

# Service-Learning and Hispanic Students: What Works in the Field

By Tiffani Lennon

*“Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental.”*

W.E B. DuBois



Education Commission  
of the States



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
I. Current State of Education for Hispanic Students	3
II. Research Rationale	3
III. Case Study Schools	4
IV. Common Characteristics of Case Study Schools	5
V. Recommendations And Best Practices	12
VI. Challenges	14
VII. Conclusion	15
Schools participating in the Service-Learning and Hispanic Students Case Studies	16
Appendix A	18
Appendix B	20
Endnotes	20

## Acknowledgments

*Service-Learning and Hispanic Students: What Works in the Field* was written by Tiffani Lennon, professor at The Women’s College of the University of Denver, and consultant in research and policy analysis for the National Center for Learning and Citizenship at the Education Commission of the States, with assistance from Lisa Guilfoile, project leader at the ECS National Center for Learning and Citizenship. Interviews at the schools involved in the case studies were conducted by Lennon and Guilfoile.

The authors greatly appreciate the time and effort given by the site visit coordinators for each school: Susan Abravanel, Ari Dolid, Ruben Dueñas, Tomas Kelnhoffer, Susan Kroll, Jorge Lopez, Raul Magdaleno, Heather Pavona and Janet Torosian.

The National Center for Learning and Citizenship thanks the following leaders in the service-learning field for their help in identifying the schools selected for the case studies: Susan Abravanel, Teri Dary, Evan Goldberg, John Minkler, Julie Chavez Rodriguez and Jon Schmidt.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the State Farm Companies Foundation for the research and production of this report.

For more information about this topic, please contact JoAnn Henderson at [jhenderson@ecs.org](mailto:jhenderson@ecs.org).

© Copyright 2009 Education Commission of the States

ECS is the only nationwide, nonpartisan interstate compact devoted to education at all levels. Our core purpose is to enlighten, equip and engage key education leaders — governors, legislators, chief state school officers, higher education officials, business leaders and others — to improve education across the 50 states and U.S. territories.



# Executive Summary

A concern about poor academic achievement among Hispanic students and the corresponding high dropout rate led the National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) at the Education Commission of the States (ECS), with funding from the State Farm Companies Foundation, to convene a Thinkers Meeting about Service-Learning for Hispanic Students in March 2008. Thinkers Meeting participants — representing P-12, universities, policymakers, education leaders, program staff, students and practitioners from around the country, along with community organizations advancing Hispanic initiatives — explored the positive relationship between service-learning and Hispanic students' education, success and aspirations. Building upon the growing body of research indicating that service-learning is a critical pedagogy for student academic, civic, social and career development, the meeting concluded with a plan to conduct case studies to uncover best practices for engaging Hispanic students in service-learning.

According to the National Youth Leadership Council, quality service-learning entails:

1. [Meaningful service](#)
2. [Intentional link to curriculum](#)
3. [Reflection](#)
4. [Diversity among participants](#)
5. [Youth and parental engagement and decisionmaking](#)

6. [Mutually beneficial partnerships](#)
7. [Ongoing process monitoring and](#)
8. [Appropriate duration and intensity to meet community needs and outcomes.<sup>1</sup>](#)

The nine schools selected have demonstrated sound experience and commitment to service-learning. Schools reflected urban, suburban and rural communities and varied in size from small to medium to very large inner city schools. Most, if not all, sites were on at least 50% free or reduced lunches and most had a very large percentage of Hispanic students. All of the schools attributed their success to integrated service-learning policies and practices.

More than 100 interviews were conducted with school board officials, administrators including principals and assistant principals, superintendents, community members, community-based organizations, teachers and students. Despite the vast amount of diversity among the schools, consistent themes, and best practices and policies emerged across all sites. These best practices and policies are detailed later in the paper. Through prior work, NCLC identified five elements of service-learning policy and practice that are essential to institutionalizing quality programs and leading to greater student success: leadership, continuous improvement, professional development, curriculum and assessment, and community partnerships. The case studies protocol or questionnaire (*Appendix A*) used the five policy areas as a framework for uncovering best practices and lessons learned for engaging Hispanic students in service-learning.



The case studies uncovered specific recommendations schools can employ to more successfully engage Hispanic students and ultimately ensure greater success. Whereas NCLC conducted the case studies to learn how to better engage Hispanic students, the findings may have implications for all students, particularly for other minority students. Key recommendations include the following:

- ◆ Ensure curriculum and projects are culturally relevant and appropriate.
- ◆ Track student academic progress through measurements and assessments; employ intervention strategies when necessary.
- ◆ Engage community partners, families and students by using specific strategies that address needs and maximize expertise.
- ◆ Align service-learning curriculum and projects to standards.
- ◆ Form partnerships with higher education institutions for assistance with developing and implementing assessments and measurements and for providing resources.
- ◆ Ensure time for service-learning professional development, informal reflection time and cross-disciplinary collaboration among teachers.
- ◆ Employ multilateral and collaborative leadership strategies.

Among the challenges identified in engaging students in service-learning, three consistently stand out:

1. All schools stressed the importance and necessity of implementing service-learning in a cross-disciplinary curricular way, because it allows repetitive learning to occur while simultaneously capturing multiple learning styles. A great deal of time is necessary to successfully integrate a cross-disciplinary approach. Eight of the nine schools identified a common solution in that school leaders can provide informal reflection and collaboration time either outside of or during professional development time.
2. Schools reported that it was virtually impossible to implement service-learning effectively and successfully without a full-time coordinator. In about half of the schools, the service-learning coordinator served as the community contact person as well.
3. All schools indicated they do not have in place sufficient service-learning measurements and assessments to determine service-learning benefits to students. About two-thirds of

the schools indicated they would like to have measurements and assessments to evaluate student success and areas of improvement. They also felt that adopting qualitative and quantitative measurements reached beyond their area of expertise because service-learning is difficult to assess. Three schools plan to approach their higher education partners to ask for resources and assistance in developing assessments that measure service-learning impact on student success.

When these recommendations are adopted and the challenges addressed, the data suggests that schools will more effectively engage Hispanic students and ensure greater academic success and improved graduation rates. This report details specific characteristics, analysis and corresponding recommendations.

The intent of this set of case studies is to extract and highlight common elements and practices inherent in schools that successfully engage Hispanic students in quality service-learning.



# I. Current State of Education for Hispanic Students

Although low high school graduation rates among all students are of concern across the country, minority students have lower graduation rates than their white peers. According to *Cities in Crisis 2009: Closing the Graduation Gap* prepared for America’s Promise Alliance, only 57.8% of Hispanic students graduated in the 2004-05 school year.

A growing body of research pertaining to Hispanic students involves the need for developing “social capital.” One study, focused entirely on the influence of social capital on Hispanic students, defined social capital as “relationship networks from which an individual is potentially able to drive various types of support via social exchange.”<sup>2</sup> To consistently build social capital for Hispanic students, schools can improve the level of engagement and quality interaction among students and among Hispanic students and adults. In addition, schools can improve their outreach and engagement with Hispanic parents.

Given the Hispanic culture and importance of networking to build social capital, specific interventions that can reverse the Hispanic dropout rate include:

- ◆ Cooperative learning opportunities
- ◆ School-community partnerships
- ◆ Reflective school climate focused on “engagement of all stakeholders”
- ◆ High student expectations and participation
- ◆ School and community professional development
- ◆ Sponsoring “parent engagement” opportunities
- ◆ Honoring student achievement and progress
- ◆ Partnerships with business community focused on 21st century skill development
- ◆ Service-learning.<sup>3</sup>

# II. Research Rationale

NCLC promotes service-learning as a critical pedagogy for student academic, civic, social emotional and career development. To that end, NCLC designed and implemented the Learning In Deed Policy and Practice Demonstration Project and Anchoring the Investment initiatives. Among other things, these efforts identified policies at the state and district levels that encourage, support and reward quality service-learning.

*Service-Learning Policies and Practices: A Research-Based Advocacy Paper* was the third generation of NCLC initiatives that built upon existing work, and supported the adoption and implementation of policies and practices based on rigorous qualitative and quantitative research. The paper identified practices and policies in alignment with the data that shows what works. The paper also provided a research-based framework encompassing the five critical components shown to institutionalize and maximize service-learning effectiveness: vision and leadership, curriculum and assessment, community-school partnerships, professional development and continuous improvement.

Several studies have found that successful schools institutionalize service-learning by simultaneously adopting the five essential components. This simultaneous adoption also requires continuous renewal and commitment to each component. We refer to this adoption and commitment as “*simultaneous renewal*.”

This report is the fourth generation project detailing the adoption of the simultaneous renewal framework for the purposes of improving academic success for Hispanic students and improving higher education matriculation rates. The case studies offer school leaders and administrators a “how-to” for quality service-learning that leads to Hispanic student success and achievement. The five components also framed the case study protocol or questions presented to interviewees.



# Simultaneous Renewal Of Five Critical Components



Participants from the Thinkers Meeting believed that the challenge our nation currently experiences — to ensure more Hispanic students graduate from K-12 schools and matriculate into higher education — could be addressed by integrating and sustaining quality service-learning in schools and communities. This belief evolved in part because service-learning values are consistent with those of the Hispanic culture and build on the need for social networking for achievement and success. The State Farm Companies Foundation sponsored NCLC to conduct case studies with a threefold purpose:

- ◆ To learn about the benefits of service-learning for Hispanic students
- ◆ To identify challenges and obstacles in engaging Hispanic students in service-learning
- ◆ To uncover strategies and best practices for overcoming obstacles and challenges.

## III. Case Study Schools

Nine schools were selected to participate in the Hispanic Students and Service-Learning Case Studies. They represent a cross section of grade levels and geographic areas, as well as urban and rural settings. Each of the schools has a significant Hispanic student population and each school is committed to and proficient in high-quality service-learning. These schools have one more thing in

common: a cadre of teachers, principals, coordinators and community partners dedicated to student success through service-learning. Without their cooperation and assistance, these case studies could not have been conducted. The participating schools listed here are described more fully at the end of this report.

1. **San Leandro High School Social Justice Academy**  
San Leandro, California
2. **Fowler High School**  
Fowler, California
3. **Hayes Bilingual Elementary School**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
4. **Forest Grove High School**  
Forest Grove, Oregon
5. **Marie Sklodowska Curie High School**  
Chicago, Illinois
6. **Kelvyn Park High School**  
Chicago, Illinois
7. **Thomas Kelly High School**  
Chicago, Illinois
8. **Bert Corona Charter School (grades 6-8)**  
Pacoima, California
9. **Roosevelt High School**  
Los Angeles, California

## IV. Common Characteristics of Case Study Schools

Common practices and school policies emerged from the case study data. These practices and policies have been implemented to ensure greater student success, particularly for Hispanic and underperforming students. Interestingly, most practices and policies were instituted *prior* to any service-learning. In other words, practitioners must lay the groundwork before attempting to engage students in service-learning. The following best practices and school policies can contribute to a culture of student success, thereby allowing all students, including Hispanics, to succeed.

### **Successful schools understand the culture.**

One of the reasons State Farm Companies Foundation funded this case studies project was to identify practices and policies that have been designed specifically to support Hispanic students. Consistently, the data reveals that high-achieving students and successful service-learning projects are culturally responsive. Schools and community members spent considerable time and resources getting to know students' backgrounds and culture. To illustrate, one university partner shared how they reached out to the Hispanic community by hiring a member of the community who serves as a community liaison. The community liaison spends at least one year building relationships with the community before she will even attempt to engage the community.

The barrier or disconnect that often exists between school personnel and families of color is rooted in language and culturally appropriate means of engagement. For example, one Mexican father did not understand what a zero meant, because in Mexico a zero was not a symbol used to denote a particular grade earned. The inability to converse in a common language presented another barrier in that the teacher was unable to explain what the zero meant and how it would impact his student. Another example involved Hispanic parents who refused to allow their daughter to participate in a service-learning project because the project required travel to her city's downtown location. These barriers need to be understood and then overcome. In some cases, familial expectations around students working after school and/or working at home presented difficulties for Hispanic students to participate in after school programs. Other families expressed a concern about giving their students too much freedom and believe in placing family first above all else.

Many teachers and administrators reported that they learn a great deal about students and their families by attending confirmations, family dinners, home visits and by integrating a curricular topic such as "A Day in a Life of an Hispanic." One teacher reported that students thrive on others taking an interest in them, and this allows students to feel a level of comfort knowing that others understand their cultural values and experiences. Most students are proud of their Hispanic heritage and want to celebrate that pride. Giving them an opportunity for celebration will help engage them and communicate that they are respected.

A strategy in understanding culture is having a parental liaison who will foster an environment for improved student and parental involvement. The liaison can help to facilitate dialogue around academic and service-learning components. Having a parental liaison helps in addressing the cultural barriers hindering student and parental involvement. Another strategy involves listening to students experiencing real problems and issues in an effort to accommodate them more successfully. In short, these strategies are intended to foster an environment that is intentionally welcoming of bicultural students. Moreover, in some cases it is essential for teachers and administrators to challenge their own assumptions.



## **Successful schools create an inclusive school climate**

Creating an inclusive school climate is part of cultural relevancy and proficiency, and therefore, warrants a separate discussion. Sites emphasize that character development helps to improve school climate and the corresponding resources expended are an efficient and worthwhile use.

Some sites employ a strategy where all students retain the same homeroom teacher for all four years of high school. Homeroom time becomes the time when students have regular opportunities for advisory and character development. Another site implemented mentoring time during homeroom where teachers mentor students. In addition, teachers read student names at graduation. At other sites, division or major teachers monitor service-learning hours and check to ensure that student service-learning requirements are met.

Many sites find that schools are unsuccessful in fostering a positive school culture because they are unable to devote time, curricular hours and commitment to service-learning. Service-learning can be a venue for creating an inclusive school climate by providing an opportunity for engaged and comfortable conversation. Such dialogue opens the door for authentic engagement. In this way, students find a voice and a way to belong at school and find opportunities for success, or as one school posited, “allow students to learn to win.”

Finally, a positive, inclusive school climate is one where the school places emphasis on internal controls such as responsibility and self-discipline rather than on external controls, which communicate a lack of trust and belief in students’ abilities to make good choices. An inclusive school climate also values student contributions and allows for collaborative work. All schools that reported a positive, inclusive school climate also characterized effective leadership as shared and multilateral.

## **Successful schools track students’ progress and success.**

Tracking students’ progress and success will enable teachers and administrators to intervene if students begin to fail. Tracking students by cohort, in particular, will enable teachers and administrators to closely monitor individual students. Tracking is different than assessing, although related in that it allows for short-term monitoring and provides an opportunity to adapt and adjust to student needs.

One school reported that it tracks and monitors a cohort of students beginning in middle school through high school graduation. In doing so, different classroom resources are sometimes necessary and therefore provided, and different teaching methodologies are employed. Some scenarios called for motivational speakers to inspire students to learn and persist. When students are struggling, they are referred immediately to the intervention process for assessment. Working together to identify the reason, as well as viable strategies for improvement, helps the students know they are valued and have allies in their teachers and administrators. An illustration of one possible intervention technique includes the following:

*A teacher referred an underperforming student to a well-known journalist, who grew up in the projects and experienced struggles similar to that of the student. The journalist shared her journey in how she overcame obstacles and became a mentor for the student. Teachers are viewed as first in line of defense and administrators are engaged for support.*

Tracking students also provides an opportunity to educate students in a way that addresses cohort and individual needs. In some cases, teachers and administrators can more specifically connect career and academic interests for students. At a couple of case study sites, the schools implemented a student information database where students could be monitored more closely in terms of grades, attendance, successful strategies employed, service-learning projects and future career interests. Community-based partners should be included as part of the intervention or persistence team to help get students back on track with not only high school graduation in mind but also some career or academic goal.

Additionally, by taking an individual or cohort glance at progress, it is possible to review underperformance in a holistic way where all stakeholders ask what can be done better to address the problem. School staff might find that underperforming students actually are performing better when they are examined in terms of individual or cohort progress than when compared with all students. In other words, underperforming students may be found to make greater improvements and strides than high-performing students.



## Successful schools employ strategies for successful engagement.

### Create Multiple Access Points

Often Hispanic students do not learn of service-learning opportunities through traditional avenues. Making opportunities available through multiple access points provides options for students to learn and engage. For example, several sites ensure that students learn about service-learning programs through teachers, coaches, service-learning coordinators, radio or television news, student clubs and community-based organizations.

### Engage Community Partners

Strategic approaches for engaging community partners are important and vital in creating sustainable, meaningful service-learning opportunities for students. School leaders and administrators must understand that the community and parents are valuable assets. It is important to establish and cultivate relationships with local businesses, community organizations, churches and higher education institutions. These connections can be mutually beneficial and instrumental in uniting a community.

Schools should identify their needs and connect with organizations that can help in providing the resources capable of addressing those needs. For example, one school realized that some Hispanic students were not participating in service-learning projects because of external factors such as having to help pay family bills and provide childcare. This school engaged a community partner that was able to provide resources to assist not only this family but other families, resulting in improved student attendance.

Approaches to community partners should be tailored, depending upon whether they are being approached for the first time or they have an existing relationship. With new partnerships, small and attainable service-learning projects allow for quick successes. In making the projects attainable, it is essential to ensure that sufficient time and resources are provided so that youth have an opportunity to see a project to its completion and maximize contributions. With existing partners, it is important to allow students to explore, experiment and take greater risks with projects, and to immerse themselves in other school activities.

Perhaps most importantly, community partners should share the mission and vision of the school, and come to the table with the desire and resources to assist students in learning and taking action. Community members and students alike want to see positive change and understand the larger impact locally, regionally and nationally. Students who collaborate with local

organizations gain valuable experience in problem solving and planning for their community's future. They are more likely to develop a sense of pride and ownership in their neighborhoods when they see that they can impact positive change — that they do, in fact, have a voice.

Administrators and school leaders should communicate with the community about the role of the school, which includes not only educating students but also instilling the values of civic engagement and community responsibility. Service-learning involvement can help students realize the power in their ability to contribute to the community and may inspire them to remain after graduation as invested, civic-minded and responsible citizens.

Administrators and school leaders also should demonstrate support by visiting project sites, attending meetings in the community and acknowledging the work and role of the partner. School leaders can help by integrating service-learning programs into school assemblies, for example. They should continually check in with community partners to ensure their needs are being met. In some instances, partners may have had



previous negative experiences with schools, so school representatives may need to nurture the relationship and monitor progress closely to ensure any problems are dealt with quickly. Additionally, community partners should be consulted and involved at the school in other ways as appropriate. Under the most ideal circumstances, community partners will take co-ownership along with students.

Community partners should know their school and available resources well and ensure they are fulfilling a need. Here again, the school needs to work closely with the partner so both groups have the information they need to be successful. In doing so, partners can build upon what is going on at the school, capitalize on teachers' work, and tailor projects and curriculum to the school, its standards and its students. Partners also should be clear with teachers and principals about what is expected to ensure a solid, trusting relationship. For example, most partners articulated that they need teachers to help with:

- ◆ Logistics
- ◆ Trust and ability to allow students to take charge of projects
- ◆ Help and volunteer with the project
- ◆ Recruitment of students.

From the teachers' point of view, partners specifically helped to:

- ◆ Make the connection and relevancy link to the curriculum for teachers by drawing real world application and practicality
- ◆ Ensure culturally relevant and responsive training particularly for African-American and Hispanic students and families
- ◆ Emphasize that the cultural piece is as important as knowing one's content for student success and engagement
- ◆ Develop curriculum for including and honoring various cultures in the classroom.

Additionally, the case studies revealed that the most successful community partners aligned service-learning curriculum and projects to district standards. These additional lessons have been learned about school and community partnerships:

- ◆ Time is of the essence! Work with students during a time that is practical for them.
- ◆ When developing service-learning curriculum and project plans, be sensitive to cultural implications for parents and families of Hispanic students.

- ◆ Know your community. Every learning community has its own unique needs and potential. Study the community dynamic and be willing to enter uncharted waters when planning projects.
- ◆ Encourage community partners to take a more active teaching role when possible. They have valuable knowledge to impart and often are eager to share with young people.

### Engage Parents and Families

Almost all sites have a parent liaison, coordinator or parent group who addresses the needs of the families who are underserved and/or underrepresented in the school. The sites report that meeting outside of school is particularly valuable for Hispanic families, enabling all parties to feel like they are on an equal, less intimidating playing field. In this way, parents who have difficulty understanding how the school system works can have an opportunity in a safe environment to learn more and exchange ideas with other parents, school leaders and their children's teachers.

Providing adequate and continuous opportunities for parents to learn about service-learning and ask questions is important. Parents are valuable resources and often can provide quality consultation, mentoring, tutoring and other services. It behooves districts and schools to engage parents in ways that utilize their intellectual, supportive and experiential capacity — to treat them as assets. For example, a school reported that during a service-learning project where students were engaged in community research, teachers collaborated with parents to ensure that the research was of high quality.

Parents are powerful agents. When they understand that the school regards something as important, they, too, assume its importance. At another case study site, a teacher noted that her students' parents began to take a tremendous interest in service-learning projects when they observed a change in their children. As a result, they learned about their children's involvement and participation in various projects and chose to actively participate themselves. This school provided transportation for those parents who lacked a car or money for bus or train fare, making it possible for them to participate.

## Engage Students

One teacher interviewed effectively captured the enormous potential of service-learning and how it engages students by stating that “service-learning puts them (students) in the socio-emotional place to access knowledge.” Teachers have been successful when they:

1. Align learning with state standards and regularly post the standards; articulate the connection between the expectations and the learning activities students will engage in. This keeps goals and objectives on track and highly visible.
2. Ensure service-learning projects and class work align with standards and require that all such project work ideas be submitted to the service-learning coordinator or lead person for approval prior to implementation. This will help to prevent incongruous and ineffective project work.
3. Reinforce existing familial and community values, and design curriculum and projects that address the needs and concerns of the students. This gives learning relevance, which is crucial for creating and sustaining quality service-learning programs. It also helps students to see the global implications of their contributions in their own community.
4. Employ a variety of assessment methods (observation, written reflection, journal writing, oral presentation, quizzes, focused discussion, etc.) as learning styles vary from student to student.
5. Provide a safe, co-creative environment where students can take risks and collaborate.
6. Maintain high expectations and gently push their students to achieve even higher.
7. Engage students whenever possible in extracurricular activities. For some case study sites, this included after school and weekends, while for others it was during school hours because of other work and family obligations. For these reasons, it is essential to know and understand students and their needs.
8. Accommodate and stimulate various learning styles.
9. Work in collaboration with other teachers, the service-learning coordinator and parent or community liaison to build relationships that will serve students and projects.
10. Engage students in decisionmaking as often as possible to encourage buy-in and create meaningful and impactful learning experiences for them.

## Use Curriculum and Standards to Enhance Service-Learning Projects

Teachers and administrators regard meeting state and district standards as a priority, therefore teaching to standards often receives more emphasis, time and resources than service-learning projects. Proponents of service-learning often cite standards as impediments to implementing quality projects while others view service-learning and student engagement as a luxury due to existing standardized testing demands. The case studies data analysis suggests that quality, effective service-learning is directly tied to curriculum and standards.

Four consistent themes emerge around curriculum and standards. Interestingly, many sites self-reported that when the following are implemented, standardized test scores improve tremendously.

- ◆ Tie service-learning projects to existing standards.
- ◆ Approach all service-learning projects from an interdisciplinary perspective. Some content areas such as English and social studies lend themselves more easily to interdisciplinary projects, whereas content areas such as science and mathematics are still attainable, simply requiring more forethought.
- ◆ Provide teachers with specific planning time to collaborate, propose and co-create projects and curriculum with fellow teachers. This is discussed further in the section on professional development.
- ◆ Measure student outcomes and adjust curriculum accordingly.



### Seek Higher Education Partners

One unexpected finding was the strong presence of university or college partners among successful schools. The data suggests that higher education partners can play additional roles depending on the need of the school and its students. Higher education partners provide assistance in three key ways:

- ◆ Developing and assisting in implementation with measurements and assessments
- ◆ Providing sustainability and consistency among community partners
- ◆ Providing resources in understanding the culture and connecting with the community.

Higher education partners assist in providing and accessing community resources and also provide a stable, constant community presence. These partners also have ongoing and long-term relationships with other community-based organizations, and work collaboratively with them in numerous ways. Having access to community-based organizations is an essential way to help connect schools with the community. Often, higher education partners already have a community liaison who has the cultural competency to reach and access the Hispanic community.

Even among the nine successful case study schools, comprehensive measurements and assessments have not yet been developed. However, they have been recognized as important next steps in quality service-learning. Some schools are beginning to work with their higher education partners to develop comprehensive measurements to assess student success and determine the effectiveness of service-learning and improved learning. Measuring success through a service-learning lens will help to build the case that service-learning helps underperforming students achieve. This is a challenging area of needed development that warrants future work and advocacy.

### Improve Professional Development Opportunities

All case study sites report the efficient use of professional development opportunities as an essential component to ensuring Hispanic student success. Specific strategies have been identified for successful professional development trainings:

1. Invite community partners to participate in developing and implementing professional development trainings.
2. Allocate one full day per month for teacher collaboration to discuss projects and reflect on classroom and curriculum practices.
3. Institute after school, faculty and/or departmental meetings dedicated to informal reflection and discussion.
4. Allocate resources for a district-wide, service-learning mentor who provides a professional development workshop for teachers once per year.
5. Tie professional development participation to salary increases when attended outside of school and the school day.
6. Ensure the curriculum speaks to students' needs. Hands-on activities and technology are essential along with a need to have real-world application.
7. Offer a "how to" on developing service-learning curricula.
8. Emphasize an interdisciplinary approach to growing responsible citizens. For example, one school institutionalized Citizenship Tuesdays, allowing for more structured time for incorporating civic learning in all subject areas. The curriculum focused on critical thinking skills and inquiry. For example, students were encouraged to address why people vote the way they do and how people make decisions about supporting candidates who may not align on all the same issues as the voter.
9. Ensure that professional development opportunities are streamlined and not too bureaucratic where teachers have to process unnecessary paperwork.
10. Provide teachers with a great deal of freedom to experiment and trust in their skills and abilities.
11. Cultivate a continuous learning environment for teachers by ensuring they have common prep periods and work collaboratively on projects and curriculum.

## Ensure Success Through Essential Leadership Approaches

Case study data uncovered common key focus areas of school leaders. Interviewees indicated that school leadership should:

1. Focus on equity for all students
2. Build community relationships
3. Cultivate new and emerging leaders
4. Embrace a multilateral leadership model
5. Support service-learning initiatives by allocating resources and publicly acknowledging efforts.

Equity and fairness are essential leadership qualities necessary to cultivating an effective learning community. Consistency builds trust and reduces confusion as to what is expected. Almost all interviewed indicated that leadership must focus on equity and achievement of all students. In successful schools, the vision of equity manifested in professional development trainings, curriculum and pedagogical models, and student intervention services, including effective assessments for measuring performance and learning.

Interviewees also indicated that sustainable relationships with parents, families and community are essential. This is true particularly when trying to engage those who are unengaged and to cultivate new stakeholders. Many of the schools had an assistant principal dedicated to cultivating community, including family, relationships. An interesting point to mention is that often the assistant principal grew up in the area and still lives in the community or nearby, and maintains ties to the community.

The dynamics of service-learning initiatives are ever changing and networking is a way to make valuable connections with other people and organizations to help meet changing needs. Network at every opportunity with schools, districts, community partners, local merchants, families, etc. Leaders are encouraged to be creative when seeking financial support for service-learning. In these difficult economic times, it will become increasingly important to find creative pathways to funding.

Sites also emphasized the importance of developing new leaders. Seven sites reported that existing resources should be used to develop emerging leaders and shape their knowledge and skill base by providing leadership opportunities for the next generation and engage young teachers who tend to be mission-driven. This emphasis on developing and encouraging new leaders resonates with most sites because it ensures passage of the leadership baton to the next generation of leaders.

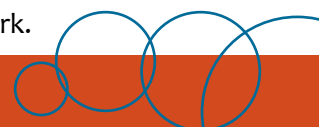
Multilateral leadership has been found to be most effective. All those interviewed expressed the importance

of 1) being willing to work collaboratively within the school and district, and 2) including parents and local higher education institutions, two fundamental components of the learning community that are sometimes overlooked. Sharing the responsibility encourages creative thinking and reduces feelings of isolation and disconnection among staff. Effective administrators lead with integrity and transparency. Students, staff and community partners are found to be more willing to get behind someone who is authentic and willing to take risks, make mistakes, own those mistakes, etc.

Additionally, a multilateral leadership approach includes involvement from all stakeholders: community, family, students, teachers and local government. This approach not only will ensure that consent, a shared vision, improved communication and collaboration will result, but it also will help to identify and eliminate unnecessary obstacles. For example, one interviewee reported that a school policy requiring everyone to leave the building by 4:30 p.m. prohibited students and teachers from working after hours on projects and lessons. For years this policy stifled students and teachers and sent a message that additional work and commitment were discouraged and unwelcomed. This unintended result was addressed once school administrators heard and understood the problem from the teachers' and students' perspective. In short, a multilateral leadership approach creates an ownership environment.

Principals and school leaders need to support teachers and students engaged in service-learning. They should publicly endorse and acknowledge service and reward teachers for engaging students and helping to foster greater achievement and success. Support is communicated by ensuring alignment of resource allocation with student outcomes, including measurements with vision, mission and values of the school. Another way school leaders can support service-learning is by providing staff with sufficient planning time as well as financial resources. Often teachers report that it's not as much about having enough money as it is about having enough time. Administrators also should strive to link teachers with projects and programs befitting their strengths and abilities, and assist in the development of strategies for funding new programs. To that end, school administrators must have a genuine understanding of program needs as well as staff's strengths and expertise.

Moreover, administrators open to the ideas of their students and staff, who see the value in the collaborative process, send a strong message of support to the entire learning community. Many teachers and students maintain that they are only successful when administrators trust them and their work.



## V. Recommendations and Best Practices

From the case studies analysis, a set of recommendations for school policies and practices have emerged.

### ***Ensure curriculum and projects are culturally relevant and appropriate.***

Schools should employ culturally appropriate ways to engage Hispanic students and their families, and create an inclusive school climate. In doing so, schools should learn more about Hispanic culture or acquire a proficiency in the culture. Curriculum and projects also should be designed specifically to address the needs and concerns of students, making learning meaningful and helping students realize their ability to create positive change.

### ***Track student progress through measurements and assessments; employ intervention strategies when necessary.***

Consistently, schools reported the need for more developed measurements and assessments that track the impact of service-learning on student success. Many concur that employing a variety of methods to track student progress is essential for growing success and continuous improvement. Employing a variety of assessment methods (observation, written reflection, journal writing, oral presentation, quizzes, focused discussion, etc.) sheds important light on where improvement is needed, what can be tweaked, etc.

Likewise, assessments and measurements can be helpful in creating intervention strategies, particularly when students are falling behind in their learning. Meeting them where they are in the process builds trust and respect and promotes student accountability.

Focus on new measurements and assessment tools to help monitor or track students and continuously improve on curriculum and learning. Engage higher education partners to collaborate on developing new qualitative and quantitative measurements and assessments.

### ***Engage community partners, families and students by using specific strategies that address needs and maximize expertise.***

The presence of a community or service-learning liaison in the school or district can make a huge difference in the engagement of community members and the quality of the service-learning program. Teachers from the one school with no designated community liaison indicated that they struggled to engage parents, families and community partners. Various teachers from the other eight sites reported that prior to the presence of a liaison in their school or district, they faced similar difficulties around engaging parents and families. The liaison maximizes the school or district's ability to:

- ◆ Establish and cultivate relationships with local businesses, community organizations, churches and higher education institutions. These partnerships are instrumental in creating sustainable, meaningful service-learning opportunities for students, and will help to provide the necessary resources for the school.
- ◆ Engage parents and families in substantive ways that utilize their breadth of experience and expertise.
- ◆ Ensure the presence of student voice in addition to project and curriculum relevancy. Engage students in decisionmaking as often as possible to encourage buy-in and create meaningful and impactful learning experiences for them. Students must co-create and understand the larger societal importance of their work.

### ***Align service-learning curriculum and projects to standards.***

At six sites, service-learning curriculum aligned to standards. One community partner took an innovative approach to alignment by helping to advocate for mandatory district approval for all service-learning work. These efforts provided a valuable service to teachers in that projects and curriculum were packaged and ready for immediate implementation. At other sites, either the principal required evidence of alignment or the teachers molded service-learning projects to meet state standards. Those sites that aligned curriculum to standards used the standardized testing as the measurement to assess student learning and success. By measuring student outcomes they were able to adjust the curriculum to improve learning.

### **Form partnerships with higher education institutions for assistance with resources and developing and implementing assessments and measurements.**

Partnerships with higher education institutions were found at all but one site. These partnerships enabled the school to reach more deeply into Hispanic communities because of the allocated resources in understanding the culture and connecting with the community.

- ◆ These partnerships also provided sustainability and consistency with service-learning curriculum and opportunities.
- ◆ At sites where the schools successfully reached deeper into the Hispanic community, higher education partners provided the resources and community contact liaison.
- ◆ One area where higher education partners have not been sufficiently tapped is with developing measurements and assessments for student performance.

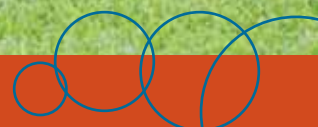
### **Ensure time for service-learning professional development, informal reflection time and cross-disciplinary collaboration among teachers.**

Interestingly, all but two sites had specific professional development opportunities for service-learning. Offering formal service-learning professional development demonstrates the school's support for service-learning as a teaching strategy. Yet teachers at each site report a desire for more regular informal reflection and collaboration to share best practices and strategies for incorporating service-learning into the curriculum, often with an interdisciplinary approach. Four sites already provide these opportunities while the others advocated for regular time with colleagues to reflect, share, plan and collaborate.

### **Employ multilateral and collaborative leadership strategies.**

Seven of the sites identified and stressed the importance of leadership setting the tone and culture of the school and ensuring that the school's mission and vision are realized. All seven sites were profoundly mission- and vision-driven and all staff, community partners and faculty interviewed also echoed the importance of the mission and vision. More specifically, each of the seven sites recognized the leadership of their own school as having the following characteristics.

- ◆ Multilateral leadership has been found to be most effective. All those interviewed expressed the importance of 1) being willing to work collaboratively with families and community organizations and 2) knowing students and their community well.
- ◆ Focus on equity and fairness in cultivating an effective learning community and building trust.
- ◆ Publicly support the work of community partners, students and teachers.
- ◆ Establish a service-learning coordinator or a point person to lead projects.
- ◆ Lead with integrity and transparency. Students, staff and community partners are found to be more willing to get behind someone who is authentic and willing to take risks and allow for mistakes.
- ◆ Align resources and priorities with the mission and vision of the school.



## VI. Challenges

Whereas each school faced its own unique challenges that were dependent upon specific, and in some cases, unique circumstances of the school, three common challenges emerged from the data: the importance of a cross-disciplinary curricular approach to service-learning; the necessity of a service-learning coordinator to assist in building community partnerships and help teachers develop curriculum; and the need for development of adequate measurements and assessments .

### **Implement a cross-disciplinary approach to service-learning**

Six sites value a cross-disciplinary approach in implementing the curriculum and find that students learn better when they have opportunities to absorb information in different contexts. Teacher planning time or professional development opportunities are necessary to allow teachers to plan collaboratively so that projects and learning occur cross-disciplinarily. Informal professional development and collaboration ensured that an interdisciplinary approach to overall student learning resulted, leading to improved student success, particularly for underperforming students.

### **Designate a service-learning coordinator**

All but two schools interviewed had a designated, full-time service-learning coordinator who was responsible for organization, logistics, service-learning curriculum and projects, connecting students with relevant projects and building community partnerships. Each of these districts also required service-learning as part of high school graduation and the coordinator ensured that the requirement was met. Perhaps most importantly, the coordinator served as the essential contact for teachers and community.

One school did not have a service-learning coordinator at all and relied entirely on strong community organizations, another had a part-time coordinator who held several roles at the school. These two out of the nine schools faced serious challenges not only in serving teachers and students and providing them with quality service-learning opportunities for delivery, but also in building sustainable and strong community partnerships. Each school was able to overcome these challenges because of a community partner who acted as a service-learning coordinator and the good will of a couple of teachers who worked with them.

### **Develop measurements and assess student performance: enlist the help of higher education partners**

Most sites have self-reported that standardized tests scores have improved as a result of service-learning, yet would like to quantifiably or qualitatively prove this, and are stumped about how to implement such measurements. Sites report that without measurements and assessments, schools cannot determine the real impact of service-learning projects and curriculum. Determining real impact will help to continuously improve curriculum and projects, secure funding and resources, and improve student success.

All schools visited attributed Hispanic success to hands-on, project-based, interdisciplinary approaches to learning and all employed service-learning as that vehicle. Because of this attribution, most desired to see additional measurements and assessments employed and yet also recognized the school's limitation in developing such measurements. Schools are beginning to look to community partners, and it is recommended that higher education partners are sought to develop and help institutionalize qualitative and quantitative measurements and assessments.





## VII. Conclusion

---

Thanks to the numerous administrators, students, teachers and community partners, as well as State Farm Companies Foundation, NCLC was able to compile this report to bring to light best practices in educating Hispanic students and improving student graduation rates and matriculation into higher education. NCLC sought to determine whether successful schools implemented different practices for Hispanic students and how successful service-learning was as a pedagogical approach.

Schools and community partners reported that service-learning is a very successful pedagogy for Hispanic students. Many of the schools credited improved scores and graduation rates to service-learning. The data also indicate that before implementing service-learning curriculum and projects, administrators and teachers need to create an inclusive culture and lay the groundwork for success. Whereas the identified practices will work for all students, several specific practices pertaining to culture, relevancy and community, and family engagement are designed for Hispanic success.

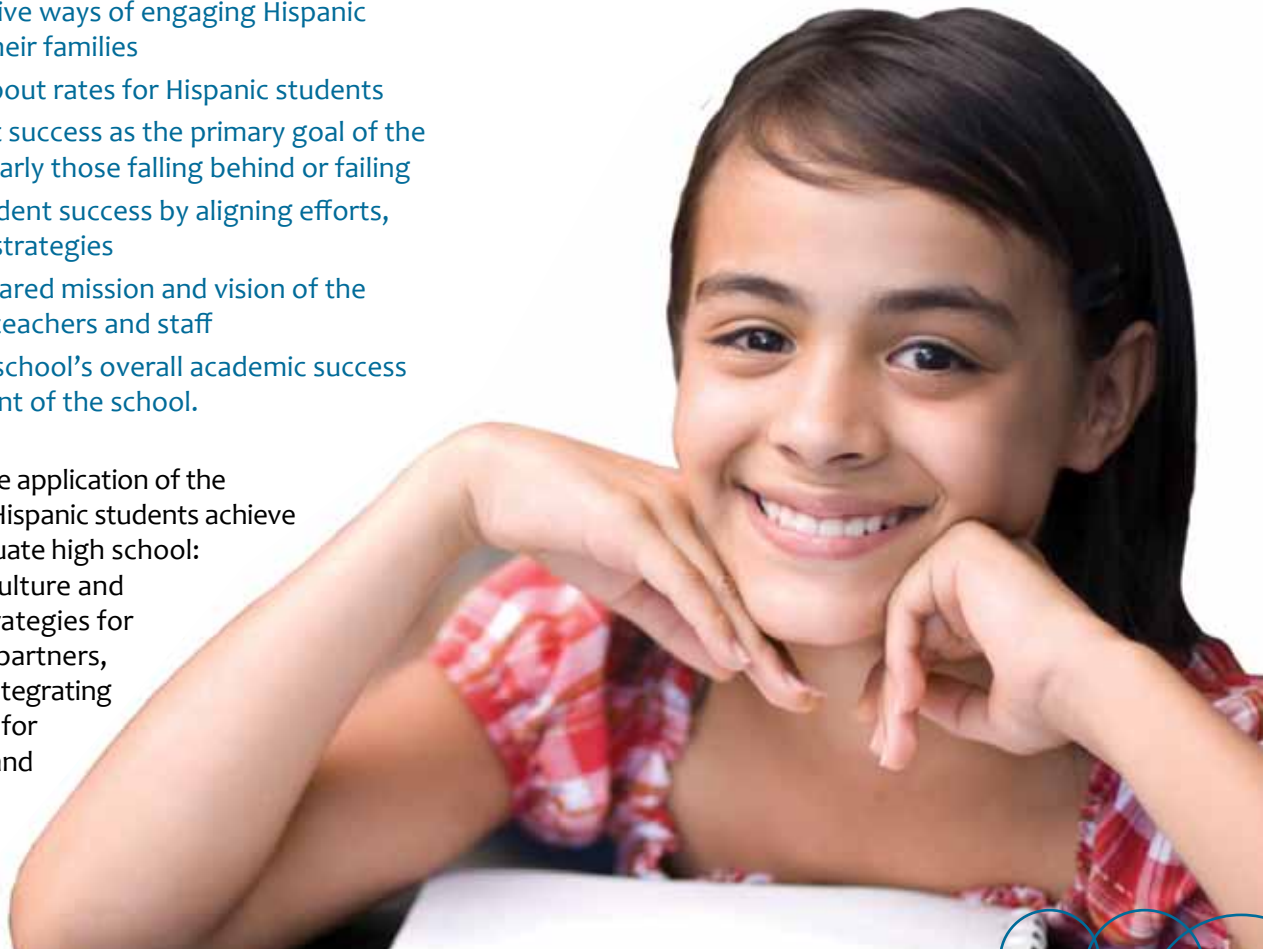
Broader implications for adopting the recommendations and best practices contained in this report include:

- ◆ Ensuring effective ways of engaging Hispanic students and their families
- ◆ Improving dropout rates for Hispanic students
- ◆ Placing student success as the primary goal of the school, particularly those falling behind or failing
- ◆ Supporting student success by aligning efforts, resources and strategies
- ◆ Cultivating a shared mission and vision of the school among teachers and staff
- ◆ Improving the school's overall academic success and achievement of the school.

In closing, the collective application of the following ensure that Hispanic students achieve academically and graduate high school: creating an inclusive culture and climate; employing strategies for engaging community partners, parents and families; integrating informal opportunities for teacher collaboration and reflection; adopting

multilateral leadership approaches focused on equity; and tracking student success. Since Hispanics are the largest growing population in the United States, the distressing picture of Hispanic students dropping out and disengaging from school, along with their lack of preparation for the workforce, has lasting and troublesome implications for the entire country. The nation is beginning to understand the devastating consequences of having a large percentage of the population without a sufficient education. Schools throughout the United States must embrace the recommended best practices as a way to curtail the dropout and disengagement rates and create a school culture where all students believe they are valued and expected to achieve.

The National Center for Learning and Citizenship would like to express deep appreciation and admiration for the schools who participated in this case study. Special recognition and acknowledgement go to each interviewee for his or her willingness, time and accommodation during school days that are already full. We extend a special thanks to the case study, site-visit coordinators for organizing our visits and for their exemplary leadership in service-learning at both the district and national level.



# Schools participating in the Service-Learning and Hispanic Students Case Studies

## **Forest Grove High School**

**Forest Grove, Oregon**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Susan Abravanel**

Forest Grove, a western suburb of Portland, is home to Forest Grove High School, serving roughly 1,940 students (36% Hispanic) grades 9 through 12. In 2006-07, SOLV — an Oregon environmental non-profit organization partnered with an existing 4-H program at the school (“Tech Wizards”) to introduce a two-year pilot program, *Equipo Verde* (Green Team), an after-school service-learning program designed to engage at-risk, Hispanic high school youth in intensive stream restoration. *Equipo Verde’s* leadership in urban stream restoration project management coupled with SOLV’s experience in service-learning created fertile ground for a program that connects fieldwork to classroom lessons, making learning relevant and impactful. Curriculum intentionally aligns to state-set standards in science, math and language arts, and is designed to incorporate elements of the state’s new Career-Related Learning Standards (CRLS) and culminating project or extended application high school graduation requirements. Student response to this program has been so favorable that SOLV sought another funder to keep the program — initially to have been piloted for only the first year — going at Forest Grove High even as it traveled to a second school pilot site. SOLV has committed to developing a “replicable model” that can be transferred to other locations in the state.

## **Bert Corona Charter School**

**Pacoima, California**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Ruben Dueñas**

Bert Corona Charter Middle School, serving students in grades 6-8, is situated in the heart of the San Fernando Valley in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Of the 367 students enrolled, 98% are Hispanic, many coming from severely impoverished areas. Bert Corona seeks to close the achievement gap for these students by providing clear and high expectations for all students, a personalized and supportive learning environment that recognizes students’ accomplishments, family-school-community partnerships and service, and culturally enriched curriculum. The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization committed to helping individuals fully realize their inherent and unlimited potential to make a difference in their own lives, their communities and the world, has worked with Bert Corona over the last 12 years on the development and

implementation of the Cesar E. Chavez Service Clubs, an after-school service-learning program implemented in 65 Title I Middle Schools across California. Bert Corona has been a model school for the program and has demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating service-learning throughout the school.

## **Fowler High School**

**Fowler, California**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Janet Torosian**

Fowler High School, located in the San Joaquin Valley, a largely rural community several miles south of Fresno, serves approximately 702 students grades 9-12, 72% who are of Hispanic descent. Fowler High has been implementing service-learning for the past seven years, with a required service-learning project in the freshman orientation class, integration into core classes, annual Youth Service Forums with community and student leaders, and a service recognition program that includes a community event, a distinguished graduation cord, and designation on the diploma for students who demonstrate outstanding service and civic responsibility. The Traveling Service-Learning Museum is a unique program in which students create presentation boards (large tri-folds) depicting their project work and then take them to different schools or locations in the area to share their work and ideas with other students and community members. Fowler prides itself on its commitment to the *Ten Pillars of Character* — a district-wide set of values consistently reinforced in the classroom. To view the *Ten Pillars*, go to: [www.fowler.k12.ca.us/charactereducation](http://www.fowler.k12.ca.us/charactereducation).

## **Roosevelt High School**

**East Los Angeles, California**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Jorge Lopez**

Roosevelt High School, located in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles, is one of the largest public high schools west of the Mississippi, with an estimated enrollment of 4,613, and a Hispanic demographic representing just over 99% of the student population. The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation has worked with Roosevelt High over the last two years to support implementation of the Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) service-learning graduation requirement. The Chavez Foundation currently provides teacher training, curriculum development and technical support services to 10 LAUSD high schools. Roosevelt High has been a model school among the 10 in the district and has

demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating service-learning across the curriculum. Similarly, Roosevelt has a strong service-learning lead who understands the importance of integrating cultural and community engagement in the classroom to support student learning and academic success.

### **San Leandro High School Social Justice Academy** **San Leandro, California**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Ari Dolid**

The Social Justice Academy (SJA) at San Leandro High School (SLHS), was established in 2007 with the intent to teach students how to give back to society. It embodies an extraordinary mix of ethnicities with a Hispanic constituent representing roughly 35% of the population, its largest subgroup. SJA is a smaller learning community on SLHS's campus that aims to empower students to create change within the community through service-learning instructional strategies. It is built upon the principles of equity and uses service-learning as a primary teaching strategy and as a means of re-engaging its students with the standards-based curriculum.

### **Hayes Bilingual Elementary School** **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Tomas Kelnhoffer**

Hayes Bilingual Elementary School, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is a public school that serves roughly 374 students grades Pre-K-5, 94 % of which are Hispanic. In 2008, with the help of their teachers and the school librarian, students from both 5th-grade classrooms participated in an ecological anthropology unit on the nearby Kinnickinnic River, a local waterway suffering from neglect and misuse as a dumping ground. Students focused on examining the relationship between Milwaukeeans and the urban river over the course of time. This project incorporated online learning and a multi-disciplinary approach, and was conducted in collaboration with community partners like Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, The Park People of Milwaukee, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Students created a PowerPoint presentation to share with the wider community about the history of the river and to help raise awareness about what can be done to reduce pollution in the river. In addition to these advocacy efforts, students will be assisting with the layout for rain gardens at a local riverside park and creating information signage about the benefits of rain gardens. Their long-range goal is to have a bike path developed as a cooperative effort between community agencies and a local health clinic so that the community can easily access a picnic area that will be established.

### **Marie Sklodowska Curie High School** **Chicago, Illinois**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Susan Kroll**

Curie High School is a large Chicago public school with an enrollment of 3,300 students. (74.9% Hispanic) Curie has worked diligently to engage its student population in meaningful, high-quality service-learning work via classroom activities, cross-curricular initiatives, after-school clubs and all-school projects. Curie is one of 13 public high schools in Chicago currently participating in the Service-Learning Strategic Consortium, designed to project positive academic, social and civic outcomes among students. A key element of the school's mission is the belief that students will emerge empowered to commit to positive actions and to gain the academic and personal attributes necessary to become productive citizens.

### **Kelvyn Park High School** **Chicago, Illinois**

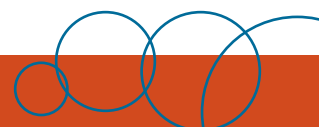
**Site-Visit Coordinator: Heather Pavona**

Kelvyn Park High School is a medium-sized public high school with an enrollment of 1,700 students, of which approximately 90% are students of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent. Kelvyn Park is one of six National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) generator schools. It has engaged a high percentage of its teachers and students in classroom-integrated service-learning experiences highlighted by its freshman and sophomore Social Justice Academy, through which students identify social issues in their neighborhood from a justice perspective, then develop and implement a service action project. Kelvyn Park also currently participates in the Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Strategic Consortium.

### **Thomas Kelly High School** **Chicago, Illinois**

**Site-Visit Coordinator: Raul Magdaleno**

Kelly High School, located on Chicago's southwest side, is one of the largest populated public high schools in the area with an enrollment of 3,200 students, roughly 84.2% of those being Latin American. Kelly consistently has engaged its student population in high-quality service-learning through classroom integration and after-school clubs. Kelly's work has been enhanced by an in-depth partnership with the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council — a local community-based nonprofit organization — resulting in the receipt of funding from Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) for community partnership service projects. Kelly joins Curie and Kelvyn Park high schools as a participating member in the Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Strategic Consortium.



## CASE STUDY PROTOCOL/QUESTIONS

### VISION AND LEADERSHIP

1. Identify the leadership characteristics that are essential for successful engagement and learning.
2. Who shares responsibility for leadership?
3. How do you ensure diversity among the participants?
4. Who drives the content of the service-learning project(s) or curriculum? Is it driven by school leaders, teachers or students? How is this decision made?
5. Are students involved in decisionmaking and leadership? What is the role of parents?

#### Optional Questions

6. Is the responsibility of leadership multilateral or unilateral? Provide an illustration.
7. Has service-learning become institutionalized? If so, how?
8. Have other school reforms taken place? If so, were the reforms connected to service-learning initiatives? Provide an example.
9. Have you created collaborative partners and stakeholders? If so, how did you accomplish this?
10. Who are your stakeholders?
11. Have specific funding dollars and resources been allocated for service-learning?

### CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

1. When developing service-learning curriculum, do you consider Hispanic students' connection to their community and/or family?
2. How is service-learning integrated into the curriculum?
3. How is it integrated into learning?
4. How is learning assessed?
5. Are individualized interventions available for students? If so, what kinds of interventions are in place?

#### Optional Questions

6. Does service-learning help students to demonstrate achievement of standards? If yes, how?
7. Does service-learning align with standards? If so, provide an illustration.
8. Are there clear connections between goals and activities? If so, give an example.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Are teachers afforded structured time to learn new intercultural or multicultural skills and teaching methodologies? If so, how much time and when?
2. Are teachers afforded structured time to explore new curriculum ideas and projects? If so, how much time and when?
3. What, if any, resources are available for new curriculum and project exploration? Are specific resources allocated for students of color or Hispanic students specifically?
4. Are there training opportunities for students? When and how do these training opportunities occur?
5. What role, if any, do community partners play?

#### Optional Questions

6. What specific structures are currently in place and practiced? E.g. policies and networks.
7. Are professional development structures permanent?
8. What is emphasized in the professional development?
9. Are there any linkages between professional development and the teacher evaluation process?
10. Is professional development tied to education reform? If so, provide examples.
11. Do you disseminate best practices? If so, how?

## COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Do you have a higher education partnership?
2. Are there any community-school partnerships? If so, what types of partnerships exist?
3. Are there any community-school projects in existence currently? If so, describe the project.
4. Is there a direct connection between projects and impact on family and community?
  - a. If so, is the connection meaningful for Hispanic students?
  - b. How do you know that the connection is meaningful?
5. What are the measurements you use to determine when the community need is met?

### Optional Questions

6. Is there a commitment to civic responsibility? If so, how is this commitment manifested?
7. How are cultural differences recognized and adapted?
8. Are the relationships reciprocal and mutually beneficial? If so, how?
9. What mission and/or vision do community partner and school share?
10. Do partnerships exist with local higher education institutions?

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

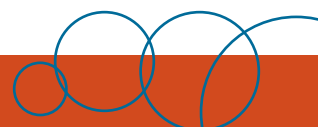
1. When Hispanic students are not learning, who's responsible?
2. What opportunities exist currently for staff and students to learn from each other and celebrate successes?
3. What process monitoring and program evaluations are currently in place? Describe the process monitoring and program evaluations employed.
4. Are students and staff given an opportunity for written feedback and reflection? What has been learned from written feedback and reflection?

### Optional Questions

5. Do administrators give students sufficient time to improve and meet standards?
6. How do you identify students who are in need of additional or different forms of instruction?
7. What is the role of youth in process and program evaluations?
8. What aspirations/expectations are communicated to students?
9. How is success measured?

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the benefits of service-learning for Hispanic students?
2. What are the challenges and obstacles in engaging Hispanic students in service-learning?
3. Please identify best practices and strategies for overcoming challenges and obstacles.



## Appendix B

COMPONENTS				
<b>Vision &amp; Leadership</b>	Engages both Hispanic youth and parents in leadership	Employs a collaborative approach with shared responsibility for learning	Promotes service-learning with education leaders and staff	Creates policies that support service-learning
<b>Professional Development</b>	Improves school climate	Service-learning is an integrated part of teaching and learning	Permanent service-learning professional development opportunities	Supports professional learning communities
<b>Community Partnerships</b>	Direct connections with the projects and their impact on family and community	Established, mutually beneficial partnerships with community	Shares resources and data with other schools	Cultural differences are recognized and accounted for
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	Assesses impact of service-learning on students and community	Evaluates service-learning impact on academic achievement	Measures outcomes and adjusts accordingly	Evaluates impact on dropout rate
<b>Curriculum &amp; Assessment</b>	Service-learning is a common and integrated component of curriculum	21st century skills & career development	Clear connections exist between goals and activities	Individualized interventions are available

## Endnotes

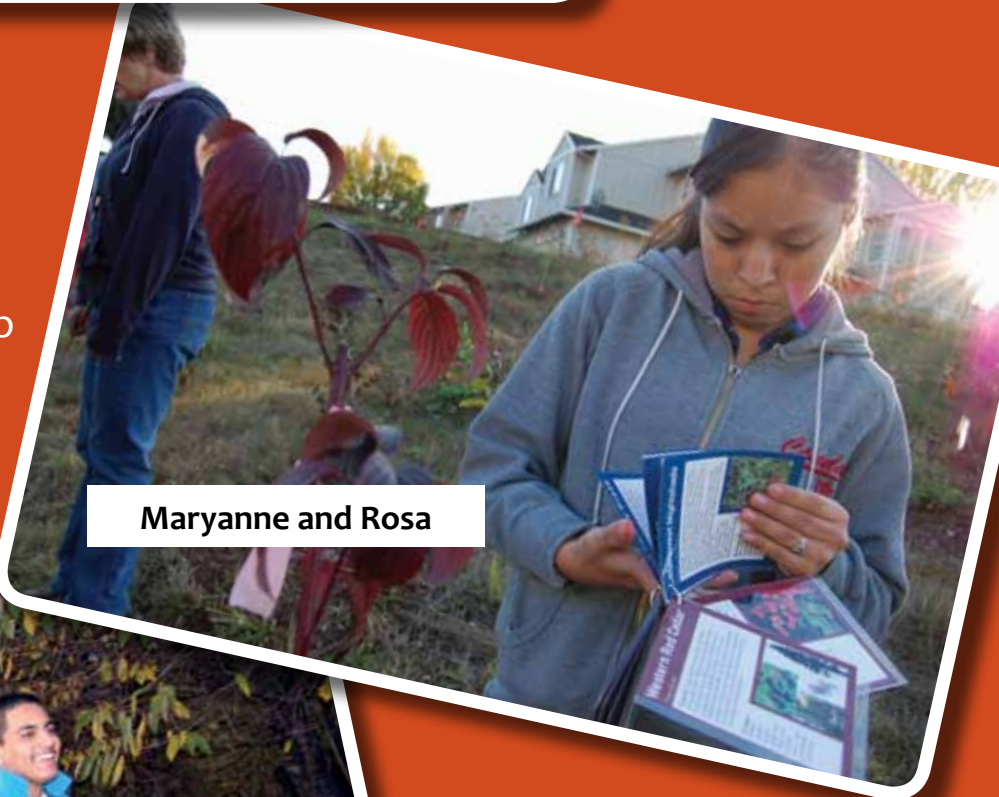
- <sup>1</sup> National Youth Leadership Council, *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice*, 2008, [www.nylc.org/objects/publications/StandardsStand aloneDocument.pdf](http://www.nylc.org/objects/publications/StandardsStandaloneDocument.pdf) (accessed April 18, 2008).
- <sup>2</sup> Robert K. Ream, "Counterfeit Social Capital and Mexican-American Underachievement," in *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25:3, 2003, 237-262.
- <sup>3</sup> Terry Pickeral, Julie Rodriguez and John Minkler, *Service-Learning and Hispanic Students Thinkers Meeting Briefing Paper*, 19 March, 2008.

# Students from Forest Grove High School in Oregon

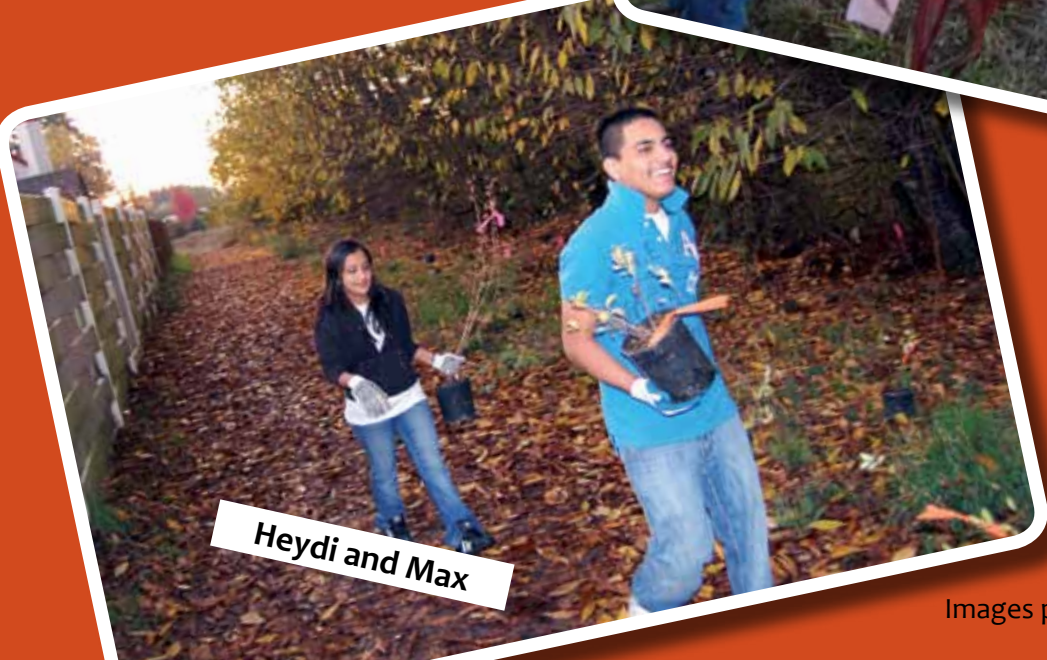


**Fabiola and Monica**

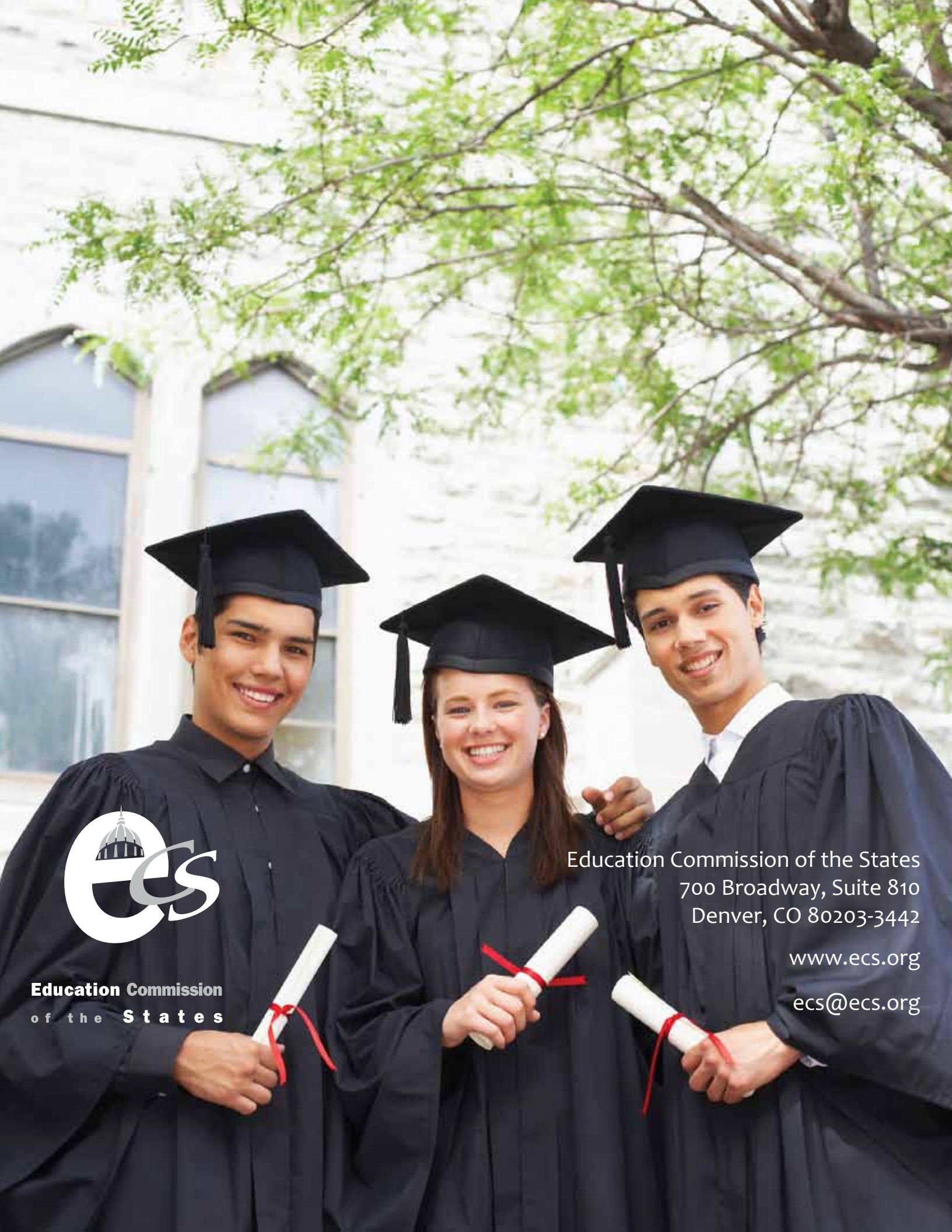
As part of a yearlong watershed restoration service-learning project, students planted trees, monitored water quality and removed invasive species in a riparian area. Their work will help reduce erosion, provide habitat and improve water quality in the Tualatin River Watershed.



**Maryanne and Rosa**



**Heydi and Max**



**Education Commission**  
of the **S**tates

Education Commission of the States  
700 Broadway, Suite 810  
Denver, CO 80203-3442

[www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)

[ecs@ecs.org](mailto:ecs@ecs.org)