

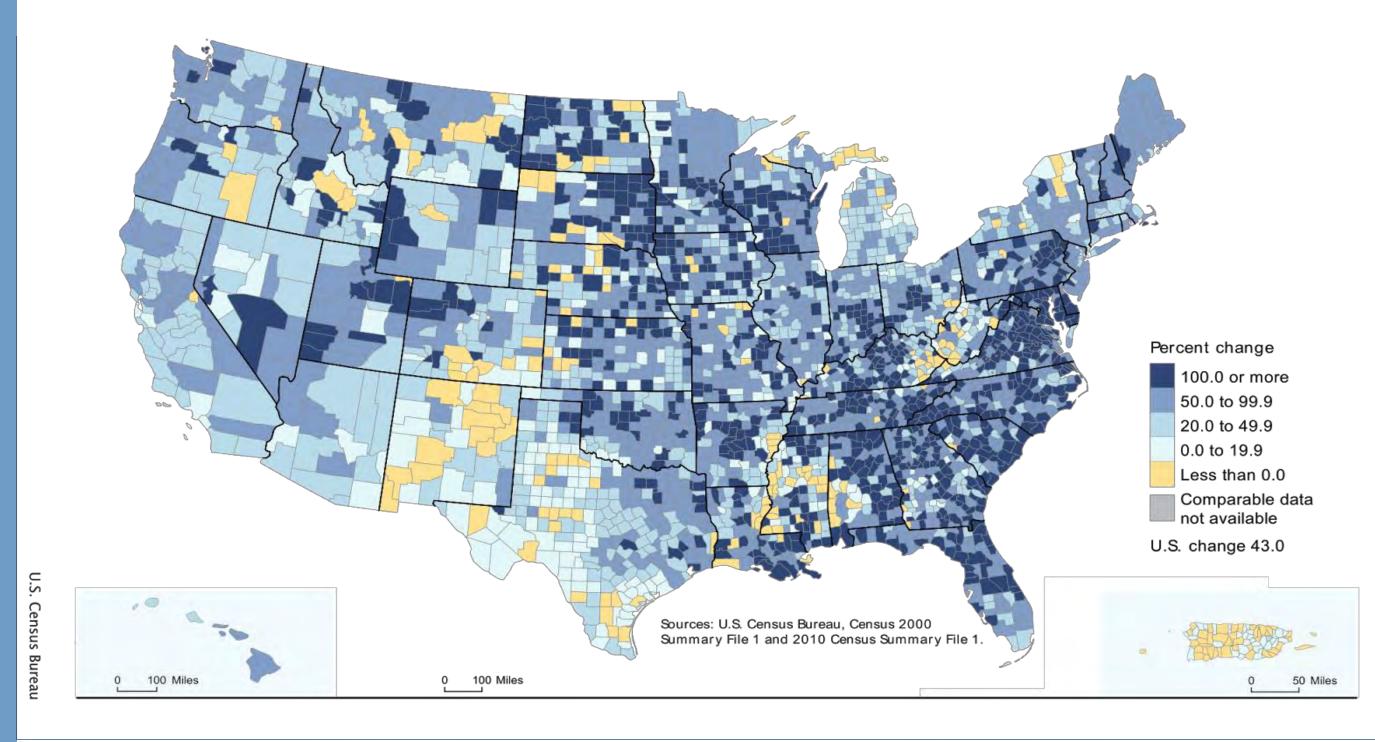
Bass Connections: Promoting Academic Success for Elementary School Latino English Learners

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Background

Between 2000 and 2010, the Latino population in North Carolina increased by 78.7%¹. In addition, the number of Latino students in American public schools has almost doubled in the last 30 years. In fact, 25% of students in American public schools will be Latino by 2021^2 .



Parent engagement, defined as direct involvement in the learning process, is thought to have a substantial impact on student success³.

Data has shown that only 37% of Hispanic parents, compared to 61% of White parents and 41% of Black parents, are involved or volunteer at their child's school⁴.

The Study

Methods

- Two hour-long focus groups conducted at El Centro Hispano
- Facilitated by a fluent Spanish-speaking team member
- Participants were given a \$15 stipend

Participants

- 20 Spanish-speaking mothers at El Centro Hispano
- All parents had at least one child in a local public school **Data Analysis**
- Focus groups' audio recordings were transcribed and translated into English
- Transcriptions were coded for recurring them

Research Questions

- 1. In what ways are Latino/a parents engaged in their children's education?
- 2. What facilitates or inhibits parent engagement?

Results

Focus group data show that Latino parents face significant barriers to engagement.

Barriers Limited Other teacher/administra Responsibilities Language tor availability "The truth is...more "The hysterical thing "Or, sometimes, I about the meetings is than anything it's work with her and that they schedule us the job, because one we try it out, but I

works more in the don't speak English morning to be able very well, not to have the evening 100%, but I try to with them." keep helping her assignments..."

for some really early ones...I came really early, at 8 for the meeting and they say 'Your meeting is cancelled.""

Moreover, Latino parent engagement is often reflected in less traditional forms.

Engagement

Advocacy

with

"The assistant to the director of the principals met with me. I spoke with her, and she said the same thing. She said, 'You're not just fighting against the school or anyone, you're fighting against the system.'

Encouragement

"[Son] 'But I want to be an astronaut.' [Mother] Everything is the same, to be an astronaut has steps... And when he doesn't want to do his homework, I say, ...If you want to be an astronaut... you have to follow the steps, you have to keep studying and I will be with you.

Extracurricular Support

"In the case of my son, I have requested tutoring here at El Centro Hispano from Monday through Thursday..."

Conclusions

- Parental engagement encompasses a wide range of activities that current scholarship on the topic sometimes fails to address.
- Types of parental engagement included:
 - networking with other Latino/a parents
 - advocating for specific needs
 - enlisting homework help from older siblings.
- Most parents seemed eager and willing to become more involved if certain barriers such as language and administrative inaccessibility could be addressed.



References

¹Progress 2050. Infographic: Demographic Change in North Carolina. (2012, May 1). Retrieved December 7, 2015.

²Ennis, S. R., Ríos-Vargas, M., & Albert, N. G. (2011, May). *The Hispanic* Population: 2010 (Rep. No. C2010BR-04). Retrieved February, 2016, from US Census Briefs website.

³Harris, A., & Goodall, J. (2008). Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning. Educational Research, 50(3), 277-289. doi: 10.1080/00131880802309424

⁴Kena, G., Aud, S., & Johnson, F. (2014). Condition of Education 2014 (Vol. 83). US Education Department.

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