recognize three conditions that were present in effective programs:

1. Clear goals with methods, materials, and assessment related to these goals.
2. Well-specified components, materials, and professional development procedures.
3. Extensive professional development.

The authors confront schools working with Latino children by challenging them to step out of the status quo to explore an appropriate program for their own adaptation.

In the second chapter, six pro-
grams that meet the criteria of effectiveness, replicability, and applicability for Latino students are described. Seven additional programs that did not meet the effectiveness criteria are described due to their prevalent employment with Latino students. Four common themes in effective programs are explicitly described by the outlining chapters. The elementary program, Success for All (SFA), is described primarily through the lens of the principal. While this is insightful, an exploration of alternative viewpoints would have been beneficial. Lacking are voices of students and parents participating in the program. The middle school program, Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, is explicitly described by the outlining of how the program overcame obstacles and barriers to implementation. It would have been effective to describe how the other programs have also attended to barriers. The high school program, Project AVID (Advancement Via individual Determination) is described. On the whole, this chapter provides a qualitative complement to the initial chapters, which focus on quantitative confirmation of program effectiveness.

The chapter provides an opportunity for those considering adaptation of one of the programs to have a more intimate insight into the process of implementation. The fourth chapter presents an ethnographic study of a two-way bilingual program in El Paso, Texas. The undertaking explored:

1. Program design and implementation adjustments.
2. Teacher performance and professional development.
3. Pedagogy.
4. Role of the principal in program and structure.

The inquiry provides a good view of implementation in the various stages of the implementation of a two-way program. It presents an in-depth look at the two-way adaptation of Success for All (SFA) and issues related to curriculum development, team teaching, separation of languages, instructional methods, and professional development. The analysis emphasizes the importance of involving teachers as researchers, the importance of their attitudes and collegial relationships. Moreover, the study concentrates on working with the principal in the two-way program and the significance of cultural and racial tension, historical inequities, and negative attitudes of staff.

This is an important chapter in light of the proliferation of two-way programs across the United States. Recommendations are provided for schools considering

**Answering Questions about the Schooling of Latino Children**

A. Reynaldo Contreras, San Francisco State University

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Continued from page 1

latter group of students remains unexamined. The academic and behavioral difficulties are more likely to be interpreted as a student’s deficit, leading to more discipline referrals, disproportionate high representation in special education, and higher attrition. However, when teachers’ understanding of the teaching-learning process acknowledges the role of culture in student learning, they are more likely to realize that cultural discontinuities between home, school, and community can contribute to lower achievement patterns for students of color and low-income students. They are then able to create learning environments in which all students can learn by altering the structure of schools— including classroom organization, curriculum, instruction— so that they are responsive to cultural differences in socialization, cognition, and patterns of communication (García and Domínguez 1997; García and Guerra, in press). As a result, educational practices would be differentiated in ways that accommodate students’ culturally based patterns of learning and behavior, foster the development of bicultural/bilingual competence among all students, and lead to higher academic outcomes for all groups of children (see figure 2).

The framework depicted in figure 2 has important implications for the ways in which schools conceptualize and implement the various components of school reform. From this perspective, such efforts must go beyond professional development targeted at teachers. Rather, existing school reform models, and even the goals and standards of the NCLB Act, must be examined through an equity lens to ensure that the multiple perspectives reflected in culturally and linguistically diverse communities are taken into account, that they guide our development of reform activities, as well as our final evaluations of success. This has implications at several levels, and all aspects of educational leadership, for ultimately we cannot relegate student achievement to teachers only; we must be willing to examine our own beliefs and assumptions about how to create equitable educational opportunities and achieving high academic outcomes for all students. As we have noted elsewhere (García and Guerra, in press), in order to achieve such changes, however, it is essential to closely examine the cultural underpinnings of our educational system and to struggle with questions like, “If a central purpose of schooling is cultural transmission, whose culture should be transmitted, and who decides?” How can an educational system that is essentially based on the dominant culture’s (vs. pluralistic) view of success be effective in educating students who do not identify with these values? “Which cultural and educational ideologies are most likely to support educational success for all students?”

References


ASKING QUESTIONS
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News and Notes is a publication of the Hispanic Border Leadership Institute (HBLI) at Arizona State University. The newsletter is published periodically throughout the year, Dr. Barbara Firoozye, editor (barbara.firoozye@asu.edu).

HBLI's bimonthly newsletter is published periodically throughout the year. Dr. Barbara Firoozye, editor (barbara.firoozye@asu.edu).

In late March, the leadership of HBLI met with James Montoya, vice president, western regions, for the College Board and head of the western region, in Phoenix, Arizona, to have exploratory discussions on how HBLI and the College Board, Western Region, might work collaboratively on common matters of import. As a result of the meeting, the Western Regional Office of the College Board will support HBLI in its leadership development of school board members. They will do so in two ways. First, they will provide modest financial support over a one-year period of time. Second, they will provide at no cost to HBLI, experts to facilitate information sharing and discussion in one of three sessions of the HBLI planned three-day leadership seminars scheduled for California, Texas, and New Mexico.