



# Hispanic Legislative Education Summit

## FINAL REPORT

- February 21, 2013
- Santa Fe, NM

### ORGANIZERS

Hispanic Round Table of New Mexico

MANA de Albuquerque

ENLACE

Lumina Unidos Project on Latino Student Success

### PLENARY SESSION FACILITATOR

New Mexico First

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# INTRODUCTION

After reviewing the importance of investing in Hispanic education and the return on this investment for the economy of New Mexico, participants at the *Hispanic Legislative Education Summit* prioritized a number of key policies. The event was held February 21, 2013 in Santa Fe.

The purpose of the summit was to identify policies that will drive an agenda for Hispanic education excellence and economic possibilities. This policy platform will guide the organizers' advocacy with legislative and institutional policymakers over the next two years.

The summit produced a platform of 18 recommendations, of which nine garnered support from at least 80% of the participants.

Summit participants requested more student and parent empowerment in schools and a more culturally diverse curriculum. They also called for additional funding for early childhood education, tuition assistance, mentoring programs, community schools, and youth leadership programs. These recommendations and more are outlined in the complete report that follows.

## Summit Participation

With approximately 200 attendees, the event included people from many areas of the state. Participants came from both urban and rural communities – and they included educators, healthcare providers, business people, nonprofit professionals, advocates, as well as public and government officials. Most were Latino.

## Summit Process

The event opened with guest speakers including Ralph Arellanes, Chairman of the Hispanic Round Table, Dr. Jozi De Leon, Vice President for the

Division of Equity and Inclusion at the University of New Mexico, and Jennifer Gomez-Chavez, Director of the Unidos Lumina Project. Dr. Deborah Santiago, Vice President of Excelencia in Education gave the keynote address on “Investing in Hispanic Education and Why It Matters.” In addition, two panels of experts provided information on the importance of economic investment in education and best practices which can lead to student success.

Participants then worked in small table groups, during which they identified policies that would have the most significant impact on sustained student education and economic success. Finally, all summit participants reviewed and prioritized the work of the small groups.

## About the Organizers

### HISPANIC ROUND TABLE OF NEW MEXICO

The Hispanic Round Table of New Mexico is a coalition of over 50 local, state, and national Hispano organizations and over 50,000 members who speak with one voice about the pressing issues of the day that most affect the community and state in the areas of education, employment, economic development, and civil rights.

### LUMINA UNIDOS PROJECT ON LATINO STUDENT SUCCESS

The Lumina Unidos Project on Latino Student Success allows students to freely flow through the educational system with appropriate support and direction to remain on course. The goal is to produce 55,000 post-secondary degrees for Latinos in Bernalillo County by the year 2025.

Representatives from K-12 education, higher education, community-based organizations, employers, and policy leadership collaborate to achieve this goal. Project partners include: Albuquerque Public Schools, University of New

Mexico, Central New Mexico Community College, Center for Education Policy Research, El Centro de la Raza, College Board, Youth Development, Inc., Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce, ENLACE, Innovate+Educate, Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Community Schools Partnership, and State Representative/House Education Committee Chair Rick Miera.

### About the Facilitator

New Mexico First engages people in important issues facing their state or community. Co-founded in 1986 by retired U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici, the public policy organization offers unique town halls and forums that bring together people to develop their best ideas for policymakers and the public. New Mexico First also produces nonpartisan public policy reports on critical issues facing the state. These reports – on topics like education, healthcare, the economy, and energy – are available at [www.nmfirst.org](http://www.nmfirst.org).

### Recommendation Summary

The list below offers a high-level summary. Additional details on each recommendation are provided in the complete report that follows.

- Enhance student empowerment
- Review testing practices
- Fund early childhood initiatives
- Implement a culturally relevant curriculum
- Increase mentorship programs
- Mandate meaningful family engagement
- Increase funding for model programs
- Maintain current lottery scholarship requirements
- Retain students through mentoring and quality programs
- Motivate students by linking education to higher paying jobs
- Strengthen bilingual communication to parents and students
- Provide teacher training and mentoring
- Ensure transparency and inclusion for community members
- Provide statewide funding for recruiting and retaining first year minority undergraduate students
- Create more community centers
- Fund the teaching of “soft” skills
- Hold state accountable for current constitutional policies and regulations
- Ensure students have access to information about their education opportunities

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy recommendations were developed by participants in small groups at the summit. The entire summit group considered all the recommendations and used electronic polling devices to indicate their level of support. The recommendations are listed in order of approval.

<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>PERCENT APPROVAL</b>
<b>REC 1:</b>	Enhance student empowerment by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying successful Latino students and putting them in the role of peer advisers with younger students from kindergarten through college,</li> <li>2. Increasing opportunities for after-school clubs and activities to make school fun, and</li> <li>3. Removing punitive policies in schools and school districts that lead to student disengagement (e.g., banning students from after-school sports, clubs, and activities due to low grades).</li> </ol>	94%
<b>REC 2:</b>	Review standardized testing cost and effectiveness as outlined in NM Senate Bill 580.	93%
<b>REC 3:</b>	Fully fund early childhood initiatives (e.g., prenatal care, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, and parent education) in order to break poverty trends, provide a good foundation for learning, and lead to economic success.	87%
<b>REC 4:</b>	Implement a culturally relevant curriculum starting at Pre-K to improve student academic success by increasing their interest and helping them feel part of their school.	87%
<b>REC 5:</b>	Increase mentorship programs in order to sustain student education and economic success.	86%
<b>REC 6:</b>	Mandate meaningful family engagement and collaboration with schools as outlined in NM Senate Bill 582, including a: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Statewide parent advisory council,</li> <li>2. Parent outreach ambassador, and</li> <li>3. Family resource center.</li> </ol>	84%
<b>REC 7:</b>	Empower students and families to be engaged in education development/delivery and policy change by increasing funding for model programs such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community schools, which emphasize wrap-around services for students and families,</li> <li>2. Parent engagement, and</li> <li>3. Programs that increase youth leadership through positive youth development practices.</li> </ol>	82%
<b>REC 8:</b>	Oppose NM House Bill 451 that increases requirements for lottery scholarships.	81%

<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>PERCENT APPROVAL</b>
<b>REC 9:</b>	Create a systematic approach to guide and retain students in academic institutions through the use of mentors and quality academic programs and clubs in order to build a foundation for resiliency and community.	81%
<b>REC 10:</b>	Motivate students to graduate by emphasizing the fact that they can fulfill their life needs and desires through higher paying jobs, which are linked to higher education.	79%
<b>REC 11:</b>	Strengthen bilingual communication to parents and students regarding school programs and services, e.g., bilingual materials that are not exclusively online.	78%
<b>REC 12:</b>	Provide teacher training and mentoring on engaged pedagogy <sup>1</sup> and student-centered practices across the educational pipeline.	78%
<b>REC 13:</b>	Ensure transparency and inclusion for community members to be informed and involved in decision-making regarding issues such as worker rights, immigration reform, and education.	77%
<b>REC 14:</b>	Amend NM House Bill 618 to provide statewide funding for recruiting and retaining first-year minority undergraduate students utilizing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better dissemination of information,</li> <li>2. Greater tuition assistance,</li> <li>3. Transition support into higher education, and</li> <li>4. Peer mentoring.</li> </ol>	76%
<b>REC 15:</b>	Create more community centers and a staff liaison for students, parents, and schools in order to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help parents connect with their children's schools and teachers, and</li> <li>2. Provide opportunities for mentoring students and educating parents.</li> </ol>	75%
<b>REC 16:</b>	Fund and train educators to teach youth leadership skills, including tutoring, mentoring, career development, and service learning, either as electives or embedded in traditional academic courses. The funding would support pilot programs, assessment development, and training for teachers and administrators.	73%
<b>REC 17:</b>	Examine current constitutional policies and regulations using a cultural competency lens and hold the state accountable for honoring first nation laws.	65%
<b>REC 18:</b>	Ensure students have access to information about their education opportunities so they can be mentally and financially prepared to make decisions. Emphasize preparation and qualitative outcomes, not just quantitative outcomes.	61%

<sup>1</sup> In the book, *Bell Hooks' Engaged Pedagogy*, by Namulundah Florence, engaged pedagogy is a classroom that is centered around conversation and discussion where the teacher values critical thinking and creates a safe space in which all students feel comfortable and confident that their opinion is worthwhile.

## APPENDIX-Additional Ideas

The previous section of the report listed all the “top priority” items from each table group. However, other policy ideas were discussed by the groups. The following ideas are listed in the order of frequency mentioned.

### Increase parent engagement

The most frequently mentioned policy was the need to increase parent engagement so that parents are more empowered to support their children throughout the education experience. This would include providing information and training to family members, especially Spanish-speaking members, regarding how to:

1. Understand their child’s education goals, obstacles to achieving these goals, and how to coach their child.
2. Communicate effectively with teachers.
3. Help their child navigate the pathways to college.
4. Access resources for education funding.
5. Access programs on health and mental health related issues.

Meaningful, proactive outreach to family members by educational institutions would be necessary. For example:

1. Call parents and ask them what they need to be supportive of their child.
2. Visit homes and make meaningful connections.
3. Contact parents when things are going well for their child, as well as when there is an issue.
4. Bring parents into the classroom to make them aware of what is going on.
5. Encourage parents to return to school.

Participants also suggested creating parent academies and providing transportation to participate in education opportunities, including:

1. Adult education
2. Alternative GED programs
3. Computer courses
4. Language classes
5. Financial literacy classes

### Fund and expand successful programs

Many table groups recommended funding and expanding existing programs that have proved to be successful. Programs mentioned include: dual credit for high school coursework; early college high school opportunities for more students; college admission policies that allow adult education students to apply for financial aid; electives, enrichment, and career pathway programs to maintain student interest; use of technology in education; bilingual education and ESOL classes; access to GED classes; ENLACE Ambassador program; after-school tutoring and service learning programs; and athletic and social opportunities.

### Increase student support

Several table groups recognized the value of support organizations that specifically serve the Latino community, such as ENLACE. Support services including tutoring, peer mentoring, career mentoring, and job shadowing were seen as very valuable to sustain student motivation and education attainment. In addition, more proactive outreach by school counselors and advisers was seen as essential to ensuring access to information and resources.

### Leverage community involvement

Several table groups also saw the need for collaboration from all sectors of the community to be involved in policymaking and financial support for education. Finding ways to leverage resources

across the state to help mitigate the effects of low community and family income resulting in poverty was also seen as a key need. These collaborations would allow better access to resources for students.

### Utilize data

Continued research and use of data was also seen as important by a few table groups. Suggestions include: disaggregate data by race and gender; continue to illustrate gaps through mapping; use data to identify at-risk students early on and connect them to appropriate resources; target at-risk populations that need support; and watch student/teacher ratio trends.

### Support tuition costs

Two table groups saw the need to lower tuition fees and reduce obstacles to accessing grants and scholarships.

### Increase cultural proficiency training

Two table groups saw the need to provide in-service and on-going training for teachers, administrators, and staff on diversity, cultural sensitivity, and cultural humility. Participants recommended making this training mandatory.

### Increase student/teacher communication

One table group mentioned the importance of increasing positive relationships at schools between students and teachers, administrators, and school staff. Better and more frequent communication can result in better individualized attention and attainment, more student motivation and interest, and better decisions regarding student progress and accountability.

### Support immigrant students

One table group proposed advocating for institutional change in support of immigrant students. They saw the need for these students to be better informed regarding their rights including applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and work permits.

### Implement Hispanic Education Act

An additional policy concern was the slowness in implementing components of the Hispanic Education Act. One table group recommended assessing effectiveness to date and making adjustments as an appropriate step in prioritizing future policy recommendations.

### Impact of poverty

One group of participants recognized the impact of poverty on Hispanic families as an overarching issue when considering policies that will lead to more sustained education and economic opportunities. Participants believed a stronger support system for communities is needed.