

Educating Latino Immigrant Students in the Twenty-First Century: Principles for the Obama Administration

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In this essay, Carola Suárez-Orozco and Marcelo Suárez-Orozco address one of the most critical challenges facing President Obama's administration: meeting the educational needs of Latino and other immigrant children in the United States. The authors first provide a brief overview of past policies and agendas that have created a situation in which the educational and economic needs of immigrant children and their families remain grossly unmet. They then present three overarching principles to guide the Obama administration toward a more humane and effective policy agenda for immigrant children, and outline specific policy recommendations that reflect these principles to better serve this rapidly growing population and secure the future well-being of our nation.

During the course of the previous four presidential administrations, immigration to the United States has grown at a brisk pace. As a result, the new Obama administration is presiding over a country with a foreign-born population soon to surpass the 40 million mark—more than the entire Canadian population. Under President Obama, approximately 70 million people in the United States are either immigrants (foreign-born) or the children (U.S.-born) of immigrants. The uninterrupted immigration flow overseen by former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush has created a significant demographic echo. Nearly a quarter of all children in the United States today come from immigrant-origin households. The U.S.-born children of immigrants, moving forward, will account for the majority of the country's population growth (Hernandez, Denton, & McCartney, 2007).

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Historians may one day sum up the primary achievement of the four previous administrations on immigration policy as having guaranteed a steady replenishment of the immigrant-origin labor pool favored by employers and businesses in multiple sectors of the economy, including agriculture, construction, health, manufacturing, services, and technology. It is no coincidence that the largest wave of immigration in recent history took place at a time of rapid economic expansion under President Clinton. Though much of it was unauthorized, immigrant labor fueled the enormous Clinton-era growth of the U.S. economy. Looking forward, the Obama administration will face a series of challenges—from low-hanging-fruit issues ripe for relatively easy policy solutions, such as managing once and for all the fate of undocumented immigrants and putting in place smarter border controls, to more complex problems that will have lasting consequences for the future of our nation. None of these issues, however, is more urgent than incorporating the children of immigrants into the fabric of the nation.

Ideally, the massive immigration wave of the last twenty years would have taken place within a coherent policy framework, synchronized to ease the lawful, orderly, and humane transition of millions of new arrivals to education, the labor market, and the practice of citizenship. Alas, this was not to be. Instead, we experienced a dizzying immigration vertigo, losing any semblance of balance and order. The policy architecture under the prior administrations became both misaligned with the realities of global migration and plagued by unclear, contradictory, and unrealistic objectives. As a result, the Obama administration has inherited an immigration system that ignores any rational labor market objectives, the vicissitudes of language and education policies, and the requirements of citizenship and social cohesion in the twenty-first century.

Consider, for example, immigration and the family. While family reunification has been the bedrock of U.S. immigration policy, some 5 million children live in mixed-status legal limbo, where citizen children (at least 3 million) are growing up alongside undocumented children (approximately 2 million) in households headed by unauthorized immigrants (Passel, 2006). Millions of these immigrant children, enrolled in U.S. schools, are presumably acquiring the skills and competencies required to enter a U.S. labor market that *de jure* is unlikely to absorb them in a manner that maximizes their potential. Each year some sixty-five thousand unauthorized immigrant high school graduates face an uncertain future (Gonzalez, 2009). In total, 11 million to 12 million immigrants—fully a third of the entire immigrant population of the United States—are now undocumented (Passel, 2006) and face overwhelming barriers to higher education as a result.

The lives of immigrant children, then, are structured by deep contradictions that seriously compromise their future well-being. Newcomer immigrant students enter an education system shaped by school reform policies that fail to consider their particular needs or realities. In the No Child Left Behind

high-stakes testing climate, immigrant children are expected to achieve educationally in ways that are contradicted by the realities of academic language learning in American classrooms today. Newcomer students who enter midway through their educational career in early adolescence, for example, are expected to master a new academic language (something that typically takes five to seven years under optimal circumstances), while also learning all of the explicit and implicit curriculum their native-born peers have been exposed to over the course of their entire educational experience. Given the dual pressures of this condensed time frame—of mastering such a body of information, while often attending less than optimal schools—the odds are stacked highly against new arrivals in their ability to achieve fairly on high-stakes tests in comparison to their native-born peers.

Latinos' Struggles for Education

The disconnect between immigration policies and the realities of the lives of immigrants coalesce into a perfect storm that shapes the school experiences of the largest group of immigrant-origin children ever enrolled in American schools: Latinos. Immigration defines the experience of the vast majority of Latinos in the United States (Suárez-Orozco & Gaytán, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). There are now over 46 million Latinos in the United States, and two-thirds are immigrants or the children of immigrants. They represent approximately 15 percent of the total population, and the number of Latinos is expected to grow to 30 percent by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Nationwide, Latinos represent more than 20 percent of public school students in kindergarten through twelfth grade (Planty et al., 2008); in California, nearly half the student population is Latino (Pérez-Huber, Huidor, Malagón, Sánchez, & Solórzano, 2006).

Yet, Latinos are extraordinarily diverse, and their experiences resist facile generalizations. Some have ancestors who were established on what is now U.S. territory before the current borders were set through conquest and land purchases. In recent decades, large numbers of Latinos have arrived from dozens of countries creating an ever more diverse population. The sending countries, the areas of settlement, the historical timing of the migration, and economic circumstances vary considerably for Latinos of different backgrounds. The largest subgroups are of Mexican (64%), Puerto Rican (9%), South (8%) and Central (6%) American, and Cuban (3.5%) origin (Suárez-Orozco & Gaytán, 2009).

Although various social indicators, including educational attainment, differ among these Latino subgroups, many researchers treat Latinos as if they were a homogeneous group and often report general findings for an aggregated Latino population. While in our own research we have identified country of origin differences as well as generational differences, for the purpose of this

essay we are focusing on panethnic Latino concerns, especially as they pertain to those who are English-language learners (ELLs) and those who are immigrants or the children of immigrants. These represent nearly two-thirds of the current population. This group faces particular challenges in the context of systematic disadvantage and continuing poverty combined with high rates of segregation, which result in access to less than optimal schools.

Child Trends (2001) reports that at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Latino children were more likely than other groups of children to live in very poor neighborhoods: "Sixty-one percent of poor Hispanic children lived in neighborhoods with a high concentration of poor residents (a neighborhood where at least 40 percent of the residents are poor), compared to 56 percent of white children and 53 percent of black children" (p. 4). While there was some improvement in Latino poverty rates in the first half of this decade, the recent economic collapse is reversing some of those modest gains. Recent data show that almost 30 percent of all Latino children are growing up in poverty (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006), and according to the National Center for Children in Poverty (2008), 9.5 million children (or 61 percent of all Latino children) live in low-income households. This context of poverty dictates the kind of schools Latino children will attend.

Although some Latinos successfully navigate the American educational system, the majority struggle academically (Gándara & Contreras, 2009) and leave schools without the skills necessary to compete in the new global economy (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). If we envision the academic trajectory as a pipeline whose flow begins in preschool and prepares students to be carried through successive stages of education, resulting in high school and postsecondary studies, we would expect that a smooth current of students would arrive at each level, in proportional numbers, regardless of their demographic background (Pérez-Huber et al., 2006). This is not the case.

Considering a variety of outcomes, Latinos perform poorly throughout their school years. At all educational levels, Latino students lag behind their white and other peers. National studies find that an academic gap emerges as early as kindergarten and grows systematically through graduate education (Planty et al., 2008; Chernoff, Flanagan, McPhee, & Park, 2007; Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, & Kim, in press). In the twelfth grade, Latino students average only an eighth-grade reading level and are more likely to drop out of high school than students from all other groups (Fry, 2003; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; García, 2001). Indeed, Latinos have the highest high school dropout rates and the lowest college attendance rates of all racial and ethnic groups (Pérez-Huber et al., 2006).¹

These statistics foreshadow grim outcomes in today's competitive economy (Council of Economic Advisers, 2000). Many Latinos will live at or below the poverty level, laboring in the lowest echelons of a deeply stratified U.S. economy. With the current economic collapse, others may turn to opportunities in

the underground economies and may face incarceration, joining the largest prison population of any country in the world (Zimbaro & Haney, 1998). In this era of global interdependence and knowledge-intensive work, schooling processes and outcomes are strong indicators of future well-being (Suárez-Orozco & Sattin, 2007; 21st Century Workforce Commission, 2000; Bloom, 2004).

That a significant portion of our Latino youth are failing to meet their academic potential is a matter of national concern and must be a priority in the educational agenda of President Obama's administration. Future projections foreshadow negative trends unless the administration develops significant interventions for Latinos. Meaningful interventions will need to be based on an empirical and conceptual understanding of the factors that impede progress. Complex constellations of variables align to undermine Latino academic progress. These include poverty, segregation, parental education, language, documentation status, school factors (including segregation by language, race, and poverty), English-language learning, teacher preparation and expectations, individual socioemotional and student engagement factors, generational factors, and social supports, among others.²

Principles to Guide the Obama Administration

The current immigrant Latino crisis represents a daunting challenge. To develop meaningful interventions, the new administration will need to invest resources to strengthen quality research, develop strategies to take to scale best practices and promising models, and put in place smart accountability and transparency systems. We offer three guiding principles that we believe are at the heart of a smarter, more effective and humane educational experience for immigrants and children of immigrants in the twenty-first century. We follow these with specific policy recommendations to the Obama administration for a new policy agenda that reflects these principles in practice.

First Principle: Innovation and Creativity Are the Keys to Economic Growth and Prosperity

In the context of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the new administration will be weighing complex choices and priorities in investing resources. Innovation and creativity will be the route to individual mobility and the Camino Real to the creation of national prosperity.³ Massive and smart investments in education for the twenty-first century must be a priority for the new administration. When a greater share of the population is better educated—especially in higher-order cognitive and metacognitive skills needed for “expert thinking” and advanced communication (Levy & Murnane, 2007), interpersonal competencies, and cultural sensibilities—innovation and creativity are more likely to flourish.

Second Principle: Diversity Is an Asset in the Era of Global Interdependence

The dawn of the twenty-first century is revealing a world that is much more interconnected and interdependent than ever before. The greatest challenges and threats of the twenty-first century—from global warming to environmental degradation, from terrorism to financial instability and deep poverty—cannot be contained by national boundaries. It follows that the ability to function in multiple languages and to understand multiple cultural codes, meanings, values, and national systems is a new and urgent imperative. The era in which the monolingual, monocultural, homogenous citizens of the nation-state were idealized as the *sine qua non* for social cohesion is over. Moving forward, social cohesion will depend on the management of sociocultural differences. An educated, multilingual, multicultural, heterogeneous citizenry will be the backbone of the most vibrant, robust, and humane cultural democracies of the twenty-first century.

Third Principle: The Twenty-First Century Will Require More of Education Than Ever Before

The most recent wave of mass migration took place in the context of global changes in the economy and society; these changes have both fed the movement of people and made the use of a much more ambitious approach to the integration of the children of migrants more critical than in any previous wave of migration. Unlike one hundred years ago, when first-generation migrants looked to the Fordist industrial expansion and floor-shop mobility as their ticket to the American Dream, in this current wave of immigration, education will be the path to a better tomorrow.

Recommendations for the Obama Administration

After decades of neglect, there are no facile solutions to the complex problems facing Latino and immigrant students. The new administration must face head-on a challenge that has been created by a combination of policy neglect, structural barriers, general institutional decay, cultural and linguistic discontinuities, and systemic school problems. Below, however, we offer an outline for a forward-looking policy agenda that would better serve this rapidly growing population. Given the sheer numbers of Latinos, such an agenda has clear implications not just for this particular group of Americans but for the future welfare of our national economy and democratic society.

Reject the “sink or swim” approach to immigrant integration. As a nation, we have no coherent strategy to ease the transition of newcomer immigrant youth to schools (especially secondary schools), college, or the labor market. Instead, we have relied on an unreasonable faith that once young immigrants cross the border, the logic of the market will magically transform them into productive citizens. Alternatively, we believe that if we ignore them, they will fade away.

This nonpolicy approach to policy has failed too many of our newest Americans and robs the U.S. economy and society of the future contributions of a growing share of citizens. Countries that better align their immigration objectives with the objectives of labor markets, language and education, citizenship, and social cohesion are managing the integration of their immigrants in ways that are more rational, productive, and humanitarian.

Recommendation: The new administration should orchestrate a national conversation to both normalize the overheated immigration debate and build the consensus required to align our immigration objectives with our economic objectives, our need for social cohesion, and our cultural values as a country of immigrants.

Authorize the DREAM Act. Regularizing the status of the 11 million to 12 million individuals (Passel, 2006) who are de facto, if not de jure, members of our society must be a priority. Most of these unauthorized immigrants—especially those with children—are not going back to their countries of birth. Policies currently in place have created a permanent underclass of marginalized, largely low-educated and low-skilled individuals surviving in the shadows of society and facing overwhelming economic and social burdens. The status quo undermines the rule of law, basic American values, and the promise of American mobility. It is especially troubling that millions of children and youth—American in spirit but, alas, not in law—are unable to pursue formal education to the limit of their talents and ambition.

The bipartisan Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act would be one step forward in improving the educational prospects of undocumented students. The act would make undocumented students eligible for in-state tuition benefits and state and federal financial aid, and eventually would create a path to legal permanent residence. These benefits would generally be available to undocumented youth who were brought to the United States as minors, who have continuously lived in the United States since childhood, who attended and graduated from a U.S. high school, and who have no criminal record along with demonstrated good moral character. In addition to college access, students would benefit from the increased likelihood of financial productivity and improved job prospects that come with a college degree (Gonzalez, 2009).

Recommendation: The new administration should work with Congress to pass federal legislation making higher education more accessible for more than 360,000 undocumented students who have recently graduated from U.S. high schools—and for the 750,000 unauthorized students ages 5–17 who are currently in the educational pipeline.

Increase preschool opportunities. The new administration must act on the evidence that too many Latino students begin school lagging behind their peers academically (Chernoff, Flanagan, McPhee, & Park, 2007). Living in linguisti-

cally isolated neighborhoods and having parents with limited education and English language skills, many Latino children do not obtain the schooling readiness of their middle-class, English-dominant peers, thus placing them at a disadvantage that only grows over time.

Recommendation: The new administration should work to make preschool academic enrichment programs financially accessible to all Latino families—undocumented migrants, legal migrants, and native alike. Further, as placing young children in preschool is not a familiar cultural practice for many Latino parents (Fuller, Eggers-Pierola, Holloway, Liang, & Rambaud, 1994), the administration will have to work to make these programs culturally responsive and share with parents the significant long-term opportunities these programs can provide.⁴

Promote rigorous twenty-first-century education. The youth that will thrive in this twenty-first century of global interdependence will need the skills, sensibilities, and competencies required to identify, analyze, and solve problems from multiple perspectives. They will need to be curious, disciplined, and cognitively flexible, able to tolerate ambiguity, and able to synthesize knowledge within and across disciplines (Suárez-Orozco & Sattin, 2007; Wagner, 2006). Unfortunately, too many schools serving Latino immigrant youth, like schools that serve other disadvantaged students, are mausoleums to a dying industrial era that today manufacture boredom and disengagement. Schools can no longer continue to provide Latino immigrant students with anachronistic and irrelevant curricula using tools designed for the last century.

Recommendation: The new administration must invest in a twenty-first-century school infrastructure. To do this, the administration must require that schools serving Latino children offer these young people, the fastest-growing share of our child population, an education suffused with the new three Rs—rigor, relevance, and relationships (Gates, 2006).

Refocus and revitalize teacher preparation. Schools of education and school districts should provide better opportunities for quality training to prepare new teachers to work with Latino immigrant students and English-language learners. Too many teachers today leave their graduate programs with misperceptions about second-language acquisition (Reeves, 2006) and cultural practices in Latino families (Moll, 1992).

The new administration must also provide incentives for a new generation of motivated, well-trained, and well-supported young teachers to serve those schools most in need. In such schools, new teachers shall find an ever-growing number of Latino immigrant students eager to learn. Teachers serving immigrant students should learn about and be exposed to promising innovative models of practice that have a track record of success, such as the International Schools Network in New York (Fine, Stoudt, & Futch, 2005).

Recommendation: The new administration must prod schools of education and school districts to develop high-quality, research-based training programs in immigration and education, second-language acquisition, classroom and homework modifications for immigrant students, and cultural training and exchange programs. These programs must provide new teachers with exposure to and appreciation of the contexts from which Latino immigrant students come.

Revamp and prioritize second-language education. While not all Latino students are second-language learners, two-thirds come from homes with parents who speak Spanish. Acquiring academic language skills, however, takes longer than impatient policymakers generally understand; under optimal conditions, acquisition takes five to seven years (Cummins, 2000; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000). Students with limited literacy in their native language need even longer to solidify their academic skills in a new language. Schools in the United States—unlike schools in other countries with large immigrant populations, like Canada, Australia, and Sweden—do not have systematic or even consistent bilingual or second-language acquisition policies and practices, thus placing our ELLs at a disadvantage on the global stage. The new administration must work to correct this problem. Effective educational strategies for second-language learners should include: 1) placing ELLs into progressive and systematic programs of instruction that identify each student's incoming literacy and academic skills (Christensen & Stanat, 2007); 2) consistency of instruction, since frequent transitions place ELLs at considerable disadvantage (Gándara & Contreras, 2009); 3) high-quality English instruction accompanied by transitional academic supports—like tutoring, ongoing second-language instruction, homework supports, and writing assistance—as ELLs become integrated into mainstream programs (Christensen & Stanat, 2007); 4) annual assessment, including portfolio assessment and testing to measure progress and adjust further interventions (Christensen & Stanat, 2007).

The Obama administration should also work to reverse the pattern of rapid Spanish-language loss among Latino students. Spanish should not be seen as a threat to our national cohesion but as a cultural resource in the global era. Spanish-language maintenance should be included as part of an ambitious educational agenda. President Obama could use his powerful voice to urge more schools to implement dual-language programs that, when well designed and managed, produce excellent results to prepare competent bilingual speakers, immigrant and native alike. President Obama's own example, including his education in multicultural and multilingual Hawaii and Indonesia, serves as an instructional model to start a new chapter in American education more attuned to the realities of an ever more diverse and interconnected world.⁵

Recommendation: The new administration must once and for all recognize that learning academic English at a high level of competency takes consid-

erable time with optimal instruction. In addition, schools must make sure Spanish-speaking children are provided the supports they need to maintain their first language, while beginning a national program to save immigrant languages and promote bilingualism as an option for all students.

Reconsider high-stakes testing. The current high-stakes testing and accountability systems create unintended consequences for immigrant English-language learners that outweigh whatever benefits standardized tests may have (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). Because too many Latino immigrant students attend highly segregated and impoverished schools, are not exposed to optimal quality curricula, and undergo multiple school and programmatic transitions, their performance on such tests is compromised (Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008.) The high-stakes testing context is proving to be extremely challenging for Latino immigrants. Not only are many immigrant youth tested before their academic language skills have adequately developed, but all too often their day-to-day educational experiences are shaped by daily instruction that teaches to the test. This eye on the omnipresent “adequate yearly progress” is at the expense of more engaging, broader, academic content knowledge. The strong emphasis on high-stakes tests is making the educational context for ELLs extremely difficult. High-stakes tests have become the “de facto language policy” (Menken, 2008)—a policy that, for Latino immigrants, has implications for dropout rates, as well as college access (Amrein & Berliner, 2002; Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Recommendation: The new administration should reconsider the current accountability system and its overreliance on standardized tests. The yearly progress of Latino immigrant students should be assessed against their own baselines. Testing conditions should include linguistic accommodations, in some cases by providing well-translated versions of the tests in Spanish or a more flexible time frame for testing. Alternative measures of student achievement, such as portfolios of work, grades, classroom performance, and teacher recommendations, should be accounted for in high-stakes decisions (Menken, 2008). At the high school level, we recommend designing curricula for ELLs that promote their language and academic skills development, rather than providing curricula focused primarily on testing.

Expand afterschool programs. Latino students from low-income families do not typically have the multiple academic supports at home that middle-class students readily have at hand: educated parents who can help them organize and proofread essays, a computer with Internet access, a tutor to help them master trigonometry or chemistry problems, or simply a quiet place to do homework. Failure to recognize such educational impediments augments educational inequities (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Afterschool programs should provide tangible academic supports, such as homework help

in math and science; language tutoring and maintenance; meaningful, high-standards, future-focused academic information; and a positive message about academic potential and pathways. Afterschool programs with a focus on positive Latino cultural identity as well as sports, dance, and other extracurricular activities can also serve a role in positive youth development, but they are not enough to make an academic difference.

Recommendation: The new administration must lead a national effort to organize and systematize afterschool programs and youth-serving community education centers. The administration must use its resources to create places where immigrant students can benefit from specially designed programs of academic mentoring and supervision.

Support community-based mentoring. Mentoring relationships often evolve organically in afterschool programs and community-based organizations. As President Obama's own biography suggests, community-based organizations can create considerable social good, and they can make a difference in adolescents' lives (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). For youth in stressed immigrant families with limited social resources, mentors can serve to support healthier family and peer relationships by alleviating pressure on the family. The United States must develop community-based mentoring centers that build the kind of relationships among adults and youth that are particularly useful to newly arrived immigrant youth. Bilingual and bicultural mentors can be role models and bridge old and new cultures; such mentors can act as founts of information about the new cultural rules of engagement. Mentoring relationships can also help to heal ruptures in relationships that have resulted from long migration-related separations and complicated reunifications (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Since immigrant parents may not be available to their children because of their work schedules, the guidance and affection from a mentor, be it a member of the church or a coach, can serve to fill the void. Furthermore, mentoring relationships have been shown to reduce substance abuse, aggressive behavior, and incidences of delinquency (Rhodes, 2002), a path that boys are at greater risk of taking (Vigil, 2002). In addition, college-educated bicultural mentors can help their protégés perform better in school by helping them with homework and by providing them with informed advice about their own paths to college.

Recommendation: The new administration should support the development of community-based, youth-focused organizations specially designed to serve the academic and social needs of immigrant-origin students.

Advance systematic college-pathway instruction. Navigating the circuitous path to college is a mysterious and nearly impossible challenge for many Latino immigrant students (Bohon, Macpherson, & Atilas, 2005). Many of these students cannot turn to parents or neighbors, many of whom have not gone to

college themselves or have attended college abroad in systems very different from the United States. High school counselors often have low expectations of Latino immigrant students or are overburdened and hence largely ineffectual. Schools are, of course, a place to start, but the new administration should also reach out to the Spanish-language media, churches, NGOs, and other trusted community organizations to foster partnerships that will make available quality information about access.

Recommendation: The new administration should develop national programs to ensure explicit information about pathways to college is provided to Latino immigrant students and their families in a language they readily understand.

Latinos are the nation's largest minority group, and they are changing American schools. Latinos, especially newcomers, share optimism and hope in the future that must be cultivated and treasured—they see schooling as the path to a better tomorrow. Tragically, over time, Latino youth, especially those enrolling in impoverished, antiquated, and segregated schools, face negative odds and uncertain prospects. Too many Latino youngsters are leaving our schools without developing the tools needed in today's troubled global economy. The future of our country will be tied to the fortunes of our ever more diverse young Americans. As Latinos are a growing part of the American public, harnessing their energy, optimism, and faith in the future is in everyone's interest. Doing so, the new administration will discover, is one of the most important challenges to our country's democratic promise. As made famous by Cesar Chávez, and as President Obama will surely understand, *¡Si se puede!*

Notes

1. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that 22.1 percent of 16- to 24-year-old Latinos were high school dropouts, compared to 5.8 percent for whites and 10.7 percent for African Americans (Planty et al., 2008). School dropout rates and high school completion rates are correlated. In 2006 only 63.2 percent of Latinos between the ages of 25 and 29 had completed high school, compared to 93.4 percent of whites and 86.3 percent of blacks. Further, 23.9 percent of Latinos had less than a ninth-grade education, compared with only 3.5 percent of whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).
2. For an interdisciplinary interpretation of how these factors shape the Latino experience, see Suárez-Orozco, Gaytán, and Kim (in press).
3. For a historical overview of how the American educational system was once able to make the United States the richest nation on earth, see Goldin and Katz (2008).
4. We are encouraged by the president's Early Learning Challenge Grants proposal as a reflection of an effort to move toward universal preschool for all children that is well-structured, culturally inviting, and inclusive.
5. While it is the case that Spanish is a world language spoken by millions of migrants and U.S. citizens alike, and by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world, we do also believe in actively supporting other world languages. Teaching the other languages our immigrants bring (including, but not limited to, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic) offers all students an edge in this era of extraordinary global interconnectedness.

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