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INCREASING LATINO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN
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Abstract

This case study seeks to understand Latino parent involvement and experiences in two large school districts in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with the purpose of increasing Latino student attainment. Through the use of structured interviews, eight Latino mothers shared their experiences, perspectives, and insight on how they perceive education, barriers they have faced while navigating their children's educational journeys, and their desires for the future. They discussed language barriers, challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a desire for more information and well as their perspectives of what it means to be educated. This study is meant for school districts and higher education institutions to create better resources and outreach programs for Latino students.

Keywords: Latinos, education, parental involvement, parental experiences, parental perspectives

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction, Purpose, and Significance of Study

One of the most defining moments of my life came the day that I decided I was going to apply to college. Since I was a little girl, my parents had always told me about the importance of going to college, the benefits it would have for my future, and all the doors college would open for me. It seemed so easy to romanticize this place that promised scholarships and the guarantee of a successful life. However, making the decision to go to college was just the beginning. Little did I know that there was a lot more to this journey than just “deciding to go to college”. Faced with application fees, transcripts, tours, ACT scores, choosing majors, rejection letters, and navigating a FAFSA for the first time, this romanticized experience of going to college was completely different than anything I had expected. I felt completely alone in my experience, navigating the unknown for the first time.

My parents immigrated from Guatemala in the 1990’s. They didn’t receive higher education in Guatemala and started working as soon as they came to the United States. While they did their best to provide everything my brothers and I needed (and more), there was a disconnect between them and this new chapter in my life. Everything from failing my first biology test to joining my first club to changing my major for the third and fourth times, was something I experienced alone. However, this wasn’t a new feeling to me. While my parents have always had high expectations for me in my academics and have been very encouraging, they have left everything up to me. It wasn’t until the moment that I stepped into my first job as a bilingual assistant in an elementary school that I learned that I was not alone. Working with

students and families from a similar background as I made me realize that my experiences in public education are like so many others. This realization has inspired the present study.

Conducting research about the education of Latinos gives their identities, experiences, and their funds of knowledge a voice. Latinos in the United States have been dehistoricized, especially in regard to their education (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2010). This is reflected in the accounts of how Latino students and their families perceive themselves and in their overall success in the public education system. “This is urgent for research on Latino education in the light of the persistence of high dropout rates and low rates of university eligibility and attendance” (Auerbach, 2002, p. 1370). There is a lot of work that needs to be done to ameliorate the outcomes for Latino students, who make up approximately 14 percent of the United States population (Irizarry, 2011). The U.S Census Bureau has estimated in 2008 that the Latino population in the United States will reach 133 million by the year 2050. It is imperative that the educational outcomes change for this emerging minority.

This study aims to understand the perceptions of Latino parents in two school districts in Oklahoma City and study their involvement in their children’s education and in the transition from K-12 to higher education. This information will ideally serve schools and school districts as well as colleges, universities, and career/technical institutions in their development of effective and inclusive community outreach and recruitment efforts. In the 2020-2021 school year, Latino students made up 58.6% of the student population of Oklahoma City Public Schools, one of the largest school districts in the state of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City Public Schools, 2021). However, only 17% of Latino adults in the state earned associate degrees in 2018 (Excelencia in Education, 2018). The key to creating effective and lasting programs for Latino families requires

listening to them, their experiences, and their desires. “The earlier the dialogue begins, the more truly revolutionary will the movement be” (Freire, 1968, p. 128).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A Brief History of Latinos and Latino Education in The United States of America

One of the keys to understanding the educational systems in place for Latino students in the United States is to understand the historical events that have brought us to this moment in history. The history of Latinos in the United States dates back hundreds of years ago to the arrival of the Spanish on the American continent (Mitchell, 2014). However, this summary of historical events starts in the 1890's and brings us to the present day. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Latino population in the United States began to grow and diversify (San Miguel & Donato, 2009).

The term "Latino" is used as an umbrella designation that includes people who come from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries. The countries included under this term are Mexico and countries in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (San Miguel & Donato, 2009). This diverse group of nations have shared cultural and historical connections (Gutiérrez, 2006). One of the most remarkable characteristics they share is the Spanish language. While many indigenous groups and U.S. born Latinos don't speak Spanish or speak it as a second language, the United States has the second highest Spanish speaking population, only second to Mexico (Irizarry, 2011). Gutiérrez (2006) briefly and thoroughly describes additional connections between the countries of Latin America.

For example, a complicated and controversial legacy of both genetic and cultural creolization and mestizaje (a melding over the 500 years since initial contact of European, African, and indigenous gene pools and cultural traits and practices); a

Christian tradition; and a common, if uneven history of national liberation from Spanish imperialism (p. 10).

A variety of historical events have contributed to the growth of the Latino population in the United States. Over many decades, the reasons for coming to the United States have stayed consistent. Latinos have made their way to the United States with the hopes of finding political and economic stability. Many of those leaving their countries are trying to start a life away from generational poverty, rapid growth in population and civil unrest due to political turmoil. The most recent wave of immigration into the United States has been highly influenced by increased drug trafficking (Gutiérrez, 2006). While these countries have substantial connections, it is important to make note of the aspects that make their history in the United States unique.

The two largest groups of Latino populations in the United States are from Mexico and Puerto Rico. Combined, these two groups account for almost three quarters of the U.S Latino Population (Irizarry, 2011). The largest group of Latinos in the United States is Mexican (U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). In February 1848, the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo marked the end of the Mexican American War. This event served as a catalyst for a long history for the Mexican community in the United States. The historical signing of the treaty brought many changes in the relationship between the United States and Mexico. The treaty defined a new border between the two countries and a huge territory of Northern Mexico (current day New Mexico, Nevada, California, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona) was placed into the hands of the United States (Mitchell, 2014). One of the most notable agreements in the treaty was the citizenship of Mexican citizens that decided to stay in the United States. They were promised to receive all the benefits of United States citizenship in the United States, should

they decide to stay instead of going south of the U.S/Mexico border (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2009). Unfortunately, this promise didn't ameliorate the complicated relationship between the two countries or the conditions under which Mexicans would now live in the United States. After the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the United States would see more waves of immigration into the country.

The United States' desire to expand west (by building railroads), worsening economic conditions in Mexico and the need for agricultural and transportation laborers, brought large numbers of Mexicans across the border in search of work opportunities. With the start of World War 1, Mexicans quickly became essential to keeping several industries afloat and thriving across the Southwest of the United States, as labor shortages led the United States to recruit laborers from Mexico. Next, the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) brought Mexican citizens to the United States looking to escape the instability their country was seeing due to the war. Mexicans faced lack of work, food shortages, and social/political unrest. The population of Mexicans reached an all-time high of 480,000 in 1920, with most of them settling throughout the Southwest part of the country (Mitchell, 2014).

With the growth of the Mexican population in the U.S came the increase of anti-immigrant sentiments and rhetoric across the country. The Immigration Act of 1924 was one of the first pieces of legislation created to limit the influx of immigrants across the country. During the early 1930's (during the height of the Great Depression), this act led to the deportation of over 400,000 Mexicans, including a large portion who were U.S born citizens (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2006). During this time, Latinos suffered alongside Americans as widespread poverty

and unemployment struck the nation (Mitchell, 2014). Amid mass deportation efforts, the United States once again opened the doors to Mexicans with the start of World War II.

World War II brought a huge need for laborers. In 1942, the U.S Congress passed the Migrant Labor Agreement, more commonly known as the *bracero* program. The program allowed 4.6 million males to enter the United States as agricultural workers from Mexico, under contract. While their contracts promised them a living wage, housing, food, and transportation, their experiences with unfair wages and poor work conditions led many of the *braceros* to break their contracts and stay in the country illegally. This ultimately led to a huge influx of illegal Mexican workers during the 1940's and 50's. Illegal Mexicans were continuing to be paid very low wages and had very little rights because of their immigration status (MacDonald and Carrillo 2009). A post World War II era continued to see a growth in the Mexican population in the United States. With the growth in population, came the increase of anti-Mexican rhetoric, legislation, and sentiments led the community to fight towards their rights and equal treatment. Unfortunately, many Mexican communities were living in conditions of poverty. The lack of resources, cultural disconnect, and their lack of English were among some of the things that put the Mexican community in this position (García, 2018).

Puerto Ricans also have a complex history in the United States. Having the second largest population at around 9 percent, the Puerto Rican presence in the U.S has been seen and felt across the nation (Irizarry, 2011). The beginning of the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico really took flight in 1898, at the end of the Spanish-American War. The rule of Spain had come to an end across Latin America and the Caribbean, as many countries had successfully fought for their independence. The case was different for Puerto Rico and Cuba,

who were taken from Spain by the United States to become colonial possessions. Puerto Rico was placed in a position where they were neither an independent country nor U.S citizens (Novas, 2008).

The Puerto Rican population in the U.S started to grow in the early 1900s. A rapid increase in the mechanization in agricultural jobs and a large spike in the island's population resulted in Puerto Ricans seeking job opportunities in urban parts of the island and off the island. There was another strong factor that influenced migration from the island to the U.S mainland. With an impending world war, The Jones Act was passed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1917. This act granted Puerto Ricans U.S citizenship (Mitchell, 2014). However, the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico was still complicated, as Puerto Ricans ultimately didn't inherit all the same rights as U.S citizens. Novas (2008) perfectly describes the complexity of this relationship.

“As it turned out, Puerto Ricans did not inherit all of the fundamental rights of U.S citizenship (such as the right to vote in U.S presidential elections), but they instantly acquired most of the obligations of U.S citizenship, including serving in the military if conscripted. (During World War I, about eight thousand Puerto Ricans were drafted into the U.S armed forces and the Puerto Rican people donated hundreds and thousands of dollars to the war efforts.) (p.145)

Puerto Rico's economy continued to be affected by major historical events, including the Great Depression and World War II. Financial difficulties resulted in migration from the island to the U.S mainland, with significant numbers in large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Puerto Ricans were faced with discrimination which made it difficult for them to

find housing and jobs. Puerto Ricans were pushed into mostly poor-paying, service industry, blue-collar jobs. They faced poor living conditions and lower socioeconomic statuses. Despite these challenges, the Puerto Rican community proved to be strong as their communities blossomed (Mitchell, 2014). The Puerto Rican community has fought for equal access to resources and education through decades.

Up until 1960, the Latino population of the United States was mostly Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. From the beginning of the 1960's to the 1980's, the Latino population of the United States grew at a remarkable rate due to a variety of events, both in the U.S and outside (Mitchell, 2014). Immigrants from Central America, South America, and the Dominican Republic contributed to the rapid growth of the country's Latino population. Central America comprises El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, and Belize. Immigration of Central Americans was also influenced by growing trade relationships between the U.S and Central America, and companies from the United States took over land that was used to produce coffee, cotton, bananas, and livestock. Supported by the United States, many politicians in Central American and Caribbean countries rose to power to support the business practices of U.S companies, such as the United Fruit Company. This increased U.S involvement in these countries led to protests from the citizens. At the same time, Central Americans began to immigrate, as low wages and harsh manual labor with poor working conditions pushed them to immigrate to the United States for better employment opportunities (Chinchilla & Hamilton, 2004).

The immigration from these countries was also influenced by civil wars and unrest (supported by the United States governments) during the 1970's (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2009).

Immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras came to the United States for political reasons and violence, on top of economic issues (Chinchilla & Hamilton, 2004). Fleeing political persecution, many Central Americans sought protection as refugees in the U.S under the Refugee Act of 1990, which gave legal status to those who could prove they couldn't return to their home countries due to persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Following that act, TPS (Temporary Protected Status) granted legal status to Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and Nicaraguans who could prove they would be in danger or killed, should they return to their countries (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2009). Through the 1990's, immigration continued as violence and crime continued in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. With high numbers of immigration and violence, the economic situation across Central America has resulted in high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Natural disasters (such as hurricanes and earthquakes) that have struck these already impoverished areas have contributed to poverty and even homelessness (Chinchilla & Hamilton, 2004) Today, the largest populations are in California, New York, Washington, Florida, and Texas. In a 2019 Migration Policy Institute report, Salvadorans made up an estimated 37% of the Central American immigrant population in the United States, followed by: Guatemalans (29.4%), Hondurans (19.7%), Nicaraguans (6.8%), Panamanians (2.7%) and Costa Ricans (2.5%).

The smallest group of U.S Latinos is South American Latinos, with a majority of them being foreign born (about 74%). The largest number of South American immigrants come from Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. Most recent waves of South Americans are similar to other groups of Latinos, as they recently have immigrated to the United States in search of better economic

opportunities and to flee violence and political/civil unrest. This is the case for Colombia and Venezuela. Colombian immigration to the United States has come because of economic instability, violence, and the influence of drug cartels across the country. Venezuela was affected by the anti-American sentiment of its president, Hugo Chavez. His administration was characterized by mismanagement of the economy, scarcity of goods (such as food and medicine), and tension with the United States. This led many Venezuelans to leave their country. After his death, more lower income Venezuelans have left the country (Stavans, 2018). In contrast to most Latino immigrants, South Americans differ in their level of education and in socioeconomic status. As a result, they have had much more favorable outcomes in the U.S workforce, as they have been able to adapt to the socioeconomic structure of the United States (Espitia, 2004). South Americans tend to enter the United States more as voluntary economic migrants than as refugees (MacDonald & Carrillo, 2009).

Considering the vast history of Latinos in the United States, it becomes imperative for the educational system of the United States to reflect the ongoing shift in demographics. Latinos in the U.S have been faced with many challenges ranging from racial discrimination to the push to learn English. Latinos across the U.S have been fighting for equal access to education. Unfortunately, the growth of the Latino population has not been followed with growth in academic achievement (Irizarry, 2011). In the following section, some of the issues in Latino Education will be explained in greater detail.

Issues in Latino Education

“The history of Latino education is intricately linked to the nation’s social, political, and economic structures and directly impacted by a variety of factors. Within this larger context, we have documented and explained the rapid growth of the Latino population in the United States and its relationship to education over a 100-year period.”

- Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr & Rubén Donato (2009)

The knowledge and understanding of Latino history in the United States allows for an understanding of the need for an education that reflects and serves the needs of the largest growing demographic in the country. The consequences of this lack of understanding of the historical ties to Latino educational success are seen across the country. Valenzuela (2001) states that school officials and administrators tend to put the blame on the students, their families, their cultures, and the communities overall for the failure of Latino students, and they are often unable to understand what students are truly up against. Latinos make up one in four public school students in the United States. The educational statistics of Latino students in the United States show that our current education has historically failed and continues to fail Latino students. “The most telling statistics are the disparities in high school graduation and college completion, which are arguably the most critical outcome measures of a student’s K-12 experience” (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017). It is imperative for a true understanding of the factors that affect the success of Latino students in public education. The negative effects of lack of representation for Latino students, policies, and legislation regarding bilingual/multilingual education, poverty/segregation, and social perspectives towards Latino students all contribute to the continued challenges faced by Latino students in the public education system.

One of the most influential factors in the long term of success in Latino education is representation. A lack of representation for Latinos is seen across the board, especially in the demographics of school personnel and curriculum. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the 2015-2016 school year, Latinos made up almost 9% of teachers in the workforce compared to the 80% White teachers. The demographics of Latino educators don't match the demographic of students in the public school system in the United States. This cultural mismatch often brings tension between educators and their students. Many times, cultural inversion occurs.

Cultural inversion is defined as a conscious or unconscious opposition to the culture and cognitive styles associated with the dominant group (Ogbu, 1992). When students who see and interact with teachers from similar backgrounds as theirs can see an increase in their academic motivation and expectations (Dee, 2005). This isn't to say that non-Latino teachers cannot be good teachers for Latino students. Many times, teachers with good intentions and Latino students find themselves in a constant cycle of cultural collision, where they both yearn for understanding from each other (Irizarry, 2011). The need for greater representation in Latino education is imperative for a change in educational outcomes. "Simply having a teacher with a similar background appears to make a significant difference in the lives of young people." (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017)

Better efforts to recruit and retain Latino teachers need to be made by universities and school districts. Gándara and Mordechay (2017) explain the barriers in recruitment and retention of Latinos come from their past experiences in the school system, lack of college preparation, financial hardships, and lower rates of college completion; many Latinos are not seeking career opportunities in education. The low number of Latino educators ultimately leads to an also low

number of school administrators and Latino representatives in political places, such as school boards. Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier (2004) state that administrative positions in schools are also affected by poverty, as many educated Latinos will seek higher paying jobs in other sectors instead of choosing to work in education. The number of Latino administrators will also affect the number of Latino educators, as teachers also seek representation in leadership positions. School boards and their representatives make decisions that closely impact Latino students, such as school fund allocation, deciding on curriculum, and even the hiring and appointing of school staff (such as principals and superintendents). Therefore, it would be very beneficial for Latinos to occupy positions on school boards, as their perspectives could positively impact advocacy for Latino students. “As we know, the Latino community wants more Latinos teaching their children, greater Latinos school board representation is therefore more likely to lead education policies congruent with community wishes” (Leal et al., 2004, p. 1230). More Latino representation across the profession should become a goal for school districts and teacher preparation programs.

Lack of representation is also seen in the curriculum used to teach Latino students. Irizarry (2011) explains some of the consequences of students not seeing themselves in the curriculum they are taught. Students come to believe that they and the accomplishments of their community are insignificant or that they have yet to accomplish something worth teaching about. At the same time, lack of representation doesn’t encourage students to believe that they are capable of occupying positions of power. Bringing Latinos into the classroom curriculum pushes back against negative stereotypes and assumptions. This also allows Latino students to learn about themselves and deconstruct false and negative connotations they may have. Curriculum

should be connected to the racial, sociopolitical, cultural, and historical realities and funds of knowledge of the Latino community (Reyes, 2021).

Not only does inclusive curriculum serve Latino students, but it allows non-Latino students to benefit and learn from and about their peers (Irizarry, 2011). Much of the curriculum taught in school today is studied through a Eurocentric lens. English language arts and history primarily serves a predominantly White narrative through the literary works studied and through the recollection of historical events. Even historical events that are taught about important events in Latino history are done so through a point of view that diminishes the intent and consequences of those events. One example is the teaching of the Mexican American War, which is known as the *Intervención estadounidense en México* (the U.S intervention in Mexico) to students in Mexico (Reyes, 2021). The contributions of Latinos to the shaping of the United States are omitted from the curriculum. A modification of curriculum would allow more teachers to feel comfortable with altering their curriculums to include more diverse narratives (Irizarry, 2011).

Other factors that affect the educational outcomes for Latino students include legislation and policies that have been passed for bilingual/multilingual education. At the turn of the 20th century, education in the United States shifted from teaching in other languages to an imposed English-only curriculum that was spread across the country. Before this shift, immigrant communities had continued to educate their students in their native languages while simultaneously teaching English. This made the assimilation into American culture and the acquisition of English much easier for these immigrant populations. At the end of the 19th century, the United States saw an influx of non-European immigrants, and the perception of foreign languages changed. Schools had become the perfect place to Americanize and assimilate students. English-only instruction was implemented in schools across the nation from the 1920's

to the 1960's (Ruiz-Bybee et al., 2014). Language eventually became a way of segregating students in schools across the country.

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) into effect. This was the first time that the diverse language needs of students across the country were acknowledged and acted upon by the government of the United States. While this was a start, little guidance was given regarding *how* students would be sourced. Therefore, the development and implementation of language programs for students was left up to the discretion of individual schools and districts. Sadly, there continues to be sentiment of “language as a problem” across the country (Stritikus & English, 2009). Another landmark case for bilingual education was *Lau vs Nichols* in 1974, which made teachers provide resources and demonstrate “affirmative remedial efforts” to address the needs of students who were still acquiring English. This was a step further from the BEA. Legal battles continued for decades, as states like California and Arizona continued to fight against bilingual education (Stavans, 2018).

Yet another challenge was presented at the onset of No Child Left Behind, enacted in 2002. The goal of this act was to ensure that schools were being held accountable for the success of all students while increasing the success of certain groups of students. One of those groups of students were English Language Learners (ELL's). Unfortunately, this included a shift towards a “one-size-fits-all” sentiment. Students were becoming more subjected to standardized testing. “High-stakes testing undermines education because it narrows curriculum, limits the ability of teachers to meet the sociocultural needs of their students and corrupts systems of educational measurement” (Au, 2007, p. 258). Ultimately, No Child Left Behind has created more gaps in the education of all students, especially Latinos. “By providing all students with the same

instruction in English, school administrators failed to provide equal educational opportunities to non-English speaking students” (Reyes, 2006, p. 370).

Despite the United States’ history with bilingual/multilingual education, research continues to support the development of bilingual programs across the country. “Sociolinguists have suggested that if students’ home language is incorporated into the classroom, students are more likely to experience academic success” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161). Schools fail to recognize the value of multilingualism and in turn, treat it as a deficit (Villenas, 2012). Latino students and families are unable to truly benefit from the linguistic assets they bring into U.S schools (Gándara & Aldana, 2014), and critics of bilingual education see it as “anti-American” (Irizarry, 2011). English has historically been perceived as the staple of demonstrating one’s “Americanness” (Velázquez, 2022) However, all students deserve the opportunity to develop both their home language and English, both as a form to stay in touch with their home cultures and to have a better chance to succeed academically. The implementation of more bilingual programs could potentially close gaps in Latino student achievement (Ruiz-Bybee et al., 2014).

One of the best ways that schools and school districts can bridge gaps in Latino student education is by developing more dual-language programs. Successful dual-language programs allow students to become proficient in two languages, simultaneously. Ideally, these schools would represent 50% of native English speakers and 50% native Spanish speakers. Students become biliterate and proficient in the academic vocabulary in both languages. Also, students who participate in the programs have remarkable academic results for students. “Language is the medium through which students gain access to the curriculum and through which they display and are assessed for-what they learned. Therefore, language cannot be separated from what is taught and what is learned in school” (Lucas et al., 2008, p. 236) There is evidence of programs

that have been successful for Spanish-speaking ELL's, among them are dual-language education (DLE) programs. While building their literacy in two languages, students also benefit from each other's knowledge, culture, and language. "Linguistically speaking, DLE programs have reported success among Hispanic students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, with those performing "at least as well and often better than their peers" (Borden, 2014, p.231). Today, states like California and New York are paving the way with the implementation of more bilingual education programs (Bybee et al., 2014).

While the negative sentiment towards bilingual education plays a role in the inability to develop and implement more programs, the lack of trained professionals to teach in a bilingual setting also stands in the way of these programs. Fewer than 5% of ELL's are in classrooms taught by bilingual teachers. With a lack of demand for bilingual programs, qualified teachers are discouraged from preparing to hold a job that is not guaranteed to exist in the future. Finally, as previously mentioned, low Latino college attainment rates also stand in the way of training and retaining qualified, bilingual teachers. Students who demonstrate mastery of Spanish (or another foreign language) by AP exams, seals of biliteracy, and other exams could be targeted by colleges and universities as potential bilingual educators. (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017) With the proper support, funding, and training, states across the country could see an increase in bilingual educators needed to sustain the growth of bilingual programs. An increase in bilingual education programs can contribute to an increased success of Latinos in public schools across the country.

One of the greatest long-standing barriers in Latino education is rooted segregation. Latinos (as well as other communities in the United States) have been fighting for decades for the quality education they deserve. Latino students have been historically segregated by their

race, their home language, and their socioeconomic status. An example of this is the 1956 case *Hernandez v. Driscoll CISD*. Schools across the Driscoll School district were found categorizing the students in the first grade by their last names, not their academic standing. This led many Latino students to repeat grades unfairly (Zinn Education Project, 2022). While it may seem that the United States has been making progress, segregation continues to be present in our schools today. One of the most blatant examples of present-day segregation is how schools are funded. Schools are funded by property taxes. Therefore, schools in less affluent neighborhoods, with high levels of poverty are left without the necessary funding they need (Irizarry, 2011; Fuller et al., 2019; Fuller et al., 2022). Poverty is one of the main challenges faced by Latino students. “The segregation of poor Latino students, distant from middle class or racially diverse peers, work to reinforce disparities in children’s achievement” (Fuller et al, 2022, p. 245).

According to Gándara and Mordechay (2017), almost two thirds (62%) of Latino students live in or near poverty. Fewer than 20% of these students live in homes with someone with a postsecondary education. Two-thirds (64%) of low-income Latino children will have a parent who is foreign born, which indicates that Spanish is probably spoken at home. Finally, between 20% and 30% of low-income Latinos live in a linguistically isolated home, which means that there isn’t an adult in the home that fluently speaks English. Ultimately, poverty contributes to many factors that can affect the education of Latino students.

“Poverty is a major driver behind low educational attainment. It determines to a very large extent where children will go to school, with whom, and by whom they will be taught. It also determines the resources they will have available outside of school, where all children will spend a majority of their time” (p. 149).

Latinos and their families have been fighting segregation for decades, understanding that Latino children have a right to a quality education. The 1930's through the 1950's were filled with constant accounts of segregation of Latinos across the country. Unfortunately, many of these incidents occurred without major attention. Some of the most notable cases against the segregation of Latino students were *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), *Delgado v. The Bastrop Independent School District* (1948), and *Gonzales v. Sheely* (1951). All three of these cases made it illegal for schools and school districts to segregate Mexican students (Gándara & Aldana 2014). A shift from segregating students on the basis of their race happened and Latino students started becoming segregated by their home languages. "In the West, Latinos are the most racially segregated of all student groups, and they are segregated by poverty and often language as well" (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017, p. 150).

Today, Latino students still face segregation, as poverty continues to play a significant role in Latino segregation. "Segregation is viewed as a major contributor to minority poverty since minorities are denied full access to jobs, amenities, and individual life chances" (Santiago & Wilder, 1991). Latino students and their families that are faced with poverty are in a constant vicious cycle, as high levels of poverty make it difficult for them to attain higher degrees that will help them obtain higher-paying jobs (Marrun, 2020). Gándara and Mordechay (2017) and Rodriguez et., al (2015) explain that with rising costs of college tuition, less and less Latino students can complete their degrees. As a result, they are put in positions of needing to support themselves and their families. An additional challenge for many Latinos is that they are unable to seek financial aid to help pay for their studies due to their legal status. Thus, the cycle of poverty continues to perpetuate in the lives of Latinos and their families. When students come to school with survival in mind, they prioritize that instead of their education. "Youth prefer to be cared for

before they care about school, especially when the curriculum is impersonal, irrelevant, and test-driven” (Valenzuela, 2001, p. 336) While schools can do little to remove the hurdles faced because of poverty, they can create a space where students can fulfill their highest potentials (Velázquez, 2022). The segregation Latinos face because of poverty is a constant barrier they must continue to overcome.

Finally, one of the great challenges that Latino students face is the negative perceptions formed about Latinos in the United States. These negative perceptions of Latinos are perpetuated in the media, in the way students are treated in the classroom, and in many more aspects of their day to day lives. The stereotypical portrayal of Latinos has been shown in Hollywood for decades. “Such historically inaccurate view of Latino communities creates myths about Latinas/os not valuing school and being somehow satisfied with underachievement” (Tinajero et al., 2010, p. 451) As a result, Latinos are forced to deal with deficit perspectives. Deficit perspectives are the assumptions/biases that low achievers lack the characteristics that lead to school success.

“Deficit thinking’s long history in education has justified inequitable schooling for communities of color, including Latina/os and children from poor families, on the basis of three claims: (1) inferior genetic heritage; (2) culture of poverty; and (3) environmental factors- the connection that lower academic and social achievements of working-class students and children of color are caused by the child’s home life, cultural values, and linguistic background” (Marrun, 2020, p. 167).

In this case, school personnel see Latino students, their families, and cultures as the problem (Irizarry, 2011). However, teachers, administrators, and staff don’t take other factors into consideration such as socioeconomic status or failures in the education system. Deficit

perspectives ultimately end up playing a big role in the overall educational experiences and outcomes of Latino students.

The Role of the Educator in Latino Education

Teachers also play a crucial role in the educational experiences of students, as often, teachers come into the classroom with biases. Whether it be intentional or not, it is important to recognize the effects these biases can have. “Educators need to recognize and reflect upon their own assumptions regarding cultural differences and the role of education in shaping the cultural landscape of the United States” (Irizarry, 2011, p. 33). Ultimately, the consequences of deficit perspectives can affect the quality of education students receive (Dee, 2005). Irizarry (2011) refers to Jay MacLoed (2005) and their interpretation of social reproduction. He explains that many times, schools (and teachers) modify the quality of education offered to students. For example, a teacher with a deficit perspective might give students less rigorous work because they don’t believe their students are capable of completing it. They may opt for worksheets and problems straight out of the textbook instead of inquiry-based projects. When students’ education is deliberately differentiated, social reproduction occurs. Teacher perceptions impact future access to educational opportunities, as students will lack important skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and problem solving (Dee, 2005).

Negative perceptions can be transformed by creating better professional development opportunities for teachers and changing the curriculum in teacher preparation programs. Latino (and other minority students) students would benefit from their educators knowing culturally relevant pedagogical practices (Lys, 2009). “Culturally relevant pedagogy has three main characteristics. Students must experience academic success, develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status

quo of the current social order” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.160). The three foundations of culturally relevant pedagogy could transform many classrooms into more thriving environments for students. Teachers that are willing to combat negative stereotypes and allow students to finally see their cultures and communities represented in positive ways are needed for the success of Latino students.

School counselors also play a fundamental role in the educational experiences of Latino students. They are a critical part of student success, as they can educate students and families on how to navigate the education system (Lys, 2009). Unfortunately, they are plagued with very high caseloads and minimal training on how to effectively help Latino students (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017). Their deficit perspectives of Latino students often turn into accounts of them discouraging students from their educational goals and dreams. An example can be found in Auerbach’s 2002 publication that describes a negative encounter with a high school counselor. Here, a parent asked their child’s counselor to allow them permission to enroll in a higher-level class, which fulfilled a prerequisite for college admission (as opposed to the course she was enrolled in). Auerbach (2002) reports, “Not only did the counselor thereby violate one of the parents’ core beliefs about how to treat children, but in the story’s emotional climax or turning point he made both mother and child feel that the student wasn’t smart enough for a higher class” (p. 1380). Instances like these may damper the perception Latinos have of themselves and of their potential (Gándara & Aldana, 2014).

Latino Family Involvement in Education

While Latinos continue to face challenges in their educational journeys, there are many things that can and must be done to start closing gaps in Latino achievement. Knowing information about *what* these barriers are may allow school districts to make the appropriate

changes needed to make successful education to Latinos, their families, and communities (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017). Increasing Latino parent involvement in their children's education is one of the greatest things that can be done to achieve higher rates of educational success. "Across all grade levels, a wealth of studies specifically links parental involvement in education with higher grade point averages, achievement in reading and mathematics, academic motivation, and school engagement" (Ceballo et al., 2014, p. 116) Allowing Latino parents and families to bring their cultures and funds of knowledge into classrooms and schools could transform many aspects of Latino education (Marrun, 2020).

There is a common misconception that Latino parents and families are uninterested in being active participants in their children's education (Marrun, 2020; Williams & Dawson, 2011). Unfortunately, there are many factors that contribute to lower levels of Latino parental engagement. The differences between the U.S education system and the education system of their home countries, differences in opinion regarding what involvement looks like, and personal experiences with the education system, among other things, are some of the factors that make it difficult for Latino parents to fulfill the conventional expectations of what involvement looks like (Ceballo et al., 2014).

One of the biggest challenges faced by Latino families is navigating the U.S school system. Latino families have a dual frame of reference in which they are constantly comparing the education they received in their homelands to the education their students are receiving in the United States. These differences make it challenging for parents to understand their roles in their children's education (Auerbach, 2002). Schools define parental involvement as things "parents should do" to ensure their students are successful. However, this devalues practices that Latino parents and families may perceive as involvement. Some examples of these include finding a

quiet place for their children to do homework and study, excusing children from chores and household duties, exposing their children to the types of low-paying jobs they might be doing to encourage them to work hard in school and even making financial/personal sacrifices to ensure their children have the tools needed for success (Ceballo et al., 2013). In addition, many Latino parents have not achieved high levels of education in their home countries or in the U.S. (Marrun, 2020). These differences may contribute to parental involvement from the onset of pre-school, as parents are likely to be unaware of preschool programs and the benefits in ensuring school readiness (Williams & Dawson, 2011). Parents tend to become less and less involved in their children's education as they get older (Ceballo et al., 2014). One of the most notable differences that exists is the transition from high school to post-secondary education.

The navigation between choosing a college major, paying the high cost of college, and not understanding the rigor and time commitment post-secondary studies require puts extra pressure on Latino students, who are often doing this without parental support (Marrun, 2020). When considering potential language barriers, parents often face intimidation when having to navigate these new educational experiences for themselves and for their children. It is also important to keep in mind that education is perceived differently across cultures. "Parents and educators need to understand more about each other's belief systems and the constraints under which each operates if they are to better help students" (Auerbach, 2002, p. 1381)

Valenzuela (2001) explains that to be educated is not only to have good grades and to possess a high level of academic intelligence but to be kind, polite, respectful, and caring to the individuality and dignity of others. Latino parents expect their children to demonstrate different types of intelligence and awareness. *Respeto* (respect) is highly esteemed both by parents and students and can be used as an asset, as Latino students are more likely to be influenced by their

parents' involvement in efforts to support them and encourage them (Marrun, 2020). Wanting to show *respeto* and honoring family sacrifices and hard work is another way that Latino students are motivated (Ceballo et al.,2014).

Despite some gaps of knowledge, it is important to know that Latinos truly value education. Many parents see the opportunity of obtaining an education as an opportunity for a better life in which they can break cycles of poverty. “Latino parents oftentimes have the same or higher educational expectations as other parents. Thus, the statement that Latino parents don’t care about their students’ education doesn’t explain gaps in Latino education” (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017, p. 149; Auerbach, 2002) Latino parents and families motivate their students with words of encouragement, moral support and by sharing their own stories of enduring and overcoming hardships (Marrun, 2020). They show a genuine desire for their students to get to the finish line.

The personal experiences that parents face in the educational system on a personal level also serves as a “barrier” to parental involvement. “Latino parents with low educational attainment experience the power differential with schools as a sense of inferiority, shame, embarrassment, and helplessness” (Auerbach, 2002, p.1373). Unfortunately, Latino parents and families are also seen under the lens of deficit perspectives. Many times, Latino parents struggle with language barriers and may also find it difficult to attend meetings, conferences, and other school events due to demanding work schedules. Latino parents aren’t represented in many areas, such Parent-Teacher Associations or School Site Councils for example. From an outside perspective, it may seem that Latino parents aren’t involved. More opportunities should be created for more Latino parents to be more included and involved (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2011). Parental engagement in their student’s education can be a catalyst for higher levels of academic

achievement for Latino students. Not only that but increasing the involvement of Latino parents allows for schools to benefit from Latino families' funds of knowledge and culture.

Research has demonstrated that family involvement increases student success (Ceballos et al., 2014; Jasis & Jasis-Ordoñez, 2012; Marrun 2020; Williams & Dawson, 2011). However, there are additional benefits that come from increasing parental involvement. When families can bring their funds of knowledge into schools and classrooms, they are validated, honored, and respected. Funds of knowledge are defined as historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning (Moll et al., 1992). These funds of knowledge come in a variety of forms. Families bring in strong moral values, generational traditions, religion, work ethic and so much more into the lives of their children. Having a broader understanding of familial funds of knowledge will help deconstruct the negative stereotypes that exist about Latino families and what they have to contribute to the classroom and their children's education (Gonzalez et al., 1995). Using Latino families' funds of knowledge to transform the perceived idea of what involvement looks like can be beneficial to the overall increase of levels in familial involvement and Latino student achievement. "Formal and informal means of parent organizing when supported by school communities and inspired by the wisdom and vitality of immigrant communities can mobilize transformative local resources and become powerful tools of school reform and family community engagement" (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2011, p.86)

Not only is this a benefit to Latino families, but families of other cultures and backgrounds that get to expand their cultural views and knowledge (Irizarry, 2011). Teachers and other school staff have the opportunity to grow and learn alongside their students by being willing to benefit from familial funds of knowledge (Ceballos et al., 2014). One of the benefits

could be the establishing of better culturally responsive practices in the classroom and the building of stronger, better-informed relationships. Ultimately, this could transform the dynamics between educators and students. Taking funds of knowledge into account in all aspects of Latino students' educational experience can help close the gap in Latino representation. These changes can start on a small scale, in individual classrooms and schools. Making parental involvement more accessible can change the outcomes of Latino students while mending the historically strained relationship between schools and Latino families.

Significance of the Study

Research has shed light about large cities that have historically had a high Latino population like Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City (Fuller et., al, 2019; Velázquez, 2022; Garcia et., al, 2012). However, it is important to study the specific needs and characteristics of growing Latino communities around the United States. The state of Oklahoma has been seeing an increase in its Latino population since 1965. In fact, the Latino population in Oklahoma has increased from 1.8% of Oklahoma's total population in 1980 to approximately 10.8 percent in 2018 (Oklahoma Historical Society, 2020). The growth of the Latino community means an increase of Latino students in public schools. Getting to know the perspectives and experiences of the Latino community in Oklahoma City can help school districts develop better tools and resources to increase Latino parent involvement in their schools and ultimately ameliorate the educational outcomes for Latino students across the state. The gap in research about Oklahoma's Latino population has inspired this research study.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

A case study design was used in the present study to address the following research questions:

1. How do Latino parents in Oklahoma City perceive their experiences in their involvement in their children's education?
2. What are some things that can be implemented by schools to increase Latino parent involvement in their children's education, particularly secondary education?

I chose a case study method, as a case is studied because it exhibits characteristics that require researching to improve education (Gomez-Galan, 2016). In this case, a particular group of eight Latino parents were interviewed to study their experiences and their perspectives as a representation of a larger group of Latino parents.

“Case studies are used to understand phenomena, reconstruct transitions and educational processes that occur, which are not seen in the physical world, but by students who experience and live them. This allows us to identify how they occur and how these phenomena are. This helps create the conditions of physical infrastructure, student counseling and guidance on the skills that are needed to work to get through them successfully” (Gomez-Galan, 2016, p. 56)

The present study aimed to study the perspectives and experiences of the Latino parents who have children enrolled in public schools in Oklahoma City. By studying these experiences, the hope is that schools and school districts can make use of the information when developing outreach programs and resources for families, with the goal of encouraging Latino parental involvement in their students' education and ultimately increasing Latino students' success (Jasis

& Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). This study was made possible after approval from the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board.

Participants

Following IRB approval, the recruitment of participants began. Recruitment brochures were posted on social media, and eight participants expressed their desire to participate in the study. The participants in this study consisted of Latino parents of middle and high school students in Oklahoma City Public Schools and Putnam City Schools. Eight mothers (who immigrated from Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico) were the research participants. Of the eight participants, six of them had students who were enrolled in Putnam City Schools and two of them had students enrolled in Oklahoma City Public Schools. All of the participants have multiple children. Six of the participants have children in either middle or high school. Five of the participants also had children who are enrolled in elementary school. Finally, one of the participants has a child who recently graduated from high school and wanted to share her family's experiences. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants to protect their identity. A brief profile of them and their families in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Family Profiles

Name	Nationality	Family demographics
Mrs. R	Guatemalan	Three children (7th grader, 2nd grader, and Pre-K student, all enrolled in Putnam City Schools)
Mrs. D	Guatemalan	Three children (12th grader, 7th grader, SPED 6th grader, all enrolled in Oklahoma City Public Schools)
Ms. M	Guatemalan	Two children (9th grader, 2nd grader, both enrolled in Putnam City Schools)
Mrs. P	Mexican	Two children (12th grader, 7th grader, both enrolled in Putnam City schools)
Mrs. E	Guatemalan	Two children (College junior who graduated from a Putnam City high school, one head start student.)
Mrs. B	Mexican	Immigrated from Mexico, did SOME high school in the U.S. Three children (9th grader, 4th grader, Pre-K student, all enrolled in Oklahoma City Public Schools)
Mrs. O	Honduran	(Two children, 5th grader and 2nd grader, enrolled in Putnam City Schools)
Mrs. L	Guatemalan	Four children (Two 11th graders, one 4th grader, and one child not yet of school age)

Data Collection

The participants took part in a structured interview, asking them about their perceptions and experiences regarding their child's education, their participation in their child's education, and things they would like to share with their children's educators. The use of structured interviews was selected because its goal is to bring awareness and understanding of situations and experiences that individuals and or groups have experienced commonly (Von Robertson et

al., 2016). Many studies use this method of data collection (Von Robertson et al., 2016; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; Auerbach, 2002). In this case, these Latina mothers have the shared experience of navigating their children's education. The use of interviews is supported by the following quotation:

“The dynamics of the interview focuses on a dialogue of questions and answers: the researcher formulates questions, and the participant answers them in their own words. There are no right or wrong answers because the conversation revolves around the experiences, emotions, values, culture, and attitudes of the participants to the phenomenon/problem being studied” (Gómez-Galán, 2016, p. 62).

Structured interviews were chosen to make sure certain topics were included. This method of data collection is appropriate, as it validates and takes the storytelling traditions of the Latino community into consideration. Honoring the traditions and customs of Latino families is important, as it can serve as a way of validating their thoughts, goals, and past experiences. This also provides detailed insights into struggles with poverty, immigration, and other things that may oftentimes be overlooked (Auerbach, 2002).

All research participants were asked the same six questions (see Appendix A). The topics included in the interview questions were difficulties faced during their experiences in navigating their children's education, useful (or desired) resources, perceptions of involvement, difference between the U.S education system and the education system of their home countries, and contributions as Latinos to their children's education. All interviews were conducted and recorded via Zoom. The interviews were conducted in Spanish and lasted between 15 to 30 minutes.

Data Analysis

During the interviews, I took detailed notes that I later translated to English as interpretive memos. This was done to capture the salient points brought up by each participant in the moment, making sure that I took note of things they emphasized. The recordings of the interviews were viewed a second time to ensure that notes included all the important points of each interview. The notes were used by the researcher to analyze and code the responses from the interviews (Marrun, 2020). After reviewing the interviews and the notes, a list of common themes was created. This list of common themes was used in a final review of the interview notes to ensure all important information from the participants was included in the findings.

During the process of coding, the researcher read the interview notes to find common themes amongst the participants' responses (Von Roberson et al., 2016). While all the interviews were unique, several common themes related to their perceptions and experiences in their involvement in their children's education emerged from the interview data and will be discussed in chapter four.

Reflexivity/ Positionality

As a member of the community and as an employee of Oklahoma City Public Schools, I took some steps necessary to ensure my positionality in the community didn't affect the outcome of the research. I designed the research questions, conducted the interviews completely in Spanish and transcribed notes from interviews from Spanish to English. Before each interview, I made sure to obtain their oral consent, answered any questions they had, and let them know that there were no right/wrong answers and that they could feel comfortable answering however they felt was necessary. I didn't want them to feel like they had to answer in a specific way, thus I asked every single one of my participants the same six questions. Over the course of the research

cycle, I was intentional about minimizing any potential conflict of interest between my role as a researcher and my role as an employee of Oklahoma City Public Schools by making sure I was not interviewing the parents of any past or present students enrolled in any of my classes.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Findings

The eight interviews conducted revealed a wealth of valuable information. While each participant provided unique and different points of views, many of their responses shared common themes. There were four themes that were uncovered in the interviews by multiple participants. Those themes were: language barriers, their desires for their children's future, difficulties during at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, a desire for more information/resources, and how they personally perceive the role and importance of education. Detailed findings and discussion for each of these themes is described in the following section.

Language Barriers

Six of the eight participants mentioned that language barriers contributed to some of the difficulties that arose in their experiences in navigating their students' education and in them being more involved. According to the six participants, language barriers have impacted their ability to communicate with their children's teachers, help their children with homework, be involved in volunteer activities for their children's extracurricular activities, and advocate for their children's needs.

Mrs. D described her experiences advocating for her son in 6th grade, who receives special education services. She recalled having to call the district office in hopes of obtaining support for her son during COVID-19. She called the district office and opted to speak to someone who spoke Spanish. She was prompted to leave a message and that someone would return her call. After various attempts, she was unable to speak with someone in Spanish regarding her situation. Experiences like these often deter parents from reaching out to their students' schools in the future (Auerbach, 2002).

Mrs. P described an incident where her son reported discrimination in the classroom by one of his teachers. In an attempt to clear up the situation, the participant went to meet with her son's teacher. They were able to find an interpreter, however she realized that the interpreter wasn't saying what the participant was saying to the teacher. Ultimately, she felt like the problem wasn't resolved. She also recognized that her lack of English keeps her from being more involved in her children's education, as she felt like she couldn't understand or communicate with her students' teachers.

Similarly, Mrs. L described her experiences as a newly arrived parent in the United States and in her students' education. She discussed herself and her son (who is considered an English Language Learner) and his struggles in the classroom. She described his frustration in being unable to communicate with his teachers and the behavior problems that emerged with that frustration. The main complaint she received was her son's "inability to follow directions." This included not being able to complete his work, frequently interrupting classroom instruction, getting up at inappropriate times and finally, bursts of anger and frustration (one of which resulted in a call home where she had to pick her son up early after he snapped pencils in half). She also mentioned her inability to help him with schoolwork because she doesn't know English. She did express gratitude for her son's school's pull-out services; however, she expressed a desire for more bilingual staff in the school to aid with communication. She expressed concerns with what seemed to her as a "sink-or-swim" English education for her son. Finally, she expressed wanting to be able to be more involved but recognized her need to learn the language to do so.

Challenges during COVID-19

Five of the eight participants expressed that one of the most difficult experiences in their children's education came because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Language barriers, learning how to use and navigate new technology, and communicating with teachers challenged parents during this time.

For example, Mrs. R mentioned that she often had to rely on her children's teachers and on her oldest son to help with her younger children. Communication with teachers was easier than ever because of translation functions on the applications used from parent/teacher communication, however it was a difficult time for her. Mrs. D recalled her experiences in advocating for her son who receives special education services. She knew that her son wasn't thriving with online learning, as he is more of a visual learner. She struggled to keep him focused and ensure he completed his work. In addition, she wanted to make sure that her son was receiving the necessary occupational and speech therapies. This participant stressed the difficulties faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mrs. D: Una de las dificultades que he tenido es con las clases de mi hijo que son especiales, sobre todo en este tiempo de pandemia. Se requería que todos estuvieran recibiendo clases en casa y él por la condición que él tiene, él no puede recibir las clases en casa porque va a estar solo un ratito sentado y luego se va. No le va a interesar escuchar a alguien que hable por que él se interesa en lo visual, en lo que él puede ver. Entonces si, fue algo muy frustrante para mi el año pasado. *(One of the difficulties that I have had is with the special classes for my son, especially during this time of the pandemic. It was required that everyone take their classes from home and because of the condition he has, he can't receive his classes from home because he's just going to stay seated for a little bit and then he'll leave. He's not interested in listening to someone talk because he's more interested in visual things, the things he can see. So yes, the last year was something very frustrating for me).*

Ms. M expressed that since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, she felt that being involved with her children's education became more difficult. One of the things that stood out to her was the shift from in-person to online parent-teacher conferences. Parent-teacher conferences

were important occasions, as they were typically an opportunity where she felt like she could be involved. Mrs. O and Mrs. L also mentioned that communication with teachers during COVID was difficult at first, but as they began to navigate the necessary applications, it was much easier to communicate with them. They mentioned that learning the necessary technology came with a large learning curve.

Need For More Information

Four out of eight parents expressed a desire for more information. This need for information was communicated in various ways, such as the desire to know how to fund college and in transitions from elementary school to middle school and high school to higher education. Seven out of the eight research participants were educated in their home countries and find themselves navigating their U.S education system for the first time, alongside their children. However, paving the way for parents to be able to comfortably ask for information (and also recognizing that sometimes, parents don't know what they need to know) can make parents more inclined to be more involved in every step of their student's education.

Mrs. R, Mrs. P, and Mrs. E described a desire to know more about college, funding a college education, and how to better prepare their students' academically for college. Mrs.R's oldest child is in middle school. However, she expressed that it is never too early for her son to receive information on what degrees are available and what scholarships are available in order to help fund his (and eventually his siblings') college education. Mrs. P expressed frustration on behalf of her daughter, whose immigration status doesn't allow her to qualify for any college funding.

Mrs. P: Mi deseo, el primer deseo que yo tengo es que mi hija pudiera seguir estudiando, pero no lo se porque su estatus migratorio a ella la frustra mucho. Yo quisiera que ella siguiera preparándose. Ahorita ella ya está en el doce y no sé qué vaya a hacer el otro año. *(The first wish that I have is for my daughter, that she could continue studying, but*

because of her immigration status, she is very frustrated. I would like for her to continue preparing herself. Now she is in 12th grade, and I don't know what she'll do next year).

She also said that she didn't feel like the school was offering her daughter enough information on going to college and what her choices are, especially as an undocumented student. Mrs. E has a daughter who graduated from a Putnam City Schools' high school. She described her and her daughter's experience in getting her to college. She talked about working with teenagers at her job who would often tell her they couldn't afford college. She took it upon herself to find information on funding and came across "Oklahoma's Promise", a tuition-scholarship program that provides tuition funding for students' whose family income is less than \$60,000 a year (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education). However, she said that neither her nor her daughter would have heard of the program, had she not asked around.

She also discussed her daughter's lack of preparation for the rigor and demand of higher education. She believes that better information about advanced placement and college prep courses would have benefitted her daughter and prevented some of the struggles she faces today.

Mrs. E: *A mi me hubiese gustado que en una escuela me hubiesen dicho que en la high school, hay clases que pueden tomar ellos para prepararse para ir a la universidad. Yo no tenía conocimiento que esas clases existían, hay unos grados donde ellos pueden tener acceso a una clases que son más avanzadas y hasta las pueden adelantar para ir a la universidad o les pueden ayudar para cuando entran a la universidad no les cueste tanto. Como papá, hubiera deseado estar informada de eso para que yo hubiera decidido si ella iba o no en vez de estar tomando clases que no le servían para nada. (I would have liked that I would have been told in a school that in high school, there are classes that they can take to prepare for college. I didn't have the knowledge that these classes existed. There are grades where they can take more advanced classes that could get them ahead in college or even help them so when they enter university, it's not so difficult for them. As a parent, I would have liked to be informed of that because I could have decided if she went or not instead of taking classes that didn't count for anything).*

Mrs. O mentioned the desire to get more information on transitions from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. She suggested informational meetings to inform parents on what to expect and how to support their students. She said that she would

like to be able to receive classes or capacitation to be able to know what to expect, what extracurricular activities would be available for their students and any information that could help her, and her daughter be better prepared for the transition to high school and the eventual transition to college.

Overall, many parents expressed a desire for more information in order to be pillars of support for their children in every step of their education process. Not having experienced these events themselves make it difficult for them to relate but they are more than willing to learn and grow alongside their students.

Desires for the future and Latino perceptions of what it means to be educated

Six of the eight parents expressed their perceptions of what they hope for their children's future and how they perceive the meaning of "being educated". Their responses were the opposite of the notion that parents don't care and are purposely uninvolved in their children's education (Jasis & Jasis-Ordoñez, 2012). However, the research participants do indeed have high expectations for their children's' future.

Mrs. R, Mrs. D, Ms. M, and Mrs. O talked about their perception of what it means to be educated and how this perception can contribute to their children's' lifelong education. They mentioned the desire to ensure their children had morals, showed respect to the teachers (and to all people they encounter), were proud of their home cultures, and embraced their home languages. They shared wanting their children to be good members of the community that will eventually help others. Mrs. R and Ms. M especially made a point to ensure their children reflected these important lessons in their classrooms.

Mrs. R: Como mamá y como Latina, hay que ayudarlos y apoyarlos en todo porque creemos que tienen un potencial grande. Recordarles del hecho de ser bilingües para ayudar a la comunidad hispana. También para apoyarles en lo más que se pueda para que sean mejores personas. Moralmente, éticamente y todas esas cosas. Apoyarlos y darles un

buen ejemplo desde la casa porque esa es la primera escuela. Enseñarles desde la casa y enseñarles que la educación es muy importante y que ellos son el futuro y que son lo necesita este país. *(As a mom and as a Latina, we have to support them (our children) and support them in everything because we believe that they have a great potential. Remind them of the fact that they are bilingual, to be a help for the Latino community. Also being of support for them to be better people, morally and ethically and all of those things. Supporting them and giving them a good example from home because that's the first school. Teach them from home and teaching them that education is very important and that they are the future and they are what this country needs.)*

Mrs. R, Mrs. D, Mrs. P, Mrs. E, and Mrs. O made mention of their hopes for their children to obtain an education. Mrs. D mentioned her desire to make sure her children know that they have many more opportunities to obtain a degree than she did in her home country.

Mrs.D: Un deseo que yo tengo en mi corazón y que siempre le digo a mis hijos es que se esfuercen, que luchen por estudiar, para salir adelante. Yo les digo que estamos en un país desarrollado, les digo yo. Y si ustedes aquí no estudian, es porque no quieren, no porque no hayan las oportunidades de estudiar. Yo creo que aquí tienen oportunidades. Esto es algo que me gusta de este país, que ellos puedan tener la oportunidad de estudiar. *(A desire I have in my heart and that I always tell my children is for them to force themselves, to fight, to study, to get ahead. I tell them that we are in a developed country, I tell them. If you don't study, that's because they don't want to, not because there aren't any opportunities to study. I believe that they have opportunities. That's something I like about this country, that they have the opportunity to study).*

Mrs. P expressed the desire to see her daughter obtain a college degree, despite the barriers in her way because of her legal status in the United States. Mrs. E mentioned that she constantly reminds her daughter to take advantage of the privilege of the university education that she wishes would have had. She said that even though it may seem easier to give up, that there is a reward in hard work. She also said that she believes parents have the obligation to push their students to achieve the most they can. Additionally, Mrs. O expressed the desire to see her daughters embrace their home culture and their language and to take advantage of being able to participate in art classes, like music and art as those classes weren't available in her home country of Honduras. Ultimately, there is a common consensus regarding the understood importance of completing higher education. These findings confirm that language barriers, gaps

in information, and differing ideas of what it means to be educated are still affecting the experiences of Latino students, parents, and public-school educators.

Research and interview responses highlight just how much language barriers affect the day-to-day educational experiences for students and their families (Auerbach, 2002). A majority of the research participants mentioned language barriers getting in the way of their involvement at some point during their interview. Language barriers affect the relationship between families and educators. Everything from spending a day in the classroom (as is the current experience of Mrs. L's son) to meeting with teachers to resolve issues (as was the case of Mrs. P and Mrs. D) can be impacted by gaps in communication due to language barriers. There are many students who struggle with the transition from their home languages to the English-only classroom. Mrs. L's son would greatly benefit from the opportunity to learn in a dual language setting, where he could use his first language to acquire his second language. "English is considered Latino students' second language. The belief is that a transitional bilingual education (TBE) would accelerate second language acquisition through the use of the students' first or native language" (Garcia et al., 2012, p. 800). Language barriers have also greatly affected the way in which schools and their educators communicate with parents (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2011). Parents who aren't comfortable communicating in English will often face difficulties when trying to communicate with their children's teachers, as was the case with Mrs. P and Mrs. D. The need for more trained, bilingual staff in schools is imperative in aiding communication between families and educators (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017). Parents could feel much more comfortable and inclined to be involved in their children's education if there were more people to help bridge gaps in communication.

The importance of effective communication became noted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families were forced to take on new roles in their children's education. Capacitating families on the use of technology, devices, applications, and learning platforms is essential for successful parental involvement, not just during COVID-19 but in general. "Providing tailored support for children's and parents' efforts to develop the skills necessary for meaningful connection to the Internet and related technologies will require action at all levels" (Katz & Gonzalez, 2016, p.76). The consequences and the difficulties that came with the COVID-19 pandemic were felt by Latino families around the nation. Participants mentioned that as they became more and more familiar with technology, their ability was to communicate with teachers. With this in mind, it can be of great benefit to continue supporting families in learning technological skills as they continue to learn alongside their students.

Parents have expressed the desire to have more information. Many Latino families are navigating a new education system for the first time. Public schools and institutes of higher education can come together and bring these pieces of information to families. Being able to better navigate topics like transitions from elementary to middle school, extracurricular activities, college prep courses, and especially regarding the transition from high school to institutes of higher education. Latino parents understand the impact that higher education can have in the lives of their children. However, the complexities of higher education often lead to a lot of uncertainty for students and their families. These complexities are made even greater in situations like Mrs. P and her daughter's, who are unsure as to how to fund her college education without legal status in the country. "We must bridge the gap in knowledge about the different expectations of the college environment so that parents and family members have a better understanding not only of the financial costs of college, but also of the potential changes in their

relationship with their child, especially around their time commitments” (Marrun, 2020, p. 167). Thus, more information about college would be very beneficial for Latino parents and their students.

As previously mentioned in literature, Latino families understand the meaning of education and just how important it is for their children’s future. “Although some parents and family members were not always familiar with how to help their child navigate higher education, they had high expectations for them and communicated the benefits they perceived in having a *carrera* (a career or college education), including having employment stability and a better quality of life” (Marrun, 2020, p. 164) This understanding encourages parents to continue to be resilient, in spite of the barriers that can get in their way. It is essential for schools and educators to have the same hope for Latino students in public school settings.

The responses of each participant genuinely expressed their experiences and perceptions of their children’s’ education. Most importantly, they shared their desire for the future and words of encouragement. Being able to hear exactly what they need and how they feel can help Oklahoma schools and school districts develop more personalized tools, resources, and outreach programs for their growing Latino populations.

Discussion and Practical Implications

There are many ways that schools can help bridge gaps in parental involvement due to language barriers. “Different levels of English proficiency can lead to distrust and discomfort for Spanish speaking parents toward schools and school personnel” (Lee et al., 2012, p. 589). Being able to bridge communication gaps and make parents feel comfortable with communicating with their students’ teachers and schools despite language barriers is required to increase and motivate parental involvement. Schools can develop support groups for parents, provide different times

for parents to attend conferences and other activities (this accommodates demanding work schedules that may conflict with activities that occur during the school day), and hire more bilingual staff that is available to facilitate communication between families and teachers/administrators. The need for more trained, bilingual staff in schools is imperative in aiding communication between families and educators (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017).

Schools can also provide more materials for parents in their preferred language. Aside from sending home translated notes, schools can do more to facilitate linguistic support for their families. For example, schools can provide informational guides/sessions in Spanish for parents to get to know ways that they can be more involved, ways that they can help their students at home with homework, how to use resources already being provided such as after school programs and tutoring, and much more. “Bilingual services were a large part of facilitating parental and family involvement” (Garcia et al., 2012, p. 815). As more and more of these initiatives start taking place, parents will feel more comfortable and more inclined to be involved in their students’ educational experiences (Auerbach, 2002). “It is suggested that educators (e.g., administrators) need to establish school policies that alleviate Spanish speaking parents’ difficulties in communicating with teachers and administrators at school due to language barriers” (Lee et al., 2012, p. 589).

While there have been many changes in the protocols put into place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a lot of knowledge that can be beneficial for the continued development of online learning programs and for supporting Latino students at home. The pandemic brought many unprecedented challenges for everyone. “Disruptions created by Covid-19 threaten to exacerbate existing inequities and create new challenges to Latino student success” (Álvarez et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic opened our eyes to already existing

challenges students face and created new challenges that students, families, educators, and schools will continue to recover from in the years to come. While there is hope that there won't be another pandemic to "prepare for", it is important to reflect on the lessons learned from navigating a global pandemic and to learn from the experiences faced by Latino families. Many of the challenges students and their families faced during the pandemic weren't new. In fact, many of these challenges continue to affect students in their daily lives. Some of those challenges faced by students include caring for siblings and other family members, fulfilling financial obligations, obtaining reliable access to internet connection, and taking care of their emotional and psychological needs (Marrun, 2020). Parents were also faced with job insecurity, finding reliable child-care, balancing work, and home life, and navigating their children's education (Kerr et al., 2021). This was especially true for the Latino community across the nation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ultimately served as a reminder of the social, economic, and historical barriers that have been grappled with by the Latino community all along (Simon, 2021). "Researchers have also documented how constrained access to the internet and new technologies map closely onto other pervasive, persistent forms of social inequality- including those related to income, age, immigration status and geography" (Katz & Gonzalez, 2016, p. 60). Schools and school districts across the country can use their awareness of these challenges to continue to support families by bridging gaps in communication (between families and their educators), providing capacitation on technology (both devices and tools used for teaching and learning), and curriculum needed for student success, and most importantly making sure that the basic needs of their students are met. This has been done by many schools with the implementation of free meal programs and ensuring students have their personal devices to

complete work and continue to learn. However, above those things, being understanding to the struggles of students and their families and making them feel morally and emotionally supported will make a true difference in the success of students (Valenzuela, 2001).

The perception of education for Latinos varies from what conventional views of education perpetuated by schools and educators.

“Although Latino parents may not always be visibly participating at school according to taken-for-granted school norms employed by their teachers, they are still participating at home with the education of their children by helping with homework, finding educational resources within the community for their children, speaking with their children about the importance of education or, if they do not actually know the homework, just being present with their child during homework time at home” (Roxas & Gabriel, 2017, p. 244).

Instead of blaming parents for their perceived lack of involvement, they can be encouraged to keep up what they know how to do and to be involved at higher levels (Ceballos et al., 2014, Roxas & Gabriel, 2017). This is especially important at the secondary level. When schools and educators accept these “differences”, they can work together to support each other in achieving the same goal: high levels of education attainment for Latinos. This starts with educators who are willing to learn more about the communities they serve and can make use of this information to encourage parental involvement and increase student success. “This relationship (between parents and teachers) can become the basis for the exchange of knowledge about family or school matters, reducing the insularity of classrooms and contributing to the academic content and lessons” (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139). Thus, teachers and administrators can have a better understanding of how Latino families perceive the importance of education, which

goes against the notion that Latinos are purposely uninterested and uninvolved (Ceballo et al., 2014).

“Indeed, research studies reveal that Latino parents want to be more involved in the education of their children and want to share their hopes to be partners with teachers and other educators in the school. As such, Latinos place great emphasis on the academic success of their children and see the importance of education in their child’s future.”

(Roxas and Gabriel, 2016, p. 244)

Latinos perceive education both as having academic knowledge and being respectful. “More generally, *respeto* relates to “knowing the level of courtesy and decorum required in a given situation in relation to other people of a particular age, sex and social status” (Calzada et al., 2010, p. 78). Like the participants from the study mentioned, they want their students to display high levels of kindness, respect, and success in their academic endeavors. They also recognize the opportunities that higher education can provide for the long-term success of their children (Marrun, 2020). Given the opportunity and the support to do so, Latino parents could be more willing to be more involved in the students’ education because they understand the importance and the benefits of obtaining an education (Auerbach, 2002; Ceballo et., al 2014; Roxas & Gabriel, 2017; Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Educators and schools should be more willing to engage with Latino families and ultimately work together to understand each other for the long-term success of Latino students (Williams & Dawson, 2011). This can start by including more diversity courses in teacher preparation courses and in professional development programs (Lys, 2009; Newcomer, 2017).

Finally, Latino parents desire to receive more information. Navigating an educational system that is different from what they know from their home countries can be difficult.

Therefore, schools can be more conscious in regard to the type of information they share with parents and how they do it. One of the biggest areas of concern for parents is the transition from high schools to higher education, whether it be in a vocational or a university setting. Lack of guidance often leaves parents and students feeling confused and frustrated.

“Latino high school students cannot get guidance from parents who have not attended college, so without guidance from other sources, students lack direction on how to prepare for college, what to expect during college, how to pay for college, and how to get support during college” (Rodriguez et al., 2015, p. 212).

Schools can support students by hiring more guidance counselors and providing them with culturally relevant practices to better assist Latino students. High caseloads and deficit perspectives often affect the attention and guidance that they give Latino students. Ultimately, Latino parents want to obtain more information on how to help their students get to where they need to go. Lack of information was a concern expressed by two of the participants, one who felt that her daughter’s transition to university was made difficult by lack of academic preparation and one whose daughter doesn’t know how to pay for her education because her legal status makes her ineligible for financial aid. Schools can also support students by providing them and their families with tips on how to better prepare financially (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2015). This can be done by creating partnerships between high schools and institutes of higher learning. Involving parents in the process, educating them on the transition to college and the demands of obtaining a college degree can help parents support their students (Marrun, 2020).

Parents also desire information on other processes that their students go through, such as extracurriculars for their students, college preparatory courses, and other major transitions, such

as elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. “The greater the school’s commitment to providing information to parents about their children is important to parental satisfaction with their child’s educational experience” (Lee et al., 2012, p. 584.)

Educators and parents who have been educated in the United States might not think of these things as important to inform others on. However, many Latino parents are experiencing the U.S education system for the first time. Ultimately, schools can hold informational meetings and conferences or be willing to provide guidance to parents who request this information. “Targeted outreach programs enabled adults to better support students and provided access to information and opportunities” (Garcia et al., 2012). Making parents feel comfortable with asking and receiving the information and resources they feel are necessary can change the perspectives they have of their students’ education and hopefully encourage them to achieve higher levels of education. With this knowledge, schools, school districts, and institutes of higher learning can continue to develop the types of resources, information, and outreach programs they create to specifically cater to the needs of Latino students.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The complicated history of Latinos in the United States has continued to affect their current experiences and educational attainment. Today, Latinos have lower rates of academic attainment than some of their counterparts (Gándara & Mordechay, 2017). To be exact, only about 17% of Latinos in the United States will obtain a bachelor's degree, in comparison to 40% of European Americans and 62% of Asian Americans. Issues in Latino history have negatively affected the educational outcomes for Latino students across the country. Some of the most prominent issues in Latino education are (but are not limited to) lack of representation, policies and legislation regarding bilingual/multilingual education, poverty and segregation, and the social perspectives towards Latino students (Leal et al., 2004; Stritikus & English 2009; Irizarry, 2011; Fuller et al., 2022). While efforts have been made to address these issues, there is still a lot of work that must be done. The educational community has gathered a lot of information from studying cities that have historically had high Latino populations and have started to make strides in how they serve their Latino populations.

However, there are states and cities across the country that are currently experiencing growth in their Latino population. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is one of the cities that has seen rapid increases in their Latino population. Thus, it is important to explore the specific needs of the growing Latino community in the state's public schools. This case study sought to get to know the perspectives and experiences of parents who have their children enrolled in Oklahoma City Public Schools and Putnam City Schools, two of the largest districts in Oklahoma City. After conducting interviews with eight research participants, some very valuable information came to light. They were asked to respond to questions that addressed their experiences navigating the children's' education, difficulties faced, useful resources, perceptions of

involvement, and their desires for their children's educational careers. While each interview was different, there were common themes that emerged from them. They described language barriers, navigating their children's education at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a desire for more information.

A synthesis of their responses generated several implications for the future. The implications include changing the perception of what it means to be involved and creating more opportunities for parents to be involved. Examples of this reimagined involvement includes such things as, scheduling activities and meeting at different times to accommodate for different work schedules, and bridging gaps in language (e.g., hiring more bilingual staff and providing translated materials for families). Latino families show their involvement in different ways that aren't always reflective of conventional modes of involvement (Ceballo et al., 2014).

Understanding how Latino parents perceive education (both academic and social education) and involvement can help teachers and schools better understand the dynamics of Latino families.

This can happen through culturally relevant education in teacher preparation programs and in professional development Latino parents have. Latino parents have also expressed a desire for more information regarding the many stages of their children's education, most importantly the transition to higher education. With this information, school districts and higher education institutes can collaborate in the development of the resources for Latino families.

The most notable piece of information came from the desires and hopes that Latino parents have for their children. Latino parents want their children to show kindness and respect to everyone they encounter and pride for their culture and language. Latino parents understand the importance a college degree can make in the success of their children's lives. They have high expectations for their children. Despite difficulties, Latino parents want to be more involved.

With the proper steps, Latino parent involvement can increase. The effects of increased involvement in the educational outcomes of Latino students may ultimately improve the overall educational outcomes of Latino students in Oklahoma City and across the country, as a growing Latino population needs to see changes in the ways that they have been experiencing education for decades. With the right steps from school districts and families, these changes can start positively affecting the outcomes of Latino students.

Study Limitations and Future Research

This study did not come without its limitations. The three most notable limitations were, a) the number and diversity of research participants, b) the structured, formal interview method of data collection and c) the need to include the perspectives of Latino students to better understand what the needs of the whole community are. This study would have benefitted from a larger, more diverse group of participants. This more diverse group of participants could come in the form of expanding the pool of parents from other large school districts across the state who also have growing Latino populations, for example Moore and Norman, Oklahoma. It could also come from the recruitment of more fathers to participate in the study. This would ensure better representation of the Latino community (Gomez-Galan, 2016).

Another place for improvement comes from the method of data collection. This study used structured interviews to collect data from participants, which directed participants to answer in a certain way and elicited more specific responses. In the future, the researcher would like to employ less structured interview methods, where participants have more freedom to share their testimonies. The testimony has also been used by many researchers who have tried to make sense of the experiences of a community (Beverly, 2008). The recognition of Latino testimonial narratives serves as a way of empowering and advocating their communities (Marrun, 2020).

This would give more room for more data to come from participants about other things that play a strong role in their perceptions and experiences in their students' educations.

Finally, a gap of research still exists in literature that depicts the personal perspectives and testimonies of Latino students. A need to study the experiences of Latino students could illuminate a better understanding of things that need to be addressed by schools, school districts, and institutes of higher education. Future recruitment efforts should include a variety of Latino students who are from different parts of their educational journey (middle school students, high school students, first-generation college students, and many more). Ultimately, getting a deeper look at more accounts of parental and student perspectives and involvement would provide more representative data of Oklahoma's growing Latino population and what implications their perspectives have for the future.

Being able to conduct this research was very insightful. Having the opportunity to study the first-hand experiences of members of my community was truly a privilege because they opened up to me, sharing stories of struggles and difficulties faced. This isn't something easy for many people to do. At the same time, I am admiring of their resilience and their desire to persevere for themselves and their families. In a time and a society that is filled with deficit perspectives, the parents I talked to discussed the pride they have in their children, their education, and in all of their future accomplishments. Our school districts are filled with hopeful, persevering, and willing families. In a time where education is highly politicized, it was refreshing to hear parents' express gratitude and hope for their children's educators and schools. As an educator, I am also hopeful and looking forward to the continued growth of the Latino community in Oklahoma City. I am happy to continue to work with my community, to share

their stories and perspectives, to hopefully make them feel heard, and to start bridging the gaps that exist in our education system.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

- 1.) ¿Cuántos hijos tiene estudiando en escuelas públicas de Oklahoma? ¿De qué grados y qué edades? *(How many children do you have studying in public schools in Oklahoma? What grades and ages?)*

- 2.) ¿Cuáles han sido algunas de las dificultades que usted ha pasado en el transcurso de sus experiencias con las escuelas públicas? *(What are some of the difficulties you have faced in the course of your experiences with public schools?)*

- 3.) ¿Hay algún tipo de recurso que sería útil para usted o para sus hijos? ¿Han habido algunos recursos que han sido de mucha ayuda o de beneficio para usted o para sus hijos? *(What are some resources that have been beneficial to you or your children?)*

- 4.) ¿Siente que está involucrado en la educación de sus hijos? ¿Qué lo animaría a estar más involucrado en la educación de sus hijos o que lo haría más fácil para usted? *(Do you feel like you are involved in your children 's education? What would make it easier for you to be more involved?)*

- 5.) ¿Cuáles han sido algunas de las diferencias más grandes entre el sistema educativo de los Estados Unidos y el de su país? *(What are some of the differences between the US education system and the education system of your home country?)*

- 6.) Como Latinos, ¿qué podemos aportar a las educaciones de nuestros hijos? *(As latinos, what can we contribute to our children 's education?)*

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: March 22, 2022 **IRB#:** 14328

Principal Investigator: Maria P Peruch

Approval Date: 03/22/2022

Exempt Category: 2

Study Title: Sourcing Latino Families and Students in Education

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lara Mayeux'.

Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board