

To: Sandra Rodriguez, Advocacy Director Greater Houston Latinos for Education
From: Sylvia Manzano, BSP Research
Date: August 28, 2023
Re: Survey of Houston-Area Latino Parents and Educators

On behalf of Greater Houston Latinos for Education, Barreto Segura Partners (BSP) Research surveyed 400 Latino parents and educators in the Houston area to learn about their experiences with public schools, and their views on a variety of bilingual education policies and Spanish-language access for Latino parents and students.

The survey was implemented August 10th through August 21st, using a mixed-mode approach, with 75% of respondents completing the survey online, and 25% completing via telephone on a live interview. All participants were given the option to complete the survey in English or Spanish, according to their preference. In total 101 participants completed the survey in Spanish, and 299 opted for English. The survey included an oversample of 100 educators, and has margin of error of +/- 4.9%.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. There is strong and broad support among Latino parents and educators for bilingual education programs and policies that provide education access to Spanish-speaking students and parents.**
- 2. Latino parents and educators want to see bilingual programs and access expanded further, to address faculty shortages and representation needs.**
- 3. Latino parents and educators encounter a variety of information barriers and communication gaps at their children's schools, which underscore their support for expanding access for parental engagement.**
- 4. Latino parents want to engage and hear more from their schools and districts, which they view as essential to their children's success.**

Key Finding 1: There is strong and broad support among Latino parents and educators for bilingual education programs and policies that provide education access to Spanish-speaking students and parents.

- An overwhelming 90% of Latino parents and educators support more funding for bilingual education programs that support students learning English, with 60% strongly supporting increased funding.
- Similarly, 88% support hiring more Latino and Spanish-fluent teachers, staff, and administrators, with 61% strongly supporting such hiring priorities.
- Latino educators illustrate the need for parent-focused language access policies. When asked whether their campus had a written policy or plan in place for engaging with non-English speaking families during open houses, meetings, or other school activities: 40% said their school either didn't have one (25%) or they were unaware of one (15%).
- In a related finding, 39% of Latino educators said their district did not do a good job preparing front-office staff to work with families who do not speak English. 30% described the effort as fair, 8% said it was bad, and 1% said terrible.

Key Finding 2. Latino parents and educators want to see bilingual programs and access expanded further, to address faculty shortages and representation needs.

- A strong majority, 89% support creating programs or pathways for professionals to earn teaching certification to increase bilingual classes and hiring bilingual teachers, with 63% strongly supporting such an initiative.
- A large very large majority, 86% support (with 53% strongly in support) their district creating a website or online dashboard where the district posts information about teacher and administrator diversity, such as the number of Spanish-speaking and/or Latino staff. Among Latinos educators, 88% support this idea.
- The need to bring in more Latino teachers is keenly felt in the community: 34% of Latino educators, and 36% of Latino immigrant parents report that their school district has seen a lot of Latino teachers laid off, or leave for other jobs.
- A mere 22% of Latino parents said that their school has a lot of Spanish-fluent teachers available for Spanish-speaking parents. And, 30% of Latino educators observed that Spanish-fluent teachers are pulled away from their classrooms and students to help translate for non-Spanish-speaking teachers who cannot communicate with Spanish-speaking parents.

Key Finding 3. Latino parents and educators encounter a variety of information barriers and communication gaps at their children’s schools, which underscore their support for expanding access for parental engagement.

- 46% of Latino parents said their school communicates with them only in English. Among bilingual households, 62% only receive English communications, and the same was true for 34% of Latino parents in Spanish-dominant households.
- In many instances, the lack of information can have a pronounced impact on immigrant households. For example, more than one-in four (29%) Latino immigrant parents said their child’s school didn’t have translation services available to them, or they were unaware that option was available to them.
- Similarly, 39% of Latino immigrant parents need better communication from their school about their Spanish-language website: 21% of Latino immigrant parents didn’t know whether their child’s school had a Spanish website, and another 18% said the school’s Spanish website was not easy to find.

Key Finding 4. Latino parents want to engage and hear more from their schools and districts, which they view as essential to their children’s success.

- Latino parents support their local schools, and see them as partners (not adversaries) in their children’s development and success. 87% of Latino parents say they want to know about school board meetings and events at their child’s school. This is especially so among immigrant (92%) and Spanish-dominant (97%) parents.
- There is also clear agreement (80% agree, 46% strongly agree) that more parents would be involved with their children’s school and education if there were more Spanish fluent teachers and administrators. Notably, 90% of Spanish-dominant respondents agree that more Spanish fluent faculty and administration would spur engagement, and 57% strongly agree.
- 76% of Latino parents believe that administrators and teachers at the schools their children attend care a great deal about addressing issues important to Latino parents and students.
- Likewise, 90% of Latino parents and educators agree that high quality public schools are very important to helping their students get ahead in life and making a difference in their community (66% strongly agree). That figure is even higher among immigrant parents, where 95% agree, and 77% strongly agree.