

# The Latino Education Crisis

## Rescuing the American Dream

by Patricia Gándara

*The United States faces an unprecedented challenge. The largest and fastest growing minority group in the nation — Latinos — are performing academically at levels that will soon put the entire society at risk and consign these young people to a permanent underclass. From kindergarten to high school graduation and college matriculation, the gaps in achievement between Latinos and most other students are enormous, and in many cases growing. Projections are that, unchecked, this situation will continue to worsen. No other statistic better captures the plight of the Latino population than college completion rates.*

While other groups have continued to increase their share of college degrees over the last three decades,<sup>1</sup> Latinos have made almost no progress. In 2008, they were about half as likely as African Americans and a third as likely as White students to obtain a college degree. As the job market continues to demand more education and Latinos make up a larger and larger portion of the workforce, the consequences will be felt by all of society.

In 2008, Latinos constituted 20 percent of the school-age population nationally; by 2025 they will be one in four of all public school students. In

California half of all students are now Latino, and Texas is right behind with 47 percent; 14 states have at least half a million Latinos and in 22 states Latinos are the largest ethnic minority.<sup>2</sup>

Some communities have initiated major school reform efforts to address minority underachievement, but changing the culture of schools is slow, hard work, especially if the actors are constantly changing, as is chronically the case in poor schools. Moreover, educational attainment is highly correlated with wealth, and wealth is very unequally distributed in the United States.

**Latinos, the largest and fastest growing minority group in the nation, have made almost no progress in college completion rates in the last three decades.**

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For example, in 2003, only 13.6 percent of Latino families earned \$80,000 or more compared to 34 percent of White families.<sup>3</sup> According to the U.S. Census, almost 29 percent of Latino children lived below the poverty line nationally in 2007 (compared to 15 percent of White children), and the effects of poverty on intellectual and academic achievement can be pernicious.

Michael Martinez, a psychologist with the University of California, points out the systematic ways in which formal and informal education have both been shown to directly increase the intellectual ability of humans. Mothers' education has perhaps the most potent effect on children's measured ability or achievement,<sup>4</sup> and psychologists have linked this to the kinds of informal educative experiences that well-educated mothers engage in with their children. For example, college-educated mothers spend more time with their children on activities that advance cognitive development, such as reading, fostering exploration of the environment, and asking children to explain things. But Latina mothers have the lowest average education of all ethnic groups, reducing their repertoire of informal educational activities. At least one third has not completed high school (compared to 6 percent of White mothers), and many have much less education.<sup>5</sup>

## Public Policy and Academic Achievement

To the extent that there are differences in background factors like parent education and income in the lives of children, they will be reflected in different levels of achievement. However, research yields six areas in which public policy that acknowledges the interlocking nature of schools, homes, and communities can change the course of academic achievement for Latino students, and all of these are within our grasp:

- » Early and continuing cognitive enrichment
- » Housing policies that promote integration and residential stability
- » Integrated social services at school sites
- » Recruiting and preparing extraordinary teachers
- » Exploiting the Latino linguistic advantage
- » College preparation and support programs

## Early and Continuing Cognitive Enrichment

Early intervention, if sustained over time, can affect the intellectual development of children. The evidence suggests that this early intervention needs to extend beyond the classroom, involving the homes of preschool children and familiarizing their parents with the demands of school and how practices in the home can work hand in hand with the goals of schooling. Most important of all are literacy practices in the home such as reading to and with children, but also talking to them about ideas, about how things work, about the skilled activities that parents engage in. These activities are referred to by researchers as the "funds of knowledge" that parents have and can share with their children.<sup>6</sup>

Many low-income Latino parents believe that they cannot help their children learn because they do not have much formal education themselves, or because they do not speak English, and their skills and abilities are often overlooked by schools. In their eagerness for their children to learn English, many Latino parents forego the opportunity to teach their children to read in Spanish, thinking this will hinder their English learning. However, learning to read, even just being read to, in Spanish is an important precursor to achievement in English.<sup>7</sup> Developing a strong vocabulary in Spanish helps students develop a strong vocabulary in English. There is much that Latino parents, of all educational and economic levels, can do to support their children's schooling, if they are encouraged and supported to do so. Teachers need to be prepared to invite and facilitate this home support.

Similarly, preschool that prepares Latino children for formal schooling needs to incorporate and build on the learning that occurs in the home. For example, building young children's vocabulary in the language they use in the home provides a strong basis for cognitive development. It allows children to quickly access the learning they have already accomplished and to build on what they already know.

Two psychological principles are critical for understanding the way children learn, whether English speakers or not: Learning is most efficient when it builds upon prior learning; and knowledge acquired in one language is transferred to other languages once the

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corresponding vocabulary and linguistic structures have been acquired. Thus, teaching a child to read in a language in which the child already has a knowledge base of sounds (phonemic awareness) and word meanings (vocabulary) is more efficient than attempting to teach that child to read in a language she does not know and has no knowledge base to call on.<sup>8</sup> And, once an individual has learned to read, this task never has to be learned again. Basic decoding skills can be applied to any language; when the languages share the same alphabet and similar sounds, the task is even more parallel. Moreover, teaching the child, at least part of the time, in the home language provides a bridge so that parents can extend that learning in the home.

Policies that seek to use preschool as the venue to begin English immersion can result in reducing the efficiency of children's learning rather than accelerating it. Likewise, preschools (and K–12) that send messages to parents to “speak to your child in English” when parents do not have a good command of English can undermine parents' greatest potential as teachers. Over time, this also undermines parents' authority as children come to see their parents as deficient and less knowledgeable than their own children because of their lack of English. Lily Wong Fillmore<sup>9</sup> has studied the disruption that this can cause in family relationships and the disciplinary problems that can ensue, jeopardizing students' academic achievement. Preschool children offered a rich bilingual curriculum can benefit both linguistically and academically. A recent randomized study of English bilingual versus two-way immersion preschool programs found that, in high-quality programs, the children made the same advances in language, literacy, and mathematics tested in English, but the Spanish-speaking children in the dual-language program also gained significantly in

Spanish vocabulary, at no cost to the academic gains of the English speakers.<sup>10</sup>

Children who live in poverty, on average, perform at lower levels academically regardless of the language they speak — Spanish, English, or some other language or dialect. Contrary to stereotypes and oversimplifications, speaking Spanish is not fundamentally what holds Latino students back academically; opportunities for learning is a far more important factor. Poor children of English-speaking backgrounds also perform significantly below their English-speaking peers because their learning opportunities are far fewer.

Latino children who arrive at school already behind their peers in kindergarten, as most do, need additional instructional time, and those that must also acquire a new language probably require even more time. They also require more consistent and extensive exposure to English spoken by people who have a good knowledge and command of the language. And, they need many opportunities during each day to use the new language they are learning, in formal classroom contexts and informal contexts with peers and others. Studies we have conducted show that even in very good school systems, English learners are often given little more than a few minutes a day to actually speak in class,<sup>11</sup> and intensive within-school segregation of students results in few opportunities to interact with native English speakers even when they attend schools that have significant numbers of English speakers.<sup>12</sup> Recent research suggests that full-day preschool — with well-prepared bilingual teachers who can enrich students' learning in both languages — exposing students to good models of both languages should be part of any serious plan to narrow achievement gaps.<sup>13</sup>

## Housing Policies That Promote Integration and Residential Stability

Latino students are heavily segregated in the schools; this is especially true in the West where 60 percent of Latinos in the large cities attend hyper-segregated schools in which 90 to 100 percent of students are non-White.<sup>14</sup> English-learner Latinos are often similarly segregated into schools where most students do not speak English as a native language.<sup>15</sup> Without the opportunity to be exposed consistently to strong English role models in the community or in school, it is difficult to learn the language of the classroom. Such isolation also results in a peer and community context that is lacking in critical social capital. Non-native speakers are more isolated from mainstream experiences and therefore have less knowledge and fewer critical social contacts to call on.

It has been argued that housing is the fulcrum of opportunity, linked to many factors critical to the success of adults and children in American society: access to good schools as well as “wealth, healthy and safe environments, positive peer groups for children, good local health care, convenient access to areas of greatest job growth, high-quality public services, networks to jobs and college, and many other forms of opportunity.”<sup>16</sup>

Segregated housing becomes the vicious cycle that traps families into intergenerational inequality because housing is so closely connected to quality of schools and quality of schooling is so closely connected to future economic opportunity. Students in neighborhoods that are segregated by race and socioeconomic status are not likely to attend schools that prepare them for college and are much less likely therefore to complete a college degree — the primary means of social mobility for members of the lower and working classes. So their children become victims of the same inequality that they have experienced.

Latino students must be assigned to schools that will give them the chance to break the vicious cycle of poor schooling and limited opportunity. Educators must consider innovative ways to redistribute students across schools to achieve less ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic isolation, notwithstanding increasing legal impediments to desegregation of schools. Changing school boundaries, providing racially and socioeconomic status balanced magnet schools, and providing transfer

opportunities to attend two-way language programs are among the many options that schools can employ. The most powerful remedy, however, is to desegregate housing. Not a simple challenge, but one for which policies do exist and can be implemented.

Increasing gentrification of urban centers across the country invites new opportunities to create excellent schools that can attract the returning middle and upper middle class to the inner cities, as well as providing subsidized homes for high-quality teachers who might be thereby inclined to stay in such inner-city schools. Mayors should seize on these opportunities to work with school boards to create schools that will strengthen the attractiveness of their cities to all families with children.

Also important are housing policies that help low-income families put down roots in a community, allowing their children to stay in the same school. Latino students, and especially immigrants, are more likely than others to move frequently and this often has very negative effects on schooling outcomes.<sup>17</sup> For all children, the relationships they form at school with teachers, counselors, and peers are key for engagement and learning; children who move frequently are unable to establish these key relationships and are often unknown to their teachers. Increasing the stock of subsidized housing for families with children, especially in areas with strong schools, should be a critical component of a plan to change the academic trajectories of Latino students.

## Integrated Social Services

The United States is the only rich nation that does not provide comprehensive health care for its children. Many Latino students spend significant time out of school with chronic illnesses that could be prevented, and that time in school is often negatively affected by toothaches, poor vision, asthma, and other health-related problems. Even as health insurance for all documented citizens becomes available, accessibility for low-income families will continue to be a challenge because health care resources are not evenly distributed among lower and upper income communities. A number of attempts have been made at the state and regional levels to provide integrated physical and mental health

One third of Latino families have no health insurance; as a result, these students spend more time out of school with chronic illnesses.

services for low-income students through cooperative arrangements among schools, counties, and regional health agencies, though such centers are still relatively rare nationwide. However, when implemented well, they can have substantially positive effects on children's physical and mental health, which are at least indirectly related to schooling outcomes. Some studies have also shown that these programs can reduce student mobility through greater attachment to school, a factor that is highly related to student achievement.

In 1991, California passed a state law establishing Healthy Start centers that served as many as 148,000 students in 148 schools at its peak in 1997. However, the program has been progressively defunded in spite of evaluations showing the program reduced unmet needs for food, clothing, transportation, and medical and dental care; improved clients' emotional health and family functioning; reduced teen risk behaviors, improved grade point averages modestly, and reduced student mobility.<sup>18</sup> There is no new funding for this program. The Communities in Schools organization has operated for more than 30 years to provide integrated services at school sites for disadvantaged students. A range of social services is provided, including health clinics at some sites. It currently operates in 27 states and serves more than two million students,<sup>19</sup> but the program is built largely on volunteer help, with all the limitations that implies.

Concerted efforts have been made by some foundations to extend the numbers of school-based health clinics for low-income students around the country, but both controversies over the kinds of services provided and lack of stable funding have hampered these efforts. Yet, we have long known that children whose basic needs are not met cannot come to school ready to learn.

## Recruiting and Preparing Extraordinary Teachers

The single most critical resource in any school is the teacher, and well-prepared and experienced teachers for Latino students are in short supply. This is especially true if the students do not speak English. School districts often despair of finding teachers with the skills and aptitude to work in low-income communities, and with children who have special needs. When school districts are able to recruit these teachers, they commonly find that they leave for other schools and other jobs that are less demanding and that compensate them better.<sup>20</sup>

Teachers for these students must have skills and the means for communicating with parents and enlisting them as allies; they must be able to communicate with and motivate their students; they must understand the circumstances of the students' lives and histories. Critically, teachers must know how to provide deep, rich, and intellectually challenging instruction that pushes students to excel. They must be able to help children learn to think deeply and creatively about problems and they must be able to build on the foundations of learning that the students bring with them to school.

Solutions to the problem of teacher quality and stability for Latino students involve more than just increased salaries. Teachers must be recruited from students' own communities. These would-be teachers already have a unique knowledge of and sensitivity to the culture and language of this group; training them as teachers is the easier task.<sup>21</sup> Teachers from these communities are also more likely to remain in the teaching profession in these same communities.<sup>22</sup> However, so few Latinos successfully make it through the college pipeline that the pool of potential teachers is small;



further, those individuals who complete college degrees often have many professional options. But, many Latino students (like other students from low-income backgrounds) are anxious to make a difference in their communities and can be enticed into teaching with targeted incentives, such as scholarships, housing allowances or mortgage loans, signing bonuses, and the like.

To retain these Latino teachers, research suggests that their working conditions should be improved by assigning them smaller classes, providing strong, supportive leadership in their schools, providing time for planning and collaboration with colleagues, and making their campuses safe, clean, and attractive.<sup>23</sup>

The cost of such incentives to attract and retain these high-quality teachers is small compared to the lost taxpayer investment in teachers who are ineffective and leave the classroom early in their careers out of frustration. A recent study puts the cost of teacher turnover nationally at \$7 billion per year.<sup>24</sup>

## Exploiting the Latino Linguistic Advantage

Although in American schools speaking a language other than English is generally considered an impediment to learning, a defect to be corrected, and a characteristic with little relevance to other students, other developed nations typically view command of multiple languages as essential to a well-rounded and economically productive education. As many of these nations are now overtaking the United States in average years of education,<sup>25</sup> the United States might consider taking a second look at some of their education policies with respect to language learning.

The popularity of English as a world language frees Americans from the necessity of speaking other languages in many contexts, but it does not obviate the advantage that accrues to individuals who can speak directly and in a culturally appropriate way to colleagues, clients, and business partners in other parts of the world, or to individuals within our own borders whose primary language is not English and who increasingly represent a vast market opportunity. Nor does it obviate the need to speak heritage languages that are rich with family and community culture and history, and tie children to their roots and to their extended families. It also fails to capitalize on the human resources and cognitive advantages that are represented by having full literacy in another language.

If the United States is not to be left (further) behind in the education race and in a globalizing economy, the ability of its people to work and interact across cultural and linguistic borders will become increasingly important. Languages must be seen as resources, as invaluable human capital, and as doorways to enhanced cognitive skills. This is the one area in which many Latino students arrive at school with an advantage over their non-Hispanic peers, and it can be used to benefit all the children in a school.

There are many hundreds of two-way immersion programs (those that combine students from both target languages and in which both groups learn in two languages simultaneously) listed by the Center for Applied Linguistics.<sup>26</sup> Some of these have developed as a result of restrictive language policies in states, but there is a tendency for such programs to spring up in very highly educated communities (often in close proximity to university campuses) where parents are anxious to have their children learn a second language. It is easily argued that the students who participate in such programs are

neither “typical” English speakers nor “typical” speakers of other languages, as their parents tend to be highly motivated to provide opportunities for their children to be multi-lingual. Nonetheless, numerous studies have found that two-way immersion students either perform as well as those students in English only (in addition to being similarly skilled in a second language) or they outperform the English-only students, across all academic areas.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, students in two-way or dual immersion programs tend to have more positive attitudes toward non-English languages and cultures and to exhibit better intercultural relations with students who speak other languages. That is, these programs appear to prepare students better for the global village.<sup>28</sup> In fairness, it is important to note that the research also finds limitations of these programs in their tendency to privilege the learning of the English-speaking students over English learners,<sup>29</sup> and not all communities have the mix of students to provide such programs. Nonetheless, the biggest impediment to more widespread adoption of two-way and bilingual programs is almost certainly the lack of qualified teachers to teach in them. Strong programs require teachers who are very strong bilinguals themselves and who have expertise in developing innovative programs. We could have many such teachers, given the fact that in states like Texas and California, 30 to 40 percent of the college-age students come from second language backgrounds. By capturing more of these students in the college and teacher preparation pipeline through targeted recruitment and tuition supports, we can begin to build the capacity to break the cycle of underachievement and language loss.

## College Preparation and Support Programs

College access or college preparation programs are seriously limited in their ability to change the educational trajectory of students because they generally begin too late and affect too few students. But the most effective of these programs incorporate many practices that should be embedded in the routines of schooling — access to rigorous curricula with academic supports, comprehensive counseling, supportive peer groups. Like school reform, however, we cannot wait until the day that public schools have the resources to adopt the effective practices of these programs, and so we must

reinforce what is now in place to help as many students as possible.

A critical feature of such programs must be to bridge the K–12 schools with colleges and universities. Those programs that have demonstrated effectiveness should be instantiated in schools as early as possible and should be linked to effective college support programs. Summer bridge programs, for example, can confer considerable benefits — social, psychological, and academic. When carefully implemented, they help students build a network of support and give them the confidence that they can perform to standard at college. But, the support cannot stop at the door to college. Latino students who are the first in their families to go to college need a supportive network, and sensitive counselors, at the college level as well. And they need the support and encouragement not just to survive, but to excel. There are models of these kinds of programs that support high achievement; the most important features of such programs include:

- » recruiting a critical mass of Latino students;
- » creating supportive peer study and social groups;
- » placing the best teachers in freshman classes;
- » extending program components beyond the freshman year;
- » acknowledging that skill development is cumulative and that some students may require more time to excel; and
- » providing meaningful financial aid.<sup>30</sup>

## College Financial Aid

Even in the most generous states, a four-year college education is now beyond the reach of most low-income students. Most Latino students go to two-year colleges, and two-year college students are much less likely to receive financial aid.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the great majority of students who attend community college work substantial hours outside of school, limiting time for study, developing attachments to the college, and jeopardizing their grades.<sup>32</sup> And for most low-income students, the cost of tuition, which is about all that can be covered with most financial aid packages, is only part of the economic burden. Even if they live at home and commute to college, they must consider foregone income very seriously.

Studies of Latino students show that lack of financial aid — whether it is due to lack of knowledge of how to get it, or actual lack of available funds — is a key impediment to college-going.<sup>33</sup> Because it is so much in the interest of the states to increase college-going and college completion, especially for this very large sector of underrepresented and underserved youth, the states would benefit by ensuring a cost-free four-year education for all qualified, low-income students, with stipends and/or interest-free loans for living expenses. This could be accomplished, in part, by better alignment of federal and state financial aid programs, easing of the family income threshold for financial aid eligibility, such as allowing eligibility for all federal program (e.g., TRIO and Gear Up) participants and those on free and reduced-price lunch programs.<sup>34</sup> Given the severe fiscal consequences to the states and the nation of not increasing the degree completion of large percentages of Latino students, these policies simply make common sense.

For those Latino students who are undocumented, but who have completed significant portions of their K–12 education in the United States, the passage of a federal Dream Act is critical to their motivation and ability to go to college. Now stalled in Congress, this would allow undocumented students with U.S. educations, and no criminal records, to have provisional legal status, access student aid, and eventually apply for citizenship under specific conditions. Without the promise of some kind of legalization of status, it is very difficult for these students to acquire a job. Without the ability to get a job in the legal labor market, there are few incentives to pursue education, especially as it requires such enormous economic sacrifice to pay non-resident tuition. But many of these students are trapped — they have lived most of their lives in this country, do not have ties or supports in any other country, and can only imagine living their lives out in the United States where they see themselves as being “Americans.”

Immigrant optimism has spurred many undocumented students to do well in school and look forward to contributing to U.S. society, but without legal status they are currently precluded from doing so. In fact, they are being channeled back into the underclass where most of their parents are located.

## The Cost and Benefit of Educating Latino Students to College Completion

A few years ago, Georges Vernez and Lee Mizell of the RAND Corporation were commissioned by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund to conduct a study looking at the costs and benefits of doubling the college completion rate of Latino students in the United States — a goal that the Fund had set out to achieve.<sup>35</sup> These researchers found two major investments necessary to double the college completion rate of Latino students: (1) investment in the high school and higher education infrastructure to support increased numbers of students; and (2) direct investments in these students. They calculated the infrastructure investment at \$6.5 billion in 2000 dollars, but argued that this was only half the value of the benefits that would accrue to society — \$13 billion — from increased tax collection on enhanced earnings and decreased social service costs. They were less certain about the direct costs for students, citing anywhere from \$300 to \$6,000 per student. Even at the highest level of per-student expenditures (\$6,000), they argued that the economic benefits to society outweigh the costs.

We have also estimated the costs for supporting students across the span of youth development. Intensive intervention among the youngest children (which would include a relative few highly at risk 0–3 year olds) and at the other end of the spectrum, at the level of four-year college, are the most expensive and can easily double or triple the \$6,000 per student that Vernez and Mizell estimated as the upper parameter of costs. On the other hand, expenditures during the K–12 years are considerably less on a per-child basis, though these could rise substantially if schools were actually funded at levels that would allow them to meet the real academic and social needs of their students. However, no matter what we do, all students will not go on to college, and all of those who do will not stay to complete a college degree. Expenditures at the level of college will be much lower when averaged over all students.

A true understanding of the costs and benefits of boosting the numbers of college completers will require a different kind of analysis, one that incorporates broader social and economic benefits. Reversing the under-education of Latino students will lead not only to increased tax revenues and decreased social expenditures, but also to an economy that will continue to grow and

States would benefit by ensuring a cost-free four-year college education for all qualified, low-income students.

to healthier social conditions. Moreover, it will prepare Latino youth to participate fully in American democracy, and increase the likelihood that they will vote and make meaningful contributions to their communities.

## Rescuing the American Dream

America is still the land of hope. Presidents win elections by invoking the hopefulness of this country, and more than a million people come here each year, hoping to make the American Dream their dream. This fundamental lack of cynicism in the American people is perhaps this country's greatest asset. And, it is why immigrants are so good for this country. They remind us of what we stand for, and what the rest of the world wants to share in. We can harness that hopefulness to create the more equitable society that we, as a people, believe in.

While not everything that needs to be done can be implemented in the short run, a policy agenda for the nation that could immediately begin to address the inequitable conditions for Latino students would include the following:

**Subsidized preschool programs.** Many states are engaged in planning for universal preschool. The federal role could be especially important in subsidizing salaries for highly qualified teachers, who with better salaries would stay in their job and reduce the turnover rate. The U.S. Department of Education could provide funding to develop intellectually rigorous curricula that are sensitive to the language and cultural needs of Latino students.

**Universal health care that can be accessed at school sites or local community centers.** If all Latino children could have accessible health and social services, it would take a large burden off of the schools for

students whose learning is jeopardized by unmet basic needs. Once a seeming political impossibility, it is now within reach and should be a part of any health care legislation that is passed at the federal level.

### ***School desegregation and residential stabilization.***

The federal government can support school desegregation through programs aimed at moving “welfare” families into suburban areas where their children can attend stronger schools that integrate them into the societal mainstream. The states, working with their cities and counties, can provide both carrots (tax subsidies) and sticks (legislation) to require developers to build and subsidize more low-income housing in suburban areas. Cities can work with their school districts to provide world-class schools in gentrifying inner cities that are bringing in middle- and upper-income families, so that desegregation of schools can occur organically.

### ***Targeted recruitment and better preparation for teachers.***

By reinstating graduate fellowships, the federal government could help train more bilingual, bicultural faculty, who can then prepare a cadre of highly qualified teachers for Latino students. And by ensuring a cost-free education for college students who want to serve as teachers (and counselors, psychologists, nurses, and social workers) in the public schools that serve low-income students, the states can stimulate the pool of teachers and other professionals who come from Latino communities.

**Support for dual-language programs.** With the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the U.S. Department of Education could institute incentives for schools to provide dual-language programs. This could be accomplished by including incentives for those students who are mastering subject

matter in more than one language, and by removing disincentives (such as removing the requirement that dual-language programs produce English proficiency on the same timeline as English-only programs).

#### **Dropout prevention and college access programs.**

School districts can institute, at relatively little cost, programs that take teachers into students' homes so that teachers and parents can partner in supporting students' learning. In addition, they can implement programs to track students who are at risk of dropping out so that intensive intervention can occur. Because these programs, in reality, often serve the dual purpose of holding students in school and preparing them for college, a relatively modest investment by the federal government to evaluate these programs could point to the most effective intervention strategies to achieve both of these goals.

**Passage of a Dream Act.** It is important to pass a Dream Act that will allow high-performing students who through no fault of their own find themselves undocumented and therefore unable to attend college and to contribute fully to their communities.

## Endnotes

- 1 Data for Asians are not included because they are not available for all years, but almost 60 percent of 25–29-year-old Asians have gained a college degree in 2008.
- 2 See Pew Hispanic Center at <http://www.pewhispanic.org>.
- 3 Lui, M., Robles, B., Leondar-Wright, B., Brewer, R., & Adamson, R. (2006). *The color of wealth*. New York: The New Press.
- 4 See also Grissmer, D., Flanagan, A., & Williamson, S. (1998). Why did the Black–White score gap narrow in the 1970s and 1980s? In C. Jencks & M. Phillips (Eds.), *The Black–White test score gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings.
- 5 Gándara, P., & Contreras, F. (2009). *The Latino education crisis. The consequences of failed social policies* (pp. 19 & 29). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 6 González, N., & Moll, L. (2002). Cruzando el puente: Bridging to funds of knowledge. *Educational Policy*, 16, 623–641.
- 7 See, for example, Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners. What the research does — and does not — say. *American Educator*, 32(2), 8–44. Available at [http://archive.aft.org/pubs-reports/american\\_educator/issues/summer08/goldenberg.pdf](http://archive.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/summer08/goldenberg.pdf)
- 8 A more extensive discussion of these issues can be found in August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Developing literacy in second language learners. Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- 9 Wong-Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing your first. *Early Childhood Education Quarterly*, 6, 323–346.

10 Barnett, W., Yarosz, D., Thomas, J., Jung, K., & Blanco, D. (2007). Two-way and monolingual English immersion in preschool education: An experimental comparison. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22, 277–293.

11 University of California, Davis Graduate School of Education. (2006). *How education programs in one highly effective school district meet the needs of English language learners*. Unpublished commissioned study. Authors conducted a year-long commissioned study of a northern California district's program for English learners. This unpublished study yielded surprising findings, including the miniscule amount of time that English learners were afforded opportunities to speak or write in English in spite of the fact that all of the district's teachers were "highly qualified" and many had sophisticated understandings of the needs and appropriate strategies for educating English learners. One of the study's conclusions was that even in a very successful school district, the challenges of teaching English learner students place very large burdens on teachers, especially when teachers must address the needs of students at various skill levels in more than one language.

12 See Gándara, P., Gutiérrez, D., & O'Hara, S. (2001). Planning for the future in rural and urban high schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, 6, 73–93. English learners were segregated into a separate part of the campus and clustered together in the "free lunch" cafeteria area during lunch break, seldom ever having contact with the English speakers in their school. English learners noted that other Latinos who spoke English were as hostile to them, or more so, than the White students on campus.

13 Robin, K., Frede, E., & Barnett, W. (2006). *Is more better? The effects of full-day vs. half-day preschool and early school achievement* (Working Paper). New Brunswick, NJ: National Institute for Early Education Research. This study, while relatively small (about 340 children), tested the outcomes for 8-hour versus 2.5- to 3-hour preschool programs on low-income, largely Latino students. The design was random assignment through lottery, adding to the strength of the findings. Those children in the extended day preschool outperformed the shorter days students significantly in vocabulary, math, and literacy skills, and approached national norms. Moreover, with a somewhat extended kindergarten program (two additional hours daily more than the controls), they were able to maintain a significant advantage in these academic areas through the last testing at first grade.

14 Orfield, G., & Frankenberg, E. (2008). *The last have become first: Rural and small town America lead the way on desegregation*. Los Angeles: UCLA Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles.

15 See Rumberger, R., Gándara, P., & Merino, B. (2006). Where California's English learners attend school and why it matters. *UCLMRI Newsletter*, 15, 1–3.

16 Orfield, G., & McArdle, N. (2006). *The vicious cycle: Segregated housing, schools, and inequality*. Cambridge: Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University.

17 Ream, R. (2004). *Uprooting children. Mobility, social capital, and Mexican American underachievement*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.

18 Wagner, M., & Golan, S. (1996, April). *California's Healthy Start School-Linked Services Initiative: Summary of evaluation findings* (pp. 13–14). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

19 <http://www.cisnet.org/default.asp>

20 Research on teacher turnover, or loss from the teaching field, shows that half of new teachers leave the field within

# About the Author

Patricia Gándara is Co-Director of the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles. She has been a bilingual school psychologist, social scientist with the RAND Corporation, and a Professor of Education in the University of California system. She also directed education research in the California legislature and has served as Commissioner for Postsecondary Education for the state of California.

Gándara has written and edited several books and more than 100 articles and reports on educational equity for racial and linguistic minority students, school reform, access to higher education, the education of Latino students, and language policy. Her two most recent books are *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies* (2009, Harvard University Press) and *Forbidden Language: English Learners and Restrictive Language Policies* (2010, Teachers College Press).

Gándara received a PhD in educational psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles. She may be reached at [gandara@gseis.ucla.edu](mailto:gandara@gseis.ucla.edu).

five years. See Darling Hammond, L. (2004). Inequality and the right to learn: Access to qualified teachers in California's public schools. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 1936–1966. Schools that serve mostly Latino children lose teachers at a higher rate and attract those with the least experience and seniority. See Imazeki, J., & Goe, L. (2009). *The distribution of highly qualified, experienced teachers: Challenges and opportunities*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

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22 Murnane, R., Singer, J., Willett, J., Kemple, J., & Olsen, R. (1991). *Who will teach? Policies that matter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Quartz, K., Thomas, A., Anderson, L., Masyn, K., Lyons, K., & Olsen, B. (2008). Careers in motion: A longitudinal retention study of role changing among early-career urban teachers. *Teachers College Record*, 110, 218–250.

23 National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2007). *The high cost of teacher turnover*. Washington, DC: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

24 Ibid.

25 OECD data for 2005, published in 2007, show that almost half of the member nations outperform the United States with respect to percentage of population completing college degrees. See Education at a Glance at <http://www.OECD.org>

26 The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) maintains a database of two-way immersion programs. However, programs contribute information about themselves to CAL on a voluntary basis. Many programs are known to exist that have not listed themselves with CAL. It is thus impossible to know how many programs exist across the country, but the list can be accessed at [www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org), under "Resources."

27 See Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2006). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence* (pp. 200–205). New York: Cambridge University Press.

28 See Genesee, F., & Gándara, P. (1999). Bilingual education programs: A cross-national perspective. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, 665–685.

29 For a discussion of this issue, see Valdés, G. (1997). Dual-language immersion programs: A cautionary note concerning the education of language-minority students. *Harvard Education Review*, 67(3), 391–429.

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32 Horn, L., & Nevill, S. (2006). *Profile of undergraduates in U.S. postsecondary education institutions: 2003–04: With a special analysis of community college students* (NCES 2006-184). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Available at [http://eric.ed.gov:80/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/1b/d4/49.pdf](http://eric.ed.gov:80/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/d4/49.pdf); Zamer, S. (2009). *Working too hard to make the grade*. San Francisco: California Public Interest Research Group. Available at <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/10/20/calpirg>

33 Gándara & Contreras (2009), pp. 242–246.

34 See Fitzgerald, B., & Kane, J. (2006). Lowering barriers to college access: Opportunities for more effective coordination of state and federal student aid policies. In P. Gándara, G. Orfield, & C. Horn (Eds.), *Expanding opportunity in higher education* (pp. 53–73). Albany: State University of New York Press, for a thoughtful discussion of ways to address the financial aid impediments to college going for low-income students.

35 See Vernez, G., & Mizell, L. (2001). *Goal: To double the rate of Hispanics earning a bachelor's degree*. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. Downloaded June 23, 2009, at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/authors/v/vernez\\_georges.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/authors/v/vernez_georges.html)



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