



## Minority/Diversity Issues— Hispanics

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### Improving Hispanic Achievement: Implications for State Policy

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On October 19, President Obama signed an [Executive Order](#) creating a presidential advisory commission on Hispanic education.

Many ECS constituents are deeply committed to improving educational outcomes for Hispanics. Below is just a sampling of ECS policy tracking, analysis and research syntheses aimed at helping state policymakers work towards this important goal.

#### Policy Tracking

The following links provide summaries and links to recent state legislation and state board activity on issues related to Hispanic education. All links identify policies from 2010 back to 2000 (in chronological order, with most recent activity at top).

- [Serving Hispanic students](#)
- [Minority/diversity issues](#) (in general, not specified by race)
- [Serving bilingual/ESL students](#)
- [Improving postsecondary access for traditionally underserved students](#)
- [Closing the achievement gap](#)

#### Promising Policy Approaches

- **Innovative workforce training and English as a second language (ESL):** Some [research](#) suggests that “Spoken English appears to be an important component of economic stability and success in the U.S.,” and that 36% of the foreign-born population comes from Mexico or Central America. **Texas 2009 H.B. 1935** creates a Green Job Skills Grant Program to retool workers for jobs in renewable energy or energy efficiency. Funded programs must be designed to lead trainees to economic self-sufficiency and career pathways, and may use funds for ESL education.
- **Better serving English language learners (ELLs):** Among children ages 5-17 in 2008, 75% of ELLs spoke Spanish and 17% of Hispanics spoke a language other than English at home and were not fluent in English, according to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#). A 2009 **New York policy** creates a New York Citywide Council on English Language Learners to do the following:
  - (1) Advise and comment on any educational or instructional policy involving bilingual or ESL programs
  - (2) Issue an annual report on the effectiveness of the city district in providing services to ELLs and make recommendations on improving the efficiency and delivery of such services
  - (3) Hold at least one meeting per month to provide a forum for members of the public to discuss issues facing ELLs.

- **Improving college readiness using existing state assessments:** A recent [ACT report](#) suggests that Hispanic students trail their white and Asian peers in college readiness benchmarks. Subject to appropriation, 2010 Illinois [legislation](#) extends and expands a 2007 pilot program designed to partner high schools and community colleges to improve students' college readiness, using students' ACT scores or other measures.
- **Supporting minority college students: New Mexico** policy creates the [Alliance for Underrepresented Students at New Mexico State University](#). The alliance is intended to (1) promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and retention at the undergraduate and graduate level for underrepresented students; (2) engage in research on and development of programs that support student retention and achievement; (3) disseminate knowledge acquired through education and retention programs; and (4) collaborate with and provide assistance to K-12 educators and postsecondary institutions to support STEM education and student achievement. The alliance's [2009 report](#) points to promising outcomes for students.
- **Serving adult English learners where they are:** Tennessee's [We Want to Learn English Initiative](#) provides grants to community-based, not-for-profits, immigrant social service organizations, faith-based organizations and on-site job training programs so that immigrants and refugees can learn English where they live, work, pray and socialize, and where their children attend school.
- **Using family-centered approaches:** Utah [policy](#) creates the ELL Family Literacy Centers Program to increase parent involvement; communicate with parents who are not proficient in English concerning required and optional activities at the school, in the parents' preferred language to the extent practicable; increase academic achievement, literacy skills and language gains in all ethnic groups of students and their families; and support and coordinate with other language acquisition instructional services and language proficiency programs in the public schools.

## Policy Analysis

- **Postsecondary Access:** [Strategies to Empower Low-Income and Minority Students in Gaining Admission to and Paying for College](#) identifies the misalignments, gaps and obstacles that pose a particular challenge to aspiring, first-generation college-goers and state policy approaches to help student overcome these barriers.
- **Serving Hispanic Students:** National [data and recent research](#) with implications for policymakers.

## Research Syntheses

The ECS [Research Studies Database](#) provides jargon-free summaries of the findings and policy implications/recommendations of recent, high-quality academic research with wide-reaching implications for state-level policy.

- The frequently asked question, "[English Language Learners: Which approaches best impact student achievement?](#)" currently includes five studies with the potential to improve outcomes for non-native English speakers.
- Additional studies also hold implications for Latino/Hispanic students. For example:
  - "The [impact](#) of a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality on college degree completion is far more pronounced and positive for African American and Latino students than any other pre-college indicator of academic resources."
  - There is [no difference in graduation rates](#) between African Americans, Latinos and whites once socioeconomic status and math grades are taken into account.
  - While [trends in TAAS \(Texas Assessment of Academic Skills\) scores](#) seem to suggest a closing of the achievement gap between racial/ethnic groups, and between limited-English-proficient (LEP) and English-proficient students, analyses reveal that gaming strategies likely reduced educational opportunities for Latino high school students.

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