



A Council of the National School Boards Association

National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members

CONFERENCE 2009

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National Hispanic Caucus Chair's Message

It is my pleasure to address you on behalf of the National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members. The NHC Board of Directors and I pledge to continue to promote and improve educational opportunities for Hispanic students and the importance of retaining and celebrating whatever cultural heritage our children bring with them.

The NHC membership is open to anyone interested in addressing the educational needs of Hispanic students and committed to creating a new paradigm to enhance these students' educational experiences and academic accomplishments.

NHC Annual Board Retreat

The Fifth Annual National Hispanic Caucus Board of Directors Fall

Retreat was held Oct. 10-11, 2008, at the NSBA headquarters. We had a packed two-day agenda with additional work conducted during the evening hours. Several business items were discussed, and committee meetings were held. We would like your help with membership recruitment and participation in committees.

We discussed in detail the many NHC events planned for NSBA's 2009 Annual Conference in San Diego. The NHC Luncheon speaker will be Pulitzer Prize-winning author and journalist, Sonia Nazario, who has spent two decades reporting and writing about social issues. Her book, *Enrique's Journey*, is about the experiences of Latin American children who immigrate to join their parents in the United States. You won't want to miss this special event promising to be one of the highlights of this year's confer-

ence. The luncheon will be held April 6, 12:45 – 2 p.m. at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel.



Cindy Matus Morriss

The Abrazo Award presentation will also take place during the NHC Luncheon. This award is given annually to honor an individual who has committed their time, energy, and resources to improving educational opportunities for Hispanic students.

The board had a lively discussion about the NSBA Annual Conference and the desire to see Hispanic presenters as keynote speakers. Because of the emerging issues surfacing in response to the growing population of Hispanic

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It's Scholarship Time!

The caucus hopes to present 10 scholarships—two per region—to deserving students this year. The Scholarship Committee is devoted to selecting students who demonstrate their intent to go to college and are committed to become a positive force in their communities.

So far, we have provided scholarships to more than 55 students, and our goal is to increase the number every year. We awarded nine scholarships at our 2008 annual meeting.

We appreciate the generosity of great companies, such as ARAMARK Education, Sodexo School Services, and Washington Mutual, to name a few, and individuals who have made personal donations. We are very grateful for all the contributors who have partnered with the National Hispanic Caucus and NSBA to make the dreams of our children become a reality. All high-achieving students deserve a chance for success.

You can find more information about the scholarship program on the NHC website:

<http://www.nsba.org/SecondaryMenu/Caucuses/NHC.aspx>

Respectfully,

Kevin Carbo
Scholarship Committee Chair

Ideas for Upcoming Issues?

We want to hear from you! The caucus would like to know what hot topic our members would like covered in the newsletter. Please contact Hispanic_Caucus@nsba.org.

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NALEO Conference on Pre-K and the Early Grades

A highlight of the National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials Conference on Pre-K and the Early Grades last September was a congressional hearing on the importance of early education for all of our children with a particular focus on English language learners. The hearing covered issues surrounding the increasing population of the Latino student population and the various myths that follow them.

As policymakers, we must understand the so-called "myths" by which our children are being held accountable and labeled. One source that could be helpful in illuminating this issue is "Challenging Common Myths about Young English Language Learners" in *Foundation for Child Development* by Linda M. Espinosa, published in 2008.

As school boards develop or amend policies affecting these children, they need data on the student populations in their districts who are language deficient, limited English proficient, and English language learners.

School board members need to understand that:

- * Not all English learners are Latinos, and not all Latinos are English learners.
- In order to close the achievement gap, English language literacy is critical in accelerating learning.
- How many of the children who begin school in our district are still classified as ELLs by middle school and high school? What does the trend tell you?
- Data shows that students who do not get reclassified by middle school are most likely to drop out.
- It's critical to advocate for the implementation of full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten in our school districts.

Statistics shows that the achievement gap that exist between Latino children and the top-performing mainstream students can be closed within three years if these students are taught by exceptional teachers (in the top quartile). The districts that have assigned their top teachers to these students have seen the gap closed within three years. School districts that continue to use their lowest-performing teach-

ers for students with learning problems will see the gap widen.

I urge you to ask many questions to your superintendent and professional educators about these issues. Learn more about the early-grade programs that are successful and those that are not and think outside the box about innovative programs and ways in which we can better serve our entire school population without hurting the learning capacities of one particular group. All of our students—the ones who are struggling and those who are talented and gifted—deserve the best education so they can compete at the same level.

I also encourage you to take a look at your district's wellness initiatives and policies. We all know that healthy students learn better, and obesity threatens the health of students across the country. School board members can play an important role in addressing this issue by developing policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Through participation in the Leadership for Healthy Communities Program, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, NSBA's School Health Program supports efforts by school boards to demonstrate leadership in addressing childhood obesity in their schools and communities by:

- Providing information and technical assistance for developing policies to improve students' nutrition and physical activity opportunities.
- Educating board members, as well as local government and community leaders, about the importance of communication, collaboration, and advocacy around this issue.
- Convening school board leaders to facilitate discussion and idea-sharing.
- Collaborating with other state and local organizations to develop resources that will help schools and communities work together to improve the political, social, and physical environments in which children eat and play.

For more information about NSBA's involvement in childhood obesity efforts, visit NSBA's school health website, www.nsba.org/schoolhealth.

Carmen Piñeyro
Secretary

National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members Educate Congress

Members of the NSBA Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members visited Capitol Hill Sept. 23 to educate legislators about the Campaign for High School Equity.

This campaign is a coalition of leading civil rights organizations representing communities of color that is focused on high school education reform. It was formed to address the United States' unequal public education system, which does not provide high-quality education to students of color and youths from low-income neighborhoods.

The campaign members include, among others, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, League of United Latin American Citizens, Alliance for Excellent Education, National Indian Education

Association, and Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

NHC Chair Cindy Matus Morriss, Treasurer Liz Sanchez, Central Region Director Guillermo Z. Lopez and other caucus members met with staff from House Education and Labor Committee Chair George Miller (D-Calif.) to encourage him to continue his support of high-quality education for all students and, in particular, students of color. NHC members emphasized the following:

1. Congress needs to promote educational fairness and access for all students and ensure that U.S. high schools are equipped to pave the way for success of Latino students.
2. The personal and societal costs associated with graduating from high school without the skills for success—or dropping out—threatens the future of families, our communities, and the U.S. economy. In short, pay now or pay a higher price later.

3. We all must find solutions to close the achievement gap for Latino students and to strengthen public will and support among policymakers, advocates, and community leaders for policies to increase high school achievement and graduation rates for minority and low-income students. It is our moral responsibility to improve our schools. Unless trends in minority student achievement and high school graduation are reversed, our high schools will be complicit in creating a permanent underclass of individuals who cannot provide for themselves and their families and are prevented from actively participating in our democracy.

After the meeting, each of us visited our own representatives to deliver the same message.

To learn more about the Campaign for High School Equity, visit www.highschool equity.org.

Guillermo Z. López
Central Region Director

Arizona school board members attend national summit on Latino education

Three Arizona school board members, who also are members of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, attended the fourth annual National Summit on the State of Latino Education in Washington, D.C., Sept. 22-24. Freddie Bracamonte Jr. (Laveen ESD), Cindy Matus Morriss (Patagonia ESD), and Elizabeth Sanchez (Alhambra ESD) joined other elected leaders, including 33 other school board members, from around the country, as well as 14 state legislators and five members of Congress to discuss topics relevant to Latino students.

Eugene Garcia, former dean at Arizona State University's College of Education, spoke at the conference on the importance of closing the achievement gap through early intervention.

According to Garcia, providing full-year, full-day prekindergarten programs taught by fully certified instructors is the best way to lay the groundwork for academic success. He noted that Latino children are less likely than their black and white counterparts to participate in early childhood education programs.

Attendees focused on the other end of the education spectrum, as well. Education leaders discussed the need to increase the number of Hispanic students in higher education by recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers to middle and high schools with high Hispanic enrollments and providing more rigorous math and science courses in secondary schools.

Attendees also learned about the Compact for Success, a partnership between a San Diego, Calif., school district and San Diego State University aimed at improving student readiness and providing access to higher education. Since the program's inception in 2000, the number of program graduates admitted to SDSU has more than doubled, from 639 to 1,406.

According to data presented at the summit by Richard Fry, a researcher with the Pew Hispanic Center, 47 percent of Hispanics nationwide do not attend college. Twenty-three percent go to a four-year college, 25 percent go to community college, and 5 percent get some form of postsecondary education.

Elizabeth Sanchez
Treasurer

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students throughout the United States, attendees at the General Sessions would benefit greatly by hearing from experts within the Hispanic community.

At the retreat, we also heard from guests who supported our National Hispanic Scholarship Program, including Larry C. Arreguin, vice president for government affairs at VisionIT, who donated \$1,000, and Ralph Young, ARAMARK's vice president of client retention, K-12 education pledged \$1,500. These donations were possible through the diligent work of our Central Region director, Guillermo Z. Lopez of the Lansing, Mich., school district. Accompanying Young's pledge, the ARAMARK Charitable Fund, through the Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program, generously contributed \$5,000 toward our goal of expanding our scholarships. NHC Pacific Region director Lillian Tafoya secured a \$1,000 scholarship donation from IBEW/NECA's Tom Curran. During the NHC Luncheon, we will thank contributors for their continued support.

NHC Membership

Within this newsletter you will find a membership form. You will notice a "full board membership" category allowing full boards to enroll as members of NHC at discounted dues. We anticipate your registration with NHC and look forward to your participation.

NSBA's Leadership for Healthy Communities (LHC) Program

I have been invited by Brenda Z. Greene, director of school health programs at NSBA, and co-chairs Brian Perkins and Carmen Piñeyro to participate in the Peer Leader Committee of LHC. This is a new initiative focused on addressing childhood obesity through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating, and access to healthy foods. I am looking forward to working with the co-chairs, committee members, Greene and Emily Kujawa on this vital issue that focuses on the connection between student wellness and learning.

Policies and Resolutions Committee Update

I want to thank Anne M. Byrne, chair of the NSBA Policy and Resolutions Committee, and the committee members for their work at the Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., in January. NHC submitted our resolution on "educational opportunity and teacher diversity" to the committee for re-adoption. The committee also supported the proposed resolution on the reauthorization of the ESEA/NCLB Act and the Childhood Nutrition Act.

With regard to the resolution on the "educational needs of English language learners," it is now subsection (e) of the resolution on "federal funding for public education":

"(e) ensuring that school districts serving immigrant students or limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELL) are provided with the necessary resources for those students as they make the transition into our society."

The resolutions will be presented for adoption to the Delegate Assembly at NSBA's Annual Conference on Friday morning, April 3 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel.

Hispanic Education-Related Meetings

As NHC chair I have the honor of serving on the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Board of Directors and have attended other education meetings. I am also serving my second term as a board member of the NALEO Educational Fund Board.

The fourth annual NALEO National Summit on the State of Latino Education & Legislative Hearing on Pre-K and the Early Grades was a great success, bringing together 55 elected officials to address the current state of education for Latino students. The summit featured a discourse on the academic achievement of Latino students from preschool to graduate studies (P-20). Policy issues highlighted during the summit include: preK and the early grades, reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, English language learner success,

school leader and teacher quality, high school equity, and access to higher education. The NHC was a convening partner with NALEO at the education summit. [For more information, see the related article in this newsletter by NHC Treasurer Liz Sanchez.]

The seventh Biennial National Institute for Newly Elected Officials, NALEO's "boot camp," provided participants with a chance to learn, share, and develop new skills as they began their careers as public servants. Several NHC board members participated in this institute, including Harry J. Delgado, Northeast Region director, who gave a presentation on school board constituent relations and the legislative process; and Carmen Piñeyro, secretary, who spoke about the micro-manager versus the education policymaker. I also spoke at the institute, as a representative of the NHC, NSBA, and my district, Patagonia Elementary School District #6 in Arizona. Additional information about these institutes is available at NALEO's website, <http://www.naleo.org>.

Included in this newsletter is an interesting article from Sammy J. Quintana, a former president of NSBA and the first recipient of the Abrazo Award, on "The History of NSBA's Black and Hispanic Caucuses."

I trust you will find this newsletter informative and that you will share it with your school board colleagues. I thank you for your membership, and NHC always looks forward to your participation and teamwork. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions about the caucus and how we can better serve you. For more information, visit our website at: www.nsba.org/caucuses or Hispanic_Caucus@nsba.org

Con mucho cariño and with much affection,



Cynthia "Cindy" Matus Morriss

History of NSBA'S Black and Hispanic Caucuses

On July 1, 1970, the National School Boards Association board of directors approved the creation of a position titled "Director of Human Resources and Minority Affairs." This position came about at the suggestion of a number of black school board members who felt that minority issues needed to be addressed by the organization. The next year, at the 1971 NSBA conference, a meeting room was provided for a group of Black school board members to meet. This meeting was the genesis of what was to become NSBA's Black Caucus. Two years later, at the 1975 NSBA conference, the Black Caucus was officially created and recognized by NSBA.

Shortly after the creation of the Black Caucus, the Hispanic Caucus was formed and modeled after the Black Caucus. The Hispanic Caucus also began meeting at the national conference in meeting space provided by NSBA. It wasn't until 1979 that NSBA began to list the caucus meetings and events in its conference program booklet as part of the special activities.

Beginning in 1981, the officers of the Black and Hispanic Caucuses were invited to the June meeting of the NSBA Board of Directors to report on the activities of the caucuses. However, it wasn't until 1984 that NSBA started the current practice of collecting registration fees for caucus activities held in conjunction with the annual conference.

As the caucuses grew and became more organized, they became more vocal in their request for a seat on the NSBA board of directors. A request for a seat on the board was made yearly at the June board meeting attended by the caucus officers.

At the 1991 annual conference, I was elected to the board of directors from the Western Region. At the June board meeting following the conference, the officers of the caucuses reported on their activities and again renewed their request for a seat on the board. The caucus officers argued that it was important that blacks and Hispanics have a voice in the deliberations of NSBA.

Much of the discussion by the board regarding the caucus' request centered around two issues: While the board agreed that it was important to have input from the caucuses,

many members of the board felt that increasing the size of the board would make the board too large. Secondly, they felt that the addition of two new board members would be too costly. Sensing that the request was going to be denied, I suggested a compromise: Appoint the chairperson of each caucus to serve as *ex officio* members of the Policies and Resolutions committee to ensure their input on issues affecting their respective constituencies. The board decided to adopt the suggestion. At the next meeting of the Policies and Resolutions committee, which occurred in conjunction with the Leadership and FRN meetings in 1993, the presidents of both caucuses were seated on the committee.

Bill Soult from Colorado served as NSBA president from 1993-1994. During our board retreat in September, it was reported that our national conference, held in San Francisco earlier in the year, was very successful. We had surpassed our projected revenues significantly. At that same meeting, the board voted to recommend a bylaws change to the delegate assembly which would eliminate the office of vice-president.

During a break at that meeting in Colorado, Bill Ingram and I saw an opening for re-visiting the issue of having the black and Hispanic caucuses represented on the board of directors. Since we had such a successful conference that year, the money argument lost much of its validity. Likewise, since we were reducing the number on the board by one through the elimination of the office of vice-president, adding two new members to the board would be a net increase on the board of only one.

Some members of the board were not in support of the idea. After much discussion and compromise, the board agreed to recommend the creation of two new seats on the board for the caucuses. However, it was decided that these seats would be *ex-officio* and non-voting. The delegate assembly approved the change at the 1994 conference in New Orleans.

Boyd Boehlje was NSBA president. At the board retreat in Iowa in 1994, the board again discussed the issue of the black and Hispanic caucuses' membership on the board of directors. It was decided to recommend to the dele-

gate assembly that we change the designation of the new seats from non-voting to voting. That change was made at the 1995 delegate assembly meeting at the NSBA conference. Roberta Doering of Massachusetts was president of NSBA at that time.

During his remarks at the Human Relations Dinner, Executive Director Tom Shannon, delivered the following remarks:

"The caucuses' representatives will bring to the board – and to the entire NSBA Federation – a set of perspectives that deserve to be heard on the unique challenges facing the academic and life preparation of an expanding population of public school students for a future that will be entirely different from the past in an America that must learn to celebrate its diversity and to build unity upon its differences so that we can all continue to prosper as the greatest and most free nation in the history of the world."

George Evans from Delaware and Danny Trujillo from New Mexico were the first voting directors representing their respective caucuses.

Sammy J. Quintana (NM)
NSBA President, 1996 - 1997



The mission of the **National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members (NHC)** is to promote the goals and vision of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and to provide leadership and a foundation to school board members for student educational opportunities through collaboration with key stakeholders to foster excellence and equity in public education. The Hispanic Caucus continues to be involved in legislative initiatives ranging from literacy rates to standardized tests, and education leadership issues from professional development to effective governance.

Most noteworthy is the NSBA National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members' Statement of Goals, which guides the organization's programmatic agenda:

- Promote and advance equal education opportunities for Hispanic children by Caucus members becoming actively engaged in national dialogue on education problems, issues and concerns in conjunction with the National School Boards Association and other national organizations committed to the continued growth and development of minority children.
- Promote state and national legislation to improve educational opportunities and programs for the Hispanic students in the public schools.
- Provide education and information to members and/or interested parties on unique challenges and opportunities faced by school board members throughout the country.
- Provide leadership by encouraging the most desirable and effective communication between school board members, their local school board, communities, national and state board associations relating to Hispanic students.
- Study the development, academic achievement of the Hispanic youth within public schools.

The National Hispanic Caucus is open to anyone interested in meeting and addressing the educational needs of Hispanic students and committed to creating a new paradigm to enhance both their educational experiences and academic accomplishments.

Members of the Caucus represent many of the largest and most populated urban school districts, together with some of the most expansive and rural school districts in the nation. They are called upon to work to promote equal educational opportunities for Hispanic students—monitor the developmental and academic achievement of Hispanic children—and address the concerns, unique challenges and opportunities faced by school board members working with these issues throughout the country.

We hope you will consider joining today!