APPENDIX 19:

Studies on Latino Students

The Status of Latina/o and Bilingual Secondary Students in the Rochester City School District: An Examination of School Trends, District Policies, and School-based Responses

Donna M. Harris, Ph.D.
Consultant Research Analyst for Latina/o Affairs and Bilingual Education
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Introduction

The Latina/o community with the Rochester City School District (RCSD) and other civic and university partners has documented the challenges confronted in local schools since the late 1980's(RCSD, 1986,1996, 1998). More recently Kiyama and Harris (2010) and Harris and Kiyama (2015) documented both challenges confronted and resources Latina/o families used at the secondary level. Over the last thirty years there have been numerous changes in state academic standards and assessments, RCSD leadership, interventions, and student demographics. This report examines the progress of Latina/o students in the RCSD with a primary focus on high schools and extends prior studies in order to document changes in Latina/o students experiences in the RCSD.

The Educational Status of Latina/os: A National and State Perspective

The presence of the Latina/o population in the nation and our public schools require keen attention to ensure that social and educational disparities are addressed. Estimates reported by *Excelencia* in Education (2015) show that Latina/os represented 17% of the U.S. population during 2012 and 24% of public school enrollment in 2011. As the largest racial/ethnic group in the U.S. it is necessary to continuously track their progress in our schools at national, state, and local levels. Federal data indicate that the educational progress of Latina/os has improved with an increase in 4th grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading and math scores. However, these scores do not eliminate disparities in performance compared to White and Asian students. At the secondary level, national estimates show that the Latina/o dropout rate has decreased but still remains the highest among racial/ethnic subgroups. In addition, Latina/o students have higher college matriculation rates compared to all other groups. "In 2012, 70% of recent Hispanic high school graduates had enrolled in college[1], compared to their White (66%) and African American (56%) peers (Exelencia in Education, 2015, p. 7).

Among the 2.6 million students enrolled in New York, Latina/os represented 25% and English Language Learners were 8% of the public school population during 2014-2015 (NYSED, 2016). Compared to the 78% graduation rate for the state, 65% of Latina/os completed high school in 2014-2015. At the same time, 11% of Latina/os dropped out of high school before completion. Also, 13% of Latina/os achieved an advanced Regents designation compared to 32% of students in the state. English Language Learners graduated at 34% and dropped out at 23% during 2014-2015.

As these demographic shifts occur at national and state levels, what are the implications for the educational trends and outcomes for Latina/os in Rochester? How has the Rochester City School District (RCSD) responded to the challenges of educating Latina/o students? What challenges still exist? What steps need to be taken for the RCSD to further improve the experiences of Latina/o students and families?

Data

In order to address posed above, I will draw on several data sources. In order to examine educational trends, I draw on New York State Department of Education district data to examine dropout and graduation trends and RCSD non-identifiable data with unique student identifiers to analyze student attendance, suspensions, and course placement. Data from school leader interviews in eight secondary

[1] During 2012 forty-nine percent of Latina/o students were enrolled in a two year public or private college/university with 46% enrolled in community colleges.

schools (East, James Monroe, East Upper School, East Lower School, Northeast College Prep, Northwest, College Prep, School Without Walls, and School of the Arts), focus groups interviews with students at East High School and Ibero American Action League Family Service Assistants; and field notes from district and school-based meetings including Board of Education Meetings, school climate parent meetings, and Rochester Teacher Center professional development sessions were synthesized and integrated with the descriptive quantitative data.

New York State Educational Policy Context and the RCSD

The New York educational policy context is framed by the Common Core standard curriculum (i.e. Engage New York) and associated assessments that influence instructional experiences of students. The Common Core assessment is used to measure outcomes in English Language Arts and Reading in grades 3-8. Under the current accountability regime, high school graduation requirements dictate that students achieve 22 credits across core academic subjects with additional credits in a foreign language, the arts, physical education, health, and 3.5 academic electives (NYSED, 2016). The School Receivership law, passed during spring 2015 impacted several RCSD elementary and secondary schools with persistent low levels of student performance and graduation outcomes. Schools deemed as persistently struggling (East, James Monroe, School #9) have one year and struggling schools (School #3, #8, #17, #22, #34, #41,#44, #45, Northeast College Prep, Northwest College Prep) have two years to improve outcomes on site specific performance indicators. Five of the receivership schools have bilingual programs (#9, #17,#22, East High School, James Monroe High School) (Vargas, 2015). If these schools do not meet performance requirements, then they will be turned over to an external receiver to transform the school. The East High School Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) partnership with the University of Rochester is an example of receivership.

Rochester City School District Vision and Leadership

Since 2006, the Rochester City School District has been led by two superintendents, Jean Claude Brizard and Dr. Bolgen Vargas. And by summer 2016 a new superintendent will be named as the third chief executive for the district in ten years. The RCSD has engaged in a number of efforts to improve the educational outcomes for students. It has implemented whole school reform in K-12 buildings with the America's Choice School reform (May & Supovitz, 2006), created schools within schools in a number of comprehensive high schools, and initiated theme-based schools to improve teaching and learning (Vargas, 2014). The Vargas (2014) administration's action plan for educational achievement included an emphasis on reading on grade level by third grade, expanded learning time, and access to high quality instruction. The theory of action envisioned by Vargas centered on closing the opportunity gap by providing middle class opportunities (e.g. arts and music), and reducing interventions for all students including Latina/os (Vargas, 2015, p.151). As a result of these actions, test scores would rise and more students would graduate prepared for postsecondary opportunities. A significant transformation of the RCSD's performance would make it an attractive educational setting for children of residents and staff. At the same time it would decrease the need for increased charter school slots.

The RCSD and School Population Shifts

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) is experiencing growth in the Latina/o student representation at the same time as a decrease in overall student enrollments (see Table 1). Between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 the RCSD experienced a loss of 3,337 students, a decrease in Black students, and an increase in the proportion of Latina/os. During 2009-2010 Latina/os were 22% of the RCSD population and reached 27% during 2014-2015. This increase in the Latino representation aligns with national shifts in school demographics (Excelencia in Education (2015). During the same timeframe, the percentage of emergent bilingual students, labelled as Limited English Proficient (LEP), increased by three percent in the RCSD.

Table 1. RCSD Student Population Demographics: 2009-2010 to 2014-2015

	2009-2010 N=31,653	2010-2011 N=31,2679	2011-2012 N=30,489	2012-2013 N=29,197	2013-2014 N=28,936	2014-2015 N=28,316
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American	64%	63%	62%	61%	60%	59%
Hispanic/Latino	22%	23%	24%	25%	25%	27%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%
White	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0
LEP	10%	11%	11%	11%	12%	13%

Source: NYSED

RCSD Staffing: Administrator and Teacher Demographics

The issue of staffing is recognized as a significant factor in promoting the educational outcomes of Latina/o students. Many urban school districts, such as the RCSD, have a student population that is predominantly students of color but the teaching staff is predominantly white. Latina/o teachers, in particular, are needed to serve as exemplars of educational success for students as they move through schools. Research also suggests that Latina/o and other teachers of color often hold higher student expectations and provide culturally relevant learning environments where students' cultural and linguistic knowledge is used in the classroom (Ocasio, 2014, Valenzuela, 2016).

During 1994-1995 (RCSD, 1999) there were six Latina/o administrators, 121 Latina/o certified teachers, and 217 other Latina/o staff in the RCSD. As a result, 6.7% of administrators were Latina/o and 4.7% were certified teachers. Almost twenty-years later table 2 shows that Latina/os represented almost 8% of school administrators and 6.5% (table 3) of teachers in 2013-2014. The proportion of Latina/o administrators decreased to 6.9% and teachers increased to 6.9% in 2014-2015. Also, the total number of administrators stayed about the same between 2013 and 2015 but the number of teachers in the RCSD over the two academic years decreased by 80 teachers.

Table 2: ASAR Staff in the RCSD

Race/ethnicity	2013-2014 (n=279)	2014-2015 (n=278)
American Indian	_	_
Asian	1.1%	1.1%
Black/African American	31.2%	32.3%
Hispanic	7.9%	6.87%
White	59.9%	60.1%

Source: RCSD Administrative Data

Table 3: RTA Staff in the RCSD

Race/ethnicity	2013-2014 (n=3079)	2014-2015 (n=2999)
American Indian	.29%	.2%
Asian	1.23%	1.2%
Black/African American	12.5%	12.8%
Hispanic	6.5%	6.87%
Nat Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	.035%	.003%
Not Specified	4.2%	3.8%
White	75.3%	75%

Source: RCSD Administrative Data

The status of Latino Education in the Rochester City School District (RCSD) has been the focus of several studies commissioned since the late 1980's (Rochester City School District, 1986, 1996, 1999, 2006; Kiyama & Harris, 2010) to track trends regarding the school population demographics and educational outcomes. These data are useful indicators to examine educational progress with attention to disparities regarding student test scores and access to college preparatory courses. A key concern highlighted by a task force convened by the Ibero American Action League in 2008 was the low levels of high school persistence and graduation among Latina/o students (Ares & Escher, 2015; Kiyama & Harris, 2010). For Latina/os who began 9th grade in 2002, 48% had dropped out of the RCSD by August 2006. At the same time the graduation rates for Latina/os by August 2006 was 52% the lowest among all racial/ethnic groups in the city schools(NYSED, 2008). The following data will allow us to understand how student persistence has changed since the 2008-2009 academic year.

RCSD Dropout Trends

In order to examine trends regarding dropout and graduation, school report card data from the New York Stated Education Department (NYSED) was used. The dropout rates for the RCSD and among Latina/os vacillated between 2009-2010 and 2013-2014. Yet, the percentage of Latina/o dropouts decreased to 29% for the class of 2014 (see Table 2). The dropout rates for Asian/Pacific Islander doubled between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 to 30%. LEPs dropout rates also fluctuated over this five year period and were higher in 2013-2014 compared to 2009-2010. While Latino students had the highest dropout rates when compared to other racial/ethnic categories, the LEP subgroup had the largest proportion of students leaving school before completion at 35% in 2014-2015.

Table 2: Dropouts (4 year outcomes -- August 31)

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
District	27%	20.3%	26.8%	28.3%	25%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	-	-	-	-	20%
Black	27%	21%	25.7%	28.4%	24%
Latino	32%	19.8%	33.6%	30.3%	29%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	23.5%	29.4%	26%	30%
White	24%	15.2%	17.2%	23.6%	22%
Multiracial	-	-	-	-	-
Student with Disability	35%	25.4%	37.8%	35%	31%
LEP	34%	21.9%	41.3%	36.5%	37%
Econ Disadvantaged	18%	13.3%	26.4%	30.3%	25%

Source:NYSED Public School Total Cohort Graduation Rate And Enrollments (2009-2010 to 2013-2014)

The RCSD's four year graduation rates from the late 2000's to 2013-2014 (see table 4) fell well below the state expectation of 80%. Latina/o graduation rates were the highest at 51% in 2009-2010 academic year and lowest at 38% in 2013-2014. These outcomes were the lowest among all racial/ethnic groups in the city schools from 2009 through 2011. However, Asian/Pacific Islander students had the lowest graduation rates among all racial/ethnic subgroups in 2013-2014. The graduation rates for LEP students were among the lowest of any student subgroup and fell dramatically between 2009-2010 to 2013-2014. A key challenge for many LEPs is passing the Regents exams. A focus group with the Family Service Assistants from the Ibero American Action League indicated that some emergent bilingual students at East experienced challenges passing the English Regents examination.

Table 4. Rochester City School District Graduation Trends (4 year Outcomes – August 31)

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
State Targets	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	
District	51%	50%	48%	49%	43%	51%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	-	-	-	-	40%	-
Black	50%	49%	49%	48%	44%	53%
Hispanic/Latino	47%	48%	42%	47%	38%	43%
Asian/Pacific Islander	63%	54%	42%	34%	31%	36%
White	58%	62%	61%	59%	58%	64%
Multiracial	-	-	-	-	-	-
Student with Disability	23%	24%	19%	24%	22%	27%
LEP	35%	31%	26%	29%	13%	24%
Economically Disadvantaged	57%	52%	48%	45%	42%	50%

Source: NYSED Public School Total Cohort Graduation Rate And Enrollments

Although there is an expectation that students graduate from high school in four years, this is not the case especially for students in the Rochester City School District. Five year RCSD graduation rates found in table 5, show an increase in the percentage of high school completion for all student subgroups. For Latina/os who started high school in 2009, the graduation rates increased from 47% to 53% five years after 9th grade enrollment. LEP students also experienced improved 5th year graduation outcomes at 36%. Also for Latina/os who began 9th grade in 2008 their four year graduation outcome was 42% and sixth year graduation rate increased to 48% (see Table 6). Despite the improved rates of high school completion for Latina/o, at least 52% of Latina/os in the class of 2011-2012 had not completed high school six years after high school enrollment.

The graduation outcomes for students in the RCSD including Latina/o fall far below national graduation trends. Since it takes more time for all student subgroups to complete high school requirements, what structures are in place to formally sustain students' effort to move toward graduation? A twilight program, like the one proposed by East High School and for newcomer students, could be a setting where students obtain the support to fulfill graduation requirements or the GED.

Table 5: RCSD 5 year graduation rates

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
District	56%	55%	53%	55%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native		-	-	-
Black	56%	54%	54%	55%
Hispanic/Latino	52%	53%	47%	53%
Asian/Pacific Islander	71%	65%	51%	44%
White	60%	64%	64%	63%
Multiracial		-	-	-
Student with Disability	29%	29%	24%	31%
Limited English Proficient	47%	42%	34%	36%
Economically Disadvantaged	64%	57%	53%	49%

Source:NYSED Public School Total Cohort Graduation Rate And Enrollments

Table 6: RCSD 6 year graduation rates

	2010-2011	2011-2012
District	56.2%	54%
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	-	-
Black/African American	55.1%	55%
Hispanic/Latino	53.9%	48%
Asian/Pacific Islander	65.1%	54%
White	65.5%	64%
Multiracial	-	-
Student w/ Disability	32.1%	25%
LEP	39.5%	29%
Economic Disadvantaged	54%	54%

Source: NYSED Public School Total Cohort Graduation Rate And Enrollments

The processes related to student graduation or departure before high school completion occurs over a period of time. Scholars indicate school attendance and student suspensions are factors that place students at risk of leaving high school without a diploma (Balfanz et al., 2014). The RCSD has confronted challenges regarding school attendance and has instituted attendance blitzes where district leadership, school staff, and volunteers go into the local community to foster the improvement in attendance. A descriptive analysis of non-identifiable student data for all Latina/o students enrolled in the RCSD from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 was conducted to examine the status of student attendance and suspension within this community. Indicators are provided for all Latina/o with data further disaggregated by gender, LEP status, and 9th through 12th grade status.

School Attendance

Table 7: Latino Attendance Trends 2011-2012 to 2013-2014

	2011-2012 (n=8385)	2012-2013 (n=8170)	2013-2014	2014-2015 (n=8485)
District[2]	87%	89%	88%	N/A
All Latina/o	82%	83.3%	83.2%	83%
Latinas	82.6%	83.4	83.3%	83.1%
Latinos	81.8%	83.1	83.1%	83.5%
Latina/o & LEP	80.3%	82.4	81%	81%
Latina/os in grades 9-12	71.1% (n=2270)	73% (n=2180)	72.3% (n=2130)	72.5% (n=2200)

Data Source: RCSD Administrative Data

School attendance is fundamental to student learning and chronic student absences put students at risk of falling behind, being retained, and leaving before high school completion. Like many urban school districts, Rochester confronts challenges with students coming to school consistently. Student attendance in the RCSD ranged from 87% from 89% between 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 (see table 7). Latina/o students' school attendance was below the district average and has stayed within the 83% range over four academic years from 2011 to 2015. Latina/o students with the LEP label had attendance rates that were 6% to 7% percent below the district average. Similar to national trends, Latina/o students in grades 9-12 experience the lowest school attendance at an average of 72%[3] from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015. Irregular attendance creates difficulty for teachers and places students at a disadvantage if they are unable to keep up with lessons. During interviews with several secondary leaders during fall 2015, some indicated that attendance can become a challenge when some families take extended visits to the Puerto Rico for holidays and family celebrations when school is in session.

Solutions to the Latina/o attendance issue require that school leaders take in consideration community practices. Vicky Ramos at James Monroe High School held summer school in August given that many of her students went to Puerto Rico at the end of the school year.

School Attendance Recommendations

- Implement attendance mentors to increase student attendance. This strategy has been used in New York City public schools to decrease absenteeism. Mentors are trained and matched with 10-15 students. Mentors and mentees meet at least three times per week engaging in activities to promote student success. Mentors monitor student progress and serves as an advisor and student motivator. See http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/html/smc/smc.shtml for additional information.
- Aim Truancy Solutions supports districts such as the Austin Independent School Districts by providing wake up calls to students. AIM also uses attendance incentives and mentors to promote student attendance. This organization also provides services regarding socio-emotional support. http://www.aimtruancy.com/our-program/

[2] The New York State of Education (NYSED) School District report card website is the source of RCSD attendance estimates. See link http://data.nysed.gov/reportcard.php?year=2015&instid=800000050065

[3] Average attendance calculation for grades 9-12 by (71.1+73+72.3+72.5/4=72.2)

Student Suspensions

Student suspensions have an impact on students' presence in classrooms and school attendance. There has been considerable concern expressed among families (Harris & Kiyama,2015; Kiyama & Harris, 2010) and community activists (Metro Justice, n.d.) about school suspensions. Metro Justice reported in 2011-2012 that Latina/os were 1.45 times more likely to be suspended compared to their White peers in the RCSD. The high suspension rates put students at risk of leaving school and increasing the likelihood of being involved in penal system. RCSD suspension data for Latina/os show that the average number of suspensions increased from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015 for all Latina/os even when this indicator was disaggregated by gender, LEP status, and 9-12 grade levels (see Table 8). By 2014-2015 Latino males had the highest mean suspensions among their peers and students in grades 9-12 had the lowest.

Table 8: Average Latina/o Total Suspensions

	2011-2012 (n=8385)	2012-2013	2013-2014 (n=1072)	2014-2015 (n=1077)
All Latina/o	1.7	N/A	2.87	3.11
Latinas	1.54	N/A	2.76	2.82
Latinos	1.80	N/A	2.94	3.29
Latina/o &LEP	1.71	N/A	2.86	2.91
Latina/os in grades 9-12	1.71 (n=187)	N/A	2.56 (n=442)	2.47 (n=434)

Source: RCSD Administrative Data

In-school suspensions were instituted by Superintendent Jean Claude Brizard as a strategy to maintain students' academic engagement (McLendon, 2008). Student reports during 2009-2010 indicate that they did not always receive their academic work while in in-school suspension sites (Kiyama & Harris, 2010; Metro Justice). Others recounted that these settings did not prevent them from engaging in additional fights in these locations (Kiyama & Harris, 2010). The percentage of Latina/os receiving one or more in-school suspensions increased from 2011-2012 to 2013-2014 and decreased between 2013-2014 and 2104-2015 (see table 9). A similar trend is found among Latinas, Latinos, and LEP subgroups. While greater percentages of Latinos experienced one or more in-school suspensions from 2011 to 2014, LEP students had the highest percentages during 2014-2015. These suspensions further marginalize a student subgroup that has the greatest difficulty meeting local and state prescribed assessments.

Table 9: Percentage of Latina/o students with 1 or more in-school suspensions

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
All Latina/o	3.7%	7.2%	11.2%	7.6%
Latinas	3 %	6.0%	9.2%	6.4%
Latinos	4.4%	8.5%	13%	8.8%
LEP	2.4%	8.0%	12%	9.1%

The Code of Conduct: A RCSD Response to School Suspensions

The revision of the Code of Conduct is a RCSD response to the high levels of suspension encountered by RCSD students. The newly revised Code of Conduct adopted as of June 2016 is grounded in the belief that all students "have a right to high quality education (RCSD, 2016, p.6)." It focuses on transforming school climates. The code of conduct makes suspensions that last resort after many steps have been taken to resolve behavioral issues that arise. Among the 18 principles that guide it include the use of prevention and intervention; promoting positive relationships; and providing due process when violations have occurred. It also addresses the alignment of school policies with the Code of Conduct and adequate training for school staff. The Code of Conduct provides specific guidelines with a classification system that links particular behaviors with a set of consequences. As a result, the consequences associated with set a class of behaviors cannot exceed those prescribed. Others efforts undertaken by the RCSD during 2014-2015 that align with the code of code is the implementation of the restorative practices in 13 schools including James Monroe, East, Northeast College Prep, and Northeast College Prep campuses.

The Code of Conduct including the guidelines for behavioral consequences and the implementation of restorative practices create a context where there should be a decrease in the number of suspensions and improvement in school climate. However, the impact of these changes is yet to be seen. Focus groups with Family Service Assistants and students at East High suggest that the climate has influenced positive changes in the school. The implementation of family groups creates a space for adults in the school to support groups of ten random students. Socio-emotional support is provided by adults referred as "carents." School leadership and other adults at East are aware about the fact that the random allocation of students to family groups may not be an effective strategy for all including some Spanish dominant students.

As the restorative practices scale up in RCSD schools and the Code of Conduct takes effect during 2016-2017, adequate resources must be provided to support the implementation the code of conduct. These resources must include adequate professional development for teachers. Some perceive that the new code of conduct will lead to leniency regarding student behavior. In order to combat these negative perceptions in the community and schools, greater awareness about best practices must be provided. In addition, an implementation evaluation should be conducted to determine adequacy of professional supports and challenges encountered regarding Code of Conduct implementation and the use of restorative practices.

Advanced Placement (AP) Course Enrollments

Federal (Every Student Succeeds Act) and state (Engage NY) policies make college and career readiness a priority for all students. As urban districts attend to the increased academic demands, it is important to ensure that rigorous courses are available and a diverse pool of students is enrolled. School districts, such as the RCSD, confront considerable challenges related to adequately preparing students for college based on analysis of state performance metrics. A New York State Education Department (n.d.) analysis shows that although 43% of RCSD students graduated high school, only 5.9% received a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. The Advanced Designation diploma requires the completion of extended coursework in the Arts or Career and Technical Education or a language other than English and 2 additional Regents examinations in math and science. Among the 1,448 RCSD graduates in 2014-2015 eight percent (n=110) achieved the Regents with Advanced Designation. However, this only represents 5% of the cohort who entered high school in 2011 (NYSED, 2015).

Access to demanding curriculum is important for college preparation and studies indicate that students from marginalized communities are often less likely to be exposed/enrolled in such courses. Without enrollment in advanced coursework, students are less likely to enroll in college (Perna,2005). The 2014-2015 RCSD district report card indicates that 1,049 students had plans to attend a four or two year college and 183 expected to seek employment after high school. Prior studies indicate that parents had concerns that school personnel held low expectations for Latina/o students in the RCSD (Quinones, 2015) and data show that Latina/os confronted barriers to gifted programs and Advanced Placement courses (RCSD 1986, Harris & Noel, 2015). Despite the challenges regarding student persistence in the RCSD, it is imperative to understand 1) whether AP courses are available in all high schools and 2) to what degree are Latina/o students enrolled in advanced level courses. Analysis of 2009-2010 data from the Office of Civil Rights) found variability in the number of AP courses offered at RCSD high schools (Harris & Noel, 2015). Although an average of 4.6 AP courses were offered in the district, two campuses lacked this curriculum based on the Civil Rights Data collection information in 2009-2010. In regards to enrollments, Latina/os were underrepresented in AP science and other AP courses (e.g. AP English, Psychology, U.S. History), overrepresented in AP foreign language, and not enrolled in AP mathematics.

In light of the previous findings, non-identifiable RCSD student data with unique identifiers for 2014-2015 was used to analyze Advanced Placement access and enrollments. During the 2014-2015 RCSD high schools offered Advanced Placement courses in six content areas including the humanities, science, mathematics, social sciences, music theory and Spanish. Within each content area, a number of courses were offered. For example, there were four AP humanities courses offered including AP Art History, AP English Language, AP Lit Lab, and AP English Language. Some courses, such as AP Art History and AP English Literature, were offered virtually. All high schools, except School without Walls[4], offered AP humanities and social sciences courses (see table 10). Nine high schools offered AP Science and six offered AP mathematics courses. James Monroe and Wilson Magnet High School were the only sites that offered AP courses in Spanish. Given its curricular focus, it is not surprising that the School of the Arts (SOTA) is the only location that offered AP music theory. Wilson Magnet, James Monroe, and the School of the Arts offered AP courses across five content areas and Leadership Academy for Young Men offered AP courses in two content areas.

[4] The 2014-2015 RCSD data did not have AP information regarding School Without Walls.

Table 10: 2014-2015 AP Course Availability by School

	AP Humanities	AP Science	AP Mathematics	AP Social Sciences	AP Music Theory	AP Spanish
#58 World of Inquiry	X	X	X	X		
Charlotte	X			X		
East	X	X	X	X		
Integrated Art & Technology	X			X		
James Monroe	X	X	X	X		X
Wilson Magnet	X	X	X	X		X
NE College Prep	X	X		X		
Robert Brown HS	X	X		X		
Rochester Science Technology Engineering & Math	X	X		X		
School of the Arts	X	X	X	X	X	
Leadership Academic for Young Men	X			X		
Vanguard	X	X		X		
School without Walls						
Total	12	10	5	12	1	2

Racial Distribution of Students in AP Courses

While it is important to know that a range AP courses are available in RCSD high schools, it is necessary to examine the racial composition in these classrooms and determine whether student subgroups are under or overrepresented based on their representation in the district's student population. For example, since Latina/os comprise 27% of the 2014-2015 RCSD population (see table 11), then they should represent this proportion in each content area.

Table 11:2014-2015 RCSD Subgroup Composition

	2014-2015 N=28,316
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0
Black	59%
Hispanic/Latino	27%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
White	10%
Multiracial	0
LEP	13%

Source: NYSED RCSD Report Card

Among the 352 students enrolled in AP Humanities courses during 2014-2015 (see table 12) almost 25% were Latina/o. This is slightly below their 27% representation in the district. Black students had the highest representation in these courses at 53% but this is 5% below their district representation of 59%. White students were the only subgroup whose representation in AP Humanities courses at 17% was above their district level representation of 13%. Asian student enrollment in AP Humanities at 4.3% almost matches their district representation at 4%.

Table 12: Advanced Placement Humanities (n=352)

	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White
AP Art History (Virtual)	0	0	1.4	.6	0
AP English Language (Virtual and Yr)	.6	2.3	30.7	15.1	10.8
AP Lit Lab	0	.6	3.4	.6	.6
AP English Language (Virtual and Yr	0	1.4	17.8	8.5	5.7
	.6% (n=2)	4.3% (n=15)	53.4% (n=188)	24.7% (n=87)	17% (n=60)

AP Science

One hundred thirty-six RCSD students were enrolled in four different AP Science courses (Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, and Environmental Science).The representation of Black and Latina/o students in AP Science courses at 44% and 19.9% respectively was below their school district representation (see table 13). White students' enrollments in AP science were sixteen percent above their district representation courses at 29.4%. Asian student representation at 3.7% is close to matching their district percentage of 4%.

Table 13: Advanced Placement Science (n=136)

	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Multi-racial	White
AP Biology	0	1.5%	15.4%	11.8%	.7%	8.1%
AP Chemistry (Virtual and Year)	0	1.5%	5.1%	.7%	0	18.4%
AP Computer Science A (Yr and Virtual	1.5%	0	3.7%	0	0	1.5%
AP Environmental Science	0	.7%	19.9%	7.4%	.7%	1.5%
	1.5% (n=2)	3.7% (n=5)	44.1% (n=60)	19.9% (n=27)	1.5% (n=2)	29.4% (n=40)

AP Mathematics was the subject area where Latina/o students were not enrolled during the 2009-2010 school year (Harris & Noel, 2015). Table 14 shows that the total enrollments in this content area were modest at 65 students during 2014-2015. Latina/o students were enrolled in AP mathematics courses at approximately 12%. This estimate is below their district representation by almost 15 percent. Black student enrollment at 52.3% was below their district representation by almost six percent. However, White student enrollment in AP mathematics was 30.8% almost three times their district representation.

Table 14: AP Mathematics (n=65)

	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White
AP Calculus AB Yr and Virtual	4.6%	18.5%	0	30.8%
AP Statistics	0	33.8%	12.3%	0
Total (=65)	4.6% (n=3)	52.3% (n=34)	12.3% (n=8)	30.8% (n=20)

AP Social Science courses enrolled the largest number of students in the RCSD. A total of 375 students took course AP US history, World History, Government & Politics and psychology courses (see table 15). Latina/o students were underrepresented in this subject at 19.7% that is almost 7% below their district representation. Black students were enrolled at 54.4% slightly below their district representation. Asian student enrollment at 3.5% was marginally below their district representation. White student representation in AP Social Sciences courses was over 22% approximately two times their representation in the overall RCSD population.

Table 15: Advanced Placement Social Sciences (n=375)

	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White
AP Government & Politics Yr and Virtual	.3	4.8%	.5%	6.1%
AP Psychology Yr and Virtual	.3%	10.7%	3.5%	.8%
AP United States History	1.1%	13.6%	5.3%	7.7%
AP World History	1.9%	25.3%	10.4%	7.7%
Total	3.5% (n=13)	54.4% (n=204)	19.7% (n=74)	22.4% (n=84)

AP Music Theory is a course that is offered only at School of the Arts with 22 students. Table 16 shows that White students represented over 54%, Black students comprised almost 32%, and Latina/os were approximately 14% of course enrollments. The Latina/o and Black student enrollment is below their district representation and the White student representation is above their district representation.

Table 16: Music Theory (n=22)

	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White
AP Music Theory	31.8% (n=7)	13.6% (n=3)	54.5% (n=12)

AP Spanish enrolled 24 students across two schools during 2014-2015 (see table 17). Latina/o students represented 66.7% of those taking this course followed by Black and White students. AP Spanish was the only subject where Latina/os dominated enrollment and the proportion was above their district representation of 27%.

Table 17: AP Spanish

	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	White
AP Spanish Language	25% (n=6)	66.7% (n=16)	8.3% (n=2)

Although there are a variety of AP courses available within and between RCSD high schools during 2014-2015 , access can vary by school and subject. While previous data tables indicate the racial distribution of AP enrollments by subject, they do not identify the schools where these AP courses are available but Latina/o students are not enrolled. Table 18 shows seven schools where Latina/os were not enrolled in AP courses even though others were enrolled in them. No Latina/os were enrolled in AP Science courses at School #58 – World of Inquiry and Rochester Science Technology Engineering and Math High School during 2014-2015 even though it was available. Integrated Arts and Technology,

Vanguard High, and Charlotte[5] High Schools offered AP Social Science courses but Latina/os were not registered. In addition, East and School of the Arts did not enroll Latina/o students in AP mathematics courses.

Table 18: 2014-2015 AP Course Enrollments for Latina/o students by School

	AP Humanities	AP Science	AP Mathematics	AP Social Sciences	AP Music Theory	AP Spanish
#58 World of Inquiry	X	No Latina/os enrolled	No Latina/os enrolled	X		
Charlotte	X			No Latina/os enrolled		
East	X	X	No Latina/os enrolled	X		
Integrated Art & Technology	X			No Latina/os enrolled		
Monroe	X	X	X	X		X
Wilson Magnet	X	X	X	X		X
NE College Prep	X	X		X		
Robert Brown HS	X	X		X		
Rochester Science Technology Engineering & Math		No Latina/os enrolled		X		
School of the Arts	X	X		X	X	
Leadership Academic for Young Men	X			X		
Vanguard	X	X		No Latina/os enrolled		

The data show that all secondary settings enrolled students in a number of AP courses during 2014-2015. The number courses and AP subject areas offered varied by school site. Generally, Latina/o students were enrolled in AP courses across six subject areas in the RCSD , but their representations varied. In the areas of AP science, social sciences, mathematics, and music theory, the percentage of Latina/o students enrolled in these courses fell below their district-level representation. Latina/o enrollments in AP humanities courses were second highest to Blacks students but their presence was slightly lower than district population estimates. AP Spanish was the only subject where Latina/os had the highest

[5] Since Charlotte High is scheduled to formally close within the next year, the availability of AP courses to its students would have been limited during 2014-2015.

proportion of enrollments. Although AP Spanish was available in two schools, the enrollments were second lowest among all subjects. Additionally, school-level data show that the availability of a course in a school site did not guarantee Latina/o student enrollment.

AP Courses and LEP Enrollments

Since there is the expectation that all students become college and career ready, the analysis of AP course enrollment is extended to examine enrollments among emergent bilingual students. Table 19, 20, 21, and 22 show that LEP enrollments in AP courses are minimal at twelve students distributed between AP Humanities (table 19), AP Science (table 20), AP Social Sciences (table 21), and AP Spanish (table 22). LEP enrollments in AP Humanities and AP Science represent less than one percent of all students enrolled in each subject. They represent over one percent (4 students) of total course enrollees in AP Social Science and 20% of AP Spanish enrollments at five students.

Table 19: LEP Status and AP Humanities Enrollments

	LEP	Non-LEP
AP Art History (Virtual)	0	2%
AP English Language (Virtual and Yr)	.3	59.2
AP Lit Lab	0	5.1
AP English Language (Virtual and Yr	.3	33.1
	.6% (n=2)	99.4% (n=351)

Table 20: LEP Status and AP Science Enrollments

	LEP	Non-LEP
AP Biology	.7%	37.3%
AP Chemistry (Virtual and Year)	0	26.1%
AP Computer Science A (r and Virtual	0	5.2%
AP Environmental Science	0	30.6%
	.7 (n=1)	99.3% (n=133)

Table 21: LEP Status and AP Social Sciences Enrollments

	LEP	Non-LEP
AP Government & Politics Yr and Virtual	0	11.7%
AP Psychology Yr and Virtual	.3%	14.9%
AP United States History	.5%	27.1%
AP World History	.3%	45.2%
Total	1.1% (n=4)	98.9% (n=372)

Table 22: LEP Status and AP Spanish Enrollments

	LEP	Non-LEP
AP Spanish Language	20.8% (n=5)	79.2% (n=19)

<u>*Schools that Enrolled LEP Students in Advancement Courses*</u>

Table 23 shows that there were 12 students enrolled in AP courses across four high schools including East, James Monroe, Robert Brown High School of Construction & Design and the Rochester Science Technology Engineering and Math High School. Advanced Placement Spanish enrolled the most LEP students in AP Spanish (5 students) followed by AP Social Science (4 students), AP Humanities (2 students), and AP Science (1 student). East High staff indicated that they do not limit access to academic programs and AP courses are available by choice. They make efforts to accommodate emergent bilingual students placed in Advanced Placement courses by providing teachers with supports for second language learners. However, low levels of English proficiency can pose great difficulty for students in an AP course.

Table 23: RCSD High Schools Enrolling LEP Students in AP Courses

School	Course	Number of LEP Students
East High School	AP Humanities	1
James Monroe High School	AP Humanities	1
James Monroe High School	AP Spanish	5
Robert Brown HS of Construction & Design	AP Science	1
East High School	AP Social Sciences	1
James Monroe High School	AP Social Sciences	1
Robert Brown HS of Construction & Design	AP Social Sciences	1
Rochester Science Technology Engineering and Math HS	AP Social Sciences	1
Total		12 students

As the expectations for college and career readiness are increased, it is necessary to ensure a pathway for emergent bilingual students in Advanced Placement courses. Since New York state policy indicates that all teachers are instructors of English Language Learners, it is necessary to provide additional supports in Advanced Placement and other rigorous courses to meet the needs of students across the English Language proficiency spectrum. Some scholars suggest that the best way to build academic language proficiency is through interactions with English dominant students (Gåndara & Orfield 2012).

The research literature about high school course placement suggests that there are a number of reasons for the underrepresentation of Latina/o and emergent bilingual students. Students may not be recommended for these courses and students or their families may not advocate for changes in course schedules in order to gain placement in college preparatory courses. In some instances, school staff may not advocate for emergent bilingual student placement in high level classes because of the amount of English reading and

writing. Teachers, especially those at the secondary level, may not bel equipped to provide the accommodations for emergent bilinguals. If emergent bilingual students enter the school district after 9th grade, they may be unable to meet the academic prerequisites that lead to courses such as AP (Kanno & Kangas, 2014).

AP Course Credit

Although RCSD students were able to enroll in a range of AP courses during 2014-2015, it is important to know if students achieved credit for the course. A third of students (e.g. 8 out of 24) that enrolled in AP Spanish did not receive credit for it. Another 13.6% of AP Humanities, 16.9% of AP Science, and 18% of AP Social Science students received zero credit for these courses during 2014-2015 (see table 24). A greater proportion of AP Mathematics and AP Music Theory students earned course credit with only 4.6% AND 4.5% respectively receiving zero credits. Table 25 shows that in AP Humanities, Science, Mathematics, and Spanish, Latina/o students had higher population percentages receiving no credit in comparison to all students taking these courses in the RCSD. Although the number of LEP students enrolled in AP courses was small, the majority had success receiving credits in AP Humanities and Science. Seventy-five percent of this student subgroup received credit in AP social science. However, 40% of LEP students did not receive credit for AP Spanish during 2014-2015 (see table 26).

Table 24: AP Course Credits by Subject for All Students

	Humanities	Science	Mathematics	Social Sciences	Music Theory	Spanish
Zero Credit Earned	13.6% (n=52)	16.9% (n=23)	4.6% (n=3)	18% (n=71)	4.5% (n=1)	33.3% (n=8)
One Credit Earned	86.4% (n=323)	83.1% (n=113)	95.4% (n=62)	82% (n=324)	95.5% (n=21)	66.7% (n=16)
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 25 : AP Course Credit for Latina/o Students

Latinos						
Zero Credit Earned	14.7% (n=4)	25.9% (n=7)	25% (n=2)	14.9% (n=11)	0	37.5% (n=6)
One Credit Earned	85.3% (n=64)	74.1% (n=20)	75% (n=6)	85.1% (n=63)	100% (n=3)	62.5% (n=10)

Table 26: AP Course Credits for LEP Students

	Humanities	Science	Mathematics	Social Sciences	Music Theory	Spanish
Zero Credit Earned	0	0	N/A	25% (n=1)	N/A	40% (n=2)
One Credit Earned	100% (n=2)	100% (n=1)		75% (n=3)		60% (n=3)
Total	100% (n=2)	100% (n=1)		100% (n=4)		100% (n=5)

Although a range of students are enrolled in AP courses, not all of them attain credit for them. It is not evident the challenges students confront as they navigate these advanced courses. It is imperative that that school leaders conduct equity audits to examine AP enrollments and outcomes by race and bilingual status. Equity audits (Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, & Nola, 2004) are a strategy where school staff use student data, as demonstrated above, to examine educational disparities that are rendered invisible when mean student outcomes are examined. Teachers and school leaders can use this information to thoughtfully plan to eliminate opportunity gaps and meet the expectation that all students are college and career ready.

AP Recommendations

The following suggestions can be undertaken to ensure access to AP courses, honors courses, and gifted programs for emergent bilingual students and Latina/o students:

- Use disaggregated data to hold district level and school-wide discussions about disparities in course access among student subgroups including Latina/o and emergent bilingual students
- Address school staff beliefs that suggest students must be English proficient before placement in advanced courses through professional learning circles.
- Review criteria for student placement in honors, gifted, and Advanced Placement courses.
- Develop target enrollment expectations for Latina/o and LEP enrollments in Advanced Placement courses and other gateway courses including Algebra.
- Use Spanish language assessments in mathematics in order to determine emergent bilingual student knowledge versus assessments that draw on English language proficiency.
- Implement Advanced Placement courses with bilingual certified teachers with the intention of enrolling students in the bilingual program and those who are not.
- Provide additional academic supports for LEP students enrolled in advanced courses such as AP.
- Implement Multiple Pathways (see Oakes and Saunders, 2008) where academic and career and technical program coursework are integrated. This practice moves beyond the debate regarding college preparatory versus vocational education. Instead, multiple pathways is "Arguing that graduates who go directly to work need solid academic skills and those who go to college will also have careers (Oakes & Sanders, 2008, p.5). It's components includes
    - College preparatory courses that prepare students for state university admissions
    - Career coursework that are aligned with "academic and work standards"(Oakes & Saunders, 2008, p.6).
    - Work place experiences including simulations that provide professional knowledge and technical skills.
    - Opportunities for students to get job experiences with pay. This provides hands-on experience and money to support students and their families.
- Early college opportunities -- For example, with the optics program at East provide access to vision technology courses provided by Erie Community College that lead to an associate's degree in optics. Focus group participants indicated the the benefits of this optics program at East and indicated the opportunity to obtain jobs in this field for the summer. However, further study in optics was not immediate since the only community college with the major is in Buffalo. The vision care technology program at ECC is full time and includes internship hours that requires students to have a car.

Bilingual Education

Ongoing issues persist regarding the implementation bilingual education in the Rochester City School District. During 2009-2010, the lack of a permanent director of bilingual education and limited slots for bilingual students at the secondary level were identified as major issues (Kiyama &Harris, 2010). Since that time, the RCSD hired a permanent director of bilingual education, Marya Ortiz, in 2014. However, there were still limited slots for students in the bilingual program at the secondary level during 2015-2016. Schools, such as Northeast and Northwest College Prep, took students who were supposed to be enrolled in the bilingual program at James Monroe High School but limited space prevented placement. Table X shows the top 16 non-bilingual schools requiring alternative language Spanish Language Support for Academics (RCSD, 2015). James Monroe High School hit capacity at 1,100 by October 2016. The inability to serve more students at James Monroe High Schools was further impacted by lack of space in their temporary building, the old Marshall High School campus, and the lack of certified bilingual teachers. The East High EPO also has an impact on bilingual education capacity in the RCSD since they did not enroll students after BEDS day unless students lived in the neighborhood or their cohort numbers were not met.

Table 27:Top 10 Non-Bilingual Schools requiring Alternative Language Spanish Language Support for Academics

School	#Hispanics
Mary McLeod Bethune	34
Helen Barrett Montgomery	45
World of Inquiry	40
Northeast College Prep	67
Northwest College Prep	40
School of the Arts	111
Robert Brown HS for Construction at Edison	87
Rochester Science Technology Engineering and Math High School	65
Vanguard Collegiate High School	56
Integrated Arts and Technology High School	76

(2014-2018 Bilingual Department Action Plan)

The lack of the certified bilingual teachers (including those with additional certification in core academic subjects and special education) was a district-wide problem and contributed particularly to the shortage of student openings in the bilingual program at the secondary level. Schools leaders expressed the desire for the RCSD to hold earlier recruitment with employment offers extended prior to fall and spring graduations. When the RCSD extend employment offers in late summer, the pool of certified bilingual teachers is limited and school leaders are often forced to hire anyone with a credential without regard to quality. In order to deal with the bilingual certified teacher shortfall, the Executive Director of English Language Learners (ELL) and Languages Other Than English (LOTE) and the Director of Bilingual Education made outreach to local colleges (e.g. Nazareth College, University of Rochester, and the College of Brockport) to locate staff before and at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. The Executive Director of ELL and LOTE and the Director of Bilingual Education were able to recruit graduate students from local graduate programs as long-term substitutes. In the short-term these graduate

students will be in the pipeline to fill openings in the RCSD. In the long-term the substitute bilingual teachers are not a permanent solution to the national shortage.

Through the Teacher Leader Quality Program (TLQP) and the Teacher Opportunity Collaborative (TOC) Programs at Nazareth, RCSD teachers have the opportunity to obtain grants to pay for the bilingual extension or TESOL certification. This program expects to fund 12 teachers each year from 2015-2018. TLQP provides professional development at School #9 and a summer literacy institute for TLQP teachers and their students. In addition, the RCSD was included as partners in U.S. Department of Education proposals with Nazareth College and the University of Rochester for funding to increase bilingual certified teachers. If these proposals are accepted, new funding for teacher certification will be available during fall 2016. Since the bilingual teacher shortfalls are related to national teacher shortages for emergent bilingual teachers, then more proactive and innovative steps are needed to secure adequate bilingual certified staff.

Bilingual Teacher Pipeline Recommendations:

- Extend bilingual teacher recruitment to New York City including Mercy College (a Hispanic Serving Institution) and Hunter College.
- Provide Bilingual Department a budget for recruiting visits.
- Provide incentives for teacher recruitment and retention including stipends, relocation funds, Rochester home buying grants, and student loan forgiveness.
- Target RCSD teachers who are substitutes in bilingual programs and provide incentives to obtain bilingual extension.
- Establish a Grow Your Own teacher development pipeline to include RCSD paraprofessionals.
  - The program would provide funds to achieve bilingual certification at local colleges and universities.
  - Create a partnership between Monroe Community College and four year colleges (e.g. College of Brockport) to support paraprofessionals as they pursue a college degree and/or bilingual certification.
  - Offer courses that lead to certification at the RCSD.
  - Provide release time for paraprofessionals to take classes during the workday.
  - Recruit OACES (Office of Adult Continuing Education Services) students to get bilingual teacher certification.
- Establish a pipeline for bilingual teacher preparation among RCSD high school students.
  - Do career education with students enrolled in bilingual programs in elementary through high school to create awareness about a profession as a bilingual teacher or school-based professional (e.g. school psychologist, guidance counselor).
  - Programs such as the Teaching and Learning Institute (TLI) at East High can be replicated in other high schools. A senior seminar can be developed where students are introduced to concepts and methods regarding teaching and learning. Students would be able to shadow teachers and engage in tutoring.
  - Create a teacher pathway, such as a magnet program, where students go on to a 4 year college to gain a degree in teacher education (e.g. University of Texas at El Paso and the Socratic Institute at Riverside High School; Puente Academy, Brooklyn, New York).

    - Create a CTE pathway for those interested in bilingual education as a profession at East and James Monroe High Schools with the opportunities for students on other RCSD campuses to be dually enrolled.
- Create Bilingual Education teacher corps to develop a cadre of faculty committed to the education of bilingual students. Both experienced and novice teachers would be recruited. This program would be a national strategy for recruitment in partnership with the City of Rochester and local colleges with bilingual education programs. A teacher corps would allow for strategic allocation of bilingual educators in the RCSD. It would be advertised in publications such as Diverse Issues in Higher in Education, Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, and National Association for Bilingual Education. This initiative can be modeled after NYC Men Teach, an initiative that comes out of Mayor de Blasio's Young Men's Initiative and in partnership with the NYC Department of Education, the City University of New York, and Teacher for America. For more information see http://www1.nyc.gov/site/ymi/teach/nyc-men-teach.page
- Hire more bilingual certified teachers than those dictated by annual bilingual enrollment projections to ensure that adequate personnel are available during the year given the historical shortages confronted over the years. The pool of extra bilingual teachers can be used in creative ways to provide additional classroom support when students who need bilingual supports are places in non-bilingual settings. This will help to support bilingual students that enter the RCSD after the school year has begun. Since these teachers have multiple certifications, they can also teach courses that tend to enroll monolingual English speaking students.

Newcomer Students

The plight of newcomer students and families to the RCSD is related to the limited space in the bilingual program at the secondary level and the shortage of certified teachers to serve emergent bilingual students in the district. As indicated above, the number of Latina/o and emergent bilingual students continues to grow in the RCSD. Factors that contribute to this growth include the economic crisis in Puerto Rico and the mass closing of Puerto Rican schools. As a result, the RCSD must be prepared to deal with who possess a range of students needs as they transition into school programs especially at the secondary level. School personnel focused attention during 2015-2016 on Latina/o students with limited English proficiency, not on grade level, and older than grade level peers. One response to this challenge was to create a newcomer program at James Monroe High School to respond to the specific needs of this population.

The implementation of the newcomer program at Monroe began at the beginning of the 2015-2016 academic year. The following describes its features.

- The program targets any student who has less than one year in the country.
- Students are placed in an intense language program.
- Essential to this program are the ESOL and ELA per 154, double period of Algebra I, then whatever bilingual course the student needs per grade level
- All parents receive an individual orientation provided by the school's parent center. We talk about services, community support, and adjusting to James Monroe.
- Newcomer students at James Monroe are not placed an isolated program. You would never know who is in the program and receiving the services

- School staff monitor language acquisition and as soon as they begin to gather language growth, they are moved by the year to not have the cluster of classes, but be part of the bilingual regular program.

Central office staff, school leadership, and community stakeholders from the Latina/o community have argued for a standalone Newcomer Program for Hispanic (NPH) students similar to Rochester International Academy (RIA) (Kiyama & Harris, 2015). Such a program can provide students and their families with all academic and social supports as they transition to the RCSD at any time during the year.

The following proposals were designed by the Director of Bilingual Education and offer several pathways to support newcomer students at the secondary level.

1. The NPH would be specially designed as an option for newly arrived Hispanics to help orient students to the New York State system and the school. As a separate and relatively self-contained intervention, it would be focused on meeting the academic and transitional needs of the newly arrived Hispanics. Typically, students would attend this setting before entering one of the more traditional options available (Transitional Bilingual, Dual Language, Bilingual CTE or Twilight Program). Students would stay in the program up to 12 school months (Ortiz, 2015).

2. Bilingual Vocational Hybrid (BVH): The BVH is a specially designed option for Multi-Lingual Hispanics and are effective in preparing students for success because they provide a hands-on and engaging environment for learning that is not exclusively language dependent. The Bilingual Vocational Hybrid would begin in 9th grade and by 10th or 11th grade (program dependent) students declare an emphasis. This program would be open to students who are transitioned from the Newcomer for Hispanics Program (NHP) and for newly arrived on grade 9th graders who voluntarily wish to enroll. This is a half day option coupled with bilingual core instruction in another program in the district. This program would exist where current district programs are offered. The trainings allow students the opportunity to interact with the world of work, so they can be trained in the process of decision making and skills own field selection. Expertise, safety principles and positive attitudes, provide them improve their human condition, becoming productive and useful to society beings are emphasized.

   The Industrial Vocational Education Program's mission is to achieve the comprehensive training for our at-risk youth. All courses are offered at the secondary level with duration ranging from one, two or three years (Ortiz, 2015).

3. Bilingual Twilight: The Twilight School program provides newly arrived 16-20 year old Hispanics and Spanish dominant students options for earning/regaining lost credits. The program assists students who are at risk of dropping out of school an opportunity for credit recovery during extended hours.

   The Bilingual Twilight program would combine components of several education models implemented in the district: blended learning (e.g., the combination of online and face-to-face instruction), alternative instruction hours, and dropout recovery. The APEX model would be

> used and translated to support this work. Students move through course work at their own pace. Once a student achieves a passing rate in a course, the student can enroll in additional courses. While the goal of the Bilingual Twilight program is high school graduation, we will also set students' sights on college entrance and career preparation.
>
> Part-time Twilight students would attend their home school full time during the school day and then attend the Twilight program afterward. Full-time Twilight students attend the program 4-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday. Part-time students may take a maximum of two courses per session or four per school year, and full-time Twilight students may take a maximum of three courses per session (Ortiz, 2015).

As the existing newcomer program at James Monroe develops and additional proposals to expand services to newcomer Latina/o, Spanish speaking students are considered, an evaluation will be essential to program development. The development of implementation and impact studies are needed to assess the scale up of the newcomer program, program efficacy, and student progress.

Academic language acquisition

Academic language acquisition is directly related to both student learning and assessment outcomes. A number of school staff at James Monroe and East High schools discussed the importance of getting students in the bilingual education program to achieve English proficiency by the end of high school. Given the changes in the commissioner's regulations, schools must move toward promoting Spanish and English proficiency. East is moving to implement a dual language approach where instruction is initially in Spanish only and moves toward instruction that is split between English and Spanish.

A related challenge confronted regarding academic language acquisition is the fact that secondary level teachers in content areas who are not bilingual lacked instructional strategies. For example, one school leader indicate teachers lack sufficient skills to help emergent bilingual students to understand the Spanish cognates associated with subject specific content. Translanguaging provides strategies that K-12 teachers can use to help student identify English and Spanish cognates. "Translanguaging refers to pedagogical practices that use bilingualism as [a] resource, rather than ignore it or perceive it as a problem (Celic & Seltzer, 2013, p.1)." These practices can be used by monolingual teachers to facilitate learning of emergent bilingual students and situate bilingualism and multilingualism as an asset within the classroom. Translanguaging was used by bilingual teachers at School #28 during 2015-2016. Hulda Yau, second grade teacher at #28 lead a professional learning circle with K-3 teachers in her school. She is an important district expert to support other teachers with creating learning circles regarding translanguaging.

Bilingual Curricula and Assessments

The Director of Bilingual Education introduced new curriculum including ENIL:Evaluación del nivel indepeniente di lectura for emergent bilingual students. ENIL addresses reading and writing in Spanish. At the secondary level, leadership and teachers request more bilingual texts in all content areas. Bilingual program leadership at East High indicated difficulty finding math and science curricula with complementary materials in Spanish.

Additional Spanish assessments in tested subjects (math and science) are needed to provide valid instruments to test emergent bilingual knowledge. With the current assessments it is difficult to disentangle whether the outcomes derived from English assessments of math or science are the result of student content knowledge or English proficiency. Since the NWEA is computerized and require headphones (at the primary level), emergent bilingual students are unable to use bilingual dictionaries or receive other allowed accommodations.

Multicultural Education Policy

The Multicultural Education Policy 4350 was revised in the spring 2016 to be more inclusive with language that recognizes the range of racial/ethnic, cultural, and linguistic of student subgroups in the RCSD. The need language regarding this policy reads

> The Board of Education believes that the learning environment in district schools must reflect diverse cultural traditions and contributions. Such an environment allows students to develop a broader knowledge base, as well as sense of respect for and understanding of culturally diverse peoples, their customs and historic legacy. Every child should be provided well rounded PK-12 instruction that incorporates the history, perspectives, and culture of Black/African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans (as well as others) in all areas of the curriculum as an integral part of her or his total school experience.
>
> A multicultural perspective in curriculum development reflects the creation and dissemination of instructional materials which are accurate, comprehensive, (and inclusive of both indigenous perspectives and diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural community experiences. The information includes relevant facts, issues, values and viewpoints for all cultures, including those that have been historically omitted or misrepresented in the standard development of curriculum and instructional materials. This curriculum will be implemented via culturally relevant instructional strategies that are student-centered. As a result of the multicultural curricular and instructional environments in the RCSD, students will develop a positive sense of identity, strong academic skills and critical analytical competencies so as to address problems found in their community and an expanding global society (April 2016).

The substantive changes to the multicultural education policy moves the RCSD toward a formal recognition of groups beyond African American students by creating visibility for Latina/o and other groups (e.g. refugee population) in the RCSD. In our global society, the RCSD must take steps that reflect this reality through both policy and actions.

Although multicultural education is often associated with curricular changes, it extends to broader concerns regarding social justice in education. It requires attention to content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy (Banks, 1993).

Content integration refers to the use of knowledge about multiple groups and cultures in all curricula in schools including mathematics and science. This information is fully synthesized in curriculum and instruction of each discipline/

Knowledge Construction focuses on the ways that teachers facilitate student understand the development of knowledge and the implications for diverse peoples who vary by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language.

Prejudice Reduction relates to practices or lessons that allow for students to expand their positive understanding of others.

Equity pedagogy refers to the instructional strategies used to promote the academic achievement especially among students of color. It focuses knowledge construction and promotes the development of critical and reflection thinking among students (Banks, 1993; Banks & Banks, 2001).

A key concern expressed during the Board of Education Policy Committee meetings regarding the revision of the Multicultural Education policy was how does the RCSD implement such a policy? A draft multicultural action plan was drafted by Dr. Jennifer Gkourlias, Dr. Donna Harris, Djinga St. Louis, and Audra Schmitt in order to begin a process to implement the multicultural education policy. The first step taken was to identify existing efforts that aligned with the dimensions of multicultural education including content integration.

- By summer 2016 audit current curricula to ensure that it aligns with multicultural educational policy. Determine the criteria for curricula and book adoption and curricula development.
- Transform primary curricula and classrooms as centers of community building and cultural centers.
- Between fall 2016 and May 2017 create schools as centers for healing and affirmation including restorative justice. Develop and implement PLC for teachers facilitated by Joy DeGruy. Create 15 pilot restorative practice schools that are trauma informed.
- Teacher hiring process designed to select those who have the knowledge and dispositions to serve as highly effective teachers of racially and linguistically diverse children (e.g. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Geneva Gay, Angela Valenzuela). Determine criteria for teacher selection.
- Design and Implement Professional Learning Communities. Implement an urban teacher summit to expose teachers to best-practices.
    - Embed content area conferences.
    - Matching teachers in order to make practice public. Opening classroom doors (e.g. #8). Between classroom visitation. Non-punitive activities. Video clips. Start with a smaller cohort of schools.
    - Connect with school building leaders during the summer to build capacity and anchor in this work. Follow through in the building to ensure implementation.
- Examine institutional barriers (e.g. Regents test success) to academic courses such as AP and electives.

Curriculum Integration via Latino Studies Curriculum

The revised Multicultural Education Policy charges the Superintendent or her/his designee to ensure the infusion in the curriculum as well as the implementation of courses such as Latina/o studies along with African American Studies at the secondary level. During the fall 2016 the Latina/o Studies course will be piloted on East High School and Edison campuses and curriculum development will occur during summer 2016. This will include the Executive Director of Curriculum and Special Projects, Dr. Jennifer Gkourlias, faculty at East and Edison high schools, and students. In addition, content integration regarding Latina/o knowledge will occur within the K-2 curriculum review facilitated by Dr. Gkourlias and the curriculum committee. A community partnership with playwrights , Annette Ramos (Rochester Latino Theatre Company) and Don Bartalo who wrote "Separate Is Never Equal" is emerging that premiered in June. Separate Is Never Equal is a play about the experience of Sylvia Mendez and her family's pursuit of the federal desegregation case Mendez v. Westminster in California. This court case set the legal precedent for the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) Supreme Court case. The play and its curriculum will be integrated into the district's ELA and arts curriculum. In addition, Duncan Tonatiuh's children book, Separate Is Never Equal, will be used for summer school.

Latino Studies Course Framework
Rochester City School District

The Latino Studies (1101S) will be offered as an elective in all RCSD high schools. The course provides students with a historical overview about the origins of Latino populations and culture in the Americas and the Caribbean with attention to the social construction of multiple identities shaped by ethnicity, race, gender, language, and colonization. The curriculum is focused on developing an understanding about the social, political, and economic forces that shape the status, contributions, and outcomes of the Latina/o community in various social institutions.

The inclusion of this course in all RCSD secondary building expands culturally relevant curriculum and instruction in the RCSD. Latino studies (like other courses such as Pan African Studies) expand the inclusiveness of academic content offered to students beyond the traditional social studies canon because the focus is centered on those of Latino origins. As a result, the experiences of Latinos are not marginalized by the narrative of White-European historical narratives (Sleeter, 2011). In particular, this course offering will allow Latino students (and other students of color) to see themselves embedded within the curriculum. A number of districts across the county including Chicago and Tucson have implemented Latino studies courses focused on Latinos. In 2014, San Francisco Unified School District expanded ethnic studies courses in all of its high schools (SFUSD, 2014). Research from Arizona confirms that the enrollment in Mexican American studies courses was positively associated with several academic outcomes including high school graduation (Cabera, Milem, & Marx, 2012). Sleeter's (2011) literature review regarding the impact of ethnic studies on student engagement and achievement revealed that most studies reported that enrollment in these courses had a positive impact on the engagement and learning outcomes for students of color at the K-12 levels.

The Latino Studies course in the RCSD will be an inquiry-based learning environment where students are at the center of knowledge creation. Given this focus, students will engage in authentic learning where instruction is linked to the world outside of the classroom. Among the shifts in these classrooms is that the course instructor is a facilitator of learning; instruction focuses on deep conceptual understanding of

topics; and students use multiple sources of information to synthesize and interpret. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge through multiple formats. The course's instructional design aligns with the New York State Social Studies Framework and the National Council for the Social Studies' College, Career, & Civic Life C3 Framework. Students enrolled in this course will be expected to demonstrate critical reasoning through advanced literacy, research, oral presentation, and writing. A key feature of the course is service learning projects that engage students with a local, state, national, or international issue confronted by the Latino community. Service learning is defined as "…an educational technique that incorporates community service into the academic curriculum. Service-learning differs from generic community service in that it has specific academic goals, is organized through schools, and involves reflection activities for the participants (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008, p.7). This learning approach offers new ways to engage student learning and foster student persistence (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008).

As an inquiry-based course, Latino Studies is designed to draw on the resources that students bring with them to school including Spanish language proficiency (see Luis Moll's concept Funds of Knowledge). The course can include course readings and documents in Spanish and English in order to draw on the linguistic resources that emergent bilinguals bring to school. Using primary documents in Spanish reflects an important aspect of New York State Social Studies Standards since the use and interpretation of multiple information sources of information is desired (NYSED,n.d. Field Guide). This shift has the potential to expand the opportunity to learn for Spanish dominant students enrolled in Latino Studies because they possess an expertise essential to learning.

Course Goals

Students enrolled in this course will

- Gain and express a broader knowledge about issues regarding Latina/o identity, history, and culture.
- Synthesize and integrate major ideas of course via class discussion, presentations, and written assignments.
- Develop writing skills for college and career readiness.

Course Organization

The course is organized around 3 overarching themes[i].

1. Common Roots and Diverse Identities
2. Shaping Latino Citizenship
3. Struggles and Triumphs through the New Century

*Additional Resources***:**

Websites

http://clacs.as.nyu.edu/object/clacs.k12outreach.curricularmaterials.arizonaethnicstudies

Books

Joel Spring (2004). *Deculturalization and the Struggle for Equality: A Brief History of Dominated Cultures in the United States* (4nd Edition). New York: McGraw Hill

Rogelio Saenz and Aurelia Lorena Muraga (2011). *Latino Studies*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO

Course Requirements may include:

1. **Service-based learning project** where a small group engages in understanding an issue confronted by the Latino community to be address (e.g. the Dream Act). E.g. students may do a project where they interview leaders in the Latino community who have fought for community rights in the city.
2. **Personal Artifacts** Students will create an artifact to represent their ethnic/racial identity. This activity will relate to understanding the historical origins of Latino heritage – linking to Indigenous, European, and African influences. When this task is completed during the end of the course, students will make presentations. These projects will be used to link to themes identified in the course.
3. **End of Course Poster Session**: At the end of the course, students will present final projects during a poster session with their peers, school staff, and families.

**As the Latino Studies course is implemented attention must be focused on student enrollments to ensure that emergent bilingual students have access.

Parent Engagement

Engagement is a key issue parents mentioned at school climate focus groups conducted at James Monroe, School #9, and Wilson Foundation Academy. They desired to have better communication with schools and greater access to schools at any time during the day. Other issues discussed include

- Improved supports for students with an IEP placed in regular education settings.
- Help parents understand curricular materials and textbooks.
- Publish report card in English and Spanish.
- Special education suspensions need to be examined.
- Additional mental health professional and emergency services (e.g. food) are needed.

Parents recommended the following to address their engagement.

- Host breakfast or lunch for parents and teachers in order to build relationships.
- Help zone for parents regarding homework.
- A reminder to parents that report cards are coming out (e.g. text).

The RCSD has implemented initiatives that target Latina/o families through the Ibero American Action League. Ibero supports parents through its Family Service Assistance program and Padres Comprometidos. Family services assistants work with families of identified students who are confronting academic and/or socio-emotional challenges at East High School. The bilingual staff conduct home visits to assess family needs and connect families and students with needed services. Padres Comprometidos is a national initiative developed by the National Council of La Raza that is implemented in Rochester. The program is eight weeks with a parent orientation and workshops on topics related to adolescent development, effective communication, New York State Standards,

graduation requirements, and college preparation and financial aid. Parents engage in homework assignments where they must apply the skills learned during the workshop. Parents had to make appointments with their children's teachers. This program can be easily replicated throughout the school district to support parents as they navigate the RCSD.

The Bilingual Department piloted a homework assistance program at School #9 on the fourth Tuesday of the month beginning spring 2016. Parents and their children came to these sessions to get academic support and learn strategies to use at home. Parents were also exposed to the Engage New York lessons available online. This program can be formalized through a budget and a predetermined calendar that is shared in the RCSD annual calendar (hardcopy and online). In order to gain parent participants, more advertisement is needed including announcements on Ibero's radio station PODER (97.1 FM).

Parent Engagement

Envisioning a New Parent Orientation Process in the Rochester City School District

Efforts are being focused on rethinking Bilingual Parent Orientation in the Rochester City School District in response to 1) New York State regulations (e.g. CR 154) and 2) internal data examining the needs of Latino and bilingual families.

As a result of this expectation, the RCSD must ensure that its existing orientation programs at the district level align with these updated regulations. This opportunity also allows the RCSD to address limitations of existing practices and adjust orientation activities to fully serve the emerging needs of newcomer families in the district given the growth of Latino and refugee populations.

The orientation process for bilingual parents currently happens in two phases at *central office (phase 1)* and the *receiving school (phase 2).*

This proposal for a revised bilingual parent orientation includes the following:

Parent orientation occurs at several sites

- Central office at the time of assessment and placement.
- Monthly orientation at central office with community partners including the Bilingual Council and Ibero.
- Community-based agency sites including Catholic Family Services
- Secondary-level school selection events at GO 7and Go 9 (these are entry points for students into secondary schools).

Parent Resource Room

- Create a parent resource room with a telephone, computer, and parent resources with current information about academic and extracurricular programs at school sites. Computers are used to examine school websites and the phone is available to call schools to obtain information to inform school choice

- Include parent volunteers, such as the bilingual council, and community-based program staff (e.g. Ibero) to support parents as they select schools.
- Create videos in multiple languages for the RCSD webpages about bilingual program options and description of schools. These videos will support new parent orientation and the school selection process. (see St. Paul Public Schools website at http://www.spps.org/Domain/9424)

Orientation program materials

- Incorporate new materials from NYSED for ELLs in the family orientation folders.
- Revise school brochures.

Student registration

- Develop advertisement to be aired during the spring on PODR (97.1 FM) to inform parents about school registration before August.

Resources for student registration and placement in August

- Plan for seasonal staffing for student placement in August with budget.
- Identify and reserve additional testing space in central office.
- Extend student placement hours beyond 5 p.m. one night per week in August.
- Offer student placement personnel flex time between 3 p.m. – 7 p.m. in order to ensure staff coverage for extended hours in August.

Multilingual website

- Redesign district website with translation capacity in several languages including Spanish, Karen, etc.
- School Selection Guides should be in low incidence languages that are also downloadable from website.
- School videos should be available in multiple languages beyond English. See St. Paul Public Schools as an example of school choice videos at http://www.spps.org/Domain/9424

Student assessment

- Use computer-based assessment to facilitate literacy and numeracy assessment in home language for Spanish speakers.

School-based orientation

- Central office conducts investigation to examine the different ways schools provide orientation that is aligned with New York state CR154 regulations to families of emergent bilingual students.
- Develop a handbook to be distributed to RCSD staff about the RCSD bilingual department with information about the student placement process, central office and school-based staff, ELL policy, parent resources, and professional development resources for schools.
- Conduct professional development for school staff about the central office orientation and placement process for emergent bilinguals with the distribution of Engage New York materials regarding parent orientation implementation.

Conclusion

The improvement of educational outcomes for Latina/o students at the secondary level has been mixed. Although graduation rates have fluctuated, dropout rates are decreasing. Even though the RCSD invests in efforts to improve instruction, transform school climate, and extend learning opportunities, the needs of Latina/o and bilingual students are not being fully met. The continuing shortage of bilingual teachers is crucial to the learning opportunities for many Latina/o students especially newcomers. Without qualified teachers, the educational needs of emergent bilingual students will likely go unfulfilled. In order to meet the needs of bilingual students, some argue for increased financial commitment to invest in bilingual educators and culturally and linguistically relevant instructional resources. Increased funding would allow the RCSD to create a pipeline of bilingual teachers and staff. Additional funds can help with teacher retention. Adequate instructional resources and new assessments in Spanish are also necessary to properly evaluate bilingual student learning in the content areas. Additional resources are needed to support the efforts of the bilingual education department and sustain efforts of community organizations such as Ibero American Action League. The RCSD must constantly monitor how state policy, such as the receivership law, impact Latina/o progress. Data systems must be created to constantly assess the opportunity gaps encountered by Latina/o students in academic programs including Advanced Placement.

As the number of emergent bilingual students increases, the RCSD will need to commit funds to expand the newcomer programs that meet the educational and vocational needs of students. Latina/o and bilingual parents must become partners in education. Teachers and school leaders must be willing to go into the community and learn about the needs of Latina/o families and recognize community assets. Trusting relationships between school staff and families can be encouraged via home visit and attending community events including sporting events.

Efforts to change school climate and decrease school suspension with the Code of Conduct revision and restorative practice implementation are important for Latina/o students. The implementation of the multicultural education policy and implementation of the Latino Studies course fosters a learning environment that draws on cultural knowledge of the Latina/o community. However, these changes in school climate must be supported by having adequate staff who can meet the socio-emotional, linguistic, and academic needs Latina/o and bilingual students.

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School Experiences of Latina/o[1] Students: A Community-Based Study of Resources, Challenges, and Successes

Part I

Judy Marquez Kiyama, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Donna M. Harris, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Educational Leadership

Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education & Human Development

University of Rochester

With:

Nancy Ares, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Amalia Dache-Gerbino, Doctoral Student

Sandra Quiñones, Doctoral Student

Monica L. Miranda Smalls, Doctoral Student

Anibal Soler, Doctoral Student

Emily Martinez Vogt, Doctoral Student

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[1] In this study we will use the term Latina/o to represent this racial, ethnic, and language diverse population that includes Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, as well as others from the Caribbean, Central America, and South American. Hispanic is another term that is also used to describe our population.

Report Overview

This preliminary, report details initial findings from a collaborative research study conducted by researchers from the University of Rochester's Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development (hereinafter referred to as the Warner School). Informed by a community call to action regarding concerns about the Latina/o drop-out problem within the Rochester City School District, we, the researchers, together with the Education Task Force of the Ibero-American Action League, Inc. established the following research questions:

- What are the critical transition points for Latina/o students in the Rochester City School District?
- What contributes to the development of educational aspirations of Latina/o students?

We were interested in understanding what factors influenced Latina/o students' transition through their educational pathways. Specifically, we sought to understand the barriers that impacted Latina/o student drop-out. Data for this study included student records from the Rochester City School District (RCSD) regarding educational status and attainment between 2003 and 2007. Additionally, we conducted 31 focused groups, which included 41 parents or guardians and 95 current and/or former students at nine community locations. The majority of participants identified as Puerto Rican.

Our findings are presented through RCSD student records which detail Latina/o student drop-out and transition trends. Additionally, data from focus group interviews reveal multiple factors that influence Latina/o student drop-out, transition and persistence. Drop-out factors include safety in schools, structural and organizational factors within schools, and racial and ethnic tensions. Transition factors include geographic transition and adaptation and acculturation factors. Finally, persistence factors include the role of community and school-based programs and the influence of persistence factors on the development of educational aspirations. Recommendations are presented following each section.

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Table 1: Student Participants by School 8

Table 2: Student Participants by Grade Level 9

Table 3: RCSD Drop-Out Trends 14

Table 4: GED Transfer Data for RCSD 15

Table 5: 2004-2005 7th Grade Status 23

Table 6: 2005-2006 8th Grade Status 24

Table 7: 2006-2007 9th Grade Status 24

Table 8: 2004-2005 10th Grade Status 25

Table 9: 2005-2006 11th Grade Status 26

Table 10: 2006-2007 12th Grade Status 26

A Call to Action

The persistent high dropout rate and underachievement among Latina/o students in Rochester, NY prompted a community mobilization effort during 2008 by the Ibero-American Action League to examine the complex issues related to educational attainment (Ibero-American Action League, 2008). This study was an outgrowth of the community's efforts to understand and address Latina/o educational attainment and dropout trends, representing a partnership between Ibero-American Action League and researchers from the University of Rochester. This study is framed by the concept of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Through this lens, we approached this study with the view that Latino/a youth and families have experiences and opinions that need to be heard and resources to be drawn upon, rather than viewing Latina/o youth and families as problems to be resolved. Therefore, our aim in the data collection process was to engage youth and families in identifying both problems and solutions, and offering recommendations.

This study grew out of concerns about the low levels of achievement, low graduations rates, and high dropout rates among Latina/os in the Rochester City School District (RCSD) that have been well documented in key reports from 1986 (RCSD, 1986) and 1999 (RCSD, 1999) and in local media (Brizard, 2007). Latina/os make up about 12.5% of the total population of Rochester, with the predominant group being Puerto Rican (9.96%)[2] and just over 20% of the total RCSD population includes Latina/o students.[3] Recent RCSD data indicates that only 38% of Latina/os have graduated from high school compared to the district average of 51% (Ibero-American Action League, 2008). In light of the persistent and dismal outcomes for Latina/o students in the RCSD, this study was conducted to examine the school experiences of secondary students and recent dropouts with attention to their transitions between schools and grade levels in Rochester.

An Educational Task Force was assembled by the Ibero-American Action League consisting of community members, students, and parents. This Task Force was charged with implementing the education strategies outlined by the Ibero-American Action League strategic plan and creating and implementing action items based on the current research project (Ibero-American Action League, 2009).

State of Latina/o Education

Latina/os are the fastest growing population in the United States and Latina/o children make up 20% of those under eighteen years old (Mather & Foxen, 2010). Mather and Foxen (2010) report that 63% of Latina/o adults eighteen and older are U.S. citizens and 58% of children under eighteen live in immigrant households. These data suggest that many Latina/o students live in complex families where U.S. citizenship varies among its members. In addition, Latina/os make up 33% of the total population in poverty in the United States. For Latina/o children living in single parent households the rate of poverty is disproportionately high compared to the total child population. That is, 38% of

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[2] Information based on 2000 Census Data. Note that more accurate data will be available after 2010 Census Data information is shared.
[3] Information retrieved from http://www.schoolmatters.com/schools.aspx/q/page=dl/did=12765/midx=StudentDemographics.

Latina/o children living in single parent households were in poverty compared to 32% of the all U.S. children living in single parent households during 2008.

With respect to education, over one third of Latina/o students were found in the 100 largest school districts in the country during the 2004-2005 academic year (Garofano & Sable, 2008). These schools tend to serve a disproportionate number of poor students and 12% of all students served in these schools include English Language Learners and migrant students (Garofano & Sable, 2008). Overall, 80% of English Language Learners across all public schools are Latina/o and Spanish speakers (Mather & Foxen, 2010).

Educational attainment

It is well documented that a disproportionate number of Latina/o students do not complete high school (Orfield, Losen, Wald & Swanson, 2004). Latina/os continue to have the lowest educational attainment of all racial/ethnic groups with approximately 43% of Latina/os achieving less than a high school diploma. When reviewing Latina/o subgroup educational attainment statistics, 49% of Mexicans and 33% of Puerto Ricans have less than a high school diploma with Cubans obtaining the highest high school completion rate at almost 39% (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004). According to Perez Huber et al. (2006), out of every 100 Latina/o students who enter elementary school in the United States, 54 will graduate from high school and of these students only 11 will graduate from college, with only four graduating from graduate or professional school, and less than one will earn a doctoral degree (p. 2). National dropout estimates show that although dropout rates have decreased since the late 1980s, the rates of dropouts for Latina/os are higher than national averages. For example, while 8.7% of young people from a cohort of 16 to 24 year olds in 2007 dropped out of high school without obtaining a GED, dropout rates for Latina/os was 21.4% (Synder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009). In addition, Puerto Ricans have experienced high rates of dropouts particularly in large urban cities including Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York City for almost 40 years (Nieto, 2003). Exiting high school leaves limited educational and occupational opportunities as once Latina/o students drop out of high school, only 10% obtain their GED and the unemployment rates for those with a GED are lower than high school graduates (Fry, 2010). As a result of dropping out, Latina/os have limited access to jobs that provide living wages and are at high risk for involvement with crime and the social welfare system (Belford, 2008). Therefore, finding ways to keep Latina/o students in school provides the best chance for long-term educational success.

The Study

Informed by the community call to action described above, we, the researchers, together with the Education Task Force of the Ibero-American Action League established the following research questions:

- What are the critical transition points for Latina/o students in the Rochester City School District?
- What contributes to the development of educational aspirations of Latina/o students?

The questions resulted from multiple meetings with the Education Task Force that began in December of 2008 and continue today. We have intentionally developed a community-based design

for this research and are guided by the assumption that research seeking to understand the experiences of marginalized groups should be approached from an asset-based, culturally relevant perspective. As such, our mixed-methods study is guided by three primary theoretical frameworks:

> (1) Community-based research: engages the community as participatory partners in project research design and implementation, values community knowledge and works towards shared understanding and improved ways to address societal problems (Israel, Eng, Schulz, Parker, 2005; Polanyi & Cockburn, 2003).
>
> (2) Funds of knowledge: refers to the bodies of knowledge and skills in a household that have accumulated over time (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).
>
> (3) Community cultural wealth: recognizes the "knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression" (Yosso & Garcia, 2007, p. 154; Yosso, 2005).

The next steps for this study involved requesting individual, student records from the Rochester City School District regarding educational status and attainment between fall 2003 and spring 2007 in February 2009 and creating the focus group interview questions that were first piloted with a group of parents and students in March of 2009. Over the course of the next few months the interview questions were refined and official requests were submitted to the University of Rochester and the Rochester City School District (RCSD). We requested permission to conduct focus group interviews and obtain RCSD student records. In August of 2009 we received approval to move forward with the study from the University of Rochester and in October of 2009 we began recruiting participants.

Recruitment. Recruitment was a multi-step process that included community nominations of students and family members from school counselors, local community leaders, teachers, and community advocates. Information letters were sent to every nominated student or parent. Additionally, RCSD provided the research team with a contact list of parents of students who had dropped-out of school. These individuals and their families were also sent information letters and invited to participate. Finally, recruitment occurred through already established programs within schools (e.g. Puerto Rican Youth Development, the Urban League and the Family Literacy Program) and through community events like the PRYD College Fair and the RCSD Parent Forum.

Timeframe and locations: Focus group interviews began in November of 2009 and continued until April of 2010 (see Appendix A). Focus group interviews were held at nine community locations including: Puerto Rican Youth Development, Monroe High School, East High School, Franklin High School, St. Michael's Catholic Church, School 9: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, School 22: Lincoln Elementary School, the RCSD Office of Adult and Career Education Services, and the University of Rochester.

Participants: In total, we conducted 31 focused groups, which included 41 parents or guardians and 95 current and/or former students. Of the parent/guardian participants, 83% (34 parents) were female and 17% (7 parents) were male. Of the student participants, 56% (54 students) were female and 43% (41 students) were male. Students represented seven of the district high schools (including several schools within schools), three of the local higher education institutions and former RCSD students (either transfer or drop-out). The majority of participants identified as Puerto Rican, but also offered the following as personal identifiers: Cuban, Dominican, Hispanic, and Latina/o. Over ten

participants identified as biracial or bi-ethnic (e.g. Puerto Rican and Black and/or another Latina/o subgroup like Dominican, Mexican, and/or Cuban). The following tables demonstrate the student breakdown by high school, grade and gender.

Table 1: Focus group student participants by school

SCHOOL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
East HS	8	8	16
Edison HS	3	2	5
Franklin HS	10	6	16
Jefferson HS	1	1	2
Monroe HS	22	9	31
School Without Walls	1	2	3
Wilson HS	1	0	1
RCSD Grad (Medaille)	1	0	1
RCSD Grad (MCC)	2	0	2
RCSD Grad (UR)	0	1	1
Former RCSD (transfer)	0	1	1
Drop-out / Push-out youth	5	11	16
TOTAL	**54**	**41**	**95**

Table 2: Focus group student participants by grade level

GRADE LEVEL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
7th	3	4	7
8th	5	2	7
9th	13	10	23
10th	8	4	12
11th	8	3	11
12th	9	5	14
Community College	2	0	2
Four-Year Inst.	1	1	2
Drop-Out Youth	5	11	16
Did not report	0	1	1
TOTAL	**54**	**41**	**95**

Rochester City School District Data

In addition to the focus group interviews, this study makes use of quantitative, non-identifiable, individual student records provided by the Rochester City School District's Office of Research and Evaluation. Data for 6th and 9th grade students beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year through the end of 2006- 2007 provide a longitudinal view about student status and progress including information about student background, school enrollment, dropouts, grade level transitions, and academic outcomes such as grades, course credits, and standardized test scores over four academic years. There were 4,021 sixth grade students and 4,647 ninth grade students between 2003 and 2007 in this database of student records. This includes 767 Latina/o sixth grade students and 898 ninth grade students. The four years of data for 6th and 9th graders allow for a descriptive understanding about the grade levels that are critical for Latina/o student persistence in the local schools. Latina/o students made up 19% of the 8,668 sixth and ninth grade students in the school records database. Among the 767 Latina/o 6th graders in 2003-2004:

- 54% were male and 46% were female;
- 23% were Language English Proficient (LEP) or LEP exempt from reading,
- 17% were former LEP,
- 17% were labeled with a documented disability; and

- 81% were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Among the Latina/o 9th graders in 2003-2004:

- 50% were male and 50% were female;
- 20% were labeled as either LEP or LEP exempt from reading;
- 27% were former LEP students
- 22% had a documented disability; and
- 64% were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Latina/o Student Departure Trends in RCSD 2003-2007

We consider the process of student dropouts within a broader discussion regarding the various ways that students are characterized by the RCSD as leaving its schools. As a result, there are several reasons why students exit from the local schools including the fact that students can be expunged from the school rosters with 20 consecutive unexcused absences. The reasons that Latina/o students leave RCSD vary by whether students are in 6th through 8th grades versus 9th grade and above. For Latina/o students who leave RCSD during the upper elementary and middle grades (i.e. grades 6-8) the majority do so to attend another public or private school outside of the RCSD, district, or state. The RCSD database of school records indicate that:

- 92% (n=706) of Latina/o 6th graders in 2003-2004 were enrolled in RCSD schools,
- 7% (n=56) of the population left to attend a non-public school or a school outside of the district or state,
- 1% (n=5) left as result of leaving the United States, obtaining 20 consecutive, unexcused absences, or other reasons including placement in a reform school, youth home, jail, or a mental institution.

By 2005-2006 nearly 22% (n=171) of the Latina/o students who started in 6th grade two years prior in 2003-2004 left the RCSD with

- 20% (n=152) leaving to attend a non-public school or a school outside the district and state and
- 2% (n=19) were eliminated from RCSD rosters as a result of having 20 consecutive, unexcused absences, leaving the United States, changing schools or grades within the district, or other reasons.

At the high school level Latina/o students left the RCSD schools at higher rates compared to younger peers in elementary and middle grades between 2003 and 2007 and for different reasons. The RCSD

data show that by the end of the 2003-2004 academic year 24% (n=219) of the 898 Latina/o students at 9th grade exited RCSD including:

- 7% (n=58) either dropping out or leaving the RCSD to obtain a GED and
- 7% (n=58) leaving to attend a non-public school or a school outside of the district or state.

However, there were other reasons that the RCSD student records database provided as to why students left the local schools in addition to being officially considered a dropout or exiting to obtain a GED such as

- 6% (n=55) of Latina/os 9th graders were expunged from school rosters as a result of obtaining 20 consecutive, unexcused absences, and
- 4% (n=48) were no longer enrolled in RCSD because of expulsion, being a no show to a RSCD school, departure from the United States, or other reasons including placement in reform school, youth home, jail, or mental institution.

The rates of departure of Latina/o high school students significantly increased each year and 57% (n=518) of 898 Latina/o students who were 9th graders in 2003-2004 were no longer enrolled in the RCSD schools two years later in 2005-2006 where

- 17 % (n=154) of the Latina/os in this high school cohort had either dropped out or left to obtain a GED;
- 16% (n=144) left as a result of 20 consecutive, unexcused absences;
- 12% (n=108) left to attend a non-public or a school outside of the district or state;
- 6% (n=50) left because of being a no show to a RCSD school, reasons unknown, or being exempt from instruction;
- 6% (n=50) were no shows to a RCSD school, exempt from instruction, or for reasons unknown;
- 3% (n=28) were expelled, home schooled, left for a postsecondary institution without a diploma, changed school/grades within RCSD, or placed in reform school, youth home, jail, or mental institution.
- 2% (n=22) left the United States; and
- 1% (n=12) graduated with a local or Regents diploma.[4]

After four years of high school in 2006-2007, 39% of Latina/o students left the RCSD including:

- 5% (n=45) dropping out or leaving to obtain a GED;

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[4] The 1% of students that are reported as graduates represent students that either entered/reentered the RCSD between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 academic years or students behind grade level who were able to graduate .

- 22% (n=199) leaving to attend a non-public school or a school outside the district or state;
- 8% (N=68) leaving school for other reasons including placement in reform school, youth home, jail, or mental institution; and
- 4% (n=36) being expelled from school, never showing up to a RCSD school, or being withdrawn because of 20 consecutive, unexcused absences.

The results describing the reasons why students leave the RCSD in 2006-2007 suggest further analysis of the school record database to understand whether the large numbers of students who exit ultimately return to the RCSD between the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years since the 2006-2007 data suggest that only 39% (348) out of the 898 Latina/o students in their fourth year of high school had withdrawn from the RCSD compared to the 57% of Latina/o exiting by the end of the 2005-2006 academic year. The school record database shows that the majority of Latina/o students that are characterized as leaving the RCSD in a given academic year are not "official" high school dropouts. However, it is not clear what practices and policies are in place within the RCSD to track students who are expunged from school rosters because of 20 consecutive, unexcused absences or are no shows to a RCSD school where they are expected to attend. This sub-population of students who exit the RCSD and are not official dropouts reflect a group at most risk of never returning to high school and ultimately becoming dropouts over time. However, these students may also represent a group that have the potential to return to the local schools if adequate resources are provided. In addition, it is a concern that the "unofficial" dropouts found in the RCSD student record database may be rendered invisible in the official dropout statistics released by the New York State Department of Education that are based on a calculation of the percentage of a cohort of 9th graders who graduate four years later.

Drop-out Trends

We draw on official reports of dropouts via data supplied by local school districts in New York to the State Department of Education to describe recent dropout trends for the RCSD's high school classes of 2006 through 2009. This data shows shifts in dropouts and GED transfer for Latina/o students in comparison to all students in RCSD between 2006-2009. In general, the dropout rates have declined between 2006 and 2009 for all students including Latina/os in RCSD if only examining outcomes based on expected graduation dates four years post entering 9th grade. The data in Table 3 show the following trends for the classes of 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009.

For the class of 2006:

- 48% of Latina/o students were dropouts after 4 years of entering high school compared to 36% of all RCSD students.

For the class of 2007:

- 32% of Latina/os had dropped out of high school compared to 26% of all RCSD students after four years of entering high school.

For the class of 2008:

- 31% of Latina/o students were dropouts after 4 years of entering high school compared to 26% of all RCSD students.

For the class of 2009:

- 36% of Latina/o students were classified as dropouts compared to 32% of all students in the RCSD after four years of high school.

This initial evidence shows that RCSD dropout rates have declined since 2006 for all students including Latina/os but a gap between Latina/o dropout rates and district dropout rates among all students remains. Since a significant proportion of Latina/o students are English Language Learners, table 3 also shows that the dropout rate for English Language Learners in the class of 2009 was 41%, which is higher than the dropout rates for all students, including Latina/os.

We also display available dropout outcomes for students one and two years past projected graduation dates. Since a proportion of RCSD students neither graduate nor dropout four years after entering 9th grade, the 5th and 6th year dropout outcomes provide additional insights about what happens to these students who linger in high school. These outcomes potentially help to understand what happened to the Latina/o high schools students we described above with the RSCD school records database who left the RSCD for other reasons besides dropping out or obtaining a GED. The 5th and 6th year dropout data for the class of 2007 (who were 9th graders in the 2003-2004 academic year) show that dropout outcomes actually increased one and two years after their expected graduation date of June 2007.

The dropout outcomes for the class of 2007 one year past the expected graduation date show:

- 42% of Latina/os dropout after five years of entering 9th grade compared to 34% of all RCSD students.

- 47% of Latina/os dropout after six years of entering 9th grade compared to 38% of all RCSD students.

Therefore, the Latina/o dropout rate for the class of 2007 was almost 50% after six years of beginning 9th grade. Similarly, the dropout rate for all RCSD students in the class of 2007 rises from 26% four years post entering 9th grade to 38% six years post entering 9th grade. These data suggest that we do not obtain a complete understanding about student dropouts after four years of entering high school in grade 9. The dropout process takes places over a number of years and through various pathways.

Table 3: Rochester City School District (RCSD) Dropout Trends

Drop Out Rates			
Projected Graduation Year	Latina/o	ELL	ALL
2006 – 4 Year Outcome	48% (n=465)	N/A	36% (n=2550)
2006 – 5 Year Outcome	54% (n=465)	N/A	42% (n=2550)
2006 – 6 Year Outcome	58% (n=465)	N/A	45% (n=2550)
2007 – 4 Year Outcome	32% (n=424)	N/A	26% (n=2281)
2007 – 5 Year Outcome	42% (n=424)	N/A	34% (n=2281)
2007 – 6 Year Outcome	47% (n=422)	50% (n=86)	38% (n=2272)
2008 – 4 Year Outcome	31% (n=444)	N/A	26% (n=2220)
2008 – 5 Year Outcome	38% (n=438)	47% (n=100)	32% (n=2211)
2009 – 4 Year Outcome	36% (n=551)	41% (n=113)	32% (n=2924)

Note: ELL indicates English Language Learners

2006 – Projected graduation date for 9th graders entering high school in 2002-2003
2007 – Projected graduation date for 9th graders entering high school in 2003-2004
2008 – Projected graduation date for 9th graders entering high school in 2004-2005
2009 – Projected graduation date for 9th graders entering high school in 2005-2006

(Data compiled from NY State Department of Education Graduation Rate data http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irts/pressRelease/20100309/home.html)

We also examine to what extent Latina/o students and their RCSD peers enter GED programs as an alternative to completing high school. The data in Table 4 show that low numbers of students who exit from the RCSD without receiving a diploma are transferring to GED preparation programs. The evidence is relatively consistent for the high school classes of 2006 through 2009.

For the class of 2006:

- Only 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 2% of all RCSD students after 4, 5, and 6 years of entering 9th grade.

For the class of 2007:

- 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 1% of all RCSD students 4 years after entering 9th grade.
- 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 2% of all RCSD students 5 years after entering 9th grade.
- 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 2% of all RCSD students 6 years after entering 9th grade.

For the class of 2008:

- 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 2% of all RCSD students 4 years after entering 9th grade.
- 5% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 0% of all RCSD students 5 years after entering 9th grade.

For the class of 2009:

- 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program compared to 0% of all RCSD students 4 years after entering 9th grade.

Although for most years 1% of Latina/os transfer to a GED program, there was a significant jump in GED program enrollments among Latina/os in the class of 2008 one year past their expected graduation date. Despite this spike in GED enrollment, the use of these services is quite limited. It is worrisome that low numbers of students are transferring to GED programs. Without a high school diploma or a high school equivalency, Latina/o students and the rest of their RCSD peers who do not earn a Regents or local diploma will have limited educational and occupational opportunities leaving them at risk for living below the poverty line.

Table 4: GED Transfer Data for the Rochester City School District

GED Transfer Rate			
Projected Graduation Year	Latina/o	ELL	ALL
2006 – 4 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	2%
2006 – 5 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	2%
2006 – 6 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	2%
2007 – 4 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	1%
2007 – 5 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	2%
2007 – 6 Year Outcome	1%	0%	2%
2008 – 4 Year Outcome	1%	N/A	1%
2008 – 5 Year Outcome	5%	0%	0%
2009 – 4 Year outcome	1%	1%	0%

Note: ELL indicates English Language Learners

(Data compiled from NY State Department of Education Graduation Rate data http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irts/pressRelease/20100309/home.html)

Latina/o Student Drop-Out Factors

National research consistently demonstrates that Latina/os have lower educational attainment than their African American and White peers (Excelencia in Education, 2008). Furthermore, the school data provided above demonstrates that Latina/o student departure represents a complex process and a persistent problem in the Rochester City School District. RCSD school data has demonstrated when students are leaving and how their departure is categorized by district records. However, we wanted to also understand why Latina/o students are leaving. We turn to the focus group data on Latina/o student drop-out factors to address that question for Latina/o students in the Rochester City School District.

Data collected on drop-out factors was categorized into three areas: school and learning factors, personal/youth factors, and environmental factors. For the purposes of this report we will focus specifically on school and learning factors with particular attention paid to (1) safety in schools, (2) structural and organizational factors, and (3) racial and ethnic tensions.

Safety in Schools. A recent special issue in of *Educational Researcher*[5] engages in an important discussion about school safety and violence prevention. The guest editors of this issue suggest that school safety (which they argue has broader reach than school violence) is important to understand from policy and practical perspectives and that "school safety and order transcend student misbehavior, bullying, and physical aggression" (Mayer & Cornell, 2010, p. 5). Mayer and Cornell urge for an integrative approach that responds to school safety by creating a "positive school climate, engaging academic programs, and support[ing] the needs of students and families" (p. 5). In what follows we highlight many of the challenges students faced with respect to school safety, violence and organizational climate. In what follows, we highlight the subsequent challenges:

- In school suspension procedures
- Surveillance features and failures
- Culture of violence and hostile relations

The first factor of safety and schools pertains to in-school suspension procedures. Students reported contradictory safety procedures with respect to placing students who have altercations or fights in the same room with one another during in-school suspension. Students felt uncomfortable at best and unsafe at worst because they were forced to stay in the same room with the person with whom they were fighting. Second, in-school suspension, as part of the punishment, does not provide opportunity for students to attend their regular classes. Students reported not getting the necessary academic information they needed in order to keep up with their classes. Therefore, when students returned to their regular classes they were behind and had difficulty making up the work. Students' sentiments parallel the research of Arcia (2006) who suggests that schools are relying too heavily on exclusion from classrooms as the main strategy for disciplining students. The following quote highlights the feelings of being unsafe and documents the length of time this particular student spent in in-school suspension:

[5] Volume 39, Number 1, January/February 2010

Then three securities came from upstairs to separate us and separated us. Then they gave me [in-school-suspension] for a month. You cannot go to any of your classes, you have to stay right there the whole day until 2:00... People that fight, that go without uniforms... Getting kicked out of a classroom, or for like a major thing. Like me I didn't have a month [at first}, they gave me two days...then she [the student with whom the altercation was had] was there and then she started talking mad junk so I grabbed a desk and I threw the desk. And they gave me [in-school suspension] for a month.

While it is clear that this student does share some of the responsibility for the issue, had students not been placed in the same room for in-school suspension a second altercation could have been avoided. Additionally, we must question if keeping students out of their classrooms for a month at a time is actually doing a disservice to their educational progress.

The next factor regarding safety in schools deals with the surveillance features and failures. Participants across all schools were able to share examples of students who had been assaulted with weapons and were aware of students who possessed weapons either recently or in the past. Students recognized the reasons for enhanced security and scanners, however clearly indicated that they felt criminalized in the process. This is evident in the two quotes below taken from two separate focus group interviews:

Student 3: *I don't know. I don't like the whole how we feel like we're going into a jail when we first go into school.*

Student 1: *Bag scanners.*

Student 3: *Because at my old school, we didn't have no scanners at all – not none, and that's only 30 minutes away. We didn't have none. Like, you never felt like you were going into an airport when you're going to school.*

In a separate focus group a student responded,

The thing is, when you walk into a school with a scanner and an x-ray scanner, you feel like you're walking into a jail. You're not walking into a place where it's education.

Students also shared that despite the enhanced security, they knew of others who had found ways around this system and had managed to bring weapons on to school grounds. Finally, for those larger schools or schools within schools, students commented on the challenges of having to go through one security entrance for multiple schools. Students' comments are not unique to schools within RCSD as research has documented and cautioned that urban schools are becoming replicas or mirrors of prison complexes (Foucault, 1979; Meiners, 2007). While there is no easy solution to this issue, we must further examine if enhanced security systems like scanners are feeding into a self-fulfilling prophecy of delinquent behavior. If we expect our students to act like criminals and we treat them in ways that mirror prisons, will students begin to meet that expectation?

The last factor in this section is the school culture of violence and hostile relations. This particular factor was referenced over 100 times in focus group interviews with parents and students. Both

groups offered examples of the high schools that had bad reputations of fighting and violence. Although some students believed that schools were changing because of the new principal(s), others expressed anxiety in talking about the violence they encountered at school. There was no distinction between male versus female students reporting issues of violence. However, the majority of examples shared with respect to who was engaging in fights included female students, a population that is generally overlooked when discussing issues of violence.

The reasons students engaged in violent behaviors ranged from someone having a bad day to gaining and maintaining respect as articulated by a female student below:

> *No, not to protect themselves [those fighting], it's like you have to get your respect. Every time you gotta fight with someone, let's say you don't want to fight with them and they are always talking about you, but you don't want to fight them... But, if you are going to fight with someone, not for no boy, or talking about you, you want to get your respect. You want that person to know that if you talk bad to me I am going to talk bad to you. So that you know I know how to control myself, if you want me to respect you, you have to respect me. The same respect you give me, I will give you. If you don't give me respect don't think I will give you any either.*

In other instances female students shared examples of older students beating on younger students:

> *I got jumped by seventh, eighth and ninth graders earlier in the year with padlocks. They took the padlocks off their gym lockers and all of them beat me like that. They got suspended, but they should've gotten long-term. They didn't get long-term, they came back – within a month they came back. I know they had the padlocks, but I beat them even though they had the padlocks. So I didn't care, my face wasn't messed up. I really wasn't scared about it because – I don't know. I mean they're dangerous, I know one of them could've killed me if they knocked me in the head hard enough.*

One male student offered the following as to why female students are more often engaging in violence, "Dudes just argue now instead of fighting, because they don't wanna get arrested and kicked out of school. Girls, they'll just swing". Contradictory to what we might assume, female students provided many examples of the ways in which they were working to maintain their academic identities through programs and extra curricular activities; yet, many are engaging in deviant behaviors – a tension worthy of additional follow-up.

Structural & Organizational Factors. Structural and organizational factors consist of three primary findings:

- The availability of bilingual programs for Latina/o students,
- Use of public transportation,
- Schools within schools.

The first, the availability and enrollment in bilingual programs, was a factor that was referenced specifically with students and family members from Monroe, Franklin and Edison High Schools. Findings suggest that limitations due to space and availability of bilingual programs are resulting in

students with high need being diverted away from the high schools that do offer such services. This was particularly evident when discussing the experiences of recently immigrated students from Puerto Rico. Specifically, parents/guardians expressed concern that two high schools (Edison and Franklin) were developing a reputation for being "dumping grounds" for students arriving recently from Puerto Rico. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> *At Edison – about five or six [students] that came straight off the island, not speaking a word of English. Edison Tech itself does not have a bilingual program and these students have to depend on agencies to come in and help them... These children were forced to come to this school because Monroe or other schools that do offer the bilingual education were too full. They were already at capacity. So, these students come here basically setting themselves up for failure because there's no support anything like that as far as translating the schoolwork.*

Additionally, students suggested that for those students who speak fluent English, they are placed in limited English proficiency, Spanish dominant classrooms. We see these two issues as interconnected. If dominant English (Latina/o) students are being placed in programs where they are not being challenged academically and have demonstrated English proficiency, are spaces being used by students who would benefit from other classes instead? In turn, this could make room for those students who are arriving directly from Puerto Rico and need the services provided by the bilingual programs. In an era where English-only legislation is making its way into more and more states across the country (Diaz Soto & Kharem, 2006; Garcia, 2009), the RCSD is fortunate to have bilingual transition programs. However, it is clear that capacity and resources pose a limitation to the number of students they can serve.

The next factor in this section is the use of public transportation. Multiple participants across both parent and student focus groups brought up concerns about the public transportation system and conversations about "the bus" took place in over half of the focus groups. Concerns about the use of public transportation included: confusion around what bus to catch, inconsistency with bus schedules – some buses came early, some buses came late, students not knowing how to take the bus, and finally, issues of violence and fighting on the bus. The conversation below highlights two of these issues, the inconsistency of the bus schedule and fights on the bus:

Student 1: *I know the bus is really bad. Like, I know a lot of people that won't go to school because of the bus...They hate the bus – the RTS. They just hate it. They can't, because like I don't know. That's why I never used to go to school. I don't know why, but I just didn't go to school because of the bus. I just didn't wanna be on it in the morning.*

Interviewer: *Because things happen on the bus, or because it's not on time?*

Student 2: *Different bus drivers. Some come early. You'll miss your bus. They'll come late. You won't go to school, because there are not enough buses. There's fights, arguments. All they do is pull over, and wait for the people [to stop].*

What these concerns suggest is that there are times when it is easy, and arguably safer, to not take the bus and attend school than to go to school. In fact, student 1 above notes that she/he did not attend school because of the bus.

The final factor in this section is the collapsing of schools or "schools within schools." The notion of schools within schools is not uncommon. Researchers have noted that such practices show promise while also presenting challenges like the overall organization and governance of such plans (Lee & Ready, 2007; Wallach, 2010). Our findings show that students often found that having multiple schools within schools was confusing and ineffective in building student community. Additionally, students and family members addressed concerns about the collapsing of schools and placing 7th grade students in buildings with older high school students. Again, this last concern relates back to the notion of safety and violence as some of the younger students expressed concern about being smaller than or little (physically) compared the older high schools students and feeling unsafe. Parents specifically were concerned with the different developmental levels students were at.

Racial & Ethnic Tensions. The last section of drop-out factors highlight the racial and ethnic tensions experienced by Latina/o students. Two primary findings emerged:

- Students felt that some teachers displayed racial biases against them because they are Latina/o,
- Students described the tensions between Black and Latina/o students.

We turn first to feelings of racial bias from teachers because students are Latina/o. Unfortunately, the sentiments that students described with regard to racial/ethnic bias is consistently found in research. Studies suggest that students feel that some teachers favor non-Black and non-Latina/o students (Rakosi Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Similarly, students in this study suggested that the racial tension they experienced from teachers led to feeling confused or inadequate about their ethnic and academic identities. Students were unsure of how to address these concerns because of the teacher / student hierarchy and power relationships. The following quote came from a student who had left the RCSD school system:

> *And they'd pay more attention to the White people or the Black people instead of the Hispanic people. Sometimes we feel you know, ignored, yeah and we feel like "oh, they don't' get along with us because we're Hispanic." Because that happens a lot.*

This student went on to share a specific example of Latina/o students being kicked out of a classroom, which this student believed was influenced by the racial biases of the teacher. Yet, these racial/ethnic tensions were also felt across student groups.

Students also mentioned feeling racial tensions between Black and Latina/os. While research addressing inter-ethnic school conflicts between Black and Latina/o students is limited, the research on interpersonal relationships among populations of color in school settings reveals compelling findings. Rakosi Rosenbloom and Way (2004) describe an interethnic conflict between varying Latina/o and Black student groups toward Asian groups. Asian students were the targets of bullying by Black and Latina/o students. Rakosi Rosenbloom and Way (2004) suggest that such bullying was the result of school tracking and language and cultural differences. In the current study, students are specifically addressing conflicts between Latina/o and Black students due to Latina/o students' use of the Spanish language.

> *They [Black students] can't stand the fact that we can speak a different language than what they could. When they talk to me, they're like, "How do you know Spanish? You're black." I'm like, "No. I'm Puerto Rican." And then they get mad that I'm Puerto Rican. If he [friend]*

comes up to me and starts talking to me in Spanish, they get offended. And we're just talking about what he did yesterday or what he wants to do or what he's going to do after school and stuff like that. So they don't sit with us for the simple fact that they don't like that we talked Spanish.

Some students felt that they constantly needed to choose how to identify in order to fit in. For instance, if students made friends with Black students they felt forced to let go of speaking Spanish. If students continued to speak Spanish freely and hang out with other Latina/os they felt they could not fit in with English dominant groups. There were also tensions in how students were perceived based on their skin color. Students revealed that those Latina/os who could pass as White were seen as weak by Black students. Students who looked Black were seen as strong by the Black students.

Student 1: *I got into fights and skipping. But it was more towards females that would come at me because I was so quiet. I was very quiet. They think I'm a white girl but I'm really Puerto Rican. They'd say "oh, look at this bitch over here, she's supposed to be Puerto Rican."*

Student 2: *People like discriminate and they judge before they even; they don't see themselves. "Oh she's white so she's weak. We got her." But if you're like black "oh, she's black. Let's just be friends with her."*

As demonstrated throughout our data, Latina/o students in the RCSD are not a homogenous group. One can see how complex the process of identity formation and sense of self is for Latina/o students, particularly when you layer issues of language and skin color on their daily experiences. Finally, there were concerns from parents that programs and services were specifically being targeted at Black students. The result of which was negligence (intentional or unintentional is not known) of Latina/o student needs.

I believe that there is some stuff out there. I truly believe that the Latinos are being kind of kept out of the loop; you know what I'm saying? There's not so much for them. I think a lot of stuff is catered more for Blacks.

Therefore, when we ask, "why are Latina/o students dropping out of school?" we find the answer is incredibly complex. Yes, there were many instances of students noting teen pregnancy (as a factor for both young men and women), opportunity to make money on the streets, suspension, skipping school and overall not liking school. However, we argue the factors leading up to these issues must be addressed. Factors include those that were reviewed above: safety in schools as understood by in-school suspension and surveillance procedures; violence and hostile relations; structural and organizational factors like bilingual education, public transportation and schools within schools; and finally, the racial and ethnic tensions experienced by students. All of these factors complicate students' educational experiences and can lead to students either choosing to drop-out or feeling like they are being pushed out. We turn now to recommendations for addressing these drop-out factors.

Recommendations from Drop-Out Findings

We offer the following recommendations based on feedback from family members and students and informed by literature on these topics. We stress these recommendations are merely a starting point with respect to drop-out factors. Thus, many of these recommendations begin with reviewing the very polices that influence the structures in which students must function on a daily basis.

1. Conduct a review of in-school suspension polices to:
    a. ensure that enough physical space and resources prevent students from spending suspension time with those with whom they were originally fighting.
    b. provide effective academic opportunity for students who are placed in in-school suspension, including maintaining course work and assignments.
2. Conduct a review of school surveillance polices to determine:
    a. effectiveness of reducing incidents of weapon possession.
    b. if these surveillance mechanisms are leading to enhanced violent behavior.
3. Establish active and passive programming (e.g. posters, positive messaging) addressing issues of school violence and risk of violent behavior. This is particularly important for young women as findings demonstrate increased violent behavior with Latinas.
4. Assess current bilingual program policies and explore opportunities to expand such resources to additional high schools.
5. Provide on-going and consistent social justice, inclusion, and race sensitivity workshops to staff and students.
    a. Incorporate such themes into school curriculum so that students develop a sense of racial and cultural pride rather than racial biases.

Latina/o Student Transitions

Researchers often reference the *educational pipeline* to describe students' progress through the educational system (Perez Huber, Huidor, Malagon, Sanchez & Solorzano, 2006). Ideally, as students progress through the educational pipeline they demonstrate successful transition through each level of the educational system, starting with kindergarten and ending with college.

The school records show that as Latina/o students progressed between the 2003-2004 and 2006-2007 academic years, greater numbers of students did not move onto their expected grade levels. For the Latina/o 6th graders who were enrolled in the RCSD by the end of the 2003-2004 academic year (Table 5),

- 94% were on grade level and had reached 7th grade in 2004-2005. However, 6% of Latina/o students remained in 6th grade in 2004-2005.

By 2005-2006 (see Table 6) the numbers of students retained increased with

- 66% of Latina/o students reaching 8th grade while 30% remained in 7th grade and almost 4% were still in 6th grade.

As Latina/o students transitioned to secondary grade levels in 2006-2007

- 68% had reached 9th grade (see Table 7), 24% were in 8th grade, and 8% remained in 7th grade.

Table 5: 2004-2005 7th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
6th grade (one grade below expected grade level)	43	6.1%
7th grade (on expected grade level)	661	93.6%
8th grade (one grade above expected grade level)	1	0.1%
9th grade (two grades above expected grade level)	1	0.1%
Total	706	100.0%

Table 6: 2005-2006 8th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
6th grade (two grades below expected grade level)	25	3.5%
7th grade (one grade below expected grade level)	213	30.2%
8th grade (on expected grade level)	485	65.9%
9th grade (one grade above expected grade level)	2	0.3%
10th grade (two grade levels above expected grade level)	1	0.1%
Total	706	100%

Table 7: 2006-2007 9th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
7th grade (two grades below expected grade level)	48	7.8%
8th grade (one grade below expected grade level)	148	23.9%
9th grade (on expected grade level)	422	68.2%
10th grade (one grade above expected grade level)	1	0.2%
Total	619	100.0%

Latina/o 9th graders who were enrolled in the RCSD by the end of 2003-2004 had significant difficulty transitioning between 9th and 12th grades.

In 2004-2005 (see Table 8)

- 59% of Latina/os reached 10th grade, 40% remained in 9th grade, and 1% were either in 11th or 12th grade.

As of 2005-2006 (see Table 9) we see a significant drop in Latina/o student successful transition between 10th and 11th grades with

- only 35% of Latina/os reaching 11th grade, 33% remaining in 10th grade, 29% remaining in 9th grade, and 4% progressing to 12th grade.

By 2006-2007 (see Table 10)

- 51% of Latina/o students were able to reach 12th grade but 49% remained in 11th, 10th, or 9th grades.

These data are disconcerting because while students may officially remain enrolled in schools, the Latina/o students from 2003-2007 were not progressing as expected in the middle and high school grades. This further supports our reports' findings that Latina/o students confront significant challenges in meeting the demands of schools and schools seem to be unable to adequately address their educational needs. This limited progress further suggests that those behind grade level are at significant risk of dropping out of high school.

Table 8: 2004-2005 10th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
9th grade (one grade below expected grade level)	165	33.6%
10th grade (on expected grade level)	318	64.8%
11th grade (one grade above expected grade level)	5	1.0%
12th grade (two grade levels above expected grade level)	3	0.6%
Total	491	100.0%

Table 9: 2005-2006 11th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
9th grade (two grades below expected grade level)	89	18.1%
10th grade (one grade level below expected grade level)	150	30.5%
11th grade (on expected grade level)	229	46.6%
12th grade (one grade level above expected grade level)	23	4.7%
Total	491	100.0%

Table 10: 2006-2007 12th Grade Status

Grade Level Attained	Frequency	Percent
9th grade (three grades below expected grade level)	54	12.2%
10th grade (two grades below expected grade level)	75	17.0%
11th grade (one grade below expected grade level)	83	18.8%
12th grade (on expected grade level)	230	52.0%
Total	442	100.0%

As the RCSD school records database shows, Latina/o students especially those in high school during 2003-2007 had difficulties progressing though school. Research indicates that students of color experience transition barriers beyond those of their White peers (Reyes, Gillock, Kobus, & Sanchez, 2000). These additional barriers are specifically influenced by cultural incongruence, language factors, lack of culturally specific resources, and deficit views by peers and/or administrators (Reyes et al., 2000). Student and family attributes including poverty and parental support, are often cited as explanatory variables for Latina/o educational outcomes (Wiggan, 2007). Unfortunately, these explanations further perpetuate a deficit understanding of Latina/os' experiences. The hyper-segregation of Latina/o students in public schools place them in racially isolated school contexts that tend to be urban and under-funded and are often composed of students who live below the poverty line (Cammarota, 2006; Garofano & Sable, 2008). Such learning environments place students at a disadvantage because these schools tend to lack adequate instructional resources including highly qualified teachers to meet student needs (Kozol, 1991; Kozol, 2005). A number of studies show that being in an urban public school with mostly African American and Latina/o children can lower teachers' expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning (Balfanz, 2000; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Wiggan, 2007). These school context factors make it difficult for students to be prepared to transition between grade levels and schools. Therefore, findings from our study confirm much of the nationwide research on Latina/o students in urban settings.

The literature regarding student transitions provides an important lens to examine the process that leads to Latina/o students staying in or exiting from secondary schools. Our research has been informed by the following definition of student transitions in school settings. *Normative school transitions* refers to "students [who] enter a new setting and face numerous attendant changes to which they must adjust" (Reyes et al., 2000, p. 521). A variety of factors influence students' normative school transitions. These factors include: relationships with peers and teachers; new instructional styles, grading policies, and settings; organizational, policy, and/or structural changes in schools, and changes in school diversity (Reyes et al., 2000). Other factors influencing normative school transitions in high school include a decline in student grades, attendance and extra curricular participation; lack of family involvement; lack of rigor in curriculum; and an overall lack of representation of Latinos in college-track and/or rigorous curricular coursework (Benner & Graham, 2009; Sciarra & Whitson, 2007).

We extend this definition of normative transitions in the findings that follow which suggest that while Latina/o students do experience the various transitions outlined above, they also experienced transitions that (re)define their academic identities, highlight their geographic mobility and other factors that are sociolinguistic and socioeconomic in nature. For example, the identity or developmental transitions experienced by students were influenced by peers, key mentors and adult advocates, and many of the concrete transition examples highlighted above. Thus, external or structural transition factors (i.e., student body size and peer support) influenced internal transition factors like academic identities. Geographic transitions were noted when students migrated from one state (or country) to the next, thus disrupting their linear transition from year to year in one secondary school. This more nuanced definition of student transitions helps us to better understand students' progress (or lack thereof) through various educational pathways.

Findings from the focus group data complement the transition factors noted by Reyes et al. (2000). Specifically, students experienced the following school-based transition factors: adjustment to uniforms, repeating a grade, falling behind in classes, schools as unwelcoming spaces, differing

levels of preparation for elementary to secondary schools, course and school placement issues, making new friends, school size and schedules. However, our data challenges and extends normative school transition factors in several ways.

Geographic Transition Factors. Geographic transition factors were specifically relevant for Circular Migrant Students (CMS), those students with multidirectional and multipart (im)migration patterns. Students' (im)migration patterns included issues that were both physical and emotional in nature. Our data reveals that such transitions are indicative of the transnational and diasporic nature of Puerto Rican, Dominican and Cuban students within the Rochester City School District. We discuss two aspects specific to geographic transition:

- Circulatory Migrant Students
- socioeconomic factors

A significant number of participants can be characterized as Circulatory Migrant Students (CMS) (see Vega de Jesus & Sayers, 2007). Students referred to this process as the "back and forth" between Puerto Rico and Rochester; Rochester and other cities within New York; and/or New York and other states, suggesting that students' migration patterns were not circular in nature, but included multiple stops in multiple locations. Additionally, many families reported living in Rochester multiple times and for various lengths of times. For example, the least amount of time reportedly lived in Rochester was one month, the most amount of time was 45 years, with many participants noting anywhere between 2 to 8 years. This back and forth mobility is highlighted below:

> *I was born in Puerto Rico, came to live in Rochester when I was four. Around when I was eight I moved to Syracuse and then two years later I came back when my grandma died. And then ever since I've been living here in Rochester.*

Because our community represents one that is quite mobile and, often-times transient and transnational, students experienced numerous disruptions their normative school transition process. The following quote by a male student highlights the implications of this migratory process for students. Note specifically the impact this process has on the role of language:

> *When I went to Puerto Rico I had problems to speak in Spanish, so it took me like three years to get the hang of Spanish. But then I lost a little bit of focus on my English and then when I came here I lost a little bit of problem with English...It only effects a little bit because when you wanna speak this certain type of language you just forget about the words and you remember the other language, so it's pretty hard...*

Ultimately, this student declares,

> *...I was able to grasp my two languages.*

We share this quote for many reasons. First, it highlights the "back and forth" notion that participants frequently referred to. Second, it highlights the complicated sociolinguistic factors around learning, relearning and mastering two languages. Such sociolinguistic factors will be discussed in more detail below. This in turn influences the students' placement and access to bilingual resources and successful progression through courses. Finally, the last part of this student's quote emphasizes the ownership of his two languages. Despite the complicated geographic and academic transition

processes, at the end of his anecdote, he spoke confidently about "my two languages." Perhaps the following student's quote best summarizes many of the Latina/o student experiences, "my mom's an immigrant. She doesn't stay too in one spot too long."

Drawing from the work of Vega de Jesus and Sayers (2007), our findings suggest that local Circular Migrant Students (CMS) may experience the following:

1) Lack of control,
2) "Back and Forth" Bicultural Identities,
3) *Choque Cultural* / Culture Shock,
4) Linguistic obstacles,
5) Prejudice, Racism, Rejection, and Stereotypes,
6) Unresponsive Schools,
7) Hope and Understanding.

(Vega de Jesus & Sayers, 2007, p. 18)

Our findings demonstrate that the geographic transitions and (im)migration patterns students experience are a persistent problem in the RCSD that directly and indirectly relates to drop-out and persistence factors.

Although we cannot account for every reason students experience such geographic "back and forth," we can provide information regarding socioeconomic factors. These factors include: poverty, (lack of) employment, housing, and living in an urban area. Complicating these factors is the fact that many families are single-parent homes. Further, most of these homes are headed by a female which is consistent with local data that points to "Latino families being more likely to be headed by a female with children under age 18 compared with the local population as a whole" (Boyce, 2003, p. ii). Focus group interviews with parents/guardians revealed that parents experience economic difficulties and changes in employment which leads them to seek opportunities elsewhere. This lack of stable employment, and substantive income results in frequent and ongoing mobility patterns, thus disrupting normative school transitions for students.

Adaptation & Acculturation Factors. Students transitions were also influenced by adaptation and acculturation factors. Within this category we highlight two primary areas:

- Sociolinguistic[6] transition factors
- Cultural incongruence.

Both of these areas impact students' academic and grade level progress and influence feelings of homesickness. Often students' experiences were coupled with those of their parents who described

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[6] Including, but not limited to the societal and cultural aspects of Latina/o students' and families' Spanish language.

feelings of isolation, lack of a social support network, and reports of making only little steps to advance – described by one parent as *"poco a poco"*.

With respect to sociolinguistic transition factors, students emphasized issues with English language learning, Spanish language maintenance, and Spanish language regionalisms. The role of English Language Learning (ELL) was essential for parents and students, with distinctions often highlighting survival English and knowing enough English *"pa' defenderse"*. For those parents aware of the bilingual services, both bilingual and interpreter services were often requested to ease the transition for students. Students were aware of which high schools offered assistance with sociolinguistic factors. Yet, as we highlighted above, those services are limited to certain schools and often came with stereotypes about Latina/o students that must then be navigated on top of their linguistic efforts.

> *Para que no empieze cometer los errores de temprano como tambien este escuela es bilingue. So rapido que cuando tu vienes de Puerto Rico o de cualquier sitio que venga lo primera escuela que te refieren es aqui en el Monroe porque es bilingue y, tu sabe, empiezan hablar de la reputación no que si esto y lo otro y cuanto se interfieren los comentarios.*
>
> *(In order to not start making errors from early on like this school is also bilingual. So, immediately when you come from PR or from wherever the first school that they refer you to is here at Monroe because it has a bilingual program and, you know, that's when they start talking about the reputation and this and that and the interfering comments.)*

These uncertain transitions were often made more difficult by feelings of cultural incongruence. Cultural incongruence can take on many forms including: language barriers, deficit views of Latina/o students, issues of prejudice and discrimination, low teacher expectations, and violent and hostile school spaces. Many of these forms have been discussed in detail through out the report and as stated above, can have both direct and indirect effects on student drop-out and persistence. Parents also expressed feeling unwelcome in school spaces and often felt ignored or silenced. Additionally, parents offered that their students felt unwelcome in school spaces or blamed for their lack of adaptation. For example, the following two quotes highlight a mother's concern with how her student was treated by lunch staff, and suggested students' Puerto Rican identities were being blamed as part of the problem. She goes on to describe the difficulties in adjusting when the aforementioned are occurring on top of students' needs to adjust to new school and classroom environments.

> *Lo unico que pedimos es pues que lo del comedor que traten mejor a los nenes, y ellos no tienen la culpa que sean Boricua....*
>
> *(The only thing we ask for is [to improve] the lunch staff situation—that they treat the children better [in a more respectful way]—and the children are not to blame because they are Puerto Rican.)*

She continued,

> *Y el proceso de acoplarse tambien, entonces tras de que vienen con ese cambio de escuela, venir aqui a encontrarse con eso, pues se frustran y no quieren venir a la escuela, no quieren estudias porque de por si ya le estan poniendo una barrera.*

(And the process of accommodation also, then not only are they [students] changing schools, but to come here and find themselves with that, well they get frustrated and they don't want to come to school, don't want to study/learn because already, they are faced with barriers.)

This particular mother is referring to feelings of racism and discrimination towards Puerto Rican children. Thus, suggesting that students, particularly Spanish-dominant students encounter schooling spaces that require a transition into new classrooms, new languages, new ascribed identities, and mixed reactions from school personnel that may include racial bias.

Students highlighted the adaptations that were necessary when learning about new cultures and racial groups. For example, a male student provided the following:

In Puerto Rico, you're just used to like just Puerto Ricans in the school. You come over here, you gotta transition to like every race and everything. It's not like racism, but it's like kind of different.

Both students and parent/guardians encountered transition factors with respect to new cultures and possible racial bias. The following mother described her families' experience:

Es un cambio brusco, porque este ambiente, el clima...el idioma, entonces muchas veces...mira yo no me imaginaba que hubiese tanto racismo aqui sinceramente porque son bien racistas la gente y con los Hispanos, con los Latinos son bien racistas y se ve en el trato...Son bien...porque en Puerto Rico, hay blancos, negros y todos nos tratamos iguales, y cuando uno viene aquí es totalmente diferente y entonces para mi fue bien dificial y frustrante y para los nenes tambien.

(It is a sudden change, because this environment, the climate/weather, the language...and then a lot of the time, look, I had no idea that there would be so much racism here, really, because people are very racist here and with [or toward] Hispanics/Latinos they are very racists, you can tell in the interactions, how people treat you. Because in Puerto Rico, there are Whites, Blacks and we all treat each other the same, and then when you come here it is totally different and this has made it very difficult and frustrating for me, and for my children as well.)

As demonstrated, normative school transition factors like movement between grades and adapting to new friends were experienced by students and by their families. Findings show that it is not just a matter of students transitioning into a new school environment; entire families must transition into a new city which includes various racial/ethnic groups and cultures. These transitions were further complicated by geographic transitions, sociolinguistic transitions and notions of acculturation and adaptation, issues specific to Circulatory Migrant Students like Latina/os. Despite these factors, families and students worked to maintain high academic identities and many experienced positive changes in their attitudes towards schooling. Parents and students described examples of resisting school personnel who demonstrated low expectations towards students or who blamed students for their difficult academic transition. Likewise, parents and students also described positive examples of those school personnel who demonstrated care towards their students which fostered academic aspirations. Ultimately, the transition process is a tenuous one which continues to be facilitated by

negative perceptions about Latina/os as chronic underachievers despite the affirmative efforts by caring teachers and other school/community personnel.

We turn now to the recommendations based on transition factors.

Recommendations from Transition Findings

The following recommendations are informed by data about transition factors:

1. Have staff available at each school to deal specifically with mobility and migration issues related to student transitions, adaptation and educational progress.

Some of the parents we spoke with were unaware of the resources available in the local community and within the district. Some of these parents were spoken with at local churches and others were invited by parents who were already involved. Therefore we recommend,

2. Provide increased opportunity for parents to participate in transition programs such as the Family Literacy Program (in school) and family-based programs outside of school.
    a. Outreach to families in non-traditional ways such as by providing incentives for already involved parents to invite a new parent to attend and by outreach to local churches.
3. Enhance the bilingual staff available at schools and ensure interpreter services are available so that students do not have to fill that role.
4. Increase access to individuals who serve as community advocates for students and families.

The following recommendations are based on research conducted by Vega de Jesus & Sayers (2007 p. 19) and are relevant to the findings presented here.

5. In an effort to reduce feelings of cultural incongruence and marginalization, provide access to culturally responsive counseling services and support staff.
6. Make assessments and student test results (e.g. English proficiency tests) available to families if/when students must move to another school.

Persistence Factors: Community & School-Based Programs

The focus on individual and structural factors exclusively ignores that Latina/o students, families, and communities have linguistic and cultural assets and resources that can be used in promoting academic persistence and success (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Yosso, 2005).

Despite the challenges that Latina/o students face, a significant theme arising from student focus group data was that much of their academic and social support came as a result of community and school-based programs. Community and/or school-based programs were referenced over 150 times in over half of the interviews. These programs included those provided by external social service agencies (e.g., Ibero American Action League and the American Red Cross), a local baseball little league, and peer mediator programs. There were two school-based programs that were referenced numerous times across all interviews - the federally funded TRIO Upward Bound program, and the

AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) program. While schools were often portrayed as uncaring, unwelcoming, and even unwilling to support Latina/o students' success, these programs and the peers and staff within them were seen as key resources.

Findings suggest that community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) can be located among multiple players including students, families, community members, community and school-based organizations, indicating that involvement with community and school-based programs is important to Latina/o student grade level transition in secondary school. For the purposes of this report, we will focus solely on the role of school and community-based programs and those individuals within them (which we label as "institutional agents," (Stanton-Salazar, 2001)) that influence the school persistence of Latina/o students.

Community and school-based programs. Established research on the subject and our findings suggest a theory of change regarding relationships between Latina/o students' background, and access to community and school-based resources including high school persistence and aspirations. Findings suggest, as illustrated in figure 1, that Latina/o students have important personal background characteristics to be considered in an investigation regarding their schooling experiences (Harris, et al., 2010). These include race/ethnicity, family, and resources and barriers related to Spanish dominance and English language acquisition. Additionally, students' experiences are influenced by environmental factors such as neighborhoods and peer groups. For example, our data demonstrate that participants reported complex (multiple) racial and ethnic identities that were often related to national origin (i.e., Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico). The model also illustrates the role that schools play in mediating students' experiences as they participate (or not) with community and school-based programs. For example, teacher and school staff responses to Latina/o students and their families influenced schooling experiences in various ways and can ultimately influence persistence. Access to community and school-based programs were often facilitated and/or influenced by the various background factors that students negotiate.

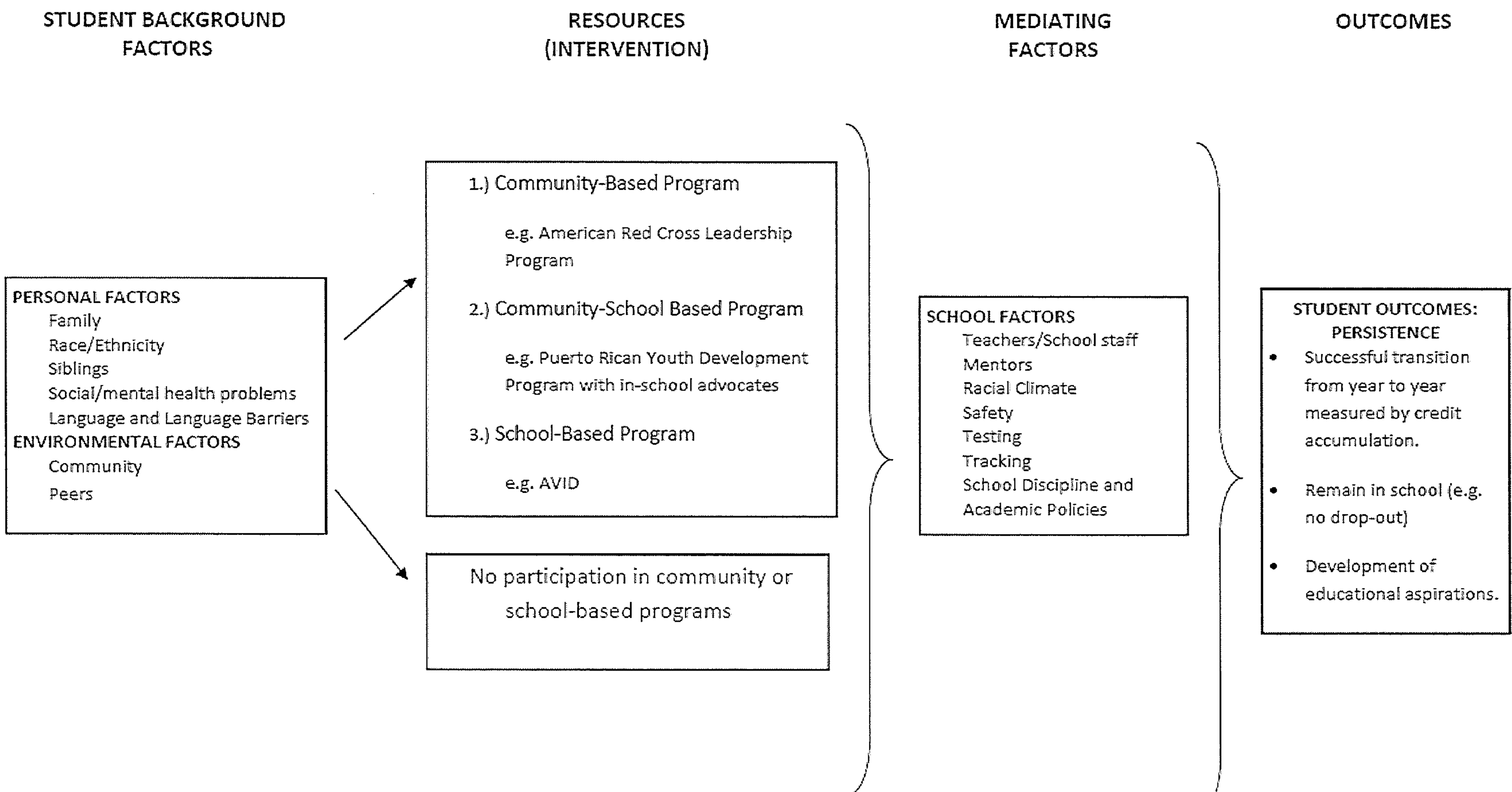
We define community and school-based programs in three distinct categories:

1. Programs based solely in the community that do not have a presence (either formally or informally) in the schools. This might include a youth leadership program sponsored by the American Red Cross.

2. Community-school based programs with presence in the school. This might include the youth advocates who work with the Puerto Rican Youth Development (PRYD) or the mentors associated with the Urban League.

3. School-based programs that do not have presence and/or coordination based in the community. This would include programs like Upward Bound. Further distinction of this category of programs might be district-wide programs (such as AVID) versus specific school-based programs.

Figure 1: Theory of Change: Latina/o Student Persistence Model



(Harris & Kiyama, 2010)

Despite challenges confronted in school, when students had access to community and school-based programs that were culturally and linguistically relevant it allowed for the development of caring and lasting relationships with peers, role models, and teachers based on *confianza* (mutual trust). The greater *confianza* developed, the more likely students were to seek assistance and resources from peers and teachers (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Stanton-Salazar (2001) further notes that *confianza* is necessary for Latina/o students to engage in "regular help seeking and for the fluid, recurrent, and tailored transfer of key institutional resources from agent to student" (pp. 198-199). The following were shared as specific examples of the resources provided by community and school-based programs:

- Professional development
- Academic development
- Personal development
- Incentives for staying in school (like incentives for good grades or opportunities for summer jobs; maintain active involvement)
- Cultivation of ability and confidence and opportunity for students to help other students (i.e. peer educator, seniors as examples of freshmen)
- Opportunity to be with Latina/o community while also expanding out and meeting others from different cultures and race/ethnicities
- Opportunity for students to develop their own "voice" - their individual agency and advocacy.

There is a specific factor that deserves additional attention. Students often referred to these programs as providing a "safe space" for them. This was noted in two ways – a figurative safe space where they could turn for advice and support like finding the emotional support that was needed when working through the difficulties or home or school, and a physical or literal safe area (such as a room in school or a building in the community) where they could go for support. The first example we share is the conversation with two students regarding their feelings about Puerto Rican Youth Development:

Interviewer: *So what would school be like without PRYD?*

Female Student: *Hell. School would be hell without PRYD.*

Male Student: *I would drop out. To be honest, I would drop out of school if PRYD wasn't here.*

What is clear in these statements is that the support provided by PRYD influenced students' persistence in school. What we question is – what is the gap or role that PRYD (and other programs) are filling that our schools are not? While we cannot ignore the integral role these programs play, we must also question if responsibilities are being shifted from the schools to the programs? One particular student described the programs as "peace among chaos." Another student provided the following description of the physical space that she could turn to when she needed support,

This room [a room in a school building], is somewhere where you can just be open with yourself... You could be yourself. You don't have to be something else outside of these four

walls to impress everybody else. You can be yourself. You can be yourself in this classroom. You can say what you want. You can express how you feel. And we got the whiteboard so we can express whatever we feel. We can write it on the board. We got our signs everywhere. I'm really dedicated to this group.

Students played an active role, as this student describes, in maintaining this safe space for themselves and others. Access to community and school-based programs can also be a significant moderator regarding Latina/o student experiences in schools because of the positive role social networks and the resources provided by those networks can have for educational outcomes. Findings consistently pointed to the school and community-based programs serving as "human bridges" (Stanton-Salazar, 2001) or organizational bridges to additional resources. It was often the case that if the program did not have direct access to the tools or resources that students needed, they would connect them with another individual or program that did. Our findings suggest that adults available through community and school-based programs (who were not employed as teachers or counselors in the RCSD) acted as institutional agents for Latina/o as students negotiated within schools. Once mutual trust is established, the influence of such programs on students' educational opportunities is evident. Yet, our data also revealed that if those programs and the people within them were removed, students felt a profound lost.

Interviewer 1:	*Entonces si sacas PRYD, si sacas Hillside, y estas aqui en [la escuela] y quieres hablar con alguien...*
	(Then, if you take away PRYD, if you take out Hillside, and you are here in [the school] and you want to speak to someone.)
Student 1:	*No tienes a nadien. (You don't have anyone.)*
Interviewer 2:	*Si no esta [program mentor] con quien habla?*
	(If it's not [program mentor] who do you talk to?)
Student 2:	*Nadie. (No one.)*

When students lack these embedded supports among caring adults available in community and school-based programs, they are less likely to be successful in school and are at risk of dropping out. Although these programs reflect federal and national initiatives, the introduction of Upward Bound and AVID into the local schools helps to create a cadre of Latina/o students who serve as a supportive academic peer group as they realize postsecondary aspirations. In an unconventional way, these programs serve as local community resources for Latina/o participants because they provide a level of protection from the negative characteristics of schools that do not support student success.

Influence of persistence factors on educational aspirations. Given the increasing presence of Latina/o students in U.S. public schools we must consider student experiences and outcomes relative to Latina/o student educational aspirations. We draw upon the following definition when understanding students' aspirations, "a student's ability to identify and set goals for the future,

while being inspired in the present to work toward those goals (Quaglia & Cobb, 1996. p. 130). Studies show that Latina/o families and students have high aspirations for education in the United States (Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Kiyama, 2010). Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, and Ganier's (2001) seven year study of Latina/o kindergarteners from immigrant families demonstrate that parents held high educational aspirations for their children. Survey responses obtained from the Latina/o parents from kindergarten through sixth grade ranged from 84% to 93% of parents reporting that they expected their children to attend or finish college. Parent interviews identified that they saw education as a means for social mobility and access to better occupational opportunities. Despite these aspirations, parents reported lower educational expectations. That is, while 91% of parents reported that they aspired for their children to attend or finish college only 49% of them expected college attendance or completion. Among high school students participating in the National Women's Law Center and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (2009) study, 98.5% of the Latinas surveyed (n=332) expected to graduate from high school or higher and 80% indicated aspirations to complete college or an advanced degree. However, only 51% of the same young women expected to graduate from college or obtain an advanced degree. Despite the evidence that Latina/o students and families have high aspirations for high school graduation and college, there is a disconnection between educational aspirations and expectations. Additionally, our findings parallel what has been documented in the literature, aspirations are complex and often incomplete as steps required to achieve educational goals can be misunderstood or unknown (Kiyama, 2010).

It was evident that school-based programs in particular played a significant role in furthering the development of students' educational aspirations. It was also evident that students' own intrinsic motivation and resiliency played significant roles in developing positive educational aspirations. Thus, we highlight two factors influencing educational aspirations:

- School-based programs
- Students' intrinsic motivation and resiliency

When specifically examining college aspirations and opportunity, two school-based programs were noted as significant resources – AVID and Upward Bound. While similar sentiments were shared about the IB Program (International Baccalaureate) at Wilson HS, data on this particular school was limited to one student. Thus, we focus this conversation on AVID and Upward Bound. Currently, the AVID program is in 18 of the RCSD high schools. The Upward Bound program, coordinated through the University of Rochester's Kearn's Center, is currently in five RCSD high schools. If considering the multiple schools within schools in the RCSD, Upward Bound has presence in over ten high schools. Since Upward Bound began at the University of Rochester in 2007, it has successfully served 163 high school students (Upward Bound, 2010). Consistently, both students and parents commented on the importance of such programs and noted the goal of the programs in helping students prepare for college. AVID and Upward Bound cultivated a sense of pride in students that was developed with respect to their work, their behavior, and their identities as young academic scholars. While one student noted, "It was hard for me to switch from immaturity to maturity," the sentiment was that students and parents were pleased with the fact that these two programs held students to high academic standards and helped them to set high academic expectations for themselves. With regard to specific educational skills, these programs helped students with learning styles, note taking, college search, college applications, and trips to local

college campuses. Students specifically noted the increase in their grades from B's and C's to A's after becoming involved with these programs.

Finally, school-based programs, like community-based programs helped connect students with important institutional agents. These examples were not limited to AVID and Upward Bound and also included programs like the Teaching and Learning Institute and the Entrepreneurship Program. Individuals associated with these programs became key persons of influence for students. Institutional agents were often described as, "caring" which was interpreted to include asking about life goals, following up with students after class or at home, and talking to students about their influential peer groups. These institutional agents were often the teachers or mentors associated with the school-based programs. This is evident in the quote below shared by a male student participant in Upward Bound:

> *Like, a lot of my friends were in gangs and what not, doing horrible things, and for a long time, I felt like that's what I wanted with my life. So, that was like my life at one point in time until like I met my mentor, and he sorta changed my perspective on life, ... Yeah, so I met my mentor... So, he sorta like showed me like there's nothing wrong with being a smart guy.*

While Latina/o students in secondary schools report the relevance of community and school-based programs to their school success, we do not know how involvement with these resources systematically influences high school persistence and outcomes over time. In this era where school districts are expected to use evidence based programs, it is necessary to understand how school-based advocates and community interventions shape how Latina/o students access resources that influence student performance, persistence, and aspirations.

Finally, Latina/o students demonstrated knowledge about postsecondary opportunities and offered specific information about their educational goals. Educational goals were often fueled by intrinsic motivation and resiliency. College conversations were referenced nearly 100 times in interviews with students. Students were very clear and confident on the areas of study they are interested in. Subject and career exploration was broad and include the following (among many others): gaming designer, elementary and bilingual education, fire science, marines, army, hair stylist (barber), mechanical engineer, math, history, science, art (illustration), medicine (chief of surgery), and lawyer. In many interviews when asked who planned to attend college, all students would nod yes or raise their hands affirmatively. However, with the exception of those students who participated in programs like AVID, Upward Bound and the Teaching & Learning Institute, few Latino/a students and families had knowledge of the concrete steps needed to apply to and obtain a college education. Therefore, disconnect between students' aspirations and expectations were demonstrated. It is evident from our study that these programs make students aware of their college and career opportunities. Knowing the steps required not only to graduate high school, but to enter college are imperative for many more Latina/o students. It was clear that some of students' intrinsic motivation resulted as a means to negate naysayers, and prove them wrong. We understand these students' experiences as *"contra la corriente,"* (against the current) because students were demonstrating not only how they were going against stereotype and expectations that people had of them, but of their larger Latina/o community. And, as mentioned previously, it often took just one person to help a student understand their potential. The importance of positive institutional agents was a common thread in nearly all of the interviews as described by the following student:

Throughout my years I had a lot of people who believed in me, before I even did. In 3rd grade when I had a turn for the worse I had teachers who were telling me that 'you were better than this.' I didn't believe it and it's just people believing in me, you kind of start thinking to yourself 'well maybe their right' and then you go out to start prove them right and prove the people who thought you weren't, prove them wrong. It's just that inner motivation to make sure that you look good. I still remember, I think that it was a compliment, but I took it in a bad way. My principal when I was in 5th grade I took the ENA exams in 4th grade and he went and read them he came up to me and said 'wow I'm so proud of you and in Spanish finally doing good' and I kind of thought that I shouldn't be the only one. So I'm going out there to prove that a Hispanic can do anything that anybody else can do. It doesn't matter if I'm Hispanic or not it just matters that I have my motivation and that people are helping me and that anybody can make it through.

We encountered many students with fierce determination and positive academic goals. Yet, we do not want to let their motivational stories deter us from addressing the systemic factors that often derail students' educational opportunities. For that, we turn to the recommendations.

Recommendations from Persistence Findings:

Several recommendations can be drawn from data regarding community and school-based programs. First, services for Latina/os appear to be concentrated in one or two schools or one or two programs. This ranges from school-based programs like the Bilingual Program at Monroe High School to the AVID and IB programs. Although present in many of the district schools, opportunity for involvement within schools appears to remain limited. It also includes the decreasing visibility of programs like PRYD in schools. Despite the smaller number of Latina/o students at other schools, access to such programs should be equitable. Thus, the first recommendation is:

1. Work to create programmatic opportunity in every school for Latina/o students.
    a. Establish partnership with community organizations to ensure community-based programs have a physical space and presence in each high school.
    b. Direct district resources to ensure that school-based programs are expanded to become available to students in every school.

Students and parents specifically provided recommendations about school and community-based programs. One student suggested that programs should be offered to all students during lunch, suggesting a need for accessible times. Thus, the second recommendation is:

2. School-based programs should be provided during accessible time periods for students.

Upon complimenting the work of community-based programs, one parent noted the distinct separation and, oftentimes, overlap between some of the initiatives. He suggested services should be more collaborative. Therefore, the third recommendation is:

3. Establish collaborative partnership and programming between community-based programs and initiatives in an effort to provide more accessible resources to students and parents and to preserve human and financial resources.

In an effort to create a positive college-going culture in schools, we recommend the following:

4. Create partnerships with local higher education institutions to have consistent college representatives present in high schools. These representatives should provide not only institution specific recruitment information, but general college knowledge information about applications and federal financial aid. (refer to the College Prep Center[7] at East High School for more information).

5. Develop active and passive programming to consistently engage students in college knowledge in an effort to establish messages that college is an opportunity for all students, not just for a select few.

6. Research successful college outreach programs for parents[8] so that college knowledge can begin in the home during elementary school when students are first developing their educational aspirations.

Finally, the space provided by the focus groups themselves became a form of education and opportunity for students. Many commented that they felt comfortable sharing their concerns and personal experiences. Others commented that it felt like, "a family." Thus, a final recommendation is:

7. Partner with local community organizations and higher education institutions to continue such conversations as a means to allow students to express their concerns and use their voices in an environment that is non-judgmental and safe. Such group conversations should be facilitated outside individuals not employed by the schools.

Conclusion

We fully believe that that the trends and factors presented in this report represent a problem the entire community must address. The educational issues facing Latina/o students are not just a school problem or a family problem. Changes in the opportunity structure for Latina/o students will require a commitment from the entire community. We cannot continue to hear stories of Latina/o students being presented with more opportunities on the street, than in their school. Thus, it is our objective with this report to not only document the trends and factors influencing Latina/o student drop-out and transition, but to inform and to move you to action. The findings of both the school data and focus group interviews parallel much of what many urban districts face nationwide. However, there are key points that relate specifically to how Latina/o students experience school in the Rochester

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[7] The College Prep Center is a college advising program at East High School. It is a collaborative partnership between the University of Rochester and East High School.

[8] Successful programs include the University of Arizona's College Academy for Parents (http://eao.arizona.edu/cap); Arizona State University's American Dream Academy (http://cdcr.asu.edu/Programs/american-dream-academy-ada); or the University of Utah's Adelante Partnership (http://www.partners.utah.edu/yes/adelante/adelante.html).

City School District. These experiences are influenced by structural and organizational factors like the use of public transportation, collapsing of schools or schools-within-schools, and the availability of bilingual resources in schools. Additionally, safety and violence in schools was a consistent theme across all focus groups, suggesting we must review the policies and practices related to in school suspension, surveillance, and screening procedures. Finally, these experiences are exacerbated by the racial and ethnic tensions felt by Latina/o students, which calls for more inclusive and culturally responsive spaces.

The transition experiences of Latina/o students and families speak to the need for schooling systems to provide necessary resources that make this frequent migratory group comfortable and welcome in schools and communities. Specifically, findings from this section call for us better understand and serve those students who are characterized as circulatory migrant students. Such students experience various socioeconomic, sociolinguistic, and cultural adaptation factors that may not be present for other student groups.

Finally, the role of school and community-based programs as persistence factors have important implications for state and district policy. If a positive relationship is found between student involvement in community and school-based programs and high school persistence, then local school districts will have evidence to establish policies that formally integrate community partnerships and school-based programs into all secondary schools. This is especially important at this time, as many states and local school districts are confronting budget challenges and are making cuts in personnel and programs, and thus need evidence of the value of competing programs to decide which ones they should invest in.

Our recommendations attempt to create safe and nurturing environments for Latina/o students to learn and become successful scholars. Such environments should work in collaboration with Latina/o communities, organizations and families. Therefore, we stress that all recommendations should include students and families in the planning and implementation processes. This report marks the beginning of many community forums, discussions with students, policy briefs, and additional reports that will occur over the couple years. It signals a starting point for the Education Task Force and the researchers at the University of Rochester. We expect to collaborate with the Rochester City School District and the larger community so that we can shift practices and policies to prevent Latina/o students from having to work *"contra la corriente."*

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Appendix A: Study Timeline

October / November 2008:	Team invited to preliminary discussions with Education Task Force members regarding Latina/o drop out concerns in the Rochester City School District.
December 2008 – January 2009:	Discussions about goals, focus, and participants for focus groups. Development of initial, guiding, research questions.
February 2009:	Development of focus group interview questions.
March 2009:	Pilot of focus group interview questions with over 20 parents and students. Held at Puerto Rican Youth Development.
March 2009 – September 2009:	Ongoing discussions with RCSD research/evaluation personnel regarding student attainment and achievement dataset.
April 2009 – July 2009:	Request (formal application) to the University of Rochester Research Review Board for permission to conduct research and collect data.
August 2009:	Approval from the Research Review Board.
October 2009:	Recruitment for focus group interviews.
November 2009 – April 2010:	Focus group interviews with parents and students.
November 2009 – September 2010:	Analysis of RCSD Achievement and Attainment dataset.
May 2010 – September 2010:	Analysis of focus group interviews.
October 2010:	Part I of report to Ibero-American Action League and Rochester Community Foundation.