# THE LARGER ECOLOGY OF LATINO SUCCESS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION: WHY SOME LATINO STUDENTS ARE BEATING THE ODDS

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## INTRODUCTION

Latino students presently fare worse academically than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States.[1] Regardless of whether I looked at performance in school, years of school completed, or academic skill level, I have found in my research of K-12 education that Latinos are consistently at the top of the list as the most educationally disadvantaged group in America. Education should serve as the key for Latino immigrants and nonimmigrants alike to move upward in the United States though access to better jobs, economic mobility, and access to the political process, as well as giving Latinos the ability to contribute culturally and intellectually to American society. In contrast to the adult first-generation Latinos, for whom success or failure is largely determined by performance in the labor market, the key outcomes are linked to academic achievement for the second-generation, third-generation, and so on of Latino youth. Their achievement and length of time spent in school will govern their eventual position in the American status system.[2] Latinos comprise 12.5 percent of the United States population, representing the largest minority group in America.[3] Reflective of the national trend, Latinos comprise the largest minority in Walla Walla, Washington at 17 percent of the total population – a population size this continuously increases. Fueled by the growing Latino population, the number of students in U.S. public schools increased by 4.7 million from 1993 to 2003.[4] Latino students accounted for 64 percent of this total growth.[5] According to the most current available statistics, there are more than 55,000 Latino students in Washington public schools, representing 12 percent of the entire student population.[6] In Walla Walla Public School District, Latinos represent 30 percent of all students. At 21 percent, the national Latino high school dropout rate is more than twice the national average at 10 percent.[7] These statistics make clear that Latino students' school achievement should be among the top priorities of educational policymakers – not only nationally, but at the state and local levels as well.

Although statistics indicate that many Latino students perform poorly in school, the Latino student population is not a homogenous group in which all perform equally. Instead, it is a heterogeneous group, in which some perform well while others do not.[8]

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[1] For consistency purposes, I use the term "Latino" to refer to the broad category of people of Spanish-speaking origin. In my research, I found that that the term "Latino" is commonly preferred by members of this group, while "Hispanic" is preferred in some areas and is most often used for government statistics.

[2] Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. *Legacies: The Story of The Immigrant Second Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 234.

[3] Census 2000 Profile Demographic Highlights. <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=ChangeGeoContext&geo_id=05000US53071&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=Walla+Walla&_cityTown=Walla+Walla&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&qr_name=null&reg=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=>

[4] Moscoso, Eunice. "Hispanic Students Fuel School Growth." *Cox News Service* (2006.)

[5] Moscoso. "Hispanic Students Fuel School Growth." (2006.)

[6] Reed, Brack. "Portal to Opportunity." *Northwest Education* 11, no. 3 (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2006) <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>

[7] "Latino Teens Staying in High School: A Challenge For All Generations." Pew Hispanic Center. <www.pewhispanic.org.> (accessed November 2006).

[8] Conchas, Gilberto Q. *The Color of Success: Race and High-Achieving Urban Youth* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006) 3.

Thus, my main research question is *"Why do some Latino students succeed academically while others do not?"* In my research, I have found that the most fundamental factor to academic success or failure involves the youth's "motivation to learn and their willingness to expend the requisite effort to achieve educational goals."[9] The literature indicates that high academic expectations produce high student motivation, which successfully predicts subsequent educational performance and occupational choice.[10] I will refer to this concept of how success materializes as *achievement drive*. The two mechanisms that I found that play the leading roles in achievement drive are *family* and *quality of education.* Therefore, my subordinate research questions are: *"What is the role of family as a mechanism in the success for Latino students?"* and *"What is the role of quality of education as a mechanism in the success for Latino students?"* Although both of these factors merit further investigation, I found a closer connection between family and achievement drive, and therefore also with academic success, than between quality of education and achievement drive. The latter, however, is critical for Latino student academic success as well.

Methods of research included reading literature written by similarly focused educational researchers and examining specific case studies, as well as longitudinal data and national, state and local quantitative and qualitative statistics relating to my research questions. In addition, I conducted my own qualitative research. I interviewed five Latino youth who are attending (two of whom are brothers), or had attended Walla Walla High School for at least three years, two teachers who had spent considerable time working at or with the high school, and three members of the administration and support staff at the high school, including an assistant principal, the Intervention Specialist, and the GEAR UP Program Coordinator.

My aim in this research was to identify the patterns of mechanisms that have proven to increase success among Latino students as a means to inform educational research, policy, and practice. In context of my research findings, I have focused specifically on the programs and policies for Latino student success present at Walla Walla High School (commonly referred to as Wa-Hi). Later in my report I will go into detail concerning my recommendations of how to enhance these programs and policies so that they extend to more Latino students. In addition, I will make recommendations that address areas of improvement that I have identified for the high school, namely in attempting to counteract the disadvantaged students from less supportive families as well as raising awareness among Latino parents of ways they can increase the success of their children. These recommendations focus on creating a stronger alliance between school and family, increasing opportunity and quality of experience for Latino participation in extra-curricular activities, and improving access to one-on-one teaching for all members of the Latino community.

Before I continue, it is appropriate that I acknowledge the considerable support I received from my two community partners, Cindy Gregoire and Diana Erickson. The extent of resources I had access to, such as contacts for interviews, scholarly articles, and statistics, would not have been possible without the consistent help and enthusiasm from these two passionate women, whom I would like to thank.

[9] *Legacies,* 211.
[10] *Legacies*, 211.

## SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

*"It seemed easy for us to recite all of the problems teachers and students confront and create in secondary schools … but it seemed difficult, even awkward, to find goodness and talk about success."*

-Sara Lawrence Lightfoot[11]

Gilberto Q. Conchas cites the work of Sara Lawrence Lightfoot as a significant educational researcher because she urged other educational researchers to reframe their research questions to disclose the positive aspects of high schools.[12] As Conchas stated, "Lightfoot persuasively articulated the need for researchers to move beyond static notions of school failure and explore a more complex and nuanced understanding of goodness and success. Research, in so doing, is better able to address social inequality and effectively impact education policy and practice."[13] The literature of both Lightfoot and Conchas informed my decision to focus my own main research question on high-achieving Latino students: *"Why do some Latino students succeed academically while others do not?"* As I stated in my introduction, it is important in educational research to view the Latino population as a heterogeneous one, in which some students perform well while others do not. This research approach is necessary if the ultimate goal – to close the achievement gap in education – is truly to be accomplished.

### *THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP*

In my research, I found hundreds of education articles that concern "closing the achievement gap." This term refers to efforts to bring the average performance of minority or economically disadvantaged students in line with the average performance of White or middle-class students. Policy options and program recommendations frequently focus resources or remediation for the lower-performing students among the minority groups.[14] As Patricia Gándara states in a Policy Recommendation Report for the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the results of this focus on lower-performing students "is a proliferation of dropout programs designed to ensure high school graduation and college-access programs that aim to place students in college – any college. Part-time enrollment in a two-year college is counted the same as enrollment in a selective four-year university. In other words, the strategy is to 'bring up the bottom.'"[15] The achievement gap, however, does not only exist at the mid-range of scores, but is a significant feature of achievement at the upper-score ranges as well. Gándara notes in her report that the average high-achieving Latino student is performing at a lower level than the average high-achieving White student. For example, in the 2002 national SAT scores the top fifth of Latino test takers achieved a mean of 598 on the SAT verbal section and a mean of 646 on the math section, compared to a mean of 663 and 720, respectively, for

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[11] Lightfoot, S.L. (1983). *The Good High School* (New York: Basic Books) found in *The Color of Success*, 24.
[12] *The Color of Success*, 1.
[13] *The Color of Success*, 1.
[14] Gándara, Patricia. *Fragile Futures: Risk and Vulnerability Among Latino High Achievers.* Policy Information Report (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 2005).
[15] *Fragile Futures*, 5.

White test takers.[16] Gándara points out in her report that from a statistical perspective, the strategy of focusing only on bringing up the bottom in order to close the achievement gap is illogical. "It would require a truly massive movement of the lower-performing students toward the middle of the academic distribution to achieve similarly "average" scores if nothing is done simultaneously about raising test scores and other performance indicators at the upper end of the distribution."[17] This is not to say that at-risk Latino students should be overlooked, but rather to note that neither should high-functioning Latino students. Yet, there is a tendency to believe that the latter need less attention, when, according to Gándara, they may be the best targets for programmatic efforts. [18]

*ACHIEVEMENT DRIVE*

As I stated in my introduction, I have found that the most basic factor in school success or failure involves the youth's "motivation to learn and their willingness to expend the requisite effort to achieve educational goals."[19] The research literature presented by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut indicates that a student's high academic expectations for herself, as well as the expectations from others, successfully predict subsequent educational performance and occupational choice.[20] I refer to this concept of how success materializes as a student's own achievement drive. My research concerning the role of family and the quality of education in the educational success of Latino secondary students is based ultimately on the factors of these two mechanisms that influence the Latino youth's achievement drive.

The following data comes from a longitudinal study conducted by Portes and Rumbaut based on school records and a series of surveys with over 5,000 immigrant children and their parents. They conducted the study between 1992 and 1996 in Miami/Ft. Lauderdale and San Diego, including fieldwork for the original and follow-up surveys. In their research, Portes and Rumbaut acknowledge that, "We learned what we know of the second generation from endless hours of talking to them and listening to their histories, worries, and dreams."[21]

*Educational Expectations*

Before going into the mechanisms of family and quality of education, I must first show that high academic expectations successfully predict the student's subsequent educational achievements and occupational choice since this concept serves as the theoretical basis of the rest of my research. To begin, it is important to define expectations and differentiate expectations from aspirations. As Portes and Rumbaut define the two terms: aspirations

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[16] "College Board, Unpublished SAT Data from 2002 Administration," found in *Fragile Futures*, 4. It is important to note that these scores include a smaller percentage of the Latino student population than the White student population.

[17] *Fragile Futures*, 4.

[18] Other important issues that not only impede, but serve as disincentives to high achievement among Latino students are legal statues and low income. "Many bright students who begin school functioning at high level, but who are undocumented immigrants, or the children of undocumented immigrants, come to realize that postsecondary education is probably foreclosed to them – either because they cannot enroll in or pay for it. Knowing this, many students are apt to give up, drop out, or approach high school with a lackadaisical attitude" (*Fragile Futures*, 18).

[19] *Legacies*, 211.

[20] *Legacies*, 211.

[21] *Legacies*, xxiv.

refer to desired levels of future performance (what people want to happen); expectations are beliefs about a probable future state of affairs (what people think will happen).[22] "Aspirations are less realistic than expectations, since what people subjectively desire typically exceeds what they rationally expect. As such, expectations constitute the fundamental blocks on which future behavioral choices are made."[23]

In the surveys that Portes and Rumbaut conducted, they asked respondents about their educational aspirations ("What is the highest level of education you would like to achieve?") as well as their expectations ("And *realistically speaking*, what is the highest level of education that you think you *will* get?").[24] As they explain in their methods, each of these items was scored 1-5 ("less than high school," "finish high school," "some college," finish college," and "finish a graduate degree"). The data they collected from this study is significant in differentiating between expectations and aspirations over time as it shows that the percentage of students aspiring to an advanced degree (66.5 percent) is much higher than the percentage who realistically expected to attain it (44 percent).[25] It is also important to note that in the sample as a whole, strong and positive correlation between high educational expectations and self-esteem, school engagement, and daily homework hours were found.

Portes and Rumbaut point out that at the bivariate level, a series of mutually supportive relations emerge, which are generally congruent with the initial theory that high academic expectations successfully predict subsequent educational performance and occupational choice.[26] According to the two scholars, the strong relationship between these variables suggests a "virtuous cycle of cumulative development."[27]

The importance of the family and quality of education mechanisms is clear in determining high educational expectations. The findings from the qualitative study conducted by Portes and Rumbaut that I discussed above clearly indicate that both educational aspirations and expectations rise significantly in correlation with family cohesion and decline with parent-child conflict. From their studies, we can also see the impact of parental goals on the child's own achievement drive: only 28.8 percent of students (from all backgrounds included in the study, not just Latinos) whose parents held less than college-level aspirations for them aspired to an advanced degree, while 85 percent of students whose parents had high goals for them aspired to an advanced degree. I will go into depth concerning the mechanism of family on Latino high educational expectations and success in the next section. The mechanism of quality of education is also noted in this study as high educational expectations are most prevalent among fluent bilinguals. Later in my report I will thoroughly cover the factors of quality of education in how they relate to the Latino students' achievement drive and subsequent success in school.

In the following sections concerning family and quality of education, I will explain how research has related specific factors of these two mechanisms to the

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[22] *Legacies*, 215

[23] Olson, James M., Neal J. Reese, and Mark P. Zanna. 1996. "Expectancies." In Social psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles, ed. E. Tory Higgins and Arie W. Kruglanski (New York: Guillford Press) Found in *Legacies*, 216.

[24] I based questions for the interviews in my own qualitative study on this literature.

[25] *Legacies*, 218.

[26] *Legacies*, 219.

[27] *Legacies*, 219.

variables of high educational expectations, thus logically connecting these factors to educational success for Latino youth.[28]

## *FAMILY*

***"****I guess those [Latino students] who succeed are the ones who do care; they might come from a good family and they might not just want to do this for their own benefit. Other Latino students who don't come from good families usually do bad, like if they are missing people, or their parents are divorced, or they just have their mother, or if they're lacking in something. They might feel that nobody cares. Maybe they even have to be the parent for their little brothers and sisters, but when they get to school it is tougher for them because they're also trying to fix their family or something. It can be an obstacle for school. So they don't put as much time into studying, so maybe they're too tired to listen to the teacher… It really helps if you have your family there supporting you. That support really helps. Which mine did, even my uncles and my aunts – all wanting me to work hard. That's a lot of pressure too. It's like they're all relying on you to succeed."*

-Jazmin Lopez, Whitman College freshman, Wa-Hi Alumni[29]

*Familismo*

Although it is critical to approach Latino students as a heterogeneous group, it is also important for practitioners to take into account the homogeneity within various Spanish-speaking groups of important family and community-level cultural factors. These cultural factors include "language use and preference, systems of cultural beliefs and value orientations, conservative versus traditional community norms, and prevalence of acculturative stressors in the school system and community."[30] According to David S. DeGarmo and Charles R. Martinez Jr., many Latinos are strongly rooted in family connectedness; they live in close proximity to one another, share in child rearing, and are more likely than most ethnic groups to maintain their native language and preserve customs through family or community rituals. This value and orientation towards familism, *familismo,* are major sources of identity, self-worth, and social support for Latino students. "Familism can include structural, attitudinal, and behavior characteristics

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[28] According to several scholars researching Latino educational success, social class more than anything else determines the nature of schooling. The economic factor plays an indisputably large role in determining a Latino youth's educational opportunities and corresponding success at school, especially because Latinos represent one of the most economically disadvantaged racial groups in the United States. For my research, however, I felt that examining possible school structural changes in the form of student and family support programs was a more productive use of my research opportunity. The programs I will discuss in my Case Study and Recommendations sections can feasibly enhance Latino student success in the nearer future. Attempting to bridge the economic gap between the many economically disadvantaged Latino families in the Walla Walla valley and the average Anglo family is a much more complicated project. Improvements are incremental and trickle down to student academic success much more slowly. The economic factor in Latino student success deserves further in-depth investigation, but will not be directly addressed in this report.

[29] Interview with Jazmin Lopez, see Appendix B for full transcript.

[30] DeGarmo, David S., and Charles R. Martinez Jr. "A Culturally Informed Model of Academic Well-Being for Latino Youth: The Importance of Discriminatory Experiences and Social Support." *Family Relations* 55, no. 3 (2006): 267.

bounding social relationships."[31] For this reason, it is imperative to address my subordinate research question, "*What is the role of family as a mechanism in the success for Latino students?"* in the context of these cultural aspects. Although it is difficult to study them as structural factors, cultural aspects can directly influence academic success of Latino student. For this reason, it is evident that cultural education efforts are necessary for not only educational researchers and policymakers, but for all school staff who work with Latino students and parents.

*Social Capital*

According to the Hispanic Pew, a nonpartisan research group, "A significant portion of the higher dropout propensity of Latino youth can be attributed to their less favorable family circumstances and the communities in which they reside."[32] Educational researchers have long argued that unequal family resources generate disparity in school achievement. "Family resources may be evident (such as financial support) or could be less tangible (such as norms, encouragement, and information gained from relationships and social networks.) Following P. Bourdieu and J.S. Coleman, these less tangible resources have been called "social capital," and focus on the information, support, and supervision that closely knit networks of relationships provide.[33] In addition, Coleman noted that it was not just the sum of relationships that a child has, but also the interconnectedness of those relationships that mattered for the child's educational outcomes.[34] At all points in the school career of Latino youth, the greater the social capital, or degree to which individuals receive home support for their education, the better they perform in school.[35]

Scholars studying Latino educational performance consistently focus on two areas relating to family. In an essay synthesizing her own research with that of other scholars focusing on trends and challenges in education facing the Latino community, Melissa Roderick outlines the relationship between Latino educational development with two areas of family. These two areas of family are:

1) differences in the educational resources available to children and adolescents in Latino families, which I will refer to in this report as the *family's ability to support*, and
2) cultural differences in views of childrearing and education, which I will refer to as *family background*.[36]

I will spend the rest of this section of my report focusing on data that relates specific factors concerning these family characteristics and social capital to the success of Latino youth in secondary school.

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[31] "A Culturally Informed Model of Academic Well-Being for Latino Youth," 267.
[32] "Latino Teens Staying in High School: A Challenge For All Generations." Pew Hispanic Center. <www.pewhispanic.org.> (accessed November 2006).
[33] Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture (*Longon: 1987); Social capital and the development of youth. *Momentum, 18*(4), 6-8. found in *The Color of Success*, 89.
[34] *The Color of Success*, 89-90.
[35] Roderick, Melissa. "Hispanics and Education." Found in *An Agenda for the Twenty-First Century: Hispanics in the United States*. Ed. Pastora San Juan Cafferty and David W. Engstrom (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006) 139.
[36] "Hispanics and Education," 139.

*FAMILY BACKGROUND*

The longitudinal study performed by Portes and Rumbaut (which I have already referenced in my explanation of high education expectations) examines the success of Latino youth in school through the lens of acculturation. The findings of two specific studies within the scope of Portes and Rumbaut's research highlight important factors that increase understanding concerning the influence of family on Latino youth success at school. These findings are:

1) Student school engagement and school work effort is higher for more recent immigrants.
2) Immigrants who experience selective acculturation have higher success rates in secondary education. Selective acculturation, as defined by Portes and Rumbaut, takes place when the learning process of both generations is embedded in a co-ethnic community of sufficient size and institutional diversity to slow down the cultural shift and promote partial retention of the parents' home language and norms.[37]

*Immigrant drive for achievement*

One explanation for the finding that student school engagement and school work effort is higher in the population of immigrant Latino students than in native-born Latino students is that the families of the immigrant student, as well as the students themselves, have different points of reference and may place a greater value on education. "Immigrant students are more likely to compare their opportunities and status to that offered in their home country, while first and second-generation youths are more likely to compare their opportunities and statues to those of the dominant American culture."[38]

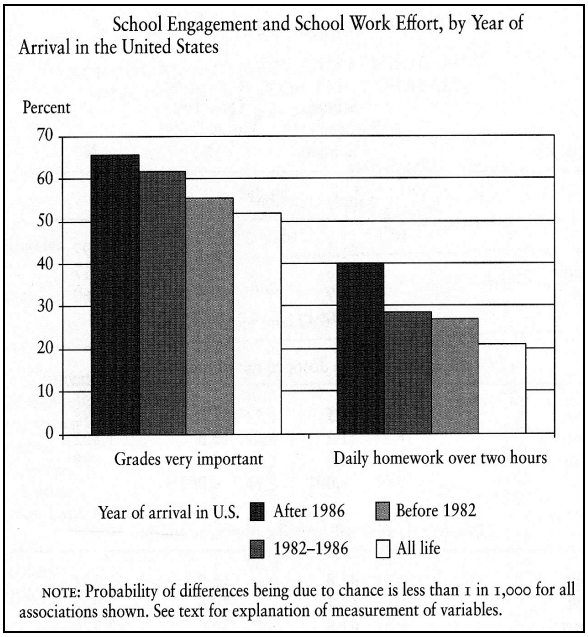
The following graph represents longitudinal data collected by Portes and Rumbaut during one of their studies. The two preliminary indicators that they use as measurements of achievement drive are school engagement and the number of hours spent daily on homework. "School engagement is operationalized as responses to an attitudinal item asking how important grades are to the student. High engagement is defined as responses of 'very important' in both surveys. Schoolwork discipline is measured by the percent who reported that they spent over two hours daily on homework in both surveys—an indicator of persistent effort well above the national average of one hour or less among all public high school students."[39] (See Figure I.)

[37] According to Portes and Rumbaut, selective acculturation is associated with a relative lack of intergenerational conflict, the presence of many co-ethnics among children's friends, and the achievement of full bilingualism in the second generation. In contrast, *dissonant acculturation* takes place when a child's learning of the English language and American ways and simultaneous loss of the immigrant culture outstrip their parents. (*Legacies,* 53-54.)

[38] "Hispanics and Education," 152.

[39] *Legacies*, 213.

**Figure I.**[40]




The information table from which this bar graph is built originally categorized results by nationality. The results concerning Latin Americans showed the lowest levels of school engagement. The general trend of Portes and Rumbaut's entire study, however, reflected that the population of Latin American children exhibited positive characteristics such as the highest levels of fluent bilingualism amongst immigrants, high levels of family cohesion, and low intergenerational conflict. Portes and Rumbaut conclude that "[t]hese positive outcomes do not translate, however, into extraordinary school effort but are associated instead with a more relaxed attitude toward schoolwork."[41] It is likely that, in the case of Latinos, "selective acculturation is manifested less in fluent bilingualism than in the intergenerational transmission of a strong achievement drive." This reinforces one of my key findings: *the pressure parents place on their child to achieve is one of the most consistent determinants of the child's educational success*.

Parental goals have a great impact on their children's achievement drive. This fact was evident in the findings of the first study I referred to by Portes and Rumbaut concerning educational aspirations and expectations. In this study only 28.8 percent of students (from all national origins included in the study, not just Latinos) whose parents held less than college aspirations for them aspired to an advanced degree, while the figure increases markedly to 85 percent among those whose parents had high goals for them. These high expectations held by parents for their child are said to compel students to work hard in order to excel in school.

*Dissonant acculturation*

[40] *Legacies*, 214.
[41] *Legacies*, 214-215.

Dissonant acculturation is when children's learning of the English language and American ways outstrip their parents. This negative type of acculturation, also associated with a simultaneous loss of the immigrant culture, leads to many factors that have been proven to decrease a student's academic drive and subsequent academic achievements.[42] Intergenerational relationships in immigrant and nonimmigrant Latino families vary by psychosocial factors such as nationality, patterns of language adaptation, and family status and composition. A mix of these factors can influence the self-esteem and ambition of a Latino student, and in turn, can be used as predictors of educational achievement.[43]

As a means to study the inner workings of immigrant families, Portes and Rumbaut conducted a qualitative study comprised of 5,262 interviews with young people in 1992. In their study, they systematically investigated the "differences that can exist among families and groups along a continuum ranging from situations where parental authority is fully preserved to those where it is thoroughly undermined by generational gaps in acculturation – particularly in English knowledge and the extent in which second-generation youth retain their parents' language."[44]

The results from their study confirm the association between parental language loss and dissonant acculturation. The study indicates that fluent bilinguals are the least likely to report persistent conflict with their parents and the most likely to indicate high levels of family cohesion. By contrast, English monolinguals and limited bilinguals exhibit the strongest tendencies toward dissonant acculturation.[45] The relationship between limited bilingualism and dissonant acculturation is further discussed in context of bilingual education programs in the following Quality of Education section of this report.

*FAMILY'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT*

In my research, the second area within the mechanism of family found to be highly influential in Latino student success is the differences in the educational resources available to children and adolescents in their home environments, or rather, the family's ability to support the student.[46] Parents can often be an important source of motivation and information that promotes high school completion. In a study used by Charles Clark, parental support was most predictive of greater academic well-being.[47] Almost 10 percent of Latino teens, however, are not living with a parent, more than twice the rate for White teens.[48] Quantitative studies generally find that "the combination of low parental

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[42] *Legacies,* 52.
[43] *Legacies,* 193.
[44] *Legacies,* 199.
[45] *Legacies,* 201.
[46] Economically, families that are poorer simply have less money to buy educational materials and purchase formal education. "Low economic status also limits the families' ability to provide educational resources in the home if parents with low income work more or experience more stress. Less flexible work schedules prevent parents from visiting schools and from having regular contact with teachers." (*Legacies,* 140) I am not examining economic effects on student success, however, because it is often out of the scope of school structure and power to deal with these issues and this report is focused on expanding and improving school programs and policies.
[47] Clark, Charles S. "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?" *The CQ Researcher* 5, no. 3 (CQ Press, 2006) 1-37.
[48] "Latino Teens Staying in High School: A Challenge For All Generations." Pew Hispanic Center. <www.pewhispanic.org.> (accessed November 2006).

education, low family income, and lack of English-language skills explains much of the poorer school performance and lower educational attainment of Hispanics as well as Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites."[49] The unfavorable statuses of these three variables are consistently found among Latino adults nationwide. In addition, research has shown a correlation between parental involvement and the child's educational success.[50] In this section I will discuss the effects of low levels of parental education, lack of English-language skills, and level of parental involvement on the Latino youth's academic performance.

*Low parental education*

Not only do Latino adults have the lowest level of education of any racial or ethnic group in the United States, but also the level of educational achievement of Latinos has not improved as rapidly as that of other racial and ethnic groups. This is true particularly for Mexican-Americans and recent immigrants, the largest demographic within the Latino population at the state and local level.[51]

When parents themselves have not attended high school, they have a more difficult time understanding the effort and steps their children need to take in order to succeed in school. These Latino parents also have a harder time helping their children with schoolwork, interacting with their children in literacy and numeracy activities, and creating home environments in which children see adults reading and engaging in educational activities.[52] Guiding a child's education requires that parents understand what children need to accomplish each day to be successful. In comparison to 93 percent of white children who have mothers who finished high school, only 51 percent of Latino children have mothers that have achieved this level of education. In context of this statistic alone, over half of Latino children face a disadvantage in their education success based on their family background. In addition to a low-level of education, many Latino parents remain largely monolingual as their children acquire English language proficiency in school. This disparity creates a parental dependency on the child, distorting cultural parent-child roles, and further limiting the parents' control over their children and ability to help them with school work – all of which are characteristics of dissonant acculturation.

"Research finds that despite efforts to support their children's education, many Hispanic families are consistently frustrated by inability and feelings of inadequacy when helping their children with schoolwork."[53] For example, a study of non-Hispanic White, Black, and Latino families of elementary school-aged children in Chicago found that Hispanic mothers felt significantly less able to support their children's education.[54] In

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[49] Grissner, David W., and others. Student Achievemn and the Changing American Family (Sata Monica: Rand Corporation, 1994) found in "Hispanics and Education," 143.
[50] Clark, Charles S. "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?" *The CQ Researcher* 5, no. 3 (CQ Press, 2006) 1.
[51] Reed, Brack. "Portal to Opportunity." *Northwest Education* 11, no. 3 (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2006) <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>
[52] Concha Delgado-Gaitan and Manuel Trueba. *Crossing Cultural Borders: Education for Immigrant Families in America* (London: Falmer Press, 1991) found in "Hispanics and Education, 141.
[53] "Hispanics and Education," 141.
[54] Only 77 percent of Latino mothers in this study, versus all of the Black and non-Hispanic White mothers of these children, believed that they could help their children in reading.

another recent longitudinal study of adolescents in three public high schools in Chicago Mexican-American and Black parents of freshman students were asked whether they "felt capable of helping their children with school work."[55] In this sample, "the average years of education for Mexican-American parents was only five years, compared to 13 years for Blacks. Fully 92 percent of Mexican-American parents of ninth-graders, versus 8 percent of Black parents, stated that they felt unable to help their adolescents with school work on a day-to-day basis."[56] Any feelings held by Latino parents of being unable to support their children in elementary school are only exacerbated as the child moves into high school, "yet the extent to which parents need to provide day-to-day monitoring becomes even more important, even as their capacity to do so becomes less."[57]

Even among high-achieving Latino students, analyses from two national databases reveals that they are much more likely to have parents with very low educational levels. "More than 25 of Latino high-achieving students have at least one parent who did not graduate from high school, compared with less than 5 percent of their White peers."[58] As with higher-risk Latino students, these high-achieving Latino students face a distinct disadvantage as their parents are not often in a position to provide support for and advice to their child to help her successfully navigate through school and into postsecondary education.[59]

Despite their own educational barriers and lack of knowledge about the United States school system, Latino parents have shown a high level of interest in wanting to learn how to help support their children. In a qualitative study that asked Latino and Black parents of ninth-grade students what kinds of programs they would be interested in, "Latino parents were significantly more likely than Black parents to say they would be very interested in programs about how to raise teenagers (76 percent versus 46 percent); programs that introduced parents to the education system (76 percent versus 43 percent); and programs that helped parents understand the work their children do in school (80 percent versus 64 percent.)"[60]

*Parental Involvement*

*"The three most important aspects of parental involvement are communication, communication and communication."*

-Columbia, MO., Principal Kennedy.[61]

According to research done by Portes and Rumbaut, children's academic performance is higher at schools that have high parental involvement. [62] Parents, however often face many barriers that prevent them from providing this type of support for their children. The National PTA conducted a survey in 1992 of 30,000 parents. The results of their

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[55] Conca Delgado-Gaitan. "School Matters in the Mexican-American Home: Socializing Children to Education," American Educational Research Journal 29, no. 3 (1992) found in "Hispanics and Education," 141.
[56] "Hispanics and Education," 141.
[57] "Hispanics and Education," 141.
[58] *Fragile Futures*.
[59] *Fragile Futures*, 3.
[60] "Hispanics and Education," 143.
[61] "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?", 15.
[62] *Legacies,* 130.

survey indicated that parents felt that the biggest barrier to becoming more involved in their child's school was "lack of time" (cited by 89 percent of survey participants). Time was followed by other barriers such as a feeling that they have, "nothing to contribute" (32 percent); "don't understand the system to know how to be involved" (32 percent); "lack of child care" (28 percent); "feel intimidated" (25 percent); "language and cultural differences" (15 percent); "don't have access to transportation to attend functions" (11 percent); "do not feel welcome at the school" (9 percent).[63]

In literature concerning the effects of parental involvement on students, Charles S. Clark cites Dan Safran, the head of the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement at John F. Kennedy University in Orinda, Calif. Safran is cited for saying that while the primary value of parental involvement is greater academic achievement, there are other important benefits. Chief among these are, according to Safran, "the opportunity for parents to contribute to school reform, which is part of our participatory tradition, and the potential for the many cultures of our society to find some common ground around children," he says. "This is particularly true in low-income, minority and rural areas and among new immigrants, especially at the elementary school level."[64]

*Section summary*

It is important to note that at the individual level, there are incidents in which children lack an achievement drive and therefore academic success despite parental pressure. These incidents arise in my qualitative interviews and they are also noted by Portes and Rumbaut in their research.[65] As a consistent pattern, however, high parental aspirations and parental pressure for their children to succeed translate into higher educational ambitions among students and a greater confidence in reaching these goals. "Higher parental status and unbroken families support fluent bilingualism and other manifestations of selective acculturation that, in turn, increase self-esteem, reinforce aspirations, and lower psychological distress."[66]

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

*The potential of formal institutions*

As discussed in the previous section, research on parenting helps us understand what aspects of home environment tend to promote learning and school achievement. Similarly, my research on quality of education has sought to understand what school environments tend to encourage academic success for Latino students.[67] In addition to the social capital provided by the family I discussed in the Family section of this report, developmental studies have identified two other major sources of support for youth that come from outside the family: formal institutions (school staff, school policies, school resources, etc.) and informal support from peers and other adults.[68]

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[63] "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?", 38.
[64] "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?", 3.
[65] *Legacies,* 231.
[66] *Legacies,* 231.
[67] "Hispanics and Education," 145.
[68] "Will More Parental Involvement Help Students?", 3.

According to Gilberto Q. Conchas, although schools by themselves are hard-pressed to circumvent structural inequalities at the larger social and economic levels, they can have a powerful effect on students' experience of social conditions.[69] In his article, *Structuring Failure and Success: Understanding the Variability in Latino School Engagement*, he describes the results of a study that reveals that formal institutional mechanisms have an impact on Latino school engagement.[70] His research indicates that "Latino students responded to institutional actions and institutional actors responded to Latino students in distinct ways. Students became active agents in the creation of school success as they interacted with school structures and culture. This simultaneous interplay of structure, culture, and agency was the proximate source of engagement and school success."[71] Most importantly from his research concerning the impact of quality education on Latino students, the study shows that supportive institutional and cultural processes in schools can play a significant role in the formation of high-achieving Latino students.

I focused my research on secondary schools partially as a result of the summary evaluation by Melissa Roderick concerning the research conducted by Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Pater Mortimore, and Jaent Ouston.[72] Bases on this other research, Roderick argues that "adolescence is a particularly critical period in the formation of school attachment and identity, and is a time when the qualities of school and community environments play an important role."[73]

Roderick notes that "researchers studying ghettos and barrios, for example, most often focus on the negative effects that living in such neighborhoods have on adolescents; at this age, peer influences, lack of safety, lack of access to role models, negative social norms, and lack of opportunities to work and be involved in productive extracurricular activities have the greatest negative influence."[74] The family has a significant impact on the success of Latino students. The school and its teacher, however, have the potential to play an important role in counteracting the possible negative influences of an unsupportive home environment by offering students a "challenge, a sense of the future, a positive sense of school membership, and relationships with adults who can foster resilience."[75]

Research concerning school environments that tend to be beneficial to students indicates that these schools often combine "four essential supports that produce higher achievement among students from diverse backgrounds:

1. These schools set *high expectations*, develop a core mission of the school centered on learning, and provide instruction that continually exposes students to new content and skills so that students develop high levels of competence.

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[69] Conchas, Gilberto Q. "Structuring Failure and Success: Understanding the Variability in Latino School Engagement." *Harvard Educational Review* 71, no. 3 (Cambridge: Fall 2001) 475-505.
[70] "Structuring Failure and Success: Understanding the Variability in Latino School Engagement," 2.
[71] "Structuring Failure and Success: Understanding the Variability in Latino School Engagement," 14.
[72] Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore, and Janet Ouston, Fifteen thousand Hours: *Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children* (Cambridge, mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979) found in "Hispanics and Education."
[73] "Hispanics and Education,"147-48.
[74] Jargowsky, *Poverty and Place*, found in "Hispanics and Education," 148.
[75] Rutter, Michaels, and others. Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) found in "Hispanics and Education," 148.

2. These schools create a *web of support,* or rather *non-familial social capital,* which includes individual attention; opportunities for students to develop relationships with adults; and a safe, responsive, and orderly learning environment that communicates consistent expectations for student behavior.
3. These schools work to develop a *positive sense of school membership* and identity among students, through a focus on developing self-esteem, instilling a sense of future orientation, and placing high value on students' language and culture.
4. Effective schools work to *engage parents* in developing common goals and strategies for reaching those goals."[76]

*High expectations*

One frequent criticism of the American education system is that, although public schools do a good job of providing basic skills for students, they generally fail to move students on to more complex problem-solving, analytical, and communication skills.[77] This criticism is reflected in the trends of Hispanic achievement test scores. According to the results from a national study conducted by the United States Department of Education, very few Hispanic students demonstrate a mathematic proficiency that is considered adequate to above average for their grade.[78]As I discussed in the Achievement Gap section of this report, the strategy of focusing only on bringing up the bottom in order to close the achievement gap is illogical. It overlooks the fact that high-functioning Latino students, as well as at-risk Latino students, should be the target for more programmatic efforts.

*Web of support*

Parents are not the only source of children's social capital. In a child's day, large portions are spent without her parents. Examples of sources of "non-familial" social capital include friends, teachers, school officials, and communities – such as teams and clubs formed through extracurricular sports and activities. "Ignoring these non-familial sources of social capital, and attributing discrepancies in children's educational outcomes solely to the actions of parents, is problematic."[79]

Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch argue that "supportive ties with institutional agents represent a necessary condition for engagement and advancement in the educational system and, ultimately, for success in the occupational structure." [80] According to Stanton-Salazar, low-income youth of Mexican origin can find supportive ties within schools.[81] Researchers have found that one significant way to boost students' motivation to succeed, and therefore their achievement drive, is to build close networks of support with teachers and other students. These types of programs work to engage students in schooling and provide positive motivation. In his book, *The Color of Success:*

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[76] "Hispanics and Education," 145.
[77] "Hispanics and Education," 138.
[78] "Hispanics and Education," 137
[79] *The Color of Success,* 90.
[80] Stanton-Salazar, R. and S. M. Dornbusch. "Social Capital and the Social Reproduction of Inequality: the Formation of Informational Networks Among Mexican-origin High School Students." *Sociology of Education* 68, no. 2, 116-135 found in *The Color of Success*, 14.
[81] *The Color of Success,* 14

*Race and High-Achieving Urban Youth*, Conchas describes these institutional processes as being key forces in challenging racial inequality in education.[82]

Research by Luis C. Moll and Richard Ruiz also points to the necessity of social supports within an effective school that will ensure that the students will succeed within more rigorous classes.[83] In their examination of effective schools, "this social support included: rigorous weekly academic tutoring with explicit instruction on note taking, test taking, and study strategies. It also included teacher advocacy on the students' behalf, the creation of social networks that facilitated acquiring the knowledge and wherewithal necessary to deal with the school culture, and acquaintance of the students with the procedural knowledge they needed to deal with college applications and admissions."[84]

*Positive sense of school membership*

Bilingual education, or lack thereof, has been a controversial topic nationally for years and affects millions of Latino students. In the 2003-04 school year, English language learner (ELL) services were provided to 3.8 million students (11 percent of all students in the United States school system). According to Portes and Rumbaut, a strong movement has arisen against schooling imparted in foreign languages to immigrant students. "This form of remedial schooling is erroneously called bilingual education, for it is not aimed at promoting fluent command of two languages, but at mainstreaming students as soon as possible into English classes."[85] Intentionally or not, this type of language education program, one common form of which is called transitional bilingual education, promotes dissonant acculturation with negative consequences that can far exceed the alleged benefits of quickly learning English. [86] Limited bilingualism in children is a common reflection of the negative outcome of these programs.

According to the studies by Portes and Rumbaut that I discussed in the Family section, limited bilingualism has much higher correlation with dissonant acculturation.[87] The related factors of dissonant acculturation and limited bilingualism include higher levels of parent-child conflict, children reporting an increased embarrassment over parents' ways, and decreased family cohesion.[88] Intergenerational dissonance limits the support that a student receives from their family. Studies have shown that students with

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[82] *The Color of Success*, 19.

[83] Moll, Luis C., Richard Ruiz. "The Schooling of Latino Children." *Latinos: Remaking America.* Ed. Suarez-Orozco & M. Paez. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 362-374.

[84] "The Schooling of Latino Children," 368.

[85] *Legacies,* 130.

[86] "*Transitional bilingual education* (also referred to as *early exit bilingual education* is a type of school program in the U.S. for language minority students who do not speak English or have limited proficiency in English when they start schooling. The students' primary language is used for some curriculum instruction for a limited number of years (usually two or three). This approach aims to promote the students' mastery of academic material while they are learning English as a second language. These programs are intended to facilitate language minority students' transition to instruction in English only. These programs aim for full proficiency in oral and written English, but do not aim to maintain or develop the students' primary language. They often lead to subtractive bilingualism, that is, a process in which individuals lose their primary language (and possibly culture) as they acquire a new language and culture" (Cloud, Nancy, Fred Genesee, Else Hamayan. *Dual Language Instruction: A Handbook for Enriched Education* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 2000).

[87] *Limited bilinguals* have lost fluency in the home language but have not yet acquired full command of English (*Legacies,* 131).

[88] *Legacies,* 131.

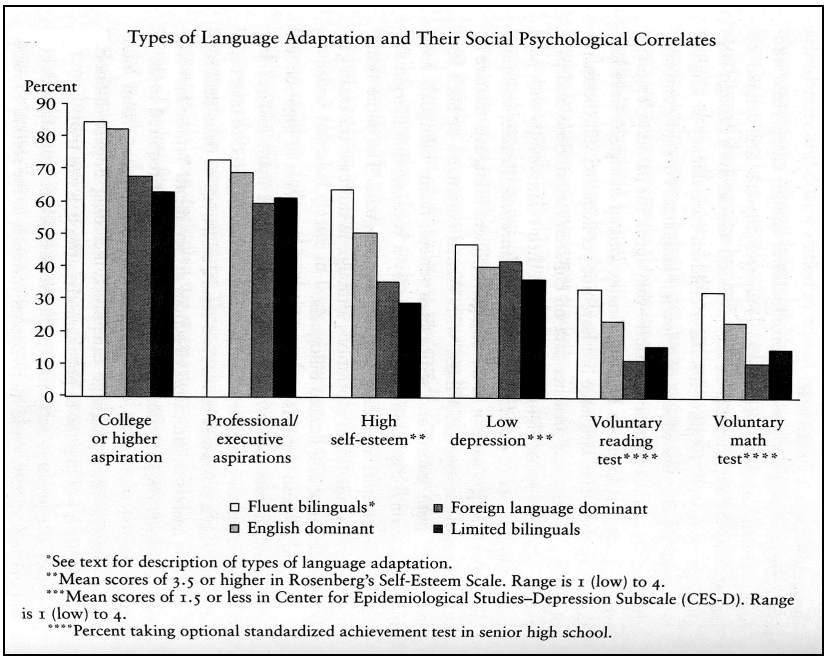
less family support consistently show less motivation and academic drive, subsequently greatly reducing their level of achievement in school.

Bilingual researcher Patricia Gándara criticizes most research evaluating bilingual education for focusing only on short-term accomplishments in English.[89] From the results of her research, she argues that "[a]ll transitional bilingual education programs, no matter how effective they are in helping students joining the academic mainstream, implicitly foster prejudice against non-English languages because transitional programs are based on the "language as a problem" model. The children's non-English language is something to be dispensed with and transitioned out of as quickly as possible."[90] In comparison to transitional bilingual education programs, dual-immersion programs use language as a resource – "an asset rather than a liability."[91]

Many policymakers and researchers have believed for some time that dual-immersion, or two-way bilingual programs, are the most effective strategy for meeting the needs of English Language Learners.[92] This alternative to transitional bilingual programs does not have the same subtractive effect on the student's familiar relations or devaluation of the student's native language. These programs are designed to promote English fluency while supporting parental efforts toward bilingualism. "Cooperation between schools and families in promoting this form of additive learning is likely to have precisely the opposite results of the subtractive approach."[93] (See Figure II.)

**Figure II.**[1]

*As seen in Figure II, the bilingual fluency gained by dual-immersion programs has far reaching positive impacts on the student. In contrast, limited bilingualism, often resulting from transitional bilingual programs, has negative consequences.*




[89] Gándara, Patricia. "Learning English in California: Guideposts for the Nation." *Latinos: Remaking America.* Ed. Suarez-Orozco & M. Paez. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002) 339-358.
[90] "Learning English in California," 341.
[91] *Two-way immersion* (dual language immersion) is a program which serves both language minority and language majority students in the same classrooms. These programs use each group of students' first language for academic instruction at certain points during their program. They aim for bilingualism and biculturalism for both groups of students (*Legacies*, 208).
[92] "Learning English in California," 354.
[93] *Legacies,* 132.

With regard to intercultural relations, transitional bilingual education programs provide the students with knowledge of their own culture in the context of the mainstream culture; this cultural identity is thought to support high self-esteem.[94] In fully bicultural or multicultural orientations, however, such as dual-immersion programs, members of both the mainstream culture and members of the minority culture are taught to appreciate and value each other's culture and language and are encouraged to incorporate features of both into multicultural social identities.[95]

The importance for all individuals in the United States to have an appreciation and understanding of different cultures is increasingly important as we live in a diversified nation and are members of an international community that is progressively more globalized. Acquiring language proficiency is real capital in the global economy; thus, bilingualism and biliteracy are valuable for all populations in the United States, not just Latinos. Dual-immersion programs also offer academic and cognitive advantages. Many studies have found that full bilingual and biliterate students have enjoyed certain types of academic superiority over monolinguals.[96]

Another negative aspect of transitional bilingual education is that it often increases intergenerational dissonance. Children in these programs often face a rapid loss of parental languages, limiting their ability to communicate with their parents who will remain largely monolingual. As pointed out by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, another indicator of dissonance associated with transitional bilingual programs and limited bilingualism is an increase in frequency of parent-child cultural conflict, which also has a consistently negative and powerful influence on student educational achievement.

According to Patricia Gándara, bilingual teachers have been viewed in the United States as expedient and not essential to student success. She argues that "[m]illions of dollars have been spent on evaluating the effectiveness of *programs* rather than the effectiveness of *teaching strategies*."[97] This national pattern of dollar allocation is based on the assumption that teacher competencies are not critical if we can just identify the "silver-bullet program."[98] This school of thought ignores decades of research on classroom learning that has pointed to one conclusion: "nothing matters more in school than the quality of the teacher."[99] In my evaluation of Wa-Hi in the Case Study section of this report, and in my Recommendations, I stress the importance of this point.

*Engaging parents*

(See Parental Involvement in Family section) As I discussed previously in this report, a higher level of parental involvement increases student success. [100] Following this train of thought, effective schools who work to find ways of involving parents, such as in

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[94] *Learning English in California*, 340.
[95] *Learning English in California*, 340.
[96] *Learning English in California*, 341.
[97] *Learning English in California*, 351.
[98] *Learning English in California*, 351.
[99] Shields, P., and others. The Status of the Teaching Profession: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations (Santa Cruz: The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 1999) found in *Learning English in California*, 351.
[100] *Legacies,* 130.

developing common goals and strategies for helping their children succeed, increase the level of student achievement.

*Scholarly Literature Section Summary*

The literature and many studies I have examined have led me to further refine my question concerning why some Latino students succeed academically while others do not. From reading the studies conducted by the various educational researchers, and theories they have formulated, I have identified two mechanisms, family and quality of education, as playing the most critical roles in the achievement drive for Latino students. This research led to the formulation of my subordinate research questions: *"What is the role of family as a mechanism in the success for Latino students?"* and *"What is the role of quality of education as a mechanism in the success for Latino students?"* Within these mechanisms, factors related to family have a greater impact on a student's educational experience and therefore are most important for program developers and policymakers to consider when deciding where to focus resources and remediation. These family factors include: familismo, selective and dissonant acculturation, the immigrant drive for achievement, and the levels of parent education and parental involvement.

Supportive formal institutions that provide Latino students with quality education can significantly increase Latino student achievement. I have focused on studies that have shown common characteristics of formal institutions that promote learning and school achievement. These factors of effective schools include: high teacher expectations, a strong web of support, programs that enhance student's positive sense of school membership, policy that reflects and respects cultural and linguistic diversity, and special efforts made to engage parents. Even though family, to a great extent, determines success of Latino students, it is a mistake to overlook the potential that schools have in progressively closing the achievement gap by their ability to support both high-functioning and at-risk youth throughout their educational process.

## RESEARCH METHODS

My main research question, *"Why do some Latino students succeed academically while others do not?"* guided the specific choices I made for my research methods. Because I was looking for information concerning successful Latino students, I first looked on national educational data bases such as the National Center for Educational Statistics[101] and the US Department of Education to determine the present state of Latino demographics.[102] I looked for information such as: the increase of Latino immigrants, the percent of Latinos in the public school system, the national-origin break-up of Latinos in the U.S, and the achievement gap between Latino students and their Anglo peers based on graduation rates and standardized testing. Then, I looked for the same quantitative data at the state level using website resources such as the Washington State Board of Education[103] and Washington State Board of Education.[104] The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website was very useful to acquire the "report card" of local

[101] <http://nces.ed.gov/>.
[102] <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>.
[103] <http://www.k12.wa.us/>.
[104] <http:www.sbe.wa.gov/>.

schools, where I could specifically focus on race/ethnicity statistics, special programs, WASL results, and drop-out rates of Wa-Hi students and then compare that data to secondary schools across the state.[105] At this point in my research I had identified for myself a definite achievement gap at the national, state, and local level between Latino students and their Anglo peers. The problem I faced was that all of these statistics indicate that many Latino students are performing poorly in secondary school; however, the Latino student population is not a homogenous group in which all perform poorly. In order to explore the complexities and particular circumstances of why certain groups of Latino students do better academically than other groups of Latino students, I began to investigate scholarly articles and case studies conducted by various educational researchers.

I discovered that the main influences over Latino student success came from the mechanisms of family and quality of education. After researching specific factors within these mechanisms, I searched for current programs and policies at the national, state, and local levels that focus on improving the academic achievement levels of Latino students. When I found these different programs and policies, I was particularly interested in seeing if they foster characteristics that coincide with the literature I had researched. For example, I looked to see if these programs emphasized parental involvement, a factor of family, or if the policies focused on creating a positive sense of school membership for students, a factor of quality of education. Through this method of applying what I had learned from the scholarly literature, I also evaluated the programs and policies existing at Wa-Hi.

The four main factors that contributed to my decision to center my case study on Wa-Hi included: literature I read that points to adolescence as a particularly critical period in the formation of school attachment and identity, the convenient proximity of the high school to Whitman College, the resources my community partners could provide me as the Bilingual Coordinators of the Walla Walla School District, and the school's high number of Latino students.[106] Latinos comprise approximately 30 percent of the high school's student body; yet, congruent with the national trend, Latinos as a group are grossly underrepresented in advanced courses, receive the lowest state test scores, have the highest drop out rate, and of those who graduate, a lower percent chose to attend college than their Anglo peers. At Wa-Hi, Latinos represent, by a large margin, the most disadvantaged racial group. Some Latino students, however, are still succeeding. Investigating the different factors that distinguish these students from those Latino students who are not succeeding academically correlates exactly with what I wanted in a case study for my research focus.

I conducted a limited qualitative investigation of Wa-Hi through a series of 10 different interviews, as well as through frequent visits to the high school during these past months of research. I interviewed one "successful" and one "not successful" (indicated by their academic standing and/or fulfilling of his/her potential deemed by teachers) Latino youth of high school age who have attended at least three years in the Walla Walla school system. I also interviewed two "successful" and one "not successful" Latino

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[105] Student Demographics. <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/> (accessed November 2006).

[106] Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore, and Janet Ouston, *Fifteen thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children* (Cambridge, mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979) found in "Hispanics and Education."

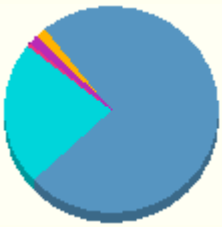
persons between ages of 18-24 (post high school-age) who have attended at least three years in the Walla Walla school system. My community partners, Cindy Gregoire and Diana Erickson, were integral to coordinating these interviews for this research. I also interviewed two teachers who taught/had taught at Wa-Hi, Keith Gradwohl and Diana Erickson. I interviewed a Wa-Hi Assistant Principal, Brett Cox, the GEAR UP Program Coordinator for Wa-Hi, Michael Gwinn, and, the high school's Intervention Specialist, Javier Hernandez.

**CASE STUDY: *WALLA WALLA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL***
***Walla Walla, Washington***

| **School Name:** | **District Name:** | **County:** |
|---|---|---|
| Walla Walla High School | Walla Walla School District | Walla Walla |

**Figure III**.[107]

| | |
|---|---|
| **American Indian/Alaskan Native:** | 11 |
| **Asian/Pacific Islander:** | 37 |
| **Hispanic:** | 447 |
| **Black, non-Hispanic:** | 25 |
| **White, non-Hispanic:** | 1428 |
| **Total Students:** | 1948 |



**Free lunch eligible:** 526 **Reduced-price lunch eligible:** 168 **Migrant Students:** 143

*SOCIAL CAPITAL: Parent Education Programs*

As I discussed in my scholarly research section, the lack of education among Latino parents is correlated to a reduced academic achievement drive of their child. This effect may come from a combination of factors, including a lack of understanding of the United States school system and what it takes for their child to succeed within it, not being able to help their child with schoolwork, feeling uncomfortable interacting with the school, being limited in English-language ability, not having high aspirations for their child, and several more that were discussed earlier in this report.

I have found from my research that Wa-Hi has several programs focused on improving the ability of Latino parents to support their children academically. The following is a discussion of some of these programs and school policies:

*Latino Parent Night*

This year, by the efforts of a team lead by Assistant Principal Brett Cox, Wa-Hi has begun a Spanish-speaking parents' night. Until this year, the only parents' night, the

[107] CCD Public School Data 2004-2005 School Year. <http://nces.ed.gov/globallocator/index.asp?search=1&State=WA&city=Walla+Walla&zipcode=99362&miles=&itemname=Walla+Walla+High+School&sortby=name&School=1&CS=32438911>

"Blue Print for the Future," was held in English with Spanish interpreters available if needed. Those nights, however, were poorly attended by Latino parents. This fall, the high school hosted its first Spanish-speaking parents' night. As a community service project, approximately 20 students from Wa-Hi's Club Latino came to the high school on the Saturday prior to the meeting to call and inform the parents of every Latino student at the high school of the event.[108] Between 40 and 45 Latino parents attended the meeting. A similar Spanish-speaking parents' night is planned for spring semester as well.

The Spanish-speaking parents' night had a very similar agenda to the English-speaking parents' night. The agenda included providing parents with information concerning graduation requirements, the WASL, WASL tutoring opportunities, other tutoring opportunities, and the attendance policy. Differences between the two parents' meetings include, for example, a larger stress on attendance policy at the Spanish-speaking parent's meetings. This additional emphasis is based on the fact that it is more common in this population to take extended family trips to their country of origin. The planning of these trips is frequently based on the parents' work schedule and not that of school vacation time. Many Latino students have faced detrimental consequences in terms of passing classes and attendance discipline as a result of these trips. This agenda emphasis acknowledges issues of *familismo*, such as a more tight-knit extended family connection in the Latino population, as well as informing the parents of the importance of consistent attendance necessary for their child to succeed in the U.S. school system.

Creating distinct nights for parents' meetings, one attended exclusively by Latino parents and the other attended almost entirely by Anglo parents, conspicuously separates the two races. This practice is dangerous as it may psychologically promote the students and families to regard themselves as inherently different based on race. The language, however, is a barrier for many Latino parents in knowing how to better support their child and that factor needs to be addressed. The offering of this meeting in Spanish is one way to approach this barrier; however, in the long run, providing Spanish-speaking parents the opportunity to bridge this language gap should be the ultimate goal of the school district – and the next program I address is working to achieve just that.

*Garrison Night School*

Over 70 Latino families of Wa-Hi students have very limited English-language ability. In addition, a large number of Latino Spanish-speaking parents have low education levels. In response to this language and educational barrier of Latino parents, Walla Walla School District together with Walla Walla Community College offer a 13 week, four nights per week course at Garrison Middle School in order to give Spanish-speaking Latino parents the opportunity of earning their GED in the Spanish language for only $40. The course syllabus includes English-language learning as well.

This program has existed since 1994, but has expanded greatly since its beginnings. Traffic Safety, Citizenship, and ESL have been added, as well as two separate classes for Native English-speaking adults who want to learn Spanish, one for beginners and the for advanced beginners. These Spanish courses run from November 14 through February 28 for two nights a week, and the cost is $150. Attendance is encouraged for all Walla Walla Public School Employees as clock hours are available to them through this course. The second hour of each of these classes is spent together with

[108] Approximately 300 Latino families in total were contacted by these Club Latino members.

native Spanish-speaking adults from the corresponding ESL night class. A native Spanish-speaking student is paired with a native English-speaking student and the teachers spend half of that time instructing in Spanish and the other half in English. Both adults have the experience of being in the minority language group as well as operating in their native language and having to assist their partner with the school work.

This progressive element of Garrison Night School directly reflects the findings of my research concerning the strengths of dual-language programs. As I discussed in my Quality of Education section, this type of opportunity for adults serves the same purpose of teaching members of the mainstream culture and members of the minority culture to value and appreciate each other's culture and language. Reducing prejudice and ethnic stereotyping and enhancing inter-group relations among the adults in these classes will have a powerful and positive intergenerational influence over inter-group relations of their children. In addition, within the Walla Walla school district, only one out of six elementary schools in the district presently has a dual-language program. Another three of these elementary schools have transitional bilingual education programs. The two middle schools and the high school have ESL programs, and the remaining two elementary and the alternative schools do not offer English language learning programs.[109] As I discussed in my Quality of Education section, studies have shown that transitional bilingual education programs, unlike dual-immersion programs, foster limited bilingualism in students, which has a much higher correlation with dissonant acculturation than fluent bilingualism.[110] Dissonant acculturation is when children's learning of the English language and American ways outstrip their parents. This negative type of acculturation, also associated with a simultaneous loss of the immigrant culture, leads to many factors that have been proven to decrease a student's academic drive and subsequent academic achievements.[111] A few of these factors include: role reversal of the parent and child, lower self-esteem, lower college or higher education aspirations, increased embarrassment of parents' ways, and increased clashes with parents.[112]

During a visit to the high school I witnessed an example of one of these factors of dissonant acculturation: role reversal. A Latina student had been reported as skipping class; in order to excuse herself she had brought in a note she had written in English saying the was absence due to sickness, and it was signed by her mother. The bilingual secretary at the front desk had background knowledge that the mother of this child did not understand English and therefore was suspicious that the mother did not know what she was signing. According to Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, "This role reversal occurs when children's acculturation has moved so far ahead of their parents' that key family decisions become dependent on the children's knowledge. Because they speak the language and know the culture better, second-generation youths are often able to define the situation for themselves, prematurely freeing themselves from parental control."[113] The Latina student eventually admitted that she had not been sick and she received the penalty for an unexcused absence. Programs, such as the Garrison Night

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[109] English language learners that attend those schools have enough skills that they can be successful in an English only classroom, or they are bussed to a school that offers services. Sometimes their parents elect to leave them in the school that does not offer ESL.
[110] *Legacies*, 130.
[111] *Legacies*, 52.
[112] *Legacies*, 132-133.
[113] *Legacies*, 53.

School that provides Latino parents an opportunity to increase their level of education as well as their ability in English, is one approach to counteract the dissonant acculturation that results from the majority of English Language Learner (ELL) Latino students having gone through transitional bilingual education programs in the Walla Walla School District. Spanish-speaking parents' night is another example of a program that attempts to counteract dissonant acculturation by familiarizing parents limited by language skills with the U.S. school system so that they will have better abilities to maintain control and to monitor their children.

*GEAR UP*

In the discussion of some of the above programs, GEAR UP was mentioned as a financial and organizational force. Wa-Hi received a five year federal grant from GEAR UP which specifically targeted students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and focused on orienting more students towards attending college. The goal of this program supports the research findings I discussed earlier, as it focuses on raising the academic expectations and aspirations of students towards college. Present programs and services offered by GEAR UP at Wa-Hi include: daily in-class tutoring; after school tutoring; a student club focused on college called the Cougar Club; the annual Cache conference for Latinos at Washington State University focused on teaching Latino students about college and support for Latino students wanting to attend college; and a study skills class. In addition, GEAR UP will spend over $50,000 in teacher professional training in a program called Secondary Instructional Practices that focuses on how to help students with literacy. This program benefits all students, as every teacher is trained and they then apply those methods in their classes. Many of the programs that GEAR UP funds and organizes are essential specifically in supporting Latino students. The majority of these programs, however, are focused on more "at-risk" students rather than high-functioning Latino students.

*Cinco de Mayo*

In addition to the above mentioned programs, GEAR UP also offers information concerning college campus visits, financial aid, and college admission for students and parents. For example, on Cinco de Mayo last year, GEAR UP, in cooperation with TRIO ETS director America Carrion, organized and funded a parent-student trip to visit Eastern Washington University. Although Wa-Hi has sent a bus load of students to Eastern Washington University's Cinco de Mayo celebration on numerous occasions before, the trip this year made special efforts to encourage the parents to attend as well. Approximately 40 Wa-Hi students and five Latino parents attended. The objective of the trip was to encourage a dialogue between parents and students about going to college, as well as to give both the parent and the student a better idea of the steps the student needs to take and the type of support the parents can provide in order to accomplish this goal. Michael Gwinn, the GEAR UP Program Coordinator at Wa-Hi, noted that a weakness of this trip was in the timing. In his interview he mentioned how May 5$^{th}$ was a difficult time for many Latino parents in Walla Walla, the main target for this event, to take a day off work due to the large percent who work in the fields.

In terms of closing the achievement gap for Latinos, it is important that students and their parents are exposed to the idea of attending more selective colleges as well.

Coinciding with this theory, GEAR UP does bring 7th grade students from the local Garrison and Sager Middle Schools to Whitman College for a campus visit each May. Club Latino, and any other students interested, also makes an annual visit to Whitman. An increase in efforts of intervention programs such as these targeting high-functioning Latino students is needed to increase the level of Latino student achievement at Wa-Hi. To narrow the achievement gap of Latino students it takes helping high achievers realize their potential as well as motivating more at-risk students.

*Providing materials to parents in Spanish*

I have found that Wa-Hi has made a concerted attempt to provide Spanish-speaking parents with all the same informational opportunities as to their English-speaking parents. This translating policy reflects the school's awareness and goals to improve relations with their Spanish-speaking parents. It is the goal that all notes sent home with students are written on one side in English and on the other side in Spanish. Unfortunately, this is not always true: the announcement for the November parent-teacher conferences, however, was mistakenly not printed with the Spanish side. In his interview, Wa-Hi science teacher, Keith Gradwohl, reflected a high standard that this policy must be followed. He responded to this misprint by saying, "If we really want to improve relations with our Spanish speaking parents, we cannot be making mistakes like this."[114]

The high school also brings in eight interpreters, employees of the district school office, during teacher conferences to translate between Spanish-speaking parents and English-speaking teachers. Because many teachers have never had to engage in a conversation needing language interpretation, they are given a hand-out that covers proper etiquette of working with an interpreter prior to the parent-teacher conference.

Although many positive steps have been made in an attempt to provide Spanish-speaking parents with an equal opportunity of being involved, there are still major areas where translation and the system are lacking. Examples of these include: the Student Policy manual, the Attendance and Discipline manual, and the course catalog. The first two of these documents are provided in Spanish, but only in-full through the Wa-Hi website.[115] Major parts, however, of the handbook, such as discipline, attendance, and dress codes are printed in both languages in the students' planners that they receive free. Because many Latino parents do not have easy access to the internet, providing this information to them through the internet is inadequate. A hard copy of these documents in Spanish and in-full needs to be accessible to Latino parents for them to best understand the school system and what is required of their child. This should be a priority for the high school, regardless of the cost of translating and double printing of materials.

*Parent Education Programs Summary*

Success has been evident in the programming efforts made by Wa-Hi to provide Latino parents with support educational programs. Also, special efforts made by individual members of the school staff, adult volunteers, and students to contact the parents of Latino students directly through telephone calls or home visits to encourage them to attend these programs have been successful. Congruent with other studies discussed in the Family section of this report, many Latino parents in the Walla Walla

[114] From interview with Keith Gradwohl, conducted at Wa-Hi and recorded with an audio recording device.
[115] Walla Walla High School homepage. <http://wwhs.wwps.org/>.

valley have proven that they are very interested in knowing how to support their child in school; but become active in their child's education most often only after they are first approached and informed about the U.S. school system. It has been uncommon for Latino parents to take the first step to visit the school or become involved with educational activities. According to research, this may be due to several factors including but not limited to: a lack of trust in the school system due to the parents lacking documentation or general mistrust of governmental institutions, a lack of knowledge of the United States school system, inflexible and long work hours, and a language barrier. Although efforts still need to increase because many Latino parents are still facing these barriers, Wa-Hi, in general, is making definite efforts to increase its effectiveness in supporting Latino students' academic success.

Even though it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of these parental education programs in conjunction with Latino youth academic success, several of my interviewees who have worked within the Walla Walla School District for many years have reported that, especially over the last 4-5 years, they have noted an increase in Latino parents crossing the "gap" and coming to their child's school – although there is still a great deal of improvement needed in this area.[116] No study has been done to examine this positive behavioral pattern change. Possible reasons, resulting directly from the work of the above mentioned parent education programs, may include an increased comfort and trust of the United States educational system, a feeling amongst Latino parents that the school acknowledges them and is attempting to provide support for them and their child, a greater awareness of how important parental support is for a child's success, more concern over the educational achievement of their children including more pressure to attend college, and/or a narrowing language barrier. Continuing programmatic efforts that enhance better relations between Wa-Hi and the Latino parent community will only increase Latino student success at the high school.

### ***NON-FAMILIAL SOCIAL CAPITAL:*** *Institutional support*

*Emergency Immigrant Education Program*

For the 2005-06 school year, the Public School District office applied for and received an Emergency Immigrant Education Program grant issued by the federal government. The purpose of this program is to assist local educational agencies that experience large increases in their student population due to immigration. The grant defines immigrant students as students that were born outside the United States and its territories and having spent three years or less in a United States school system. Walla Walla Public School District qualified for the highest level of funding support, receiving $75,000 from the federal government. Among all the schools within the district, Wa-Hi had the greatest number of immigrant students, representing 32 of the 112 eligible students in the district.

[116] Interviewees who mentioned this include: Diana Erickson, teacher within the Walla Walla School District for 29 years and now Bilingual Coordinator of Walla Walla School District, Cindy Gregoire, Bilingual Coordinator of Walla Walla School District, and Michael Gwinn, GEAR UP Program Coordinator at Wa-Hi.

The grant money was to be used to "provide high-quality instruction to immigrant children and youth and to help those children and youth make the transition into American society and meet the same challenging State performance standards expected of all children and youth."[117] This stated goal by the Emergency Immigrant Education Program positively responds to the findings of many educational researchers that more programmatic efforts need to be made by formal institutions, such as Wa-Hi, to decrease the stress on students created by the acculturation process. A study conducted by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, for example, shows that a decreased level of stress from acculturation relates to an increase in student self-esteem and subsequent academic achievements.[118]

The Walla Walla Public school district allocated this grant money to many different areas throughout the district. For example, some money from this grant went towards getting more Latino youth involved in sports. Jose Juan, one of my interviewees, represents one of seven Latino males who had the opportunity to play school soccer directly as a result of this grant. The barriers that these Latino students had faced prior to the grant money included (approximately): ASB card ($40), sports participation fee ($35), and sports physical ($65), in addition to the necessity of soccer shoes, soccer shin guards, and transportation costs.

Six out of the seven of these male Latino students started on the varsity soccer team. This recent success for Latinos to become more involved in the school community, however, may be short lived: the grant money extended only throughout the 2005-06 school year. Because the number of immigrants in the Walla Walla School District is not increasing at a higher rate, the district did not receive the grant for this school year. This directly affects many Latino students, and specifically the seven students who were able to play for the school soccer team last year. Without these funds, there is not sufficient financial aid and transportation to support these seven students for another season. Instead of expanding this opportunity to more Latino students and to more outlets of school involvement, Wa-Hi may be forced to reduce financial and transportation support.[119]

Non-familial social capital (such as friends, teachers, school officials, and other supportive communities that the students is apart of outside of the home, such as a sport's team or club) are imperative for Latino student success. Research shows that the depth of support a student finds outside of the home relates directly to a more positive sense of school membership, which then relates to higher levels of self-esteem and higher academic aspirations. Along with Juan Jose, I also interviewed his older brother, Sergio Meza, who had graduated from Wa-Hi in 2004. Sergio contrasted his experience at the high school with that of his younger brothers. He said, "I didn't feel connected because I wasn't involved in anything … Juan José has soccer. He's doing a lot better because of it. He likes school. He likes to go to school."[120]

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[117] The remaining 80 eligible students were scattered throughout the other nine schools in the Walla Walla School District. All of the 132 students were from a Latin American country.

[118] *Legacies,* 211.

[119] A men's soccer league in Walla Walla, almost entirely comprised of Latinos, is considering donating money that they collect from registration fees to assist these students with transportation costs.

[120] Information from interview with Sergio Meza, conducted in English and recorded with an audio recording device.

Another use of the grant money was the hiring of two more paraprofessionals at Wa-Hi for the spring semester. This doubled the amount of paraprofessionals that the 103 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students at the high school depended on for language and tutoring help in their required classes for graduation taught in English. Although there was no significant improvement in the GPAs of the immigrant students in comparison to their GPAs from the prior semester, a single semester is not enough time to accurately evaluate the usefulness of this extra classroom and language support for these Latino students. The importance of having bilingual paraprofessionals placed in classrooms, however, is not only measurable by the GPAs of Spanish-speaking students. The paraprofessionals' primary responsibilities are to the LEP students, but they also help any student that needs assistance. This additional support in the classroom frees up the teacher to work more one-on-one with students, increasing the level of learning potential for all.

The grant money also hired a Latino student-family liaison for the year, Magali Hernandez. Her job was to build communication with the immigrant students' families. She visited their homes and made telephone calls to check in with the families to see what kind of support they needed from the school to help their child succeed. The type of support asked for ranged from school supplies to a child's desire to play soccer. For example, the family of Juan José Meza, my interviewee, was unable to pay for his dental work when he had a tooth ache last year. Although providing medical attention is not part of the program, Magali Hernandez was able to help the family find extended community support. A local dentist donated his time to relieve Juan from his pain. The employment of a Latino student-family liaison, like Magali Hernandez, is another example of efforts to increase the non-familial social capital, the web of support, available to Latino students at Wa-Hi.[121] The liaison also served and supplied materials purchased through this grant to immigrant students in all schools and grades. Unfortunately, because of limited funding, this position no longer exists.

This grant contains obvious limitations. The largest is that it only offers to assist recent immigrant students. In my research findings, the most at-risk Latino students are not recent immigrants, but native-born Latinos. In addition, the grant money was not sustainable, lasting only a year. Last but not least, I was told that the allocation of the grant money to increasing Latino involvement in sports was given only to male soccer players because the district received the money around November, past the deadline for women's soccer registration. No Latina student was given the opportunity to participate in any school sport as a result of the grant money covering her financial and transportation barriers.[122]

Regardless of these limitations, the School District's attempts to find a means in the form of this grant to address the needs of their Latino students, even if it was intended for a limited population and was temporal, reflects positively on the School Districts awareness and dedication to improving success of its Latino students.

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[121] "Hispanics and Education," 145.

[122] I do not have evidence that any Latina showed strong interest in participating in a school sport at this time. Some immigrant girls, however, participated in fall sports of 2006, which could be an effect of having seen the boys play soccer last spring.; but, of course, I have no proof of this. The School District has a few other limited funds that it uses to help students with the fees, but transportation is still an issue.

*Study skills class*

This year Wa-Hi began offering a new study skills class. The targeted students to participate in this program were, as Michael Gwinn described, "middle of the road students." All of these students were identified as having ability, measured by receiving at least a 2 or 3 out of 4 on the WASL, yet continue to earn low grades, with a cumulative GPA between 1.5 and 2.0. The high school has seven period days, and students must fill six of these seven periods with classes. This special study skills class does not replace another class, but is in addition to the other six periods. The class curriculum includes instruction on taking good notes, how to prepare and take a test, information concerning different learning styles and strategies, as well as exposing the students to the steps of going to college. The school now offers three periods per day of this class, each section with fifteen students.[123] GEAR UP hired one teacher to teach these classes. Each section also has two tutors who assist the students. The program had to limit the number of students it could enroll to 45, as the objective was to provide these students with extra, small-group help where they could create a connection with an adult and learn how to organize themselves. Approximately 70 percent of the students chosen for this program are Latino. In his interview, Gwinn explained that this program was made in part as an effort to combat the fairly chaotic lifestyles that many of these students have outside of school. He said that many lack parental support as they have no adult supervision at home and their parents are not involved with their school activities.

This program exemplifies the theory of many educational researchers that I discussed in my Scholarly Literature, that is, schools should make programmatic efforts to counteract unsupportive home environments of students. In this way, effective schools can decrease, or even overcome, the familial factors that subtract from educational success in the lives of students from unsupportive home environments. Because this is the program's first year, no results can indicate if it is effective or not. Although this effort is necessary, again, if the achievement gap of Latino students is truly going to narrow, programming strategies need to expand beyond "bringing up the bottom" and focus more on high-functioning Latino students as well.

*CONEVyT*

Although Wa-Hi offers English as a Second Language classes (ESL), the school only has 2 paraprofessionals who are responsible for assisting all of the 103 English Language Learner (ELL) students with the rest of their courses taught in English. According to Michael Gwinn, GEAR UP Program Coordinator at Wa-Hi, "Here at the high school we have programs for students that can speak English but that don't have the skills, so we have the study skills class, make college visits – but those programs aren't going to help your ELL students." In response to the lacking programmatic support for ELL students, the school district is currently working to implement a program called CONEVyT at the high school.

CONEVyT – the Spanish acronym for Mexico's Consejo Nacional de Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo (the National Council for Education for Life and Work) – was developed by several Mexican government agencies over 25 years ago as part of a national system that offers lifelong education and training opportunities for Hispanic teenagers and adults. In the last five years, the program has developed into a Web-based

[123] The average class at the high school has between 28 to 32 students.

"portal," through which high-quality, Spanish language curricula for more than 150 different courses, ranging from remedial Spanish literacy and math to calculus, physics, and other college-level courses are offered. Schools in Washington State have only recently started to host their own portals. As reported in a publication of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, in May 2005, Washington and other states held a joint videoconference with Mexican government officials to announce the unveiling of CONEVyT Portal/Plaza Comunitaria projects in their respective states. During this conference "Mexican President Vicente Fox, Washington state Governor Chris Gregoire, and other high-ranking officials hailed the multinational collaboration and its potential to improve the academic achievement of Spanish-speaking students in the United States."124

Assistant Principal Brett Cox has played a major role in setting up the high school to bring the CONEVyT Portal to Wa-Hi. GEAR UP is also supporting this program by the purchase of 25 laptops at the beginning of the school year. According to Michael Gwinn, GEAR UP Program Coordinator, "CONEVyT is giving English Language Learner students an opportunity to be successful with their academics in their native language – and keeping them in school. I think a lot of students get behind and end up dropping out because they get frustrated because they haven't learned English yet." If Wa-Hi continues with its efforts to implement CONEVyT at the high school, it may make the difference between graduating and dropping out for many students.

The requirement to graduate in Washington State is 22 credits, with a maximum of seven credits taken in electives. Through CONEVyT, Limited English Proficient students can currently earn up to 14 of their 22 credits in Spanish. These credits include core classes such as Algebra I and II, geometry, Biology I and II, Economics I and II, accounting and bookkeeping, one of the two health/fitness requirements, world languages, and occupational education. The only core subject credits students can't meet through CONEVyT are language arts and social sciences.[125] According to Jorge Herrera, the CONEVyT coordinator for both the Yakima School District and the state, "We want students to learn English. The Spanish language courses are not a replacement for that – they are supplemental."[126]

CONEVyT will also serve as a support for high-functioning migrant students who face a language barrier. "In the past," says Herrera, "students might arrive at the school ready for calculus, but end up being placed in a lower-level math class because of their limited English skills. That was a total waste. Now, with CONEVyT, a student will never get stuck in a lower-level or remedial class due to a language barrier."[127] In addition, CONEVyT offers programs for Latino parents who have very little background in reading or writing in either Spanish or English to take ESL classes or Spanish literacy classes. Through CONEVyT, they can also earn a GED by taking Spanish language classes or their accredited certification from the Mexican school system. From his experience with working with Latino students and parents, Gwinn commented about the value of this aspect of the program. He said, "It is so important for students to see their

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[124] Reed, Brack. "Portal to Opportunity." *Northwest Education* 11, no. 3 (Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, 2006) <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>.
[125] "Portal to Opportunity," <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>.
[126] "Portal to Opportunity," <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>.
[127] "Portal to Opportunity," <http://www.nwrel.org/nwedu/11-03/portal/>.

parents making the attempt to educate themselves. That in itself creates an additional motivation factor for the students to work hard."[128]

For students to see their parents pursue their own education is invaluable. Brett Cox said that the school was planning to set up evening hours for parents to come in and take courses along with students. According to assistant principal Matt Bona, there is even discussion of how to possibly set up CONEVyT program at the Farm Labor Camp so that Latino parents who face transportation barriers can benefit from the program as well.

The adoption of the CONEVyT program at the local and state level is extremely encouraging. It reflects Wa-Hi and Washington State's growing awareness of the need to support the increasing number of Latino students, and the importance of providing these students with the support that they need in order to succeed.

*Student Support Team*

This year a Student Support Team (SST) was created at Wa-Hi with the goal of helping students that are presently experiencing difficulties. This team is composed of Michael Wa-Hi staff, including two of the assistant principals, Brett Cox and Matt Bona, the Intervention Specialist, Javier Hernandez, all school counselors, and other certified staff members.

Students who are dealing with a variety of problems, from low academic achievement to substance abuse to attendance, can be referred to this intervention team by teachers, community members, or other students. The team then discusses ways to attach the student to different programs and/or counselors available at Wa-Hi that will help her reconnect to the school community. The actions they take and the programs and counselors they use include: migrant tutoring; GEAR UP tutoring; special education placement; referral to nurse Susie Morris; parent contact; academic/behavior contract; teacher conference; a home visit by Javier Hernandez; academic placement; drug/alcohol counseling by Casey Kramer; professional counseling referral; classroom observation; and the soon-to-be addition of the CONEVyT program. According to the research I have discussed, by reconnecting students to the school community and by working to give them the opportunity of developing a more positive sense of membership, their motivation and subsequent achievement level will increase. This administrative development reflects concern and commitment by Wa-Hi staff concerning the betterment of their students.

*Club Latino*

The Wa-Hi Club Latino has approximately 40 active Latino members. It is one of the few extra-curricular activities that has mainly Latino-student members at the high school other than boy's soccer. There are very few Latinos who participate in other clubs and organizations throughout the school. All three of my "successful" interviewees were active members of Club Latino. Within the club, there are two departments: the interschool club, participating in all-school club events, such as tailgates at school football games, and then the Exploring Post 311. Two people that help with Club Latino, Bill Erickson and his wife, Diana Erickson, have been very active with the Club Latino for three years. In an interview, Mrs. Erickson said, "My husband and I think that if kids

[128] From Interview with Michael Gwinn, conducted in English and recorded with audio recorder.

can find their niche in the school and the community they will be more successful."[129] This idea is supported by research conducted by Melissa Roderick concerning the importance that a "web of support" has on increasing a student's self-esteem.[130] My interview with Sergio Meza, concerning his brother's increased sense of community at the high school due to his participation in soccer, also supports this idea.

Five years ago Bill and Diana Erickson researched options of how they could expand the interschool Club Latino into an outlet to the community and create other educational resources for the Latino students. Mr. Erickson, a long time community Scout leader, organized an Explorer Post that enabled them to accomplish these goals.[131] The two main educational activities of the club are the annual Hispanic Youth Exploring Engineering Camp at Washington State University and the Department of Energy's Regional Science Bowl sponsored by the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Oregon. In addition to these annual activities, the Ericksons hosted a movie night, a pizza night, a couple of family potlucks, and had two community-service work days this summer. As I mentioned earlier, one community service project that Club Latino completed recently was to call all the Latino parents and notify them about the Spanish-speaking parents' night. They also called all the Latino families again to let them know about fall parent-teacher conferences.

When Club Latino members are involved with activities associated with Exploring, any youth in the area can join, not just Wa-Hi students. In this way, the adult leaders hope that they can reach out to all Latino youth in the valley, and even some middle school age siblings. Family participation is also encouraged in Exploring activities. This club provides an outlet for Latino students to make a difference in their local Latino community, not only in connecting Spanish-speaking parents with school activities, but also as positive examples to the larger Walla Walla community of responsible Latino youth, and as good role models to other Latino youth. It is a superb example of non-familial social capital playing a strong supportive role in the lives of Latino students at the high school. Club Latino and its leaders not only serve as support for Latino student, increasing self-esteem; but this club community provides a setting where Latino students can feel self-empowered as they recognize that they can make a positive difference in their school community, as well as the larger Walla Walla community. This realization has inevitable positive effects on student achievement beyond just an increase in self-esteem.

*Cultural Cues and "Cultural Moments"*

The principal at Wa-Hi was given a copy of "Cultural Cues," a document that came out of the Seattle Public School District's Bilingual Instructional Assistants in June 2001. The School District has enough to give copies of this document to all of the certified staff, but is still in the process of deciding what the proper venue or opportune

[129] From interview with Diana Erickson, Bilingual Coordinator of Walla Walla School District, conducted in English and recorded with an audio recording device.
[130] "Hispanics and Education," 145.
[131] Exploring is a program under the auspice of the Learning for Life Program that is offered through a subsidiary corporation of Boy Scouts of America; however, it is not associated with a specific belief. The participation fee for each student in Club Latino who wants to become an Exploring member is covered by the local Blue Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America, who has a specific fund for "Hispanic outreach."

moment for this distribution. “Cultural Cues” resulted from a project to increase the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication among students, staff, parents, and the larger community. This document contains points of information specific to certain groups as well as “cultural capsules.” The five-page section concerning “Latino culture” includes: a caution to educators concerning terms to use when addressing persons of Latin American descent – i.e. referring to all Spanish speaking students as “Mexican” may be very offensive; possible differences in body language, such as eye contact and personal space; possible behavioral differences in class such as standing for an authority figure or hesitation to speak; holidays, etc. In addition to these informational points, “Cultural Cues” also included “Cultural Capsules.” These are vignettes based on actual experiences in the Seattle Public School System that reflect circumstances where behavior entirely appropriate in one culture may have been misunderstood by members of another. The Latino section is one of ten sections in this document, all which attempt to cover useful information concerning different cultural groups with the intent to deepen intercultural competence and understanding in schools.

Beginning this September, Principal Darcy Weisner, Cindy Gregoire, and Diana Erickson began organizing “cultural moment” to be presented during every biweekly, all-staff meeting at Wa-Hi. These cultural moments have a similar objective as the writers of “Cultural Cues” and provide the same type of information. The advantage of the cultural moments is that all staff will receive the information, versus “Cultural Cues,” which staff members can choose for themselves to read it or not.

According to my research of scholarly studies, bridging the cultural gap between students and families with the school, whether it is cultural, educational, or economical, is imperative to Latino student success. Especially important for improving relations between teachers and other faculty and Latino parents is cultural information concerning *familismo,* which is briefly covered in “Cultural Cues.” Congruent with this research, the Walla Walla Public School District would be correct in incorporating “Cultural Cues” into the literature that teachers and school personnel receive. Although it does make many valid points, however, it is an abbreviated version of what teachers and other school personnel need to be aware of to best support Latino students. By providing a “manual” to counter-cultural understanding, the many other cultural differences and miscommunications that are not covered within these pages may be overlooked.

## INTERVIEW DISCUSSION

The statements that I have included in my interview discussion below represent voices from Latino students, the most educationally disadvantaged group in the United States. Listening to their voices is integral for any research concerning how to narrow the achievement gap between Latino students and their Anglo peers. It provides Latino students the opportunity to share their view concerning the factors that they feel have and do influence their academic success. Comparing and contrasting what Latino students feel to be true with the literature is an invaluable part of my report. According to my qualitative study, I consistently found correlations between the factors that these Latino students identified as essential to their success and the factors that the literature identified

as essential. The most important and consistent of these factors include: high parental involvement, high expectations set by schools, and web of support.

I will briefly discuss the responses concerning these three key factors of success based on selected excerpts from my interviews with Jazmin Lopez and Sergio Meza, two of the five Latino youth who attend/ed Wa-Hi that participated in my study. These two young adults represent a sampling from both the "successful" and "not successful" interviewees. ("Successful" as indicated by their academic standing and/or fulfilling of their potential deemed by teachers, and "not successful" also as indicated by their academic standings and/or fulfilling of their potential deemed by teachers.) Jazmin Lopez is a "successful" Latino student in her first year at Whitman College.[132] Sergio Meza is an "unsuccessful" Latino young-adult who was high-achieving in high school; but, after graduating in 2004, he lost motivation to continue his formal education and began working different jobs in Walla Walla ranging from in the fields to his current position as a construction worker.[133]

In order to see if the experience of these students confirmed or disconfirmed the literature I had read in regards to the importance of parental involvement, I asked my interviewees a series of questions based on findings from educational researchers. I began by asking questions that would shed light on the student's level of educational aspirations and expectations for herself, and to see if, as indicated in the literature, these factors correlated with the degree to which the student felt she received familial support. I formatted the first part of these questions after a survey conducted by Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut as a means to compare aspirations and expectations in my own qualitative study. These questions included: "What is the highest level of education you would like to achieve?" as well as "And *realistically speaking*, what is the highest level of education that you think you *will* get?"[134] I then accompanied these questions with questions concerning the students' perspective of their relationship with their family, their parents' expectations for the students' academic achievement, and the degree to which their parents support them in their education. Consistent with the literature, I found that students who had higher educational expectations for themselves also felt that their parents had high academic expectations for them, and that their family was very supportive.

After questioning Jazmin concerning her expectations for herself regarding a future career, I asked her who had influenced this goal the most. She responded:

> My mom. When I was a little girl she always told me to try hard and work hard so I could get somewhere in life. So that I won't be stuck working in the fields or in the factories. So she always pushed me when I needed help saying, "Uno, even though I can't help you with this material, I'm pushing you to get through. I'm pushing you to get help." And I guess that is what has made me work hard in life. [If I were to drop out my parents would] not be happy, I don't know what they would do. My parents would say that I couldn't rely on them anymore, that I would have

[132] The full transcripts from Jazmin's interview can be found in Appendix B.

[133] *Jazmin Lopez* has lived in Walla Walla her whole life and learned English through transitional bilingual education programs during elementary school. Her family immigrated to Walla Walla from Oaxaca, Mexico about 20 years ago. *Sergio Meza* immigrated to Walla Walla from Mexico during his freshman year in high school. Upon arriving at Wa-Hi, he did not speak any English. He took ESL classes throughout high school. As with all five of my interviews with Latino youth, both of these interviews were conducted in English and recorded with an audio recording device.

[134] *Legacies*, 218.

> to find a job. They would be disappointed and say that, "We've been working all our lives to get you this opportunity and you're going to mess it up."

Her response is consistent with the literature in that she feels that her mother's high expectations for her, as well as her mother's high level of involvement in Jazmin's education, have played key roles in Jazmin's academic success. Jazmin's response is also significant in that she felt that the low-educational level of her mother did not serve as a detriment to the amount of support her mother was able to provide for her. This contradicts the general trends discussed in the literature that Latino parents with low-educational levels generally feel unable to play an active role in their child's education, and, therefore, tend to be less engaged academically with their child.

Sergio's response to this same question was also consistent with the literature. Similar to Jazmin, he told me that his mother played a major role in motivating him during high school. He felt that his father, however, did not have high-academic expectations for him. According to Sergio, this lack of support from his father ultimately determined whether Sergio continued with his education after high school:

> For my father, it's more important to him for me to work. He cares more about work so I could give more money to pay the rent. But for my mom, I think that she really wanted me to keep studying…When I went to school. My mom was always looking at my grades, checking on my notes and everything. I worked really hard on school. She knew that I could learn more about, I don't know, everything. My father, I think, just wanted me to be working so I could give him some money to help pay for things, I don't know…It was really hard for me. I knew if I would start working I could be earning a lot of money. So I decided not to go to college.

Jazmin and Sergio both mentioned in their interviews the importance that teachers set high expectations for Latino students. This strongly supports Melissa Roderick's research, as a school setting high expectations is one of the four essential supports that she identifies as crucial for producing higher achievement among Latino students.[135] Jazmin mentions that when teachers did not have high expectations for her she felt frustrated and that is had a negative impact on her academic progress:

> Sometimes [teachers] will feel like you don't understand. Like in high school, sometimes when the teacher would be talking to a whole class of people and when they would ask, "Now did everyone understand this?" I felt that they would look at me. I don't know if that is discrimination, it's just that they think that [Latinos] need more time to understand some things than [other students]… I had an English teacher that just wouldn't call on me, maybe because I was Latino… There were other shy kids that were white that the teacher would call on more – and that would help open them up, and their confidence would grow. But I wouldn't get that. I think that it really discouraged me from participating in class. Maybe [my teacher's] intentions were good and they just didn't work out…I didn't get to open up as much as I wanted to. I wasn't being pushed.

Another factor of success that both of these interviewees addressed was a web of support, also one of the four major features of effective schools according to Roderick. Sergio said that his favorite teachers were those that made the effort to build a personal relationship with him. He said he felt more confident asking questions in the classes of these teachers:

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[135] "Hispanics and Education," 145.

> [I felt most comfortable] with Mrs. Erickson and some of my other favorite teachers. They were funny and always in a good mood – making jokes and stuff. But some of the other teachers, they were cool too, but they knew that I didn't speak English very well so they didn't make conversation with me.

Jazmin also contributes part of her academic success to a personal relationship she formed with a teacher. She acknowledges that one of her elementary school teachers still remains as one of her academic mentors to the present day:

> I don't know how she inspired me. I just had a connection with her, and so I've gone back to visit her and talk about uno, my education and how it has been so far. She has always pushed me. And I feel that she has given me motivation in what I want to do. We've always had a special connection. I always felt that she had a special interest in me because I was the only Latino in her class with good grades. I don't know, I guess she felt the need to help me out a little more. Maybe because the language it took me awhile to understand some things, and so we had this connection, and we grew on this connection, and we've kept this relationship.

Consistent with the literature, all five students that I interviewed felt that a high level of parental support and involvement are the most critical factors for Latino student success. Aspects of quality of education were central in my interview discussion, and each student felt that the school plays an important role in helping Latino students succeed; however, when the students spoke about the factor that had the greatest impact over their achievement drive, it always came down to their family. As Jazmin articulated it:

> I think it is more family than teachers, but teachers do play a role. Like if it is a really, really bad teacher it could discourage a student. But, if the Latino has a sense of what he wants he is not going to let anything stop him. Like I didn't let anything stop me, and I know a few others who didn't let anything stop them. It really helps if you have your family there supporting you.

## SYNTHETIC DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

*"Why do some Latino students succeed academically while others do not?"*

There are many factors that I discussed in this report that influence the success of Latino students. The most fundamental factor is the achievement drive of the student. I have discussed the influence over the student's achievement drive from two mechanisms, family and quality of education. Family has the most impact over a student's actual achievements. Different family characteristics, such as recency of immigration to the United States, parental education level and familiarity with the American school system, and level of educational expectations the parents have for their child, all play leading roles in determining a student's academic success. The school, however, has the potential of counteracting the negative impact unsupportive families have on the student's educational achievements. Effective schools can help Latino students by providing high expectations, a social web of support, creating opportunities for Latino students to feel a positive sense of school membership, and making extended efforts to engage Latino parents in the educational process of their child. Creating a positive sense of school membership necessitates that schools implement programs that increase cross-culture

understanding and appreciation, such as dual-immersion language programs over transitional language programs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

My scholarly research has given me insight into the present programs and policies at Wa-Hi. After conducting my own qualitative investigation, consisting of a series of five interviews with Latino youth who attend/ed Wa-Hi, as well as five adults who work within the school district and directly with the high school, I have identified many effective programs that the high school provides as well as areas of improvement. In summary, my recommendations for secondary schools, specifically Wa-Hi, can be categorized by the following three areas: focusing on high-functioning Latino students, improving teacher and school personnel relations with Latino parents; and counteracting subtractive family factors by providing more institutional and personal support for Latino students.

*Focusing on high-functioning Latino students*

By letting high-achieving Latino students try and "make it on their own," we are placing at-risk some of the best talent within the Latino community, "moreover, we are squandering a real opportunity to make significant progress toward closing the achievement gap."[136]

1) With regard to the present GEAR UP program at Wa-Hi, as well as within the context of other special programs, developers and directors should focus more attention on the needs of high-achieving Latino students. This should include efforts to encourage and help these student "gain access to college-preparatory courses; to the most rigorous courses offered by the school; to information for students and parents about how to seek scholarship funds and to finance an education at selective institutions; and to frank discussions about both the benefits and liabilities of attending nearby, less-demanding institutions."[137] Much can be learned from college-access programs about strategies that effectively support Latino students. A study by Patricia Gándara and Deborah Bial examined literature on the effects of college-access programs and studied 13 programs. Their goal was to understand the programs' impact on participants, how the programs operated, and which students were most likely to profit from such intervention.[138] A few of the main features of college-access programs that they found could help retain more Latino students in the upper quintile of performers, and motivate others to aspire for that goal, included aspects such as "counseling students about selective colleges and how to prepare for them; monitoring students progress on higher education goals; steering students into more rigorous courses; structuring opportunities for students to form supportive, high-achieving peer groups; and providing parents with tangible information about college opportunities and how to finance them." [139]

[136] *Fragile Futures*, 19.
[137] *Fragile Futures*.
[138] *Fragile Futures*, 29.
[139] Gándara, 29

2) Even when a student comes from an unsupportive home environment, receiving consistent support from individual non-familial adults can counteract the negative effects from the family. Even already high-functioning Latino students have proven to increase their achievement level when they have a strong mentoring relationship with a non-familial adult. These finding indicate that, to increase success among Latino students, schools should make special efforts to connect each student with a key person who monitors and guides her over a long period of time. "This could be a mentor, program director, faculty member, or guidance counselor; studies are not clear on which of these is most effective. Critical, however, is that someone takes responsibility for the student at a personal level and does not allow the student to fall through the cracks of the system."[140]

*Improving teacher and school personnel relations with Latino parents*

1) Because some Latino parents have expressed intimidation of going to schools, and others may face transportation barriers preventing them from traveling easily to schools, holding Spanish-speaking parents' nights, or other similar program meetings, in locations closer to the neighborhoods of these parents may send out a more welcoming message, as well as be more accessible for them to attend.
2) Partnerships are needed between parents, schools, and practitioners, and a focus on the role of *familismo* must be taken into account. As discussed in the Family section of this report, *familismo* is a powerful protective factor that should be incorporated into intervention strategies promoting academic success of Latino youth.[141] Further investigation should be done by program developers concerning "culturally competent interventions involving Latino parents and youth to prevent the detrimental impact of acculturative strains on academic adjustment and behavior problems."[142]
3) Because of the high number of monolingual Spanish-speaking families at Wa-Hi and in the rest of the Walla Walla School District, increased efforts should be put into training teachers how to work more effectively with this population – beyond just providing advice to teachers concerning how to work with interpreters during parent-teacher conferences. Wa-Hi, as well as other schools in the district, should look into a culturally adapted parent-training program for monolingual Spanish-speaking families developed by Marinez and Eddy (2005). Although the program was developed specifically for families of middle-school-aged kids, the core aspects of the program is applicable at the high school level. The program, "*Nuestros Familias: Andando Entre Culturas* (Our Families: Moving Between Cultures) focuses on the influence of familism, providing parents with previously demonstrated tools of effective parenting skills, consistent and non-coercive discipline, contingent positive reinforcement, and skills for academic success, at the same time addressing the acculturative stress."

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[140] Gándara, 29

[141] DeGarmo, David S., and Charles R. Martinez Jr. "A Culturally Informed Model of Academic Well-Being for Latino Youth: The Importance of Discriminatory Experiences and Social Support." *Family Relations* 55, no. 3 (2006) 267.

[142] DeGarmo, David S., and Charles R. Martinez Jr. "A Culturally Informed Model of Academic Well-Being for Latino Youth: The Importance of Discriminatory Experiences and Social Support." *Family Relations* 55, no. 3 (2006): 267.

4) Provide incentive for more teachers and other school personnel to attend the Spanish language learning at Garrison Night School, as it provides participants with not only needed language skills to interact with Spanish-speaking students on a daily basis, but also provides an opportunity for greater cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Providing incentive for teachers to earn an ESL-endorsement would also have benefits for the large number of Spanish-speaking students at Wa-Hi.
5) Prioritize funds so that all parent and student information is not only translated into Spanish, but also *easily accessible* in Spanish as well. Although a definite effort is being made, there are still essential documents that are not presently accessible to Spanish-speaking students and parents. The two top priorities for information that the school needs to provide in a Spanish hard copy are the Student Policy manual and the Attendance and Discipline manual. Providing the PTA letter in Spanish is also necessary if Spanish-speaking parents are to be acknowledged as equally important as English-speaking parents.
6) The "Cultural Cues" document should be distributed to all certified staff in the school district. In addition, a complement to this document, and possible opportune time to pass it out, could be a special cross-cultural training for all teachers and school personnel. The school district could bring staff from the Bilingual Student Services, who created "Cultural Cues," to provide a more personalized cross-cultural education program that addresses the more specific issues related to the Latin American culture. A specific emphasis of this training should be on characteristics of the Mexican culture in order to reflect the national origin of the majority of Latino students in the Walla Walla School District. This cultural-education presentation would merit a one-time district-wide in-service day. Depending on the results and effectiveness of the day, an event similar to this, an intensive cultural-understanding educational opportunity for all school district employees, could become an annual event.

*Counteracting subtractive family factors by providing more institutional and personal support for Latino students*

1. When Wa-Hi administration chooses where to allocate money and energy, it is important that they consider the disadvantaged predisposition that many of their Latino students face as a result of their home environment. For example, many Latino students at Wa-Hi live in low-income neighborhoods, the Farm Labor Camp, or too far out of town to access the high school without busing.[143] As a result, these students have to depend on school buses that arrive at the high school just in time for class to begin, and leave the high school immediately after class finishes for the day.[144] If Latino students are to have equal access to the after school tutorial programs offered by the school through GEAR UP, and to have the

[143] Many of these neighborhoods are accessible through the city bus system. A good number of the students from these neighborhoods use the city bus system in order to stay for after school tutoring that is provided through the Bilingual program. The bus passes are provided free for these students.
[144] Through the Emergency Immigrant Grant there was a van provided to transport students home between 4:00 and 4:30 pm if they chose to stay for after school tutoring. The van then returned at 5:30 pm to transport the soccer players home.

opportunity to seek out-of-class assistance and build personal relationships with teachers, an alternative mode of transportation needs to be available. In addition to limiting one-on-one educational opportunities for these students, lack of transportation also prevents many from participating in after school extra-curricular activities – activities that would provide these students with more support and community.

2. Provide more Latino students with the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities. Money to financially support these groups may have to come from temporary grants, but idealistically, the school district should strengthen relationship with community groups that may be interested in sponsoring these students (such as local Boy Scout Troops or the men's soccer league in Walla Walla).
3. According to a study done by Gilberto Q. Conchas, smaller and intimate school-within-a-school structures, or small learning communities, are significant for student engagement.[145] The study skills program created by SST is an example of this type of learning environment. An additional means of creating smaller learning communities, even within classrooms, is to hire more paraprofessionals. One-on-one or one-on-few help is essential to support the many ELL learners at the high school to successfully function in English-instruction classrooms. In addition, more paraprofessionals would reduce the present strain on English-only speaking teachers as many interact daily with ELL students.

*Areas for further investigation and research*

1. As I mentioned in my case study, several of my interviewees who have worked within the Walla Walla School District for many years have reported that, especially over the last 4-5 years, they have noted an increase in Latino parents crossing the "gap" and coming to their child's school. A qualitative study, such as a Latino parent survey, examining the factors behind this positive behavioral pattern change may be very helpful in developing support for future parent outreach programs. A good setting to administer this qualitative survey may be at both the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents' nights. The results from this study may give valuable insight into what programs focused on bettering relations with Latino parents are working well, and where the school can improve to be even more effective in supporting their Spanish-speaking students and families.

## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Goals/Family Involvement:*

1. What is the highest level of education you would *like* to achieve?
2. And realistically speaking, what is the highest level of education that you think you *will* get?
3. Who has influenced this goal the most?
4. Who are your main role models?
5. What do your parents do for a living?

[145] *The Color of Success,* 117.

6. What role do your parents play in your education? What is their attitude towards education?
7. How would your parents react if you dropped out?
8. Is there a difference in mentality about education between migrant families and families that were already here?

*Role Models:*
9. Do you have any Latino role model/s that you aspire to be like?
10. What is the race of the majority of the teachers who have had?
11. Is there a difference between having a Latino teacher and an Anglo teacher?
12. Have there been topics or materials covered in class that you have particularly liked?

*Culture:*
13. Has your cultural heritage ever been addressed in class?
14. How do you feel when the class focus is Mexican heritage?
15. Has there ever been a point at school that you have not felt proud for being Latino?

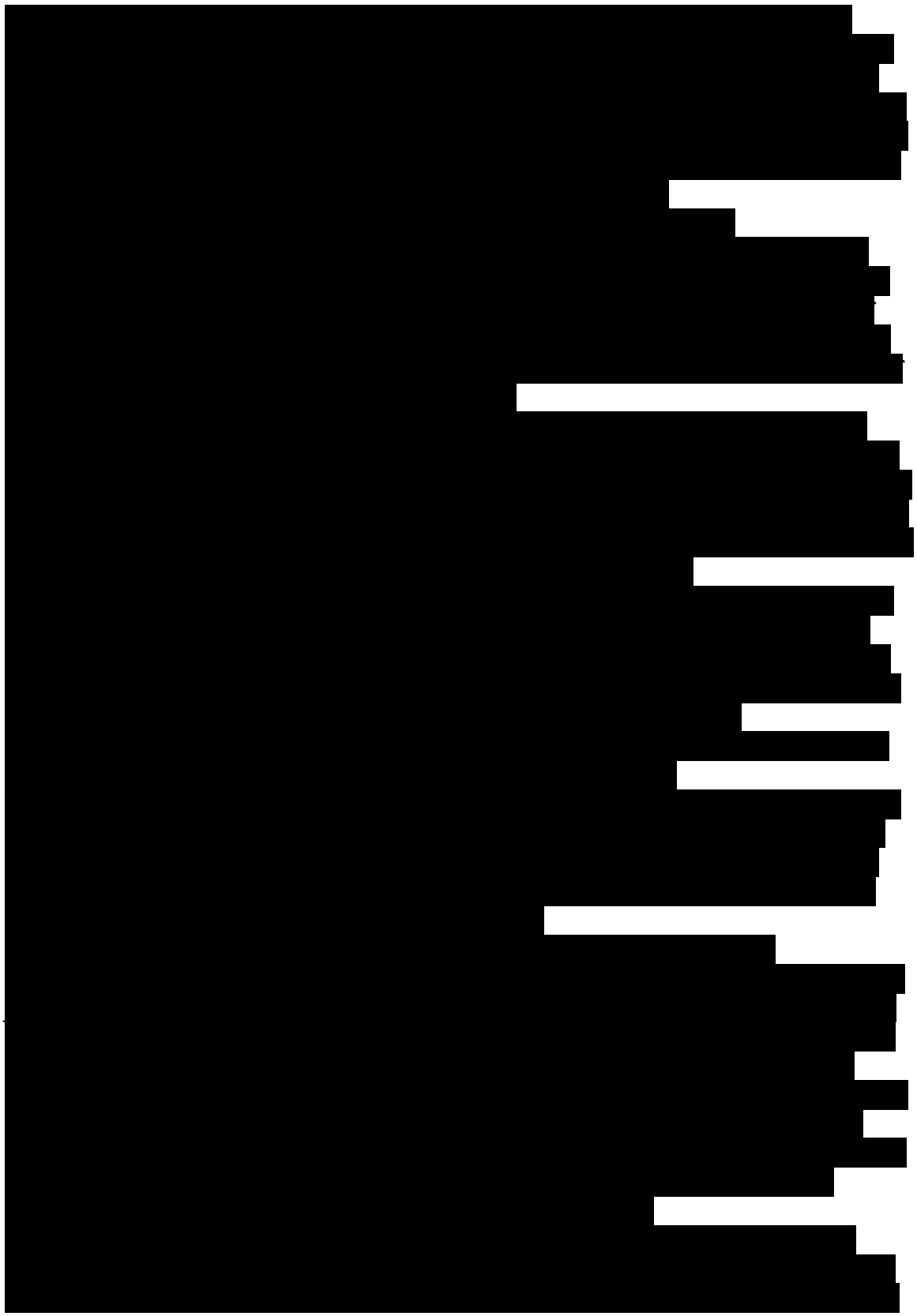
*Discrimination/Equal Expectations in the Classroom:*
16. Have you ever felt discriminated against for being Latino at school?
17. As a child, do your remember any earlier experience of discrimination towards you that that occurred?
18. Earlier you said you had career goals, do you feel that any of your teachers and/or other school personnel have distracted from your goals in life?
19. Have teachers and/or other school personnel contributed to your goals?
20. Have you ever felt that your teachers perceive you differently because you are Latino?
21. In classrooms do you feel comfortable asking questions?
22. Do you think low teacher expectations could affect Latino students?
23. Have you ever felt that a teacher has had different expectations for you because you are Latino?
24. And if Latino students are not "treated just like any other person," what message does that give the Latino student about himself/herself?
25. Under these same teaching conditions, why do some Latino students succeed and others don't?

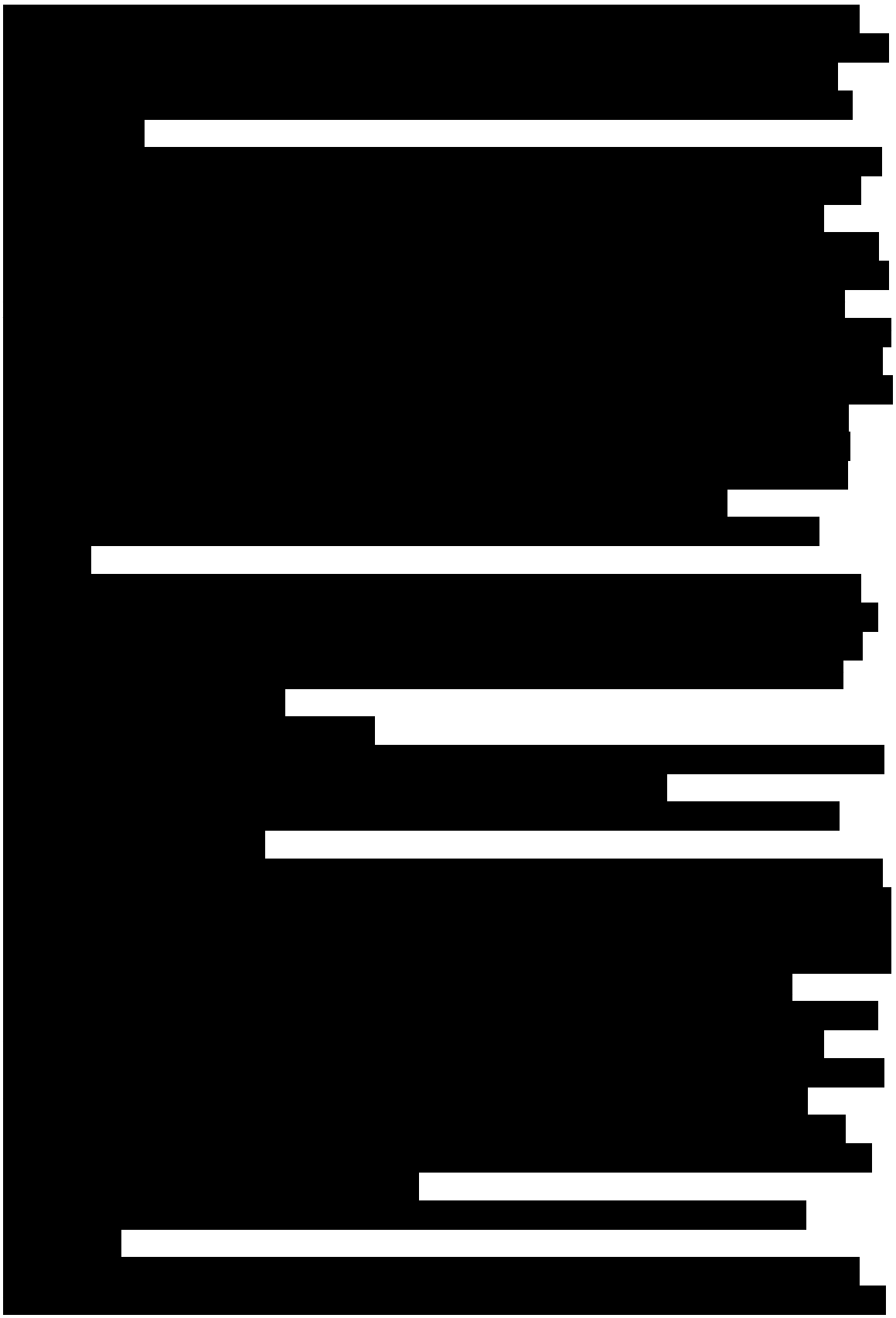
*Self-Image/Success*
26. How do you define success?
27. Do you view yourself as successful?
28. Are/were you treated special because you are/were a Latino student who is succeeding?
29. What types of clubs or activities at high school are/were you involved in?
30. What are the biggest factors that have made you feel (successful/not successful)?
31. Do you feel that you have faced any additional obstacles while trying to succeed because of being Latino?
32. What could teachers do to help Latino students feel more comfortable in the classroom?

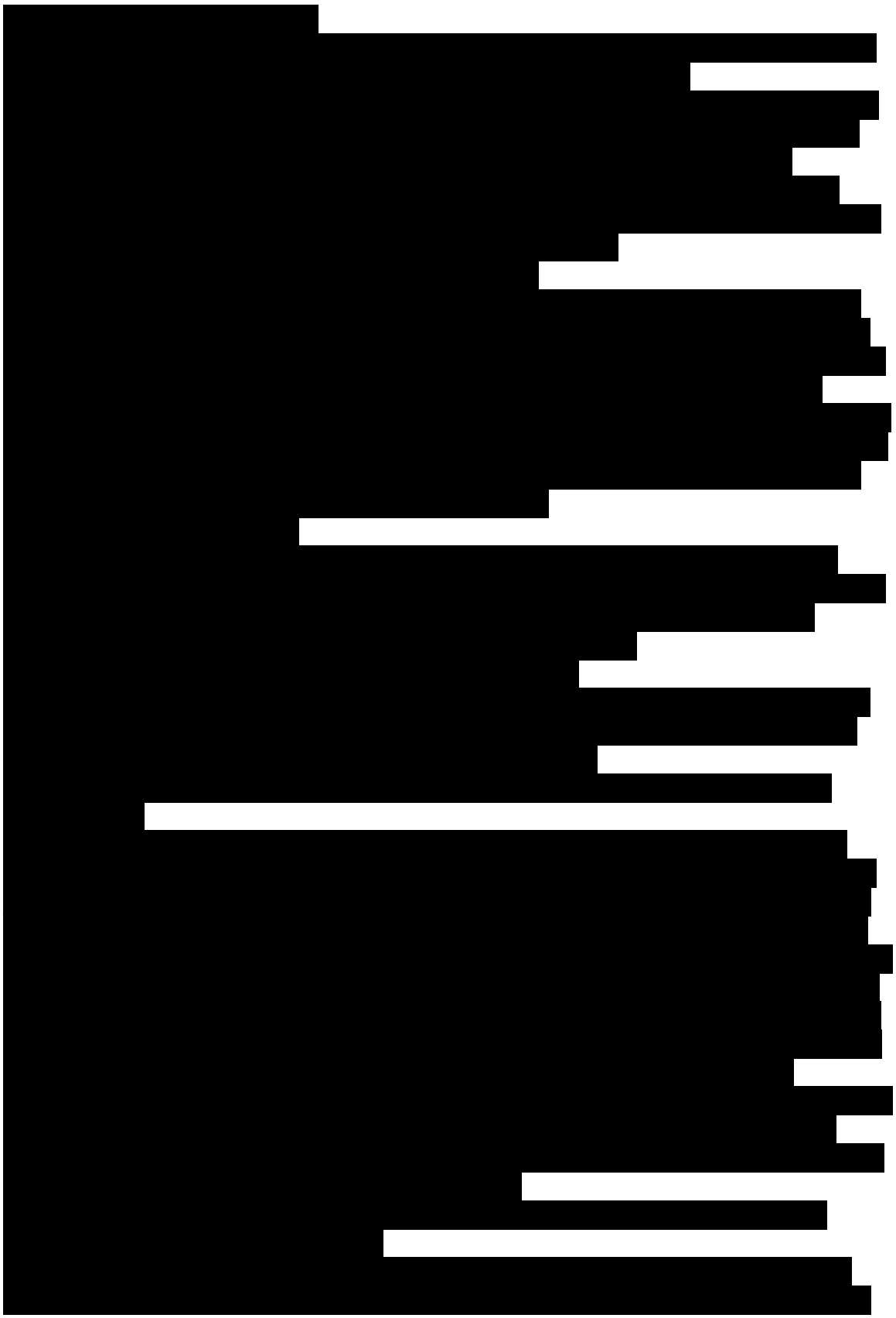
33. What do you think the school could have done differently?
34. Do you feel that teachers give Latino students who are working hard special help?
35. Do you think that Latino students should get special help?

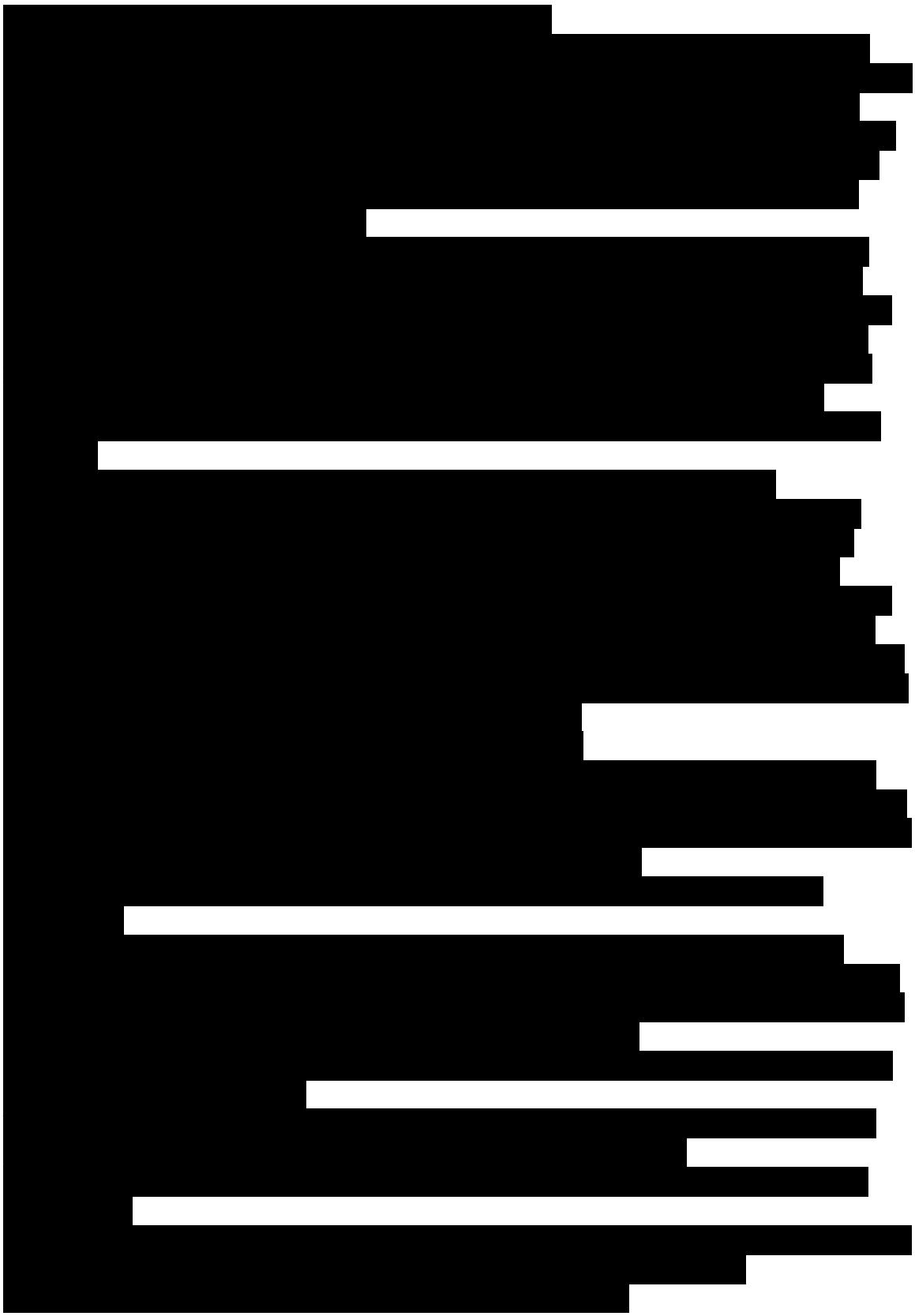
## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT I.









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