

THIRD REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
HISPANIC FAMILY LEARNING
AND
LATINO SUMMIT

May 10-12, 2007

Suwanee, Georgia, and Norcross, Georgia

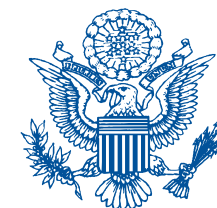


WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

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ON THE
PARTNERSHIP FOR
HISPANIC FAMILY LEARNING
AND
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and
Norcross, Georgia

Presented by



WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE
ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS



Latin American Association

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We gratefully acknowledge the support of our conference sponsors.

This program contains information about public and private organizations for the reader's information. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any views expressed or products or services offered.

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ABOUT THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANIC AMERICANS

On Oct. 12, 2001, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13230, creating the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. In the same executive order, the president designated the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (White House Initiative) as the office that would provide staff support and assistance to the commission in its charge to examine the underlying causes of the existing education achievement gap between Hispanic American students and their peers.

Over a period of 18 months, the commission heard from over 1,600 parents, students, educators, community and business leaders, and education experts at 11 commission meetings and four unprecedented bilingual town halls. This work resulted in an interim report that was submitted to the president on Sept. 30, 2002. *The Road to a College Diploma: The Complex Reality of Raising Educational Achievement for Hispanics in the United States* contained the commission's initial findings on the state of Hispanic education in the U.S., and outlined the education issues that required the nation's attention to close the achievement gap.

On March 31, 2003, the commission submitted its final report to the president, *From Risk to Opportunity: Fulfilling the Educational Needs of Hispanic Americans in the 21st Century*, which contained six recommendations for increasing the educational achievement of Hispanics. These recommendations encompassed the entire education continuum, from early childhood education through postsecondary degree attainment, as well as recommendations to improve federal accountability, coordination and research.

The commission's recommendations became the basis for the White House Initiative undertaking a pilot public-private partnership in July 2003. This yearlong effort teamed the WHI with leading national Hispanic organizations, corporate leaders and national private entities to further public understanding of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* at conferences held in seven cities across the country. Over the course of that year, the White House Initiative met and worked with Hispanic families, organizations and communities to make informed decisions about their children's education. The pilot program fortified the White House Initiative's belief in the necessity of coordinating efforts, fortifying relationships and making optimal use of the resources that stakeholders possess to effectively reach Hispanics.

THE PILOT PROGRAM
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THE PARTNERSHIP, COMPRISED OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE BUSINESS, COMMUNITY, FAITH-BASED, EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS, FOCUSES ON: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY READING; PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT; ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION; COLLEGE ENROLLMENT, AFFORDABILITY AND COMPLETION; AND ADULT AND WORKPLACE LITERACY.

Building on the lessons learned from the pilot program, the White House Initiative convened a working group in 2004 to develop a new course of action. This called for the formation of a broader public-private partnership that drew on the Hispanic family—and by definition the extended family—as a way to positively influence the educational outcomes of Hispanics in the U.S. and maximize the use of the numerous options and opportunities afforded by *NCLB* and other education programs.

To that end, in June 2005, the White House Initiative and the U.S. Department of Education hosted a conference in Washington, D.C., “Pathways to Hispanic Family Learning.” The conference highlighted private and public efforts to meet the education needs of Hispanic children and youths. It also set the stage for the White House Initiative’s Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning, a national network of public and private organizations that provide Hispanic families with the knowledge and tools needed to help them prepare their children for academic success. The partnership, comprised of individuals and organizations from the business, community, faith-based, education and government sectors, focuses on: early childhood development and early reading; parent and family involvement; academic preparation and high school graduation; college enrollment, affordability and completion; and adult and workplace literacy.

In addition, in mid-2007, the White House Initiative convened Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and other important stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities inherent in the American Competitiveness Initiative—an ambitious, long-term strategy to ensure America’s continued worldwide leadership in science and technology through math and science education—announced by President Bush in January 2006. Focused on helping HSIs build the capacity needed to increase the number of Hispanic graduates in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and develop the infrastructure required to undertake innovative research, this gathering at the University of Texas at El Paso helped to strengthen the nation’s ability to remain competitive in today’s global economy.

ABOUT THE LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1972, the Latin American Association (LAA) is a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive transitional services for Latinos as they strive for self-sufficiency and an enhanced quality of life. The LAA is the largest provider of services to the Latino population in Atlanta and is funded in part by the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta.

In 1989, the LAA was awarded the Outstanding Nonprofit Management Award by the Metropolitan Atlanta Community Foundation. The following year, the LAA opened its first satellite office in northern Atlanta’s Gwinnett County to address the needs of the city’s growing Latino population. In 1993, the LAA successfully completed a \$1.8 million capital campaign that allowed the organization to purchase, renovate and furnish a modern 16,000 square foot facility to house the LAA’s ever-increasing number of community programs. By 1997, the LAA was operating out of four office buildings in the Atlanta area. In 2005, the LAA assisted more than 69,000 individuals and their families.

The LAA takes an integrated approach to providing services and programs that are focused on increasing family stability, building skills and promoting the development of youths and community involvement. More recently, the LAA has developed a model to deepen its outreach efforts in the Latino community. Working closely with the property managers of these four outreach centers—all running in apartment complexes in Cobb and Gwinnett counties—the LAA has been able to leverage its relationships with the business community and solidify program partnerships for the benefit of Latinos. This year, the LAA entered into a partnership with Plaza Fiesta shopping center on Buford Highway in an effort to further reach out to the local Latino community by using it as a fifth outreach center on weekends when the mall is bustling with visitors.

The LAA’s services, developed in response to the Latino community’s needs, include: English language-literacy instruction; citizenship and other immigration assistance; pre-employment skills training and job placement; a youth mentoring program; a youth internship program; and a Latino homeownership program.

THE LAA TAKES AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO PROVIDING SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT ARE FOCUSED ON INCREASING FAMILY STABILITY, BUILDING SKILLS AND PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTHS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR HISPANIC FAMILY LEARNING

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (White House Initiative) believes that an essential factor in the effort to increase educational attainment for Hispanic children and youths and to close the achievement gap between Hispanic students and their non-Hispanic peers is family involvement. To effectively reach these families, it is necessary to coordinate efforts, fortify relationships and make optimal use of the resources that various agencies, organizations and businesses possess.

To that end, in June 2005, the White House Initiative and the U.S. Department of Education hosted a conference in Washington, D.C., “Pathways to Hispanic Family Learning.” The conference highlighted private and public efforts to meet the education needs of Hispanic children and youths. Officiating at the event were Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings and U.S. Treasury Anna E. Cabral. Over 200 Hispanic leaders from across the country representing small, medium and large organizations also participated in the event.

PARTNERSHIP

The conference set the stage for the White House Initiative’s Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning, a national network of public and private organizations that provide Hispanic families with the knowledge and tools needed to help them prepare their children for academic success.

The partnership, comprised of individuals and organizations from the business, community, faith-based, education and government sectors, focuses on: early childhood development and early reading; parent and family involvement; academic preparation and high school graduation; college enrollment, affordability and completion; and adult and workplace literacy.

Partner organizations are drawn from:

- Hispanic parent and family-involvement groups;
- Community, nonprofit and faith-based organizations;
- Hispanic-serving schools and school districts;
- The corporate sector, government and the Hispanic business community;
- Researchers; and
- Local, state and regional Hispanic organizations.

TO EFFECTIVELY REACH THESE FAMILIES, IT IS NECESSARY TO COORDINATE EFFORTS, FORTIFY RELATIONSHIPS AND MAKE OPTIMAL USE OF THE RESOURCES THAT VARIOUS AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES POSSESS.

THE INFORMATION,
WHEN PLACED
IN THE HANDS
OF PARENTS, IS A
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TO MAKE INFORMED
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THEIR CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION.

GOALS

There are over 9 million Hispanic households in the U.S., of which nearly 6 million have school-age children. Unfortunately, a substantial number of these families are unaware of the options and opportunities that education reform in the form of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* and the American Competitiveness Initiative offer them.

The Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning makes every effort to disseminate a wealth of new and existing education information to Hispanic communities. The information, when placed in the hands of parents, is a powerful tool that enables them to make informed decisions about their children's education. In the process, they become powerful allies in the White House Initiative and partnership's efforts to help close the achievement gap for Hispanic students. To this end, the White House Initiative has a goal to reach 6 million families during a two-year period.

However, the White House Initiative and the U.S. Department of Education alone cannot reach all of the nation's Hispanic families and children. Thus, the White House Initiative's second goal is to enlist up to 500 organizations in the Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning during the same two-year period. To date, more than 200 public and private organizations from across the U.S. have agreed to join the partnership.

DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

The Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning, committed to improving the academic achievement of Hispanic children and youths, provides its member organizations access to valuable education information that includes:

- *The Hispanic Family Learning Tool Kit*;
- Bilingual publications;
- *NCLB* updates and in-depth, practical information for families;
- Grant and other funding opportunities;
- Promising practices among partner organizations;
- Upcoming events;
- News clips related to Hispanic education; and
- A monthly newsletter that highlights member organizations, U.S. Department of Education program offices, and key federal departments and agencies.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Information is also distributed at the regional conferences the White House Initiative convenes nationwide. The first regional event, cohosted by Youth Development, Inc., was held in May 2006 in Albuquerque, N.M. The second regional conference was held in Santa Ana, Calif., in September 2006 and was cohosted by the Orange County Department of Education, the Santa Ana Unified School District, the Orange County United Way, and Los Kitos Entertainment, LLC. The third regional conference, cohosted by the Latin American Association, is being held in Suwanee and Norcross, Ga., this month. Subsequent regional conferences will be held in Miami in the summer and Chicago in the fall.

These events focus on the ways in which various stakeholders are working to meet the education needs of Hispanic families and cover topics ranging from early childhood cognitive development to postsecondary education.

JOINING THE PARTNERSHIP

The White House Initiative and the Partnership for Hispanic Family Learning welcome all organizations—nonprofit, community, faith-based, education, public, private, and government—that wish to be counted among those that are forming this national network to ensure academic success for Hispanic Americans.

Interested organizations should contact the White House Initiative at 202-401-1411 or visit <http://www.YesICan.gov/getinvolved/organization.html>.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the Latin American Association would like to thank the following members of the conference planning committee:

Beth Arnow

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Katuska Delgado

Junior Achievement of Georgia

Tricia Kennedy

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Berney Kirkland

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Laureen Lamb

United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta

Santiago Marquez

Boys and Girls Club of America

Bernadette Musetti

Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education

University of Georgia

José R. Perez

Georgia Board of Education Seventh Congressional District

Target Market Trends, Inc.

Jill J. Reimer

Georgia Afterschool Investment Council

Elizabeth Webb

Georgia Department of Education

PROGRAM AT GLANCE

THURSDAY, MAY 10

1–5 p.m.	Executive Education Briefing
3–5 p.m.	Pre-conference Workshop: Accessing Federal Grants and Contracts

FRIDAY, MAY 11

8–8:30 a.m.	Registration
8:30–9:00 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Session
9–10:30 a.m.	Early Childhood Development
10:45–11:15 a.m.	Overview: <i>No Child Left Behind</i> and Education Reform
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	<i>NCLB</i> Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplemental Educational Services and Choice• Parental and Family Involvement• Accountability
12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 p.m.–3:15 p.m.	High School Reform: Linking Academic Preparation to College Completion
3:30–5 p.m.	Increasing Postsecondary Educational Attainment: Access, Persistence and Completion
5 p.m.	General Session and Close

SATURDAY, MAY 12

8:30–9 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Session
9–10:30 a.m.	Families as Full Partners in Education Reform
10:45 a.m.–Noon	Mad Science Family Activities
Noon	General Session and Close

DETAILED PROGRAM

THURSDAY, MAY 10

Gwinnett County Public Schools Instructional Support Center
437 Old Peachtree Road N.W.
Suwanee, Georgia

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

1–5 p.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

José R. Perez

Member

Georgia Board of Education Seventh Congressional District
President

Target Market Trends, Inc.

J. Alvin Wilbanks

CEO and Superintendent

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Louise Radloff

Chairman

Gwinnett County Public Schools Board of Education

Anne Hancock

Secretary's Regional Representative

U.S. Department of Education

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION BRIEFING

State, district and local board of education members from Georgia and adjoining states will receive a range of updates from key U.S. Department of Education officials. Updates will cover the state of education reform, particularly those pertaining to the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

POLICY PROVISIONS OF *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND*

Speakers: **Kathleen Leos**
Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director
Office of English Language Acquisition
U.S. Department of Education

Morgan Brown
Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Innovation and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

PUTTING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Presenters: **Eduardo Cancino**
Assistant Superintendent for School and Program Improvement
Hidalgo Independent School District

Jackie Beasley
Principal
Lilburn Elementary School
Gwinnett County Public Schools

3–5 p.m. **WORKSHOP: ACCESSING FEDERAL GRANTS AND CONTRACTS**

For decades, community, faith-based, and a host of other organizations have been serving Hispanic children, youths and families nationwide. This workshop will provide: information about federal grant opportunities as a source of funding for these important services; technical assistance for organizations seeking to secure funds from the federal government; an overview of the federal government's new grant Web site, <http://www.grants.gov>; and information about best practices with regard to applying for grants.

Presenter: **Blanca Rodriguez**
Director of Grants, Policy and Oversight
Office of the Chief Financial Officer
U.S. Department of Education

5 p.m. **GENERAL SESSION AND CLOSE**

FRIDAY MAY 11

Gwinnett County Public Schools Instructional Support Center
437 Old Peachtree Road N.W.
Suwanee, Georgia

7:30–8:30 a.m. **REGISTRATION**

8:30–9 a.m. **WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION**

Adam Chavarria
Executive Director
The White House Initiative
on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

J. Alvin Wilbanks
CEO and Superintendent
Gwinnett County Public Schools

Maritza Pichon
Executive Director
Latin American Association

9–10:30 a.m. **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

The skills acquired during early childhood create a solid foundation for future academic success. Children must have the language, cognitive and early reading skills necessary to not only enter kindergarten, but to succeed at each successive grade level. This session will provide information about the president's Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative, designed to transform existing early education programs into centers of excellence that provide high-quality, early education to young children, especially those from low-income families. In addition, the session will address successful Head Start programs as well as other early-education initiatives for Hispanic children.

Moderator: **Danielle Gonzales**
State Policy Specialist
Pre-K Now

Panelists: **Norma Garza**
Senior Advisor for Early Childhood Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Clara Lopez
Vice President
Children's Programs
El Valor

Mary Mazarky
Pre-K Division Director
Bright From the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

10:45–11:15 a.m. **OVERVIEW: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND EDUCATION REFORM**

No Child Left Behind calls for the disaggregation of student performance data, greater accountability, highly qualified teachers and parental involvement activities. *NCLB* also requires that families be provided with options to ensure that their children receive the quality education they deserve. Although measurable progress, particularly in the early grades, has been made in the five years since *NCLB* was enacted, more work remains to be done, particularly in “improving chronically underperforming schools; increasing resources and rigor in high schools, especially in math and science; and making college accessible and affordable for every student” (*Building On Results: A Blueprint For Strengthening the No Child Left Behind Act*, 2007). This session will provide an overview of the progress to date under *NCLB* and address the policy proposals designed to build on this progress. Following this overview, breakout sessions will expand on the specific provisions of *NCLB*, such as supplemental educational services and choice, parent and family Involvement, and accountability.

Presenter: **Amanda Farris**
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. **NCLB BREAKOUT SESSIONS (CONCURRENT)**



Breakout Session: SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND CHOICE

The supplemental educational services (SES) provisions of *NCLB* are designed to help students achieve or exceed grade-level standards by providing extra academic support such as tutoring or remedial help. *NCLB* has also empowered parents with new options, including the ability for them to choose to send their children to a better-performing public school or a public charter school. This breakout session will discuss efforts to strengthen SES and parental choice.

Presenters: **Virginia Gentles**
Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Innovation and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Clara J. Keith
Director
Division of Title I Programs
Georgia Department of Education

Breakout Session: PARENTAL AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Under the provisions of *NCLB*, schools are required to encourage parents to take an active role in their children's education and engage them as full partners to improve the school's overall performance. This breakout session will outline *NCLB* requirements and address the challenges and opportunities that schools and school districts face as they strive to increase parent and family involvement for the purpose of improving student academic performance.

Presenters: **Amanda Farris**
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Policy and Strategic Initiatives
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Lorena Amaya Dickerson
Education Program Specialist
Office of English Language Acquisition
U.S. Department of Education

Priscilla Sena
Title I Program Specialist
Gwinnett County Public Schools

Breakout Session: ACCOUNTABILITY

Building on Results: A Blueprint for Strengthening the No Child Left Behind Act calls for continued school accountability and the continued measuring of student progress and achievement. Through annual assessments, parents receive information about how well their children are doing in school and how well that school is educating its students. This breakout session will discuss accountability and assessment, including the disaggregation of student academic achievement by subgroups.

Presenters: **Meredith Miller**
Senior Policy Advisor
Office of the Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Education

Susan Thompson-Hoffman
Senior Management and Program Analyst
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Performance
Information Management
U.S. Department of Education

Martha R. Reichrath
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Student Achievement
State of Georgia

12:30–1:30 p.m. **LUNCH**



1:45–3:15 p.m. **HIGH SCHOOL REFORM: LINKING ACADEMIC PREPARATION TO COLLEGE COMPLETION OR WORKFORCE READINESS**

Many low-income and Hispanic students who graduate from high school find themselves academically unprepared to undertake the rigors of a college education. Those who enroll in college often find themselves taking remedial classes to keep pace with their non-Hispanic or high-income peers. It is imperative that high schools equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed at the postsecondary level or when entering an increasingly competitive workforce. This session will highlight: the President's High School Reform Initiative and the American Competitiveness Initiative; the importance of taking advanced placement courses; and the need for rigorous academic preparation, with an emphasis on science and math classes.

Moderator: **Virginia Gentles**
Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Innovation and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education

Panelists: **Kristin D. Conklin**
Senior Counselor
Office of Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Monica Hayes
Director
K-20 Office of Equity and Access
Office of the Commissioner
Florida Department of Education

Gregg Fleisher
President
AP Strategies, Inc.

Raymond G. Mellado
President and CEO
Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation

3:30–5 p.m.

INCREASING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: ACCESS, PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION

The majority of Hispanic students who enroll in postsecondary institutions fail to obtain their undergraduate degrees within six years. To increase the number of Hispanics who obtain a postsecondary degree, students must be sufficiently academically prepared to undertake the rigors of college-level courses and be provided with the information they need to make informed decisions about choosing a postsecondary institution. They and their families also must have access to available sources of student financial aid. This session will highlight the factors contributing to Hispanic student access to postsecondary education and persistence through to degree completion.

Moderator: **Gregg Fleisher**
President
AP Strategies, Inc.

Panelists: **Kristin D. Conklin**
Senior Counselor
Office of Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Mark Matthews
Senior Educational Manager
Florida Partnership and College Board

Ruth Nichols
President
North Georgia Technical College

Maritza Soto Keen
Director
Latino Initiatives
Office of the Vice President
Public Service and Outreach
The University of Georgia

5 p.m. **GENERAL SESSION AND CLOSE**

SATURDAY, MAY 12

Norcross Cultural Arts and Community Center
10 College St.
Norcross, Georgia

8:30–9 a.m.

WELCOME AND OPENING SESSION

Adam Chavarria
Executive Director
The White House Initiative
on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

Maritza Pichon
Executive Director
Latin American Association

Speaker: **Stanley Preczewski**
Vice President
Academic and Student Affairs
Georgia Gwinnett College

9–10:30 a.m.

FAMILIES AS FULL PARTNERS IN EDUCATION REFORM

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans believes that an essential factor in the effort to increase Hispanic educational attainment and to close the achievement gap for Hispanic students is family involvement. Research indicates that the level of parent-family involvement is a strong predictor of a child's academic success, despite household income or parents' levels of education. This session will address the range of parent-family involvement efforts that organizations are undertaking and their collaborative work with schools and school districts to improve educational outcomes.

Moderator: **Chris Ferguson**
Program Associate
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

Panelists: **Maite Arce**
Chief Operating Officer
Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options



Beth Arnow

Director
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and
International Newcomer Center Programs
Gwinnett County Public Schools

Romanita Matta-Barrera

Deputy Director
White House Initiative
on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

J. Israel Cortez

Adolescent Outreach Specialist
Southern Pine Migrant Education Program Division
Georgia Department of Education

10:30–11:00 a.m. **GENERAL SESSION**

Speaker: **Alfred A. Valenzuela**
Major General, Retired
United States Army

11 a.m.–Noon **MAD SCIENCE FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

Mad Science delivers unique, hands-on science experiences for children that are entertaining and educational. Mad Science encourages scientific literacy in children in an age when science is as vital as reading, writing and arithmetic. The Mad Science presentation is designed to develop a heightened interest in science among parents and their children.

Noon **GENERAL SESSION AND CLOSE**

BIOGRAPHIES

SPEAKERS

Alfred A. Valenzuela

*Major General, Retired
United States Army*

Major General Alfred A. Valenzuela was commissioned by St. Mary’s University as a Distinguished Military Graduate and awarded a bachelor’s degree in government. He also holds a master’s degree in political science with an emphasis in Latin American studies and national security affairs. His military education includes courses in: basic and advanced field artillery; defense strategy; the Army War College; national security management; and airborne training. Additionally, he is a graduate of the Inter-American Defense College, Command and General Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College, and the Air War College.

Major General Valenzuela served as the commander of United States Army South from July 2000 to October 2003. His last assignment prior to his retirement in April 2004 was special projects officer for Commander, Forces Command.

Major General Valenzuela served in three corps (3rd, 7th and 18th) and four infantry divisions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 10th and 1st AD). While serving as commander, 10th Mountain Division Artillery in Fort Drum, N.Y., he participated in operations “Restore Hope” (Somalia), “Uphold Democracy” (Haiti) and “Distant Thunder” (Kuwait). Valenzuela also served as commander of Military Assistance Advisory Group (Peru) and as field artillery advisor, U.S. Military Group (Colombia).

In addition, Major General Valenzuela also served as the Latin American politico-military analyst at the National Security Agency, where he also worked as the planning coordinator for operations “Urgent Fury” (Grenada) and “Just Cause” (Panama). Valenzuela was also: a fire support officer and brigade artillery and infantry adviser for the U. S. Military Group in El Salvador during the country’s civil war; the deputy commanding general and deputy Joint Task Force Panama commander, U.S. Army South; as assistant division commander (support), 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.; and as deputy commander in chief, U. S. Southern Command.

Among his decorations are the: Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Distinguished Service Medal; Defense Superior Service Medal; Legion of Merit (with three oak leaf clusters); Soldier’s Medal; Bronze Star; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Meritorious Service Medal (with two oak leaf clusters); Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal (with oak leaf cluster); Joint Service Achievement Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal; and Joint Meritorious Unit Award (3rd award).

To add to his already distinguished career, Major General Valenzuela has served on the board of directors for the Eagle Scout Association and the Tomas Rivera Institute for Policy. He also has been

elected to the Hall of Fame for the Boys Club, and is on the board of trustees of Saint Mary's University. Valenzuela was recently named one of the "100 Most Influential Hispanics" by *Hispanic Business* magazine and was elected to the board of directors of the Boy Scouts of America, Texas Chapter.

Major General Valenzuela is married to the former Esther Treviño, and they have two children, Freddie and Lori. Lori is married to Robert Sean McCleskey, and they are the parents of Madison Catherine and Hayden Anthony.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Morgan Brown

Assistant Deputy Secretary

Office of Innovation and Improvement

Morgan Brown was appointed by Education Secretary Margaret Spellings as the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) assistant deputy secretary for the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) on July 6, 2006. In his post, he leads ED's efforts to support innovations in education and make strategic investments in promising education practices, most importantly implementing the public school choice and supplemental educational services provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. Brown oversees the administration of 28 grant programs related to education improvement, school choice, teacher quality, technology, and arts in education as well as ED's Family Policy Compliance Office and the Office of Non-public Education—the Department's liaison to the nonpublic education community. OII also disseminates information about parental options and rights.

Prior to joining ED, Brown worked for three years as the director of the Division of School Choice and Innovation for the Minnesota Department of Education. He supervised a staff of 20 and oversaw 25 programs related to school choice, charter schools, nonpublic school options, voluntary integration, supplemental educational services, American Indian education and postsecondary scholarships.

He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., in 1991. After a summer fellowship at the Claremont Institute outside Los Angeles, Brown moved to Washington, D.C., and worked briefly as a research assistant for the National Republican Congressional Committee before landing a job as a legislative assistant for Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-Minn.). He stayed for three years, receiving a promotion to legislative director, before being hired by former Sen. Rod Grams (R-Minn.) to work as a legislative assistant on foreign affairs issues.

In 1997, Brown received a fellowship from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota while working for a year as the director of public policy and communications for the Minnesota Family Council in Minneapolis. In 1998, he became the senior community affairs officer for the Twin Cities Financial Foundation, managing the grant review process for a \$2 million annual philanthropic budget.

During the next four years, Brown worked for two different advocacy groups in the Twin Cities area on education reform and school choice issues. From 1999 to 2000, he was the director of the Partnership for Choice in Education, and, from 2001 to 2002, he led the Minnesota Education League. Just prior to serving in the Minnesota Department of Education, Brown became a senior fellow for education policy at the Center of the American Experiment, a Minneapolis think tank. Brown and his wife, Susan, have three sons who attend public schools in Edina, Minn.

Amanda Farris

Deputy Assistant Secretary

Policy and Strategic Initiatives

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Amanda Farris serves as the deputy assistant secretary for policy and strategic initiatives in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Her primary focus is on developing and implementing educational and strategic policy regarding teacher quality, literacy, early childhood education, math and science, education technology, high school reform, school choice, supplemental educational services and migrant education.

Prior to joining the U.S. Department of Education, Farris served as professional staff for Chairman John Boehner on the U.S. House of Representatives' Education and the Workforce Committee. In this position, she worked with members of Congress to promote the successful implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and reauthorize the *Head Start Act*.

Farris has also served as professional staff for the Subcommittee on Employment Safety and Training of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, helping to draft the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002*. She started her career as a legislative correspondent in the office of Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.). Farris holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Western Carolina University.

Kathleen Leos

Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director

Office of English Language Acquisition

Kathleen Leos was appointed to the position of assistant deputy secretary and director of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) by President Bush in September 2005. In her position, she is the principal adviser to Secretary Margaret Spellings on all matters related to Title III of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and limited English proficient (LEP) students. As the head of OELA, Leos is also responsible for administering Title VII of the *Improving America's Schools Act*, which supports high-quality instructional programs for linguistically and culturally diverse students. In addition to Title III and Title VII, her office supports foreign language programs for elementary, secondary and postsecondary school students and high-quality professional development programs for language teachers in these fields.

Leos joined ED on June 3, 2002, as the secretary's senior policy adviser on Title III. In that position, she helped develop policy, guidance and technical assistance for implementing Title III as well as

disseminate its policies and regulations to the nation's educators, who serve 5.5 million non-English-speaking students in public, private and charter schools.

As assistant deputy secretary, Leos has now visited 35 states and Puerto Rico to interpret the law, train administrators and create federal-to-state-to-local partnerships to ensure that state agencies and communities understand the responsibilities they have to include all students in the *No Child Left Behind* accountability systems.

A longtime Dallas resident, Leos earned her bachelor's degree with high honors in classics from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. After graduation, she returned to Dallas, where she first directed a children's theater and later worked as an elementary school administrator. From 1988 to 1999, she was the director of the Dallas Services for Visually Impaired Children.

In 1991, serving as PTA president at her child's elementary school, Leos, with other parents and community members from six different cultures, successfully led a movement against involuntary busing in East Dallas and advocated for the construction of two new schools in her neighborhood. As an outgrowth of this work, she also led efforts to create a scientifically based language development and literacy program that has proven to be successful with diverse populations. This program later grew into the nonprofit organization Basic English Inc., which she officially founded in 1992, providing comprehensive educational services for adults and young children. Leos was the organization's president and chief fundraiser until her appointment to federal service in 2002. When she left Dallas to come to Washington, D.C., the organization supported four learning centers and had an annual budget of approximately \$750,000.

From 1995 to 2002, Leos served in various leadership positions—president, vice president and the head of several committees—as a Dallas public schools board trustee and, for six years, served as the board's liaison to the Texas legislature. During this time, she testified often, had a governance and policy development role and collaborated with elected officials on school reforms. In 1999, she was instrumental in getting the state's *No Exemption* law (Tex. Ch. 397, S.B. 103) passed, by which all English language learners were to be included in the Texas public education accountability system for the first time.

An active single parent of five fully bilingual children, Leos has received numerous awards. In 2001, her company, Basic English Inc., received the Laura Bush First Lady Family Literacy Award. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) honored Leos with its President's Award for Excellence in Education for Hispanic Students in 2003, and, in 2005, the Mexican American Legal Defense Educational Fund (MALDEF) recognized her with its Excellence in Government Service Award.

Leos' articles on education issues have appeared in a variety of English- and Spanish-language periodicals, including *Dallas Morning News*, *Education Week* and *El Sol de Tejas*. Together with her five children, Leos divides her time between a residence in the Washington, D.C., area and her home in Dallas.

SESSIONS

Maite Arce

Vice President

Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options

Maite Arce, vice president of the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options (Hispanic CREO), oversees the organization's administration and core programs. While at CREO, she has developed an affiliate's network of 32 organizations with whom CREO has worked to train 30,000 parents.

Prior to joining Hispanic CREO, Arce was the deputy director of the Self Reliance Foundation (SRF), a national organization that develops Spanish-language social marketing campaigns and outreach initiatives. While at SRF, she led the *Celebra la Ciencia* (Celebrate Science) Program, establishing coalitions of organizations, including museums, universities and school systems. These coalitions, which still operate in six cities across the country, come together to organize a rich variety of science education events for Hispanic families.

In addition, Arce founded and served as the director of the National Hispanic Resource Helpline—the first national toll-free, bilingual, multi-service help line. She also cofounded the University of New Mexico-Pepperdine University Student Fellows Program, a service-learning and mentoring program for undergraduate and graduate students.

Arce is a national trustee of the National Coalition of Latino Clergy & Christian Leaders and the National Council of Hispanic Women. She is an advisory board member of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, the National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence, and the Coalition for Access to Education Resources. She lives in Herndon, Va., with her husband Ted and their sons, Luke and Noah.

Beth Arnow

Director

*English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and International Newcomer Center Programs
Gwinnett County Public Schools*

Beth Arnow is the director of the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program and the International Newcomer Center Program for Gwinnett County Public Schools. Of the 152,000 students in the system, more than 46,000 students have a primary or home language other than English; approximately 16,000 are eligible for the state-funded program.

Prior to working for Gwinnett County Schools, Arnow was state director of migrant education and ESOL with the Georgia Department of Education for 16 years. She holds a master's degree in bilingual education and English as a second language from the State University of New York at Albany.

Eduardo Cancino

*Associate Superintendent
Hidalgo Independent School District*

Eduardo Cancino has 19 years of experience in public education and currently serves as the associate superintendent for school and program improvement with the Hidalgo Independent School District in Texas. Prior experiences include educational consultant for Education Service Center Region One, Southwestern Region of The College Board, and adjunct faculty at South Texas Community College and University of Texas-Pan American. He has experience leading school districts in systemwide continuous improvement initiatives, curriculum alignment, and data-driven instruction. Cancino currently is completing doctoral coursework in educational leadership.

Adam Chavarria

*Executive Director
The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans*

Adam Chavarria joined the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans as associate director in June 2001. He presently serves as the executive director, a position he was appointed to by the Bush Administration in December 2003. In this capacity, he is responsible for directing the efforts of the White House Initiative in engaging Hispanic parents, families and entire communities nationwide as active participants in improving the academic achievement of Hispanic Americans.

Prior to his appointment, Chavarria served for more than eight years as the executive director of the Hispanic College Fund (HCF), a national nonprofit organization founded by Hispanic business leaders in 1993. Chavarria led the HCF, headquartered in Washington, D.C., since its inception, during which time more than \$1 million in scholarships was awarded to over 600 Hispanic students enrolled in colleges and universities across the country. As its executive director, he led the HCF from start-up to successful national scholarship-granting organization. In the process, he forged lasting partnerships with corporations, higher education institutions and the Hispanic business community.

Chavarria was a consultant in Dallas prior to accepting his current assignment. While there, he also served as vice president with SER-Jobs for Progress National, Inc., a national employment and training organization. A native of Harlingen, Texas, Chavarria was the first in his family to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees. He received a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Minnesota.

Chavarria has been listed in Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans and has been a member of the Dallas Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Dallas Association of Mexican American Professionals. As a graduate student, he was selected to attend the United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, Switzerland. He has served as an active member of the U.S. Senate Republican Conference Task Force on Hispanic Affairs Advisory Committee since 1991.

Kristin D. Conklin

*Senior Counselor to the Under Secretary
U.S. Department of Education*

Kristin D. Conklin is a senior counselor to the Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). In this role, she supports the under secretary's oversight of the implementation of Secretary Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education's final report, *A Test of Leadership*. Conklin also provides advice, analysis and communications support to the under secretary and secretary of education on matters related to high school rigor and college access and affordability.

Prior to joining ED, Conklin was program director in the Education Division at the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices (NGA Center). Conklin launched and managed the NGA Center's \$23.6 million Honor States Grant Program, which supports gubernatorial leadership and high school policy innovation in 26 states.

Conklin was director of the Washington, D.C., office for the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education from 1997 to 2000. In this capacity, she provided analytic leadership for the development of Measuring Up, a comparative 50-state report card on higher education performance.

Conklin's areas of expertise include higher education finance, education governance and college readiness. She is coauthor of the 2005 National Education Summit on High Schools policy blueprint, *An Agenda for Improving American's High Schools*. She led the development of the NGA Center's *Getting it Done: Ten Steps to an Action Agenda* and the accompanying guidebook of best practices. Conklin has authored chapters on state education policy in books published by the *Harvard Education Press* and *Oryx Press*, and written opinion editorials for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Education Week* and *Change* magazine.

Conklin received a master's degree in public policy from The Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and a bachelor's degree in political science from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

J. Israel Cortez

*Adolescent Outreach Specialist
Southern Pine Migrant Education Program Division
Georgia Department of Education*

Cortez has over 17 years of experience working with the Georgia Migrant Education Program as an identification and recruitment coordinator and as the regional adolescent outreach specialist.

Throughout his career, Cortez helped to develop a network of contacts that have proven vital to the success of the Migrant Education Program in the Southern Pine service delivery area and has received recognition from other states. He has made presentations at national migrant education conferences and forums and has consulted other states on issues related to student eligibility, community organization, parental involvement program resources, and services such as the Mexico-

USA Bi-national Program. Cortez also has coordinated local identification and recruitment trainings and assisted in the development and implementation of the new *MEP Non-regulatory Guidance*. He has spoken at professional development seminars for administrators, teachers and other staff that are centered on Georgia's Migrant Education Program and has also spoken at Latino cultural awareness seminars geared toward schools and school districts in the state.

As a former migrant student, Cortez is able to identify with migrant students, their families and the obstacles they face to future academic success.

Lorena Amaya Dickerson

*Education Program Specialist
Office of English Language Acquisition
U.S. Department of Education*

Lorena Amaya Dickerson holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in multicultural-multilingual education. She has worked in the education field for 15 years.

As an education program specialist in the Formula Grants Division of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), Dickerson is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Title III requirements under *NCLB*. As part of her job, she monitors and provides technical assistance to states to ensure that they meet those requirements. Dickerson is part of the OELA Policy and Technical Assistance Team. She participates in writing non-regulatory guidance for states and participates in internal task forces.

Chris Ferguson

*Program Associate
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory*

Chris Ferguson has over 30 years of education experience as a classroom teacher, curriculum and instruction specialist, professional developer, writer, and researcher. She joined the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) staff in 1997 as a member of Instructional Coherence Team. Her current work in SEDL's two regional comprehensive centers, Texas and the Southeast, includes leading response teams to promote effective practices in family involvement with schools, and accountability and assessment. She holds a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies with a focus on teacher education, curriculum and instruction, an M.Ed in education administration, and a bachelor's degree in speech communication.

Gregg Fleisher

*President
AP Strategies, Inc.*

Gregg Fleisher began his career as an auditor and actuary with Coopers & Lybrand (now known as PricewaterhouseCoopers), an international accounting and consulting firm. He decided to make a major career change to pursue his passion: teaching math to high school students. While teaching in

the Dallas Independent School District (ISD), he had one of the highest percentages of students pass the AP calculus exam per school enrollment of any public high school in the country.

In 1993, he was awarded the Advanced Placement Special Recognition Award by the Southwest region of The College Board. In 1995, Fleisher became the lead math teacher in the new Dallas ISD's AP Incentive Program. During his five years as a lead math teacher, he has had a strong track record of helping minority students excel in AP courses. As much as 3.3 percent of the country's minorities who passed AP math exams were from Fleisher's schools.

In 2000, he was asked by Dallas philanthropist Peter O'Donnell to lead a nonprofit company called Advanced Placement Strategies (APS) that manages AP Incentive programs for districts in the state of Texas. As of the 2006-07 school year, APS was in 50 school districts across the state.

Virginia Gentles

*Associate Assistant Deputy Secretary
Office of Innovation and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education*

Virginia Gentles is the associate assistant deputy secretary for parental rights for the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII). In her role, she oversees the Office of Non-Public Education and the Family Policy Compliance Office and works on the Innovations in Education series produced by OII. Prior to joining the U.S. department of education, Gentles served as the executive director of Florida's Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, where she oversaw charter, virtual and private schools.

Gentles lived in Canada before returning to her home state of Florida, first working for the Ontario Ministry of Education and then directing the Children First: School Choice Trust Scholarship Program for the Fraser Institute. Ms. Gentles began her career as a legislative and budget assistant for the U.S. House of Representatives. She has a bachelor's degree from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., and a master of public administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, N.Y.

Danielle M. Gonzales

*Deputy State Program Director
Pre-K Now*

Danielle Gonzales, deputy state program director for Pre-K Now, works on state program issues as well as Latino outreach efforts. Prior to joining the organization, she worked at Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), where she served as a liaison between the national office and several large, multisite literacy programs. While at RIF, Gonzales trained program coordinators and developed programs and provided technical assistance for reading motivation, family literacy, literacy efforts in correctional facilities, and family-community involvement in education. In addition, Gonzales worked on a Latino outreach effort to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate literacy resources for Hispanic children and their families.

Previously, Gonzales: taught fourth grade in Brownsville, Texas; researched the condition of Latinos in the American education system for the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans at the U.S. Department of Education; and worked on several political campaigns in her home state of New Mexico. Gonzales received her bachelor's degree in political science and Spanish language and literature from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and her M.Ed. from the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

Gonzales is a recipient of the Harry S. Truman Fellowship for Leadership and Public Service for her work in educating Latino high school students about the college application process and her efforts to improve Hispanic educational achievement and attainment.

Susan Thompson-Hoffman

*Senior Management and Program Analyst
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
U. S. Department of Education*

Susan Thompson-Hoffman is the senior management and program analyst for the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), where she coordinates the use of EDFacts data for administrative purposes, including policy development, planning and program implementation and management. EDFacts is the U. S. Department of Education's new, central repository of state-reported, K-12 education and performance data. This repository includes significant state data on the performance and education progress of Hispanic elementary and secondary school students.

Thompson-Hoffman has 25 years of experience coordinating data efforts at ED. She chaired the Interagency Committee on Disability Statistics, a governmentwide forum for issues relating to the collection, analysis and reporting of disability data; coordinated the *Annual Report to Congress* for the Office of Special Education; developed the first national repository of data on disabled persons at the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research; assisted program offices in identifying data for performance management; and advised other ED offices, agencies and councils on the collection, analysis and reporting of data. She also published the book *Disability in the U.S.: A Portrait of National Data*.

Maritza Soto Keen

*Director
Office of the Vice President
Public Service and Outreach
The University of Georgia*

Maritza Soto Keen serves as director of the Latino Initiative for the University of Georgia's Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach. In this position, Keen directs a new initiative targeted at Georgia's Latino community. A key focus of the initiative is to increase the number of students in the education pipeline and to support efforts that will lead to an increased number of students entering and graduating from the university system.

From 2002 to 2005, Keen held a faculty position at the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute, where she focused on: reaching underserved audiences, especially the Latino community, and conducting training for nonprofit organizations, particularly in the areas of board development and training, and strategic planning. Keen developed the university's first Latino Youth Leadership Program focused on high school students (15-18 years old).

In 2004, in partnership with the National Community for Latino Leadership, Keen researched the leadership assets and needs of Atlanta's Latino community. In May 2005, a report identifying emerging themes and recommending needed curriculum and training was completed.

From 1985-2002, Keen served as executive director of the Atlanta Latin American Association. During her years there, she served as the principal advocate for Latino issues on both the local and national levels, resulting in increased access and opportunities for immigrant children. She also provided executive staff leadership to two capital campaigns, generating over \$13.5 million.

Keen is a graduate of Queens College in New York (CUNY) and holds a master's degree in psychology from the University of West Florida.

Clara J. Keith

*Director
Division of Title I Programs
Georgia Department of Education*

Keith has been a Georgia educator for over 20 years. She began her career in education as an elementary classroom teacher and a school library-media specialist. She joined the Georgia Department of Education in 1989, where she has worked on curriculum and instruction, school improvement, instructional technology and federal programs. Over the past five years she has led a group of highly qualified and dedicated educators to implement *No Child Left Behind*. She received her undergraduate degree from Tift College, now Tift College of Mercer University, and her graduate degree from the University of West Georgia.

Stacy Kreppel

*Policy Advisor
Office of Innovation and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education*

Stacy Kreppel has been a policy adviser within the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII) at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for almost four years. In that role, she works primarily on the public school choice and supplemental educational services provisions of *NCLB*. Prior to working in OII, Kreppel conducted program evaluations for ED for four years. She received her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Michigan and her master's in public policy from the University of Maryland.

Clara A. López
Vice President
Children's Programs
El Valor

Clara A. López is vice president of children's programs at El Valor. El Valor's children's programs work with over 3,000 children and their families throughout Cook County, Ill. López has more than 25 years working with young children, including children with disabilities, and their families. Throughout her career, López has been a Head Start parent, a Head Start teacher, a curriculum specialist and El Valor's director of Head Start programs. Her experience in the classroom and her commitment to continual education and training has enabled her to be recognized as a leader in early childhood education by her peers nationwide. In addition, she has cochaired the national Head Start Conference for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region V.

López has worked with partners to put research-based curriculum into practice, including: *I Can Problem Solve*, a conflict-resolution program; *Raising the Thinking Child*, a program that teaches parents how to implement the *I Can Problem Solve* curriculum at home; NCAST: Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training, a research-based approach to ensuring interaction and bonding between mothers and infants; the Father's Initiative, which encourages fathers' participation in their children's upbringing; the *Mis Padres, Maestros* parent education video and curriculum that teaches the importance of early childhood education. Other work include a Health Advisory Committee that deals with health issues affecting young children, and a countywide training program for Spanish-speaking licensed child care providers. López and her team have taken these curricula to Mexico, where they have been put into practice in the states of Michoacán, Guanajuato and Nuevo Leon.

In addition to her many responsibilities, López has led the development, construction, and start-up of El Valor's three children and family centers. Each center works with over 1,000 families. Her most recent center is the Carlos H. Cantu Children & Family Center, which will open in September 2007.

Romanita Matta-Barrera
Deputy Director
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

Romanita Matta-Barrera was appointed by the Bush Administration as the deputy director to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans (WHI) in August 2006. In this capacity, she is responsible for working with public and private organizations, businesses and other stakeholders to promote the White House Initiative's efforts to empower Hispanic families nationwide with information on education and improving academic achievement for all Hispanic Americans.

Prior to her appointment, Matta-Barrera served as the Texas media director for Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas). She also served as staff director to Sen. Cornyn in his vice chairmanship of the U.S. Senate Republican Conference Task Force on Hispanic Affairs. In this role, she led the coordination efforts

with other Senate offices to identify Hispanic leaders throughout the nation to serve as advisers on education, immigration and other issues affecting the Hispanic community.

Matta-Barrera earned a bachelor's degree in political science and Latin American studies from The University of Texas at Austin. She also studied abroad at the Center for International Studies at El Colegio de México in Mexico City.

Mark Matthews
Senior Educational Manager
K-12 Services
Florida Office
The College Board

Mark Matthews joined The College Board in January 2006 as a senior educational manager with the Florida Partnership. He came to The College Board from Florida's Orange County and Seminole County school districts, where he served from 1997 to 2006 in various educational leadership positions ranging from classroom teacher to school administrator at the middle and high school levels. From 1992 to 1995, he was a business management professor at Pierce College in Tacoma, Wash.

Matthews received his bachelor's degree in business management from Hawaii Pacific University, Honolulu, and his master's degree in business management from Webster University, St. Louis. Mark served in the U.S. Air Force as an officer and enlisted serviceman from 1974 until 1995. He also was a recipient of the Bronze Star Medal.

Mary Mazarky
Pre-K Division Director
Bright From the Start
Department of Early Care and Learning

Mary Mazarky is currently the Pre-K Division director for Bright From the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning, which oversees Georgia's Pre-K Program. The Pre-K Program in Georgia uses a universal approach to serve 76,000 students. Mazarky's background includes 33 years with one of the largest school systems in Georgia where she served as the early childhood coordinator, overseeing programs dealing with pre-K, kindergarten, Montessori schools and preschool inclusion.

Raymond G. Mellado
Chair and CEO
Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation

Raymond G. Mellado was born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif., where he attended Cathedral High School, East Los Angeles College and Whittier College. He is the founder, chairman of the board and CEO of the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation (HENAAC). The mission of HENAAC is to seek, identify and document the outstanding contributions of Hispanic Americans to science, engineering and technology. HENAAC began to carry out this mission through its annual conference, now entering its 17th year. In recent years, HENAAC has also developed educational programs like the HENAAC Hall of Fame, the HENAAC College Bowl, and Viva

Technology. The HENAAC Hall of Fame is the first museum exhibit honoring world-class Hispanic engineers and scientists.

In 2000, HENAAC introduced the College Bowl, an innovative, competitive two-day workshop for college students preparing to enter engineering careers. In 2001, HENAAC launched Viva Technology, a year-round K-12 education program designed to introduce pre-college students to exciting careers in science, engineering and technology. In 2005, Viva Technology served over 35,000 students, parents and teachers.

Mellado entered the private sector after a distinguished 21-year marketing and sales career with the Xerox Corporation. In 1977, while a notable member of the Xerox marketing team, Mellado became a founding member of the Hispanic Association for Professional Advancement (HAPA), one of the first Hispanic employee associations in corporate America.

Mellado was also the founding publisher of *TECHNiCA* and *Rego* magazines. Currently, Mellado serves on the Executive Advisory Council for the College of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology at California State University Los Angeles (CSULA), the National Academy of Engineering's Action Forum on Diversity, a group chartered to work with the academy to increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities in engineering and the U.S. Navy's Diversity Senior Advisory Group (DSAG), reporting to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Mellado also serves on the board of the Foundation for the Advancement of Science Education (FASE), producers of award-winning educational products that have earned three Peabody Awards.

Ruth Nichols

President

North Georgia Technical College

Ruth Nichols was born and raised in Mississippi; however she has lived in Georgia for many years and calls it home. She has been involved in education for over 25 years and has been employed at North Georgia Technical College (NGTC) since 1990. While at NGTC, she has directed the Adult Literacy Program, served as the director of institutional advancement, and served as vice president of student services. Her dedication to technical education and community values was recognized when she was appointed president of NGTC in August 2000.

Since 2000, the college has experienced a 65 percent increase in enrollment and has opened two campuses. It is the oldest technical college in the state and is one of only two technical colleges with residence facilities. NGTC is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and is currently undergoing a feasibility study in preparation for a major gifts campaign.

The main focus of the NGTC Foundation is student scholarships. In the future Nichols plans to renovate the college's Cy Grant Gymnasium and ensure the continuation of the middle and high school summer camps and "Made in the Mountains"—a Creative Economies Initiative to enhance economic development in the Northeast Georgia Mountains. Current projects include the development of a middle college in partnership with local school systems, completion of major construction

projects on the main campus, and the growth and development of what Nichols envisions to be the most successful foundation in the Technical College System of Georgia.

Nichols believes that the strongest partnerships are those whose missions are to develop and support the local community. Because of the strength of her leadership team, Nichols can commit her future to reaching out and creating the necessary partnerships to take the foundation efforts of NGTC to higher levels.

A former kindergarten teacher, Nichols has a bachelor's and master's degree in education from the University of Southern Mississippi. She studied school counseling at Louisiana State University, and has a doctorate from Clemson University in technical and adult education.

Maritza Pichon

Executive Director

Latin American Association

Maritza Pichon was appointed executive director of the Latin American Association (LAA) in May 2003. She has over 20 years of experience in corporate finance. Most recently, Pichon served as the chief financial officer for Cox Radio, Inc., a publicly traded broadcasting company, from 1996 to 2000. Prior to her tenure there she was the assistant controller for Cox Enterprises, where she held various positions since coming on board with the company in 1984. Before her arrival at Cox, Pichon was the financial manager at ISACOMM, Inc., a subsidiary of United Telecomm.

Pichon was appointed to serve on Gov. Sonny Purdue's Latino Commission for a New Georgia, an advisory group that served as a liaison for the governor's office, state government agencies and the private sector. In 1999, Pichon was part of the Latino Forum, created by Gov. Roy Barnes, that looked at issues affecting Georgia's growing Latino population.

Pichon serves on the boards of the Partnership for Excellence in Education and Georgia Case Appointed Special Advocates. Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, Pichon holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Florida and is a certified public accountant.

Martha R. Reichrath

Executive Director

Office of Student Achievement

Gov. Sonny Perdue appointed Martha R. Reichrath as the executive director of the Office of Student Achievement (OSA), formerly known as the Office of Education Accountability.

Regarding her work, Gov. Perdue stated, "Student achievement must be the focus of Georgia's educational system, and the role of accountability is to ensure that all students are achieving at higher and higher levels. Dr. Reichrath leads this office with student achievement as the ultimate measure of success. Her extensive experience and background, particularly her efforts in turning around the

very diverse Chamblee High School, demonstrate that she is an excellent and accomplished educator. Dr. Reichrath led Chamblee High School to recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence in 1995.”

Reichrath has served as a teacher, assistant elementary school principal, elementary principal, junior high principal and high school principal, and has been an area assistant superintendent and associate superintendent in the DeKalb County School System. She has an undergraduate degree from Minnesota State University, Mankato, as well as master’s and specialist’s degrees in curriculum and instruction and a doctorate in educational administration from Georgia State University. She serves on numerous boards and councils in her role as a state accountability leader.

Priscilla Sena

Program Specialist

Supplemental Educational Services

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Priscilla Sena has been an educator for 33 years. A native of New Mexico, she has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Wayland Baptist University, Plainview, Texas, a master’s degree in education from East Texas State University (now known as Texas A&M University), Commerce, Texas, and an educational specialist degree from Brenau University, Gainesville, Georgia.

As an educator, she taught in Texas, New Mexico and Georgia. After 28 years in the classroom, Sena joined Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) as a lead teacher, overseeing parental involvement in Title I schools. She continues to work for GCPS as a program specialist in the area of supplemental educational services. Sena is married and has four children and five grandchildren.

J. Alvin Wilbanks

CEO and Superintendent

Gwinnett County Public Schools

In March 1996, the Gwinnett County Board of Education appointed J. Alvin Wilbanks as the chief executive officer and superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools. At the time of his appointment, Wilbanks was serving as the school system’s assistant superintendent of human resources and continuous improvement. He concurrently held the position of president of Gwinnett Technical College (formerly Institute), the largest technical institute in Georgia, a school he opened as its president in 1984.

During his 12 years as president of Gwinnett Technical College, Wilbanks also served as assistant superintendent for occupational and continuing education and as director of vocational and technical education for Gwinnett County Public Schools. His education career began in the DeKalb County School System where he was a teacher, assistant principal, and principal-director of the Occupational Education Center. He came to Gwinnett County from the Georgia Department of Education where he was an administrator in the department’s Industrial Development Unit. During the course of his career he has traveled abroad extensively to promote technical-vocational education, and the U.S. and International Skill Olympics.

In 2000 and 2001, Wilbanks served as a leading member of Gov. Roy Barnes’ Education Reform Study Commission, which helped shape significant new education legislation for Georgia. In 2002, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige asked Wilbanks to be the only local school system superintendent to serve on the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on Title I Standards and Accountability under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. In 2004, Gov. Sonny Perdue appointed Wilbanks to the Education Finance Task Force that is charged with recommending improvements to the Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula, which determines how state funds are allocated to Georgia’s K-12 public schools. Gov. Perdue appointed Wilbanks to the board of trustees for the state’s Teacher Retirement System in 2005. Wilbanks also serves as the first chairman of the Georgia Education Coalition, formed in 2006 to give school systems a unified voice in the state legislature on funding and educational policy issues important to all member districts.

Wilbanks is the recipient of numerous honors and awards for his professional accomplishments and civic contributions. Most notably, he was named the “2005 Georgia Superintendent of the Year” and earned further distinction as one of four finalists in the “2005 National Superintendent of the Year” Program. In 2004, he was presented the “Distinguished Practitioner Award” by the University Council of Educational Administrators, and the “Excellence in Educational Leadership Award” from the Education Research and Development Institute (ERDI). The Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce recognized Wilbanks’ contributions to the county by awarding him its highest honor, “2005 Citizen of the Year.”

Wilbanks earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Georgia, Athens, Ga., and his education specialist degree from Georgia State University, Atlanta. His professional memberships include the American Association of School Administrators, the Georgia School Superintendents Association, Phi Delta Kappa, ERDI, and the Professional Association of Georgia Educators. He is a leader in many civic organizations including the Gwinnett County Board of Public Health, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, Lawrenceville Rotary Club, the American Cancer Society, the Northeast Georgia Council-Boy Scouts of America, and the Council for Quality Growth. Wilbanks is a graduate of Leadership Gwinnett.

He and his wife Celeste reside in Lawrenceville, Ga. They have two daughters and five grandchildren.

STAFF

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and the Latin American Association would like to thank the following individuals for their collaboration on this conference:

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