



*A National Education Blueprint:*

INVESTING IN HISPANICS TO FULFILL  
AMERICA'S FUTURE



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**Disclaimer:** The terms Latino and Hispanic are used throughout this Blueprint and may be used interchangeably, while recognizing their distinctive demographic and cultural meanings and the diversity within the Latino/Hispanic community. Hispanic is used to describe a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term Latina will also be used throughout this report, which is the feminine form of Latino.

## FOREWORD

It is deeply gratifying to see that, to commemorate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics has chosen to mark the occasion by releasing *A National Education Blueprint: Investing in Hispanics to Fulfill America's Future*. Twenty five years ago, there were about 22 million Hispanic Americans, comprising 9 percent of the total U.S. population. The first report of the Commission in 1992 found that, relative to other subgroups of students:

- There were fewer Hispanics in preschool education;
- There were fewer keeping up with their age groups;
- There were more dropping out and dropping out earlier;
- There were fewer completing high school;
- There were fewer enrolled in college, with more dropping out of college.

Executive Order 13555, which created the Initiative, sought to address these dynamics through efforts focused on making progress on the educational status of Hispanic Americans. In the Initiative's first inventory of federal programs designed to meet the nation's educational goals, only 33 percent of program managers were able to provide data for the number of Hispanics participating.

We have come a long way since then in making sure that all students – including Hispanic students – receive a complete and competitive education that prepares them for college and the workforce. At more than 54 million strong and with a buying power of \$1.5 trillion, it is clear that the Hispanic community will continue to be a huge contributor to our nation's economic growth and prosperity; investing in the educational needs of the Hispanic community is guaranteed to yield a significant return on investment in support of the country's economic future.

The Blueprint documents this important progress while also making clear that there are educational achievement and opportunity gaps that persist. It highlights key policy priorities that require continued investment from the public and private sectors to ensure that the Hispanic community is prepared to help fulfill America's future.

Our hope is that this Blueprint underscores that change is possible, even in the face of enormous challenges, and brings renewed attention to the growing needs of this young, large, and growing community and ignites a national conversation on the educational investments, from cradle to career, that are crucial to the success of our country's future. Together, we can continue to advance the national education agenda for the Hispanic community and provide all students with the tools, resources and opportunities they need to reach their individual full potential and help us fulfill America's future.

Respectfully,  
Cecilia Muñoz

Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council

## INTRODUCTION

Much progress has been made by the rapidly growing Latino population that now comprises 17 percent of the U.S. population. The growth of the Latino Community is not only intrinsically linked to the future of this country; it is also intrinsically linked to its economic prosperity. Latino students now make up nearly a quarter of the K-12 public school student population, yet in terms of educational attainment, Latino students continue to trail behind their non-Latino counterparts (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Although, there have been tremendous gains made over the last several decades in high school graduation and college enrollment rates – which should be celebrated– there is still progress to be made in terms of college- and career-readiness and postsecondary completion.

Education is touted as the greatest investment one can make as a means to ensure economic opportunity and the social benefits that follow as a result. The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Initiative) has supported those ideals since its inception in 1990 under the Administration of President George H. W. Bush and at the urging of civil rights organizations. 2015 marks 25 years since the Initiative was established. As part of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this publication celebrates the progress made educationally by Latino students before and during this Administration, and seeks to capitalize on that momentum with key recommendations that will continue to increase and expand this progress for years to come. This National Blueprint is informed by research findings, statistical trends, and educational data from various research- and policy-based organizations; engagement with local-, state- and national-level stakeholders; and conversations with leaders, educators, and students themselves.

“Pursuing a higher education was one of the best decisions I have made for myself and my family. Now that I have completed my Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, I am able to pursue a fulfilling career that will provide for me and my family. Overall, my educational experience allowed me to gain countless memories, great friends, and knowledge that I can take with me wherever I go. The road towards educational success was not always easy, but it was worth it!” –**Erica, The University of Texas at Austin**

## GOALS OF REPORT

Through this Blueprint we continue to address questions of critical importance to our nation. What does educational attainment look like for Latinos at all levels of the educational pipeline? Why is it important to invest time and resources to increase educational access and achievement? What federal policies and practices have impacted Latino education? What can we do in the future to further promote the success of all students, including Latinos, in education? For the last decade, Hispanic students have represented the biggest minority group in our schools. Today one of four students in our K-12 system is Latino. While progress has been made by Latinos in education over the last 25 years, future progress will require us to reflect upon past trends, and think about how we all play a part in the success of all students. How are we helping students thrive in education and their future careers? The significance of improving educational attainment underscores the need for a comprehensive report that includes a cradle-to-career perspective and can serve as a catalyst to inform and expand future efforts.

With the growth of the Latino community, it is imperative that as a nation we pause and critically reflect on the progress made during the last 25 years in Latino educational attainment and determine how best to should direct our efforts over the next 25 years and beyond. This report will provide an overview of federal policies and initiatives that have positively impacted the access to and attainment of education for Latinos, as well as an overview of recommendations to further support educational advancement and success. Continuing to strengthen Preschool-Postsecondary (P-20) education and investing in practices that promote student success will keep our nation economically strong, globally competitive, and secure.

## WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS AND THE ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF ACTION

The Initiative was established in 1990 through Executive Order by President George H.W. Bush to address educational disparities faced by the Latino community. Since then, the call to address educational issues within the Latino community has been recognized by Presidents William J. Clinton and George W. Bush, and most recently by President Barack Obama. On Oct. 19, 2010, President Obama signed Executive Order 13555, renewing the Initiative with a focus on cradle to career policy priorities. By renewing the Initiative, President Obama underscored his commitment to Latino students and his belief that Latinos play a critical role in our nation's prosperity.



*President Obama speaking at the White House before signing the executive order to renew the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.*

Today, the mission of the Initiative is to help restore the country to its role as a global leader in education, strengthen the nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes, and help to ensure that all students receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives (Initiative, 2015a). While great progress has been made through federal, state, and local policies and initiatives there is great potential for our nation to continue to focus resources and time on fostering educational excellence.

September 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the Initiative and to commemorate this, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the Initiative launched the “*Anniversary Year of Action: Fulfilling America’s Future*” from October 2014 through September 2015.

*Activities During this Anniversary Year of Action included:*

1. Commitments to Action: A national call to public, private, and nonprofit sectors that invest in, support, and expand high-impact, long-term practices that translate into meaningful and quantifiable contributions that increase and support educational

- outcomes from cradle-to-career in the areas of: early learning, college access, postsecondary completion, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, and teacher recruitment.
2. Outreach and Engagement: Activities held across the country bringing together Latino, education, business and community leaders, to share information about federal resources and investments, and highlight educational progress.
  3. Bright Spots in Hispanic Education: A national call for evidence-based programs, models, organizations, or initiatives that target, address, and/or invest in key education priorities and are helping close the achievement gap across the educational continuum.
  4. A National Blueprint: To assess the state of education in the Latino community and bring attention to key policy recommendations that will further expand educational opportunities and outcomes.



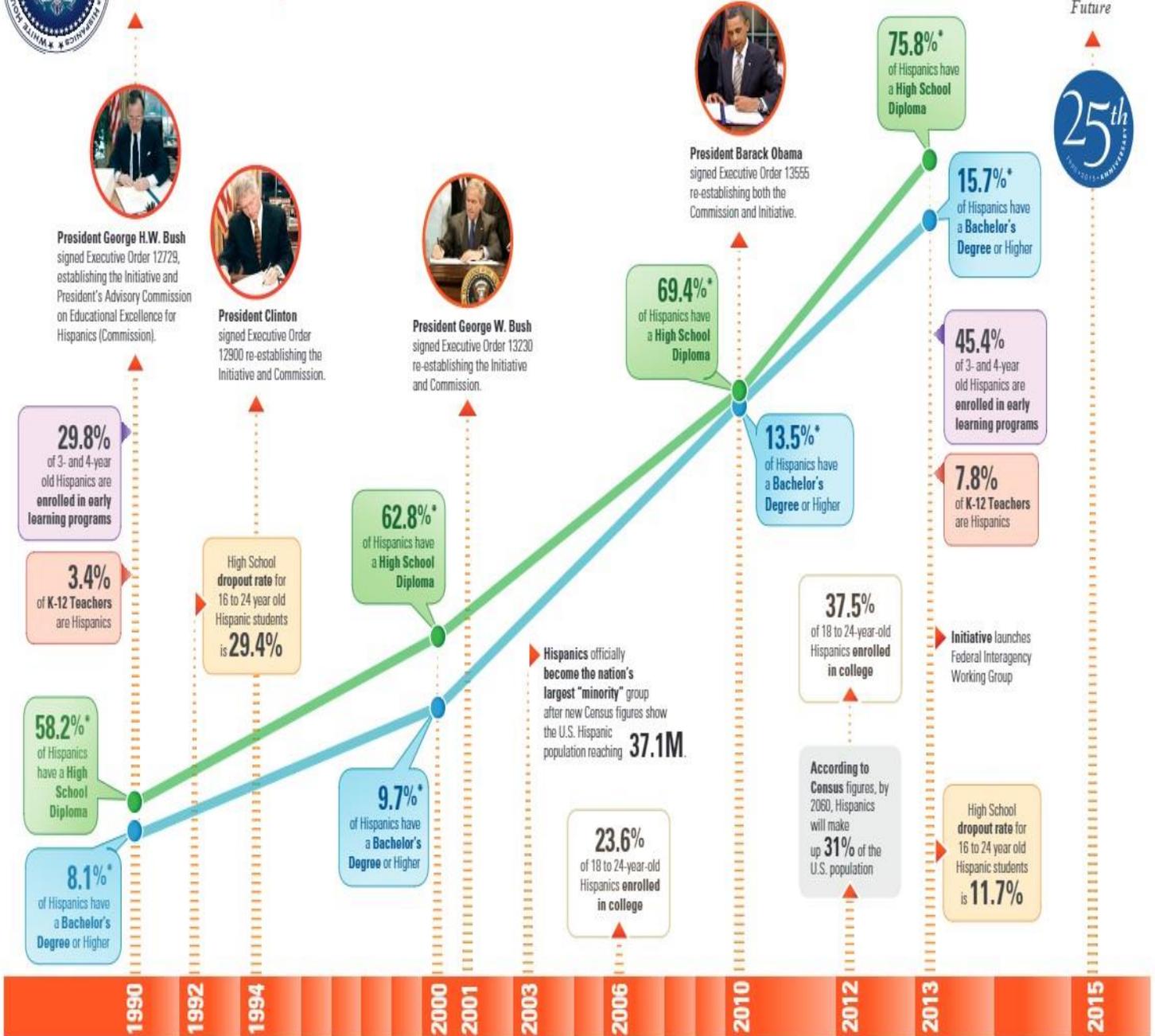
*Photo from Outreach Visit by the Initiative to the El Monte Promise Foundation Scholars Savings Launch March 12, 2015; El Monte, CA*

“We must help . . . Hispanic children enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century prepared to take their rightful place at the American table of opportunity.”-- **President George H.W. Bush**



# The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (Initiative)

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Fulfilling America's Future



\* 25-29 year old Hispanics  
U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics

The mission of the Initiative is restoring the country to its role as a global leader in education, strengthening the Nation by expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for Hispanics of all ages, and helping ensure that all Hispanics receive an education that properly prepares them for college, productive careers, and satisfying lives.

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A timeline including Initiative milestones & Hispanic educational progress since 1990

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report you will find a snapshot of the Latino population in the U.S. and demographic trends over the last 25 years. This report also provides an overview of federal policies that have impacted Latino education and explains how these policies have shaped and strengthened the educational pipeline for Latinos. A review of educational attainment and achievement trends for Latinos from early learning to graduate education is also provided to give context for recommendations to contribute to success in education for the next 25 years and beyond. Recommendations on future directions focus on a variety of ways to improve education including a focus on: early learning, K-12 education, postsecondary education, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, teacher recruitment, and engaging parents and families in education.

At more than 54 million strong, including nearly 4 million in Puerto Rico, Hispanics constitute the country's largest and fastest-growing minority group. They have had a profound and positive impact on our country through, among other things, their community's strong commitment to family, faith, hard work and service.... Our country was built on and continues to thrive on its diversity, and there is no doubt that the future of the United States is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community. --**President Barack Obama**

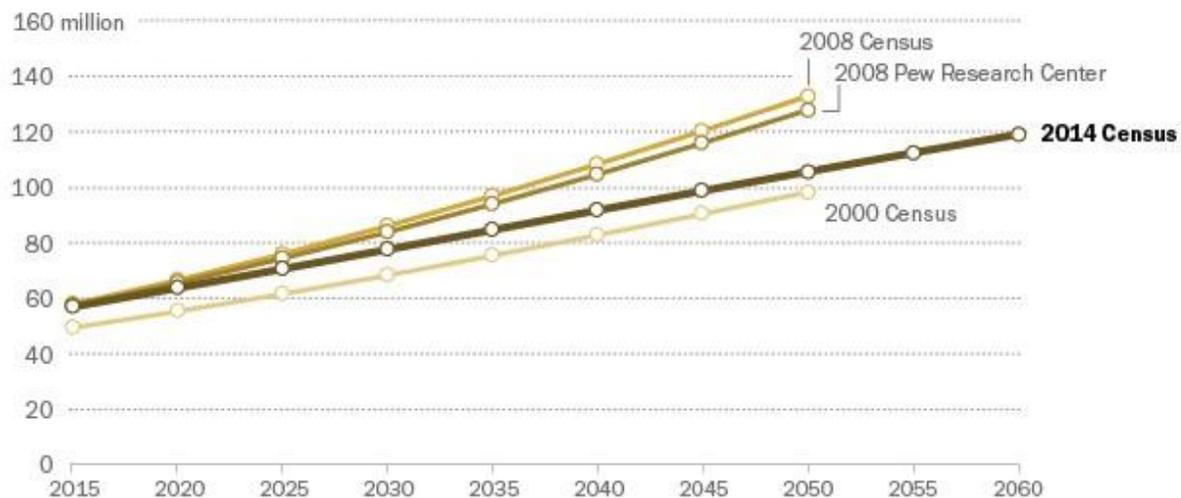
## DEMOGRAPHICS – SNAPSHOT OF LATINOS IN THE U.S.

Currently, Latinos represent 17 percent (54 million; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014) of the U.S. population. According to U.S. Census projections, Latinos will represent 31 percent of the U.S. population by 2060 (NCES, 2014a). Latinos have become the second-largest racial/ethnic group in the U.S. (ACT, 2015) and the Pew Research Center has predicted that Latinos will be the largest racial/ethnic minority group by 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008). As the Latino population continues to rise, it is estimated that the Latinos will account for 60 percent of the population growth in the U.S. between 2005-2050 (White House Administration, 2012). In our K-12 public school classrooms, Latinos represent 24 percent of school enrollment (Excelencia in Education, 2015b) and for the first time in our nation's history our k-12 public schools are made up of a majority/minority student population (Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

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### Hispanic Population Projections Scaled Back

*U.S. Hispanic population, 2015-2060*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau population projections, 2000, 2008 and 2014; Pew Research Center population projections, 2008.

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All regions in the United States have experienced a surge of Latinos and in particular states and regions Latinos comprise a much larger percentage than their national average (17 percent), such as in California, where Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic group at 39 percent (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). One in six people in the U.S is Latino, but it is worth noting that while two-thirds of the Latino population in the U.S. live in five states--California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Illinois (Malavé & Giordani, 2015)--Hispanics are the largest minority group in 22 states (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014).

Latinos are also settling in new regions of the country, contributing to the strength and diversity of these areas. (Verdugo, 2006). Most recently, a new Latino immigration pattern has emerged, with newer Latino immigrants choosing to call the South and Midwest home. In these new

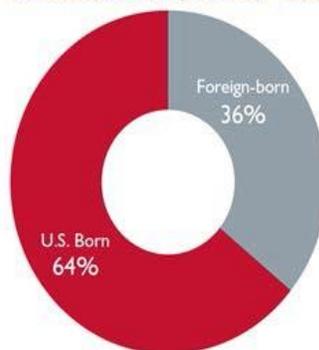
gateway destinations, states like Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia have experienced the largest increases of Latino migration (Malavé & Giordani, 2015).

“Coming from an immigrant household with low-socioeconomic standing made it hard for me to see that I too could become a great lawyer or congresswoman, even though my environment said otherwise...Every day I am empowered to continue to prove my former-self wrong and achieve everything I set my mind to.” –**Carolina, University of California, Irvine**

These population gains are an indicator of what the rest of the United States will look like decades from now. In addition, while many in the Latino community are immigrants, nearly two-thirds of Latinos were born here (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013b). The percentage of Latinos who are foreign-born is expected to fall to 27.4 percent by 2060. Additionally, 52 percent of Latino youth in the U.S. are now second-generation --- sons/daughters of at least one foreign-born parent -- with 11 percent of Latino youth being first-generation, meaning they themselves are foreign-born (Fry & Passel, 2009).

Latino children are also significantly less likely to have a parent with a college degree. In 2012, 24 percent of Latino children ages 6-18 had a parent who had earned an associate degree or higher. In comparison, 67 percent of Asian American, 58 percent of White, and 33 percent of African American children had a parent who earned an associate degree or higher (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). Latinos are also a young population (median age 27 years-old) compared to the general U.S. population (median age 37 years-old; Pew Research Center, 2012).

Latino Population by Nativity – 2012



*Latino population by nativity figure from Excelencia in Education (2015b), p. 17*

## Latinos and the U.S. Economy

Through these patterns of growth, Latinos are solidifying their national presence. To date, Latinos have an estimated \$1.5 trillion buying power, a 50 percent increase from 2010 (Nielsen Company, 2014). Latinos ages 18-24 also had the second highest labor participation rate, regardless of educational attainment, at 64.7 percent in 2013 (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2014) and this robust participation in the labor force is vital to these individual and their families but also to our U.S. economy.

While Latinos are a large proportion of the workforce it is important to note that Latinos in the workforce also have lower levels of educational attainment in comparison to other groups. In 2013, 71 percent of Latinos at least 25 years old had completed at least a high school diploma, compared to over 90 percent of Whites. High school graduation is a necessary predicate not only to access postsecondary education but also to build a strong foundation for future economic success (Verdugo, 2006). Additionally, 18 percent of Latinos at least 25 years old had at least a bachelor's degree compared to 37 percent of Whites (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013).

The disproportionate number of Latino young men who are unemployed or involved in the criminal justice system undermines family and community stability. Latino young men are more than six times more likely to be victims of murder than their White peers and, when combined with African American men, account for almost half of the country's murder victims each year (Initiative, 2015c). Reducing these disparities is critical because Latinos are the largest, youngest, and fastest-growing group in the nation, and will account for an even larger portion of the workforce in the future. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Latinos will account for 80 percent of the total growth of the labor force from 2010 to 2050, doubling from just 15 percent to 30 percent, and making up nearly one-third of all workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

Currently, Latino men tend to be concentrated in lower-skilled, lower-wage jobs. The career paths of the Latino community, men in particular, will affect the future economic success of the nation (Initiative, 2015c). This is where a federal focus on closing gaps and disparities through initiatives such as President Obama's My Brother's Keeper becomes imperative on a national-level because closing opportunity gaps can positively impact the U.S. economy, increase aggregate earnings, expand the labor market, and promote economic growth (White House Administration, 2015). According to estimates from the President's Council of Economic Advisers, if the gap in labor force participation was closed for men of color ages 16-54, the average weekly earnings among all workers in the U.S. would increase by 3.5 percent and the GDP would increase 2 percent (White House Administration, 2015).

It is also important to note the disparities in labor earnings for Latina women. In 2011, Latinas working year-round and full-time earned only 56 cents for every dollar earned by White men and also earned 7 cents less per dollar than their Latino male counterparts (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). While increasing educational opportunities is vital, it is not a guarantee of increased equity in earnings. Even when Latinas have more education than male counterparts, Latinas are still earning less. Policies to ensure that Latinas are paid equally are needed (Gándara & Initiative, 2015).

Latinas and Latinos have been and will continue to be important contributors to the livelihood, economy, growth, and advancement of our nation (Dávila, Mora, & Zeitlin, 2014). The opportunity afforded to the Latino population will have both immediate and long-term impacts on the U.S. economy, workforce, and education system. For this reason, it is imperative that our nation contribute to the education of all people, including Latinos, as education is a critical means through which opportunities are afforded. Investing in the future workforce will help the nation maintain a competitive advantage. While much progress has been made, there is still more work to be done if we want to see progress in the coming years (HACR, 2014).

## FEDERAL POLICY IMPACT ON LATINO EDUCATION

This section summarizes and describes a sample of notable federal policies, efforts and court cases that have contributed to improvements in Latino educational opportunities. Since the U.S. educational system serves as a pipeline supporting students from childhood to postsecondary education and on to the work force (NCLR, 1984), it is important to call attention to federal policies and educational initiatives that have impacted Latino education across the continuum of education. This list is not meant to be exhaustive and should instead inform the dialogue on key policies created over the past several decades.

### **G.I. Bill**

One of the first major policies directly addressing education was the Serviceman's Readjustment Act signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944. Better known as the G.I. Bill, the Act entitled World War II veterans to a variety of social benefits. In addition to providing war veterans low interest loans to purchase homes and property, unemployment benefits, and job placement services, it also provided them with educational and training assistance. Studies debate the degree to which Latino veterans benefited from the G.I. Bill, yet available research shows that Latinos who participated in the G.I. Bill earned a higher salary than Latinos who were not part of the program. The G.I. Bill was not directly intended for Latinos, but their inclusion in this federal initiative allowed some Latino families to move up the economic ladder. (Murray, 2008).

### ***Mendez et al. v Westminster***

The struggle for improved educational opportunities for Latino students has a long tradition in the United States and court cases are clear indicators of Latino dedication to create an inclusive quality education. For example, *Mendez et al. v Westminster School District of Orange County*, a federal civil action brought in 1946 by families of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent living in Orange County, California, set the stage for the Governor Earl Warren to repeal the education code permitting segregated education across California and provided civil rights lawyers an early opportunity to argue "separate but equal" education was inherently unequal before that argument was perfected in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Earl Warren would then go on to serve as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and author both the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, banning school segregation based on race, and the *Hernandez v. Texas* decision, opening up the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause to those of Mexican descent and other Latinos.

### **Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

President Johnson made education and civil rights the foundation of his War on Poverty. In 1964, he signed into law a number of pieces of legislation, most notably, the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Ten years after *Brown*, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 directly tackled segregation in public schools. It authorized the U.S. Attorney General to receive complaints alleging denials of equal protection, to investigate those complaints, and to file suit in U.S. District Court to seek desegregation of schools. Title IV also authorized the Secretary of

Education to provide funds to school boards to assist their desegregation efforts (Library of Congress, 2015).

### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**

On April 9, 1965 Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (P.L. 89-10), the most expansive federal education bill ever passed. The ESEA was developed under the principle of redress, which established that children from low-income homes required more educational services than children from affluent homes. As part of the ESEA, Title I funding allocated 1 billion dollars a year to schools with high concentrations of low-income children. Today, ESEA funding is approximately 14 billion dollars per year. The ESEA of 1965 was amended in 1968 with Title VII, resulting in the Bilingual Education Act, which offered federal aid to local schools districts to assist them in addressing the needs of children with limited English-speaking ability.

ESEA primarily offers funding to districts and schools serving low-income students. Additionally, the law provided federal grants to states and districts to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education.

In 2002, with bipartisan support, Congress reauthorized ESEA and President George W. Bush signed the law, giving it a new name: No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved and vulnerable students and their peers, and started an important national dialogue on educational improvement. Today, many parents, educators, and elected officials have recognized that a strong, updated law is necessary to expand opportunity for all students in America; to support schools, teachers, and principals; and to strengthen our educational system and economy. In 2012, when it became clear that Congress would not be reauthorizing ESEA despite the fact that it was long overdue for revision, the Obama administration began offering flexibility to states regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Title I, Part C, as amended by NCLB, contains the major statutory provisions that apply to the Migrant Education Program. The goal of the Migrant Education Program is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or high school equivalent certificate) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

### **Higher Education Act of 1965**

President Johnson also articulated the need for increased education opportunities for lower and middle income families, program assistance for small and less developed colleges, additional and improved library resources at higher education institutions, and utilization of college and university resources to help deal with national problems like poverty and community development. The Higher Education Act (HEA) was signed into law on November 8, 1965 “to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial

assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education” (Pub. L. No. 89-329). The HEA created grants, loans and other programs to help students acquire education beyond high school. The Talent Search program (what became “TRIO”), then called Contracts to Encourage the Full Utilization of Educational Talent, was created in the HEA of 1965. Today, all TRIO programs are authorized under the amended law.

Federal TRIO programs provide access to college readiness support, college completion support, and graduate education opportunities. Talent Search serves students from 6th-12th grade and provides academic, career, and financial counseling to promote high school graduation and college awareness and knowledge needed to pursue postsecondary education (Santiago & Brown, 2004). Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree; Upward Bound participants have access to tutoring, financial aid support, and the experience of living in a residence hall on a college/university campus for six weeks as part of the Upward Bound summer program where students take summer school courses, and receive college exploration support (Santiago & Brown, 2004). Student Support Services (SSS) supports the academic development and skill development of students through workshops, provides counseling to support degree completion, tutoring, graduate/professional school preparation resources, and may provide grant aid to SSS students who are Pell Grant recipients (Santiago & Brown, 2004). The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate program provides preparation for low-income, underrepresented, and first-generation college students to pursue and complete doctoral studies (Santiago & Brown, 2004). The McNair Postbaccalaureate program provides a variety of benefits: counseling support, graduate education exploration, graduate education application support, summer research internship opportunities, mentoring, travel to conference and graduate school visits, and guidance on securing financial support to enroll in graduate education programs. These Federal TRIO programs contribute to the educational attainment of all underrepresented students, including Latinos.

Additionally, the HEA has authorized since 1998 the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP). GEAR UP provides grants to States and Partnerships of colleges and school districts for comprehensive support services, including college scholarships, to assist students in high-poverty schools in completing high school and enrolling in college. GEAR UP projects target cohorts of students in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and provide services to these students through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and in some cases, continue assisting students in their first year in postsecondary education.

### **Adult Education Act of 1966**

Although it has its origin in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, adult basic education was established as a distinctive program with the passage of the Adult Education Act of 1966 (Parker, 1990). The legislation was part of an overarching long-term national strategy aimed at improving the economic condition of disadvantaged populations. As the number of enrollees increased from a half-million adults in 1968 to more than 3 million in 1988, the programs authorized under this legislation have been expanded and their purpose better defined.

## **Mexican American Education Study**

In 1971, the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued its first comprehensive study on a group of Latinos. Called the Mexican American Education Study, it specifically addressed Mexican Americans in the Southwest and consisted of six separate reports that were published in a span of four years (1971-1974). The first report provided the general size and distribution of Mexican Americans in the Southwest, while the subsequent reports provided a critical assessment of the state of Mexican American education. Overall, they found that Mexican American school children were racially isolated and did not have access to a quality education. These inequalities pervaded all levels of education. The major concerns were that Mexican American youth were reading below grade level, not graduating at the same rate as Whites, were twice as likely to repeat a grade, and were seven times more likely to be overage for their grade. Unlike earlier education litigation, studies, and school policies, these reports were endorsed by a federal agency and the experience of a group of Latinos was amplified by the federal government for the first time.

## **Increasing Educational Access & Opportunity in the 1970s**

The early 1970's saw the passage of several key pieces of legislation. The Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program (BEOG) was authorized as part of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972. The program was created to provide grant aid to assist eligible students attain a postsecondary education. In 1980, the BEOG Program was renamed the Federal Pell Grant Program after Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island.

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 into law. Title IX is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Consistent with Title IX, educational programs and activities that receive ED funds must operate in a nondiscriminatory manner, including in: recruitment and counseling; financial assistance; athletics; preventing sex-based harassment; treatment of pregnant and parenting students; discipline; single-sex education; and employment. Also, a recipient may not retaliate against any person for opposing an unlawful educational practice or policy, or making charges, testifying, or participating in any complaint action under Title IX. The principal objective of Title IX is to avoid the use of federal money to support sex discrimination in education programs or activities and to provide individuals with effective protection against sex discrimination. Similarly, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Recipients of this Federal financial assistance from ED include public school districts, institutions of higher education, and other State and local education agencies. Section 504 requires a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.

### ***Lau v. Nichols & Title VI***

In *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), a case brought forth on behalf of Chinese students in San Francisco, the plaintiffs argued that Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act was being violated because schools were not providing linguistic support to students who spoke little English. Title VI states that any federally funded program could lose federal funding if it is found to discriminate against people based on race, nationality, religion, or color. The plaintiffs won and ensured that federal funding would be provided to schools that had students needing bilingual education. Limited-English proficient school children, including Latinos, therefore benefited dramatically from the *Lau* decision.

### **Creation of the U.S. Department of Education**

In October 1979, under President Jimmy Carter, the Department of Education Organization Act was enacted, thereby creating the U.S. Department of Education. The Department is the agency of the federal government that establishes policy for, administers, and coordinates most federal assistance to education. It assists the President in executing education policies for the nation and in implementing laws enacted by Congress. The Department works across state lines to fulfill its mission to serve America's students—to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

### ***Plyler v. Doe***

In 1982, the Supreme Court held in *Plyler v. Doe* that a State may not deny access to a basic public education to any child residing in the State, whether present in the United States legally or otherwise. Denying “innocent children” access to a public education, the Court explained, “imposes a lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling status. . . . By denying these children a basic education, we deny them the ability to live within the structure of our civic institutions, and foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of our Nation.” For more than thirty years, *Plyler* has ensured equal access to education for children regardless of status.

### **Civil Rights Data Collection**

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC), formerly the Elementary and Secondary School Survey, is a biennial (i.e., every other school year) survey required by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR). The CRDC is authorized under the statutes and regulations implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the Department of Education Organization Act. The purpose of the CRDC is to obtain data related to the obligation of the nation’s public school districts and elementary and secondary schools’ to provide equal educational opportunity.

Since 1968, the CRDC has collected data on key education and civil rights issues in our nation's public schools for use by OCR in its enforcement and monitoring efforts regarding equal educational opportunity. The CRDC collects a variety of information including student enrollment and educational programs and services disaggregated by race/ethnicity, sex, limited

English proficiency, and disability. The CRDC is a longstanding and important aspect of ED OCR's overall strategy for administering and enforcing the civil rights statutes for which it is responsible. The CRDC is also a tool for other Department offices and federal agencies, policymakers and researchers, educators and school officials, and the public to analyze student equity and opportunity. The 2009-10 and 2011-12 CRDC are available to the public through <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/>.

## PROGRESS DURING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

The United States has long been guided by the notion that the source of its prosperity is not merely derived from how ably we accumulate wealth, but how well we educate our people. Over the course of the past six years, the Obama Administration has built upon this lasting principle by creating initiatives that provide equal education opportunities to students of all economic and cultural backgrounds, including our Latino students. While significant work remains to be done to fully meet the goal of equity and opportunity for all, our efforts have yielded substantial progress for students across the country, including significant improvements among Latino communities.

The President has spent the last six years advancing a vision for education that builds on policies and investments that raise the bar for all of our nation's learners across the education pipeline, to prepare all students for success in college and in future careers. Thanks to this vision and the hard work of states, communities, schools, teachers, advocates, students, and countless others, we have made significant progress across the educational continuum.

### *Expand Access to High-Quality Early Education*

Early childhood education makes a big difference for kids' outcomes – reducing the achievement gap, improving health and school readiness, and increasing long-term earnings. Research also shows that early childhood education makes the biggest impact on our lowest-income children—particularly those living in poverty. The largest achievement and developmental gaps are associated with children from low-income families, and in 2013, 35% of Hispanic children under five were living in poverty.

Research shows that Latino children tend to be less ready for school than their White peers, and that achievement gap grows with time. By the time Latino children enter school they are behind their White peers in reading and even further behind in math. This disparity is more pronounced for children whose parents exclusively speak Spanish at home as these children begin to learn English for the first time when they arrive in kindergarten. However, we know that high-quality early learning is one of the best tools we have to prevent and close this achievement gap. Studies of large-scale preschool programs in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Boston, Massachusetts have found that high quality early education and preschool can improve outcomes for all children, but the gains can be especially significant for Hispanic children, and those effects are even greater for children who come from homes where Spanish is the primary language spoken.

And yet, Hispanic children are consistently underrepresented in early learning programs and are the least likely among racial or ethnic groups to have access to preschool in the U.S., even

though they make up a larger proportion of the population than any other demographic (under age five) after non-Hispanic White children.

In order to meet this unmet need, in his 2013 State of the Union Address, the President called on Congress to expand access to high-quality preschool for every child in America, proposing investments that support a continuum of early learning opportunity, beginning at birth and continuing to age five. This proposal called for a federal-state partnership that will build upon and strengthen existing state systems to provide high-quality public preschool to all low- and moderate-income 4-year-olds (under 200% of poverty), while encouraging and incentivizing states to broaden participation to reach middle-class families, who could participate through sliding-scale or other arrangements. As a down payment on this investment, in 2014 the President announced \$250 million for Preschool Development grants, which are expanding access to high-quality public preschool for four-year-olds in more than 200 communities in 18 states.

Since we know that early learning begins before preschool, in his FY 2016 Budget, the President proposed to expand access to high quality, affordable childcare so that all low- and moderate-income families with children age three and under have access to a subsidy to help pay for quality child care, allowing parents to work or attend school or job training. By 2025, this investment would expand access to high-quality care to more than 1 million additional infants and toddlers, reaching a total of more than 2.6 million children served monthly through the child care subsidy program. These two proposals together would go a long way toward ensuring children start school healthy and ready to learn.

The Administration is committed to continuing to improve the quality of programs that serve our youngest children. The Head Start Program is our nation's largest preschool program, and provides comprehensive child development services that foster children's growth in social, emotional, cognitive and physical development, and monitor their progress in these areas to ensure that they are well prepared for kindergarten. About one-third (35 percent) of children who participate in Head Start are Latino, and they account for the largest proportional share of Head Start recipients by race or ethnicity.

The President has seeded new efforts to raise Head Start's standards, focus on school readiness results, and promote accountability, including the launch of a new process designed to ensure that only the most capable and highest quality programs receive Head Start grants. Additionally, Head Start is currently in the process of revising their Performance Standards, which outline all of the programs requirements that Head Start programs are required to meet, to better align with research about what works in early childhood education to ensure that our children get a strong start in school and in life. Proposed program improvements will support more effective teaching and professional development, encourage data-driven decision making for continuous quality improvement, and provide more instruction time in order to support long-term positive impacts for children who participate in the program.

## *Strengthening High-Quality Elementary and Secondary Education*

Today, nearly one in four K-12 students enrolled in America's public schools is Latino, and we know that our future success as a nation depends on the success of all students, including our Latino students. After a generation of watching other nations surpass ours educationally, today, America is putting in place the building blocks for schools that will once again lead the world. But there is major work ahead. America's schools are changing because our world is changing. Success in today's world requires critical thinking, adaptability, collaboration, problem solving and creativity—skills that go beyond the basics for which schools were designed in the past. But in recent decades, other countries have moved faster than we have to retool their schools—and we have lost our place as the world's education leader. The President believes we must do better. We can do better. The good news is that—thanks to the hard work of teachers, principals, students and communities—America's schools have made historic achievements in recent years.

The President has made it a national priority that every American student graduates from high school prepared for college and for a career. To that end, the Administration has promoted a series of reforms and investments to make significant progress toward this goal. Since the President took office in 2008, nearly every state and the District of Columbia has adopted standards aligned with college and career expectations. States are also engaged in administering high-quality assessments aligned to these standards. The Administration has also made progress in ensuring that every child has access to an effective educator; that our lowest-performing schools are identified and receive support for improvement; and that the federal government invests in evidence-based reforms and innovations that drive student improvement.

Through federal-state partnerships, the Administration has worked with 42 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to provide flexibility from the onerous, one-size-fits-all requirements of NCLB in exchange for state-led reforms that raise expectations for every student and target resources to better support locally-designed interventions in the lowest-performing schools and those with significant achievement gaps or persistent underperformance among subgroups of students, including Latinos.

And we are seeing results. According to fourth and eighth grade results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), math scores for Hispanic students have risen a full grade level. This corresponds to a broader trend, which shows that between 2009 and 2011, the share of low-income fourth graders performing at or above the basic level in math grew by 10 percentage points. NAEP also indicates that the high school graduation rate, at 81 percent, is the highest in America's history. Latino graduation rates have grown 11 points between 2007-08 (64 percent) and 2012-13 (75 percent). Dropout rates are down sharply, and the Latino high school dropout rate among 16-24 year-olds was cut by more than half from 28 percent in 2000 to 11.7 percent in 2013. Sixty-nine percent of Hispanic high school graduates in the class of 2012 enrolled in college that fall, higher than the rate among their white counterparts (67 percent).

Our nation's elementary and secondary schools are improving, with students learning more and with more students graduating. But there is still much more that must be done to ensure that every child receives a quality education, and this Administration will continue to push an agenda that ensures equity and opportunity for all students, including Latino students.

### *Expand College Opportunity & Strengthen Student Aid and Oversight*

More students are graduating from college than ever before. Since the beginning of the Obama Administration in 2008, the college-going rate for Hispanics has risen by nearly 50 percent.

The President has continued efforts to make college more affordable. Since taking office, the President has doubled investments in college scholarships by expanding Pell Grants and the American Opportunity Tax Credit programs. As part of that expansion, more than 725,000 additional Hispanic students have received Pell grants, totaling 1.8 million Hispanic students who received Pell grants in the 2011-12 award year.

Through America's College Promise, the President has also called for two years of tuition-free community college for responsible students willing to work for it. With more than half of Hispanic students attending a two-year community college, many Hispanic students may benefit from greater access to college opportunities in their local communities. The President's proposal can also benefit the Hispanic students pursuing career and technical education; today, we see that 17 percent of Hispanic students graduate with degrees in career and technical education.

The President has taken strides to allow borrowers to make sure that student debts are manageable. With the President's actions, borrowers can now cap their loan repayments at 10 percent of their monthly income. These changes benefit Hispanic students, who on average complete a Bachelor's degree from a public college with \$23,441 in debt, and from private college with \$36,266 in debt.

The progress we have made over the last six years has been hard-fought. While sometimes it has been slower than we want, we continue to make major strides towards expanding opportunities for all students across the country. In the next sixteen months, the Administration looks to continue its focus on providing a well-rounded education for all students from kindergarten to higher education.

### **EDUCATION ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT TRENDS IN P-20 EDUCATION FOR HISPANICS (1990 – 2015)**

The growing number of Latino students in America's public school classrooms has changed the face of education in the U.S. (College Board, 2011). Great progress has been made in educational attainment over the last 25 years but there is great opportunity to further increase educational achievement. Latinos continue to experience lower levels of educational attainment than their peers at various levels of education (Lumina Foundation, 2007).

**“The first step to closing that gap is to believe as I do, that high expectations are for all students. I believe intelligence is equally distributed throughout the world, but opportunity is not. And the same is true within our own country.” --President William J. Clinton**

## **Early Learning**

A strong foundation in preschool and early childhood education (ECE) is very important to educational gains for Latino youth in their future educational experiences and reduces the likelihood of grade retention and placement in remedial programs. ECE also socializes Latino youth into the academic culture of the school system. While there are great benefits of preschool enrollment, Latino students are the least likely to enroll (Schneider, Martinez, & Owens, 2006) and further exploration needs to take place to better understand factors contributing to these lower enrollment rates as 63 percent of Latino three- and four-year-olds were not attending preschool in 2012. Contributing factors may include: lack of available quality preschool programs, costs, lack of transportation, accessibility and availability of health care (for pre-enrollment immunization requirements), and lack of awareness about positive outcomes connected to preschool enrollment and early childhood education (College Board, 2007)

Head Start has led to positive changes in enrollment in preschool programs for Latinos, particularly for low-income children. Indeed, Head Start is specifically designed for low-income students and families and utilizes federal poverty guidelines to determine eligibility. However, Head Start does not reach all Latino youth – especially migrant Latino youth – who are eligible for the program (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Early learning takes place not only in the classroom but in the home environment as well. Latino families contribute greatly to the early education of Latino children as 97 percent of Latino families reported teaching their children letters, words, or numbers, which is on par with all families at 98 percent (NCES, 2012b).

## **K-12 Education**

Today, one in four students in our K-12 public schools are Latino and this will continue to rise. In fact, in many major cities and locations, the percentage of Latino students is well above 25 percent. With the increased growth of the U.S. Latino population, it is imperative to understand Latino educational experiences in our K-12 educational system. Though great progress has been made in Latino student achievement and education, this progress needs to mirror that of non-Latinos (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Disparities in educational attainment impact individuals but also the future prosperity of our nation (Lynch & Oakford, 2014). Closing the achievement gap is essential as it will provide great economic and societal benefits (Lynch & Oakford, 2014).

Latino students overall still score below the national average in the areas of math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), their scores have increased over the last 10 years (Excelencia in Education, 2015). For example, the average NAEP scores for 4th grade Latino students increased 9 points (to 231) in math and 7 points in reading (to 207) between 2003 and 2013. The average NAEP scores for 8th grade Latino students also increased in math by 11 points (to 263) and reading by 11 points (to 256) between 2003 and 2013 (NCES, 2003, 2013).

Data show that Latino young boys and young men of color overall, regardless of socio-economic background, are disproportionately at risk throughout the journey from their youngest years to college and career. For instance, large disparities remain in reading proficiency, with 82 percent

of Latino boys reading below proficiency levels by the fourth grade, compared to 58 percent of White boys (Initiative, 2015c).

As Latino students move through the K-12 setting, the achievement gap becomes more pronounced, especially in the transition to high school. Latino students represent 22 percent of all students, second to White students, enrolled in high school (Excelencia in Education, 2015b).

**The lifetime economic benefit to our nation for converting a Latino high school dropout to a high school graduate is valued at more than \$171,000 for each graduate** (re-computed in Gándara & Initiative, 2015 from report by Levin et al., 2006).

While high school completion rates have risen, Latinos continue to be less likely to graduate high school on time than most other groups at 71 percent, compared to 83 percent for Whites and 94 percent for Asian Americans (NCES, 2012a).

Latino students are more likely to attend K-12 public schools of lower academic quality, as measured by Academic Performance Index (API) scores that measure the academic performance and progress of individual schools in California (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). Along with attending schools with a poor infrastructure and resources, Latino students are also more likely to attend schools with less-experienced teachers and have less access to rigorous academic courses especially in the areas of STEM and AP/IB courses, and lower access to Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) programs (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2012). This may lead to decreased academic preparation and readiness to pursue postsecondary education. For example, in California, the number of Latino college students placed in pre-college coursework in one year could fill the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum more than one and a half fold, which is the largest stadium in California (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). While the growing college-going rate is a promising indicator of increased college access and readiness for Latino students, more must be done to be made to foster not only postsecondary enrollment, but more importantly educational attainment in postsecondary education (Carnevale, 2013).

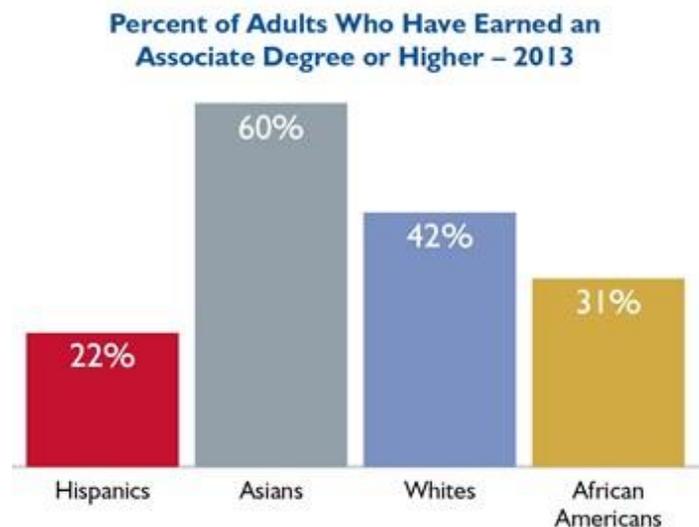
Even with all of these challenges, we are still seeing progress. Latino students were also the second most represented group who took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course in high school (Excelencia in Education, 2015b), although AP course offerings need to grow in high schools serving predominantly Latino student populations (Kohler & Lizarin, 2007). Additionally, while Latinos have the highest high school dropout rate in the U.S. in comparison to other groups, that rate has dropped nearly by half over the last 20 years (Malavé & Giordani, 2015). Latina high school graduation rates have risen by 15 percentage points between 2003-2013 yet they are still the lowest graduation rates of all women (Gándara & Initiative, 2015). Latino male high school dropout rates have also decreased. In 2002, 30 percent of Latino males dropped out of high school; the number decreased to 14 percent in 2012 (NCES, 2013).

## Postsecondary Education

Attaining a college degree is important for many reasons. As we transition into a knowledge-based global economy, the value of college degrees has increased. The Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University projects that 65 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education and training beyond high school by 2020.

Latino students are increasingly able to access to higher education; however, Latino students continue to obtain college degrees at rates lower than their non-Latino counterparts (Arbona & Nora, 2007). Latino students are also less likely to enroll in postsecondary education upon high school completion (College Board, 2007). This decreased enrollment may be due to a variety of factors including: concerns about financing postsecondary education, lack of resources to finance postsecondary education, lack of information about the process of pursuing postsecondary education, and not meeting admissions requirements or receiving guidance in the admissions process (College Board, 2007).

In 2013, 22 percent of Latino adults aged 25 years and older had completed an associate's degree or higher, in comparison to 46 percent of Whites, 60 percent of Asian Americans, and 31 percent of Blacks (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).



*Associate degree attainment figure from *Excelencia in Education* (2015b), p. 4*

In 2009, President Obama challenged our nation to increase the share of the U.S. population with a college degree by 2020, particularly among adults ages 25-34, which is one of the benchmarks for international comparisons. Looking at adults ages 25-64, *Excelencia in Education* calculated that Latinos would need to earn 3.3 million additional degrees to put the U.S. at the forefront of international college degree completion rankings, with Latinos representing close to 25 percent of all additional college degrees earned (*Excelencia in Education*, 2010).

Leading researchers say that some level of learning in higher education is a necessity to achieve middle class status and contribute economically and civically to our nation, contributing to the importance of dismantling the inequities in our educational system (Lumina Foundation, 2015).

There are major opportunities for postsecondary education institutions to meet the needs of the Latino population and potentially adapt to becoming places where Latino students make up the majority of the student population on campus, or at least the largest racial/ethnic minority group (Miller, 2015). Additionally, while Latino parents and families share high educational aspirations, especially in the pursuit of postsecondary education, this does not necessarily translate into postsecondary enrollment and completion and our states and institutions must do more to foster postsecondary attainment (Schneider et al., 2006). It is especially important that states with large and emerging Latino populations continue to work to ensure college access and enrollment. In light of the need to expand educational opportunity to more students, particular states such as Texas and California have implemented initiatives to target Latino student success in postsecondary education such as partnerships across school districts and colleges/universities (Miller, 2015).

These efforts are yielding positive results. Nearly one of every 2 additional students enrolling on public college/university campuses since early 2001 was Latino (Miller, 2015). While postsecondary enrollment trends are growing on a national scale, more than half of the enrollment increases for Latino students occurred in three states: California, Florida, and Texas (Miller, 2015). Importantly, Latinos are more likely to have a high school diploma and postsecondary degree than they were 20 years ago so there is great promise that Latinos across the nation will be more educated than the previous generation (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). In addition, according to the most recent data, approximately 680,000 young people have received temporary relief under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy announced in 2012 (USCIS, [www.uscis.gov/data](http://www.uscis.gov/data)). This has helped many individuals pursue educational opportunities that they were previously unable to pursue (Perez, 2014).

## **Community Colleges**

Community colleges enroll forty percent of college students and provide affordable tuition, open admission, convenient location, and flexible course offerings (Initiative, 2011). Community colleges are not only central to the goals of the Obama Administration, but to everyone as a means to increase the percentage of adults with postsecondary credentials (ETS, 2015). Many Latino students begin their postsecondary education in the community college setting, especially as community colleges more frequently meet the needs of adult students who are attending or returning to school part-time while balancing familial and work responsibilities (ETS, 2015). Students at community colleges should also be supported to reach their graduation goals, as many may experience difficulty in pursuing transfer options due to limited resources (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015).

Latinos were the second highest group enrolled in community colleges in 2013 at 20 percent, while Whites represented 54 percent (NCES, 2013). Additionally, almost half (49 percent) of Latinos who were enrolled in higher education were enrolled in community colleges (NCES,

2013) compared to 31 percent of Whites, 32 percent of Asian Americans, and 34 percent of Blacks (NCES, 2013). Not only do community colleges provide vital access to postsecondary education for Latinos, but they also provide remediation to address a lack of academic preparation that may derive from K-12 education. This is key since 41 percent of Latino students, compared to 31 percent of White students, required remediation when entering postsecondary education since they were not college-ready upon enrollment (NCSL, 2015). Over half of Latino students enrolled at community colleges needed remediation (Excelencia in Education, 2015b).

## **Undergraduate Education**

Latinos were the second largest group enrolled at four-year colleges/universities and 51 percent of Latinos enrolled in higher education were enrolled in four-year colleges/universities (NCES, 2013). The majority (60 percent) of Latino students enrolled in four-year colleges/universities were also enrolled in HSIs (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). Latinos also increased in bachelor degree completion in the last decade (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). In 2004, 1.9 million Latinos held a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004) and this has risen to 3.1 million in 2013, reflecting a 63 percent increase (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Latino college enrollment is also projected to increase by 27 percent by 2022--more than other races/ethnicities (NCES, 2014d). On a national level, 51 percent of Latinos who begin college complete a bachelor's degree within 6 years, compared to 59 percent of White students (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015).

The majority of Latino students in postsecondary education are U.S.-born or legal residents (98 percent). Action has stalled on immigration reform legislation that would put undocumented youth on a path to earned citizenship and allow these individuals to access federal financial aid. But the Administration has taken action to provide temporary relief, on a case-by-case basis, to certain undocumented youth who came to the United States as children. Several states have pursued policies to increase access to undergraduate education through in-state tuition policies for students who have graduated from high schools within their respective states, including those who have received deferred action under the DACA guidelines (Perez, 2014).

Latino males only represented 42 percent of Latinos enrolled in higher education in 2012 (NCES, 2013). Latino males represented 6 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment population compared to Latina women at 8 percent (NCES, 2013). While enrollment is low, Latino male enrollment in undergraduate education has increased almost 80 percent from 2002-2012, from 699,000 in 2002 to 1.25 million in 2012 (NCES, 2013). Despite this growth, Latino males also earned fewer college degrees than Latina women, as 20 percent of Latino males earned an associate degree or higher compared to 25 percent of Latina women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Federal initiatives such as My Brother's Keeper are focused on closing opportunity gaps and ensuring that all our young people can reach their full potential. If the

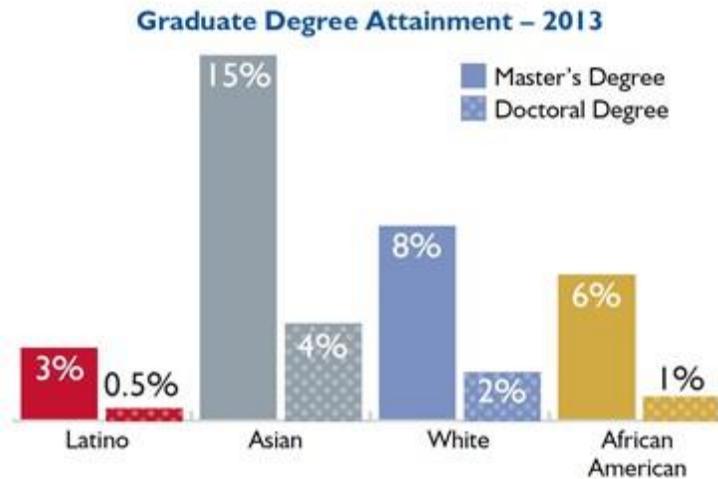
educational attainment gap was closed between men of color and Non-Hispanic White men ages 16-54, for example, the share of men of color who have completed bachelor's degrees would double (White House, 2015).

In 2009-2010, 60.7 percent of bachelor's degrees conferred to Latinos were conferred to Latinas (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012a). Although Latinas are faring better than their Latino male counterparts in terms of educational attainment, they are still earning less than their male counterparts in the work force (Gándara & Initiative, 2015). Latinas are also less likely to complete a college degree compared to their non-Latina counterparts. In 2013, nearly 19 percent of Latinas between 25-29 years of age had completed a college degree compared to White (44 percent), African American (23 percent), and Asian American (64 percent) women (NCES, 2014e). Latinas are a "linchpin of the next generation" and if the cycle of under-education is to be broken for the Latino population, it is highly dependent on changing the fortunes of Latina women in both education and the workforce (Gándara & Initiative, 2015). A child's success in education is highly correlated with his or her mother's educational attainment and projections indicate that by 2060 Latinas will represent nearly a third of the female population in the U.S. (Gándara & Initiative, 2015). Not only are Latino youth's futures tied to Latina educational attainment, but so is the future of the nation (Gándara & Initiative, 2015).

### **Graduate Education**

Latinos represent the lowest percentage of students enrolled in graduate programs compared to all other groups except Native Americans (0.5 percent). In 2012, 7 percent of students enrolled in graduate education were Latino, compared to Whites (60 percent) and African Americans (13 percent) (NCES, 2013). Latinos who are enrolled in graduate programs are concentrated within five locations: California, Texas, Puerto Rico, New York, and Florida (Excelencia in Education, 2015). These five locations accounted for 63 percent of Latino graduate education enrollment. Additionally, 37 percent of Latino graduate students were enrolled at an HSI.

While more work needs to be done to improve enrollment and completion in graduate education, Latinos have increased the number of master's degrees they have earned in the past decade. From 2003 to 2012, the number of master's degrees earned by Latinos increased 103 percent, outpacing Whites (36 percent), African Americans (89 percent), and Asian Americans (65 percent) (NCES 2013). While there has been increased enrollment, Latino graduate education has been concentrated within particular disciplines. The top three academic disciplines in which Latinos completed a master's degree include: education (26 percent), business (25 percent), and health professions (10 percent) (NCES, 2013). The majority of Latino doctoral students complete their graduate study in two main fields: legal professions (39 percent) and health professions (32 percent) (NCES, 2013).



*Graduate degree attainment figure from *Excelencia in Education* (2015b), p. 10*

Latinos also represented the smallest percentage of the U.S. population earning doctoral degrees. In 2011-2012, 5 percent of all doctoral degrees conferred were earned by Latinos (NCES, 2013). As of 2013, 141,000 Latinos had earned a doctoral degree in comparison to 2.6 million Whites, 192,000 African Americans, and 502,000 Asian Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013a). Latinas also have the lowest percentage of graduate degrees completed compared to their non-Latina counterparts with only 4 percent of Latinas having completed a master’s degree or higher by 29-years-old, compared with 11 percent of White, 5 percent of African American, and 22 percent of Asian American women (NCES 2014e). Latino males enrolled in graduate education programs at lower rates than Latina women, with 38 percent of Latino students enrolled in graduate education programs being Latino males (NCES, 2013).

While the number of Latino students enrolled in doctoral degree programs from 2003-2012 increased 67 percent in comparison to 32 percent for White students, 56 percent for African American students, and 49 percent for Asian American students (NCES, 2013), the percentage of Latinos earning doctoral degrees has the potential to grow even further.

### **Adult Education**

“I am a non-traditional student. I raised a family, secured my G.E.D., then began my college education at a community college while working over forty-five hours a week. After several years I was able to transfer to the University of California, Irvine. I believe it is important for others to know it is never too late to acquire a degree. The life challenges one overcomes may strengthen one’s resolve to succeed.” –**Sara, University of California, Irvine**

Latino adult learners come from many different walks of life and approach educational opportunities at various times in their lives. Unlike many traditional students, adults typically have more outside responsibilities that compete with their time and ability to advance

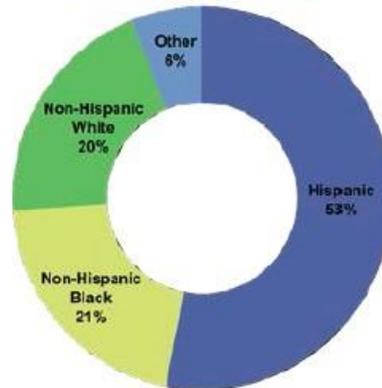
educationally. In addition, there is no single group of adult learners; they vary widely in age, have differing levels of academic readiness, come from different social and economic circumstances, and have varying levels of English language fluency (College Board, 2011).

Adult and technical education has provided access to postsecondary education opportunities for Latinos. Transforming career and technical education (CTE) to meet the needs of Latino students is essential to this process. The strength of the American economy is inextricably linked to the strength of the Hispanic workforce. At roughly 24 million, Hispanics represented 16 percent of the U.S. labor force in 2013 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013a) and are expected to grow to 19 percent by 2022 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013b).

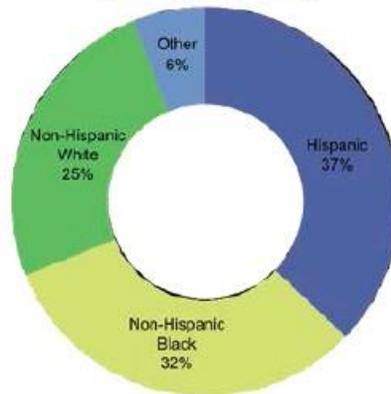
By 2060, Hispanics are projected to account for nearly a third of the workforce. According to the Census Bureau, one out of four public school students nationwide in October 2012 was Hispanic. In many major cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, and Miami, the Latino population is sometimes higher than 50 percent.

In 2013, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released their report, *Time for the U.S. to Reskill? What the Survey of Adult Skills Says*, which examined the low-skilled U.S. population in detail. The report found that the basic skills issue affects minority communities in profound ways, in part given the scarcity of resources in high-need areas. While Hispanics represent 14 percent of the adults who took the assessment, they comprise 53 percent of those who scored at the lowest level in literacy and 37 percent of those who scored at the lowest level in numeracy.

U.S. Adults With Literacy Below Level 1,  
by Race/Ethnicity



U.S. Adults With Numeracy Below Level 1,  
by Race/Ethnicity



Report: *Time for the U.S. to Reskill? What the Survey of Adult Skills Says* (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) pg. 4)

CTE represents a critical investment in our future. It offers students opportunities for career awareness and preparation by providing them with the academic and technical knowledge and work-related skills necessary to be successful in postsecondary education, training, and employment. Employers turn to CTE as an important source of talent that they need to fill skilled positions within their companies. Effective, high-quality CTE programs are aligned not only with college- and career-readiness standards, but also with the needs of employers, industry, and labor. They provide students with a curriculum based on integrated academic and technical content and strong employability skills. And they provide work-based learning opportunities that enable students to connect what they are learning to real-life career scenarios and choices.

### **Hispanic Serving Institutions**

With the increase in the Latino population and Latino enrollment in higher education, it is possible that the number of colleges earning the HSI designation could increase in the future (Miller, 2015). The HSI classification was developed by the federal government in 1992 when

the Higher Education Act was reauthorized (Gasman, 2008) and as leaders recognized there was a subset of postsecondary institutions that enrolled a large proportion of Latino students but did not have adequate resources to meet the needs of their Latino student population (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). The new HSI designation also addressed concerns of college access for Latino students as well as low completion rates from institutions who enrolled high Latino student populations but had limited funding from federal or state governments to meet the needs of their Latino students (New America, 2015). HSIs are colleges and universities that have a Latino student full-time equivalent enrollment of at least 25 percent (Excelencia in Education, 2015b) and meet other eligibility criteria related to needy students and institutional resources. Institutions that have applied for and received HSI designation are also eligible to apply for U.S. Department of Education Title V grants, which are five-year competitive grants to implement programs and services targeting Latino student access and degree completion in postsecondary education (Excelencia in Education, 2015b; New America, 2015).

HSIs and potentially eligible HSIs make up 11 percent of higher education institutions in the U.S. (Excelencia in Education, 2015b) and enroll half of all Latino students pursuing postsecondary education (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Additionally, “emerging HSIs” are also growing where the Latino student enrollment comprises between 15-24.9 percent. In 2012, Excelencia in Education, a non-profit organization, focused on the status of Latino educational achievement, identified 277 emerging HSIs located in 31 states (New America, 2015). While HSIs provide access to Latino students, many HSIs must also strengthen degree completion for Latino students, as HSIs graduate less than half (29 percent) of their Latino students within six years, which is below the national average of 57 percent (New America, 2015). There is a great opportunity for HSIs to contribute to Latino student success.

## **Conclusion**

Disparities in educational attainment trends will persist unless Latino student needs are not carefully and deliberately considered by leaders pursuing important postsecondary education policies. Advancing student achievement is not only critical to individuals and their families but also to our country’s economic wellbeing and future prosperity. That is why the Administration has and will continue to support and pursue efforts that increase opportunities for all students, including the growing number of Latino students who are enrolled in our educational system.

“... if we raise expectations for every child and give them the best possible chance at an education – from the day they are born until the last job they take – we will reach the goal that I set two years ago; by the end of the decade, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world” --**President Obama**

## SUCCESSFUL AND PROMISING PRACTICES

Several practices have been beneficial in fostering the educational attainment of Latino students in education. While none of the programs or strategies described in this section were designed specifically to serve Latino students, they have shown to benefit Latino students. A summary of a number of promising practices to support the academic success of Latino students across the educational pipeline is provided below.

Selected promising practices are highlighted to provide examples, not as a means for endorsing particular programs or practices. A one-size-fits all approach is not a beneficial approach to adopt given the unique and diverse needs within student populations. For example, what may work in one K-12 environment may not work in another, and it is important to emphasize of the need to design and implement programs and practices that meet the needs of the students served.

### Early Learning

- Partner with institutions of higher education to increase teacher effectiveness (College Board, 2011).
- Create support programs that promote meaningful parent involvement and family literacy opportunities (College Board, 2011).
- Utilize linguistically and culturally responsive practices when serving youth . This may require early childhood education programs to pay attention to Spanish language use and the diverse cultural roots of Latino families (Latino Policy Forum, 2009).
- Create professional development programs that attract and retain culturally and linguistically diverse educators (College Board, 2011).
- Develop early learning guidelines that take into account the learning needs of English Language Learner (ELL) children by creating benchmarks related to English language development (College Board, 2011).
- Develop partnerships with community-based organizations to provide effective family outreach (College Board, 2011).
- Develop outreach strategies to ensure equitable access to services, including by targeting Latino, immigrant, ELL and geographically isolated families (College Board, 2011).
- Actively reach out to families. Outreach challenges can include: identifying eligible youth for preschool and early learning programs, connecting with non-English speakers, building connections with the community, and ensuring that Latino families are knowledgeable about eligibility for various programs. Outreach should be conducted in the home language of the families as well as one-on-one contact established with families (Latino Policy Forum, 2009).
- Establish and strengthen a mixed-service delivery system (public/private, center-based and home-based) that leverages the expertise of community-based organizations to provide and expand ECE services (College Board, 2011).
- Screen children in their native language, utilizing a comprehensive and individualized screening process that begins with families filling out applications, and providing referrals when and if families are ineligible for specific early childhood services and programs (Latino Policy Forum, 2009).

- Provide youth with a culturally relevant education that incorporates and values their diverse cultures. This begins by becoming familiar with the family's background and culture and nurturing strong child-family-school relationships (Latino Policy Forum, 2009)

## **K-12**

- Teachers should draw from culturally-responsive teaching approaches as well as cooperative learning practices. These strategies have been effective in educating Latino students (Verdugo, 2006). Culturally-responsive and culturally-competent teachers incorporate the language, history, and culture of Latino students and utilize parents/families to learn about their culture and their students' interests and needs (Verdugo, 2006).
- Increase the number of school counselors in high schools with a high dropout rate or high proportion of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. Increasing the number of school counselors will increase the time spent on postsecondary education activities and college planning by decreasing the student-to-counselor ratio (College Board, 2011).
- Strengthen reading skills as it is imperative that all students are reading at grade level by the third grade to increase their likelihood of graduating from high school as well as attaining future educational opportunities, increased labor earnings, and reduced incarceration (White House Administration, 2015).
- Implement effective credit recovery programs with high student expectations. Holding high expectations is the foundation for ensuring that Latino students are receiving a high-quality education that is comparable to the education of their non-Latino peers (College Board, 2011).
- Provide access to a rigorous high school curriculum that prepares them for postsecondary access and success as students frequently are not taking the right number or right type of courses to prepare them for postsecondary education and the workforce after high school (ACT, 2015).
- Provide access to strong role models can help increase the likelihood of students achieving their goals to pursue postsecondary education early on (College Board, 2011).
- Expand tutoring, supplemental instruction, and mentoring to positively impact Latino student persistence and achievement (ACT, 2015).
- Begin participation in college and career exploration activities early to increase high school graduation rates and provide a foundation for transition into postsecondary education (College Board, 2011).
- Provide college application support by involving college/university students and faculty as well as community members (College Board, 2011).
- Engage families in school practices through two-way communication between educators and parents/families. Engaging Latino families in the education of their children will deter Latino students from dropping out and foster their educational attainment (College Board, 2007).
- Provide college awareness and readiness support including: mentoring, college exploration workshops, SAT/ACT test preparation, financial aid support, parent activities, and summer programs including field trips and college visits. The federal

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR-UP) serves a cohort of students beginning no later than the 7th grade through high school graduation and provides support to students as they transition into undergraduate education and provides scholarship opportunities (Santiago & Brown, 2004).

- Districts and States should build on current efforts to: hold schools accountable for ensuring that students are on track for college and careers; ensure students have equitable access to effective (or “excellent”) educators within schools and districts and across the state; ensure that schools serving high concentrations of Latino students are not getting fewer State and local dollars than other schools; ensure assessments are not culturally biased; provide native language assessments where possible to measure content knowledge while students transition to speaking English.

### **Postsecondary Education**

- Create a streamlined and simple pathway to transfer from community college to four-year colleges/universities on a state-level. Strong articulation programs can provide a seamless pathway for Latino students to earn their bachelor’s degree after attending a community college (College Board, 2011). Given the large concentration of Latino students at community colleges, providing a simple transfer pathway can foster college completion.
- Provide access to remedial courses for Latino college students especially in the areas of English, reading, and math (NCSL, 2015).
- Develop a strategic blueprint to focus on student success strategies to ensure access to postsecondary education and foster college degree completion (College Board, 2011).
- Disseminate college knowledge and financial aid information to Latino families, especially families of Latino first-generation college students, to support Latino educational attainment by making Latino families partners in Latino postsecondary education success (College Board, 2007).
- Provide training and professional development in culturally-responsive teaching, educational change, and how to prepare students to thrive in a global society (College Board, 2007).
- Offer student success courses, supplemental instruction, participation in experiential learning outside the classroom, tutoring, registering in courses prior to the start of the term, and early alert of student concerns and subsequent interventions from faculty, staff, and peers are also high-impact practices to foster student success in postsecondary education, especially community colleges (ETS, 2015).
- Provide textbook loan programs, transportation subsidies, enhanced career services, and a mechanism to fill gaps between financial aid received and college tuition/fee costs, to decrease the risk of students dropping out of postsecondary education (White House Administration, 2015).
- Develop state-based support programs such as the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) in California that targets low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. The program includes pre-admission counseling, orientation, summer programs, placement testing, financial aid support, tutoring, and holistic counseling focusing on personal, educational, and career development (College Board, 2011). In 2006, Latino students in EOP had a six-year persistence rate of 62 percent.

- Provide college degree completion support as well as access to pursue graduate education (Santiago & Brown, 2004).

## **Adult Education**

- Develop an accelerated outreach plan to engage individuals who do not have a high school diploma, and develop strategies to encourage completion of a diploma or high school equivalent certificate (NCSL, 2011).
- Offer credit for prior learning. This is especially relevant to Latino adults with some college but who have not completed a degree or who have been very active in the workforce without a college degree (NCSL, 2011).
- Expand state tax incentives for employers to support their employees' education (NCSL, 2011).
- Provide funding for flexible learning environments. An example being personalizing a program to a student's schedule, allowing the student to learn independent of time or place, working around a student's duty to work and family (NCSL, 2011).
- Implement a program that addresses the needs of adult students who need to balance work and education (NCSL, 2011).
- Leverage the Adult Education Basic Grant Program administered by the Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (OCTAE, 2015).
- In coordination with the administration's ConnectEd efforts to bring more connectivity to schools, OCTAE is working to inform adult education programs, teachers, and learners about low-cost Internet options, such as those brokered by [www.EveryoneOn.org](http://www.EveryoneOn.org), that can turn classrooms, public housing community centers, and community-based organizations into Internet access hot spots and provide in-home access to low-income families (OCTAE, 2015)
- The single largest open education resources (OER) effort currently in the adult education and job training field is the federal Department of Labor's \$2 billion Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program, which requires all community college grantees to share the resources developed using these funds (OCTAE, 2015).
- *Moving Pathways Forward*, a three-year state-based program to expand career pathways for low-skilled adults to transition to postsecondary education, is providing technical assistance and coaching to 13 states on aligning state adult education and workforce policies and developing cross-agency and industry partnerships, and all states are expected to benefit from materials shared on an interactive, Web-based information exchange (OCTAE, 2015).
- One-stops, both physical locations and digital access points, now will be charged with making sure youth and adults receive "information on the availability of the career services...regardless of where the individuals initially enter the statewide workforce development system"(OCTAE, 2015, p. 19).
- One successful strategy being used by states and localities to scale up effective models for low-skilled youth is to adopt policies that allow k-12 per-pupil education funding (known as average daily attendance, or ADA, funds) to follow youth who have dropped out into alternative settings, such as adult education or dropout recovery charter schools and dual enrollment, community college-based programs. Wisconsin, California,

Washington, Oregon, and Texas are among the states implementing this strategy (OCTAE, 2015).

- On the job training (OJT), which is funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other federal programs and subsidized by some states, gives employers temporary wage subsidies for hiring individuals and providing them occupational training on the job (OCTAE, 2015).
- Utilize OCTAE's Employer Engagement toolkit to help bridge the worlds of business and adult education; can assist with the new requirement in WIOA for workforce development and adult education programs to engage with local and regional employers (OCTAE, 2015).

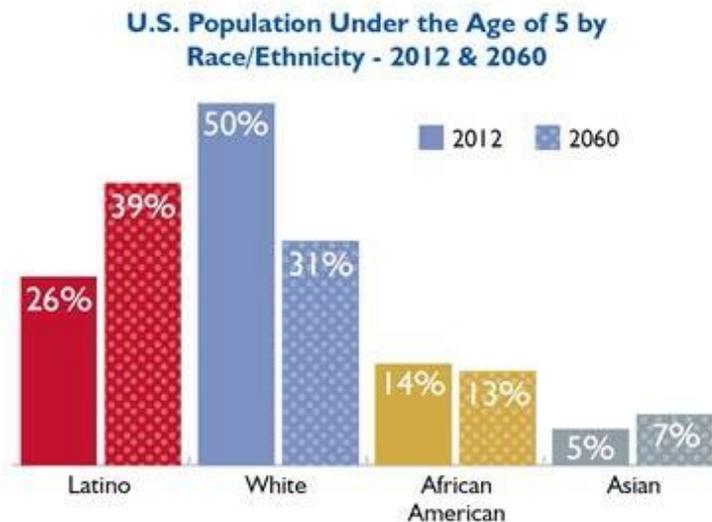
The aforementioned practices and programs are highlighted based on the success these programs have had on the retention, educational attainment, and graduate school access of Latino students in postsecondary education. However, these programs have diverse implications within the Latino sub-populations by ethnicity (e.g., Mexicans, Cubans, etc.) and there are a wide variety of state-based, local, institution-based, and community-based programs contributing to the successful outcomes of Latino students in postsecondary education. While these are just some of the many core areas and successful/promising practices that have contributed to the educational excellence and attainment of Latino students, we recognize there is great potential for further development, strengthening, and expanding of these practices in many areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As the Latino population continues to grow, more can continue to be done to foster the educational attainment of students. Below are some key recommendations to consider in the future of Latino education and provide an opportunity to reflect upon the status of Latino education. Recommendations are intended to help guide future educational policies and practices impacting education.

### Early Learning

A child's learning begins at birth and children must be shaped, nurtured, and involved with high-quality learning practices, environments, and relationships with parents, caregivers, and teachers (Initiative, 2011). Latino students are less likely to be academically ready for college and this readiness has a foundation in a child's early learning because the years prior to enrolling in kindergarten are the foundation for students' learning and future educational success. With Latino students representing more than 25 percent of children under the age of 5 it is especially important to make strong investments in early childhood education programs to ensure a strong academic foundation (ACT, 2015). Outreach to parents early in a child's educational journey increases parental involvement throughout a child's educational experiences. Fostering parental involvement from an early age will provide parents and families with the tools and support they need to contribute to their child's academic progress. The Latino population under the age of 5 is projected to increase to 39 percent by 2060 (NCES, 2014a). Improved college and career readiness develops as early as kindergarten and it is important that all students develop a strong foundation in early reading and math skills that they can carry into elementary and secondary education.



*Population figure from Excelencia in Education (2015b), p. 5*

Increasing enrollment in early childhood education can lead to positive outcomes in a student's future educational trajectory as students who attended early childhood programs have reaped the benefit of positive outcomes including: increased postsecondary enrollment, reduced levels of

grade repetition, and decreased high school dropout rates and teen pregnancy (College Board, 2011). Cost is a key barrier to enrolling in early childhood education for Latinos, which is why the availability of quality and affordable early childhood education options is key (College Board, 2007). While increasing enrollment is key, that is not enough. Quality early childhood education programs must also strong partnerships with preK-3 school systems and teachers to support students' transition along the educational pipeline as well as integrate linguistic and cultural training for teachers to better support students (Latino Policy Forum, 2009).

## **K-12 Education**

Research shows that students with lower academic readiness and preparation for college enrollment will have limited postsecondary opportunities, which is why a strong foundation must be fostered in K-12 education. Providing all students, including Latino students, with equal access to a rigorous high school curriculum will provide them with a strong foundation for postsecondary education and future careers (ACT, 2015). The absence of a rigorous curriculum means that students may not be taking the right courses to challenge them academically or prepare them for postsecondary education or the workforce after high school (ACT, 2015). Access to rigorous curriculum early on prepares students for future academic success in postsecondary education.

States can also adopt rigorous college- and career-readiness standards and strong dropout prevention programs to ensure that the next generation is prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce (College Board, 2011). Federal programs such as GEAR UP, Talent Search, and Upward Bound serve as model student support service programs that have contributed to the college access of Latino students through providing college application process knowledge and support, tutoring, parent/family involvement, and more (Santiago & Brown, 2004). An elective course on college preparation and exploration could also be offered to middle school students so they are prepared to apply to college (College Board, 2011).

While access to rigorous curriculum and student services are vital, college and career counseling for middle and high school students should be improved. The student-to-counselor ratio for Latino students is high, (College Board, 2011), and college counseling and information early on can help students understand the benefits of postsecondary education as well as obtain knowledge about how to apply for and finance postsecondary education (College Board, 2011). Educators and counselors in particular must keep in mind that there is not a one size fits all approach for students and it is important to meet the needs of diverse populations who come from rich cultural histories and communities. Educators and counselors should also strive to focus on postsecondary preparation rather than just academic achievement (College Board, 2011). Although the Latino student population is diverse, one commonality is the value and investment that Latino families make in their child's education and it is vital that schools and policies make an equal investment in all students, including Latino students.

## **Postsecondary and Adult Education**

While the U.S. had one of the most educated labor forces in the world, the President has a goal for the U.S. to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020. Reaching

college completion goals on a national level requires focus on the postsecondary degree completion rates of Latino students (College Board, 2011). Many Latino students are also the first in their families to pursue and complete postsecondary education and programs and strategies to provide guidance and support services should continue to increase (ACT, 2015). Implementation of these targeted initiatives will increase the development of behaviors and knowledge that lead to success in postsecondary education. Decreased educational achievement, by contrast, is linked to low earning power and potential. Lower educational attainment with a growing population can lead to a variety of concerns including: a decreased pool of qualified workers to fill increasingly complex workforce needs, lower disposable income to drive buyer demand, more families living in poverty, and a decreased ability to attract quality business to the nation and individual states (Hart & Hager, 2012).

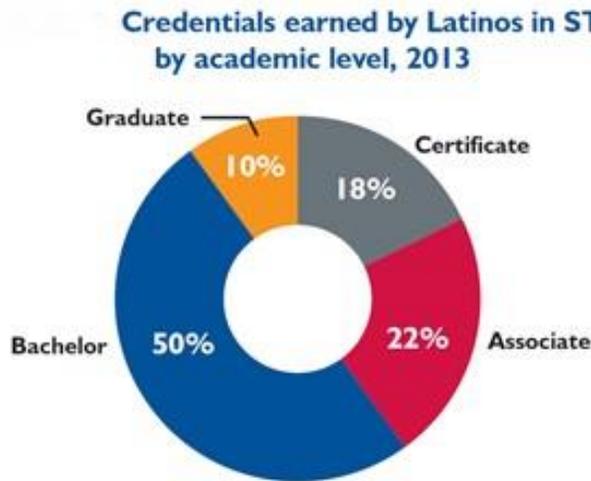
It is difficult to foresee how colleges/universities will handle the Latino population growth especially as most college search tools' completion rates track full-time students entering colleges and universities for the first time. While part-time and transfer data are made available – and disaggregated by race – for the first time through the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard's data from the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) and while the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) will also include part-time and transfer data in the coming years, states and institutions can increase transparency for Latino students' outcomes by strengthening their data collection and reporting.

States can strive to explicitly include Latino students in their postsecondary education strategic plans to think about what initiatives on a statewide level can help close achievement gaps (Miller, 2015). To keep the American dream of educational opportunity and economic prosperity alive, postsecondary education systems must be welcoming, accountable, and intentional about student success and be passionate and committed to their success (The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015). Policy conversations frequently focus on college access and enrollment and future shifts must continue to focus on postsecondary success and degree completion (College Board, 2011). Graduation rates in postsecondary education can also improve with an institutional commitment to graduating all students as well as reformed government funding focusing on degree completion rather than college enrollment (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015).

## **STEM Education**

A strong workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is vital to the nation's ability to maintain its position as a global leader. More than 8.6 million STEM-related jobs are projected to be available by 2018 (ACT, 2015). With this rise in STEM-related careers there needs to be increased support and resources for STEM-related curriculum in order to meet the rising demand for a growing STEM workforce (ACT, 2015; Excelencia in Education, 2015a). As a result, encouraging students to pursue STEM education and STEM careers is extremely important to our economic competitiveness as a nation. In addition to a focus on STEM curriculum in the classroom, an emphasis on STEM career and academic pathways can be made in elementary and middle school to increase students' exposure to these subjects early on to spark their interest in STEM fields (ACT, 2015). Introducing these subjects early with strong preparation can also lead to further interest in STEM career pathways in high school and postsecondary education.

Latinos who completed postsecondary education in STEM are also currently concentrated at the baccalaureate level so there is great opportunity to expand the graduate pipeline in STEM to meet workforce demands. In addition, the Latina STEM pipeline can be strengthened as well, as Latinas earned 60 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded to Latinos, but only 37 percent in STEM academic fields (NCES, 2014c). Latinas with STEM degrees were also less likely to work within the engineering and science fields compared to their Latino male counterparts (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). Collaborations between the business sector, postsecondary education institutions, K-12 education, non-profits and more can come together to interest, attract, and retain students, including female students, in STEM-related academic programs and careers.



Source: *Excelencia in Education* analysis of the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS, 2012-13, Completions Survey.

*STEM credentials earned figure from Santiago, Taylor, & Calderón (2015), p. 5*

### **Latino Teacher Recruitment**

Increasing the number of Latino teachers will benefit all students by bringing a diverse perspective to the classroom environment and culturally-responsive teachers. In addition, having positive experiences with teachers can foster students' interest in teaching as a career (Ramirez, 2010). Because teachers serve as role models for a career in teaching it is important that teachers receive strong teacher training to be effective educators (Bireda & Chait, 2011). It is equally important that all teachers receive a strong foundation in culturally-responsive, cooperative-learning centered, and culturally-inclusive teaching practices as these practices have positively contributed to the success of students (Dotson-Blake, Foster, Gressard, 2009; Gay, 2002; Rivera & Zehler, 1991). Local and school-based training programs can also be implemented to ensure that teachers feel equipped to meet the needs of diverse student populations, including the growing Latino student population. School districts can partner with local colleges/universities with larger ethnic minority student populations to increase the number of diverse teachers in the area by providing teacher training opportunities within their school district (Bireda & Chait, 2011).

While recruiting Latino teachers is critical, providing access to high-quality teacher preparation programs and focusing on teacher retention are equally important. In terms of access, financial concerns should not be a barrier to recruit diverse aspiring teachers. Federal and state financial aid programs must be strengthened for low-income students seeking to enter the teaching field (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Supporting the retention of teachers can include providing a strong mechanism to assess teacher candidates' potential for success in the classroom setting and providing intensive support throughout their journey as teachers (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Increasing retention of Latino teachers can also lead to increases in Latino school counselors and Latino school administrators, especially since many Latino principals and school leaders can trace their careers back to teaching (Méndez-Morse, Murakami, Byrne-Jiménez, & Hernandez, 2015). Having a teaching workforce that reflects the student population will drive us to meet the demands of our diverse nation as well as classroom environments.

### **Engaging Latino Parents and Families in Education**

Latino parents value higher education for their children. In a 2011-12 survey of parents with children in middle or high school, 91 percent of Latino parents expected their child to obtain some level of higher education (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). Latino parents value the importance of being engaged in their child's education. In 2011-12, over 85 percent of all Latino parents reported attending a general school meeting or PTA meeting and over 70 percent reported attending parent/teacher conferences (Excelencia in Education, 2015b). However, Latino parents were less likely than all parents to participate in classroom activities. Latino also parents reported they were less likely to volunteer in the classroom (32 percent vs. 42 percent) or attend a class event (64 percent vs. 74 percent) than all parents. More needs to be done to think about how to engage Latino parents/families into the classroom setting

Forty-three percent of Latino children come from families where mothers have less than a high school education. As Black and Latino children are more likely than White children to live in areas of concentrated poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), have parents with lower education attainment levels (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005), and have parents who do not have secure employment (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2012), the need to engage parents effectively in family support services targeted to these populations is especially acute.

Two-generation approaches to development, which bring together both students and parents/families, are one mechanism that can be used to focus on meeting the needs of children and their parents together, moving the whole family toward educational success and economic stability (Lombardi, Mosie, Patel, Schumacher, & Stedron, 2014). These approaches are based on research indicating that when parents have access to educational opportunities (for themselves and their children), economic supports, and social networks, they are more able to support the healthy development of their young children (Center on the Developing Child, 2007). Few things better predict a child's educational outcomes than the education of his or her mother (Tang et al, 2014). If we are to interrupt the cycle of disproportionate under-education and poverty among the Latino population for the future, it is especially critical to raise the education level and living and working conditions today (Gandara & Initiative, 2015).

“My parents have always pushed me to go further in my education than they could. Whenever I felt stressed or discouraged they always reminded me how special it was to receive an education and how they didn't have the possibility of obtaining one.” –  
**Jessie, University of Mary Washington**

## CONCLUSION

“My higher education granted me the privilege to dream...I learned to embrace my story, the good and the bad, be myself at all times and place myself in uncomfortable experiences to grow the most...I wish I would've known that it's okay ask for help, asking for assistance doesn't make you a charity case, instead an opportunity to be invested in.” --**Adan, Georgetown University**

Given the growing Latino population in the U.S., the current educational attainment for Latinos at all levels, and the need for a skilled workforce in the U.S., fostering educational excellence is vital – especially college degree completion. Identifying the barriers to educational excellence-- whether that includes: unequal school resources, attending schools with unqualified teachers, policies that inadvertently create barriers to educational access, limited knowledge and resources to support student success-- is everyone's responsibility. Everyone from community leaders to educators to federal and state policymakers to parents and students all have a stake in educational excellence. If our nation is to remain fiscally healthy and a competitor in the global workforce and economy; we must all contribute to the education of our youth, including Latinos. As a nation we cannot expect improvement and growth in educational attainment to occur without an investment and the desire to meet future workforce needs.

The discourse used also needs to be future-oriented, asset-based, and accurate and it is important to be critical and reflective about the policies and practices shaping educational excellence and access. A more accurate picture and understanding of the experiences and needs of Latino students can more accurately guide policy efforts and initiatives. Our hope is that you feel compelled as a student, parent, policy maker, educator, and American to invest in the success of all students, including Latino students. As the Latino population grows in the U.S. and in our classrooms, educational institutions at all levels will need to implement policies and programs to meet students' needs with intentionality and genuine care. The knowledge and life experiences Latinos bring to education will not only contribute to the diversity of the educational system but will also bring an ethic of care to our postsecondary institutions. While there is much work to do, it is an exciting time to invest in the educational pipeline and remember that education is a vehicle for future success! What will you do to positively impact educational excellence in the next 25 years?

“If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible — from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career.” —**President Barack Obama**

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## Appendix A

### **President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics**

Eduardo J. Padrón, Chair

#### **Early Learning Subcommittee**

- Sylvia Acevedo, Chair
- Modesto Abety Gutierrez, Vice-Chair
- Cesar Conde
- Nancy Navarro
- Adrian Pedroza
- Manuel Sanchez
- Shakira

#### **K-12 2 Education Subcommittee**

- Daniel J. Cardinali, Co-Chair
- Patricia Gándara, Co-Chair
- Alicia Abella
- Alfredo J. Artiles
- Lily Eskelsen
- JoAnn Gama
- Monica Martinez
- Veronica Melvin
- Maria Neira
- Eduardo Padron
- Darline P. Robles
- Kent Paredes Scribner

#### **Postsecondary Education Subcommittee**

- Luis Fraga, Co-Chair
- Lisette Nieves, Co-Chair
- Francisco G. Cigarroa
- Mildred Garcia
- Manuel Gomez
- Sara Lundquist
- Monica Martinez
- Darline P. Robles
- Ricardo Romo
- Marta Tienda