Latino schooling by the numbers

28: Percent of students in public preK-12 schools who are Latino
76: Percent of English Language Learners in US public schools who are Spanish speakers
9: Percept of K-12 public school teachers who are Latino
21: Percent of college students who are Latino
70: Percent of Latinos who are first generation college students
52: Percent of Latino students who graduate from college
8: Percent of Latinos in the U.S. with a college degree
6: Percent of university faculty who are Latino

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov

The Potential and Promise of Latino Students
by Patricia Gándara, Ph.D.

“Plenty of challenges remain in closing achievement gaps for Latino students. But these students represent enormous assets for our nation.”

Addressing the Latino achievement gap, UCLA Professor Patricia Gándara outlines five culturally responsive perspectives and strategies for engaging Latino students from all levels of education in “deeper learning”. These are condensed and adapted below, from The Potential and Promise of Latino Students (available at aft.org)
Circling back to the title of this article, in addition to enlightening us on the promise and potential of Latino students, Professor Gándara's work also alerts us to the potential and promise of Spanish-language educators to support Latino students' academic success by virtue of the cultural and linguistic skills that they bring to the educational context. Put differently, Spanish-language educators are on the critical path to empowering Latino students to succeed in school.

More on how Spanish education can support Latino achievement in K-12

1. To learn about the main factors behind the Latino Academic gap and to further explore the academic and social advantages associated with bilingualism, read *The Latino education Crisis*, also by Professor Gándara (available at Wested.org)
2. For specific ideas on how Spanish-language classes and programs can help close the Latino gap at the K-12 level, read Maria Carreira's publication: *Spanish-for-Native-Speakers Matters* (from the Heritage Language Journal 5 (1), 2007)
3. See also this video on how the AATSP’s programs can support Latino students’ achievement in K-12 by expanding and recognizing this populations’ linguistic and cultural assets.

How Can Colleges Close the Latino Graduation Gap?

*by Nadia Tamez-Robledo*

This *article* from EdSurge is a must-read for educators at the post-secondary level, particularly those who work with Latino students, as so many AATSP teachers do. The article's many charts and statistics, document daunting realities, including the following:

- In 2021, 52% of Latino students in four year institutions earned a Bachelor's degree, as compared with 65 percent of their White peers.
- In 2021, 33% of Latino students completed an Associate Degree from a community college, as compared to 38 percent of their White peers.
Citing Emily Labandera, director of research at Excelencia in Education, the article’s closing words summarize an important strategy for narrowing the Latino college graduation gap:

These students already come to our campuses with assets, with skill sets. We need to meet them where they are...Not asking students to change who they are, to fit a mold, but rather, ‘How can we, as the institution, serve you holistically?’

What this means for our profession

Spanish language education can help Latino students develop their cultural and linguistic assets, and Spanish language educators can lead the way in helping colleges understand how to meet Latino students where they are. Once again, Spanish language education proves to be on the critical path to the larger academic and professional success of Latino students.

More on how to Spanish education can support Latinos in higher education

A study by Josh Prada and Diego Pascual y Cabo (cited below), found that the retention rates of Latino students who took at least one Spanish heritage language (SHL) class exceeded those of the Latino population in the College of Liberal Arts at their university. Three features of SHL classes emerged as being particularly important in this regard: (1) the opportunities afforded therein to connect with Latinos with similar experiences and needs, (2) the opportunity to advance career goals by developing professional-level Spanish, and (3) having a place where Latino experiences are “reflected, recognized and centralized”.

For institutions of learning at all levels of education, the significance of these three elements cannot be overstated. For one, they show that the Spanish language and cultures are vectors for success for Latino students. For another, they put the work of Spanish departments at the center of one of the most important tasks facing the American education system: improving Latino educational outcomes and their labor-force preparation.

Source:


How to Grow Bilingual Teacher Pathways:
Making the Most of U.S. Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

by Conor P. Williams and Jonathan Zabala

The country’s dire need for more bilingual teachers aligns neatly with a corresponding labor market shift. American young adults are more diverse now than in prior generations, and children of
immigrants are projected to constitute all of the growth in the U.S. labor market in the coming decades. These new workers have enormous potential rooted in their linguistic, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity.

This report from the Century Foundation (tcf.org) argues that language minority students can help fill the dire need for bilingual teachers. Furthermore, it makes the case that such students are well positioned to enrich bilingual education by virtue of their varied life experiences and cultural and linguistic skills. With this in mind, it proposes reforms in teacher training and licensure programs that can help language minority students overcome structural inequities arising from financial, logistical, and linguistic challenges.

Must-Have Resources
by Alejandro Lee

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges Open Educational Resources Initiative (ASCCC OERI)
https://asccc-oeri.org/open-educational-resources-and-spanish/
This compilation of OERs, divided in 8 categories, address all levels of Spanish teaching: first- and second-year, Spanish for the Heritage Speakers, Grammar and Linguistics, Literature, Video and Audio resources, Proficiency Assessment Resources and repositories, and Spanish for the professions.

Image Sources https://asccc-oeri.org/image-sources/
This repository of openly licensed and public domain sources includes a section that addresses diversity and inclusion.

How to Learn a Heritage Language https://www.npr.org/2022/05/25/1101187823/how-to-learn-a-heritage-language
This NPR program discusses strategies for learning a heritage language, including how to confront linguistic insecurities and deal with the criticism of native speakers.

Scholarships for Latino Students

The McDonald’s HACER® National Scholarship offers up to 30 scholarships for Hispanic students and provides educational opportunities for Hispanic college-bound students.

The Alma Exley Scholarship Program is dedicated to promoting greater diversity in the teaching profession. The program awards one scholarship annually to a person of color who is enrolled in a teacher-preparation program at a college or University in Connecticut.

In partnership with the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, Colgate - Palmolive “Haz La U” (Make the U), offers 31 scholarships for high school seniors of Hispanic heritage to attend college.

The Opportunity Scholarship is designed for undocumented students living in locked-out states. The award covers tuition, fees, on-campus housing, and meals at selected colleges, with a maximum support of $80,000 for a bachelor’s degree. The