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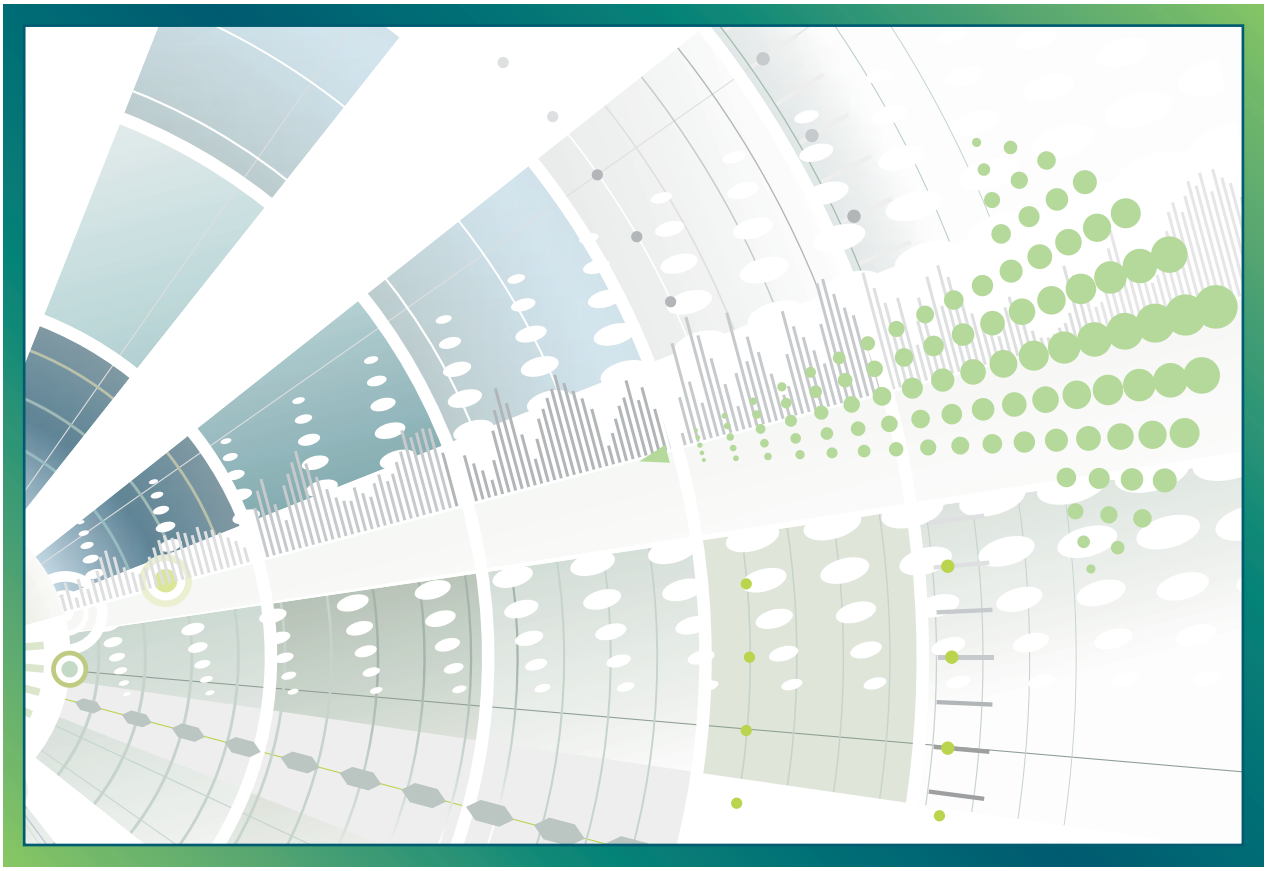
Student Achievement Policy Brief #3: Latino Students

Improving Achievement for the Growing Latino Population Is Critical to the Nation's Future



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Improving Achievement for the Growing Latino Population Is Critical to the Nation's Future

Introduction and Summary

More than one-fifth of the nation's public school students are Latino. By 2025, the share of Latino children is projected to increase to nearly 3 in 10 school-age children (Fry & Passel, 2009). The fast-growing Latino student population will shape the nation's future, so it is critical that these students are well-prepared for college, careers, and civic participation. This brief looks at the performance of Latino students on state reading and mathematics tests and considers the policy implications of achievement trends for this group.

Part 1 summarizes key results for Latino students on the state tests used for accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Included in the review are trends since 2002 in the percentages of Latino students reaching various achievement levels on state tests and in the Latino-white achievement gap; and various analyses of 2008 state test results for Latino students and other racial/ethnic groups. The information in part 1 is drawn from an immense set of test data from all 50 states that was gathered by the Center on Education Policy (CEP) with technical support from the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) and was verified by state officials. For the past three years, CEP has used these data to do an ongoing study of state test score trends. Previous CEP reports with more detailed findings about achievement for various subgroups and for students overall can be accessed at www.cep-dc.org.

Part 2 of this brief considers policies that could be undertaken at the local, state, and federal level to improve achievement for Latino students. We arrived at these findings after reviewing studies by other researchers about possible factors underlying the Latino-white achievement gap and possible strategies to address this gap.

Our own achievement studies and our review of other research revealed several key findings and policy implications about the state test performance of Latino students:

- ***Achievement gains and narrowing gaps since 2002.*** Between 2002 and 2008, the performance of the Latino subgroup on state reading and math tests improved in most states. For example, of the 38 states with three or more years of comparable data and a sufficiently large Latino subgroup, 32 states showed gains in the percentage of Latino 4th graders reaching the proficient level in reading, and 36 states showed similar gains in math. Latino 4th graders also made gains at the basic and advanced levels of achievement in a majority of states. In addition, state test score gaps between Latino and white students have narrowed since 2002 in reading and math in most states with sufficient data. Even with this progress, however, achievement gaps remain large, and many Latino students are not performing at the levels needed to succeed in college and careers.

- ***Latino students relative to other racial/ethnic subgroups.*** Latino students as a group performed substantially below Asian and white students on state reading and math tests at grades 4, 8, and the high school grade tested for NCLB, according to the

median[1] percentages of students scoring proficient across all states with sufficient data and sufficiently large Latino subgroups. Depending on the subject and grade level, the median percentages proficient for Latino students were somewhat higher than or similar to those for the African American and Native American subgroups.

- ***States with largest Latino enrollments.*** The achievement picture for Latinos was slightly more negative in the five states that together enroll more than 70% of the nation's Latino students. In California, the state with the largest Latino enrollment, Latinos were the lowest-performing subgroup in reading.

- ***Possible policy actions.*** School systems, states, and the federal government, as well as communities and families, need to take stronger actions to address the educational and societal factors that contribute to low achievement for Latino students. These include ensuring that Latino students who are English language learners receive high-quality instruction and assessment; strengthening instruction and interventions for Latino students who are struggling and reducing dropout rates; improving learning opportunities in schools with high concentrations of Latinos; and addressing poverty and other factors outside of school that affect the achievement of Latino students.

Other policy briefs in this series examine state test results for African American and Asian American students.

Background on Latino Students

As the fastest-growing racial/ethnic group in U.S. schools, Latino students comprise 22% of the students enrolled in U.S. public elementary and secondary schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). Many states and school districts enroll much greater proportions of Latino students. In 2006 Latinos made up about half of all public school students in California and more than 40% of enrollments in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Overall, Latinos are the largest minority group in the public schools in 22 states (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). In the 100 largest school districts, Latino students comprise about 36% of enrollments (U.S. Department of Education, 2008a).

This policy brief focuses on the achievement of the Latino subgroup in the aggregate, which is how test scores are tracked for NCLB accountability. But it is important to keep in mind, as explained in **box A**, that the Latino subgroup is quite heterogeneous, encompassing high-, middle-, and low-performing students, as well as children from very diverse ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds.

Latino students come from a variety of nationality and racial backgrounds, including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Guatemalan, Dominican, and many others. Among them are recent immigrants and refugees, children of migrant workers, and children whose ancestors were early residents of the formerly Mexican territories. About 87% of Latino school-age children are U.S.-born or naturalized citizens; the remaining 13% are not citizens. About 17% of Latino school-age children were born outside the U.S., 52% are first-generation U.S. born, and the rest are second-generation or more (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b).

[1] The median is the middle number in a list of numbers ordered by value, so that half of the numbers in the list are greater in value than the median and half are less. As used in this paper, the median percentage proficient for a specific subgroup in a particular subject and grade (such as Latino students in grade 8 math) represents the midpoint across all of the states with sufficient data and with sufficiently large Latino subgroups; half of these states had percentages proficient above the median and half had percentages proficient below.

There is considerable overlap between the Latino and English language learner (ELL) subgroups under NCLB—more than one-third of Latino students qualify for ELL services (U.S. Department of Education, 2008c). Spanish is by far the most common native language for these students. The test results of Latino students who are also ELLs count toward both subgroups, so efforts to raise achievement for Latinos must also include attention to the educational needs of ELLs.

A majority of school-age Latino children are economically disadvantaged. More than one-fourth (27%) come from families with incomes below the poverty level, and another 33% are near-poor.[2] Almost one-third of school-age Latino children have parents with less than a high school education, a higher share than of other racial/ethnic groups (U.S. Department of Education, 2008b). Latino students also have much higher dropout rates—about 6% for each year of high school—than white or Asian American students. Just over 63% of Latino students who enter high school as freshmen graduate on time four years later (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b).

These factors of limited English proficiency, low family income, and low parental educational levels can greatly influence the achievement of Latino children, but there are considerable differences among Latino subpopulations on all of these characteristics. For example, poverty rates are far lower for U.S. students of Cuban or South American origin than for students of Dominican, Puerto Rican, or Mexican origin (Reardon & Galindo, 2008). On the other hand, students of Puerto Rican origin tend to be far more proficient in English than Dominicans. And, not surprisingly, third-generation Latinos are generally far more likely to be wealthier and more proficient in English than recent arrivals. According to Reardon and Galindo (2008), the largest achievement gaps with white students are found among lower-income first- and second-generation students from Mexico and Central American nations who are not proficient in English and who speak only Spanish at home. The test data provided by states for our achievement studies do not further disaggregate Latino results according to students' nationality background, ELL status, income, or other factors. Thus, it is not possible to compare, for example, the test results of ELL and non-ELL Latino students.

Box A. Diversity within Racial/Ethnic Subgroups

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, schools and districts must collect and separately report test results and other achievement data for each major racial/ethnic subgroup in the state, as well as for low-income students, English language learners, and students with disabilities. The most common racial/ethnic subgroups tracked by states include African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, and white students. Schools, districts, and states must report the percentages of students in each major subgroup scoring at the proficient level on state tests.

These aggregate test results conceal the considerable diversity found within every racial/ethnic group. Each group includes high- and low-achieving students, as well as students in the middle of the achievement scale. Each group has students from low-income, middle-class, and affluent families and from a range of family circumstances. Each group encompasses children from a variety of nationality and cultural backgrounds. For example, the culture of a child whose family came recently from Colombia is unlike that of a Latino child whose family has had roots in New Mexico for many generations, just as the culture of a Hmong student may be very different from that of a Chinese student. In addition, each racial/ethnic group includes, to varying degrees, students who are recent immigrants and refugees and students whose native language is not English.

Aggregate reporting of test results can also mask the existence of subpopulations within the larger group that have unique educational needs. For example, a child of Mexican migrant workers is likely to have very different educational needs than a child of affluent, well-educated Cuban parents.

Although an analysis of trends for racial/ethnic subgroups as a whole can shed light on critical educational issues, one should keep in mind the diverse composition of the subgroup.

[2] In this Census data set, "near-poor" families were defined as those with incomes between 100% and 199% of the poverty threshold.

Part 1. State Test Results for Latino Students

To understand better how well Latino students are achieving on state tests, we analyzed the following data:

- Trends in the percentages of Latino students in grades 4, 8, and high school scoring at the proficient level on state tests between 2002 (where available) and 2008; and trends in grade 4 only at the basic and advanced levels of achievement
- Trends in gaps in percentages proficient between Latino and white students between 2002 and 2008—specifically, whether gaps have narrowed, widened, or stayed the same—as well as trends in gaps during this same period in average (mean) test scores
- Test results for 2008 for Latino students and other major racial/ethnic subgroups

Not all states had comparable data going back to 2002 because some states have changed their testing programs or cut scores for proficiency since that time. To address this situation, our analyses of both achievement and gap trends included only those states that had at least three consecutive years of comparable test data extending through 2008, the most recent year available at the time we collected data for our 2009 achievement studies. In addition, states were excluded from our analyses if the number of Latino test-takers was small (fewer than 500 students for the particular grade level and subject being analyzed).[3]

Because of the enormous amount of data involved in analyzing test results for 50 states, five subgroups, two subjects, and up to eight testing years, our analyses focused on grade 4, grade 8, and the high school grade tested for NCLB (usually grade 10 or 11). In some cases we looked at data for all tested grades (3-8) to confirm whether the trends found at grades 4 and 8 held true at other grades. In addition, we analyzed trends by subgroup for grade 4 at two additional achievement levels—basic and advanced—to detect changes in performance across the achievement spectrum that would not be captured by the percentage proficient alone. (Future CEP reports will include analyses by achievement level for grade 8 and high school.)

Additional findings for racial/ethnic subgroups are discussed in CEP's 2009 report, *State Test Score Trends Through 2007-08, Part 3: Are Achievement Gaps Closing and Is Achievement Rising for All?*

ACHIEVEMENT GAINS BY LATINO STUDENTS SINCE 2002

Generally speaking, the percentages of Latino students scoring at the proficient level on state tests have increased since 2002, the year NCLB was enacted. (The percentage proficient is the main indicator of progress used for NCLB accountability.) We had data for the Latino subgroup for 204 out of a possible 300 trend lines (reading and math at grades 4, 8, and one high school grade times 50 states. This excludes states with fewer than three years of data between 2002 and 2008 and states with fewer than 500 Latino students tested at a given grade. Out of these 204 trend lines, there were gains in 182 and declines in only 21 trend lines. Focusing on the 4th grade level, of the 38 states with data, 32 states showed gains in the percentage of Latino students reaching proficiency in reading. In 4th grade math, 36 of 38 states showed gains for Latino students—the greatest share of states with gains for any

[3] These and other rules for analysis for CEP's achievement studies were developed with advice from a panel of experts in education testing and education policy. Members of the expert panel include Laura Hamilton, senior behavioral scientist, RAND Corporation; Eric Hanushek, senior fellow, Hoover Institution; Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies, American Enterprise Institute; Robert L. Linn, professor emeritus, University of Colorado; and W. James Popham, professor emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles.

racial/ethnic subgroup. In several subject/grade combinations, the proportions of states with gains for Latinos were often higher than the comparable proportions for other subgroups.

At the basic and advanced achievement levels, states with increases for Latino 4th graders also outnumbered states with decreases, although the proportions of states with increases were somewhat lower than at the proficient level.

Even with these gains, however, state test scores remain low for Latino students as a group, a situation discussed in more detail later in this policy brief.

PROGRESS IN NARROWING LATINO-WHITE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Since 2002, gaps in percentages proficient between Latino and white students have narrowed in both reading and math at grade 4, grade 8, and high school in a large majority of the states with sufficient data and sufficient numbers of Latino test-takers. In grade 4 reading, for example, the percentage proficient gap between Latinos and whites narrowed in 29 of the 38 states with sufficient data. In grade 8 math, the Latino-white gap shrunk in 27 of 35 states, and in high school math, it narrowed in 23 of 28 states.

The percentage proficient has limitations, however, particularly for analyses of achievement gaps. Gaps can appear larger or smaller depending on where states set their cut scores for proficient performance. For example, gaps will appear to be quite small if the cut score is set so low that most students reach it or so high that very few students reach it, while gaps will appear larger with cut scores set closer to the mean score for a test. To compensate for this statistical phenomenon and to pick up changes at the lower and higher ends of the scoring scale that are not captured by percentages proficient, we also analyzed achievement gaps between Latino and white students in terms of average, or mean, scores on the scoring scale for each state's particular test.

Mean scores also showed that gaps have narrowed more often since 2002 than they have widened, although in somewhat fewer instances than the percentage proficient data showed. The Latino-white gap narrowed 61% of the time using mean scores, compared with 75% of the time using percentages proficient.[4]

It is important to remember that for gaps to narrow, achievement for the target subgroup, such as Latino students, must improve at a notably faster rate than achievement for the comparison group, such as white students. Indeed, when achievement is rising for all groups, gaps can still widen if Latino students improve at a slower rate than white students. For that reason, policymakers should understand that narrowing achievement gaps can be a long, slow, and uneven process.

ACHIEVEMENT IN 2008 FOR LATINO STUDENTS AND OTHER RACIAL/ETHNIC SUBGROUPS

Obtaining a national picture of achievement for different racial/ethnic subgroups is complicated because state tests vary widely in their content, difficulty, format, cut scores for various achievement levels, and other characteristics. For this policy brief, we compared the median percentages proficient on 2008 state tests for Latino students and four other racial/ethnic subgroups across all of the states with at least three years of comparable data through 2008. The median percentage proficient for a specific subgroup, subject, and grade

[4] These percentages were calculated based on the total numbers of gaps narrowing, widening, or staying the same for three grade levels (4, 8, and high school) and two subjects (reading and math) in all the states with at least three years of comparable data and with sufficient numbers of Latino students.

(such as Latino students in grade 8 math) represents the midpoint in a list of percentages proficient in rank order from all states with sufficient data; half of these states had percentages proficient that were higher than the median and half had percentages that were lower. Medians were calculated for grades 4, 8, and the high school grade tested for NCLB.

States were excluded from the median calculations for a particular racial/ethnic subgroup if the number of test-takers for that subgroup was fewer than 500 for a specific grade and subject. The number of states excluded due to small Latino subgroups ranged from seven in grade 4 to eleven in high school. From one to four additional states, depending on grade level and subject, were excluded because data for Latinos were not available for other reasons. In some states, the Latino subgroup was compared with fewer than four other racial/ethnic subgroups because one or more other subgroups were too small.

As shown in **table 1**, the 2008 median percentages proficient for the Latino subgroup in both reading and math were well below those of the Asian and white subgroups. Depending on the subject and grade level, the Latino medians were somewhat higher than or similar to those for the African American and Native American subgroups. In grade 8 math, for instance, the medians were 55% for the Latino subgroup, compared with 86% for Asian students, 77% for white students, 54% for Native Americans, and 46% for African Americans.

Table 1. Median percentages proficient for Latino and other racial/ethnic subgroups, 2008

Subject & grade	Latino	African American	Asian American	Native American	White
Reading					
Grade 4	64%	58%	83%	62%	81%
Grade 8	58%	58%	83%	57%	81%
High school	56%	53%	78%	57%	78%
Math					
Grade 4	67%	56%	88%	63%	82%
Grade 8	55%	46%	86%	54%	77%
High school	50%	45%	81%	44%	71%

Table reads: In grade 4 reading, the median percentage of students scoring proficient on state tests was 64% for the Latino subgroup, 58% for African American students, 83% for Asian Americans, 62% for Native Americans, and 81% for white students.

Note: Subgroups were excluded from the calculations in this table if the number of test-takers was fewer than 500 students in the grade level analyzed or if data for a particular subgroup were missing for other reasons.

The patterns of relatively low achievement for Latino students in grades 4, 8, and high school generally held true at other tested grades as well (grades 3, 5, 6, and 7).

There is a great deal of variation among states in terms of the difficulty of their tests and the location of cut scores to determine proficiency, as well as demographics and actual achievement levels. States with low percentages proficient may have harder tests or higher cut scores than states with high percentages proficient. To give an indication of the range among states, we identified the lowest and highest percentages proficient in any state for each racial/ethnic subgroup in a particular subject and grade. **Table 2** shows these ranges from lowest to highest for Latino students.

Table 2. Lowest and highest percentages proficient in any state for Latino students, 2008

Subject & grade	Lowest	Highest
Reading		
Grade 4	23%	88%
Grade 8	18%	89%
High school	26%	95%
Math		
Grade 4	28%	91%
Grade 8	14%	87%
High school	6%	91%

Table reads: In grade 4 reading, the lowest percentage proficient in any state for Latino students was 23%, while the highest percentage proficient in any state for this subgroup was 88%.

Note: Subgroups were excluded from the calculations in this table if the number of test-takers was fewer than 500 students in the grade level analyzed or if data for a particular subgroup were missing for other reasons.

At the individual state level, Latino students were the lowest-performing racial/ethnic subgroup in at least one subject/grade combination in 11 states. These included California, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, and Washington. This occurred more often in reading than in math, and may be related to the proportion of Latino students who are ELLs in a given state. The tables in the appendix show the 2008 percentages proficient in reading and math at grades 4, 8, and high school for the major racial/ethnic subgroups in each of the 50 states.

STATES WITH THE LARGEST LATINO ENROLLMENTS

Latino students are not distributed evenly throughout the country. The median percentages proficient in table 1 do not take into account differences in population. Therefore, as an additional check, we looked at percentages proficient for Latinos and other racial/ethnic subgroups in the five states with the highest number of Latino students, according to both the data on numbers of test-takers collected for our achievement studies and enrollment data from the Common Core of Data in the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.). These states include California, Texas, Florida, New York, and Arizona; together they enroll more than 70% of the Latino test-takers in the country.

The findings for the five states with large Latino populations are shown in **table 3**. Latino students were among the three lowest-performing subgroups, scoring well below Asian and white students and closer to African American and Native American students. In California, which has the highest Latino enrollment, Latino students were the lowest-performing subgroup in reading at all grade levels. In Arizona, Latino students performed lower in reading than all other subgroups except Native Americans. These two states account for about one-third of Latino enrollment nationwide. Therefore, results from the five high-Latino enrollment states give a somewhat more negative picture of proficiency in reading than the median percentages in table 1, which were derived from all states with tested Latino populations of more than 500 students.

Table 3. Percentage of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on 2008 state tests in the states that together enroll more than 70% of Latino test-takers nationwide

	Reading					Math				
State	Latino	African American	Asian	Native American	White	Latino	African American	Asian	Native American	White
Grade 4										
CA	41%	43%	78%	48%	74%	52%	46%	86%	50%	74%
TX	78%	73%	94%	85%	91%	81%	73%	96%	84%	91%
FL	64%	53%	82%	75%	81%	66%	54%	87%	76%	80%
NY	57%	56%	83%	61%	80%	77%	72%	94%	78%	90%
AZ	58%	62%	82%	51%	83%	66%	64%	88%	56%	85%
Grade 8										
CA	31%	32%	69%	39%	63%	29%	24%	72%	30%	54%
TX	89%	87%	97%	94%	96%	69%	61%	93%	78%	85%
FL	45%	34%	69%	58%	65%	61%	46%	86%	71%	78%
NY	38%	38%	70%	42%	68%	55%	49%	88%	61%	80%
AZ	54%	59%	81%	48%	80%	49%	48%	81%	42%	75%
High school										
CA	37%	37%	70%	50%	71%	37%	31%	82%	46%	68%
TX	83%	81%	94%	86%	92%	54%	46%	87%	63%	76%
FL	30%	17%	53%	41%	50%	64%	46%	86%	73%	80%
NY	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
AZ	60%	67%	85%	53%	87%	56%	56%	85%	47%	80%

Table reads: In California, which has a large number of Latino test-takers, 41% of Latino students scored proficient in grade 4 reading. This compares with 43% of African American students, 78% of Asian American students, 48% of Native American students, and 74% of white students.

Note: NA = data not available

ETHNIC ISOLATION OF LATINO STUDENTS

In a companion CEP policy brief on the achievement of African American students, we reported evidence suggesting that the states in which African American students are the lowest-performing subgroup tend to be those where the most African American students attend racially isolated schools—those in which almost all students are African American. We wanted to see whether this was also the case for Latino students.

Upon request, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provided us with its most recent state-by-state data (2007) on the percentages of Latino students enrolled in what NCES refers to "Hispanic-isolated" public schools, where more than 90% of students are Hispanic. The states with the highest percentages (greater than 10%) of Latino students attending ethnically isolated schools were Texas (32%), California (22%), Illinois (21%), New Mexico (18%), Arizona (17%), and Florida (12%). Four of these states are also among those with the largest populations of Latino students, presented in table 3.

We did not find evidence of overall lower performance by Latino students in the states with the highest share of Latino students in ethnically isolated schools, in terms of either average annual increases in the percentage proficient or achievement gaps. The majority of trend lines for percentages proficient in these states have moved in a positive direction and have increased at a rate greater than the average for all states. In these states, achievement gaps between Latino and white students have tended to narrow. The exception was Illinois. In that state, achievement gaps between Latino and white students widened at both the elementary and high school levels in both reading and math, and Latino students made less progress over time. We cannot make judgments about why this happened in Illinois without an extremely close study, but one factor may be demographic changes. At the 4th grade level, the number of Latino test-takers in Illinois jumped by 60% in three years, from just under 20,000 in 2006 to about 32,000 in 2008. Another factor may be a change in the state's testing program. An alternative academic assessment previously given to ELLs in that state was phased out in 2007 after ED objected to its use. As a result, the number of ELLs taking the regular state test with accommodations increased by a factor of 12 between 2006 and 2008. Because of the overlap in the Latino and ELL populations, Latino test score trends may have been affected by the fact that many of these students were taking a new test.

Part 2. Policy Implications

Although our own achievement studies did not gather evidence about the reasons for the trends in Latino performance that we found, we do believe it is critical for policymakers, educators, and others to consider the policy implications of our findings. These findings point to the need for strong, focused, and collaborative policies at all levels of government that are likely to improve education for Latino students. To suggest what these policies might be, we reviewed several studies by other research organizations of factors that may impact or help explain the Latino-white achievement gap and the overall performance of the Latino subgroup. These studies, which appear in the reference list at the end of this brief, point to a variety of factors inside and outside of school that could be the focus of policy actions.

Several aspects of education for Latino students deserve attention. A key set of policies should focus on ensuring that Latino students who are English language learners receive high-quality instruction and assessments. Examples include the following:

- Improve instruction aligned to academic content standards for ELLs
- Expand and improve teacher preparation and professional development to help educators provide more effective instruction to ELLs in both academic content and English language proficiency
- Develop better state assessments to ensure ELLs are placed appropriately in education programs, to measure the progress of ELLs in both academic content and English language proficiency, and to help teachers implement good instruction

Another critical policy area pertains to instruction and interventions for Latino students who are struggling academically. Possible approaches include the following:

- Continue to disaggregate test data by racial/ethnic group to call attention to the academic progress and needs of Latino and other students

- Provide preservice and in-service professional development to improve the cultural awareness and effectiveness of teachers and school leaders in working with Latino students and other racial/ethnic minorities and to address preconceived expectations and beliefs among some educators about the achievement of Latino, ELL, and immigrant students

- Train and hire more Latino teachers who can serve as role models to Latino students

- Extend learning time or provide before-, during, and after-school, or summer sessions for struggling students, including Latino children

- Establish high-quality programs to prevent students, including Latino youth, from dropping out and to serve effectively students who return to school after dropping out

A third set of policies should seek to improve the opportunity to learn for Latino students in majority-Latino schools. Examples include the following:

- Attract and retain more experienced, well-prepared, and effective teachers to schools with high enrollments of Latino and low-income students

- Strengthen curriculum and instruction in schools with high enrollments of Latino children, such as broadening the availability of and enrollments in Advanced Placement classes and other rigorous courses

- Make available more curriculum materials that reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, including the experiences of Latino students

- Improve safety and climate issues in schools with high Latino enrollments

- Reduce inequities between ethnically isolated schools and more advantaged schools in funding, distribution of experienced teachers, instructional materials, and other resources for learning

- Develop broad policies related to school assignment, housing, transportation, and jobs to reduce the isolation of Latino students in certain schools

A final set of local, state, and federal policies should address poverty and other factors outside of school that affect the achievement of Latino students, such as the following:

- Expand the availability of affordable, high-quality early childhood education and child care

- Improve access to high-quality health care for low-income families and children

- Address other risk factors related to poverty, such as frequent changing of schools, absenteeism, high rates of single-parent families, and neighborhood characteristics that work against the goal of high achievement

- Forge comprehensive partnerships and supports to strengthen the involvement of parents and community members in schools and to establish home-school relationships that support student achievement

- Provide accessible and affordable English as a second language services to parents of Latino youth

In conclusion, the relatively low performance of Latino students, who in less than a generation will comprise roughly three in ten American children, is an urgent issue. The nation's economic and social well-being will be compromised without efforts at all levels of government to develop policies to increase achievement for Latino young people. Accomplishing this goal will require national leadership from the Obama Administration and the Congress, and forward-thinking policies instead of regressive ones among state governors and legislators. At the local level, the experiences of schools and districts that have made impressive progress in raising achievement for Latino students can be instructive for other schools and districts. Improving outcomes for Latino children and youth will also require collaboration among government and communities.

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Appendix

Table A-1. Grade 4 percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
AK	n	79%	82%	62%	90%	n	74%	73%	56%	83%
AL	78%	95%	79%	n	91%	69%	93%	72%	n	85%
AR	48%	69%	54%	n	75%	54%	76%	67%	n	82%
AZ	62%	82%	58%	51%	83%	64%	88%	66%	56%	85%
CA	43%	78%	41%	48%	74%	46%	86%	52%	50%	74%
CO	82%	94%	80%	83%	95%	79%	95%	83%	84%	96%
CT	45%	82%	43%	n	81%	61%	93%	63%	n	90%
DE	69%	n	77%	n	89%	62%	n	73%	n	88%
FL	53%	82%	64%	75%	81%	54%	87%	66%	76%	80%
GA	81%	95%	83%	n	93%	57%	90%	67%	n	80%
HI	n	59%	n	n	74%	n	47%	n	n	58%
IA	56%	78%	61%	n	80%	55%	85%	65%	n	83%
ID	n	n	64%	n	87%	n	n	72%	n	87%
IL	56%	88%	59%	n	84%	69%	95%	77%	n	93%
IN	55%	78%	58%	n	78%	55%	84%	63%	n	78%
KS	71%	87%	73%	n	91%	71%	92%	77%	n	90%
KY	51%	n	65%	NA	74%	51%	n	63%	NA	74%
LA	60%	83%	65%	n	80%	53%	88%	69%	n	81%
MA	25%	56%	23%	n	56%	26%	66%	28%	n	56%
MD	82%	96%	84%	n	94%	81%	97%	84%	n	95%
ME	n	n	n	n	64%	n	n	n	n	61%
MI	69%	92%	77%	83%	89%	69%	95%	79%	85%	91%
MN	44%	62%	47%	53%	79%	38%	64%	43%	50%	77%
MO	27%	55%	31%	n	51%	22%	62%	33%	n	50%
MS	36%	n	87%	n	63%	42%	n	83%	n	68%
MT	n	n	n	55%	82%	n	n	n	42%	70%
NC	41%	71%	43%	47%	43%	55%	88%	67%	66%	84%
ND	n	n	n	52%	80%	n	n	n	54%	81%
NE	81%	90%	86%	85%	94%	85%	95%	91%	85%	95%
NH	n	n	54%	n	75%	n	n	44%	n	69%
NJ	67%	93%	73%	n	89%	68%	95%	76%	n	92%
NM	48%	n	44%	36%	69%	32%	n	33%	25%	55%
NV	44%	70%	45%	53%	69%	50%	79%	58%	61%	75%
NY	56%	83%	57%	61%	80%	72%	94%	77%	78%	90%
OH	59%	90%	69%	n	86%	49%	88%	59%	n	81%
OK	86%	95%	88%	92%	91%	67%	91%	75%	82%	87%
OR	76%	87%	66%	77%	87%	64%	83%	59%	69%	82%

Table A-1. Grade 4 percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008 *(continued)*

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
PA	45%	83%	49%	n	77%	56%	92%	64%	n	86%
RI	48%	n	40%	n	72%	36%	n	29%	n	63%
SC	28%	67%	33%	n	58%	22%	67%	31%	n	56%
SD	n	n	n	71%	93%	n	n	n	49%	85%
TN	85%	94%	82%	n	94%	83%	96%	87%	n	93%
TX	73%	94%	78%	85%	91%	73%	96%	81%	84%	91%
UT	58%	77%	54%	51%	82%	51%	81%	53%	53%	80%
VA	81%	94%	84%	89%	92%	74%	93%	76%	85%	89%
VT	n	n	n	n	69%	n	n	n	n	63%
WA	58%	78%	52%	54%	77%	31%	64%	31%	32%	60%
WI	57%	74%	66%	73%	87%	47%	76%	61%	65%	83%
WV	76%	n	n	n	82%	67%	n	n	n	77%
WY	n	n	62%	n	76%	n	n	68%	n	79%
US median*	58%	83%	64%	62%	81%	56%	88%	67%	63%	82%
Lowest	25%	55%	23%	36%	43%	22%	47%	28%	25%	50%
Highest	86%	96%	88%	92%	95%	85%	97%	91%	85%	96%

Table reads: In Alaska, 79% of Asian American students scored at the proficient level on the state grade 4 reading test. Comparable percentages proficient for other racial/ethnic subgroups were 82% for Latino students, 62% for Native American students, and 90% for white students. Results for African Americans are not included because the number of African American test-takers in Alaska was fewer than 500 at grade 4. Across all states with available data and with at least 500 African American test-takers in grade 4, the median percentage of African American students scoring proficient in grade 4 reading was 58%. Among these states, the lowest percentage proficient for African Americans in grade 4 reading was 25%, and the highest percentage was 86%.

Note: NA = data not available; n = state percentage was not calculated because state had fewer than 500 test-takers at this grade level.

*The median is the midpoint; half the states with data had percentages above this point and half had percentages below.

Source: Center on Education Policy, based on data collected from state departments of education.

Table A-2. Grade 8 percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
AK	n	83%	87%	71%	92%	n	68%	64%	51%	77%
AL	61%	85%	65%	80%	82%	53%	91%	63%	75%	77%
AR	45%	n	54%	n	75%	32%	n	46%	n	65%
AZ	59%	81%	54%	48%	80%	48%	81%	49%	42%	75%
CA	32%	69%	31%	39%	63%	24%	72%	29%	30%	54%
CO	80%	92%	77%	85%	93%	57%	88%	59%	65%	86%
CT	54%	89%	50%	n	87%	58%	93%	59%	n	91%
DE	68%	n	76%	n	89%	46%	n	56%	n	77%
FL	34%	69%	45%	58%	65%	46%	86%	61%	71%	78%
GA	86%	95%	83%	n	95%	49%	87%	55%	n	73%
HI	n	63%	n	n	78%	n	34%	n	n	43%
IA	45%	72%	48%	n	75%	46%	81%	55%	n	79%
ID	n	n	74%	n	91%	n	n	62%	n	82%
IL	69%	93%	74%	n	88%	61%	94%	75%	n	89%
IN	46%	74%	51%	n	73%	49%	84%	61%	n	80%
KS	63%	83%	63%	n	88%	50%	82%	54%	n	80%
KY	48%	n	57%	NA	69%	28%	n	39%	NA	54%
LA	42%	76%	58%	n	71%	39%	83%	56%	n	73%
MA	58%	81%	50%	n	81%	24%	68%	22%	n	56%
MD	58%	89%	62%	n	85%	41%	89%	51%	n	78%
ME	n	n	n	n	72%	n	n	n	n	52%
MI	58%	87%	65%	72%	83%	45%	89%	59%	67%	79%
MN	36%	54%	41%	42%	72%	23%	52%	28%	28%	63%
MO	24%	60%	33%	n	55%	17%	62%	32%	n	51%
MS	29%	n	n	n	61%	42%	n	n	n	68%
MT	n	n	n	58%	84%	n	n	n	29%	63%
NC	33%	65%	37%	38%	69%	50%	87%	59%	54%	80%
ND	n	n	n	52%	77%	n	n	n	45%	74%
NE	85%	94%	85%	82%	94%	80%	95%	85%	77%	82%
NH	n	n	n	n	68%	n	n	n	n	59%
NJ	62%	92%	68%	n	90%	38%	88%	50%	n	79%
NM	63%	n	58%	54%	77%	31%	n	29%	23%	55%
NV	37%	68%	40%	51%	69%	34%	70%	39%	45%	66%
NY	38%	70%	38%	42%	68%	49%	88%	55%	61%	80%
OH	58%	90%	66%	n	84%	46%	90%	58%	n	79%
OK	68%	87%	67%	82%	87%	69%	92%	74%	78%	86%
OR	50%	72%	40%	54%	71%	48%	81%	49%	57%	74%

Table A-2. Grade 8 percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008 *(continued)*

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
PA	57%	88%	58%	n	84%	46%	88%	51%	n	77%
RI	41%	n	38%	n	70%	25%	n	24%	n	57%
SC	13%	50%	18%	n	39%	8%	47%	14%	n	30%
SD	n	n	n	50%	84%	n	n	n	38%	81%
TN	90%	97%	88%	n	96%	82%	96%	87%	n	93%
TX	87%	97%	89%	94%	96%	61%	93%	69%	78%	85%
UT	64%	87%	61%	57%	87%	53%	79%	51%	47%	78%
VA	71%	92%	75%	89%	89%	72%	94%	74%	88%	89%
VT	n	n	n	n	69%	n	n	n	n	59%
WA	52%	76%	52%	49%	69%	28%	64%	30%	32%	57%
WI	59%	76%	68%	75%	90%	37%	73%	55%	64%	83%
WV	72%	n	n	n	81%	59%	n	n	n	73%
WY	n	n	56%	n	73%	n	n	48%	n	71%
US median*	58%	83%	58%	57%	81%	46%	86%	55%	54%	77%
Lowest	13%	50%	18%	38%	39%	8%	34%	14%	23%	30%
Highest	90%	97%	89%	94%	96%	82%	96%	87%	88%	93%

Table reads: In Alaska, 83% of Asian American students scored at the proficient level on the state grade 8 reading test. Comparable percentages proficient for other racial/ethnic groups were 87% for Latino students, 71% for Native American students, and 92% for white students. Results are not included for African Americans because the number of test-takers in this subgroup was fewer than 500 at grade 8. Across all states with available data and with at least 500 African American test-takers at grade 8, the median percentage of African American students scoring proficient in grade 8 reading was 58%. Among these states, the lowest percentage proficient for African Americans in grade 8 reading was 13%, and the highest percentage was 90%.

Note: NA = data not available; n = state percentage was not calculated because state had fewer than 500 test-takers per grade level.

*The median is the midpoint; half the states with data had percentages above this point and half had percentages below.

Source: Center on Education Policy, based on data collected from state departments of education.

Table A-3. High school percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
AK	n	71%	n	61%	90%	n	60%	n	43%	71%
AL	71%	85%	70%	87%	87%	74%	94%	83%	90%	90%
AR	23%	n	33%	n	61%	41%	78%	57%	n	74%
AZ	67%	85%	60%	53%	87%	56%	85%	56%	47%	80%
CA	37%	70%	37%	50%	71%	31%	82%	37%	46%	68%
CO	77%	91%	77%	82%	91%	41%	77%	42%	52%	76%
CT	61%	90%	62%	n	91%	50%	89%	55%	n	90%
DE	54%	n	56%	n	80%	58%	n	47%	n	69%
FL	17%	53%	30%	41%	50%	46%	86%	64%	73%	80%
GA	NA	NA	NA	n	NA	87%	98%	91%	n	96%
HI	n	66%	n	n	76%	n	33%	n	n	41%
IA	53%	79%	57%	n	79%	45%	77%	56%	n	80%
ID	n	n	67%	n	89%	n	n	57%	n	80%
IL	25%	64%	31%	n	65%	21%	78%	33%	n	64%
IN	41%	67%	47%	n	73%	36%	74%	49%	n	70%
KS	62%	78%	62%	n	86%	50%	81%	58%	n	81%
KY	43%	n	49%	NA	62%	18%	n	29%	NA	41%
LA	45%	69%	52%	n	70%	48%	87%	60%	n	79%
MA	55%	77%	49%	n	80%	48%	85%	46%	n	78%
MD	73%	91%	77%	n	83%	74%	89%	81%	n	82%
ME	n	n	n	n	49%	n	n	n	n	42%
MI	34%	69%	43%	56%	68%	13%	67%	28%	35%	53%
MN	36%	58%	42%	48%	78%	7%	29%	12%	11%	38%
MO	17%	48%	26%	n	44%	18%	64%	32%	n	53%
MS	32%	n	n	n	68%	44%	n	n	n	71%
MT	n	n	n	50%	80%	n	n	n	23%	56%
NC	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
ND	n	n	n	42%	67%	n	n	n	n	58%
NE	78%	89%	82%	82%	91%	79%	90%	79%	75%	87%
NH	n	n	n	n	67%	n	n	n	n	14%
NJ	65%	91%	69%	n	90%	45%	91%	57%	n	85%
NM	45%	n	43%	35%	65%	25%	n	25%	17%	52%
NV	63%	82%	62%	n	84%	26%	62%	31%	32%	59%
NY	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
OH	69%	91%	75%	n	89%	54%	92%	67%	n	85%
OK	57%	83%	61%	72%	81%	58%	91%	67%	71%	81%
OR	40%	67%	39%	53%	71%	25%	68%	30%	36%	57%

Table A-3. High school percentages of students in racial/ethnic subgroups scoring proficient on state tests, 2008 *(continued)*

	Reading					Math				
State	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White	African American	Asian	Latino	Native American	White
PA	36%	71%	38%	n	71%	27%	78%	31%	n	62%
RI	41%	n	40%	n	68%	6%	n	6%	n	27%
SC	43%	75%	51%	n	76%	38%	82%	50%	n	73%
SD	n	n	n	42%	71%	n	n	n	31%	70%
TN	94%	98%	95%	n	98%	72%	95%	86%	n	94%
TX	81%	94%	83%	86%	92%	46%	87%	54%	63%	76%
UT	n	84%	57%	59%	86%	n	74%	41%	41%	73%
VA	89%	97%	91%	97%	97%	80%	95%	85%	87%	92%
VT	n	n	n	n	68%	n	n	n	n	30%
WA	63%	83%	63%	62%	82%	19%	56%	23%	25%	50%
WI	38%	62%	49%	61%	82%	25%	62%	41%	50%	77%
WV	63%	n	n	n	74%	49%	n	n	n	69%
WY	n	n	n	n	68%	n	n	n	n	67%
US median*	53%	78%	56%	57%	78%	45%	81%	50%	44%	71%
Lowest	17%	48%	26%	35%	44%	6%	29%	6%	11%	14%
Highest	94%	98%	95%	97%	98%	87%	98%	91%	90%	96%

Table reads: In Alaska, 71% of Asian American students scored at the proficient level on the state reading/language arts test in the high school grade tested for the No Child Left Behind Act. Sixty-one percent of Native American students and 90% of white students scored proficient in high school reading/language arts. Results are not included for African American or Latino students because the number of test-takers in these subgroups was fewer than 500 in the tested high school grade. Across all states with available data and with at least 500 African American test-takers in the high school tested grade, the median percentage of African American students scoring proficient in high school reading/language arts was 53%. Among these states, the lowest percentage proficient for African Americans in high school reading was 17%, and the highest percentage was 94%.

Note: NA = data not available; n = state percentage was not calculated because state had fewer than 500 test-takers at this grade level.

*The median is the midpoint; half the states with data had percentages above this point and half had percentages below.

Source: Center on Education Policy, based on data collected from state departments of education.

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Professor Emeritus
University of Colorado

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Council of Chief State School Officers

Michael T. Nettles
Senior Vice President, Policy Evaluation & Research Center
ETS

Arturo Pacheco
Director, Center for Research on Educational Reform
University of Texas at El Paso

W. James Popham
Professor Emeritus
University of California, Los Angeles

Terry E. Spradlin
Associate Director for Education Policy
Center for Evaluation & Education Policy
Indiana University

Caitlin Scott
Evaluation Advisor
Education Northwest

Linda Trinh Vo
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Asian American Studies
School of Humanities
University of California

Brenda Welburn
Executive Director
National Association of State Boards of Education

Judith Wilde
Executive Director
National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition
George Washington University

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Center on Education Policy
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 522
Washington, D.C. 20036
tel: 202.822.8065
fax: 202.822.6008
e: cep-dc@cep-dc.org
w: www.cep-dc.org

www.cep-dc.org