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Educational Achievement and the Successful Integration of Latinos in Nebraska: A **Statistical Profile to Inform Policies and Innovate Programs**

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Educational Achievement and the Successful Integration of Latinos in Nebraska:

A Statistical Profile to Inform Policies and Programs

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Preface

This report has been prepared by the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) at the request of the Nebraska Mexican American Commission (MAC). It is, in part, an update of earlier reports prepared for the commission by the Bureau of Business Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, entitled "The Educational Status of Hispanics in Nebraska: A Statistical Profile," Volume 1, 1992, and "The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos in Nebraska: A Statistical Profile," Volume 2, 1997.

The report in several instances goes beyond the types of information presented in the earlier volumes. It includes, for example, comparisons between foreign-born and native-born Latinos across a series of demographic and educational measures, as well as more extensive comparisons between Latinos and non-Latinos than those offered in the earlier reports. We have also expanded our analysis and offered some brief reflections on the implications of key findings for the policy reforms and innovative programs needed if we are to match the high educational aspirations of many Latino students and parents. These high aspirations are well documented in numerous studies. Effective policies and programs beyond the educational arena are critical to deter the lower expectations that arise as the barriers to education appear insurmountable.

A significant portion of the data for this report was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. We have expanded comparisons across census years in some cases to get a better sense of whether educational achievement rates for Nebraska Hispanics/Latinos improve with "assimilation" or incorporation, or whether they fall victim to similar sets of structural barriers for older and newer generations. Jerry Deichert, director of the Center for Public Policy Research at UNO, lent his expertise for the retrieval and numerous internal calculations of this data. Esperanza Camargo, our research assistant, spent countless hours retrieving and organizing the information presented here in tables and graphs that can be easily understood by different audiences. The report also includes data from the Nebraska Department of Education, the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education (CCPE), University of Nebraska Central Administration, and from various school districts across the state.

In addition to these large data sets, the report benefits from a small set of interviews, meetings, and focus groups with students, parents, and school officials whose insights informed our analysis; these are offered sparingly here as they will be published more extensively later as part of a broader study on Latino educational achievement. A portion of this larger study is sponsored by MAC. The majority of this qualitative data, as well as data from an on-going survey taking place in Omaha Public Schools, will be published in subsequent reports and will add to the growing, but still highly insufficient, Nebraska-based research on the Latino population.

Whenever possible, we have highlighted how the lack of research, or outright inaccessibility to data collected by state and private institutions, inevitably makes policy and reform efforts more difficult or less informed.

Thus, among our final recommendations are the need to transform how we collect data in some cases, as well as the need for a more transparent and public presentation of data about the successes and failures of the educational system at all levels so that educational reform can be most effective.

We wish to thank the Nebraska Mexican American Commission, especially its director, Cecilia Huerta, and the individual commissioners for their vision and foresight in elevating education to the top of their agenda. In sponsoring this report, the commission recognizes that this is one of the most important and foundational issues we must tackle to successfully integrate new Latino families in Nebraska and to ensure prosperity for all Nebraskans. We also wish to thank the staff of OLLAS, particularly Lucy Garza, OLLAS Project Coordinator who supervised student workers and kept track of every step of the process for us. OLLAS student workers provided much assistance to the project, especially Sociology student Levi Sanderson who helped assemble the data on ESL and postsecondary education. Our work-study student, Lucia Marquez, helped with various organizational tasks. We wish to express our gratitude to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at UNO for supporting the authors during our research process and training the excellent undergraduate and graduate students that assisted us with the project. Finally, we thank the UNO Office of Sponsored Projects for their research and administrative support during the period it took to collect, process, and analyze the data presented here. Additional funding for this project has been provided by a grant to OLLAS from the U.S. Department of Education.*

*OLLAS (the Office of Latino/Latin American Studies of the Great Plains) is a center of excellence that focuses on the Latino population of the Americas with particular emphasis on U.S. Latino and Latin American transnational communities. It is an interdisciplinary program that enhances our understanding of economic, political, and cultural issues relevant to these communities.
On August 2003, OLLAS received a $1,000,000 award from the Department of Education (Award # P116Z030100). One of the central objectives funded by this grant is the "Development and implementation of a research agenda designed to address the most urgent and neglected aspects associated with the region's unprecedented Latino population growth and its local, regional and transhemispheric implications. These projects will involve collaboration with community agencies, UNO programs and faculty and other governmental and non-governmental associations." This report represents a clear example of our fulfillment of that objective.

For more information contact Dr. Lourdes Gouveia (402/554-3835) or go to the OLLAS website: www.unomaha.edu/ollas.

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Highlights

The unprecedented and continuous growth of the Latino population compels us to engage in institutional changes, comprehensive policy reforms, and innovative programs that enhance the productive integration of this population into our state. As an abundant body of research and informed practices make clear, education is the bedrock of successful integration for current and future generations of Latinos. No longer can a job, obtained without a high school or college education, provide the opportunities it may have once provided to older generations of Americans or, for that matter, first generation immigrants. The latter tend to measure their socioeconomic success relative to conditions of unemployment and below-poverty wages they may have left behind. Their children's socioeconomic mobility will hinge on educational attainment.

Dramatic Latino population growth and complex diversity will shape the future of the state

1. Nebraska can be designated as a new and resurgent Latino immigrant destination. Latinos make up the bulk of new arrivals in the state, with exponential growth taking place during the 1990s. As communities around the state experienced serious loss of population in the aftermath of the farm crisis, Latino newcomers breathed new life into them (Table 1.5).
2. The highest population projections noted in this report suggest that the Nebraska Latino population may reach 450,000 by 2030. Mid-level projections for the same year, which we believe to be too conservative, estimate the Latino population will reach nearly 300,000 (Figure 1.5).
3. According to the more conservative estimates cited above, by 2030 Latino children under age five will comprise nearly a quarter of Nebraska children (22.3%), and Latinos as a whole will make up over 15% of the Nebraska population (Table 1.7). With regard to new immigration, research shows it is the second generation that will leave its indelible mark on the social, economic, and political landscape of the state (Table 1.6).
4. Most Latinos in Nebraska (76%) trace origins to Mexico, but there is a growing number of Caribbean, Central and South Americans, creating great diversity and complicating the provision of meaningful integration policies and programs (Table 1.4).

Poor Families, Poor Schools, and Poor Immigration Laws Negatively Affect Educational Outcomes

1. Latinos experience high rates of poverty despite very high rates of labor force participation. Many Latino parents suffer from low educational attainment and tend to be clustered in poor-wage occupations (Table 1.8 and Figures 1.6, 1.7, and 2.1.b). Research shows that parental socioeconomic status (a combination of education, occupation and home ownership) is a strong predictor of children's school achievement.
2. Latino children suffering from high levels of poverty are likely to attend classes with health and personal problems that affect learning. In 2003–2004, 73.4% of

Hispanic students in the Omaha Public School District (OPS) qualified for free or reduced-price lunches (Figure 2.2). From our conversations with teachers, we learned this figure may underestimate the real need as many parents are embarrassed to request this service.

3. Immigrant and Latino parents have very high aspirations for their children. However, the resources to meet such aspirations are frequently lacking. School funding is often inadequate to provide for programs such as early education, dual language, or summer classes, which contribute to higher educational attainment.

4. There is a high concentration of English Language Learners (ELLs) in a selective number of Nebraska school districts, and 39% of Spanish-speaking Limited English Proficiency (LEP) children in the state are enrolled in OPS. However, Table 2.19 shows that a large proportion of these students (more than 25%) are enrolled in schools in smaller towns such as Lexington and Schuyler. The schools in these towns are often less equipped than urban schools to deploy the institutional resources and provide the staff training necessary to comply with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Civil Rights Commission standards regarding access to a quality education for all students.

The Persistent Latino Educational Gap and Contributing Factors: From Early Years to Higher Education

1. A high proportion of Latino children are of preschool age (14% as shown in Figure 1.4) yet a relatively small number of Latino children participate in preschool programs in Nebraska (Figure 3.1). Research has consistently shown that such early education programs have lasting positive effects on educational attainment (Bredekamp and Copple 1997). However, the state generally does not provide funding for preschool programs. There also is a serious lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate staff as well as a dearth of the kind of data needed to formulate informed programs and policies (Interview with Head Start staff July 7, 2004).

2. Enrollments for Latino students in Nebraska public schools have increased dramatically, a function of population increase. Between 1996 and 2002 increases were greater than 62% at all grade levels (Table 2.5). In 2003 to 2004, 9.3% of students in Nebraska public schools were Latinos, while Latino certified staff in schools was only 1.1.% (Table 2.7). Research has shown that Latinos do better in educational settings where Latino faculty and staff, as well as student co-ethnics, are visibly present.

3. In Nebraska, fewer than half of Latinos 25 years and over have completed high school, while almost 90% of non-Hispanic Whites have done so (Figures 2.1.a and 2.1.b). In 2003 only 57.8% of Latino students completed high school, a rate lower than every race/ethnic group except Native American students (Table 2.8). Rates also vary, sometimes significantly by school district (Table 2.9). A variety of factors interact to affect these rates. School context, for example, may account for lower graduation rates in schools with a smaller presence of co-ethnics or a history of a hostile learning environment. In other school districts, the lure of better labor market opportunities, as may be the case in Omaha or Lincoln can

also influence the rate. Much research needs to be done before we understand the causes of differential graduation and dropout rates across localities and districts.

4. In 1990–1991, Latinos accounted for 6% of total dropouts in grades 7–12 in the state (Table 2.12.b). By 2002–2003, Latinos made up 19% of total school dropouts in these grades. Viewed differently, 12.2% of Latinos, grades 9–12, dropped out of school in 2001–2002. The Nebraska rate is the highest among Great Plain states (Table 2.10). Statewide in 2002-2003, although Latino students accounted for 19% of Nebraska dropouts from grades 7 through 12 they totaled less than 7% of the student population in those grades.

5. We found that national and state data sources on dropout and graduation rates are incomplete, unavailable and often contradictory. Nebraska, not unlike every other state in the nation, cannot tell with precision how many students drop out, what percentage are Latinos, and whether rates have changed significantly over time and for different generations of Latinos.

6. The educational gap is affected by factors such as immigration histories, gender, and how different Latino groups have been treated by the larger society. Among Latinos, those groups who experience higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination, as is the case with Mexicans and Central Americans, have lower levels of education than Latino immigrant groups who have experienced more favorable contexts of reception. Educational attainment for men and women also varies by nationality in complex ways (Figure 2.1.d.) (Gouveia 2005).

7. An educational gap exists not only between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites, but also between U.S.-born and foreign-born Latinos. Statewide, in 2000, 26.3% of U.S.-born Latinos age 25 and older had less than a high school education, but 71.8% of foreign-born Latinos fell into this category (Figure 2.1.c.).

8. Latinos made up 8% of the state's college-age population in 2000, but only 2.4% of students enrolled in higher education were Hispanic (Tables 3.1.b and 3.2). Hispanic students accounted for only 1.8% of degree completions in 2000–2001. Viewed differently only 20% of Hispanics in the prime college attendance age (18-24) are attending Nebraska colleges and universities, compared to 65% of Whites.

9. The proportion of Latino students who enroll at NU campuses has shown a slight increase between 1993 and 2003, but it is still far below the percentage of college-age Latinos in Nebraska (Figure 3.3). The UNO campus had a Latino enrollment of 2.8% in 2003, the highest proportion of Latino enrollment in the system. This is partly explained by the fact that the largest concentration of Latinos in the state reside in Omaha, a city poised to become an even more favorite urban destination for Latino immigrants in the years to come.

10. Hispanic faculty comprised only 2.1% of all full-time faculty in higher education in the state (CCPE). This percentage is 2.3% in the NU system (Table 3.6). The issues raised in point number 2. about low faculty/staff to student ratios apply equally to higher education.

Why Care about the Educational Status of Latinos? An Introduction

Children of immigrants must cross in the span of one generation the educational gap that took their predecessors, descendants of European immigrants, several generations to bridge.

Portes and Haller 2004

Why Care about the Educational Status of Latinos? An Introduction

Americans are slowly awakening to the fact that the promise of a new economy, filled with abundant jobs demanding high levels of education and technical skills, is only half of today's social story. It is a story that applies to the upper and somewhat smaller segment of an economy more accurately characterized as a distended hourglass. More than half the jobs being created today fall in the lower half of that glass, where pay is lower, skill and work experience requirements appear degraded, and career ladders are shorter (Sassen 1989).

Immigration to the United States today is fueled by a voracious appetite for immigrant labor at both ends of this hourglass. However, it is at the bottom rungs of the occupational ladder where the demand for immigrant, especially Latino, labor is greatest (Waldinger and Lichter 2003).[1] Latino immigrants make up a major, if not the largest share of

[1] Latino or Latina have become the preferred self-denominational terms for most individuals who were born in Latin America or who trace their historical, cultural, and linguistic roots to peoples living within the current or past borders of that region. The term Hispanic came into usage during the 1980 census and a decreasing number of Latinos choose to call themselves Hispanic today than was the case 10 to 20 years ago. In addition, given the fluidity of identity, large numbers of recent immigrants, and the heterogeneity of the Latino population, many Latinos choose nationality (Mexican, Colombian) rather than a panethnic designation such as Hispanic or Latino. In this report, we often use Latino and Hispanic interchangeably depending on the technical term utilized by the particular data source we may be citing.

workers in our nation's farms, Nebraska's meatpacking plants and construction sites, and a broad range of low-end service jobs all over the state. Parental occupation has a profound effect on the education of children, and active national, state, district, school, and community intervention is critical if we are to reverse these occupational trends for the next generation (Portes and Hao 2004).

Today, Latino immigrants and their U.S.-born children are more likely than non-Latino Whites to fill society's bottommost jobs and to have fewer opportunities for mobility. In 2000, Hispanics/Latinos were twice as likely to be employed as laborers than non-Hispanic Whites (20.8% and 10.9% respectively). Conversely, Whites were more than twice as likely as Latinos to be employed in managerial or professional occupations (35.1% and 14.2% respectively) (Ramirez and de la Cruz 2003). In the context of this new hour-glass economy, the intermediate career ladders available to former waves of immigrants have virtually disappeared. The only way the children of these immigrants can improve on their parents' socio-economic status is to also improve sharply on their educational attainment levels. In order for these children to be able to make such a huge leap in just one generation, as the opening quote suggests, major intervention on the part of educational and community institutions must take place.

Not all Latinos are new immigrants or new to the state, however. Nebraska's need for low-wage Mexican labor dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century when companies and the United States government sent labor recruiters to both sides of the 1848 border divide (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). The historical consolidation of this type of labor migration, along with associated social dimensions such as severe racism and segregation, is commonly associated in the literature with restricted opportunities for mobility across various generations (Portes and Rumbaut 1997; Saenz 2004). In fact, while foreign-born Latinos are more likely than U.S.-born Latinos to be found in lower-paying occupations, all Latinos continue to be underrepresented at the top of the educational and occupational ladder. In 1990, a census year not yet registering the new immigration wave in any significant numbers, only 9 percent of Hispanic adults in Nebraska had completed college degrees, compared to 19 percent for non-Hispanic Whites (Gouveia, Carranza, and Cogua 2005).

National research findings have pointed toward a disturbing trend whereby third-generation immigrants in this country experience downward mobility when compared to the second generation (Gibson 2000; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). A large number of U.S.-born Mexican Americans in Nebraska are third-generation immigrants, not unlike Italian or Polish Americans in the state. Despite the fact that some European immigrant groups also experienced serious bouts of discrimination during their early history in this country, several factors intervened in their favor. Among them was a much more favorable employment structure consolidating within an era of industrial expansion. Second, the virtual end to Southern and Eastern European immigration as a result of the draconian national quota immigration law of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act), limited the size and thus visibility of "foreigners" as potential target for exclusionary practices. Third, racial characteristics of Southern and Eastern Europeans were much closer to those of the dominant Northern and Western European majority. Immigration research has clearly established that the size of an ethnic group and its "social distance" from those who exercise cultural, economic, and political dominance, highly determine newcomers' opportunities for mobility and incorporation into the host society (Saenz 2004).

Although we focus primarily on educational attainment indicators in this

study, we are mindful of and offer some empirical evidence of the factors contributing to low levels of educational attainment among Latinos, especially those of Mexican origin, as compared to other sizable immigrant and ethnic groups. The search for reasons why students of certain immigrant and ethnic or racial origins perform consistently better while others perform poorly cannot be confined to an examination of the schools they attend. School failure or abandonment results from a host of interacting societal forces and school contexts that become cumulative over time and for generations to come. Likewise, the policies and solutions implemented cannot be piecemeal. They must be cognizant of the fact that barriers to Latino educational achievement are found across various societal institutions and policies, from education and employment to housing, health, and immigration.

Despite popular beliefs, there is a dearth of national, let alone state-level, scholarly research that can shed light on Latino education. This is particularly true with regard to new or revitalized destinations of Latino migration such as Nebraska (Gershberg, Danenberg and Sánchez 2004; Ruiz-de-Velazco and Fix 2000). These less traditional, non-coastal, immigrant destinations may offer very different contexts of reception from those found in traditional immigrant gateways. We hope future phases of this project will also contribute to the debate. Among other things, future research must distinguish more carefully between Latinos of different generations, racial and ethnic groups, nationalities, and levels of language ability.

That said, important lessons can be drawn from research carried out at the national level or in these traditional immigrant destinations and historic Latino/Mexican settlements. The following excerpts highlight some of the major findings and additional questions that can be gleaned from this body of research:

In terms of educational attainment levels:

- Latinos' educational attainment is below that of African Americans, Asians, and non-Latino Whites. However, there are important differences in educational attainment among Latino nationality groups represented in Nebraska. South American and some Caribbean groups have migrated under different circumstances and tend to have higher levels of education (Gouveia et al. 2005; Saenz 2004).

- Mexicans tend to rank at the bottom of the educational scale given the disadvantages they have historically encountered, mentioned earlier; this group deserves special attention for that reason. Nationwide, foreign-born Mexicans had the highest dropout rates in 2000. However, this may be overstated, as studies that talk about drop out rates may include those individuals who technically never dropped out because they never attended a U.S. school but came as adults (Saenz 2004).

In terms of interactive factors that affect educational attainment and need attention:

- In studies about the second generation, children from high-status families perform well academically regardless of school context, in other words, whether schools are high or low socioeconomic status (SES). In contrast, children from lower SES Mexican families tend to perform best in schools with larger concentrations of Hispanic co-ethnics (Portes and Hao 2002). Thus, what may be good policy for Colombians may not be good for Mexican children; but we don't know yet if this relationship holds for Nebraska.

- Contrary to old-line assimilation theory, length of residence in the

United States tends to correlate with declining educational achievement levels as evidenced among the more-assimilated second-generation adolescents, regardless of school context and regardless of nationality (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Existing data sources do not adequately distinguish between the educational experiences of new and older immigrants or generations.

- Mexican-origin students have a higher propensity to drop out of school, and this is more likely in schools where their ethnicity is most visible and they are more vulnerable to discrimination (Portes and Hao 2004).
- There is a tendency to conflate "new immigrants" with English Language Learners (ELLs); policies and programs are often designed for the latter and not the former. Poor academic performance as measured by school test-score averages, for example, is not so much influenced by high concentrations of new immigrants but by large concentrations and segregation of ELLs (Gershberg et al. 2004). Again, we must make these distinctions in research and subsequently in policies adopted, because the underlying reasons for this gap have to do with lack of sufficient resources for schools educating large numbers of ELLs (Ruiz-de-Velazco and Fix 2000).
- It has become fashionable to point to factors such as "poor education in immigrants' home country" or "different educational aspirations of immigrant parents" when discussing lower educational achievement or parental involvement of Latinos of second and subsequent generations. However, we take issue with these assumptions, and many of the works cited here question them as well. Immigrant and Latino parents have been found to have very high aspirations for their children and some research shows that Mexican children educated in relatively good schools perform better in math and science than their U.S.-born counterparts (Gershberg et al. 2004).
- Experts agree that parental involvement in a child's education correlates with higher levels of educational achievement; schools have been implementing programs to promote such involvement among Latino and new immigrants' parents. However, these programs are mainly ad hoc rather than pieces of a more comprehensive and research-informed policy on Latino and new immigrant educational integration. In practice, parents may find schools inaccessible and their bureaucracies difficult to navigate. The punitive nature of today's immigration policy climate further distances parents from the schools, especially but not only, the undocumented immigrants (Gershberg et al. 2004). We must work simultaneously on comprehensive immigration and educational reforms.

Why Invest in Latino Education?

There are several reasons why it makes sense to invest in Latino education as the pivotal core of a broader social and economic integration strategy:

1. Latinos will make up an increasingly higher proportion of Nebraska's labor force in the future; this will be seen more clearly in the section on socioeconomic characteristics below. The majority of Latino children

living in the United States, and born to immigrant parents, were born in this country (about 72%). We can invest in their education, as well as other proactive integration strategies, now or assume the much higher costs associated with large numbers of uneducated and institutionally disenfranchised adults later.

2. While the state's economy is currently structured around low-wage jobs, this need not be its destiny. University of Nebraska officials, state economic analysts, and political leaders repeatedly decry the fact that Nebraska will fail to meet its expected economic potential unless we are able to improve the educational level of our labor force. An expanded pool of better-educated, higher-skilled labor can shift the state's balance toward better-paying jobs and higher-ranked occupations. Conversely, to the extent that we reproduce a poorly educated workforce, we will continue to create a state economy characterized largely by dead-end jobs, low-wage structures, and a poor tax base, along with high social service costs. This severely compromises the state's future.

3. In Nebraska, the Latino population may reach over 450,000 by 2030 (see Figure 1.5). By 2020, according to our projections, the working age Latino population (ages 20 through 64) may account for anywhere between 11% to 20% percent of Nebraska's total workforce. Educating Latino children, many of whom are children of immigrant parents, is not simply a matter of state but of national importance. Conservative estimates state that the Latino population in the United States will triple by 2050, with Latinos comprising about 25% of the U.S. population. Current projections indicate that Latino workers will account for more than one-third of total labor force growth by 2012.

4. Nebraska is increasingly integrated into the world economy, and new immigration is only one aspect of this trend. Currently, 44% of all Nebraska exports go to Mexico alone and 32% of its beef goes to Latin America (www.midwestlivestock.com). Labor mobility is an inevitable and necessary component of this new economy and, as many state experts have stated, national and state competitiveness hinges on the capacity to integrate immigrant and international workers and families into our economy and society (Wilkerson 2004).

5. American values of democracy and equality are undermined at home and abroad when we blatantly fail to provide equal opportunities and protections under the law to large segments of the most

To the extent that immigration continues to meet the nation's demand for manual labor, compensatory programs of support to immigrant families and communities must be put in place lest we confine a large number of these workers' children to poverty and permanent social exclusion.

Portes and Hao 2004

vulnerable populations. To the extent that rules about distribution of rights and benefits, such as access to a good education, consistently place members of some groups at the top and others at the bottom of the social hierarchies, they violate democratic principles by disallowing opportunities to climb.

6. The success or failure of societal integration policies and initiatives in increasingly diverse communities is measured by the position occupied by the second and future generations within these communities (Pennix 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Contrary to popular views, "assimilation" is not a one way process. Rather it is a dynamic interaction between Latinos and the communities where they settle. However, it is the response of local populations and institutions that proves most critical to a process of successful integration. Today, educational institutions are particularly important to this process.

This research is limited by the availability of useful data. Although we received the cooperation of several key state and local agencies in Nebraska, data were frequently not in a form readily accessible for understanding issues faced by Latinos. For example, although we obtained information about the proportion of Hispanic certified staff in public schools in the state, we were unable to determine whether school staff were bilingual in Spanish and English.

Our analysis includes data from several Great Plains states for comparison to Nebraska, data from the entire state, and data from several Nebraska communities and school districts. We made editorial decisions to focus on specific communities in Nebraska, based on several factors. Objective indicators include the proportion of Latinos based on census data. We also included some cities for comparison to prior reports. A more subjective selection process included one of the researcher's knowledge of areas of rapid growth in the Latino population, even though they may not yet be among the largest percentages of Latinos as revealed by the census.

We approached this project as sociologists and not as experts in education. In other words, we are not interested simply in the school system, but in embedding our knowledge of educational issues into the larger and often unexamined context of social, economic, and political forces situated at the global, national, state, and local levels. These forces are often beyond the control of schools, localities, and the immigrants themselves. In order to truly address the challenges of new immigration and Latino integration, we must be cognizant of these various layers of forces and enact comprehensive solutions that do not begin and end at the school level alone. This research strives to produce reliable information, introduce useful language to debate the issues that interest us, and articulate policy recommendations that go beyond opinions shaped by narrow experiences or ideological convictions. Highlighting the importance of research-based observations and policies provides an important message to our children about the purpose of education. Education is, first and foremost, about the production of knowledge and discovery. Latinos must reclaim the right to be knowledge producers rather than mere knowledge recipients. We hope this report, along with subsequent ones, helps inform this important conversation about the need to increase a Latino presence in all our educational and research institutions and policy arenas.

Latino Population in the United States and Nebraska: Demographic Profile and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Part I

Tim Fitzgerald

Latino Population in the United States and Nebraska: Demographic Profile and Socioeconomic Characteristics

Population Growth and Immigration

As the Census 2000 figures have been released, they have revealed profound population shifts that are transforming small towns and large cities all across the United States. At the core of that transformation has been the largest increase in the number of immigrants since the first part of the twentieth century. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the foreign-born population grew by 57.4% in the 1990s to about 31 million, or 11% of the U.S. population. The majority of immigrants in 2000 came from Asia (26.4%) and Latin America (51.7%) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2003). As Table 1.1 shows, while the U.S. total population increased by 13% between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population as a whole increased by 58% during the same period, to 35,305,818.

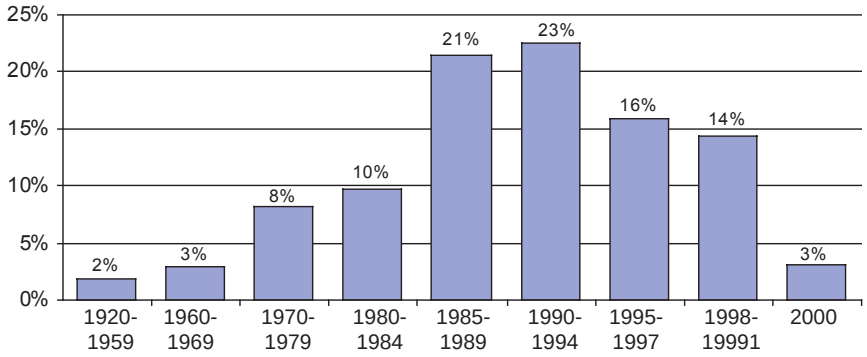
Table 1.1 Percentage Increase for Total and Hispanic/Latino Populations in the United States, 1990–2000

United States	1990	2000	Percentage Change 1990 to 2000
Total Population	248,709,873	281,421,906	13%
Hispanic/Latino	22,354,059	35,305,818	58%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1).

Nebraska can be designated simultaneously as a new and a resurgent immigrant destination (Gouveia et al. 2005). As in the rest of the country, the majority of Nebraskans are descendents of European-origin and, in lesser numbers, Mexican-origin populations, most of whom arrived during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Reflecting current national trends, Latinos make up the bulk of new arrivals in the state. The latest immigrant wave began as a small trickle in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but this population experienced exponential growth during the 1990s. About 56% of foreign-born Latinos who lived in Nebraska in 2000 arrived after 1989 (see Figure 1.1). As Figure 1.2 shows, foreign-born Latinos also make up about 42% of the total Nebraska Latino population.

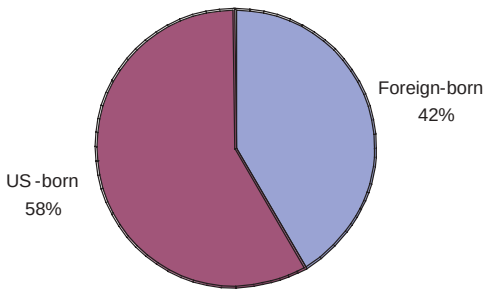
Figure 1.1 Foreign-born Hispanic/Latino Population by Year of Entry to the U.S. for Nebraska, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.

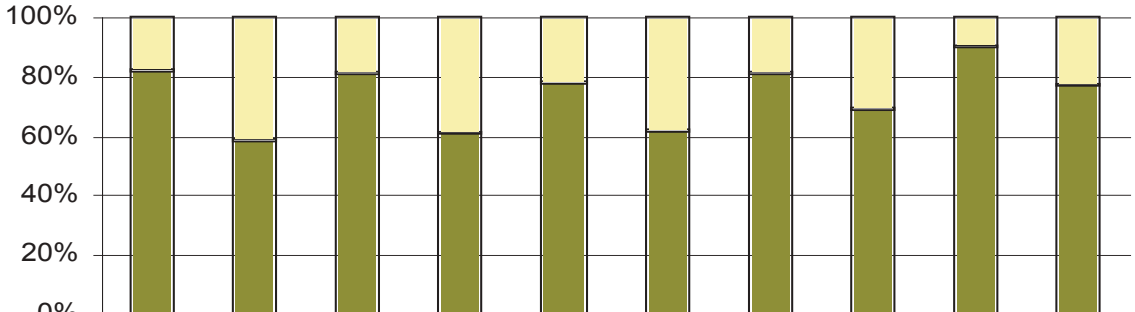
It is a well-known story in Nebraska, as well as in surrounding Great Plains states, that the rather swift arrival of large numbers of Latinos in the 1990s, particularly those foreign born, was triggered by active recruitment by meatpacking plants that had relocated or expanded their operations in this region. Total Latino population in the Great Plains states increased dramatically, and among them Nebraska experienced the largest growth rate (see Table 1.2, Table 1.3 and Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.2 Foreign-born and U.S.-born Hispanic/Latino Population in Nebraska, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.

Figure 1.3 Percentage of Foreign-born Hispanic/Latino Population in Selected Great Plains States, 1990–2000



	Nebraska		Iowa		Kansas		Missouri		South Dakota	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Foreign-born	17.4%	41.5%	18.9%	39.1%	21.7%	38.3%	18.3%	30.9%	10.0%	22.5%
Native	82.6%	58.5%	81.1%	60.9%	78.3%	61.7%	81.7%	69.1%	90.0%	77.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Table 48. "Geographic Mobility, Commuting, and Veteran Status by Race and Hispanic Origin," 1990 and Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

Table 1.2 Foreign-born Hispanic/Latino Population in Selected Great Plains States, 1990–2000

Hispanic/Latino population	1990			2000		
	Total Hispanic/Latino	Native	Foreign-born	Total Foreign-born	Latino	Native
Nebraska	35,093	29,001	6,092	93,872	54,920	38,952
Iowa	30,642	24,853	5,789	81,501	49,637	31,864
Kansas	90,289	70,732	19,557	186,299	114,987	71,312
Missouri	60,429	49,395	11,034	116,373	80,406	35,967
South Dakota	5,428	4,883	545	10,386	8,047	2,339

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990, Table 48. "Geographic Mobility, Commuting, and Veteran Status by Race and Hispanic Origin," 1990 and Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

Table 1.3 Percentage Change for Total and Hispanic Populations in Selected Great Plains States, 1990–2000

	1990		2000		Percentage Change 1990 to 2000	Percentage Change 1990 to 2000
	Total Population	Hispanic/ Latino	Total Population	Hispanic/ Latino	Total Population	Hispanic/ Latino
Nebraska	1,578,385	36,969	1,711,263	94,425	8.4%	155.4%
Iowa	2,776,755	32,647	2,926,324	82,473	5.4%	152.6%
Kansas	2,477,574	93,670	2,668,418	188,252	7.7%	101.0%
Missouri	5,117,073	61,702	5,595,211	118,592	9.3%	92.2%
South Dakota	696,004	5,428	754,844	10,903	8.5%	100.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1), Tables P006 and P009, and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1).

As Table 1.3 makes clear, while the total Latino population in these states is still very much a numerical minority, comparisons between the divergent growth rates of Latinos and total state populations tell a more complex story.

By 2000, the majority (76%) of all Nebraska Latinos (foreign and native born) continued to trace their origin to Mexico. However, the state also became a new destination for a growing number of Caribbean and, especially, Central and South Americans (Table 1.4). The latter now make up about 24% of the state's total Latino population. This new diversity in national origin further

Table 1.4 Nebraska Hispanic/Latino Population by Country or Region of Origin, 2000

Hispanic/Latino Population	Percent
Mexican	76%
South America and Caribbean	18%
Central America	6%
Total	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.

complicates Nebraska's sociodemographic picture and must be understood in depth if integration policies and programs are to be successful. A common mistake made by educational and other institutional representatives and policymakers is taking at face value the overencompassing term Latino, or worse yet, minority, when designing allegedly innovative programs to recruit, retain, or integrate this population into their midst.

Demographic transformations in Nebraska are most evident in nonmetropolitan counties and cities where meatpacking is concentrated. This is especially true for the growth in the Latino population. As the latest migration wave matures, however, Latinos search for better jobs in alternative labor markets, and a growing number of employers understand the advantages of tapping into this labor pool. Table 1.5 demonstrates that the highest Latino population growth between 1990 and 2000 occurred in meatpacking communities such as Lexington (1,457%) and Schuyler (1,377%). However, the Latino presence has been increasing in urban localities such as Omaha and Kearney, due to demand for their labor in construction, medical, restaurant, and other services.

Age, Gender, and National Origin

While 42% of Nebraska Latinos are foreign born, as Table 1.6 shows, only 16.4% of Latino children (under 18 years of age) were born abroad. This additional demographic dimension has multiple implications. On the one hand, the law states that all children, regardless of national origin or immigration status, must be educated by the public school system. However, a large number of noncitizen children who have lived in the state for a major part of their lives continue to be excluded from higher education because they lack financial aid funding due to legal status. On the other hand, the fact that the majority of Latino children are U.S. citizens suggests a greater possibility of those children reaching adulthood here. Thus Nebraska's future is much more dependent on them than is often understood.

Table 1.5 Percentage Change in White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino, and Hispanic/Latino Populations in Selected Nebraska Cities, 1990–2000

City	White alone, not Hispanic/Latino		Hispanic/Latino		Percent Change in White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino Population in 2000 (based in 1990)	Percent Change in Hispanic/Latino Population in 2000 (based in 1990)
	1990	2000	1990	2000		
Omaha	276,218	293,876	10,288	29,397	6%	186%
Bellevue	26,968	36,916	1,213	2,609	37%	115%
Columbus	19,171	19,209	167	1,395	0%	735%
Fremont	23,261	23,570	165	1,085	1%	558%
Grand Island	36,732	34,960	1,887	6,845	-5%	263%
Hastings	22,192	21,790	268	1,343	-2%	401%
Kearney	23,415	25,525	667	1,118	9%	68%
Lexington	6,231	4,635	329	5,121	-26%	1457%
Lincoln	179,302	198,087	3,764	8,154	10%	117%
Norfolk	20,748	20,834	299	1,790	0%	499%
North Platte	20,994	21,725	1,355	1,596	3%	18%
Schuyler	3,873	2,893	164	2,423	-25%	1377%
Scottsbluff	10,460	10,548	2,720	3,476	1%	28%
South Sioux City	8,704	8,074	545	2,958	-7%	443%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 Summary Tape File (STF1) and Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF1).

Table 1.6 Percentage of Foreign-born and U.S.-born Hispanic/Latino Populations by Age, Nebraska, 2000

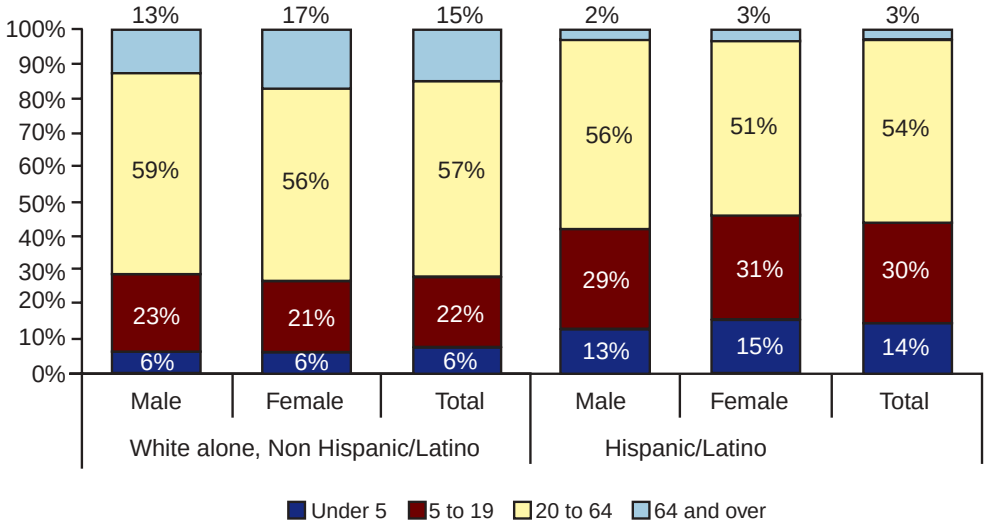
	Percentage of Foreign-born	Percentage of U.S.-born	Total
Under 18	16.4%	83.6%	100.0%
18 and over	57.6%	42.4%	100.0%
Total	41.5%	58.5%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4).

It is this younger, second generation of Latinos who will leave an indelible mark on the social, economic, and political landscape of the state. Intelligent management of this new sociodemographic landscape via coherent and proactive immigration integration policies and programs, particularly regarding access to training and education, will be a decisive factor.

Recently released census data underscores the fact that Latinos are a very young population. Nationally, 10.4% of Latinos are five years old or younger. As Figure 1.4 makes clear, the percentage of this age group in Nebraska is even greater and nearly 50% above the national figure, or 14%. Conversely, the proportion of non-Latino White children of this age is about 60% below that of Latino children in the state. While Latinos as a whole make up 5.5% of Nebraska's population, the proportion of Latino children under the age of five is more than double that of the proportion of non-Latino White children (14% and 6% respectively). The number of Latina females within the younger categories is slightly larger than that of Latino males, while the opposite is true for non-Latino Whites.

Figure 1.4 Percentage of Hispanic/Latino and White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino Populations by Sex and Age, Nebraska, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1).

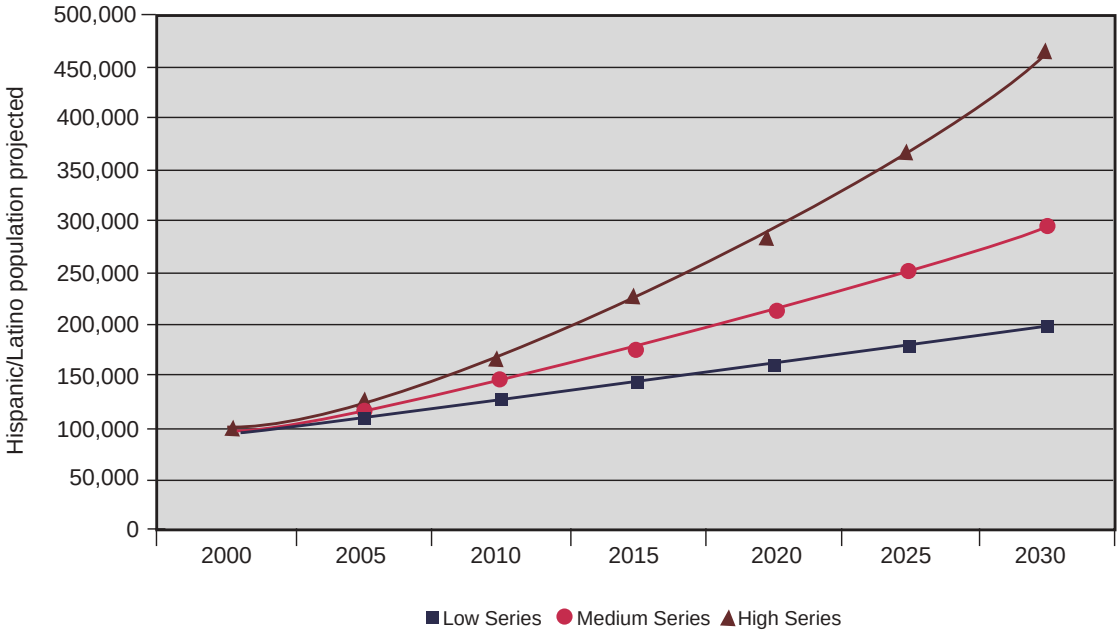
As Table 1.7 shows, by 2030 Latino children under age five will comprise close to a quarter of Nebraska children (22.3%), and Latinos as a whole should make up just above 15% of the total Nebraska population. Also note that, according to the latest projections by the Nebraska State Data Center, by 2025 Latinos of all ages are expected to number 252,241, or 13.3% of Nebraska's total population. Interestingly, in 1997, when the last report on education commissioned by MAC was published, Latinos were expected to reach a total of only 110,725 by 2025; this is about the same number of Latinos living in the state today. Population projections are based on a series of assumptions about migration, birth rates, and survival rates. Table 1.6 uses a middle range of assumptions. However, Figure 1.5 demonstrates a series of three possible population projections through 2030, with the most conservative estimates projecting nearly 200,000 Latinos in Nebraska by that year, and the least conservative ones over 450,000.

Table 1.7 Projections of the Latino Population in Nebraska by Age Group as a Percent of Total Nebraska Population, 2005–2030

Hispanic/Latino by age	Census 2000	Projections Based in Population 200					
		2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
	Percent of Hispanic/Latino Population as Percent of Total Nebraska Population						
Total	5.5	6.8	8.2	9.7	11.4	13.3	15.4
Under 5	11.0	14.4	15.2	16.0	17.9	20.7	22.3
5 to 19 (School age)	7.3	9.4	12.8	15.6	17.5	18.9	21.0
20 to 64 (Labor force)	5.2	6.2	7.3	8.9	11.0	13.8	16.8
65 or older	1.1	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.8	3.6	4.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1), and projections made by Nebraska State Data Center, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.
Note: Projection Assumptions
Birth rates: Birth rates by single-year age of mother were calculated for 2000 and used for 2001 to 2005. Beginning in 2006, the total Latina birth rate was decreased annually until it reached the total Nebraska birth rate in 2030.
Projection series averaged the single-year migration rates for 1990 to 2000 with the single-year rates for 1980 to 1990 and assumed they would continue from 2000 to 2030 at 2/3 the average rates.
Survival rates: Survival rates by single-year age for men and women were developed for total Nebraska projections and were used for the Latino population projections.

Figure 1.5 Projections of the Latino Population in Nebraska by Age Group as a Percent of Total Nebraska Population: 2005 to 2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) and projections made by Nebraska State Data Center, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Projection Assumptions:
Birth rates
Birth rates by single-year age of mother were calculated for 2000 and used for 2001 to 2005. Beginning in 2006, the total Latina birth rate was decreased annually until it reached the total Nebraska birth rate in 2030.
Net migration rates
There were three series of net migration assumptions: high, middle, and low. The same net migration rate was used for men and women.

- The high series assumed the single-year migration rates for 1990 to 2000 would continue from 2000 to 2030 at 2/3 the 1990 to 2000 rates.
- The low series assumed the single-year migration rates for 1980 to 1990 would continue from 2000 to 2030.
- The middle series averaged the single-year migration rates for 1990 to 2000 with the single-year rates for 1980 to 1990 and assumed they would continue from 2000 to 2030 at 2/3 the average rates.

Survival rates
Survival rates by single-year age for men and women were developed for total Nebraska projections and were used for the Latino population projections.

Socioeconomic Dimensions

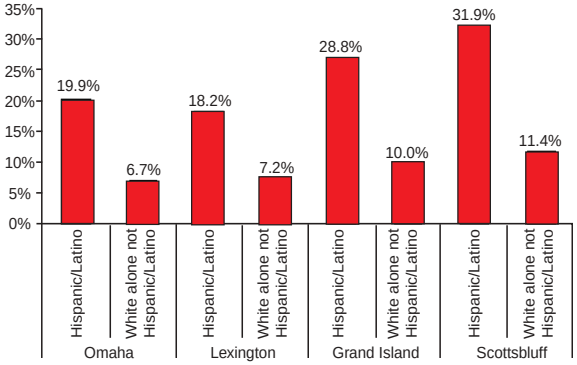
It is a well-reported fact that Latinos, especially the foreign born, have very high labor-force participation rates, often exceeding those of any other population group. It is also well known that despite such high labor-force participation rates, low incomes and poverty rates are double or triple those of non-Latino Whites (The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations 2004; Gouveia et al. 2005; United Way of the Midlands 2004). Latino children in Nebraska are more than twice as likely to be poor as are the children of non-Latino Whites (Table 1.8). What is most disturbing is that time and purported processes of "assimilation" do not by themselves yield progress for older generations of Latinos. Some of these oldest generations are located in Scottsbluff, in western Nebraska. Yet poverty rates for Latinos in that part of the state exceed those of newer arrivals' destinations such as Lexington (Figure 1.6).

Table 1.8 Poverty Status in 1999 by Age for Hispanic/Latino and White Alone, not Hispanic/ Latino Populations, Nebraska, 2000

Income in 1999 Below Poverty Level	Hispanic/ Latino	White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino
Total	20.4%	7.9%
Under 5 years	25.0%	9.7%
5 years	25.2%	10.1%
6 to 11 years	24.5%	9.2%
12 to 17 years	21.2%	8.2%
18 to 64 years	18.3%	7.5%
65 to 74 years	15.0%	5.6%
75 years and over	20.1%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

Figure 1.6 Poverty Status in 1999 by Hispanic/Latino and White Alone, not His panic/Latino Populations for Selected Nebraska Cities, 2000

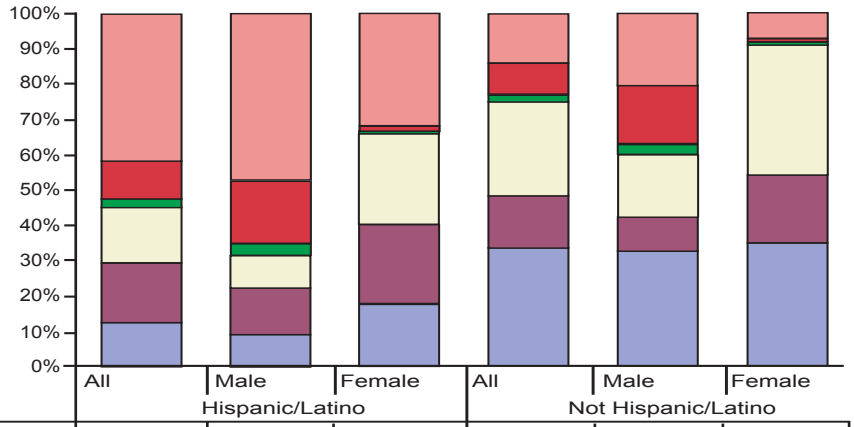


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4).

The major reason why Latinos are poor is directly related to the kinds of jobs they are most likely to perform. As in the rest of the nation, these jobs are predominantly low wage, have few opportunities for advancement, and possess minimal training beyond that performed among Latino workers themselves (Gouveia et al. 2005). As Figure 1.7 makes clear, Latinos in Nebraska are the primary producers of the commodities we consume, but few work in the upper echelons of management and professional occupations where incomes allow for consuming such goods or saving for children's college educations, for example.

Figure 1.7 Occupation by Sex for Hispanic/Latino and not Hispanic/Latino Populations, 16 Years and Over, Nebraska, 2000



	Hispanic/Latino			Not Hispanic/Latino		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	41.4%	47.4%	32.1%	14.0%	20.2%	7.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	11.1%	17.5%	1.0%	9.2%	17.0%	0.7%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	2.5%	3.5%	0.9%	1.6%	2.6%	0.5%
Sales and office occupations	15.6%	9.2%	25.8%	26.9%	17.7%	37.0%
Service occupations	16.9%	13.4%	22.4%	14.5%	9.6%	19.8%
Management, professional, and related occupations	12.5%	9.0%	17.9%	33.9%	32.9%	34.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF4).

From Early Education Through High School

Part II

From Early Education Through High School

To place the educational attainment of children in Nebraska in context, we first examine the current level of educational attainment of adults in Nebraska. We then discuss early childhood education, enrollment in elementary, middle, and high schools, and high school completions and dropouts. The elements that contribute to school success are discussed next, starting with an explanation of the newest influential legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. A comparison of how Latino students perform on national standardized tests follows. The final sections include discussions of English language proficiency, loss of bilingualism, successful adaptation of Latino immigrant children, and migrant education.

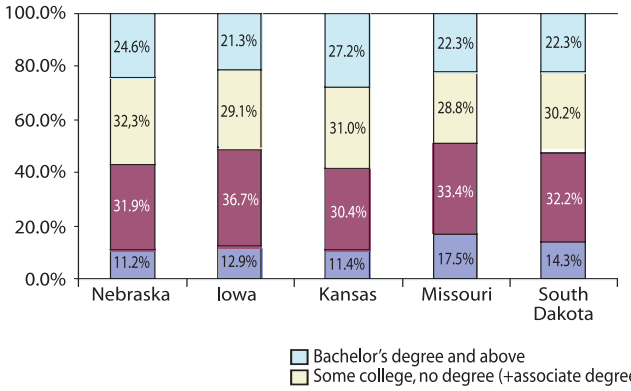
Educational Attainment in Nebraska

Great Plains States

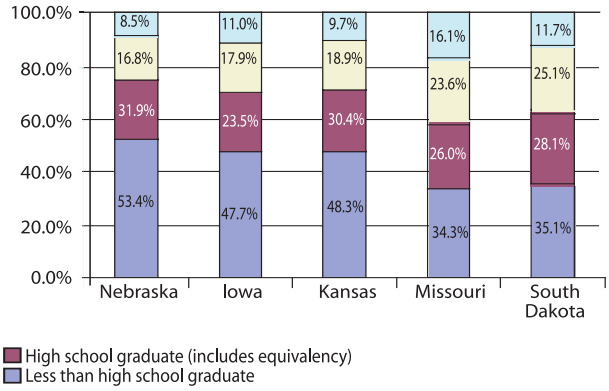
Figures 2.1.a and 2.1.b compare the educational attainment of non-Hispanic White, and Hispanic adults ages 25 and over, in the Great Plains states in 2000. In Nebraska, 53.4% of Hispanic/Latino adults have completed less than high school, while only 11.2% of non-Hispanic White adults fall under this category. Differences are also evident at the higher educational levels, with 24.6% of non-Hispanic White adults holding a bachelor's degree or above, compared to 8.5% of Hispanics. A similar pattern is found across the Great Plains states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and South Dakota. However, Nebraska Latinos fare less well in each case. In other words, compared to the other Great Plains states, Nebraska has a higher percentage of Latinos who did not complete high school, and fewer with high school diplomas, some college, or a bachelor's degree or more. Concomitantly, the educational attainment gap between Whites and Latinos is higher in Nebraska than in any of the other states.

Figure 2.1 Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over in Multiple Perspectives, 2000

2.1.a Percentages of Educational Attainment for White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino Populations in Selected Great Plains States, 2000



2.1.b Percentages of Educational Attainment for Hispanic/Latino Populations in Selected Great Plains States, 2000

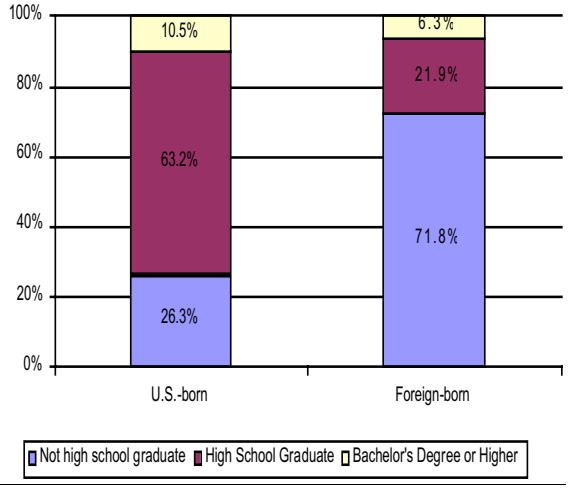


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

The educational gap is also affected by factors such as immigration histories, how different Latino groups have been treated by the larger society, and gender. As demonstrated in Figure 2.1.c., among those age 25 and over, foreign-born Latinos are much less likely to have a high school diploma than those who are native born. Nearly three-quarters of foreign-born Latinos lack a diploma, compared to 26.3% of those born in the U.S. Furthermore, 63.2% of U.S.-born Latinos have high school diplomas, compared to only 21.9% of foreign-born Latinos.

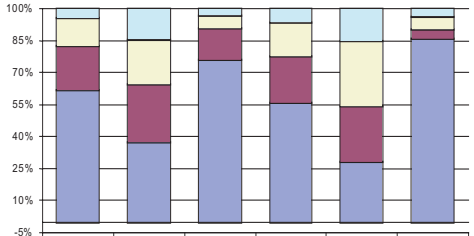
Among Latinos, those groups who experience higher levels of socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination, as is the case with Mexicans and Central Americans, have lower levels of education than Latino immigrant groups who have experienced more favorable contexts of reception (Gouveia 2005; Figure 2.1.d.). Educational attainment for men and women also varies by nationality in complex ways.

2.1.c Percentages of Educational Attainment of U.S.-born and Foreign-born Hispanic/Latino Populations Age 25 and Older in Nebraska, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2000. Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.

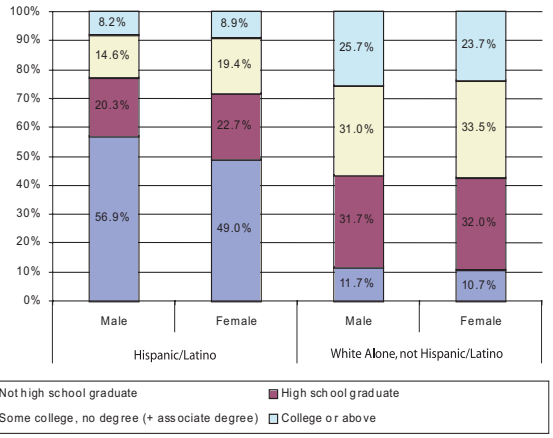
2.1.d Percentages of Educational Attainment for the Hispanic/Latino Populations 25 Years and Over by Country or Region of Origin and Gender, Nebraska, 2000



	Mexican	S.Amer/ Carib Male	Central Amer.	Mexican	S.Amer/ Carib Female	Central Amer.
College or above	4.1%	14.8%	3.5%	6.6%	15.1%	4.0%
Some college, no degree (+associate degree)	13.4%	20.6%	5.8%	15.9%	30.8%	6.0%
High school graduate	20.8%	27.1%	14.5%	21.7%	25.9%	4.0%
Not high school graduate	61.7%	37.4%	76.2%	55.8%	28.1%	86.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2000. Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska. Washington: U.S. Census Bureau.
Note: S. Amer.= South America; Central Amer.= Central America; Carib=Caribbean.

2.1.e Percentages of Educational Attainment for Hispanic/Latino and White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino Populations, 25 Years and Over, Nebraska, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF3).

The proportion of Latino adults in Nebraska who have not completed high school is dramatic, but men are more disadvantaged than women. In 2000, nearly 57% of Latino men ages 25 and over lack a high school diploma, compared to 49% of women. Twenty-eight percent of Latinas over 25 have either attended or graduated from college. This compares to 22.8% of men in this age group. Figure 2.1.e. provides a gender comparison of educational attainment for both Latinos and Whites, and reveals that among non-Latino Whites, both men and women are much more likely to attain higher levels of education than Latinos. Among Whites, the differences in gender are much less pronounced than among Latinos.

Selected Nebraska Counties

Comparisons of educational attainment across selected Nebraska counties reveal how urban areas benefit from higher concentrations of both Whites and Latinos with higher levels of education (Tables 2.1.a and 2.1.b). Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy Counties have the largest percentages of college degree holders for both Latinos and non-Latino Whites and the fewest of both groups who completed less than high school. However, there are some noticeable differences as well. Similar percentages of non-Latino White adults have bachelor's degrees or above in all three counties (over 30%). Latinos in Lancaster County, however, have higher levels of education; 19.3% have bachelor's degrees or above, compared to 11.1% in Douglas County and 14.8% in Sarpy County. At the lowest educational levels, 51.7% of Latinos in Douglas County are not high school graduates, compared to 35.9% in Lancaster County and 19.8% in Sarpy

County. Among non-Latino Whites, these percentages are below 10% in all three counties. In some of the more rural counties, such as Dakota and Dawson, three-fourths of the Latino adults are not high school graduates, and very few have completed any college. The reasons for these differences are fairly obvious and are linked to the structure of local labor markets and their particular demands for professionals (as in the case of Lancaster County where the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is located) or lesser-skilled labor as in other localities. A large number of Latinos reside in Douglas County; its labor market is far more heterogeneous than other Nebraska counties, including a revitalized meatpacking sector alongside world headquarters of several major multinational corporations.

Table 2.1 Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over in Selected Nebraska Counties

2.1.a Percentage of Educational Attainment for White Alone, Not Hispanic/Latino Population, in Selected Nebraska Counties, 2000

	State of Nebraska	Colfax County	Dakota County	Dawson County	Douglas County	Hall County	Lancaster County	Madison County	Sarpy County	Scotts Bluff County
Less than high school graduate	11.2%	16.3%	15.9%	15.2%	9.1%	12.3%	7.8%	14.0%	6.0%	15.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	31.9%	42.6%	41.4%	39.6%	25.9%	37.2%	25.6%	34.7%	24.9%	30.6%
Some college, no degree (+associate degree)	32.3%	27.9%	28.5%	27.7%	31.4%	33.1%	33.3%	33.2%	38.2%	34.9%
Bachelor's degree and above	24.6%	13.2%	14.1%	17.4%	33.6%	17.4%	33.4%	18.1%	30.9%	19.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

2.1.b Percentage of Educational Attainment for Hispanic/Latino Population, in Selected Nebraska Counties, 2000

	State of Nebraska	Colfax County	Dakota County	Dawson County	Douglas County	Hall County	Lancaster County	Madison County	Sarpy County	Scotts Bluff County
Less than high school graduate	53.4%	75.6%	74.9%	76.2%	51.7%	64.3%	35.9%	67.6%	19.8%	52.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	21.3%	14.9%	14.1%	15.8%	20.5%	20.7%	22.8%	18.3%	25.5%	23.0%
Some college, no degree (+associate degree)	16.8%	5.7%	6.2%	5.8%	16.8%	12.2%	21.9%	11.3%	39.9%	19.4%
Bachelor's degree and above	8.5%	3.8%	4.8%	2.1%	11.1%	2.9%	19.3%	2.8%	14.8%	5.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3).

Early Education as a Key to Future Educational Achievement: Headstart

U.S. Latinos are more likely than any other group to be preschoolers; one in ten (10.4%) is five years old or younger. In Nebraska, that percentage is even higher (13.6%). However, Latino children are less likely than any other group of children to participate in early education programs (U.S. Department of Education 2003). Research has consistently shown that such programs have lasting positive effects (Bredekamp and Copple 1997). Differences in participation in these programs may contribute to the educational achievement gap for Latino children. Unfortunately, the state does not collect reliable data on the proportion of children of various races and ethnicities who attend different early education programs (this includes Head Start and its various components, as well as private and public preschools and day

care); the data are available only for Head Start. However, even here, the level of detail necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of this program with regard to the Latino population is greatly lacking. As Table 2.2 shows, about 24% of Nebraska's Head Start students are of Hispanic/Latino origin. Table 2.3 shows, somewhat surprisingly, that only 16% of Head Start students come from homes where Spanish is the primary language. Data for Early Start, a program that began more recently, are available only for Omaha. More than 30% of the student population in Omaha's Early Start is of Latino origin.

Table 2.2 Head Start Program, Enrollment by Race/ Ethnicity, 2002–2003

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percentage Over Total
White	3,190	52%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	1,453	24%
Black or African American	936	15%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	153	2%
Asian	65	1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	6	0%
Other*	356	6%
Total	6,159	100%

Source: Head Start Program Information Report for the 2002–2003 Program Year, State Level Summary Report.
*Other includes Native Hawaiian, biracial or multiracial, other, and unspecific categories.

Table 2.3 Enrollment in Head Start by Primary Language of the Family at Home, 2002–2003

Language	Number	Percentage Over total
English	4,944	80%
Spanish	965	16%
Others	248	4%
Total	6,157	100%

Source: Head Start Program Information Report for the 2002–2003 Program Year, State Level Summary Report.

Table 2.4 Head Start Direct Child Development Staff by Race/ Ethnicity, 2002–2003

Head Start Staff by Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percentage Over total
White	558	69%
Black or African American	120	15%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	89	11%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	1%
Asian	2	0%
Other*	34	4%
Total	808	100%

Source: Head Start Program Information Report for the 2002–2003 Program Year, State Level Summary Report.
*Other includes biracial or multiracial, other, and unspecific

Head Start programs are considered the premier, federally funded, early childhood education programs in the United States. However, lack of sufficient funding and trained staff continuously threaten their survival and effectiveness. In Nebraska, only 11% of Head Start staff is Hispanic or Latino (Table 2.4). In locations such as South Omaha, the lack of linguistically and culturally appropriate staff available to work with the high number of Latino children living in the area (about 58% of total Omaha Latinos) has been particularly troublesome. As one staffer told us, "Unfortunately, we are not ready to meet the demand for that [Latino teachers]. We were blindsided by the Latino growth in the state" (Interview July 7, 2004). In addition, the agency had been placed in "Deficiency Status" due to administrative difficulties. As of March, 2005, the Omaha Public School District has been awarded the annual federal grant to serve children in the Omaha area. We are hopeful this will alleviate some of the past difficulties that have confronted

this program. Still needed are improved data collection methods by the state and more in-depth analysis of early education needs of Latino and non-Latino children. These must take place before we have a real understanding of the cost and effectiveness of these programs in Nebraska.

School Enrollment in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

The number of Hispanic/Latino students in public schools in Nebraska has increased dramatically in the last few years. Table 2.5 shows enrollments by grade level from prekindergarten through 12th grade for 1996–1997 and 2002–2003. In 1996, Hispanic students comprised 5% of the total public school enrollment in Nebraska. By 2002, this had grown to 9%. Furthermore, the total enrollments in Nebraska schools declined somewhat over that same period, while Latino enrollments increased. Increases in Latino students were particularly dramatic for prekindergarten classes, where Latino student enrollment increased 238% during this period. As noted earlier, in Nebraska in 2000, 11% of children under five were Latino. Although the evidence is only suggestive because there is not a perfect match by year or ages of children, the 15% Latino enrollment in PK suggests improved enrollment rates among Latino children, not just greater numbers of

Table 2.5 Percentage Increase in Hispanic/Latino Enrollment by Grade in Nebraska Public Schools

	1996–1997		2002–2003		Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Enrollment Over the Total		Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Increase in Enrollment
Grade	Hispanic/Latino	Total	Hispanic/Latino	Total	1996–1997	2002–2003	Enrollment
PK	221	3,750	747	4,857	6%	15%	238%
K	1,551	21,847	2,647	20,429	7%	13%	71%
1	1,397	22,213	2,529	20,205	6%	13%	81%
2	1,214	21,431	2,247	20,093	6%	11%	85%
3	1,200	21,149	2,242	20,311	6%	11%	87%
4	1,126	21,421	2,241	20,858	5%	11%	99%
5	1,053	22,103	2,124	21,367	5%	10%	102%
6	1,082	22,527	2,050	21,722	5%	9%	89%
7	1,028	23,002	1,833	22,564	4%	8%	78%
8	1,015	22,840	1,686	21,887	4%	8%	66%
9	1,053	23,954	2,025	23,931	4%	8%	92%
10	939	23,651	1,534	22,262	4%	7%	63%
11	713	21,358	1,211	21,725	3%	6%	70%
12	602	1 9,644	983	21,713	3%	5%	63%
Total	14,194	290,890	26,099	283,924	5%	9%	84%

Source: "The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos in Nebraska," Vol. 2 and Nebraska Department of Education, "2002–2003 Membership by Grade, Race and Gender."

children in this age group. This is a very hopeful pattern, as preschool provides established benefits for school readiness, and Latino children have been less likely than non-Hispanic White or Black children to participate in preschool in the past (U.S. Department of Education 2003, p. 22).

At every age, increases in Latino enrollments between 1996 and 2002 were greater than 62%. Proportions of Latino students have increased for all grades, especially in elementary school, and Latino students comprise between 5% and 15% of students at each grade level. Although the proportion of Latino students is increasing in Nebraska schools, enrollments are still composed overwhelmingly of non-Hispanic White students.

The increase in Hispanic/Latino enrollments is even more dramatic when examined since 1990–1991. Table 2.6 demonstrates that in 1990–1991, our selected school districts had between 0–9% Latino enrollments. By 2002–2003, 70% of the students in Schuyler elementary schools were Latino, 67% in Lexington, and 44% in South Sioux City. In the Omaha public schools, where the numbers of Latino students are the highest in the state, enrollments grew from 4% (1,668 students) in 1990 to 17% (7,650) in 2002. Between 1990 and 2002, several of our target districts had enrollment increases of over 1,000%. Columbus, for example, saw a 3,653% increase in Latino enrollments in this period; Schuyler High School had a 3,675% increase. Although the percent increases necessarily reflect baseline enrollments, with smaller baselines increasing more dramatically with the addition of fewer actual students, large proportional increases can have a great impact on a particular school district. These shifts underscore how immigration produces changes and how these changes affect schools. Not only do schools need assistance and resources to deal with their changing populations, but school leadership must forge a course that adapts to new students and their families. Adaptation will be smoother for schools that recognize both the special strengths new families may bring to their schools, as well as particular needs of new students and their families.

Table 2.6 Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Enrollment Increase Between 1990–1991 and 2002–2003 in Selected Districts

District	Hispanic/Latino Enrollment District District 1990–1991	Hispanic/Latino Entrollment District 1996–1997	Hispanic/latino enrollment District 2002–2003	Percent Hispanic/Latino enrollment District 1990–1991	Percent Hispanic/Latino Enrollment District 1996–1997	percent Hispanic/Latino Enrollment District 2002–2003	Percent Hispanic/;Lat Enrollment Increase Between 1990–1991 and 2002–2003
Bellevue Public Schools	245	389	491	3%	4%	6%	100%
Columbus Public Schools	15	141	563	0%	4%	16%	3653%
Grand Island Public Schools	454	1,027	2,188	6%	14%	28%	382%
Kearney Public Schools	128	258	371	3%	6%	8%	190%
Lexington Public Schools	97	1,003	1,777	6%	42%	67%	1732%
Lincoln Public Schools	479	813	1,473	2%	3%	5%	208%
Norfolk Public Schools	62	381	745	2%	9%	18%	1102%
North Platte Public Schools	332	373	400	8%	8%	10%	20%
Omaha Public Schools	1,668	3,462	7,650	4%	8%	17%	359%
Schuyler Central High School	4	55	151	1%	14%	37%	3675%
Schuyler Grade Schools	36	287	591	6%	38%	70%	1542%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	785	816	873	5%	9%	32%	11%
South Sioux City Community Schools	230	651	1,526	9%	22%	44%	563%

Source: "The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos in Nebraska, Vol. 2" and Nebraska Department of Education, "2002–2003 Membership by Grade, Race, and Gender."

Certified Staff in Nebraska Public Schools

In the public schools, certified staff includes teachers, counselors, principals, and other professionals who work with children. Table 2.7 shows the percentage of Hispanic/Latino faculty and staff as well as the percentage of Hispanic/Latino students in selected Nebraska public school districts in 2003–2004. In the state as a whole, 1.1% of staff and 9.3% of students are Latino. Lexington public schools have the largest percentage of Latino staff, but the proportion of staff is much smaller (3.9%) than the proportion of Latino students (71%); in fact, that is the case for all the school districts examined. Although data are not available on whether staff and faculty are bilingual, it is likely that an even smaller percentage of the certified staff is bilingual. These districts have very large numbers of English Language Learner (ELL) students, as will be described in the section on English language proficiency. This means that in many cases, both children and their parents are unable to speak their first language with most of the faculty and staff. Although the schools make efforts to provide documents in Spanish, this situation is likely to create difficulties in solving problems or communicating complex ideas about the school, the school system, or the child's progress. When parents do not understand the educational system, they are necessarily less able to assist their children with school matters.

Table 2.7 Comparison of Percentages of Hispanic/Latino Staff and Students in Nebraska Public Schools, 2003–2004

District	Certified Staff 2003–2004		Student Enrollment 2003–2004		Percentages	
	FTEs* of Hispanic/ Latino Staff	Total Staff**	Hispanic/Latino Enrollment	Total Enrollment**	Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Staff	Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Students
Nebraska Public Schools	176.83	15,828.88	30,220	326,516	1.1%	9.3%
Omaha Public Schools	69.78	3,860.90	8,344	46,035	1.8%	18.1%
Bellevue Public Schools	9.00	717.70	562	8,951	1.3%	6.3%
Columbus Public Schools	2.00	262.73	657	3,473	0.8%	18.9%
Fremont Public Schools	-	328.58	510	4,535	0.0%	11.2%
Grand Island Public Schools	6.00	629.51	2,436	7,925	1.0%	30.7%
Kearney Public Schools	6.00	369.53	372	4,648	1.6%	8.0%
Lexington Public Schools	8.00	207.26	1,994	2,809	3.9%	71.0%
Lincoln Public Schools	38.25	2,886.03	1,708	32,120	1.3%	5.3%
Norfolk Public Schools	1.00	349.41	796	4,185	0.3%	19.0%
North Platte Public Schools	4.00	307.34	400	3,855	1.3%	10.4%
Schuyler Central High School	-	39.54	175	414	0.0%	42.3%
Schuyler Grade Schools	-	63.13	632	866	0.0%	73.0%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	5.00	210.89	875	2,679	2.4%	32.7%
South Sioux City Community Schools	1.00	288.36	1,637	3,496	0.3%	46.8%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education.
* FTE= Full-time equivalent for certified staff.
**The total includes all racial/ethnic categories.

High School Completion

Since 2001, the Nebraska Department of Education has used a four-year cohort model to report graduation rates, as recommended by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). This model includes the number of 12th grade diploma recipients divided by the number of diploma recipients, plus the number of dropouts in each of the four years of high school. NCES maintains that this model is preferable to the 12th grade graduation rates calculated in the past because those considered only the number of high school diploma recipients divided by the 12th grade fall enrollment. In some cases, such as in districts where the population was growing quickly and many families were moving in, the old formula could result in a graduation rate greater than 100.

This gives a graduation percent for year 4. Table 2.8 demonstrates the 2002–2003 graduation rates for public schools by race and ethnicity, calculated in both ways for comparison. In either calculation, the percentage of Latino students who graduated was below that of students as a whole in Nebraska. Considering only 12th grade enrollments and graduations (the older method), 78% of Latino students were high school graduates in 2003. Based on the four-year completion model, the graduation rate was 57.8% for Latino students, and only Native American students had lower high school graduation rates. Under the new method, while nearly nine out of ten non-Hispanic White students graduated from high school in 2003, fewer than six out of ten Latino students did so.

High School Completion Formula

$$\frac{\text{High School Diploma Recipients (year 4)}}{\text{Dropouts Grade 9 (year 1) + Dropouts Grade 10 (year 2) + Dropouts Grade 11 (year 3) + Dropouts Grade 12 (year 4) + High School Diploma Recipients (year 4)}}$$

Table 2.8 Nebraska Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity. Comparison of Rate Computation Methods, 2002–2003

	Fall 2002 Enrollments/Spring 2003 Graduates		Old Method Graduates/Enrollments	New Method Four year Completion (cohort) Model
	Statewide 12th grade Membership	Total Graduates	Percentage of Graduates	Graduation Rate
White, not Hispanic	21,386	19,663	92%	88.7%
Hispanic	1,055	824	78%	57.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	402	334	83%	83.5%
Black, not Hispanic	1,159	897	77%	58.7%
American Indian/ Alaska Nat.	242	176	73%	55.9%
Total	24,244	21,894	90%	84.7%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, "2002–2003 Membership by Grade, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender," and "2002–2003–Nebraska Graduates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender," Table 24. The Data Center Division of the Nebraska Department of Education provided the methodology to compute both methods.

[2] Source: NE Department of Education Data Definitions and Explanations. Different formulas appear in different places. This formula is from the Nebraska State Report Card data definitions. The NCES formula uses Year 4 High School Completers rather than Diploma Recipients in their published formulas. Completers and Diploma Recipients are not the same. Because we concentrate on Nebraska data, we are using the definition from the website.

Graduation rates using the four-year completion method are indicated in Table 2.9 by race and ethnicity for Nebraska's key public school districts in 2003. In nearly every district, the graduation rate for Latino students was considerably below that of the whole district. The graduation rates for Hispanic students were highest in Bellevue (88%) and Columbus (84%), and in these two districts the rates were only slightly below those for the entire district. However, in districts with lower Latino graduation rates, the Latino rates were frequently 20 to 30 percentage points below rates for the entire district. Among these key districts, Latino graduation rates were lowest in Fremont and Lincoln (38% each).

Table 2.9 Nebraska Graduation Rates (Four-year Completion), in Selected Districts, 2002–2003

District Name	White	Black	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic	District
Bellevue Public Schools	91%	89%	80%	89%	88%	90%
Columbus Public Schools	88%	75%	100%	100%	84%	88%
Fremont Public Schools	83%	100%	100%	57%	38%	81%
Grand Island Public Schools	82%	80%	100%	36%	47%	75%
Hastings Public Schools	82%	0%	100%	100%	60%	81%
Kearney Public Schools	94%	100%	0%	0%	67%	93%
Lexington Public Schools	93%	0%	0%	33%	65%	80%
Lincoln Public Schools	76%	53%	34%	79%	38%	72%
Norfolk Public Schools	95%	80%	50%	100%	62%	91%
North Platte Public Schools	86%	100%	67%	100%	64%	84%
Omaha Public Schools	71%	55%	36%	86%	43%	63%
Schuyler Central High School	88%	0%	0%	0%	48%	71%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	88%	100%	17%	100%	76%	84%
South Sioux City Community Schools	86%	100%	11%	57%	55%	73%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Data Center Division.

It is important to note that this graduation rate formula is based solely on those students who complete their degree within four years. Students who persevere and complete in five, six, or seven years are not included. In fact, some completers who take longer may have left school for a period of time and are then added in as dropouts, lowering the rate even more. Students in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs may take longer to complete school as they learn English, yet their completions are not included in the total when that is the case. Students who receive certificates of completion for their Individual Educational Programs (IEP), for example, special education students, are not included either, but this would not affect Latino rates disproportionately. Graduation rates are complex and not perfect indicators of success.

An example of how rates may be affected by the assumptions in the formula comes from the Omaha Public School District. The NCES formula resulted in a 2002–2003 Latino graduation rate of 43.26% and an overall rate of 62.72% for the district. When delayed completers and IEP students are included (this totaled approximately

200 students in 2002–2003), the rate for both Latino students and the district increased to 46.55% for Latinos and 65.10% for the district (telephone conversation with OPS staff member June 29, 2004).

Educational Gaps, Staying in School, and Dropping Out

Alarms are constantly sounded at national and state levels about the educational gap between Latinos and Whites, measured in terms of high school and college completion and especially by comparing dropout rates. Indeed, regardless of how it is measured, Latinos today have a higher dropout rate when compared to all other groups except Native Americans. Research points to a combination of factors within society, schools, and the family that help explain the continuing educational gap between minority and White groups. Among the factors that correlate with high dropout rates are poverty, children living without parents, parents' low educational status, lack of English-language proficiency, absence of peer models in schools or neighborhoods, school segregation, and low early schooling rates (Gershberg et al. 2004; Conchas 2001). A less-studied but powerful factor underscored by some is the rising consumer expectations among Latino immigrant youth, who lack the means to satisfy these material cravings. These expectations are fueled by the bombardment through various media of unregulated youth markets. This, combined with employers' incessant appetites for Latino immigrant labor, lures high school students toward jobs and away from schools (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

A number of debates are raging about how bad the Latino dropout problem is and which methodology can best calculate it. A recently published Harvard study caused a furor among school and state officials when, based on an alternative methodology, it concluded that the problem is worse than federal and state data reveal. In the case of state data, the Harvard authors contend that states often circumvent graduation rate accountability for minority subgroups. According to the Harvard study, graduation rates for U.S. Hispanics were 27.1 percentage points below those of Whites. Nebraska ranked seventh among the top ten states with the largest racial and ethnic gaps. The gap was 34 percentage points for Hispanics and 36 percentage points for Blacks (Nordby 2004; Orfield, Losen, and Wald 2004).

As we shall see in the next section, beginning with the 2001–2002 school year, the Nebraska Department of Education is requiring school districts to use one of the graduation rate models criticized by the Harvard study, albeit recommended by the National Center for Educational Statistics and used widely across the country. Whatever its limitations, Table 2.8 shows that under the new model, the graduation rate gap between Latinos and Whites expands to 31 percentage points. Although slightly lower than that reported by the Harvard study, both are quite comparable.

For a better understanding of how the state calculates dropout rates, we consulted the Nebraska Department of Education website. The excerpt below was taken directly from the website and clearly describes how the dropout rate is calculated in Nebraska.

Dropout Rate

A district dropout rate is calculated by dividing the total number of 7th –12th grade students who dropped out by the official fall enrollment for grades 7-12.
A dropout is a student who:

- Enrolled in school the previous school year but did not enroll at the beginning of the current school year.
- Has not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved education program.

A school's dropout numbers do not include students who:

- Transferred to another public school.
- Were suspended, expelled or verified as having an illness.
- Left school during the previous school year but returned before the last Friday in September of the current school year.
- Died.

Enrollment or membership is the number of students enrolled on the last Friday in September of each school year. The Nebraska Department of Education's definition for dropout is comparable to that used by the National Cooperative Education Statistics project sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Source: School District Membership Report and the Dropout Report

Across the Great Plains, Nebraska's dropout rates are worse than its neighbors. In Table 2.10, which compares rates for 9th–12th graders among the five Great Plains states, Nebraska's dropout rates are higher than most states but are particularly high for minority populations. Iowa, whose Latino population has characteristics similar to Nebraska's, has a much lower dropout rate (9%) than Nebraska's double-digit rate of 12%. Dropout rates among Latinos are even lower in Kansas and Missouri.

Table 2.10 Dropout Rates for Grades 9–12, by Race/Ethnicity in Selected Great Plains States, School Year 2000–2001

	Total	American Indian/Alaska Native	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	Black, not Hispanic	White, not Hispanic
Nebraska	4.00	13.90	12.20	3.80	10.90	2.90
Iowa	2.70	10.40	9.10	2.30	7.30	2.30
Kansas	3.20	5.60	7.60	2.10	5.40	2.60
Missouri	4.20	5.40	7.40	2.60	6.20	3.90
South Dakota	3.90	20.60	8.70	3.90	6.30	2.60

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, School year 2000–2001.

Table 2.11 Nebraska Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Grades 7–12, 2001–2002

	White, not Hispanic		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific		Black, not Hispanic		American Indian		Total by Gender		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Total 7 - 12th grade	62,513	65,929	4,099	4,520	1,198	1,200	4,265	4,364	943	980	73,018	76,993	150,011
Dropouts Statewide total	1,055	1,522	256	368	19	30	251	385	68	74	1,649	2,379	4,028
Percent Dropout by gender1.	**1.69%**	**2.31%**	**6.25%**	**8.14%**	**1.59%**	**2.50%**	**5.89%**	**8.82%**	**7.21%**	**7.55%**	**2.26%**	**3.09%**	
Percent dropout by race/ethnicity	2.0%		7.2%		2.0%		7.4%		7.4%		2.7%		**2.69%**

Source: OLLAS calculations based on Nebraska Department of Education "2001–2002 Membership by Grade, Race, and Gender," and "2001–2002 Nebraska Dropouts by Race/Ethnicity and Gender," Table 25.

Within the state, dropout rates among students in 7th to 12th grades are similar for Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans. Rates for all of these groups are also more than three times as high as those of non-Hispanic Whites (Table 2.11).

When looking at the percentages of Latinos that make up total dropout rates across districts across years, several trends become obvious, as demonstrated in Table 2.12.a. First, Latinos today make up a much higher percentage of total dropouts than they did in 1990–1991. Second, in some school districts, as is the case of Lexington, they are the absolute majority of students who dropped out. While this is largely due to the higher proportion of Latinos in these school districts today, the impact of this ethnic concentration on future educational achievement is a source of concern. Importantly, it is this table that sounds the loudest alarm regarding the need to concentrate efforts and invest heavily in Latino education in the state. Research has shown that high dropout rates correlate strongly with higher rates of crime, poverty, and unemployment (Fry 2003; Child Trends, N.d.).

Table 2.12 Nebraska Hispanic/Latino Enrollment and Dropout Rates Over Time

Table 2.12.a Nebraska Hispanic/Latino Dropouts in Selected Districts and Years, Grades 7–12

	Hispanic/Latino			Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Dropouts Over Total District Dropouts 1990-1991	Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Dropouts Over Total District Dropouts 1994-1995	Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Dropouts Over Total District Dropouts 2002-2003	Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Enrollment Over Total Districts Enrollment 2002-2003
	1990-1991	1994-1995	2002-2003				
Omaha Public Schools	58	106	249	6%	8%	24%	13%
Grand Island Public Schools	24	30	35	19%	20%	37%	22%
Lexington Public Schools	2	43	38	11%	68%	84%	54%
Lincoln Public Schools	10	21	59	3%	3%	11%	4%

Source: 1990–1991 and 1994–1995 from "The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos in Nebraska," Vol. 2. For years 2002–2003 OLLAS calculations based on Nebraska Department of Education "2002–2003 Membership by Grade, Race, and Gender," and "2002–2003 Nebraska Dropouts by Race/Ethnicity and Gender," Table 25.

Table 2.12.b Nebraska Total and Hispanic/Latino Enrollment and Dropout Rates, 1993–1994 to 2002–2003, Grades 7–12

Enrollments					
	1993-1994		2002-2003		% Change 1993-1994 to 2002-2003
	#	% Latino Over Total	#	% Latino Over Total	
	126,790		134,082		5.75%
Latinos	3,907	3.08%	9,272	6.915%	137.32%
Students Who Dropped Out					
	1993-1994		2002-2003		% Change
	#	% Latino Over Total	#	% Latino Over Total	
Total	4,161		2,911		-30.23%
	(3.28% of total students enrolled)		(2.17% of total students enrolled)		
Latinos	359	8.6%	562	19.30%	56.50%
	(9.2% of Latino students enrolled		(6.0% of Latino students enrolled)		

Source: NE Department of Education, "Membership by Grade, Race, and Gender, 2002–2003" and "Public Membership, 1993–1994," provided by request by NE Department of Education.

Table 2.12.b. provides another longitudinal view of Nebraska Latino dropout rates by comparing the number of students enrolled and the number who dropped out for all students and for Latino students in 1993–1994 and 2002–2003. In 1993–1994, Latinos accounted for 3.08% of all students in Nebraska in grades 7 through 12 but they comprised 8.6% of the students who dropped out. Among Latino students, 9.2% dropped out of school in that year, compared to a dropout rate of 3.28% for all students. By 2002–2003, Latinos comprised 6.915% of all students in Grades 7 through 12, and they accounted for 19.3% of all students who dropped out. During this period, enrollments in grades 7 through 12 increased 5.75% for the total population, but Latino student enrollments increased by 137.32%. The dropout rate among Latino students was 6.0% compared to 2.17% of total students enrolled. In summary, while the total number of all students enrolled increased slightly between these years, the total number of students who dropped out of school decreased by 30.23%. Among Latinos, the number of students enrolled increased dramatically between these years. The number of Latino students who dropped out also increased, but at a lower rate.

The GED Alternative

Many Latinos who drop out of high school enroll in GED programs. However, these students are somewhat less likely than White students to pass a GED test (Pew Hispanic Center 2004). While state-level data are not available, data collected by Omaha's Chicano Awareness Center (CAC) on their newly implemented Spanish GED classes are enlightening. When the CAC began offering GED classes in the spring of 2004, Omaha lacked GED classes in Spanish, although they had been offered sporadically in the past by various agencies. CAC records showed that 153 individuals signed up to take the course. Out of those, 87 took the course admissions test but only 30 were eligible, and out of the 25 who enrolled, only 11 passed the GED exam. According to the CAC director, three main reasons accounted for this high failure rate: 1) students lacked the skills needed for sustained self-study; 2) the GED program was minimally funded and thus lacked resources to offer tutorial or independent study guidance; and 3) students lacked the necessary Spanish writing skills. One of the center's main recommendations is to strengthen bilingual literacy as a core policy component of the educational system (R. Valdez, personal communication, April 15, 2004).

No Child Left Behind

The current federal legislation governing states and school districts that receive federal funding across the nation is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), signed by President George W. Bush in January 2002. This legislation increases federal resources to states to improve low-performing schools and expects more accountability from state education systems (National Conference of State Legislatures N.d.). NCLB provides standards-based reform that holds school districts accountable through testing results and their efforts to make "adequate yearly progress" toward their goals. It also provides a series of incentives and sanctions for results. Standards-based reform is not

new, but the strict timetable and sometimes severe costs are new to this act.

A Brief History

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was implemented to govern education from prekindergarten through 12th grade. This act included Title I, which provided funds for disadvantaged students. Unfortunately, according to a National Council of La Raza (NCLR) issue brief, Title I monies often provided only remedial educational opportunities for poor children. This resulted in "an environment of low expectations and poor results" (Gonzales 2002, p. 2). The Goals 2000: Educate America Act was passed in 1994 to help deal with this need, as was the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), known as the "new" Title I (Public Law 107-110). The goal of the IASA was to raise academic standards and close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and others. According to the NCLR brief, this bill "encouraged states to raise academic standards for all students, including those for English Language Learners (ELLs)" (Gonzales 2002, p. 3). No Child Left Behind reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, expands on the provisions of the IASA, and focuses on improving specific areas as well as making school progress more transparent to parents and community members. Its stated purpose is "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (Public Law 107-110). The government emphasizes four pillars of the NCLB legislation: "accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility" (http://www.ed.gov/print/-nclb/overview/intro/index.html).

One important provision includes testing in reading and math for every child in grades 3 through 8 annually, and at least once during grades 10 through 12. By the year 2007–2008, science testing will be added to these assessments (www.ed.gov/print/nclb/-overview/intro/index.html). Although states are allowed to design their own tests to measure progress for NCLB, they are also required to have a sample of students participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test. This is a national examination, begun in 1969, that tests 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in various subject areas. The NAEP, also known as the "Nation's Report Card," provides results for students by grade and for certain subgroups, such as female or Hispanic students (NCES: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/). Since 1990, NAEP has given results for participating states, of which Nebraska is one. The NCLB requires that states use the NAEP as a benchmark against which to compare state testing standards (Council for Exceptional Children 2003, p. 2).

Summary of Key Features of NCLB

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, the NCLB increases federal funding to states but includes "an unprecedented increase of federal mandates and sanctions. The requirements placed on states to increase testing, ensure a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, and hold schools accountable for the performance of all students, are associated with much harsher penalties.

For example, the state is allowed to replace school personnel responsible for the failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), extend the school day or year, change the curriculum, or restructure the school and reopen it as a charter or under private management" (http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/NCLBHistory.htm). Some critics of the NCLB legislation suggest that these provisions constitute a hidden agenda to weaken public education and strengthen a school voucher system. Others criticize NCLB because the potentially harsh sanctions for failing to meet goals promote "teaching to the test" rather than educating students (Gonzalez 2002).

The cornerstone of the NCLB legislation is annual testing. As part of this, states are required to issue annual report cards to parents and the public, and these appear on the Nebraska Department of Education website by state, district, and school. No Child Left Behind provides options for parents whose children are in low-performing schools, which include transfer to higher-performing schools or supplemental educational services such as tutoring (not necessarily at the school).

How Might NCLB Affect Latino Children?

The Department of Education website (www.ed.gov) provides a discussion entitled "Reaching Out… Raising Hispanic Achievement," which states that the achievement gap between different ethnic groups indicates that public education has not delivered a quality education to Hispanic students. It further states that the solution to this problem is to "attack the soft bigotry of low expectations and demand that schools close the achievement gap between Hispanic and white students." Statistics shown indicate that, nationally, Hispanic children often do not attend any kind of preschool, they have the highest dropout rates of any group in the country, with more than 27% of Hispanic students leaving high school before completion, and their test scores are lower than their White counterparts. For example, 35% of White fourth-graders scored at or above the Proficient category on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), compared to only 10% of Hispanic students. Finally, only 13% of Hispanic students nationally get a college education (http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/accountability/achieve/-achievement.hisp.html).

Several provisions of the NCLB are geared specifically to English Language Learners, and special efforts have been made to help parents of ELL students understand these provisions and their rights under the law, as revealed in a December 2, 2003, press release introducing "Ten Key Benefits for Parents of English Language Learners" (http://www.ed.gov/print/news/pressreleases/2003/12/12022003.html).

Federal standards require that achievement be examined using the demographic and other characteristics of race, ethnicity, economic background, and disabilities. Although Nebraska provides basic information to meet those requirements, in a letter to the public on the state's Department of Education website, the commissioner of education discusses this requirement and his reluctance to report test results by race and ethnicity: "The primary factors that affect student learning are poverty, language skills and mobility—not race and ethnicity. While the data will show that some groups of students are better, or worse, than others, it is unfair and inaccurate to give anyone the

impression that race and ethnicity are factors in student learning" (http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us/). The tables below will focus on poverty, language skills, and mobility as well as race/ethnicity.

The National Council of La Raza, issues cautions about the NCLB legislation in their report, "The No Child Left Behind Act: Implications for Local Educators and Advocates for Latino Students, Families and Communities" (Gonzales 2002). While acknowledging that standards-based reform holds potential for benefiting Latino students by imposing high standards, they recognize that this process involves serious challenges. They categorize their concerns into two groups: inadequate learning opportunities and inappropriate use of assessments. Inequitable funding of high-poverty schools and lack of access to challenging curricula may result in inadequate learning opportunities. Unqualified teachers and ineffective parent involvement strategies may also interfere. The inappropriate use of assessments may also be problematic, particularly in assessing the progress of English Language Learners. The issue of diluting the educational experience of students by "teaching to the test" also falls into this category. NCLR recommends several strategies for avoiding the pitfalls, including state funding formulas that provide extra assistance to schools serving Latino students, providing appropriate instructional materials to meet the new standards, assigning effective teachers to schools with large numbers of ELLs and minority students, equalizing urban and suburban teacher salaries, using multiple measures of student performance, and including all students in assessments.

Although the act attempts to address many of these concerns, actual implementation must rise to the spirit of the legislation in ways that are culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of the Latino community.

How Is Nebraska Doing?

Determining how well Nebraska meets the requirements for No Child Left Behind is complicated. The federal accountability standards, known as AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress, state that school districts and buildings with 30 or more students in any of nine groups must meet a diverse set of goals. The nine categories are: All Students; American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; White, Not Hispanic; Black, Not Hispanic; Hispanic; Students eligible for free and reduced price lunch; Special Education Students; and English Language Learners. Current goals are for both performance level and test participation level in reading, math, and writing assessment, at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

The goal of the NCLB legislation is to have 100% of all nine groups of students proficient in test scores by 2013–2014. To meet this goal, states have established target goals of percentages of students who must be proficient in various subject areas for different ages. These goals will gradually increase to 100%. Current target goals for reading and math indicate the percentage of students who must be proficient for each of the nine groups with 30 or more students:

Student Performance	4th Grade	8th Grade	11th Grade
Reading	62%	61%	66%
Mathematics	65%	58%	62%

The high school graduation rate must be 83.97%. Quality of the assessments designed by the state also must be rated good, very good, or exemplary. Finally, at least 95% of the students must have been assessed in the three areas. The last requirement is designed to ensure that states and schools do not meet standards by testing only a small portion of higher-achieving students.

Adequate Yearly Progress for Latino Students

For comparison, student performance is reported for All Students, Hispanic students, and English Language Learners. Although not all ELL students are Spanish speaking, in Nebraska 80% of the students who speak a language other than English speak Spanish.

As a whole in 2002–2003, at the elementary level, Nebraska met all participation goals, with over 95% of All Students, Hispanic students, and English Language Learners tested. In middle school, standards were met in participation level for All Students and Hispanic students, but not for English Language Learners. In high school, participation levels were below adequate for both Hispanic students and English Language Learners. Table 2.13 shows the percentage of students who met federal accountability goals in performance for select groups for 2002–2003. In every case, the percentage of Hispanic and ELL students who meet federal performance goals is below that of All Students. At the elementary level, All Students and Hispanic students met reading and math performance goals, but ELL students did not. In middle school, Hispanic students met the reading goal only. ELL students did not meet either goal. In high school, neither Hispanic nor ELL students met reading or math performance scores.

The results above were for the entire state, but results are also compiled for each district and school; the evaluation process occurs on several levels for several measures and is quite complex. Individual districts simplify the process by posting whether they met performance and participation goals. For our key districts that had more than 30 students in a group, results appear in the Appendix. Patterns of success vary from district to district, but in general, participation goals are met (that is, high numbers of students were assessed) and performance goals are more likely to be met in the 4th grade, slightly less likely to be met in the 8th grade, and least likely to be met in the 11th grade. Many districts do not have enough ELL students to report outcomes. Where reported, ELL students are less likely than Hispanic students to meet goals.

Table 2.13 Percentage of Students Meeting No Child Left Behind Federal Accountability Goals in Performance for Nebraska, 2002–2003

	Elementary		Middle School		High School	
	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
All Students	83.08%*	81.73%*	79.92%*	75.23%*	76.87%*	65.45%*
Hispanic	70.50%*	70.19%*	61.66%*	53.18%	51.40%	37.55%
ELL	51.13%	57.58%	44.44%	37.08%	36.13%	32.29%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education State Report Card. Retrieved June 25, 2004 (http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us).
*Met current Nebraska performance goals.

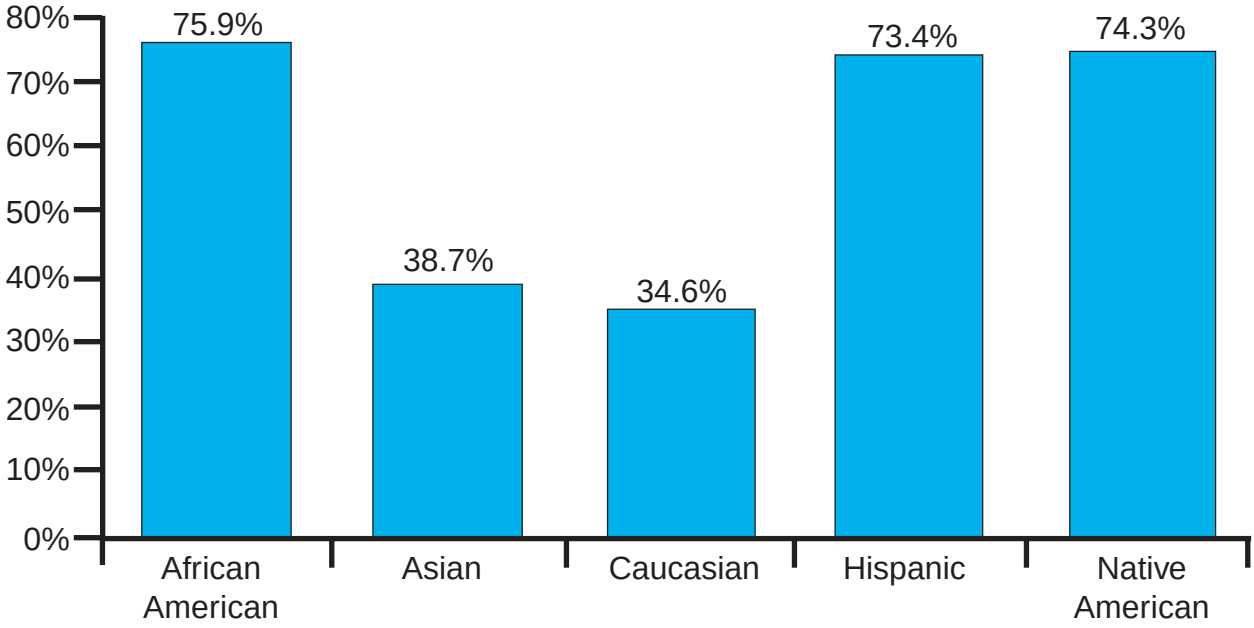
As shown above, the State Report Card illustrates the percentage proficient in reading and math by race and ethnicity for the nine target groups for the entire state. Individual districts report whether the proportion of the nine target groups who met goals was adequate to meet the standards developed by the state. This information is indicated by Met or Not Met. Therefore, at the state level, it is possible to examine the differences between the percentage of Hispanic students who met goals and the percentages of other groups; at the district level, it is not possible to compare the percentages by group. (See Appendix for a listing of NCLB standards Met and Not Met by key school districts.) Additionally, average test scores are not available at the state level by race and ethnicity, which makes comparisons difficult between groups. However, comparisons by race and ethnicity are possible for standardized tests at the national level. The section on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides these direct comparisons.

Because the Nebraska commissioner of education focuses on poverty, language difficulties, and mobility as bars to achievement, each is discussed briefly below.

Poverty

Data from the Omaha public schools illustrate the links between poverty and race and ethnicity. The number of children who qualified for free and reduced-price lunches in Omaha Public Schools in 2003–2004 varied by race and ethnicity, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2. Among Hispanic students, 73.4% qualified for free or reduced-price lunches in OPS. This figure is likely an underestimate, as anecdotal evidence suggests that students and their families are reluctant to take advantage of this program because they do not want to be labeled poor by their peers.

Figure 2.2 Percentage of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-price Lunch by Racial/Ethnic Category in Omaha Public Schools, 2003–2004



Source: Omaha Public Schools, Research Division, "Omaha Public Schools, 1994–1995 and 2003–2004 Percent of Students Eligible for Free/Reduced-price Lunch (by Racial/Ethinic Category)," Chart 1.

Language

As indicated above, English Language Learners present a special challenge in obtaining a fair assessment of their educational progress. In many districts, the percentages of ELL students are increasing each year. The section on English-language proficiency below further explains these issues.

Mobility

Mobility affects students' ability to progress in school. Although there are many reasons for mobility, it is particularly high in some of the communities we focus on. Mobility is not limited to Hispanic students, but a great deal of mobility in a district has a potential impact on all students. A mobility rate is determined by dividing the number of children who enter or leave school between the last Friday in September and the last day of school by the number enrolled on the last Friday in September of that year. The mobility rate in Lexington public schools was 43.8% for 2002–2003, the highest rate among our sample of school districts. Scottsbluff, Norfolk, Omaha, South Sioux City, and North Platte schools all had mobility rates above 20% (Table 2.14).

Table 2.14 Mobility Rate in Nebraska and Selected Nebraska Public School Districts, 2002–2003

	Mobility Rate
Nebraska Public Schools	14.5%
Omaha Public Schools	22.9%
Bellevue Public Schools	16.9%
Columbus Public Schools	11.1%
Fremont Public Schools	15.8%
Grand Island Public Schools	18.5%
Hastings Public Schools	11.2%
Kearney Public Schools	10.9%
Lexington Public Schools	43.8%
Lincoln Public Schools	19.9%
Norfolk Public Schools	23.9%
North Platte Public Schools	21.1%
Schuyler Central High School	17.1%
Schuyler Grade Schools	19.9%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	24.8%
South Sioux City Community Schools	21.6%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education. Retrieved June 25, 2004 (http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us).

National Assessment of Educational Progress Standardized Testing

The State of Nebraska takes part in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a nationally representative, continuing assessment of student achievement in various subject areas. Nebraska has participated in testing since 1990, when state assessments were first conducted. States receiving Title I funding must participate in the NAEP in math and reading exams at grades 4 and 8 every two years beginning in 2003 (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/statejoin.asp). Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states design their own assessments of student achievement, but they are required to

use the NAEP test results as a benchmark to determine how their assessments compare. NAEP provides both state (to participating states) and national results. The NAEP examinations are given to a representative sample of students at both the state and the national level. In the state assessment, a random sample of schools and students is selected. In unique situations, for example, a state with only one major metropolitan area or one area with a large proportion of a minority population, NAEP makes exceptions to ensure all groups are represented (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/-nathow.asp).

NAEP test scores are provided in both scale scores and by achievement levels. Achievement-level scores provide a context for interpreting performance, and those are reported in Table 2.15. Scores are reported by the percentage of students who attained each level. The levels are defined as follows by the NAEP:

Basic: This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient: This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

Test scores are also reported as Below Basic where appropriate. States strive to have students perform at or above the Proficient level.

Table 2.15 shows test results for writing (2002), and reading and mathematics (2003) for the nation, Nebraska, and for non-Hispanic White and Hispanic students. In every category, Hispanic student scores are below those of non-Hispanic White students (the 8th grade math exam did not report the results of a statistical test of differences, but the score for Hispanic

Table 2.15 National Assessment of Educational Progress Student Achievement Levels in Writing 2002, Reading 2003, and Mathematics 2003

Writing Results 2002 (range 0 to 300)					
4th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	154	15	59	25	2
NE[1]	153	13	60	26	1
White	158	10	60	29	2
Hispanic[2]	137	24	66	9	1
8th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	152	16	54	28	2
NE[3]	156	12	57	30	1
White	160	8	57	34	2
Hispanic[2]	128	35	54	11	0
Reading Results 2003 (range 0 to 500)					
4th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	216	38	32	23	7
NE[3] **Public**	221	34	34	24	8
White	225	29	30	14	3
Hispanic[2]	202	56	30	12	2
8th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	261	28	42	27	3
NE[3] **Public**	266	23	42	32	3
White	271	18	43	36	3
Hispanic[2]	241	21	37	11	1
Mathematics Results, 2003 (range 0 to 500)					
4th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	234	24	45	28	4
NE[3] **Public**	236	20	46	30	3
White	241	13	48	35	4
Hispanic[2]	213	49	42	8	0
8th Grade					
	Avg.score	Below Basic %	Basic%	Proficient %	Advanced %
US Public	276	26	42	27	5
NE[3] **Public**	282	33	39	22	5
White	287	20	44	31	6
Hispanic[4]	255	60	30	9	1

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved June 25, 2004 (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states).

[1] NE average score was not significantly different from U.S. score.

[2] White students scored significantly higher than Hispanic/Latino students.

[3] NE average score was higher than the U.S. score.

[4] No significant test of differences in scores was reported.

students is several points below the score for other groups reported). Also, in each category a greater percentage of Hispanic than non-Hispanic White students scored at the Below Basic level, and fewer scored at the level of Proficient and above.

Educators are particularly concerned about the gap between minority groups and non-Hispanic White students in test scores, and one of the goals of NCLB legislation is to close the gap in scores. Scores have been tracked by race and ethnicity in Nebraska from 1992 on. Analyses of the gaps in scores between Hispanic students and non-Hispanic White students for reading and mathematics examinations in 4th and 8th grades reveal that for both exams in both grades, the gap has existed for every year an exam was given. In the future, one indicator of the success of NCLB efforts will be whether this persistent gap in scores between Hispanic and non-Hispanic White students narrows.

English-Language Proficiency, Loss of Bilingualism, and Successful Adaptation of Latino Immigrant Children

When looking across generations, researchers have at times referred to the United States as a language graveyard (Caffrey 1998). The story is well known to scholars who have traced the rapid loss of second languages or the "mother tongue," as well as the transition toward monolingualism, in this country when compared to other nations. The first generation, contrary to popular myths, generally manages to achieve a halting knowledge of "survival English" at best. Their children prefer English but retain the ability to understand their parents' language and speak it mainly at home. The ability to read and write in their parents' native language, a required component of fluent bilingualism, is neither maintained nor improved significantly for most children in this second generation. The third generation is generally composed of "passive bilingual" individuals who may understand the gist of a conversation but are barely able to communicate in their grandparents' language. By the fourth generation, complete monolingualism has been achieved (Lieberson, Dalto, and Johnston1975; Lieberson 1981). This loss of language is evident in Table 2.16, which shows that fully 30% of Latinos in Nebraska speak English only.

If lack of English-language proficiency has real social and economic costs, the loss of a mother tongue is just as costly. Research on the second generation convincingly shows that such costs are about much more than the higher market value bilingual workers can command. Fluent bilingualism also allows children to retain a healthy anchor in their parents' culture while simultaneously acquiring mastery of English and the cultural world that is also part of their identities (Portes and Hao 2004). Language programs that insist on quick immersion into the English language while simultaneously neglecting efforts to maintain and improve literacy in the mother tongue ignore these findings at the peril of society and of this second generation. In Nebraska, as in the rest of the country, schools use a variety of approaches to teach English as a second language. While research on local programs and their benefits awaits, it is dual language programs, such as those utilized in some of Omaha's schools, that are most supported by research on the second generation.

Within the much shorter time frame of a single generation, when immigration is still at its peak, legitimate concerns and irrational public anxieties center around the large numbers of individuals unable to speak English well or at all. English-language learning is an important component of the human capital skills necessary to achieve higher levels of integration and social mobility. Table 2.16 again shows that about 38% of the Hispanic/Latino population in Nebraska does not speak English well or at all. Between 1990–2003, the percentage of ELL children in Nebraska increased by 1,503.6% (Internal Worksheet, Nebraska Department of Education, 2004).

Table 2.16 Language Spoken at Home and English Ability of the Hispanic/Latino population, Nebraska and Selected Nebraska Counties, 2000

	State of Nebraska	Colfax County	Dakota County	Dawson County	Douglas County	Hall County	Lancaster County	Madison County	Sarpy County	Scotts Bluff County
Total	81,218	2,441	3,908	5,186	26,925	6,338	7,482	2,550	4,675	5,555
Speak only English	30%	4%	8%	13%	28%	19%	45%	11%	61%	37%
Speak Spanish:	70%	95%	92%	87%	71%	80%	55%	89%	38%	63%
Speak English "very well"	41%	24%	38%	31%	37%	39%	52%	37%	52%	58%
Speak English "well"	21%	20%	24%	16%	20%	22%	20%	20%	22%	24%
Speak English "not well"	23%	29%	18%	27%	26%	22%	20%	24%	17%	13%
Speak English "not at all"	15%	26%	19%	25%	16%	17%	8%	19%	9%	5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 4 (SF 4).

Table 2.17 English Language Learners for Nebraska Selected Districts and Selected Years

English Language Learners	2000—2001	2002—2002	2002—2003
Nebraska Public Schools	3.7%	4.5%	5.0%
Omaha Public Schools	7.5%	9.1%	10.7%
Bellevue Public Schools	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Columbus Public Schools	8.9%	12.2%	12.6%
Fremont Public Schools	3.1%	3.3%	5.0%
Grand Island Public Schools	14.7%	15.9%	16.8%
Kearney Public Schools	1.5%	2.0%	2.8%
Lexington Public Schools	31.8%	30.7%	24.8%
Lincoln Public Schools	5.7%	6.1%	6.8%
Norfolk Public Schools	5.7%	6.3%	6.7%
North Platte Public Schools	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%
Schuyler Grade Schools	30.5%	31.0%	30.8%
Schuyler Central High Schools	13.9%	15.1%	18.8%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	3.5%	3.8%	4.2%
South Sioux City Community Schools	19.7%	22.1%	23.5%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education State Report Card. Retrived June 15, 2004 (http://reportcard.nde.state.ne.us).

The clustering of Spanish-speaking workers into a few labor markets and segregated schools and neighborhoods, as well as the lack of institutional support to facilitate English-language learning for a large number of children from Spanish-speaking households, contribute to lower levels of English-language proficiency among Latinos. Table 2.17 shows the percentage change and concentration, by school district, of all children in Nebraska who were considered to have Limited English Proficiency (LEP) from 2000 to 2003.[3] LEP children vary considerably with regard to the languages they speak, posing special challenges faced by the larger cities such as Omaha where LEP children speak a total of 38 languages (OPS 2003).[4] Despite such diversity, however, the majority of LEP children in Omaha and Nebraska as a whole are Spanish speaking (Table 2.18).

Viewed from a different angle, Table 2.19 further reveals the preponderance of Spanish-speaking children who are LEP, and their concentration in selected Nebraska school districts. The original data from which this table is drawn reveal there are fourteen

Table 2.18 Languages Spoken in Nebraska Public Schools for Limited English Proficient Students, 2003–2004

Languages spoken in Nebraska Public Schools	Academic Year 2003—2004	
	Number	Percentage
Spanish	12,398	80%
Other Language	3,185	20%
Total	15,583	100%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education. Retrieved June 15, 2004 (http://www.nde.state.ne.us/NATLORIGIN/images/LEP_20032004%20building%20counts.pdf).

Table 2.19 Spanish-speaking Limited English Proficiency for Selected School Districts, 2003–2004

School District	Number of Spanish-speaking LEP Students	Percentage of Participation
Nebraska Public Schools	11,723	100%
Omaha Public Schools	4,512	38.5%
Bellevue Public Schools	60	0.5%
Columbus Public Schools	519	4.4%
Fremont Public Schools	220	1.9%
Grand Island Public Schools	1,305	11.1%
Hastings Public Schools	190	1.6%
Kearney Public Schools	153	1.3%
Lexington Public Schools	790	6.7%
Lincoln Public Schools	666	5.7%
Norfolk Public Schools	276	2.4%
North Platte Public Schools	15	0.1%
Schuyler Public Schools	323	2.8%
Scottsbluff Public Schools	68	0.6%
South Sioux City Community Schools	722	6.2%
Other School Districts	1,904	16.2%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Data Center Division.

[3] LEP students, commonly referred to as English Language Learners (ELL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, are students acquiring English as a new language of their education. The No Child Left Behind law defines an LEP student as an individual who (1) is 3 to 21 years old; (2) is enrolled in an elementary or secondary school; (3) was not born in the United States or whose native language is not English, who is a Native American or Alaska native, who comes from a background where English is a non-major language; who is migratory and from a non-English-language environment; and (4) whose level of English proficiency may deny him or her the ability to reach a proficient achievement level on state tests, to succeed in English-led classrooms, or to participate fully in society (NCREL 2004).

[4] Linguistic diversity is internal to the Latino population, and many Latinos arriving in the U.S. and Nebraska may not be Spanish speaking. A growing number of Guatemalan and Mexican indigenous groups, for example, have been recruited by meatpacking plants and other job sectors. It is not clear that Nebraska schools adequately capture this dimension in their language statistics, as many of these Latin American indigenous immigrants may be reluctant to reveal their native language as their primary language at home.

school districts (not all of which appear in our list of preselected districts) that count 100 or more LEP children enrolled in their schools. Six of them educate 500 or more LEP children each. Moreover, about 39% of all Nebraska LEP children are enrolled in Omaha public schools. Clearly, the impact in terms of funding and institutional infrastructure needs falls unevenly across Nebraska districts. Absolute numbers don't tell the whole story either. While Omaha schools educate the largest number of LEP students, Table 2.17 shows that a quarter or more of LEP students make up the total enrollment of several schools in smaller rural towns such as Lexington and Schuyler. The schools in these towns are often less equipped than urban schools to deploy the institutional resources and provide the staff training necessary to comply with NCLB and Civil Rights Commission standards regarding access to a quality education for LEP students.

Data at the school and grade levels suggest that the concentration of Latinos with low levels of English-language proficiency, and thus the potential for linguistic isolation, is even greater than that revealed at the school district level. In some cases, LEP children attend school where more than half their fellow classmates have difficulty speaking English (United Way 2004). More research is needed to understand the consequences of these trends in Nebraska.

National research on the subject reveals a troubling trend whereby a large number of Latino LEP students have arrived in the country as teenagers and thus have a very short time frame in which to master a new language, a new culture, and new subjects required for high school graduation. In our interviews with ESL teachers in Nebraska, this concern is often raised (Interview March 23, 2004).

Nebraska LEP enrollment by grade level (Tables 2.20.a and 2.20.b), however, diverges rather significantly from this national trend. The ratio of LEP students enrolled in grades K-6 to those enrolled in grades 7-12 is nearly three to one. There is insufficient research to draw definitive conclusions about the significance of these diverging trends and their consequences, good and bad, for Nebraska schools and immigrant children. One possible conclusion is that, on average, Nebraska Latino children who lack English-language proficiency may be more likely than students in the country as a whole to fully overcome language-related barriers to educational achievement because they are more likely to start schooling in the United States at an earlier age.

Table 2.20 Spanish-speaking LEP Students

2.20.a Proportion of Spanish-speaking LEP Students by Grade Levels in Nebraska Public Schools, 2003–2004

Grade	Spanish LEP Students	Percentage of Total LEP Students in Each Grade
Kind	1,695	14.5%
1	1,583	13.5%
2	1,422	12.1%
3	1,308	11.2%
4	983	8.4%
5	869	7.4%
6	785	6.7%
7	704	6.0%
8	589	5.0%
9	656	5.6%
10	491	4.2%
11	353	3.0%
12	285	2.4%
Total	11,723	100.0%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Data Center Division, "Spanish Speaking Limited English Students for the Entire State of Nebraska as Reported March 2004."

2.20.b Summary of Spanish-speaking LEP Students by Elementary and Secondary Schools in Nebraska Public Schools, 2003–2004

Grade	LEP Students	Percentage LEP by grade
K–6	8,645	73.7%
7–12	3,078	26.3%
Total	11,723	100.0%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Data Center Division, "Spanish Speaking Limited English Students for the Entire State of Nebraska as Reported March 2004."

Nevertheless, as Table 2.21 demonstrates, the proportion of Latino students who are LEP in secondary schools in Nebraska is not negligible (about 29.4%). This number is likely composed of newer arrivals as well as students who are in danger of becoming long-term LEPs. The latter group is identified by national research as being at a much higher risk of dropping out (Ruiz-de-Velazco and Fix 2000). The number of LEP students in secondary schools is likely to be even greater, as many of these students no longer qualify for ESL classes or have tested out of ESL, even though their English-language literacy remains low. We have yet to do the research in Nebraska to fully understand the local dimensions of this important issue and what is being done about it

Several dimensions remain to be measured and studied in sufficient depth regarding LEP children and adults. One concerns the numbers, special circumstances, and needs faced by LEP immigrant children who are older when they come to the United States but have experienced significant gaps in their education here and in their native country.

A second and related issue is how data on LEP children are collected and the lack of research noted here, both of which offer an inadequate picture of the hidden dimensions of this issue. For example, neither schools nor the state collect data on children from immigrant households by generation or by years of—and gaps in— schooling in their native country. New accountability standards instituted by NCLB require schools to close the "achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students, and between disadvantaged

Table 2.21 Percentage of Hispanic/Latino Students by Grade Who Are LEP in Nebraska Public Schools, 2003–2004

Grade	Hispanic/Latino Student Enrollment	LEP Student Enrollment	Percentage of Hispantic/Latino Student by Grade in IEP
K–6	17,165	8,645	50.4%
7–12	10,474	3,078	29.4%
Total	27,639	11,723	42.4%

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, Data Center Division, "Spanish Speaking Limited English Students for the Entire State of Nebraska as reported March 2004," and "2003–2004 Membership by Grade, Race, and Gender."

children and their more advantaged peer" (Title I, Section 1001, Item 3). This law requires that states track and report the progress of students by race and ethnicity and that they assess the English proficiency of all students with limited English proficiency (Public Law 107-110 115 Stat. 1453). However, no systematic records of generation status or gaps in prior education are kept. Third, it is not yet clear how extensive is Nebraska's current lack of well-trained staff to work with ESL students, nor how sufficient are the resources the state provides schools to adequately train such staff and, in general, meet the new high-stakes assessments introduced at the state and federal levels of NCLB. Finally, while much of the concern about LEPs centers around school-age populations, first-generation Latino immigrant adults also lack the necessary resources and institutional support to acquire English-language skills at a level that aids socioeconomic mobility (Gouveia et al. 2005).[5]

The following additional issues and concerns that must be further explored were gleaned from informal phone inquiries with ESL programs in the selected districts highlighted in this report:

1. Some ESL programs have no district-level coordinator.
2. Some schools lack certified ESL staff.
3. Generally, content-area teachers, other than ESL teachers, are insufficiently or not at all trained to work with LEP students.
4. Funding is inadequate in many cases, especially in school districts with the largest number of LEP students.

Migrant Education

The Nebraska Title I Migrant Education Program is funded by Federal Title I money geared to help all disadvantaged children. The needs of migrant children are different from those of other children, and this program was developed to meet those special needs. It was established in 1966 and has been reauthorized every five years since then, most recently in 1999 as part of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).

Children are eligible for the Migrant Education Program if they have moved in the past three years across state or school district lines with a migrant parent or guardian to enable a member of the child's immediate family to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural, fishing, or food-processing industries. The Migrant Education Program serves children ages three through 21 who have not yet graduated from high school (http://www.nebraskamep.org/introduction.htm).

In Nebraska, Hispanics make up the largest group of the migrant population. The number of migrant children in the state has risen rapidly in the last 15 years. In 1990, there were 1,540 identified migrant children. This number doubled to 3,200 in 1996–1997. The latest figures available identified

[5] Some of this information is being collected as part of a larger study on educational achievement in Nebraska conducted by the authors.

14,000 migrant children ages from less than a year old to 21 in 2002–2003.

As Table 2.22 makes clear, funding has also grown during the same period, from $340,000 in 1989/90 to $2.7 million in 1996/97 (both figures are from the most recent MAC report), to the current funding of approximately $5.175 million (2002/03). According to the Nebraska Title I Migrant Education Program, the current funding is based on a level funding formula that has been frozen for five years. This means that the state receives approximately the same amount of money for all five years, regardless of changes in the number of migrant children. Recently, one of the authors of this report, Lourdes Gouveia, participated in a focus group conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Migrant Education that was exploring the possibility of eliminating children of meatpacking workers from the rolls of this program. Some within the department argued, against researchers' contentions, that meatpacking could not be qualified as part-time or seasonal employment, a requirement for receiving migrant education monies. Should the latter interpretation prevail, Nebraska stands to lose thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Table 2.22 Migrant Education Funding

Year	Children Enrolled	Funding
1989–1990	1,540	$340,000
1996–1997	3,200	$2,700,000
2002–2003	12,000	$5,175,000

Source: 1989–1990 and 1996–1997 from "The Educational Status of Hispanics/Latinos in Nebraska," Vol. 2 and 2002–2003 from Nebraska Department of Education Migrant Education Program Office, Personal Communication.

Latinos in Higher Education and the College Environment

Part III

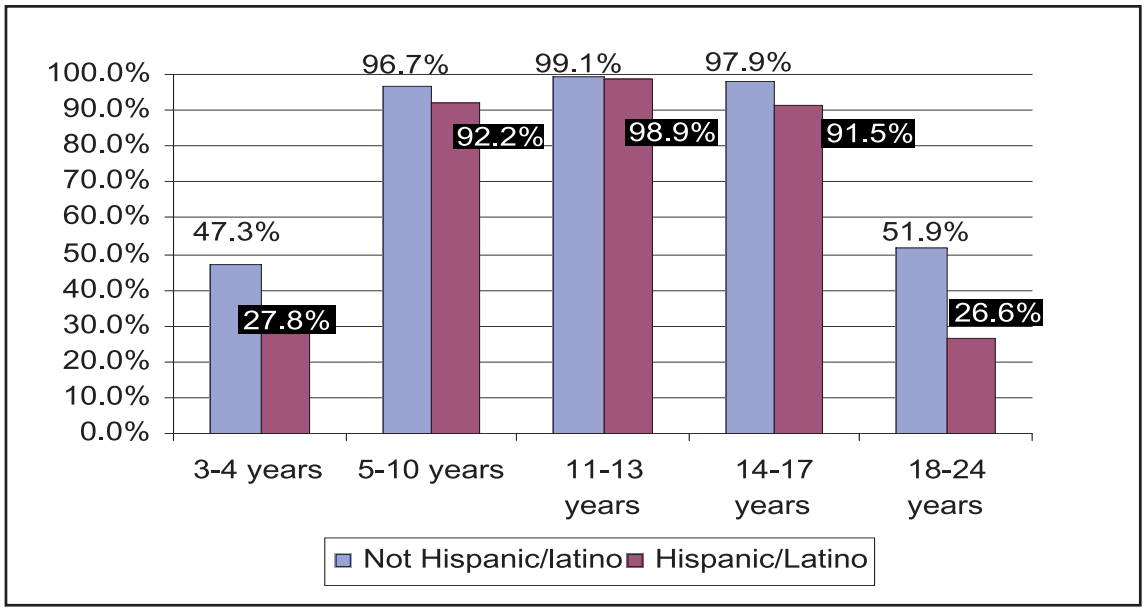
Tim Fitzgerald

Latinos in Higher Education and the College Environment

Beyond High School

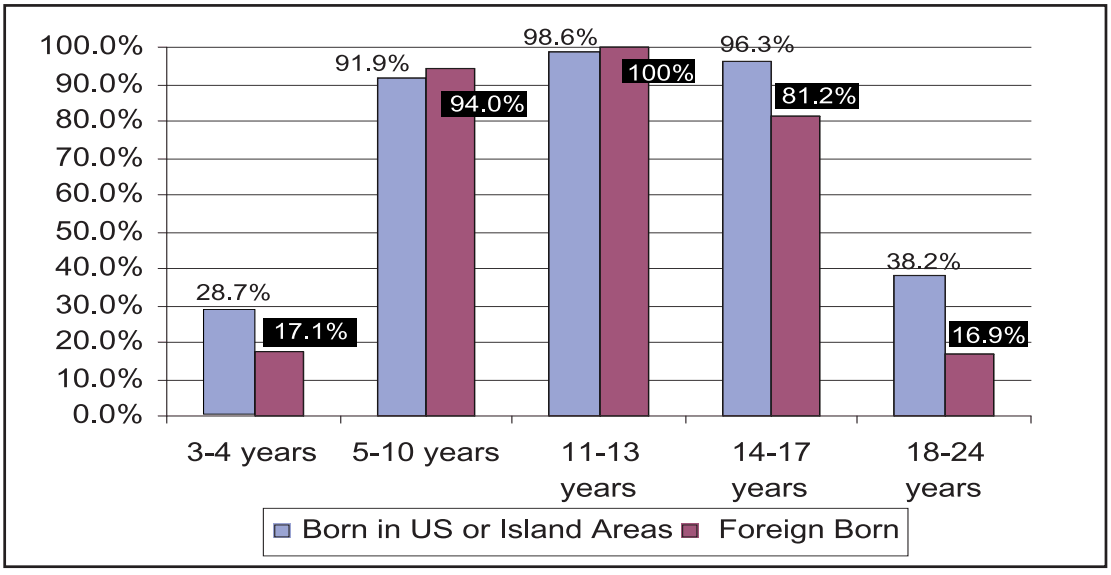
The educational gap separating Latino youth and their counterparts becomes particularly evident by the time they reach the traditional college ages of 18 to 24. Pursuing postsecondary education shortly after completing high school is important, as this group is "the cohort that reaps the greatest economic benefit from a college education" (Fry 2002). A study by the Pew Hispanic Center calculated that, nationally, 35% of Latino high school graduates, compared to 46% of Whites in that age group, are enrolled in college (Pew Hispanic Center 2004). While exact comparisons are not feasible, Figure 3.1 documents what appears to be an even larger gap between Latinos and non-Latinos enrolled in some kind of school or college in Nebraska (27% and 52% respectively). Although the figure does not distinguish between those who did not finish high school and those who did but forfeited college, it compounds our concern about the curtailing of Latinos' educational careers at an early age.

Figure 3.1 School Enrollment Attended Since February 1, 2000, for Hispanic/Latino and not Hispanic/Latino Populations Age 3 to 24



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.
*Persons were classified as enrolled in school if they reported attending a "regular" public or private school or college at any time between February 1,1999, and the time of enumeration.

Figure 3.2 School Enrollment Attended Since February 1, 2000, for Foreign-born and Native-born Hispanic/Latino Populations Age 3 to 24



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), Nebraska.
*Persons were classified as enrolled in school if they reported attending a "regular" public or private school or college at any time between February 1,1999, and the time of enumeration.

Research also shows that U.S.-educated children are more likely to stay in school. Once we account for this fact, Latino immigrant children educated in the United States are not more likely to drop out than their native-born counterparts (Pew Hispanic Center 2004). Figure 3.2 shows that 18 to 24-year-old, native-born Latinos are more likely to stay in school than foreign-born Latinos (38% and 17% respectively). There is no tracking system that shows the percentage of these children who graduated or dropped out of school early, or whether they ever attended U.S. schools. However, while it is important to learn more about the internal characteristics of this cohort, the diminished returns from these educational deficits bring similar consequences for Latinos and their communities, regardless of how they came about.

Postsecondary Education

Enrollments

Data from the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education indicate both a positive and a negative picture for Latinos in higher education in Nebraska. On the positive side, enrollments of Latino students have continued their gradual increase in Nebraska colleges and universities. In 1991, Hispanic students made up 1.5% of total student enrollments in public and independent colleges and universities. This percentage has increased each year, to its 2001 level of 2.4% of students (Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education 2003, p. 50; Table 3.1.a).

Latinos made up 8% of the state's college-age population in 2000, but only 2.4% of students enrolled in higher education were Hispanic (Table 3.1.b, 3.2). Viewed differently, only 20% of Hispanics in the prime college attendance age (18-24) are attending Nebraska colleges and universities, compared to 65% of Whites. The proportion of Latino students who enroll at NU campuses has shown a slight increase between 1993 and 2003 (Figure 3.3), but it is still far below the percentage of college-age Latinos in Nebraska. The UNO campus had a Latino enrollment of 2.8% in 2003, the highest proportion of Latino enrollment in the system. This is partly explained by the fact that the largest concentration of Latinos in the state reside in Omaha, a city poised to become an even more favorite urban destination for Latino immigrants in the years to come.

Table 3.1 Student Enrollments in Higher Education in Nebraska

Table 3.1.a Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity at Nebraska Public and Independent Higher Education Institutions

Year	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Other
1991	87.8%	2.6%	1.5%	1.2%	0.7%	6.2%
1993	87.9%	2.9%	1.9%	1.4%	0.8%	5.1%
1995	86.7%	2.9%	2.0%	1.9%	0.8%	5.8%
1997	86.0%	3.2%	2.1%	2.2%	0.8%	5.8%
1999	85.5%	3.3%	2.2%	2.3%	0.7%	6.0%
2001	84.7%	3.4%	2.4%	2.4%	0.8%	6.3%

Source: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska."

Table 3.1.b Estimate of Population Age 18-24 Enrolled in Higher Education for the White Alone, not Hispanic/Latino and the Hispanic/Latino Populations, Nebraska, 2000,2001

	Population Age 18-24 in 2000	% of Total	Total Enrollments in Postsecondary Education in 2001*	Approximate Percent Enrolled in School
Total	174,425		112,135	64%
White alone, not Hispanic/Latino	145,231	83%	94,942	65%
Hispanic/Latino	14,024	8%	2,743	20%

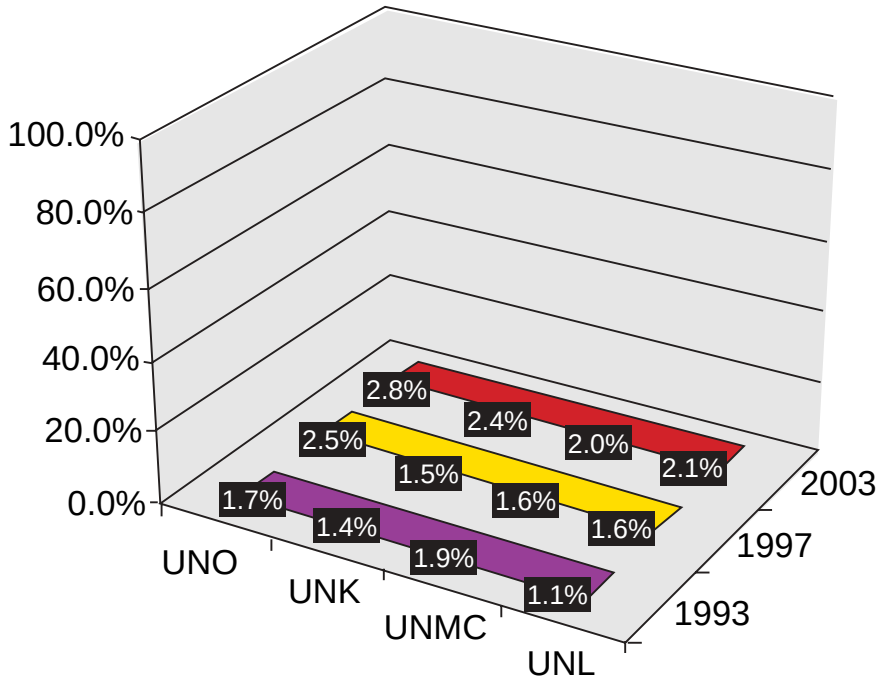
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska," Table A13.

Table 3.2 Total Enrollments in Postsecondary Education, 2001

	Hispanic/Latino			White, Not-Hispanic/Latino			Total Enrollments			% Hispanic/Latino by Gender		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
NE Public Institutions	**1,040**	**1,207**	**2,247**	**34,512**	**41,765**	**76,277**	**41,121**	**48,518**	**89,639**	**2.5%**	**2.5%**	2.5%
University of Nebraska System*	455	488	**943**	18,057	20,795	**38,852**	21,973	24,318	**46,291**	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%
NU Kearney	54	49	**103**	2,332	3,301	**5,633**	2,733	3,693	**6,426**	2.0%	1.3%	1.6%
NU Lincoln	218	186	**404**	9,712	9,352	**19,064**	11,833	10,931	**22,764**	1.8%	1.7%	1.8%
NU Med Center	12	33	**45**	845	1,556	**2,401**	997	1,727	**2,724**	1.2%	1.9%	1.7%
NU Omaha	170	219	**389**	5,075	6,453	**11,528**	6,313	7,830	**14,143**	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%
NE State Colleges	57	63	**120**	2,731	4,169	**6,900**	3,149	4,595	**7,744**	1.8%	1.4%	1.5%
NE Community Colleges	528	656	**1,184**	13,724	16,961	**30,685**	15,999	19,605	**35,604**	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%
NE Independent College & U	**254**	**242**	**496**	**7,695**	**10,970**	**18,665**	**9,424**	**13,072**	**22,496**	**2.7%**	**1.9%**	2.2%
Total NE Public and Independent College & Universities *	**1,294**	**1,449**	**2,743**	**42,207**	**52,735**	**94,942**	**50,545**	**61,590**	**112,135**	**2.6%**	**2.4%**	2.4%

Source: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska," Table A13.

Figure 3.3 Hispanic/Latino Student Enrollment by Campus



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

As Table 3.3 demonstrates, the largest proportion of Hispanic/Latino students is found in Nebraska community colleges, which in 2001, had reached 43.2%. This mirrors a national trend that has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, community colleges offer an opportunity for many Latinos, especially new immigrants, to upgrade their educational credentials when schedules and costs make four-year schools out of reach. On the negative side, research shows that students who begin their education in two-year schools are less likely to complete four-year degrees (Fry 2002).

Table 3.3 Five-year Profile of Headcount Enrollment, Hispanic/Latino Students

Institutions/Sectors	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Nebraska Public Institutions	**79.6%**	**80.1%**	**81.1%**	**82.9%**	**81.9%**
University of Nebraska	37.8%	37.0%	35.8%	33.4%	34.4%
Nebraska State Colleges	5.4%	4.6%	5.3%	5.2%	4.4%
Nebraska Community Colleges	36.4%	38.4%	40.0%	44.4%	43.2%
Nebraska Independent Colleges and U	**20.4%**	**19.9%**	**18.9%**	**17.1%**	**18.1%**
Total All Sectors	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska," Table A18a.

Table 3.4 Percentage of Higher Education Completions by Race/ Ethnicity, Nebraska

3.4.a Degrees Conferred by Race/Ethnicity and by Gender in NU System, Including UNL, UNO, UNK and UNMC, 2000–2001

	Hispanic		White		Total		Percentage Hispanic/Latino of the Total		Percentage of Hispanic/ Latino Over Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
BA and Post-Baccalaureate Certificate	49	45	2399	2956	2828	3327	1.7%	1.4%	1.5%
Master's Degree	31	19	834	1045	1051	1234	2.9%	1.5%	2.2%
Post-Master's Certificate	0	0	10	27	12	27	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
First Professional and Doctoral Degree	6	6	265	242	341	280	1.8%	2.1%	1.9%
Total by Gender	86	70	3508	4270	4232	4868	2.0%	1.4%	1.7%
Overall Total	156		7778		9100		1.7%		

Source: Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Note: Total reflects all racial/ethnic categories

* First-Professional degree programs shall mean degree programs which require completion of the academic requirements to begin practice in the profession, including but not limited to dentistry, medicine, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, veterinary medicine, chiropractic, law, theology and architecture, and which typically require completion of an organized program of study of at least 60 semester credit hours prior to entering the program and at least a total of 150 semester credit hours to complete the program, including prior college work plus the professional program itself.

Degree Completion

In the University of Nebraska system, 1.5% of undergraduate degrees and slightly over 2% of graduate degrees were granted to Latino students in 2000-2001. Latino men were more likely to obtain degrees than were Latinas (Table 3.4.a).

The graduation rate of Latino students is generally lower than that of White students. The U.S. Department of Education calculates graduation rates by race and ethnicity using a cohort method that allows 150% of normal program time for any cohort. For example, the graduation rate for a cohort entering a 4 year program in a particular year is calculated as the proportion of those entering students who complete the program within 6 years. As Table 3.4.b. shows in Nebraska in 2001, 33% of the Latino students graduated within the designated time frame for their program, compared to 49% of White students. Hispanic students in private colleges are a notable exception, with the same graduation rate as White students. As expected, the rate of attendance in private colleges was much lower for Latinos than for Whites. In the 2001 graduation class, there were 16 Hispanic students, compared to 928 White students in private institutions of higher education.

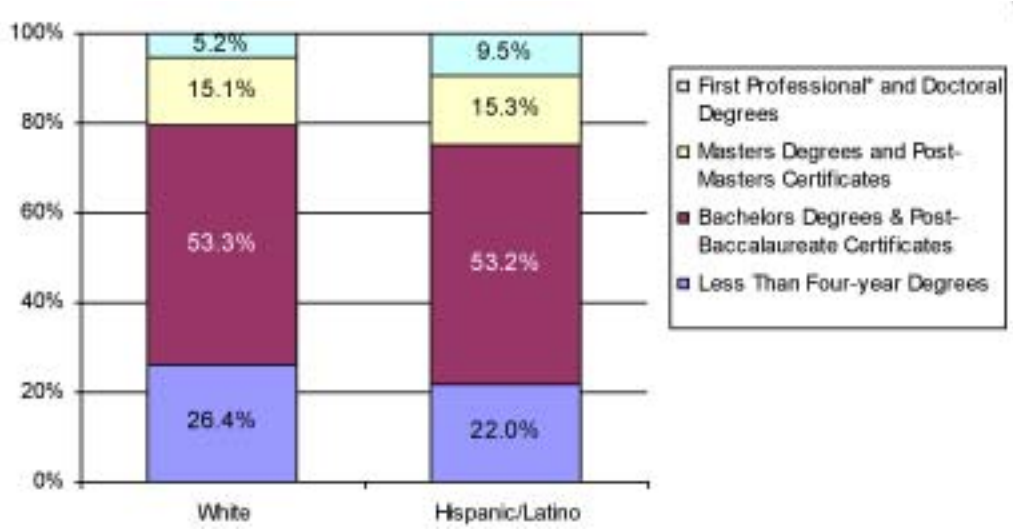
Hispanic students who garner the resources to enter and remain in postsecondary education demonstrate patterns of degree completion that are similar in degree type to non-Hispanic Whites (Figure 3.4). Among college degree recipients, Hispanic students are most likely to complete bachelor's degrees and postbaccalaureate certificates. Their percentages compare favorably to non-Hispanic White students, with about 53% of both groups completing bachelor's degrees and postbaccalaureate certificates. Interestingly, Hispanic students are more likely than non-Hispanic White students to obtain graduate degrees (24.8% of Hispanic students vs. 20.3% of non-Hispanic White students).

3.4.b Graduation Rate By Race/Ethnicity in Higher Education in Nebraska, 2001

	Hispanic		White		Total*	
Inst./Sectors	Cohort	Graduation Rate**	Cohort	Graduation Rate**	Cohort	Graduation Rate**
UNK	27	15%	1,154	41%	1,306	39%
UNL	54	43%	3,514	55%	3,891	53%
UNO	27	19%	929	28%	1,123	27%
State College	25	36%	1,259	42%	1,385	39%
Community College	100	24%	3,833	41%	4,323	39%
Independent	52	44%	2,279	64%	2,526	63%
Private	16	63%	928	64%	1,173	63%
TOTAL	301	33%	13,985	49%	15,819	47%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.
*The total includes all racial/ethnic categories.
**This rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 150% of normal time divided by the revised cohort minus any allowable exclusions.

Figure 3.4 Percent Distribution of Degree Types Within Race/ Ethnicity, 2000–2001



Source: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska." Retrieved July 1, 2004 (http://www.ccpe.state.ne.us/PublicDoc/CCPE/reports/FactLook/2003/default.asp).
* First-Professional degree programs shall mean degree programs which require completion of the academic requirements to begin practice in the profession, including but not limited to dentistry, medicine, optometry, osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, podiatry, veterinary medicine, chiropractic, law, theology and architecture, and which typically require completion of an organized program of study of at least 60 semester credit hours prior to entering the program and at least a total of 150 semester credit hours to complete the program, including prior college work plus the professional program itself.

Table 3.5 Faculty Diversity by Status in the NU System, 2001

University of Nebraska*	White	Hispanic	Black	Native American	Asian
Tenured	91.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.2%	5.5%
Tenure Track	75.0%	3.8%	4.8%	1.3%	8.2%
Non-Tenure Track	76.3%	1.4%	1.9%	0.4%	4.3%
Total	82.8%	2.3%	2.4%	0.5%	5.8%

Source: Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education, "A Factual Look at Higher Education in Nebraska."
*May not total 100% because does not include nonresident and other categories.

Faculty

Among full-time faculty in postsecondary institutions in the state, 2.1% were Hispanic in 2001 (Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education 2003). As Table 3.5 shows, in 2001, 2.3% of faculty in the Nebraska University system were Hispanic, with the highest representation found at the tenure-track level. The NU system employed fewer Hispanic faculty than any other group, except for Native Americans. The absence of a sufficiently large and visible number of Latino/a faculty on the state's campuses negatively affects recruitment and retention, as several studies have conclusively shown (Conchas 2001, Hlvya and Schuh 2003-2004; Gonzalez 2000-2001).

Tables 3.6 through 3.8, as well as Figure 3.5, allow for comparison in the number and employment characteristics of full-time Latino faculty at each of the NU system campuses in 2003, 1997, and 1993. In the NU system, the percentages of Latino faculty varied among the campuses and across years. During these ten years, the proportion of Latino faculty at all campuses combined increased very little, from 1% in 1993 to

2.3% in 2003. Latino faculty comprised only 69 out of 2,945 University of Nebraska faculty in 2003. Employment characteristics present a somewhat more encouraging trend. In 2003, 52 of the 69, or about 75%, of the Latino faculty were in tenured or tenure-track positions. This compares to 60% in 1997 and 73% in 1993. Although the proportion of Latino faculty in tenured or tenure-track positions decreased between 1993 and 1997, the actual number of Latino faculty nearly doubled during that period. However, much of the increase between 1993 and 1997 was due to Latino faculty in non-tenure track positions.

In 2003, gender differences were apparent among Latino faculty, with far more men than women on faculty in all tenured or tenure-track jobs. The gender distribution is more equitable in non-tenured or non-tenure track positions; the lower status jobs. UNO has been more successful in hiring and promoting Latina women faculty than the other campuses, with more women in tenured and tenure track positions than men.

Table 3.6 NU System Hispanic/Latino Full-time Faculty by Appointment and by Sex, Fall 2003

	Hispanic/Latino Full-time Faculty													
	Tenured			Tenure Track			Combined Tenure and Tenure Track			Non-Tenured, Non-Tenure Track				
Institution	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total Institution**	**Total Full-time Faculty**	Percentage Hispanic/Latino of the Total
UNO	**6**	0	6	**4**	4	0	**10**	4	6	**2**	0	2	**12**	**471**	2.5%
UNK	**1**	1	0	**4**	3	1	**5**	4	1	**1**	1	0	**6**	**296**	2.0%
UNMC	**3**	3	0	**4**	3	1	**7**	6	1	**2**	1	1	**9**	**706**	1.3%
UNL	**18**	16	2	**12**	8	4	**30**	24	6	**12**	6	6	**42**	**1,471**	2.9%
Central Administration	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**0**	**1**	0.0%
TOTAL	**28**	20	8	**24**	18	6	**52**	38	14	**17**	8	9	**69**	**2,945**	2.3%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.7 NU System Hispanic/Latino Full-time Faculty by Appointment and by Sex, Fall 1997

	Hispanic/Latino Full-time Faculty													
	Tenured			Tenure Track			Combined Tenure and Tenure Track			Non-Tenured, Non-Tenure Track				
Institution	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total Institution**	**Total Full-time Faculty**	Percentage Hispanic/Latino of the Total
UNO	**5**	1	4	**3**	1	2	**8**	2	6	**2**	1	1	**10**	456	2.2%
UNK	**1**	1	0	**1**	1	0	**2**	2	0	**2**	1	1	**4**	315	1.3%
UNMC	**2**	2	0	**--**	--	--	**2**	2	0	**9**	8	1	**11**	606	1.8%
UNL	**11**	8	3	**7**	6	1	**18**	14	4	**7**	3	4	**25**	1,479	1.7%
Central Administration	**--**	--	--	**--**	--	--	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**0**	--	--
TOTAL	**19**	12	7	**11**	8	3	**30**	20	10	**20**	13	7	**50**	2,856	1.8%

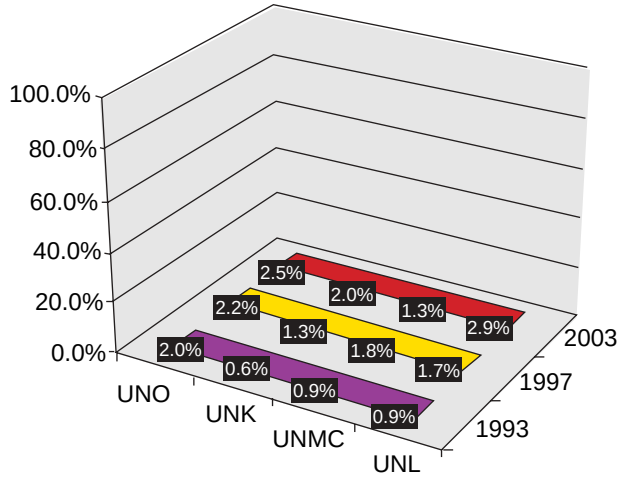
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.8 NU System Hispanic/Latino Full-time Faculty by Appointment and by Sex, Fall 1993

Institution	Hispanic/Latino Full Time faculty												Total Institution	Total Full-time Faculty	% Hispanic/Latino of the Total
	Tenured			Tenure Track			Combined Tenure and Tenure Track			Non-Tenured, Non-Tenure Track					
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women			
UNO	4	1	3	2	0	2	6	1	5	2	0	2	8	406	2.0%
UNK	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	309	0.6%
UNMC	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	4	0	5	577	0.9%
UNL	5	5	0	6	5	1	11	10	1	2	0	2	13	1,477	0.9%
Central Administration	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	0	--	--	--	0	--	--
TOTAL	10	7	3	9	6	3	19	13	6	9	5	4	28	2,769	1.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Figure 3.5 Hispanic/Latino Faculty by Campus, 1993, 1997, and 2003



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Staff in the NU System

Among the Hispanic staff in the NU system, in 2003 nearly half (45%) were employed in professional and technical jobs, followed by 27% in service and maintenance positions, and 21% in clerical positions. Very few Hispanics held skilled crafts positions or executive/administrative/managerial ones. In the last ten years, the picture has not changed greatly, as a comparison of Tables 3.9, 3.10, and 3.11 demonstrates. Although the numbers of Hispanic staff have fluctuated over time, the distribution of Hispanics among occupational categories remained fairly consistent between 1993–2003, with the largest percentages of Hispanic employees in service and maintenance at UNO and UNK. At UNL and UNMC, Hispanic staff are most likely to be in professional and technical positions, followed closely by service and maintenance. An even smaller number hold executive/administrative/managerial positions. Women are more likely to be employed in clerical positions and as non-executive professionals and technical staff; men are more likely to have jobs in skilled crafts and service/maintenance (Tables 3.12.a and 3.12.b).

Table 3.9 Full-time Hispanic/Latino Staff by Occupation and Sex in the NU System, Fall 2003

	Exec/Admin/ Managerial			Other Professionals and Technical			Clerical			Skilled Craft			Service/Maintenance			Total			Percentage	
Fall 2003	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	Men	Women
UNO	**0**	0	0	**4**	2	2	**4**	0	4	**0**	0	0	**10**	9	1	**18**	11	7	61%	39%
UNL	**2**	2	0	**28**	14	14	**15**	6	9	**4**	4	0	**17**	6	11	**66**	32	34	48%	52%
UNK	**0**	0	0	**1**	1	0	**2**	0	2	**0**	0	0	**6**	1	5	**9**	2	7	22%	78%
UNMC	**0**	0	0	**31**	13	18	**9**	1	8	**3**	3	0	**6**	4	2	**49**	21	28	43%	57%
UNCA	**0**	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**--**	--	--	**--**	--	--	--	--
Total NU	**2**	2	0	**64**	30	34	**30**	7	23	**7**	7	0	**39**	20	19	**142**	66	76	46%	54%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.10 Full-time Hispanic/Latino Staff by Occupation and Sex in the NU System, Fall 1997

	Exec/Admin/ Managerial			Other Professionals and Technical			Clerical			Skilled Craft			Service/Maintenance			Total			Percentage	
Fall 1997	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	Men	Women
UNO	**0**	0	0	**6**	4	2	**3**	1	2	**2**	2	0	**11**	9	2	**22**	16	6	73%	27%
UNL	**1**	1	0	**25**	13	12	**18**	4	14	**1**	1	0	**13**	6	7	**58**	25	33	43%	57%
UNK	**0**	0	0	**1**	1	0	**2**	0	2	**1**	1	0	**6**	2	4	**10**	4	6	40%	60%
UNMC	**0**	0	0	**44**	24	20	**13**	2	11	**1**	1	0	**20**	12	8	**78**	39	39	50%	50%
UNCA	**0**	0	0	**1**	1	0	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**0**	0	0	**1**	--	--	--	--
Total NU	**1**	1	0	**77**	43	34	**36**	7	29	**5**	5	0	**50**	29	21	**169**	84	84	50%	50%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.11 Full-time Hispanic/Latino Staff by Occupation and Sex in the NU System, Fall 1993

	Exec/Admin/ Managerial			Other Professionals			Clerical			Skilled Craft			Service/Maintenance			Total			Percentage	
Fall 1993	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	**Total**	Men	Women	Men	Women
UNO	**0**	0	0	**4**	3	1	**3**	0	3	**0**	0	0	**13**	10	3	**20**	13	7	65%	35%
UNL	**0**	0	0	**15**	9	6	**16**	3	13	**1**	1	0	**14**	3	11	**46**	16	30	35%	65%
UNK	**0**	0	0	**1**	1	0	**1**	0	1	**1**	1	0	**7**	3	4	**10**	5	5	50%	50%
UNMC	**1**	1	0	**21**	7	14	**7**	2	5	**2**	2	0	**20**	12	8	**51**	24	27	47%	53%
UNCA	**0**	0	0	**1**	1	0	**0**	0	0	**--**	--	--	**0**	0	0	**1**	--	--	--	--
Total NU	**1**	1	0	**42**	21	21	**27**	5	22	**4**	4	0	**54**	28	26	**128**	58	69	45%	54%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.12 Distribution by Occupational Category of Hispanic/Latino Staff of the NU System

Table 3.12.a Distribution by Occupational Category of Hispanic/Latino Staff of the NU System in Selected Years

	UNO			UNL			UNK			UNMC			Central Administration		
Occupation	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003
Exec/Admin/ Managerial	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other Professionals and Technical	4	6	4	15	25	28	1	1	1	21	44	31	1	1	0
Clerical	3	3	4	16	18	15	1	2	2	7	13	9	0	0	0
Skilled Craft	0	2	0	1	1	4	1	1	0	2	1	3	--	--	--
Service/Maintenance	13	11	10	14	13	17	7	6	6	20	20	6	0	0	--
Total	**20**	**22**	**18**	**46**	**58**	**66**	**10**	**10**	**9**	**51**	**78**	**49**	**1**	**1**	**0**

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Table 3.12.b Percentage Distribution by Occupational Category of the Hispanic/ Latino Staff of the NU System in Selected Years

Occupation	UNO			UNL			UNK			UNMC			Central Administration		
	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003	1993	1997	2003
Exec/Admin/ Managerial	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0	0.0%	--	--	--
Other Professionals and Technical	20.0%	27.3%	22.2%	32.6%	43.1%	42.4%	10.0%	10.0%	11.1%	41.2%	56.4%	63.3%	100%	100%	--
Clerical	15.0%	13.6%	22.2%	34.8%	31.0%	22.7%	10.0%	20.0%	22.2%	13.7%	16.7%	18.4%	--	--	--
Skilled Craft	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	2.2%	1.7%	6.1%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0%	3.9%	1.3%	6.1%	--	--	--
Service/Maintenance	65.0%	50.0%	55.6%	30.4%	22.4%	25.8%	70.0%	60.0%	66.7%	39.2%	25.6%	12.2%	--	--	--
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%	--

Source: OLLAS calculations based on U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, IPEDS Peer Analysis System. Retrieved June 15, 2004 http://nces.ed.gov/ipedspas.

Private Career Schools in Nebraska

The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education in Nebraska tracks enrollments and graduations at private career schools; examples include Bahner College of Hairstyling in Fremont; Nebraska College of Business, Inc. in Omaha; Vatterott College in Omaha; and St. Joseph Hospital School of Radiologic Technology (no longer located in Nebraska). In the fall of 2001, 2,722 students were enrolled in private career schools in Nebraska, and of those, 2.4% were Hispanic. In 2000–2001, Nebraska private career schools awarded 1,232 degrees or certificates. Hispanic students received 2% of these.

Tim Fitzgerald

Conclusions and Recommendations

Not unlike other new destination states, Nebraska lacks the kind of systematic data collection efforts required to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing educational attainment and especially, dropout rates among Latinos (Cortez, Cortez, and Montecel 2002).[6] The 2002 enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation introduced new accountability standards and imposes severe penalties for schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward a goal of academic proficiency in core subjects for all students, including non-English speakers, by 2013–2014. The tasks of producing accurate information and analyses to guide sensible reforms are particularly urgent in new immigrant destinations such as Nebraska, where the Latino population increased by 155% and English-language learners, most of whom are Spanish speaking, increased by more than 300% in the last ten years or so.

While we might partly agree with the authors of NCLB that educational institutions bear much of the responsibility for students' educational failures, it is time we own up to the fact that numerous other social and economic factors interact in complex ways to produce persistent educational gaps among various population groups.

[6] The authors of this report are currently conducting a larger study that will shed additional light on this topic, but it will likely be affected by the already mentioned limitations in dropout data collected by schools and the state as a whole. A student survey and interviews with school officials are being used to complement existing data.

A large proportion of students who drop out, for example, are poor and live in segregated neighborhoods. Latino immigrant parents labor in poor-wage jobs which, research shows, increases their children's chances of poor academic performance unless serious compensatory programs are put into play. Unfortunately, in Nebraska as in many other parts of the country, school districts with the highest poverty rates have the fewest dollars to spend per student (Omaha Public Schools 2003). Programs such as after-school tutoring, summer classes, welcoming centers and many others that have proven effective in closing the educational gaps for minority and immigrant children are in short supply in the Great Plain states. Hence, whereas change within educational institutions is possibly the most direct and effective vehicle for addressing these educational achievement gaps, remedies confined to punishing schools that fail to close those gaps will likely produce disappointing results.

With regard to higher education, university authorities and the state legislature must do a much better job than they are currently doing in order to address the serious dearth of Latino college graduates. Universities are progressively forced to spend a higher and higher proportion of their time and effort chasing private dollars. While private investment in education may be a good thing, it is unlikely that such investment will be directed at non-profitable exercises such as creating the kinds of opportunities for a level playing field in educational attainment that often escape Latinos. This applies especially to new immigrants in the state.

It remains to be seen whether Nebraska can muster the political will to make this kind of investment in Latino and minority education as a whole. Such an investment will require moving beyond the standardized, reactive approaches that mine the field of educational reform today.

The small set of recommendations offered below should be treated as initial ideas to stimulate or continue a serious dialogue about what needs to be done in Nebraska regarding the integration of Latinos into our educational institutions.

1. One of the many problems with the data sources tapped for this report is a lack of the year-to-year comparability necessary to obtain a true picture of Latino educational attainment. Nebraska must secure the necessary resources for the appropriate institutions to implement an accountability system based on the longitudinal tracking of all students. The data must be disaggregated by race/ethnicity, immigrant generation, nationality, socio-economic status, gender and LEP level. Such a system will increase our awareness of the challenges that confront Latino educational attainment and our capability to manage such challenges. We also propose a centralized clearinghouse, supported by state and private funding, that compiles such data as well as information about best practices and programs throughout the state.
2. Regardless of how they are measured, educational attainment gaps between Latinos and other groups remain unacceptably high. The state should engage multiple stakeholders—local communities, parents, employers and schools—in an effort to formulate an explicit Latino and immigrant integration policy and to design concrete

programs that place educational attainment at the center.

3. Early education is known to pay off in later years. The state should provide adequate funding for early education programs. Recent legislative efforts are encouraging.
4. State funding formulas should ensure that schools educating large numbers of newcomers and LEP children have the resources to provide equal educational opportunities for all students.
5. NCLB places a huge burden on schools to accomplish the worthy goal of closing the educational gap between Latinos and Whites. However, as research makes clear, neither schools nor poor Latino communities can accomplish this task alone. Compensatory programs must be put in place to allow schools, as well as Latino families and community institutions, to develop the know-how and resources necessary to accomplish these ends. Nebraska should join with other heartland states in conducting systematic evaluations of the No Child Left Behind Act's impact on Latino native and foreign-born students.
6. Currently, Nebraska school districts utilize a plethora of English language learning models. Research and experience reveal important differences in the performance of these various models but dual language or double-immersion programs correlate most with higher performance for all students. There is no system in place to evaluate or report on the impact of these programs on Latino children's educational success. We recommend the development of such a system of evaluation. Educational leaders will need to seek out creative solutions to address the lack of bilingual teachers that can staff these programs.
7. Educational institutions at all levels must adopt novel initiatives to increase the presence of linguistically and culturally competent staff and faculty at every level. There are large numbers of adult, educated, Latino/a immigrants arriving in the state almost daily. However, they often lack legal status or the resources necessary to transfer their credentials or educational skills to our local institutions. The small proportion of such faculty and staff in our institutions weighs heavily on our capacity to improve recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.
8. Finally, immigration policies intersect with other national and state policies and this is especially true for education. Immigration policies that erect barriers to the successful integration of Latino children hinder the states' capacity to safeguard its future and must be reformed. Recent efforts by state legislators and the NU Board of Regents to support in-state tuition for undocumented children are a step in the right direction.

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Appendix

Selected Nebraska School Districts: Report of Performance and Participation for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Reading and Mathematics, 2003.

	Omaha			Bellevue		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Math						
Performance	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Math						
Performance	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	*
Participation	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Met	*

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

	Columbus			Fremont		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	~	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	~	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	~	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	~	Met	Met	~
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	~	Met	~	~
Participation	Met	Met	~	Not Met	~	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	~	Met	~	~
Participation	Met	Not Met	~	Met	~	~
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	~	~	Not Met	~	*
Participation	Met	~	~	Not Met	~	*
Math						
Performance	Met	~	~	Met	~	*
Participation	Met	~	~	Met	~	*

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

	Grand Island			Lexington		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Not Met
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	Met
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met			
Participation	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met			
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	~

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

	Lincoln			Norfolk		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	~
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Not Met	*
Participation	Met	Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	Met	*
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met	*
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	~	*
Participation	Met	Met	Met	Met	~	*
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	Not Met	Met	~	*
Participation	Not Met	Met	Not Met	Met	~	*

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

	North Platte			Schuyler		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	*	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	*	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	~	*	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Not Met	~	*	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Not Met	~	*	Not Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Not Met	~	*	Met	Met	~

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

	Scottsbluff			So Sioux City		
Public Schools 4th grade	All Students	Hispanic	ELL	All Students	Hispanic	ELL
Reading						
Performance	Met	Not Met	*	Met	Met	Met
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	Met
Math						
Performance	Not Met	Not Met	~	Met	Met	Met
Participation	Met	Met	~	Met	Met	Met
Public Schools 8th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	*	Met	Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Public Schools 11th grade						
Reading						
Performance	Met	Not Met	*	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~
Math						
Performance	Met	Not Met	*	Met	Not Met	~
Participation	Met	Met	*	Met	Met	~

*Data was masked to protect the identity of students when fewer than 10 students were reported in the grade or group
~ To be included for AYP determinations, a group must have at least 30 students
Source: U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences,
Natinal Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Retrieved from http://nces/ed/gov/nationreportcard/states.

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