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- Chicano Latino dropout study final



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# Chicano Latino Dropout Study Final Report

## Fifth- and Eighth-Grade Survey Analysis and Recommendations

Chicano Latino Learning Resource Center  
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities  
March 1995

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CONSULTANTS' REPORT

# Chicano Latino Dropout Study Final Report

Fifth- and Eighth-Grade Survey  
Analysis and Recommendations

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

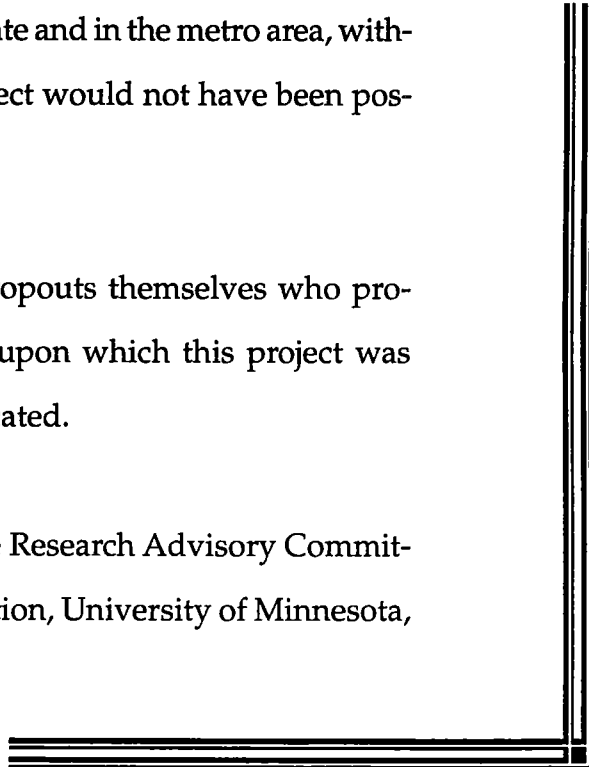
The research team wishes to express its appreciation to the Minnesota State Legislature, the State Governor's Office, and to all taxpayers for providing the necessary funds to undertake this research project. We are grateful also to the Spanish-Speaking Affairs Council which provided the impetus to request those funds and the foresight for this important undertaking.

The team also wishes to express its gratitude to the Minnesota Department of Education and to those school districts which were involved in this study: in particular, those dedicated school staff, administrators and teachers who were so generous in providing their encouragement and scarce resources. We are grateful also to a host of community organizations and local individuals, both outstate and in the metro area, without whose help and cooperation this project would not have been possible.

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We especially recognize the school dropouts themselves who provided much of the substantive material upon which this project was designed and to whom this study is dedicated.

Special appreciation is extended to the Research Advisory Committee and to Dr. Jean King, College of Education, University of Minnesota,



for their kind advice and consultation. We are grateful to the University of Minnesota Measurement Services, and to Dr. Roger Harrold and Eric Scouten for their data analysis and survey support.

The authors of this Report also wish to acknowledge all of the Chicano and Latino undergraduates at the University of Minnesota who provided their enthusiastic efforts on assorted research tasks. We hope that their work on this project will serve as an incentive to dedicate their lives to scholarly pursuits and service to others.

Finally, the content of this report is the sole responsibility of the Chicano Latino Learning Resource Center, of the University of Minnesota, and does not reflect the opinions of the funding sources.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A companion study done prior to the current report conducted a series of eleven focus groups with Chicano Latino students who had dropped out of Minnesota schools within the past five years. These former students were asked what caused them to drop out and what might have helped them to stay in school. From these discussions certain themes emerged related to Chicano Latino dropout:

- Dropouts are “facilitated out” by schools and community.
- School absence and course credit policies increase dropouts.
- Barriers to co-curricular activities deprive students of positive resources leading to dropouts.
- Alternative learning centers do not match students needs.
- Low academic expectations and differential treatment by schools reinforce negative self-esteem for students.
- Community stereotypes adversely impact student retention.
- Student pregnancy is secondary to other dropout causes.

3

The current report focuses on five of the above themes as addressed in surveys administered to 14,176 fifth- and eighth-graders and their teachers and staff. The two themes, alternative learning centers and community stereotypes, were not included because they would not correspond to the experiences of fifth- and eighth-graders.



The results of the surveys reveal that Chicano Latino students comprise 7.2% of the students surveyed, mostly Mexican American followed by Central American students, who are generally older than their fifth- and eighth-grade peers. Spanish is the first language for almost a quarter of the Chicano Latino students surveyed.

Their parents are the least educated, with the exception of Asian Americans in our sample, and are the least likely to have graduated from high school. There is likely to be a high school dropout in the family.

4 Most Chicano Latino fifth-graders had a positive view of their schools. Most expected to finish high school and liked their school. They also felt that their teachers liked them, and thought that school was important.

However, on the negative side, Chicano Latino fifth-graders said kids drop out because school makes no sense more than their White peers. Also, a large proportion of Chicano Latino fifth-graders said they did not like school or were not sure and were more likely than any other group to sense that teachers did not like them. This reflected a trend toward disaffection with school that was beyond what was expected by the researchers.

Moreover, Chicano Latino fifth-graders reported being labeled a trouble maker twice as often as White students. A quarter of them re-

ported being treated unfairly or were not sure and almost one third of them were either unsure or said there was no one at school they could talk to. Taken together, what emerges is a group of fifth-graders whose comfort level in school is marginal and whose academic future is in great peril.

The educational level of eighth-graders mirrored that of fifth-graders. The environmental comfort level of eighth-graders placed them more at risk than their younger peers. Chicano Latino eighth-graders had the highest percentage of those who did not expect to finish high school. Their perceptions of school importance decreased and relationships with teachers worsened as they increased in age.

5

Positive responses to being understood by teachers fell below national data and negative responses to general school harassment fell above national data. This may indicate that Chicano Latino eighth-graders perceive more negative stereotypes than their peers in other parts of the country.

The data imply that Chicano Latino students do not understand school policies and procedures of course credits due to poor home-school links. This lack of awareness implies that a large percentage of Chicano Latino students are not considering their future course work or that no dialogue about high school occurs between them and their parents. This does not

bode well for a successful high school career and less for obtaining a diploma.

Student involvement in co-curricular activities increases the opportunities for mentoring, participation in mainstream education, and motivation from school staff and peers. Chicano Latino students were less involved than their peers, thereby, losing decisive school opportunities.

Teacher perceptions about how their students feel about school and their school environment were compared with those of Chicano Latino students. Teacher perceptions on whether the students liked school and student abilities were generally lower than student perceptions. Teacher perceptions of whether students felt their teachers liked or understood them were generally higher than those of the Chicano Latino student.

All of the above data indicate a growing process of marginalization, lower expectations, and differential treatment. This condition worsens as Chicano Latino students increase in age. There is also a widening gap between Chicano Latino students in their educational expectations and other areas for school persistence.

It is true that teen pregnancy is associated with increased dropout rates. However, student responses to the causes of school dropout confirmed that Chicano Latino fifth- and eighth-graders perceive pregnancy as less of a cause than not liking school or problems at home.

## INTRODUCTION

Mexican Americans have lived in Minnesota since before the turn of this century. The first recorded Mexican arrived in 1888 in Minneapolis where he worked as a musician for fifty years. It is likely, however, that earlier residents came to Minnesota as migrants to work on farms and settled into the small towns and cities. They worked in the vegetable fields in southern Minnesota and in the sugar beet growing areas of the Red River valley.

After 1910, many families arrived from Mexico and Texas to escape the turmoil and hardship of the Great Revolution which caused upheaval in Mexico for more than a decade. Mexicans came to work in the slaughterhouses and on the surrounding metro farms. St. Paul and other cities provided a haven and the means for a better life for many who sought refuge from war and poverty. Most of them vowed to return to Mexico but did not, and thus, became the ancestors of families which still live in the state.

Significant numbers of Puerto Ricans arrived in the Twin Cities during the 1950's and Cubans arrived in the 1960's. Also, during this decade, immigrants arrived from Central and South America searching for a higher quality of living.

Today, there are some 75,000 Mexican Americans (Chicanos) and Latinos (those from Puerto Rico, Cuba, South and Central America) who are grateful citizens of Minnesota. About a third of the above number live on the West Side of St. Paul, a third in the surrounding Metro area, including Minneapolis, and the remainder in the southern and western parts of the state. Another 20,000 commute from Texas and northern Mexico during the summer to work in the state's vegetable fields and nurseries, arriving in April and leaving by November.

8 All Hispanics came seeking better lives than those they left behind, as all other ethnic groups have done, making unique contributions to transform Minnesota into a richer and more diverse state. Many Chicano Latinos have found the better life but, far too many have not for different reasons. The most obvious reason is insufficient education or one that is cut short.

What follows is a story of those who have not made it in the schools of Minnesota and some of the causes behind their failure. It is a look into why Chicano Latinos do not obtain high school diplomas and, therefore, are doomed to harder and less productive lives, to pay fewer taxes, and even, in some cases, to become a drain on public resources. We try to offer some ideas to avoid these high personal and public costs.

## METHODOLOGY OF SURVEYS

In the 1993-94 academic year, Chicano Latino students from Minnesota public schools had a dropout rate of 18%. This rate was four times higher than the corresponding rate for White students.

Thus, upon requests from the Spanish Speaking Affairs Council and the Governor's Office, the State Legislature in its 1994 session appropriated funds for a study to determine why Chicanos and Latinos were quitting school at such an alarming rate. A research grant proposal requested a project on the causes for Chicano Latinos dropping out and suggestions for programs or interventions that would help reduce the high dropout rate.

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The Chicano Latino Learning Resource Center (CLLRC) at the University of Minnesota was the successful bidder with a proposal of two phases. In the first phase of this study, the CLLRC conducted a series of focus group interviews with Chicano Latino dropouts in the eleven Minnesota public school districts that had the largest Chicano Latino enrollments. These focus groups yielded seven major group themes.

The group themes formed the basis upon which a survey, to be administered to elementary and middle school students, would be developed. Minnesota fifth-graders and eighth-graders were chosen to par-

participate in the survey because their age groups reflect pinnacle points of development. It was anticipated that an analysis of the responses might identify some risk factors for potential dropouts and could test the validity of particular intervention strategies.

These surveys were field-tested on two elementary and one middle school to determine whether students understood the content. The amount of time needed to take the survey was also determined and suggestions for improvements were solicited.

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After minor changes were made, the surveys were mailed to each of the 159 elementary, junior high, and middle schools that had fifth- and eighth-grades in the eleven public school districts being studied. The principal of each school appointed a contact person responsible for administering the surveys and ensure the timely return of the surveys.

Most of the schools contacted agreed to participate and to administer the surveys. A total of 22,577 fifth- and eighth-grade survey instruments were mailed to the schools and 14,176 of these surveys were returned for a total return rate of 63%. The surveys from the participating districts were combined, collated and scanned into a single data base.

All comparisons cited in this report are among the following population groups: African American, Asian American, American Indian,

Chicano Latino, and White. Respondents were instructed to self-identify into one of these five groups. A small percentage of the total sample, 5.3%, listed themselves as "other" and are not included in any data reported.

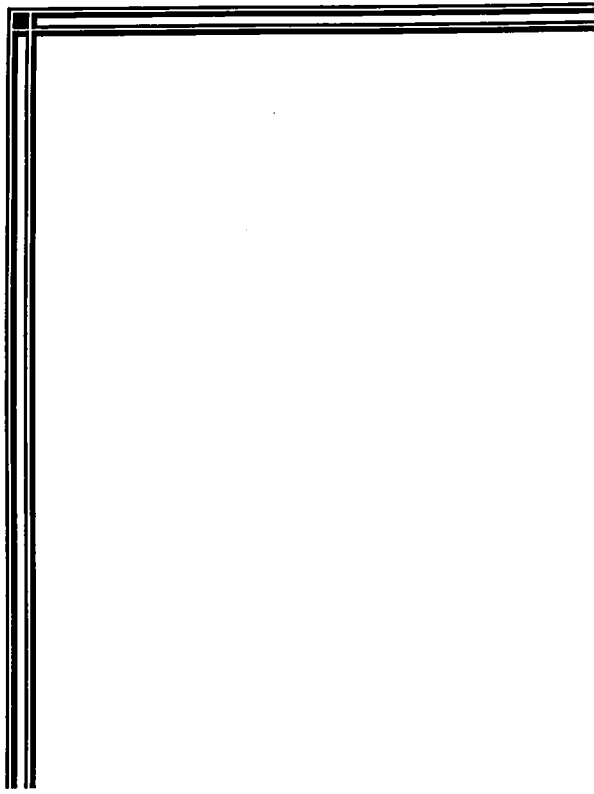
The results of this survey provided the research team with some valuable insights about the risk factors that cause Chicano Latinos to drop out. These risk factors are elaborated on in the narrative which follows. The data provide a foundation for recommendations regarding dropout prevention in the primary grades and dropout recovery at the secondary school level.

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The survey data set was large. The first level of data analysis is reported here and continued analyses are ongoing. It is expected that additional analyses will reveal more complex, multi-level, between and within group differences. It is essential that these types of analyses continue for a better understanding of minority student dropout, but that is for another project and a future time.

(Authors' Note. The current report discusses only five of the seven themes identified by the focus groups as dropout causes. Two themes, alternative school programs and community stereotypes, were not included in the surveys because these topics could not be addressed by fifth- and eighth-grade students since their responses would not correspond to their experiences. While these topics were discussed in our preliminary report, the students' lack of experience with alternative school programs and their inability to perceive subtle community stereotypes would not have added to the intent of the surveys which was to identify points of prevention prior to high school.)





## RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

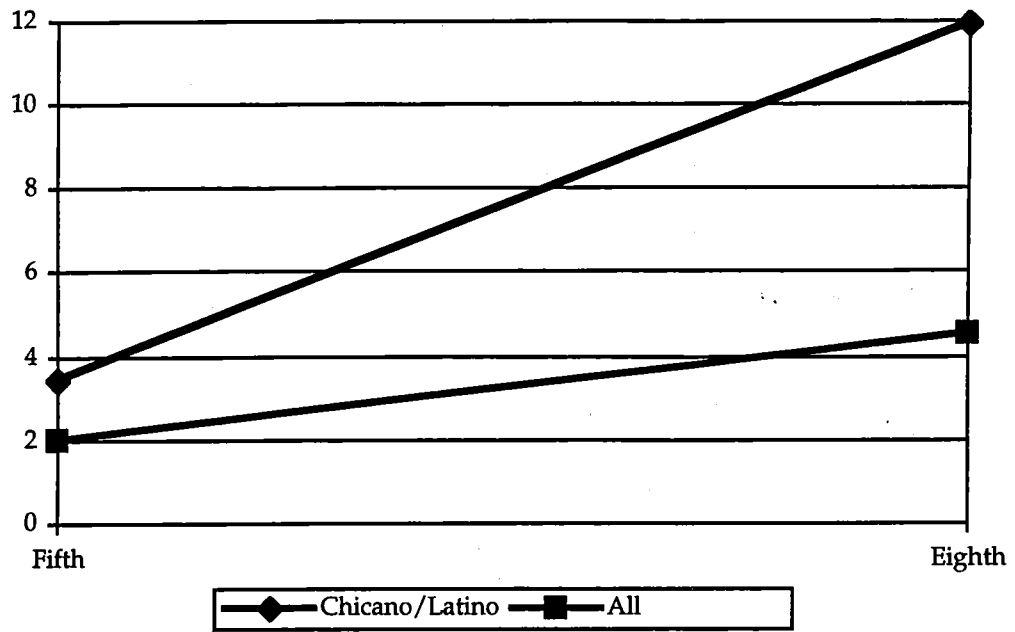
Imagine if you will, Dick and Jane Smith, or, in this case, we will call them Ricardo and Juanita Garcia, setting off to school on a nice Fall morning in rural Minnesota. Ricardo is in the fifth-grade and Juanita is an eighth-grader.

Both children are a bit older than their classmates. Their father did not finish middle school in Mexico but mother did go to the tenth-grade in Puerto Rico before dropping out. Ricardo and Juanita have older brothers and sisters who did not complete high school. Some of them still live at home.

Spanish is the dominant language used in Garcia home. Their father works in a local food processing plant. Each spring, the Garcia family works together in the planting and weeding in the nearby vegetable farms. Both Ricardo and Juanita are permitted to attend school but must join the family in the fields after school and on weekends.

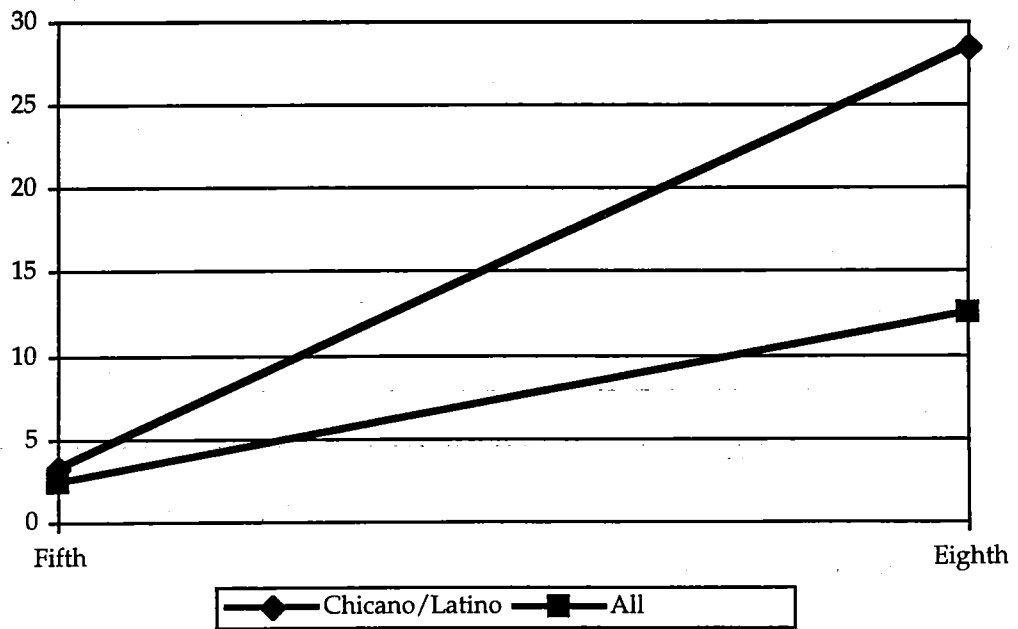
In the Fall, they will start school in late October due to field work instead of early September with their classmates. Both parents think that education is important for their children. The father frequently says to Ricardo and Juanita that "no van hacer burros como yo" (*you are not going to be donkeys like me*) because he did not go to high school. However, because of that and language difficulties and cultural differences, there

Chart 1  
Disaffirm School Is Important



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Chart 2  
Disaffirm Teacher Understands/Likes Me



is no communication between the school and the parents about their school progress or activities.

This family picture may apply to metro Chicano Latino families, except for the kind of work parents do, where family members have dropped out of school. Also, the negative impacts of neighborhoods and police seem to be greater factors in the metro area on Chicano Latino school dropouts. The similarities of the following demographics of the two groups, metro and urban, outweigh the distinctions.

Although the names are fictitious, this may be a fairly typical Chicano Latino family for Minnesota with profiles of two children as developed from the responses of the surveys. What can be concluded about the chances for children, like Ricardo and Juanita, graduating from high school? The following analysis offers some insights into their chances and the reasons why Chicano Latino students either drop out or are prevented from obtaining a high school diploma.

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### **Race and Ethnicity of Fifth-Graders**

Since the focus of this project is concerned with Chicano Latino students in comparison to all other students, other race or ethnic group statistics are not reported here although that data is available. However, Charts 1 and 2 show racial and ethnic proportions of the fifth-grade sample. Chicano Latino students comprised the third largest minority group or 7.2% of the sample. Within the Chicano Latino group, students

self-identifying as Mexican American were the largest subgroup, followed by Central American students.

The relatively large percentage of Central American students, approximately 32% of the Chicano Latino subgroup, was unexpected. Central American students also represented over 25% of the Chicano Latino eighth-grade sample. The percentages were similar enough to validate that both respondent groups were reporting actual ethnicity. In addition, the response category of Central American was listed under the category of Chicano Latino on the survey form.

#### **Race and Ethnicity of Eighth-Graders**

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Charts 11 and 12 (see page 32) show the racial ethnic proportions of the eighth-grade sample. Chicano Latino students were the third largest minority group, 5.7% of the sample. With the Chicano Latino group, over half (54.3%) identified as Mexican American. Central American students made up a little over one-fourth (25.7%) of the Latino portion of the eighth-grade sample.

#### **Age of Fifth-Graders**

Students in the fifth-grade sample were between ten and eleven years old (45% and 51.3%, respectively). This range corresponds to the January-February period in which the survey was administered. As expected, Chicano Latino fifth-graders were the oldest of all the population groups,

with a mean age of 10.70 years. Male Chicano Latino students were slightly older, with a mean age of 10.77.

Chicano Latino students also differed significantly from the average age of their White peers, 10.54 verses 10.77. Data analysis did not reveal the variability in ages, only the mean was computed. However, the range of ages for the total fifth-grade sample was from nine to eighteen years. It is probable that significant numbers of Chicano Latino students were older than the average age reported here.

The observed difference in ages between Chicano Latino and other groups is consistent with national enrollment data. Age-related enrollment is a most important measure of student progress. Significantly, these findings indicate that Chicano Latino fifth-graders are already starting to fall behind. The extent to which students keep up with their age-mates and promoted to the next grade level is a directly related to high school completion rates (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990).

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### **Age of Eighth-Graders**

Chicano Latino eighth-graders mean was 13.83 years, somewhat older than the overall eighth-grade average of 13.64. Only White students were younger than the sample mean with an average age of 13.59 years. It is important to note that the age gap between Chicano Latino and White students increases from fifth- to eighth-grade, from an average of 1.9 months to 2.9 months. If the age gap continues, by the eleventh-grade,

the age difference between Chicano Latino and White students becomes four months.

Upon first impression, this seems to be a small difference. But, as with the fifth-grade sample, the variability of ages may indicate a larger number of older students than is evidenced by the mean ages. In addition, even a few months can make a difference to a child who steps out of school for the planting and harvest seasons. Chicano Latino eighth-graders are put even further behind in age than their younger cohort, perhaps reflecting the negative effects of grade retention's and school suspensions (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990).

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#### **Gender of Fifth- and Eighth-Graders**

The fifth-grade sample was almost evenly divided between males and females, respectively at 49.1% to 50.9%. Eighth graders were similar, with 51.3% male and 48.7% female. With the exception of fifth-grade age, gender difference within separate survey items were not computed.

#### **Language Spoken at Home: Fifth- and Eighth-Graders**

English was the predominant language spoken in the homes of our sample of fifth- and eighth-graders. However, within Chicano Latino homes, Spanish was the predominant language for almost one fourth of the fifth- and eighth-graders, 22% and 23.4% respectively. These findings are possibly related to migrant rural families and the increased Mexican and Central American immigrant relocation in Minnesota.

The current findings suggest that significant numbers of Chicano Latino fifth- and eighth-graders are language-minority students whose educational future depend on linguistically and culturally inclusive education. If these educational programs are not in place, the risk increases that many children will underachieve and fall behind academically from their peers. This sets up a condition for potential drop out.

The importance of factoring in students' primary language in education has been well documented (Cummins, 1986, 1989; De La Rosa & Maw, 1990).

#### **Parents' Last Grade Completed in School: Fifth- and Eighth-Grades**

Our findings suggest that Chicano Latino parents are the least educated of our sample with the exception of Asian American parents. This may have been so because many Asian American students in the sample are first generation in the United States. The parents of Chicano Latino fifth-graders, with the above exception, were the least likely to have graduated from high school.

Similarly, with the exception of Asian American students, more Chicano Latino fifth-graders reported that their parents had completed only junior high or less (5.6% for either parent). Eighth-grade Chicano Latino students reported that one third of their mothers (33.3%) and less than one fourth (23.8%) of their fathers had completed high school.

More than any other group in our sample, Chicano Latino eighth-graders reported fathers who had completed junior high or less as their



highest educational level, (11.6%). But for Asian American students, Chicano Latino eighth-graders were most likely to report a similar level of educational attainment for mothers.

Parent education level is a key predictor of a student's success in school. Chicano Latino students in our sample mirror national data regarding low formal education attainment of parents. De La Rosa & Maw (1990) indicate that Chicano Latino students are more likely than any other group to report parents who did not finish high school. The authors also cite less formal education of parents as an important fact in predicting potential Chicano Latino dropouts.

Nonetheless, Chicano Latino parents do possess unique cultural strengths and helping abilities. From early childhood, Chicano Latino parents have their own successful methods of teaching their young. For example, there are diverse language and social skills involved in traditional storytelling nursery rhymes and songs often heard in Chicano Latino homes.

These natural teaching skills are frequently overlooked or even undervalued when Chicano Latino students begin school. It takes an active and creative mind to be able to communicate in two languages at any age.

Lower formal education may mean that parents are less able to provide direct assistance to their children on school courses (Oakland, 1992). Because Chicano Latino parents have dropped out, their work histories tend to be less stable and less lucrative. With less discretionary income,

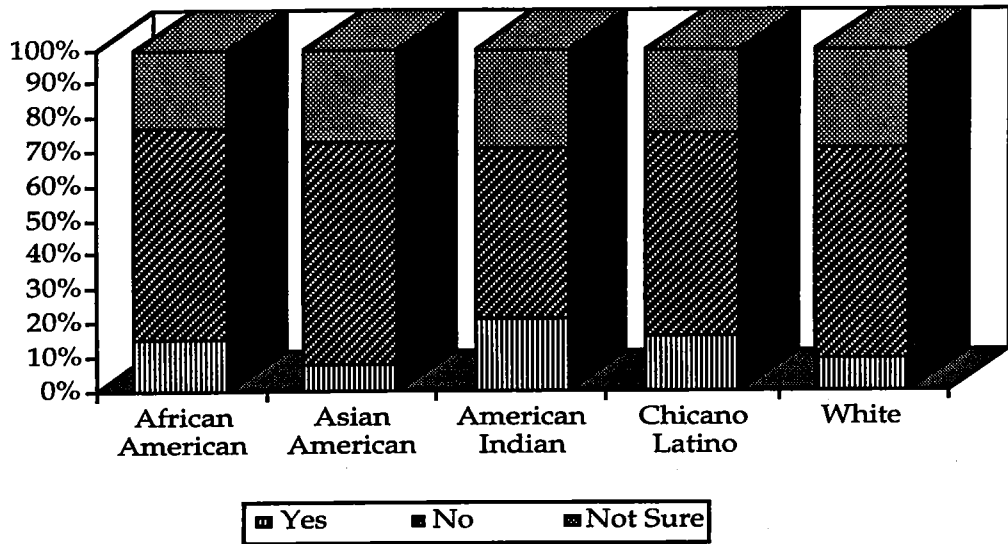
these parents are often unable to afford tutorial help, computers, or reference materials necessary to academically support their Chicano Latino children (Oakland, 1992).

### **Family Dropout: Fifth- and Eighth-Grades**

Chicano Latino fifth-graders and their American Indian peers were more likely than any other group to have a family member who had dropped out (see Chart 3). By the eighth-grade, almost one-third of Chicano Latino students report a family member dropout, more than any other group (see Chart 3A). Overall, patterns of Chicano Latino students' risk seem to increase as children progress from the fifth- to eighth-grade, and the gap between Chicano Latino students and their majority culture peers seems to widen.

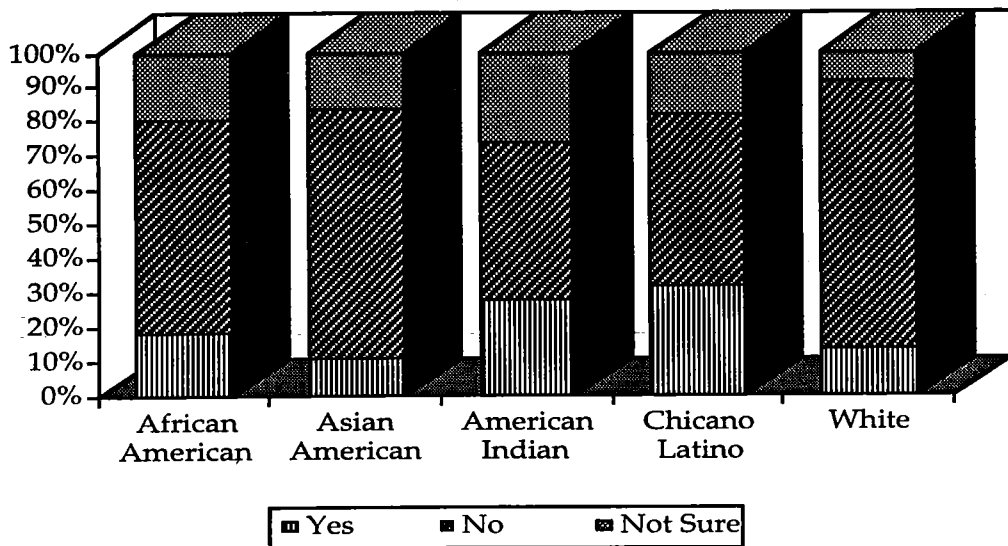
These findings are consistent with national data which reports Chicano Latino students having the highest rate of intergenerational dropout, when more than one generation in a family contains others who have dropped out (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990). As suggested earlier, a large factor associated with Chicano Latino dropout is intergenerational dropout (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990; Oakland, 1992). Oakland (1992) suggested that older family members who drop out set an example often followed by younger members.

Chart 3  
Fifth-Grade Family Dropout



22

Chart 3A  
Eighth-Grade Family Dropout



## THEMES

In much the same way as their families began a passage to the United States from Mexico, or Central or South America, Chicano Latino children are joining their peers on a long and often difficult journey through school. All begin at the same place with competent and talented guides who provide them with the map and the means.

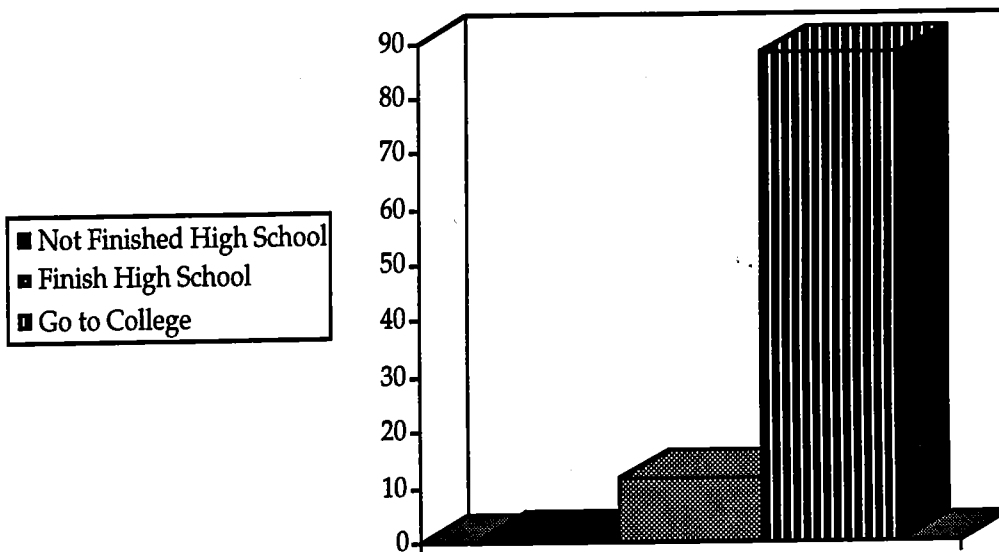
Yet, somewhere along the way, Chicano Latino students begin to wander from the path: some because the journey no longer makes sense, and others stray for personal reasons and their guides have lost track of them. In their journey through school, when students feel alienated or unsafe, their educational resolve falters, mistrust is bred among their guides and fellow travelers, and, ultimately, they seek a safer place.

23

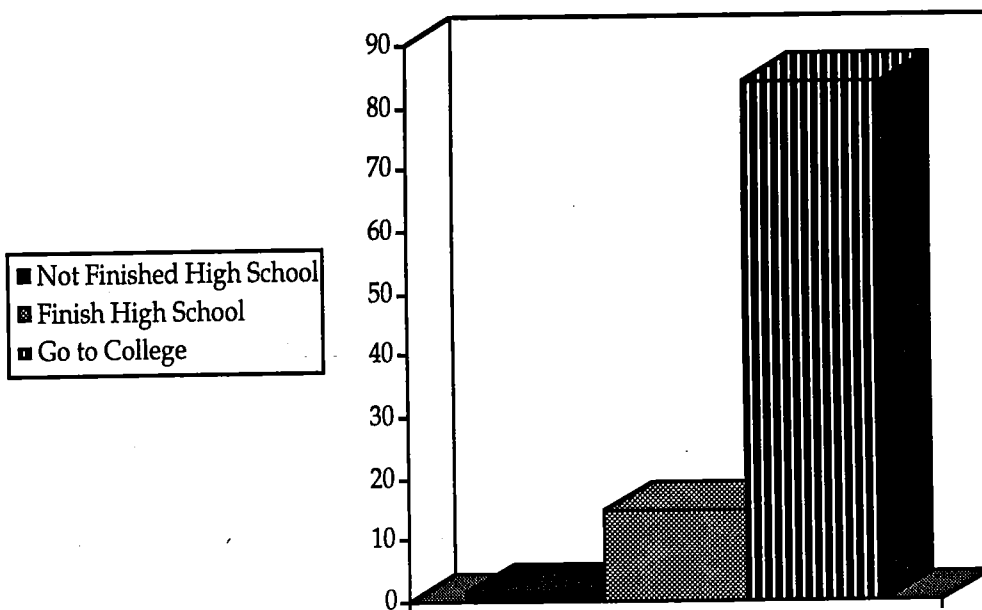
### **Facilitated Out: Fifth-Grade**

All of the survey questions having to do with the following student perceptions were designed to elicit the comfort level, both academically and environmentally, of the respondents. Overall, most fifth-graders had a positive perception of school. Chicano Latino students followed the views of their White peers in that many of them also reported positive perceptions.

### Chart 4 Fifth-Grade Educational Experience



### Chart 4A Eighth-Grade Educational Expectations



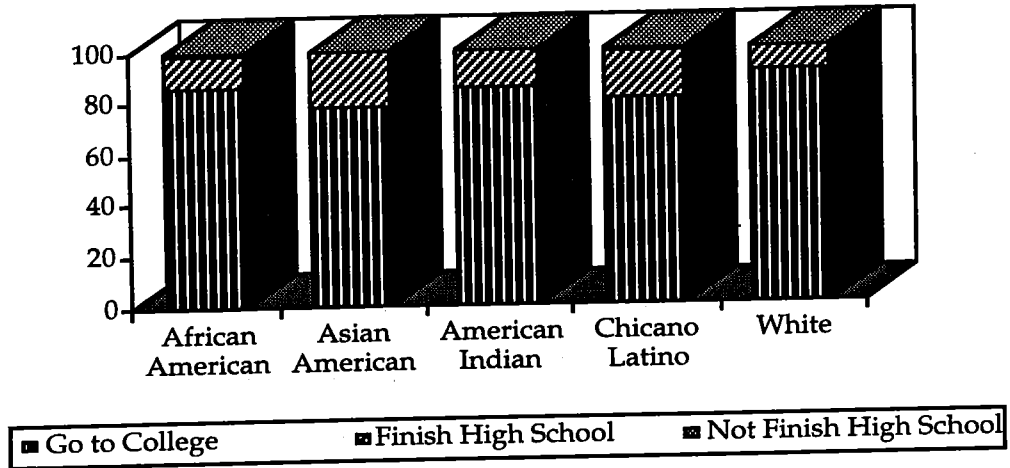
For example, most fifth-grade students expected to finish high school (see Chart 4). Similarly, few Chicano Latino fifth-graders, about 2%, indicated they would not finish high school (see Chart 5). Additional positive perceptions are reflected in Chicano Latino fifth-graders' responses that they liked their school and felt their teacher liked them (Charts 6 and 7). Chart 8 shows that most students, including Chicano Latino's, said that they thought school was important.

However, these generally positive perceptions and approvals by fifth-graders were tempered by significant percentages of negative responses. When we began investigating items related to the theme of being facilitated out as described by focus-group participants, a more sobering picture begins to emerge.

Chicano Latino fifth-graders reported that kids drop out of school because school makes no sense in greater proportion than their majority culture peers (7.6% verses 6.8%, respectively). Other reasons for dropping out according to Chicano Latino students are: Don't like school (44.3%), Problems at home (14.6%), and Having children (10.6%). Oddly, while most data suggest that pregnancy is a leading cause of dropping out for Chicano Latino students, fifth-grade Chicano Latino perceptions in this study ranked it third.

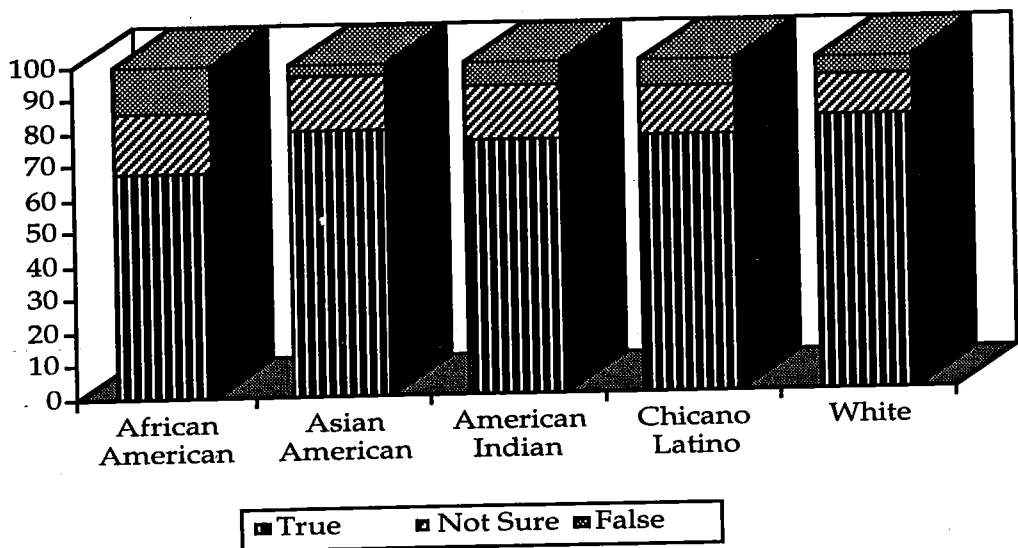
In addition, even though most Chicano Latino students reported liking their school, Chart 6 indicates that a large proportion (22.8%) reported they did not like school or were not sure of that fact. Relatedly, this same Chicano Latino subgroup was more likely than any other major popula-

Chart 5  
Fifth-Grade Educational Expectations  
by Grade



26

Chart 6  
Eighth-Grade: Like School



**...Chicano Latino fifth-graders reflect a disturbing trend towards disaffection for school that is beyond what may be expected.**

tion group to sense that teachers did not like them (see Chart 7). While children's affection for school is known to decrease as they get older, these findings for Chicano Latino fifth-graders reflect a disturbing trend towards disaffection for school that is beyond what may be expected.

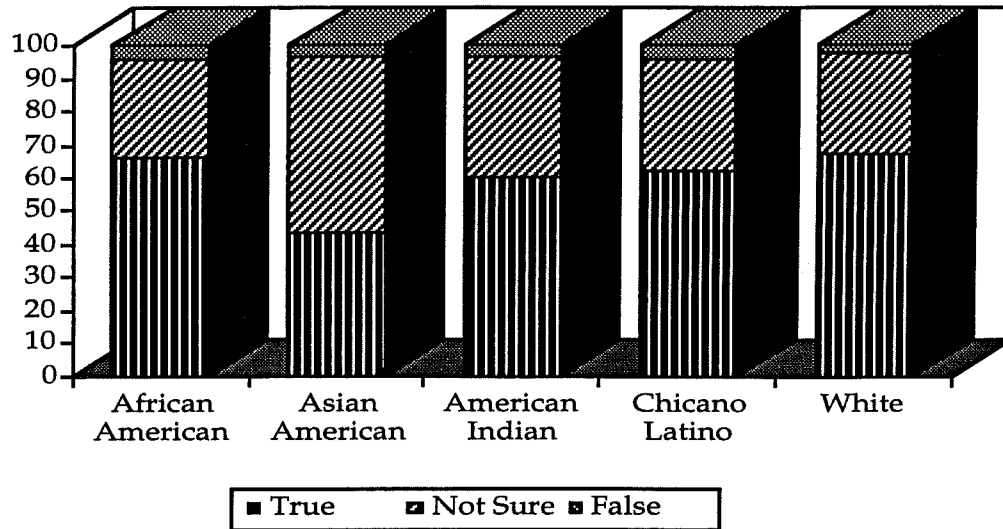
In focus-group interviews, Chicano Latino dropouts indicated that their uncertainties about school began as early as elementary school, when they were frequently labeled as problem children. While most fifth-graders reported that they were not seen as trouble makers, this was still a concern for many Chicano Latino students. Chicano Latino students report being labeled as a trouble maker more than twice as often as their majority culture peers, 12.9% verses 6.2% (see Chart 9).

These findings confirm our preliminary findings of this study, where focus-group participants reported that school staff expected them to act out and assumed that all Chicano Latino students were likely discipline problems (Davison Aviles, et al. 1995). Also, while the majority of Chicano Latino students did not report unfair treatment at their school, a substantial percentage said that they were treated unfairly. Specifically, over 25% of Chicano Latino fifth-graders reported they were treated unfairly or were not sure they were treated unfairly.

The uncertainty of fifth-graders regarding unfair treatment is largely a minority student phenomenon, as indicated in Chart 10. Possibly, this

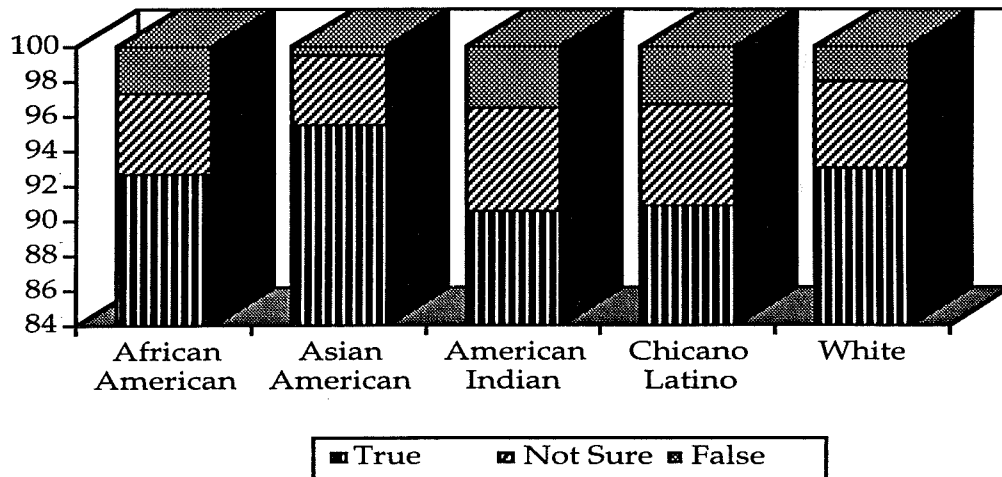


Chart 7  
Fifth-Grade: Teacher Likes Me



28

Chart 8  
Fifth-Grade: School Is Important



**...far too many of these elementary children  
seem uncertain of their place in the schools  
or of their relationships with their teachers**

finding reflects the miscommunication and sense of mistreatment repeatedly described by focus-group dropouts in the preliminary study. It is, of course, unclear in the current sample whether the source of this view of unfair treatment comes from the school personnel or peers.

Finally, although most Chicano Latino students reported that there was someone at school they could talk to about their problems, a disconcertingly large group (29.6%) were either unsure or said there was no one they could talk to. The picture that emerges from these data is a group of children whose comfort level is marginal and whose academic future is in great peril. Most Chicano Latino students succeed in school, but far too many of these elementary children seem uncertain of their place in the schools or of their relationships with their teachers than do their White peers.

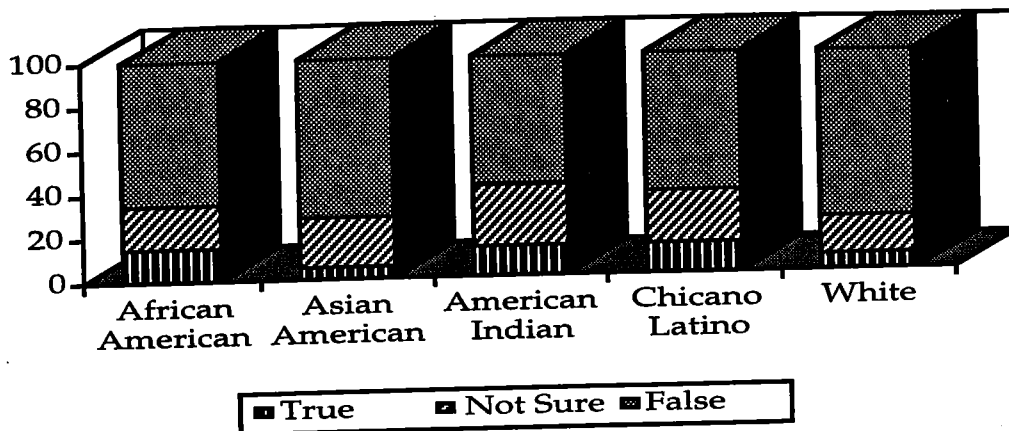
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#### **Facilitated Out: Eighth-Grade**

The educational expectation for eighth-grade students mirrored that of the fifth-graders (see Charts 4 and 4A). Most students in this sample expected to finish high school and go to college.

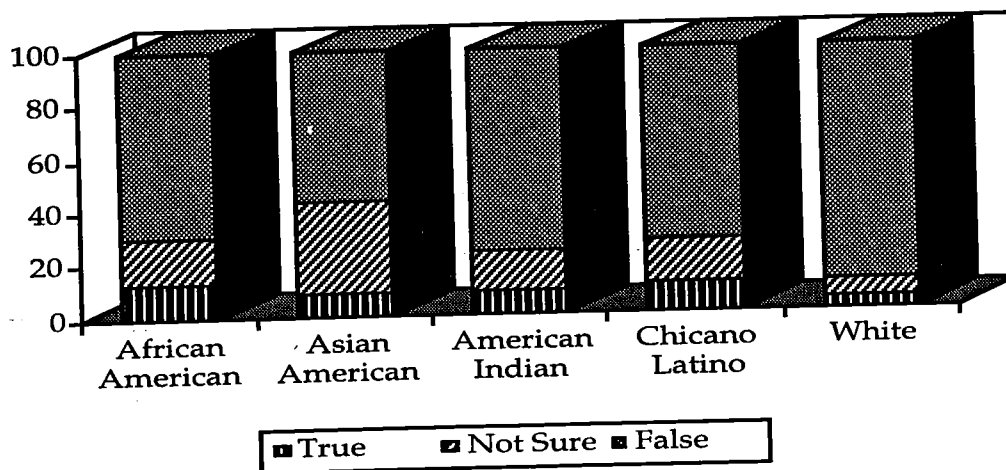
However, comfort within the school setting took on a different dimension for the eighth-grade cohort. Unlike the younger students, who often report their comfort in terms of likes or dislikes, national surveys

Chart 9  
Fifth-Grade: Known as Troublemaker



30

Chart 10  
Fifth-Grade: Treated Unfairly Race



indicate that older students' comfort levels are associated with perceptions of how safe they feel in school.

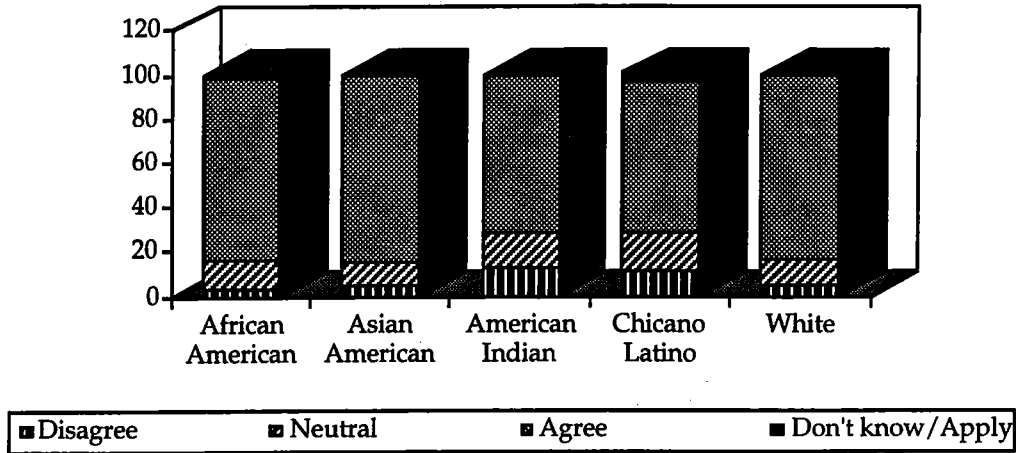
As students develop, their comfort in school is often expressed in their views of a safe environment. In the current sample, 42% of all eighth-graders surveyed agreed that their school was safe. Chicano Latino students agreed in like proportions, while their White peers agreed in a slightly higher percentage, (44%). Conversely, about one-fourth of African American students and one-fifth of Chicano Latino and American Indian students disagreed with the statement that "my school was safe."

It is reasonable to assert that as schools become less safe, students may become less motivated to stay in school. In the current study, students of color, including Chicano Latino students, were most likely to report concerns about school safety.

While safety issues were a concern, most eighth-graders, 81%, thought school was important. Chicano Latino students also responded to school importance positively. Sixty-eight percent of Chicano Latino students agreed with the statement "I think school is important" (see Chart 11). In addition, more eighth-graders agreed that their teachers understood them than disagreed with this statement (see Chart 12). The concept of "understanding them" is equated to the fifth-grade level with the concept of "liking them" or, for both grades, of accepting them.

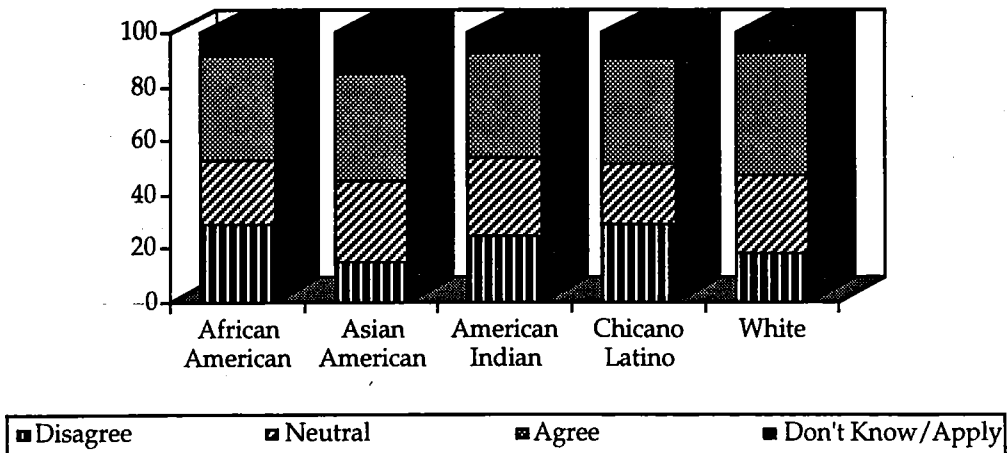
These findings suggest that schools, for the most part, remain fairly friendly environments for students. For example, like their younger cohort, most eighth-graders reported not being harassed because of their

Chart 11  
School Is Important



32

Chart 12  
Teacher Understands Me



...Chicano Latino eighth graders had the highest percentage of students who did not expect to finish high school.

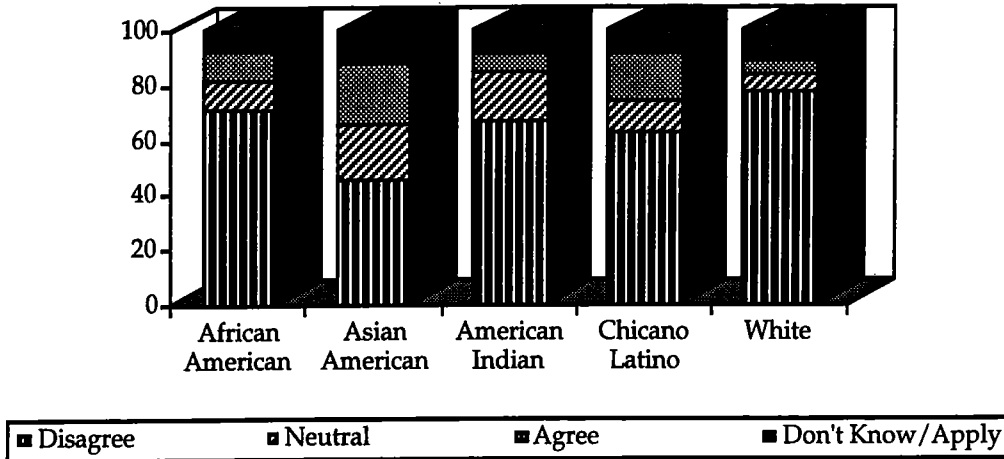
race and most agreed that their parents thought school was important. These findings cut across all racial and ethnic groups.

However, as with Chicano Latino fifth-graders, the complete Chicano Latino eighth-grade portrait must include areas of particular concern. Although many Chicano Latino eighth-graders had high educational expectations, the number of those not expecting to finish high school rose dramatically from Chicano Latino fifth-graders, 1.7% to .07%. Most significant, Chicano Latino eighth-graders had the highest percentage of students who did not expect to finish high school, and this was more than four times larger than their White peers (5.2% vs.1.2%) and higher than any other group of color.

As with all of those surveyed, many Chicano Latino students see school as important. However, the percentage of Chicano Latino students denying school importance increases from that of Chicano Latino fifth-graders. Findings which indicate that Chicano Latino students are likely to deny school importance in higher numbers points to an increasing gap between Chicano Latino students and White students (see Chart 1). The chart implies, that as Chicano Latino students age, some tend to see school as less important than all other students.

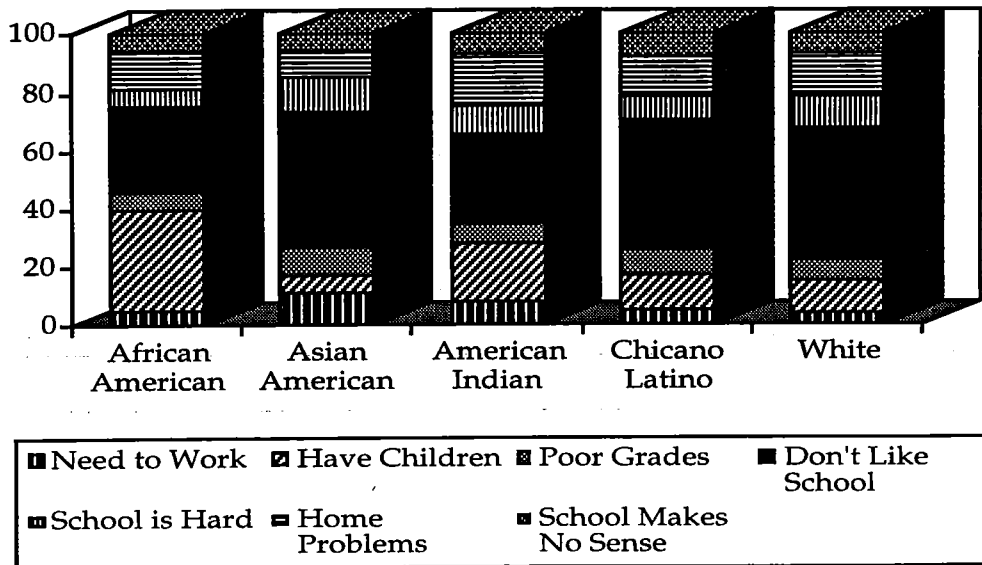
Teacher-student relations also appear to worsen over time. More Chicano Latino eighth-graders disaffirmed that their teachers understood

Chart 13  
Harassed Because of Race



34

Chart 14  
Fifth-Grade: Reason for Drop Out



them than almost all other population groups (see Chart 2). These findings parallel focus-group views that the troublemaker label, tagged to them in the fifth-grade, continues into the eighth-grade. This is confirmed by eighth-grade perceptions of being misunderstood or put down, receiving differential treatment or being harassed.

It was noted earlier that most eighth-graders do not perceive being affected with problems due to race or ethnicity. However, too many students of color do report differential, negative treatment due to race and ethnicity. Charts 12 and 13 indicate that Chicano Latino students feel that they are misunderstood by their teachers and perceive ethnic harassment in school in proportions greater than most other groups. Only Asian American students reported racial harassment in slightly higher proportions than Chicano Latino students.

These findings are especially troublesome in that, with the exception of safety concerns, they do not reflect national data on school climate. De La Rosa and Maw (1990), relying on the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS, 1988), reported that Latino students expressed little dissatisfaction with their schools. They were more likely than African American or White students to report teacher interest, good teaching and fair discipline, in proportions exceeding 70%.

But, in the current survey, positive responses to being understood by teachers and negative responses to general school harassment seldom exceeded 60% for Chicano Latino eighth-graders. This disparity between the current findings and national data raises serious questions as to why



Chicano Latino students perceive negative qualities of their schools in greater proportions and positive qualities in lesser proportions than Chicano Latino students in other surveys. These findings, if valid, could mean that Chicano Latino eighth-graders in Minnesota, where education is relatively high on the public agenda, attend schools where they confront negative stereotypes more often than in other areas of the United States.

A clearer picture of Chicano Latino students begins to take shape from these data when, as described above, positive and negative perspectives are provided. Schools are doing a good job with most students. But accountability demands that the public school system be made better and more efficient to educate and graduate all students.

In national surveys, safety is a concern for Chicano Latino students. Almost half of Chicano Latino students reported having had something stolen from them at school and one-fourth reported fighting with other students (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990). Despite national data, much of which was gathered in urban areas, the significant security concerns of eighth-graders in this sample were unexpected. School climate pays a significant part in the quality and effectiveness of education (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990).

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...Chicano Latino eighth-graders in Minnesota confront negative stereotypes more often than in other areas of the United States.

### **School Absence and Credit Policies: Eighth-Grade**

This theme is more of an issue for older students. However, fifth-graders in the survey responded to related issues. Chicano Latino fifth-grade students were less likely to endorse grades and more likely to state reasons such as not liking school and problems at home as causes for dropping out. Chart 14 shows reasons for dropping out by racial and ethnic group for the fifth-grade.

Combined with fifth-grade data cited above, it would not be unreasonable to hypothesize that Chicano Latino fifth-graders might later have increased school absences, which are directly related with dropping out (Oakland, 1992).

Chicano Latino focus-groups revealed that for older students, the inability to obtain credits was not due to failing grades, but rather to the inability to make up the credits lost by school days missed. Reasons for missing school were disinterest, work and inadequate communication between home and school.

The theme regarding school absence and credit policies arose from discussions about high school experiences. Since most dropouts do so prior to the eleventh-grade, it was anticipated that awareness of high school course credits would be reflected in our eighth-graders' knowledge of and plans for high school. The authors hypothesized a nexus, however tenuous, between active participation in planning of courses and academic success.

Almost half of the Chicano Latino eighth-graders indicated that their high school courses would be planned by them, giving little responsibility to school or parents. Another portion of Chicano Latino students (26%) endorsed combined efforts of student, parents and school. But Chicano Latino eighth-graders were least likely to consider combined efforts in high school planning. Moreover, even though most Chicano Latino students felt themselves responsible for their high school planning, a significant percentage (16.9%) did not know what courses they would need.

This implies that a large percentage of Chicano Latino students are not even considering their future course work or that no dialogue about high school courses goes on between them and their parents. Other areas of concern are the small portion of Chicano Latino students considering home and school collaboration and the small portion who believe that either school or parents alone should plan their high school program.

These data suggest that eighth-Grade Chicano Latino students do not understand school policy and procedures in terms of course credits. Without improved home-school links, these eighth-grade students who believe themselves capable for high school planning or believe it is solely the responsibility of others are likely to feel confused and isolated. It is unlikely that these students will make accurate, informed decisions about their educational futures.

Most educators endorse a collaboration between student, parent, and school in planning high school scheduling and course work (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992).

...almost one-third of Chicano Latino fifth-graders indicated that they were unsure of having someone to talk to

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### **Barriers to Co-Curricular Activities: Fifth-Grade**

Student participation in co-curricular activities increases opportunities for mentoring, participation in mainstream education, and motivation from peers, staff and teachers. It is a way for students to invest of themselves in their educational journey. Focus-group dropouts also endorsed co-curricular activities as an important aid to staying in school.

Typically, co-curricular activities become more evident in the middle and high schools. Fifth-graders usually do not participate in co-curricular activities to the extent of older students. But, contests, team sports, plays, and safety patrols offer some possibilities. It is quite reasonable to assume that students who like school and think school is important will engage in co-curricular activities.

As noted above, many Chicano Latino fifth-graders indicated that they were unsure as to whether or not they liked school, or disliked school outright. The positive connections to teachers and school staff implied in co-curricular activities is challenged by Chicano Latino fifth-graders' assertions that teachers did not like them. Additionally, almost one-third of Chicano Latino fifth-graders (29.6%) indicated that they were unsure of having someone to talk to or did not have someone to talk to at all.

When considered together, these findings suggest that younger Chicano Latino students perceive themselves as isolated from the very people most likely to facilitate participation in both mainstream and co-

curricular school activities. Overall, it appears that these barriers to co-curricular activities appear early and, often, in subtle and indirect ways. It is distressing that this many Chicano Latino fifth-grade students perceive themselves to be disconnected from their teacher and school.

### **Barriers to Co-Curricular Activities: Eighth-Grade**

Eighth-grade students are more directly involved in co-curricular activities. In our sample, students of color were equally divided in participation and non-participation in co-curricular activities. Only 26% indicated non-involvement. Chicano Latino eighth-graders were less involved than their peers, but were also evenly divided, with approximately 38% who indicated involvement against 40% non-involvement.

In light of the importance of co-curricular activities for maintaining academic persistence, it is a disturbing warning that so many Chicano Latino students perceive themselves as not involved. When perceived noninvolvement is combined with the widening gap in the perception of school importance, it is not surprising that many Chicano Latino students decide to dropout or feel themselves ushered out.

There is substantial evidence that co-curricular or incentive events play a crucial role in encouraging and maintaining school persistence (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990; Toby & Armor, 1992; Oakland, 1992). Successful school programs are those offering academic and social supports for students. Often those supports come by way of co-curricular activities that focus on cognitive, social and physical development (De La Rosa &

Maw, 1990; Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). Involvement with co-curricular activities is associated with having higher grades (De La Rosa & Maw, 1990).

When Chicano Latino students do not participate in co-curricular activities, for whatever reason, they lose important and decisive opportunities. This loss is so critical that later remediation may be almost impossible (Oakland, 1992; Sylvester, 1992).

#### **Low Academic Expectations and Differential Treatment: Fifth-Grade**

Schools generally strive to provide sound instructional environments and opportunities for healthy social and personal growth. Certainly the schools in this survey, by their very participation, are trying to address the dropout problem and come up with the workable solutions. It is in the context of these very real and positive efforts that this section of the study is written.

As noted earlier in this report, self-esteem and student progress are related. Chicano Latino dropouts reported in focus-groups that, beginning in elementary school, they felt that they were treated differently (Davison-Aviles et al., 1995). Focus-group participants said that this differential treatment was often overt, but sometimes subtle.

Related to this observation, in the current study over one-third, 34.4%, (see Table 7) of Chicano Latino fifth-graders were unsure of their teachers' feelings towards them. Other students of color in the sample were even more uncertain.

Over half, 55.4%, of Chicano Latino students reported getting good grades, yet only half that proportion of teachers, 26.4% perceived their Chicano Latino students received good grades. By eighth-grade, the proportion of Chicano Latino students reporting good grades had fallen to slightly over one-third, 39.2%. It appears that Chicano Latino students increasingly believe themselves to be more like their teachers' perception of them.

As shown earlier in Chart 9, while most Chicano Latino fifth-graders denied being known as trouble makers (62.6%), with the exception of American Indian students, they were the group least likely to deny being known as trouble maker. While the great majority of Chicano Latino fifth-graders denied being put down because of race, a substantial number were, again, either unsure or affirmative in the perception of disrespect (see Chart 10).

The label troublemaker, like many others heard in schools, may cause more problems than the events that lead up to its application. It is the social construction of labels, and the effects of disrespect and lack of school awareness that contribute in great measure to Chicano Latino students dropping out.

There is substantial evidence of the impact teachers have on students' self-esteem (Kohn, 1994; Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). Bucci & Reitzammer (1992) point out that children believe what is told them through actions and words. This appeared in the current study in the context of differential perceptions of grades between students and teachers.

Teachers and their educators agree on the importance of believing that every student can and will learn (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). Critical to these beliefs are the recognition of all students' inherent self-worth and the valuing of cultural and ethnic diversity brought by students of color.

### **Low Academic Expectations and Differential Treatment: Eighth-Grade**

Eighth-grade Chicano Latino students generally mirrored their younger cohort in feelings of differential treatment. With respect to school climate, most eighth-graders affirmed their teachers understood them, thought school was important, and denied being harassed because of race. Once again, the schools seemed to be reasonable secure places where most students could learn.

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The converse of these statements has also been discussed elsewhere in this report. Significant numbers of Chicano Latino students report harassment, being misunderstood, and lack of safety. However, it is important to note that these are not static events. Examples of the ever-widening gap between Chicano Latino students and their White peers have been noted (Chart 1 and 2). What appears to be happening, in the schools and with Chicano Latino students, is a growing process of marginalization, lower expectations, and differential treatment which worsens as students age.

When Minnesota schools expect less of Chicano Latino students, then it follows that students may expect less of themselves. If students receive



the message, however subtle, from schools that they are less capable than their majority culture peers, the message is internalized resulting in lower personal educational expectations.

In addition to the gaps already discussed, Chicano Latino eighth-graders also fell behind in their educational expectations. The gap between White and Chicano Latino students expecting to go to college widens between fifth- and eighth-grade. From fifth- to eighth-grade, White students expecting to go to college decreased 3.7%, but Chicano Latino students decreased 11.7%. Eighth-grade Chicano Latino students appear to be growing further apart from their White peers in areas critical for school persistence.

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For the children who do remain in school, the situation also worsens. When asked to respond agree or disagree to the statement "I am treated unfairly because of my race or ethnicity," Chicano Latino eighth-graders agreed in greater proportions than their younger cohort (9.9% vs.6.9%) and disagreed in lesser proportions (82.2% vs.76.9%). Consistently, perceptions of differential treatment for Chicano Latino students appear to increase over time.

Resources for the Chicano Latino students also dwindle over time. Any self-esteem derived from good grades lessens because eighth-grade Chicano Latino students report getting good grades less than their fifth-grade cohort, 55.4% v. 39.2%. Chicano Latino eighth-graders report fewer adult resources, while disaffirming that their teachers understand them more often than Chicano Latino or White fifth-grade students (Chart 2),

and report persons they can talk to at school in lower proportions than Chicano Latino fifth-Graders, 70.4% verses 52.8%.

While the literature on self-esteem is mixed, most studies confirm a positive relationship between self-esteem and student success (Kohn, 1994). Others suggest that self-esteem is more closely associated with student success than intelligence quotient (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992).

Recalling the travel metaphor described earlier, the process of dropping out is like being able to take increasingly larger steps as the journey towards a completed high school education continues. When a wrong direction is taken, the steps continue to increase in size and speed regardless of where the traveler is headed. Once these children become misdirected, their momentum increases until they drop out.

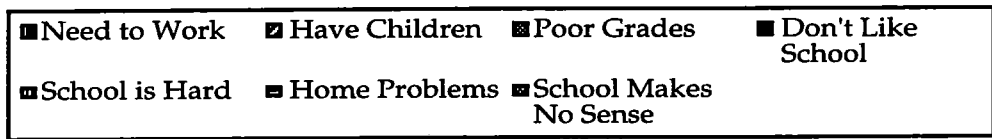
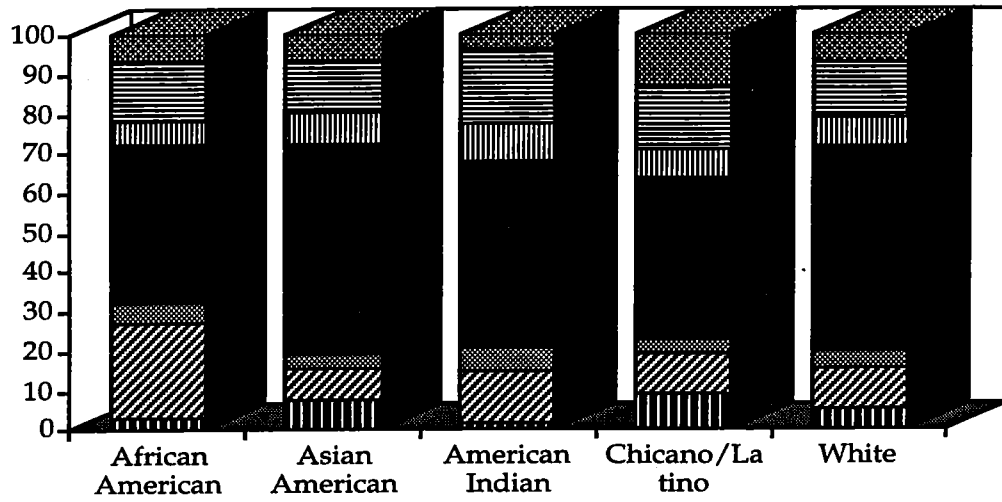
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#### **Student Pregnancy is Secondary to Other Dropout Causes: Fifth- and Eighth-Grades.**

Student responses to the causes of school drop out confirmed that Chicano Latino fifth- and eighth-graders perceive pregnancy as less salient than not liking school or problems at home (Charts 14 and 15). In fact, by eighth-grade, Chicano Latino students reported pregnancy as a cause for dropout in lower proportions than any other group except Asian Americans.

It is true that teen pregnancy is associated with increased dropout rates, but this relationship is not necessarily casual. Focus-group participants related that pregnancy was a means to escape a troubling and prob-

Chart 15  
Eighth-Grade: Reason for Drop Out



lematic school or home environment. The combined negative effects of the themes described above made pregnancy a positive choice by comparison.

It is also probable that pregnancy is a symptom of a mixture of forces, including troubled schools, homes, communities and students. However, it is important to remember that many Chicano Latino eighth-graders feel unsafe, harassed, and misunderstood in proportions greater than their peers.

In terms of a metaphorical journey through a path of public education, many Chicano Latino eighth-graders seem to be relying on an inaccurate inner sense of direction instead of a map, compass, or directions by their guides. Indeed, at this point in their journey, many Chicano Latino students feel misunderstood by their guides or, worse, have lost faith in them. It is only a matter of time before these children begin to lose faith in themselves and thus, end their journey.

### **Teachers Perceptions on Items Related to Themes**

Teachers and staff were surveyed about their perceptions of their Chicano Latino and White students also. A brief description of their responses is included to add dimension to the student perceptions.

The number of school staff persons who returned the surveys was 764. Of those, 95.2% were teachers with a mean of 16.1 years teaching experience. Most, 84.8%, of the teachers returning surveys were White,

9.6% were Chicano Latino, 2.9% were African American, and less than 1% Asian American or American Indian.

As a group, teachers agreed in greater proportions than disagreed that their students liked school, their students' parents thought school was important, and that their students got good grades. This reflects a positive attitude and caring stance on the part of the professionals entrusted to guide our children along their educational journey. The teachers who took time to give the survey to their classes and fill one out themselves, are commended for their supportive and valuable assistance to this project.

Comparison of student-teacher perceptions must be tempered with the understanding that there are developmental differences in the perception realities between the two groups. However, even with this caveat, some of the differences that arose out of the survey are striking.

For example, 77.2% of Chicano Latino fifth-graders said that they liked school, yet only 47% of the teachers affirmed this fact for their Chicano Latino students. A disturbingly large proportion of the teachers, 45.3%, were neutral, didn't know or said this item did not apply to them. Part of the discrepancy may be due to the fact that respondent teachers did not have Chicano Latinos as students.

Essentially, it seems that teachers were equally likely to not know or affirm their students' abilities as they were to recognize them. This finding has profound implications for student progress and persistence. One has only to ask: How are teachers to support and teach their Chicano

Latino students if such a significant discrepancy exists in their perceptions of their students' abilities?

On a related item, "My Chicano Latino students know I care about them," almost two-thirds, 64.0%, of the teachers surveyed indicated they agreed. Similarly, 61.8% of fifth-grade Chicano Latino students reported that their teacher liked them. By the eighth-grade, however, only 38.3% of Chicano Latino students reported that their teacher understands them, indicating a widening gap between teacher and student perceptions.

Once again, a large proportion of teachers, 35.4%, were neutral, didn't know or said this item didn't apply to them. It is reasonable to expect that by the eighth-grade the teacher-student relationship would change due to normal adolescent development. But, developmental changes should not necessarily result in such large numbers of teachers who do not respond positively to perceptions of caring by and about their students. Again, this percentage may be low in part due to those respondent teachers who had no Chicano Latino students. Most classes surveyed, however, had Chicano Latino students since only the 10 school districts having the largest numbers of those students participated.

Teacher attitudes are critical in dropout prevention. The importance of teachers in dropout programming and related school reform has been underestimated (Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992). Teachers can serve as support for one another and their students in their instructional environment, enhancing self-esteem, alternative programs, coordination and communication within the school. School teams and partnerships with

parents and community members are effective means for teachers to intervene in the lives of all of their students (Oakland, 1992; Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992).

## CONCLUSION

Over the past 40 years, secondary schools have improved their ability to graduate students. Dropout rates have fallen from as high as 40% in 1960 to less than 5% for Whites and to less than 20% for Chicano Latinos in Minnesota. This is progress. But it is not good enough for Chicano Latinos whose dropout rate is still four times that of Whites. What is "good enough" is when we work together toward a tolerance of zero dropouts in our high schools.

While most Chicano Latino students succeed academically and receive diplomas, still too many feel marginalized, suffer from low esteem, receive differential treatment, do not understand credit and absence policies, or do not receive the necessary motivation and scholastic demands by their schools. It is not surprising then, that Chicano Latino students experience more difficulties in staying in school and graduating.

We have demonstrated some of the causes for school dropout. Some are related to home and personal problems and others are related to the schools. Most of the family or personal causes cannot be approached in a study like this. However, the majority of the school related reasons discussed in this study can be ameliorated and improved upon to lower the dropout rate for Chicano Latinos.

As we go into the Twentieth Century, an increasing number of our state labor force lacks the basic skills required to succeed in most jobs. This is exacerbated by the our high dropout rates. At a time of state bud-



get cutbacks, policy makers must consider educational expenses as investments in human resources. Reducing the dropout rate has a positive effect in terms of reduced social welfare costs, increased productivity, and an improved tax base.

But there are better and more altruistic reasons as well. A successful high school experience is one of life's most defining moments. It can also be, when incomplete, one of life's most damning. What this study has shown more than anything, is that it does not have to be that way. With more caring, some sensitivity, and a little innovation, Minnesota schools can, with existing resources, enable all children the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify and investigate parental and home variables. The current study did not access the Chicano Latino home and family information directly. In addition to parents with school children, parents of preschool children need to be included, in order to begin building a solid foundation prior to entering elementary school.

- Goal 1.1 Identify child home and family characteristics associated with academic persistence, including language used in the home; knowledge of the educational system and available resources; awareness of successful social, cultural and intellectual readiness practices; financial concerns; family education, and siblings who have dropped out.
- Goal 1.2 Identify and contact parents of young children, including preschool, and third, fifth, and eighth grade Chicano Latino students and interview them using a structured interview or written survey.

2. Identify and investigate the needs of Chicano Latino students and families through their community ties. Key persons in Chicano Latino communities are important sources of data on school persistence or dropout.

- Goal 2:1 Identify community organizations (including prenatal and pediatric health clinics, useful sites for building relationships with young parents), churches, and businesses that serve the Chicano Latino population to determine when and how social networking and partnerships are accomplished, and ask of community leaders on the antecedents and causes of dropout.

3. Build school, home, and community alliances. Partnerships involving the families, community, and educational professionals as equal members need to be established. Culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions to begin working with students at an early age, as well as families, need to be designed and implemented. Wong Fillmore (1990), De La Rosa, & Maw (1990), and Cumming (1986) have suggested that culture and language are important variables to consider when working with Chicano Latino students. Partnerships that considers these variables are more successful in impacting the poor academic performance of Chicano Latino students.

- Goal 3.1 Identify, design or adapt and pilot culturally and linguistically appropriate intervention programs. Interventions may include, but are not limited to, parent information workshops; family student advocacy classes; transition sharing meetings with parents and early childhood educators; mentor programs for elemen-

tary and secondary students; designing, adapting and piloting a culturally appropriate child development curriculum for families; support and information groups for teen parents; designing, adapting and piloting a culturally and linguistically appropriate group guidance curriculum for elementary and middle school students; conducting cultural orientation seminars for health professionals, educators and community/social service persons; and piloting a bilingual early childhood program focusing on native language and cognitive development. All interventions should be designed and implemented based on identified needs and perceptions. Where appropriate and as much as possible, interventions must be designed and implemented using existing resources.

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4. School-specific recommendations are based on current education research as well as results of the survey. These apply in schools where there are least 10 or more Chicano Latino students enrolled. Improving the school and classroom environment benefits all students, such changes should include:

- Goal 4.1 Create and maintain ongoing culturally and linguistically appropriate diversity training for school administrators. The ability of superintendents and principals to set the standard for understanding and valuing culturally diverse students is critical for staff motivation and the success of dropout prevention pro-

grams. When administrators resist change, teachers are not motivated to do so. This was evident in this current study.

- Goal 4.2 Create and maintain ongoing culturally and linguistically diversity training for teachers, counselors, nurses, and all other school staff.
- Goal 4.3 Maintain ongoing modification and feedback loops in the instructional environment. Teachers may modify the instructional environment to obtain progress, and mastery approaches to instruction. Individualized, self-paced instruction needs to be augmented with formative monitoring and feedback, especially with language minority Chicano Latino students.
- Goal 4.4 Employ whole-group tasks and cooperative learning. Success for All, a drop out prevention program developed at Johns Hopkins University (Slavin, 1987) and piloted in the Baltimore city schools, uses whole-group tasks and cooperative learning. It is one of the most effective dropout prevention programs available (Sylvester, 1992).
- Goal 4.5 Provide peer tutoring where at-risk students can serve as tutors in addition to being tutored.
- Goal 4.6 Recruit and use culturally and linguistically skilled volunteer tutors and mentors in schools.
- Goal 4.7 Carefully monitor and use transition times (preschool to K, elementary to middle school, etc.) to strengthen partnerships

with parents, provide accurate and useful information to families, and transfer and use objective data from sending schools.

- Goal 4.8 Continue to use summer and mid-semester breaks as times for continuing education. This is especially important for Chicano Latino students in transition from one school level to another or students who migrate or travel frequently.
- Goal 4.9 Do not assume a safe and emotionally supportive atmosphere because many Chicano Latino students feel otherwise.

5. Legislature-specific recommendations are based upon current education research and this current study:

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- Goal 5.1 Require by statute that students remain in school until they reach the age of 18 or graduate, whichever comes first. The present statutory age of 16 gives tacit approval and consent to dropouts.
- Goal 5.2 Allocate state education funding based upon high school graduation rates so that there are direct consequences for dropout rates on administrators. The consequences for students are life-long so that it makes sense to impose consequences for administrators. It is also more cost effective.
- Goal 5.3 Mandate Chicano Latino Language and Culture Programs for elementary and secondary schools in districts which have significant enrollments of Chicano Latino students. This would meet

the specific needs of students and provide positive and equal educational opportunities.

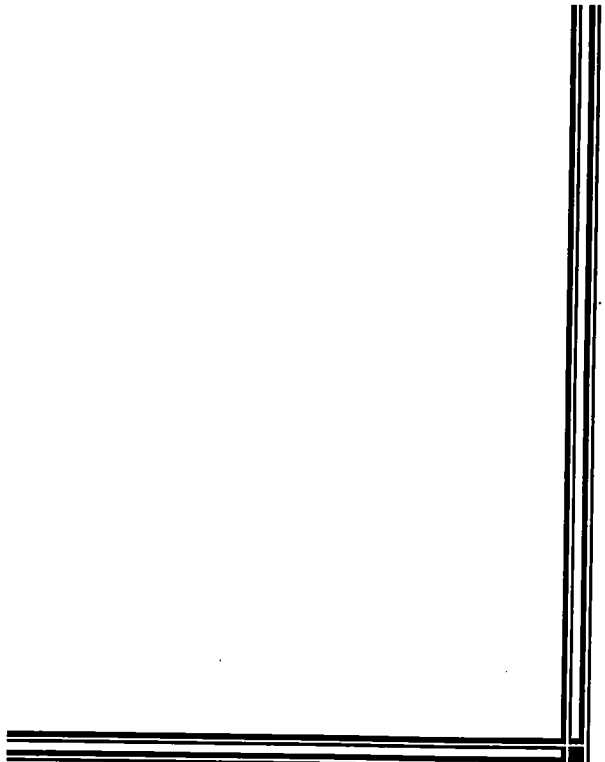
6. Incorporate Chicano Latino students' language and culture into the school program. Before any substantive interventions can succeed, relationships and understanding must be established. Basic to any relationship are the abilities to communicate and accurately understand one another's world view. Incorporating cultural diversity (including western and eastern European thought) into the school program sends an explicit and positive message to all who enter the building: we value *all* people.

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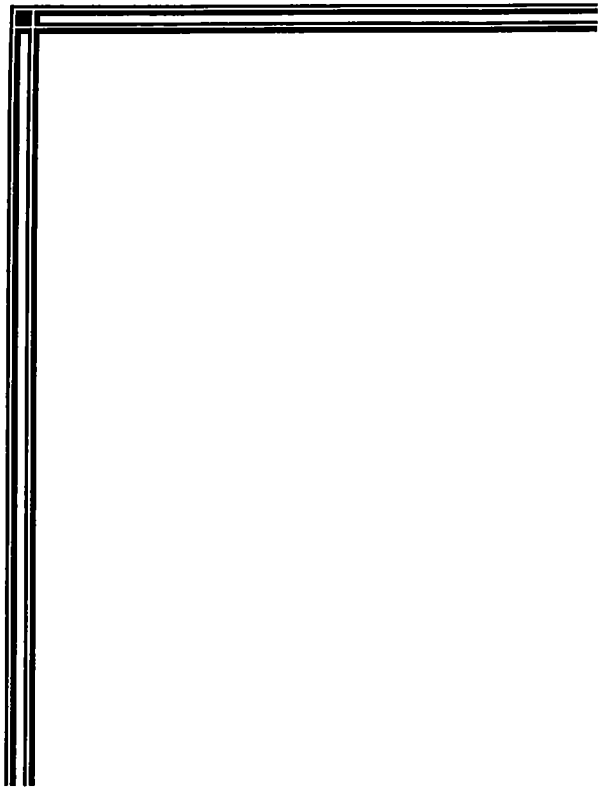
7. Investigate school reform literature (Oakland, 1992). Numerous research and position papers have addresses the dropout issue and many successful strategies have emerged.

- 6.1 Use the raw data generated by the current study as a start to study the dropout recovery effects of alternative learning programs in schools which enroll large numbers of Chicano Latino students.
- 6.2 Undertake research of the Alternative Learning Centers in Minnesota High Schools as their use and effectiveness in preparing students academically and as to graduation rates.

8. Identify, recruit, and support minority students to careers in teaching. Support should be motivational yet practical, addressing academic, financial, and emotional needs in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way. Role models in outstate Minnesota are desperately needed in the schools.







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# 5th Grade Survey

University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
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Please use a number 2 pencil.

**1. My race or ethnicity:**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 10.8 African American
- 8.4 Asian/Pacific Islander
- 4.1 American Indian
- 7.2 Chicano/Latino:
  - 46.8 Mexican American
  - 5.5 Puerto Rican
  - 4.1 Cuban
  - 32.2 Central American
  - 11.4 South American
- 64.1 White
- 5.3 Other

**2. My age:**

*(One circle only.)*

- .2 9
- 45.0 10
- 51.3 11
- 3.3 12
- .2 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18

**3. My gender:**

- 49.1 Male
- 50.9 Female

**4. The language we speak at home is:** *(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 88.0 English
- 7.3 An Asian language
- 1.7 Spanish
- .3 An Indian tribal language
- 2.8 Other

**5. My mother's highest grade completed in school:**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 1.5 No schooling
- .5 Elementary
- 1.4 Junior high
- 15.8 High school or GED
- 35.0 College or tech school
- 45.8 Do not know

**6. My father's highest grade completed in school:**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 1.0 No schooling
- .4 Elementary
- 1.5 Junior high
- 13.8 High school or GED
- 34.1 College or tech school
- 49.2 Do not know

**7. I expect to:**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- .7 Not finish high school
- 11.5 Finish high school
- 87.8 Go to college

**8. Kids drop out of school because:**

*(Read all the items and fill in one circle only.)*

- 5.5 They need to work for money.
- 13.6 They have children
- 7.5 They get poor grades
- 43.1 They don't like school
- 10.1 School is hard
- 13.7 They have problems at home
- 6.5 School makes no sense

**9. One or more of my parents, brothers, or sisters dropped out of school.**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 10.2 Yes
- 70.0 No
- 19.8 Not sure

**10. I have changed schools often:**

- 26.9 Yes
- 73.1 No



**11. If you answered yes to question 10, indicate why you changed schools.**

*(Please fill in one circle only.)*

- 13.2 Because of my parents' work
- 25.2 Don't know
- 61.6 Other

Please turn over and answer the questions on back.

Please fill in the circle of true, false, or not sure to each of the following statements.

	True	Not sure	False
12. My parents think school is important .....	98.9	0.9	0.2
13. I get good grades .....	68.5	27.3	4.2
14. I like my school .....	79.7	13.3	7.0
15. My teacher likes me .....	63.7	33.4	2.9
16. I am treated unfairly because of my race or ethnicity .....	6.2	11.9	81.9
17. I think school is important .....	92.9	5.0	2.1
18. At school I am known as a troublemaker .....	7.9	19.1	72.9
19. I read and write as well as I want .....	68.4	17.7	14.0
20. A teacher or other adult at school has put me down because of my race or ethnicity .....	3.9	7.0	89.1
21. When I have a problem I have someone at school to talk to .....	72.5	16.0	11.5

22. The job I would like to have when I grow up is:

If you have an idea, please fill in the blank:

---

23. My parents would like me to become:

If you have an idea, please fill in the blank:

---

Thank you for your help.

24. Do not answer. For project use only:

AL                      EGF                      MA                      MO  
 WI                      SP-W                      SP                      MP

# 8th Grade Survey

University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
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Please use a number 2 pencil.

**1. My race or ethnicity:**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 9.6 African American  
9.4 Asian/Pacific Islander  
2.0 American Indian  
5.7 Chicano/Latino:  
54.3 Mexican American  
7.4 Puerto Rican  
4.5 Cuban  
25.7 Central American  
8.2 South American  
69.8 White  
3.5 Other

**2. My age:**

(One circle only.)

- 9  
 10  
 11

- .2 12  
40.9 13  
53.5 14  
4.7 15  
.3 16  
17  
.3 18

**3. My gender:**

- 51.3 Male  
48.7 Female

**4. The language we speak at home is:** (Please fill in one circle only.)

- 88.1 English  
8.4 An Asian language  
1.4 Spanish  
0.4 An Indian tribal language  
1.7 Other

**5. My mother's highest grade completed in school:**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 2.0 No schooling  
0.5 Elementary  
1.7 Junior high  
29.7 High school or GED  
41.2 College or tech school  
24.9 Do not know

**6. My father's highest grade completed in school:**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 1.1 No schooling  
0.5 Elementary  
1.8 Junior high  
24.0 High school or GED  
42.8 College or tech school  
29.7 Do not know

**7. I expect to:**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 1.7 Not finish high school  
14.6 Finish high school  
83.7 Go to college

**8. Kids drop out of school because:**

(Read all the items and fill in one circle only.)

- 5.5 They need to work for money.  
11.8 They have children  
3.9 They get poor grades  
49.9 They don't like school  
7.4 School is hard  
13.9 They have problems at home  
7.6 School makes no sense

**9. One or more of my parents, brothers, or sisters dropped out of school.**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 15.2 Yes  
73.5 No  
11.3 Not sure

**10. I have changed schools often:**

- 23.4 Yes 76.6 No



**11. If you answered yes to question 10, indicate why you changed schools.**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 20.7 Because of my parents' work  
16.4 Don't know  
62.8 Other

**12. My high school courses will be planned by:**

(Please fill in one circle only.)

- 46.4 Me  
1.3 The school  
3.1 My parents  
39.3 All of the above  
9.8 Don't know

Please turn over and answer the questions on back.

Please fill in the circle to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
13. My parents think school is important .....	1.2	0.3	1.7	17.0	78.6	0.1	1.1
14. I get good grades .....	2.4	6.4	26.9	43.8	18.1	0.6	1.8
15. My school is safe .....	5.7	11.7	35.6	36.7	5.3	0.4	4.6
16. I am involved in extra school activities .....	10.6	19.5	13.7	27.0	21.8	6.4	1.2
17. My teachers understand me .....	7.7	11.5	28.8	35.7	7.6	0.5	8.2
18. I am harassed because of my race or ethnicity .....	45.1	27.3	9.4	4.9	3.0	7.7	2.6
19. I think school is important .....	3.2	1.9	12.1	34.3	47.3	0.3	0.8
20. I know what high school courses that I need .....	3.1	8.8	21.6	35.7	17.5	0.6	12.9
21. I read and write as well as I want .....	2.6	7.8	16.4	42.8	27.8	0.6	1.9
22. A teacher or other adult at school has put me down because of my race or ethnicity .....	53.5	25.7	5.1	3.2	2.2	7.7	2.6
23. When I have a problem I have someone at school I can talk to .....	11.1	10.9	20.5	32.7	19.8	1.6	3.4

24. If all were possible, the job I would like to have when I grow up is:

If you have an idea, please fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_

25. In real life, the job I expect to have when I grow up is:

If you have an idea, please fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_

26. My parents would like me to become:

If you have an idea, please fill in the blank: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your help.

27. Do not answer. For project use only:

- AL       EGF       MA       MO  
 WI       SP-W       SP       MP

# Teacher/Staff Survey

University of Minnesota  
 Minneapolis, MN 55455  
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Please use a number 2 pencil.

<p>1. My race or ethnicity:          (Please fill in one circle only.)</p> <p><u>2.9</u> African American  <u>0.8</u> Asian/Pacific Islander  <u>0.9</u> American Indian  <u>9.6</u> Chicano/Latino:              Mexican American              Puerto Rican              Cuban              Central American              South American  <u>84.8</u> White  <u>0.9</u> Other</p>	<p>2. My age:</p> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; margin-right: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">22</td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px; text-align: center;">68</td> </tr> </table> <p>① 0-0.6          ① 1-3.9          ② 2-5.6          ③ 3-4.9          ④ 4-3.0          ⑤ 5-3.9          ⑥ 6-4.3          ⑦ 7-3.8          ⑧ 8-2.9          ⑨ 9-2.3</p> <p>Mean: <u>42.482</u></p>	22	68	<p>3. Years of teaching experience:</p> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; margin-right: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> <td style="width: 30px; height: 30px;"></td> </tr> </table> <p>11-2.0          12-1.4          13-1.4          15-3.5          16-0.6          17-2.9          18-3.5          19-1.3          20-4.2          21-1.9          22-1.7</p>			<p>4. My gender:  <input type="radio"/> Male  <input type="radio"/> Female</p> <p>5. My position is:  <u>95.2</u> Teacher  <u>0.4</u> Principal  <u>1.4</u> Counselor  <u>3.0</u> Other</p> <p>34-1.0          35-0.9          36-0.4          37-0.4          38-0.1</p>
22	68						

Please fill in the circle to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Doesn't Apply	Don't Know
6. The parents of my Chicano/Latino (C/L) students think school is important .....	0.6	4.8	11.6	34.8	11.9	24.3	12.0
7. My C/L students overall get good grades .....	2.5	19.5	20.4	23.8	2.6	26.1	5.1
8. My perception is that my C/L students like school .....	0.6	7.2	15.9	39.2	7.8	24.8	4.6
9. My C/L students know that I care about them .....	0.3	0.3	5.0	45.9	18.1	25.4	5.0
10. I have seen a teacher or other adult at school put a C/L student down because of his/her ethnicity .....	43.8	24.0	3.5	3.8	1.9	19.0	4.0
11. My C/L students think school is important .....	1.2	9.2	17.9	33.5	7.0	24.9	6.3
12. I have seen a teacher or other adult at school treat a C/L student differently because of his/her ethnicity .....	34.4	28.5	4.2	7.2	1.9	18.6	5.3
13. When my C/L students have a problem, they have someone at school with whom to discuss it .....	1.2	2.9	6.9	43.3	16.7	23.5	5.6
14. My C/L students know which high school courses they need .....	2.3	11.1	14.0	12.1	1.0	34.7	24.7

Please turn over and answer the questions on back.



Please fill in the circle to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Neutral    Agree    Strongly Agree    Doesn't Apply    Don't Know

15. The parents of my White students think school is important . . .	2.3	1.4	10.4	60.4	22.0	0.7	2.8
16. My White students overall get good grades . . . . .	3.6	10.8	29.0	49.3	5.6	1.1	0.6
17. My perception is that my White students like school . . . . .	2.9	5.3	21.7	63.2	5.5	0.6	0.8
18. My White students know that I care about them . . . . .	1.0	0.3	5.6	65.2	22.5	2.7	2.8
19. My White students think school is important . . . . .	3.2	3.2	19.7	62.6	8.4	0.7	2.2
20. When my White students have a problem, they have someone at school with whom to discuss it . . . . .	1.4	1.5	7.1	65.6	20.0	0.7	3.7
21. My White students know what high school courses they need	2.1	16.2	18.6	22.2	2.5	14.9	23.5

22. The majority of my White students read and write: (Please fill in one circle only.)

- 14.4 Below grade level
- 76.6 At grade level
- 9.0 Above grade level

23. The majority of my C/L students read and write: (Please fill in one circle only.)

- 46.2 Below grade level
- 50.8 At grade level
- 3.0 Above grade level

24. My C/L students change schools often:

- 39.6 Yes
- 60.4 No



25. If you answered yes to question 24, indicate one of the following:

- 25.8 Because of their parents' work
- 50.5 Don't know
- 23.7 Other reason

Thank you for your help.

26. Do not answer. For project use only:

- AL
- WI
- EGF
- SP-W
- MA
- SP
- MO
- MP