



## **White Paper: Developing Quality Teacher Preparation Programs that Serve the Needs of Hispanic Students**

Prepared by the Select Committee of HSI-Serving Deans and Educators

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### **Introduction:**

New data reported by the Pew Research Center indicate several encouraging trends related to the educational attainment of students with Hispanic backgrounds in the United States. Two trends in particular – a decrease in high school dropout rate and an increase in college enrollment (Krogstad, 2016) are of import given the historically high dropout rates and low college enrollment by Hispanic students. While these indicators suggest improvements, there is still much work to be done.

The present paper details aspects of the nation’s teacher preparation system that impact Hispanic<sup>1</sup> student achievement in the PreK-12 system with a particular focus on factors of quality that have been noted to contribute to higher academic achievement among Hispanic students.

### **Background:**

The Hispanic population in the United States currently exceeds 54 million people (17% of the nation’s population), making this the largest minority ethnic population in the country. In contrast, approximately 8% of the nation’s teaching corps are teachers of Hispanic heritage. The significant discrepancy between the number of Hispanic teachers and students may not in itself indicate a *crisis* of cultural disparity, but it does point to the need for teacher preparation programs to: 1.) understand the unique needs and challenges of teaching Hispanic students, 2.) research and promote culturally- and linguistically-appropriate teaching practices (emphasizing approaches that benefit Hispanic students) in the preparation of all teachers, and 3.) promote the recruitment, preparation and retention of teachers from the Hispanic community.

Goldhaber’s (2016) reevaluation of the landmark *Equality of Educational Opportunity* report on its fiftieth anniversary concluded that “teacher quality is one of the few school characteristics that significantly affects student performance.” (p. 58). However, not all fundamentally sound educational practices are appropriate for every learner. As our ability to assess the needs of specific learners and groups of learners has improved and become more sophisticated, so has our capacity to apply appropriate individual and group solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge that individuals of Hispanic origins refer to themselves by a variety of terms, which include Latino/a and Chicano/a. The term, Hispanic, is used in this paper to reference all people of Hispanic descent. Additionally, the authors recognize the nature of the nation’s discourse on Hispanics in schools at this time is heavily centered on the treatment of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students. We strongly support a continuation of the current policy of providing a free and public education to these students in which schools can serve as safe zones for undocumented students in pursuit of education.

Quality teacher preparation programs support the development of differentiated skills and knowledge according to student needs which result in impactful and even transformative education. Additional demonstrations of and requirements for quality include well-defined standards of professional preparation practice and professional teacher performance; extended clinical experience in partnership with expert veteran classroom teachers; the use of problem-based and inquiry-driven models of instruction; and a rigorous core curriculum that emphasizes linkages between individual student learning, assessment, and content pedagogy. (Darling-Hammond, 2011)

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) has established five standards for teacher preparation programs, which include guidelines for the demonstration of quality. In brief, Standard 5 states:

*“The provider maintains a quality assurance system comprised of valid data from multiple measures, including evidence of candidates’ and completers’ positive impact on P-12 student learning and development. The provider supports continuous improvement that is sustained and evidence-based, and that evaluates the effectiveness of its completers. The provider uses the results of inquiry and data collection to establish priorities, enhance program elements and capacity, and test innovations to improve completers’ impact on P-12 student learning and development.”* (CAEP, 2013)

Each of the listed components serve to validate the approaches to educating teachers of all students and provide opportunities for teacher preparation programs to examine their practices particularly with regard to the burgeoning Hispanic student population using disaggregated information. The new reality of Hispanics in PreK-12 schools requires a systematic re-examination of past teacher preparation practices that considers and includes recognition of the role of culture in student learning and development and a measure of programs’ ability to prepare teachers for this growing population of students.

A re-examination of this sort should result in teachers who are well prepared to deliver culturally-responsive instruction for all students. Such instruction addresses cultural, linguistic, historical and social factors that acknowledge, respond to, and validate the cultural capital of every student. These elements are most effectively conveyed through purposeful integration of content, pedagogy and systems of and for cultural responsiveness across pre-service teachers’ entire collegiate experience, which would include course work in Colleges of Arts & Sciences. This points to the necessity of institutional partnering with national higher education organizations like the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to inform and influence post-secondary practices fulfilling the HACU mission (and arguably, that of quality teacher preparation) of improving access to and the quality of post-secondary educational opportunities for Hispanic students.

#### *Bilingual Instruction and Addressing the Needs of English Language Learners –*

According to an analysis performed by the Migration Policy Institute (2015), the number of English language learners has doubled in 25 years since 1990 from 5% of the U.S. student population to 10% in 2015. Of those learners, 71% speak Spanish as a native language. The need for effective language development has never been greater in U.S. schools, and the nation’s support for these learners should rise to the challenge of preparing all English learners, particularly the large group of Hispanic English learners, to succeed in PreK-12 course work.

The need for improved English language instruction is demonstrated by a recent study by the Council of the Great City Schools (2014) – an organization representing approximately 26% of the nation’s school districts that enroll English Language Learners. The study concluded that the quality of English language development (ELD) instruction is adversely affected by inadequate materials, misaligned practices and materials, and an insufficient supply of materials to support language development. These findings indicate the current lack of attention and priority devoted to the country’s burgeoning population of English language learners and the resources and instructional emphasis (including teacher preparation) needed to educate these students effectively.

Several fundamental elements must be included in a holistic approach to language development for students to thrive academically. The combined Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)/CAEP standards for P-12 Teacher Education Programs (TESOL/CAEP, 2010) recognize instruction of language as a system, culture as it affects student learning, assessment of English language learners and language advocacy as necessary components of effective teacher preparation for English language learners. In fact, the most recent iteration of the ESSA accountability regulations require school systems to take into account unique student characteristics in reaching English language proficiency. Preparation in these areas is well within the concept of culturally-responsive practices and enables teachers of Hispanic students with Spanish as their native language greater access to curriculum.

Additionally, a growing awareness of sustaining one’s cultural capital as s/he is educated in the U.S. school system has been noted as a benefit of possessing bi-cultural and bilingual backgrounds. Students with dual capabilities are at a premium in the workplace and, in particular, schools with students of Hispanic origins. The move to sustain cultural capital as a driver of economic, social and environmental dimensions is supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Sustainable Development Goals (2016) as a means of maintaining economic growth, quality education and sustainable cities around the world.

**Recommendation:** We recommend bilingual, bicultural and biliterate preparation for all PreK-12 teachers, especially those who serve a large percentage of our nation’s growing Hispanic students and funding to update and disseminate evidence-based materials that support English language development and practices that sustain cultural capabilities.

#### *Culturally-responsive teaching practices –*

It is imperative that teacher preparation entities include the theory and practice of cultural responsiveness in its curriculum. This is important in recognizing that “one-size-fits-all” approaches to teaching practice make indefensible assumptions about learners, context, content and classroom dynamics and the recognition that the expression of individual and contextualized identity (e.g. academic identity) is influenced to a significant degree by cultural contexts.

A lack of specific practice guidelines for professional preparation in cultural responsiveness and diversity could be cited as the primary argument against requiring teacher development in the area. This may be partially due to the apparent lack of consensus on the nature and function of culture and how it intersects with teachers and learners, both inside and outside of the classroom. The dilemma is a reflection of evolving notions of cultural dynamics impacting teaching demonstrated by the nomenclature associated with practice in the

professional literature (for example, “melting pot”, “salad bowl”, “multicultural”, “cultural relevance”, “cultural competence” and “cultural responsiveness” to name a few). However, while there are real differences of perspective reflected by these labels, all of these terms describe an awareness of the existence and consequences of cultural dynamics in the classroom.

Therefore, accepting this premise recognizes that advances in professional perspectives for practice are best derived from practical experience informed by “success stories” and evolving research. With regard to the importance of cultural responsiveness, a review of the literature clearly indicates the increasing diversity of the demographics of the country, achievement advantages for students of color who have access to teachers of color, and the greater likelihood of academic and professional success in the context of role models and mentors who are members of like cultural background. This evidence strongly argues for the importance of teacher preparation which includes the potential influences of culture, defines cultural competence as a process rather than a state, and the priority of recruiting, successfully preparing, and strategically placing teachers of color to provide the necessary perspective for culturally responsive practice.

A growing body of research in education, psychology and neuroscience suggests academic and cognitive benefits of sustaining (rather than exchanging) one’s culture and language throughout his/her educational experience. The academic benefits of maintaining or acquiring language and cultural capital is a strong driver of the emergence of dual language approaches to schooling in which students are instructed in English and another language – typically under conditions of a 50-50 division of time. (Burkhauser, et. al., 2016; Cortina, et. al., 2015). Additionally, these academic benefits include, but are not limited to, economic benefits for students, communities and the nation as students complete their PreK-12 experiences prepared to transact in the world and workplace with proficiencies in two languages and cultures as opposed to just one.

**Recommendation:** We propose the promotion of diversity standards for all pre-service and in-service teachers that include demonstrated abilities to respond to students’ linguistic and cultural needs in selecting, communicating, assessing and reflecting upon educational content and experiences.

### *Inquiry in Teacher Preparation –*

An important consideration in teacher preparation is the context in which teacher candidates will ultimately be employed. The development of teacher candidates with a strong understanding of inquiry is essential to effective transition and practice given the wide range of settings for which candidates are prepared and the reality that many candidates do not remain in the locations in which they were prepared or may find themselves in settings very different from those in which they completed their preparation. This approach is important to meet the needs of all learners, but most specifically diverse learners. It acknowledges the reality that students “come nested in multiple contexts” (Vinlove, 2012) that are interrelated and impact the relationships and ultimately the learning that takes place in schools.

Other researchers have addressed the need for a context specific preparation. Matsko and Hammerness (2013) provide an in-depth review of the context-specific approach utilized by the Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program that prepares teachers specifically for Chicago Public Schools. They detail a guided inquiry approach that treats “context as geographical, incorporating attention to the specific historical, political,

social, and even physical features of the specific place” (p. 132). The preparation framework exemplifies an ecological perspective, with the classroom and student context at the core, surrounded by the federal/state policy context, the public school context, the district context, the local geographical context, the local socio-cultural context. Developing a deep understanding of each of these reveals the “uniqueness of each school and serves as a powerful (and personal) counter narrative to generalizations that exist about urban schooling” (p. 136).

Berghoff, Blackwell, and Wisehart (2011), express the need to develop critically reflective practitioners. In addition to using inquiry to inform teaching and learning, they engage their students in collaborative inquiry to challenge their unexamined assumptions and develop agency. Their work is grounded in Cochran and Lytle’s (2009) work addressing the importance of inquiry as stance—i.e., practitioner research as a means to develop a deep understanding of how students learn.

Finally, Hollins (2015), proposes teacher preparation that engages candidates in an interpretive process through guided clinical rotations that are developmentally sequenced. Each rotation requires candidates to take part in focused inquiry as they examine curriculum, epistemic practices, the teaching process, and theoretical perspectives on teaching, subsequently moving to working with small groups and then the whole class.

**Recommendation:** We propose preparation of candidates with a strong inquiry frame that acknowledges the multiple contexts in which students and learning are nested is necessary if we are to ensure positive outcomes for all learners.

#### *Pre-Professional Teacher Preparation—*

Clearly, the discussion of few topics generates the level of passion reflected in conversations concerning education and teacher preparation. This is likely due to a number of factors but primary among them are the importance and immediacy of the PreK-12 education and the potential consequences associated with the quality of its conduct. While the manner in which educational purpose is achieved is one area of disagreement, it is also true that the purpose itself has been disputed. However, considering the enterprise conceptually, there are indications that despite the differences of opinion there are areas of agreement among those concerned, particularly with regards to the preparation of professional educators.

However, no aspect of professional preparation has been subject to the degree of policy and regulatory intrusion as has teacher education. Among other things, this is reflected in the parameters, expectations, and measures of “accountability” established by those outside the academic disciplines and professional practice and in truth, which often pays little attention to the professional, theoretical, and information (research) based judgments of those academics and professionals entrusted with developing and implementing preparation programs. For example, neither practitioners nor the academy of scholars disagree with notions of professional or program accountability. However, the manner in which this accountability is established and determined as well as the attendant consequences of enforced accountability certainly results in disagreement (e.g., ESSA). This is because any process of accountability requires a particular philosophical (e.g., epistemological) frame of reference and priorities with consequences for design of pre-professional preparation, which can be inconsistent or incompatible with those of the academy or profession. It is for this reason that those involved in teacher preparation and site-based education argue for program goals based on

sound educational student learning outcomes (SLOs). This is most often defined in the field by evidence-based practices grounded in theory, practice and research so that decisions, determinations, interpretations and assessments (of which is the purview of the discipline and the profession) are informed, rather than dictated, by external constituencies.

For the field of education, the consensus statement of the profession is reflected in the national standards for program accreditation – Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), which designates the five standards articulated previously. While it is unlikely that anyone would argue with the proffered standards, it is clear that the operationalization of those standards is subject to interpretation and as a result some expected disagreement. However, it is equally clear from the exhibits of the profession (program plans, professional and academic literature, presentations at national meetings, etc.) that regardless of interpretation, the necessity and expectation of cultural diversity and responsiveness is undisputed (as a result of the findings of inquiry which clearly suggests the importance and impact of professional diversity and the implications of practice relative to diversity). These supports for cultural diversity and expectations for cultural responsiveness can be found in most of the founding principles of educational organizations and specialized program associations (SPAs) standards within the field of Education (e.g. the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), National Education Association (NEA), National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE), etc.).

**Recommendation:** We recommend that national and/or professional education standards for professional preparation and other standards influencing the preparation of teachers provide the basis for regulatory and legislative decision making.

#### *Support Structures that Facilitate Quality Teacher Preparation–*

In order to support and sustain quality Teacher Preparation, strong partnerships must be created with a range of stakeholders including, faculty from the Schools/Colleges of Education, their colleagues in the Arts & Sciences, members of the PreK-12 system, and community-based organizations that provide additional services to students and their families. The partnership must recognize that the power for change comes from collaborative leadership, valuing the voice of all participants, engaging in critical inquiry and reflective practices, and embracing a shared vision of possibilities. At the heart of the work, including shared conversations, is the belief in the vital role of education in our democracy.

Several “postulates,” as described by a large body of research and scholarship by John Goodlad and his colleagues, revolve around the value of simultaneous renewal (Goodlad, 2000; Bellamy & Goodlad, 2008). It emphasizes that the important work of teacher educators must be recognized, supported and promoted by each institution’s top leadership including college/university Presidents and Provosts, Superintendents, other school building leadership and CEOs and Directors from our community partners.

Successful efforts across our educational settings must “enjoy parity, full legitimacy and institutional commitment and participants rewarded for their collective work in developing the next generation of educators.” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 55) A clear structure must be build that spans boundaries with resources, clear anticipated outcomes and systems of accountability. Braiding of resources, blended data systems, and the

opportunity to analyze data to improve our practices and the academic achievement of the students we serve, will lead to quality programs.

**Recommendation:** We recommend the creation of strong district/teacher preparation/community collaborative structures, shared governance, and the will to educate teachers around a shared vision.

### *Clinically-Rich Preparation*

The field-based experiences (often referred to as clinical preparation) form a critical portion of teacher preparation by exposing prospective teachers to the demands and opportunities the classroom presents. Studies consistently show field-based experiences develop teachers who are significantly more effective than those who lack clinical practice prior to beginning teaching and that teaching experience has a stronger relationship to measures of student achievement than factors like licensure test scores, a master's degree or National Board certification (Harris & Sass, 2007; King, 2010). But simply adding a clinical experience to pre-service teachers' preparation at the end of their training is insufficient to result in the culturally- and linguistically-capable teachers described in this document. For example, Williamson, Apedoe and Thomas (2015) investigated the complexity of successfully implementing a residency program in a large urban school district and concluded that the specifics of a school's context do not necessarily prepare teachers to excel in other schools within the same school district.

Thus, there is a need to ensure all teacher preparation programs are clinically rich, providing substantive opportunities to bridge theory to practice across the spectrum of the program of study and not merely through disconnected observations and student teaching at the end of the program. This recommendation is supported by the National Blue Ribbon Panel (2010) commissioned by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Doing so will require strong collaboration with key stakeholders and will yield the quality of teachers that all students deserve. Zeichner (2010) refers to a lack of "clinical curriculum" (p. 91) in his "Third Space" theory, which speaks to the ways in which "hybrid teacher educators" might be used in the traditional teacher education models to help alleviate the disconnection between theory and practice. However, this potential is often constrained or unobtainable due to outside-of-the-organizational barriers rather than a lack of professional knowledge or desire. Within the parameters of these externally imposed constraints, common applications of this concept have been: 1) clinical faculty positions filled by individuals to supervise candidates in coursework and field placement experiences, and 2) faculty liaisons to build relationships between districts and universities.

Teacher residency models are another approach that embraces clinically rich preparation, some of which are loosely based on the medical model employing experiencing long-term, participatory and observation-based fieldwork. Although residency models should be complemented with deep curricular and pedagogical support at the university and at the school site, teacher residency programs, by design, directly address some the need for clinically rich preparation. The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR, 2014) notes "... there is strong evidence that teacher residency programs are having an impact on student achievement and teacher retention, improving outcomes for high-need children." (p. 1)

Data provided from the 2014 trends report (NCTR, 2014), highlights principal, teacher, and mentor perception of residency teacher preparation models. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of principals agree that: graduates in their building positively affected the culture of the school, are more effective or much more effective than teachers from other teacher preparation pathways, would hire graduates to teach in their building and recommend hiring a residency graduate to a colleague. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of graduates from residency programs agree or strongly agree that they increased student achievement and 88% would recommend their residency program to those interested in teaching in high- needs schools. Finally, 95% of the mentors of teacher candidates in teacher residency programs strongly agree that being a mentor made them a more effective teacher.

NCTR's (2016) *Clinically Oriented Teacher Preparation Case Study Project* examined three residency programs; two of which are Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI). Heritage University, located in Washington State, was acknowledged for their work in: competency-based assessment, cascading mentorship in the field, and innovative clinical support roles. California State University, Fresno serves as an exemplar of enduring embedded partnerships between higher education institutions and school systems. These partnerships with university teacher preparation programs are signaling the power of well-planned collaborations between districts, schools and universities in creating residency programs that prepare teachers to succeed with Hispanic students.

**Recommendation:** We propose increased support for clinically rich teacher preparation programs and models such as teacher residencies that provide extensive and substantive opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in field-based inquiries that are embedded in cultural contexts.

### *Retaining Hispanic Teachers*

As previously noted, it is essential for us to diversify the teacher workforce so that it better reflects student demographics. Recently, a great deal of attention has been devoted to the recruitment of teachers of color. However, even greater attention is needed to ensure we *retain* teachers of color. This requires attention be paid to the contexts in which these teachers will teach, many of which will consist of predominately white, female teachers and predominately compromised of students of color. Teachers of color face the added burden of becoming the voice of diversity on their respective campuses. They are disproportionately called upon to address student misbehavior, serve as translators, and provide a multitude of other services on top of their teaching workload.

- This reality suggests the need to ensure all teachers are entering culturally responsive contexts in which: Institution and program recruiters, faculty, support staff and administrators (at all levels) have training about the cultural perspectives and expectations of Hispanic teacher candidates.
- The cultural understanding and responsiveness of ALL institutional personnel in the provision of educational services (e.g. Hispanic family structures/values, informal networking as a unique experience, etc.) is including in regular performance assessments.
- Inquiry based instructional approaches (pedagogy) is integrated in preservice preparation of all teacher candidates.

- Research-based Bilingual education and instructional approaches for English Language Learners is required for all preservice teacher.
- New Hispanic teachers are provided with induction training related to the successful negotiation of workplace settings and norms (where they will constitute a significant minority) preparing them to effectively communicate and support culturally responsive practice and to be resilient in the face of the limited numbers of professional practitioners from the same ethnic background.
- Residency experiences that integrate field-based learning opportunities which seek to provide supervised practice in the provision of culturally-responsive pedagogy as well as professional development opportunities for practicing educational professionals.
- Added remuneration or other consideration for Hispanic faculty and others in the workplace for the cultural and linguistic expertise they provide in the service of language minority students and families. (Thomas & Wetlaufer, 1997).
- Professional development resources to ensure program and university staff are aware of and prepare future teachers to manage unrecognized bias in educational workplace settings, especially those that may hinder the advancement of Hispanic educators to positions of leadership.
- Explicit paths to leadership for Hispanic professionals including teachers that reflect the demographics of the students they serve. (Thomas & Wetlaufer, 1997)
- The integration of tactics and techniques of cultural responsiveness in specialized or advanced education curriculum (e.g. certificate or graduate programs).
- Formal opportunities for visible professional and social interaction among Hispanic teachers.
- Quality, state-of-the-art professional development at the in-service stage of the teaching career, and
- Institutional support for quality teacher preparation that includes stakeholders beyond immediate teacher preparation.

### **Next Steps:**

The committee appreciates the support provided by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) by convening this group to author this paper. We believe that continued support is necessary and should be expanded to assembled educators regionally and nationally who are intent on preparing: 1) more Hispanic teachers to serve in our PreK-12 schools, and 2) teachers of all backgrounds to meet the needs of the growing population of Hispanic students. To this end, we believe that the following steps should be pursued at the national, state, university and district levels:

1. Establish diversity standards for all pre-service and in-service teachers that include demonstrated abilities to respond to students' cultural needs in selecting, communicating, assessing and reflecting upon educational content and experiences.
2. Prepare candidates with a strong inquiry frame that acknowledges the multiple contexts in which students and learning are nested is necessary if we are to ensure positive outcomes for all learners.
3. Increase support for clinically-rich teacher preparation and opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in field-based inquiries embedded in cultural contexts.
4. Free university (and other) teacher preparation programs from overregulation of process and focus instead on outcome and impact measures to provide professional and academic prerogative to develop curriculum and instructional approaches of excellence and distinction.
4. Develop and implement a national system of supports and incentives to ensure that all educators are well prepared (in particular to serve the educational needs of students from Hispanic backgrounds) when they first enter the profession.
5. Develop and implement methods and metrics to evaluate the *development* of teacher effectiveness through professional practice rather than or in addition to the current overreliance on achievement test results for purposes of continued appointment and career advancement.
6. Develop mechanisms, assessments, and incentives to attract and retain well-prepared content and pedagogy experts who can teach in culturally-responsive and achievement oriented ways.

The work of this committed group of educators concerned with serving the needs of our nation's Hispanic students is just the beginning. We propose and encourage Department of Education support for an organized, ongoing dialogue across states, districts, and teacher preparation programs to operationalize the recommendations contained herein.

For additional assistance with these ideas, please contact the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and the authors, **Dean John Davis**, California State University Dominguez Hills ([jdavis@csudh.edu](mailto:jdavis@csudh.edu)), **Fmr. Dean Arthur Hernandez**, University of the Incarnate Word ([aeherna8@uiwtx.edu](mailto:aeherna8@uiwtx.edu)), **Dean Patricia Alvarez McHatton**, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley ([patricia.mchatton@utrgv.edu](mailto:patricia.mchatton@utrgv.edu)), **Bianca Belmonte Sapien**, NBCT, Albuquerque Public Schools ([Belmonte@aps.edu](mailto:Belmonte@aps.edu)), **Interim Dean Deborah Shanley**, Lehman College ([DEBORAH.SHANLEY@lehman.cuny.edu](mailto:DEBORAH.SHANLEY@lehman.cuny.edu)), **Associate Professor Kari Terjeson**, Heritage University ([Terjeson\\_K@heritage.edu](mailto:Terjeson_K@heritage.edu)).

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