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## No.5, April 2017: The Latin@ Teacher Shortage: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future

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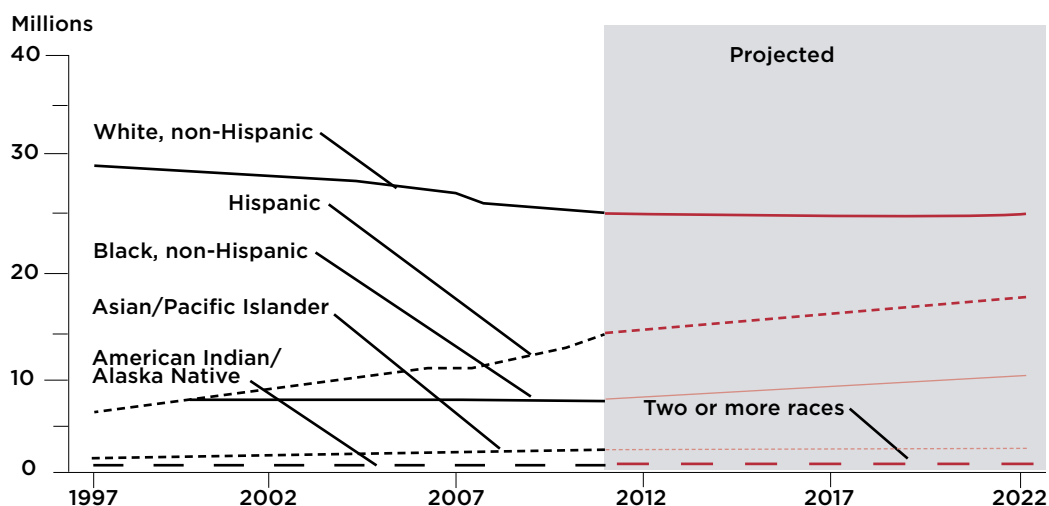
## LMU|LA Center for Equity for English Learners

## THE LATIN@ TEACHER SHORTAGE: LEARNING FROM THE PAST TO INFORM THE FUTURE

By Magaly Lavadenz, Ph.D. Loyola Marymount University and  
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While demographic trends and projections have over several decades signaled greater numbers and proportions of Latin@ students in public schools in California, the southwest and the nation (see Figure 1), teacher preparation programs have remained culturally and linguistically “generic”—that is, relatively little attention has been given to the recruitment and retention of Latin@ teachers, despite the increasingly Latin@ student population in U.S. schools (Garcia, 2001). In fact, as Figure 2 on page 2 illustrates, while Latin@ student numbers have historically increased from approximately 10% of the overall population in 1988 to 25% of the student population in 2012, the Latin@ teaching force hovers at about 7.8%. In California, 2014-2015 proportions are wider between Latin@ students and teachers; while close to 54% of the student population is Latin@, teachers represent only 18.6% of the overall teaching population. Moreover, Hispanic male teachers represent only 2% of the teaching workforce (NCES, 2012). The “Latin@” marker used here extends across national borders, gender, class, sexual orientation and other forms of identity that represents broad diversity within the U.S. Latin@ population. U.S. Latin@ demographic data that appears monolithic in definition, is actually representative of the international “Latinidad” that includes 23 nations, a variety of Spanish languages, racial *mestizajes* and cultural diversity.

Figure 1: U.S. K-12 Student Enrollment Projections by Ethnicity 1997-2022



NOTE: The historical racial/ethnic time-series were constructed using racial/ethnic enrollment data at the state level for individual grades. In some instances, enrollment data by race/ethnicity had to be imputed. Further, in some instances, the racial/ethnic enrollment data for individual grades had to be adjusted to the state total for that grade. For additional information see the Elementary and Secondary Enrollment section A.1 in appendix A. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Mean absolute percentage errors of selected education statistics can be found in table A-2, appendix A. Some data have been revised from previously published figures. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education,” 1997-98 through 2011-12; and National Public Elementary and Secondary Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014

## ETHNICITY

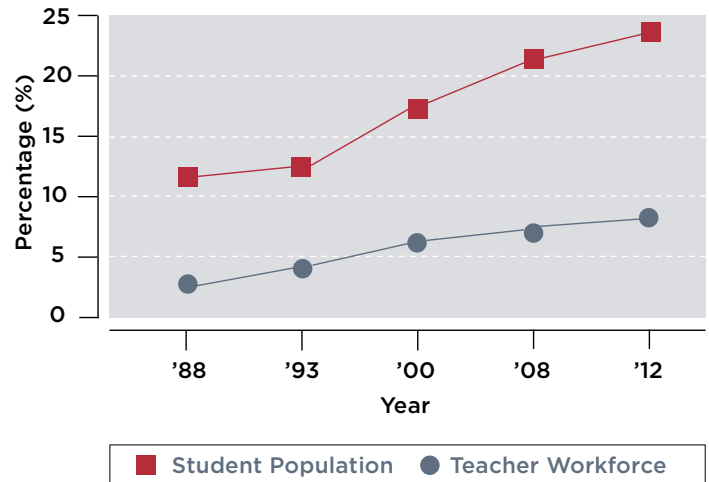
Enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools is projected to

- ▼ decrease 6 percent between 2011 and 2022 for students who are White;
- ▲ be 2 percent higher in 2022 than in 2011 for students who are Black;
- ▲ increase 33 percent between 2011 and 2022 for students who are Hispanic;
- ▲ increase 20 percent between 2011 and 2022 for students who are Asian/ Pacific Islander;
- ▼ decrease 5 percent between 2011 and 2022 for students who are American Indian/Alaska Native; and
- ▲ increase 44 percent between 2011 and 2022 for students who are two or more races. (The line for this racial/ ethnic group in figure 3 begins in 2010 because that is the first year when data for that group is available for all 50 states and the District of Columbia.)

This policy brief addresses the issue of the Latin@ teacher shortage and provides recommendations based on past initiatives, research and policies. In order to “mend” the disproportionality between the teaching force and the increasing K-12 Latin@ student population, the field must be engaged through a combination of state policies, local initiatives and by actually listening to Latin@ teacher voices (Ocasio, 2014; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly & Driscoll, 2010; Lemberger, 1992). By explicitly, strategically and directly addressing access and resources for teacher preparation programs that target the recruitment, training and retention of bilingual/bicultural Latin@ teachers, we have an opportunity to redress these critical shortages. In a review of the Latin@ teacher pipeline, Ocasio (2014) notes that we can be more successful with the integration of viable and realistic praxis and student engagement in local community schools. In the past, initiatives to recruit and prepare Latin@ teachers nationally lost funding or shriveled up during the fiscal crisis, when teachers lost their jobs.

Figure 2: Patterns of Latin@ Student Teachers in U.S. Schools

### HISPANIC STUDENT VS. TEACHER INCREASES



Source: National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 1990, 1996, 1997, 2002b, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011-12.

### Learning from the Past

The following sections provide successful examples of past efforts to increase Latino and bilingual teachers:

### Paraprofessional Career Ladders: The Latin@ Teacher Project

A highly recognized model for preparing Latin@ and bilingual teachers was created in the early 1990s at the University of Southern California (Genzok, Lavadenz, & Krashen, 1995). Career ladder programs were established for Chican@/Latin@ paraprofessionals already working in schools in instructional support positions. These were created by partnering school districts with university programs that offered flexible course schedules, financial assistance, preparation for taking state licensure examinations and priority hiring in districts upon completion of the credentialing program (Genzok & Baca, 1998; Hagedorn, Newman, & Duffy, 2003). “Normalista” programs for teachers from Mexico who had the equivalent of a two-year university level education, were also established to support the completion of the undergraduate degree and teaching credential.

### Grow Your Own (GYO) Initiatives

There has been an approximate 15-year lapse in time between the programs that emerged in the late 1990s and more recent efforts to create the Latin@ teacher pipeline. Several initiatives have (re)emerged to address the disproportionality in the nation’s diverse student population and the predominantly white and female teaching work force. GYO initiatives focus on two key areas: 1) to respond to what many are naming “the impending teacher shortages” (Darling-Hammond, 2016), and 2) to respond to the shortages in bilingual teachers for the ever-increasing demands for dual language programs in the nation. In one example, Skinner, Garretó, and Shultz (2011) describe the GYO initiative in Illinois, while many GYO programs across the nation stem from the White House Initiative on Hispanic Educational Excellence for Hispanics (2015). Research conducted for GYO teachers indicates that these teachers have better relationships with their students, fewer classroom management issues and are more ethnically representative of the diversity of their students. Valenzuela (2016) describes the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project’s (NLERAP’s) Grow Your Own Teacher Education Institutes (GYO-TEI) as the collaborative work of “researchers, teachers, and community-engaged scholars and members of community-based organizations.... [with] deep and defining commitment to equity, social justice, and a more beautiful world that centers community, teachers, teaching, and teacher preparation as essential parts of the solution to the deep sense of alienation that so many of our children and teachers experience in our nation’s schools.” (Valenzuela, 2016, p. 105) NLERAP’s GYO goal is to prepare critically conscious teachers with Latino roots nourished by the foundations of culture, language and community.

*I'm very concerned that increasingly, our teachers don't reflect the great diversity of our nation's young people.*  
**-Arne Duncan, Former U.S. Secretary of Education, 2015**

Former Secretary Duncan resparked the federal government's recognition of the mismatch between the teaching force and the increasingly Latin@ student population in our nation. Ironically, we are experiencing decreasing federal support for teacher education, coupled with increased tuition costs and a decline in the overall entry into the teaching profession. As part of a national effort to respond to the teacher shortage crisis overall, and specifically in states where these shortages are more acute, combined and innovative efforts will be required to not only recruit but to retain Latin@ teachers. For example, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics reflects the federal government's formal recognition of the mismatch between the teaching force and the increasingly Latin@ student population in our nation, as noted by Arne Duncan's 2015 statement. However, there has not been a parallel or concrete response to address the mismatch. Since the White House first launched the special initiative on Hispanic Education 27 years ago in 1990, "opportunity policy" initiatives to support Latin@s across a variety of professions, including education have not been fully enacted. The following recommendations serve as promising practices to increase the numbers, quality and retention of Latin@ teachers:

### **Recommendation 1: Growing Our Own Latin@ Teachers**

Recruiting and retaining a highly qualified Latin@ teaching force will require multiple efforts across multiple levels. Grow Your Own initiatives are community-connected and based, and involve a variety of strategic and fiscal innovations. Designing pathways to the teaching profession that begin in middle and high schools through the credential process can be accomplished by considering the following promising practices:

#### **Future Latin@ and Bilingual Teacher High School Academies**

Future Teacher Academies starting in middle or high school can begin by recruiting students working towards the Seal of Biliteracy. Transitions can be facilitated from either community college teacher preparation-articulated programs and/or 4-year university blended teacher education and master degree programs that encourage and support future Latin@ and bilingual teachers. One such as of yet untapped possibility is to develop teacher apprenticeships for individuals with Deferred Actions for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that would provide expedited residency/citizenship for DACA students who are accepted into and complete a teaching credential. This pathway (as well as other initiatives mentioned herein) can be funded by prioritizing current and future federal and state monies that target teacher shortages.

#### **ParaEducator Career Ladder Programs**

Career ladder programs support classified instructional assistants (paraprofessionals) in the process of becoming fully credentialed. Reinvigorating school/university partnerships and programs can encourage and support paraprofessionals working in schools to pursue their college degrees and teacher credentials through career ladders into teaching. Based on key learning from past efforts, career ladder programs provide critical early clinical experiences that can be counted as part of the course of study in becoming a credentialed teacher.

### **Recommendation 2: Establish Regional Teacher Preparation and Professional Learning Centers and Consortia**

California can lead the nation in creating a clearinghouse for information about the various pathways to teacher recruitment, credentialing, preparation and retention. Physical and virtual spaces developing from the convergence of multiple organizations and partnerships could result in articulated agreements between districts, county offices of education and universities in order to prepare teachers across a geographic region with job embedded clinical experiences.

#### **University-Based Teacher Education Institutes**

Collaboration with community-based organizations/centers for teacher preparation with linguistic, cultural and social stakeholders can serve as part of recruitment efforts across the teacher preparation pipeline. Recruitment of potential paraprofessionals for schools and college programs can stem from local Latin@ community-based organizations, churches, and other non-profits. Encouraging the development of Future Teacher Academies at the undergraduate level also fosters early field experiences in schools to engage preservice teachers in work with children and youth across the varied partnerships. These Institutes can serve as 'hubs' of recruitment from local Latin@ community-based organizations, churches, and other non-profits. Additionally, there exists the current untapped resource of community members who were teachers in their countries of origin.

### **Recommendation 3: Offer Financial Supports**

Increase targeted scholarship opportunities for future Latin@ and bilingual teachers to help offset the costs of higher education tuition, books and materials, state teacher exams, and licensing fees. Educational systems overall need to reconsider the professionalization of teachers and the corresponding salaries that reflect the value that Latin@ teachers provide to our society.

## Recommendation 4: Enhance University-Based Credentialing Routes, Internship and Residency Programs

State internship credentials immediately place candidates into classrooms as the teacher of record while they simultaneously take university courses towards credential requirements. These programs vary in design and length, following prerequisites for internships set by the State. Residency programs, although more costly, offer “teachers in residence” access to quality master teachers while they are apprenticed into the profession. The resident or candidate receives a differentiated salary, while assigned to a full time salaried teacher in a designated classroom.

### Binational Agreements

Expanded international partnerships with colleges in Spanish-language countries serve to immerse potential preservice teachers in both Spanish language and cultural enrichment. These can establish mutually-agreed upon long-term strategies for teacher recruitment with incentives including or that might include binational certification exchanges.

### Second Career Teachers

Programs recruiting teachers from a variety of career trajectories have varied results in effectiveness, particularly with regard to the beliefs, motivation and life experiences that second career teachers bring. Nevertheless, with appropriate screening and support, this group of teachers may be a valuable source of candidates.

## Conclusion: What can state and local policymakers do to recruit and retain Latin@ teachers?

California legislators, school board members and other elected officials can begin by acknowledging the overall benefits that a diverse teaching force can provide. Responding to the shortage of Latin@ teachers will require specific and immediate actions. The promising practices provided in this brief highlight structural, financial and procedural recommendations for action and agency to respond to the Latin@ teacher shortage in the state. Accordingly, these actions require corresponding strategies for *retention* of Latin@ and other minority teachers.

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