

THE STATE OF HISPANIC EDUCATION IN KENTUCKY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to provide information on the state of Hispanic education in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The data were obtained from Kentucky school Superintendents or their designees in 175 public school districts through a survey (12 questions) mailed in late spring, 2007. We received responses from 136 Kentucky public school districts for a 77.7% return percent.

The survey resulted in the following conclusions:

A majority (81.0%) of the Kentucky public school districts have Hispanic students. A total of 12,386 Hispanic students were reported to attend K-12 public schools in the Commonwealth. The district with the largest number of Hispanic students reported 4,039. Seventy-one percent of Kentucky school districts offer a language program for Hispanic students. ESL is the most popular program.

While the statewide dropout rate for all students was 2.4%, the dropout rate for Hispanics was 7.2%. The majority of Kentucky public schools reported that their students had good scholarship; Hispanic students were reported as having average scholarship. The school districts reported a total of 191 Hispanic teachers. The Hispanic teacher total represents 4.8% of the total Kentucky teachers.

Eight urban school districts have 7,264 Hispanic students, a clear majority. A majority of the school districts reporting identified themselves as rural or small town. The majority of Hispanic students were reported attending schools in districts with average to poor wealth. A majority of Kentucky school districts have provided multicultural training for their school district personnel.

Introduction and Background

There has been very little research done on Hispanics in Kentucky schools. The data from the current study, while reflective of Kentucky schools, cannot be generalized to the rest of the United States. The purpose of this research was to survey the 175 Kentucky school districts to assess the state of Hispanic education. The information was compiled from data collected from Kentucky school superintendents. The collected data will add to the information available to the Commonwealth, universities, school districts, administrators, teachers, and the public concerning the fast growing Hispanic school population.

The Kentucky Department of Education has released several reports on the percentages of Hispanic students attending Kentucky school districts for 1996-97 to 2004-05 (Department of Education, 2006). Jefferson County, followed by Fayette County, were the top two locations for Hispanic students in Kentucky for the two years being compared. It is interesting to note that Fayette County's Hispanic growth was 7.0% between 1996-97 and 2004-05. By comparison, Jefferson County's Hispanic growth rate was only 3.0% during this period of time. However, by the 2004-05 school year Jefferson County had 26.0% of the Hispanic students in Kentucky. Jefferson County was followed by Fayette County with 17.0% of the Hispanic students in Kentucky.

The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) reported a Hispanic population in Kentucky of 59,939 (1.5%) of a total Kentucky population of 4,041,769 people. The majority of

Hispanics in the census study came to the United States from Mexico. The census lists 31,385 Mexicans under Hispanic data for Kentucky.

Objectives:

1. To add to the research concerning Hispanics attending school in the Commonwealth of Kentucky;
2. To add to the research on the employment of Hispanic teachers in Kentucky;
3. To disseminate the results of this study to universities, school districts, administrators, teachers, and the public;
4. To improve the state of education for Hispanics in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Methods/Research Design:

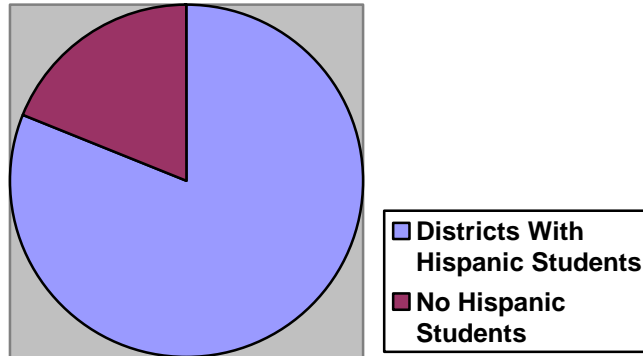
Each school district Superintendent or their designee was asked to complete and return a survey to Morehead State University's Department of Professional Programs in Education. The survey was developed, mailed, and the results were compiled and analyzed by Dr. Victor Ballestero and Dr. Sam Wright. The first survey was mailed on April 1, 2007 and was to be returned by April 27. The first mailing resulted in 86 surveys returned. A follow-up survey was mailed on May 21. The follow-up survey was to be returned by June 8. The follow-up survey resulted in 50 additional surveys being returned for a total of 136 returns. This provided a 77.7% return percent for the survey. A copy of the survey and the informational letter are included as Appendix A and B respectively.

Survey Results:

The analyses of the data for this study on Hispanic education were based on the 136 Kentucky school districts that responded to the survey.

Question 1. Are there Hispanic students in your school district?

There were 109 districts (80.1%) that indicated they have Hispanic students and 26 districts (19.1%) responded they had no Hispanic students.



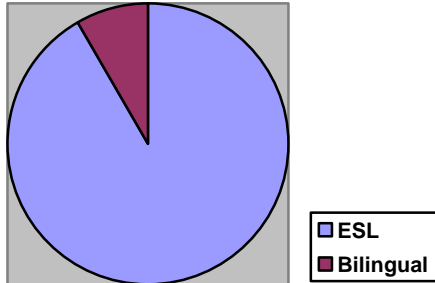
Question 2. How many Hispanic students are there in your school district?

The data indicate there were 12,386 Hispanic students that were reported for the 135 Kentucky school districts. Thus, the average number of Hispanic students per school district was 91.7. The range was from 0 to 4,039 Hispanic students.

Question 3. Does your school district offer Hispanic students a bilingual or English as Second Language (ESL) program? (Yes or No) Which Program?

Eighty or 59.2% of school districts responded positively that they offer either bilingual or English as a Second Language programs. Thirty or 22.2% of school districts responded negatively to the question. The rest of the districts (25) or 18.5% did not provide a response to this question. Nearly half of the responding school districts (65 or

48.0%) indicated they offer English as a Second Language for Hispanic students. A bilingual program was offered to students by 6 or 4.4% of the responding school districts.



Question 4. What is the overall school district dropout rate for all students?

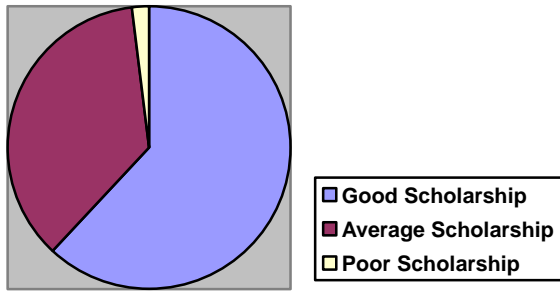
The average dropout rate for all students in the 109 reporting school districts was 2.4%. The lowest rate reported for all students was zero dropouts. The highest rate reported for all students was 16.0%.

Question 5. What is the dropout rate for Hispanic students?

The average dropout rate for Hispanic students was 7.2 percent of 103 districts reporting. The lowest dropout rate reported was zero. The highest dropout rate reported for Hispanics was 50.0%.

Question 6. Rate the scholarship of all your district students? Good/Average/Poor

There were 108 responses to this question on scholarship. The majority of the responses (67) or 62.0% indicated good scholarship for all district students. There were 39 or 36.1% of the districts that reported average scholarship responses. Only two districts (1.8%) reported poor scholarship for their students.



Question 7. Rate the scholarship of Hispanic students?

There were 103 responses to this question concerning scholarship of Hispanic students. Hispanic students were rated as having good scholarship by 44 districts or 42.7% of the Kentucky school districts that responded. Fifty of the districts (48.5%) rated the Hispanic students as average on their scholarship. Only 9 districts or 8.7% rated Hispanic students as having poor scholarship.

Question 8. How many total faculty members do you have in your school district?

For this survey, 112 Kentucky school districts reported 39,376 faculty members. The smallest district reported having 25 faculty members. The largest district reported having 5,896 faculty members.

Question 9. How many Hispanic faculty members do you have in your school district?

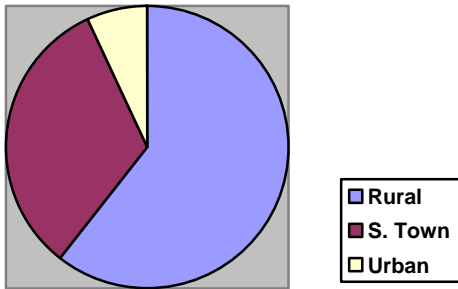
There were 136 responses to this question. The surveyed school districts reported having a total of 191 Hispanic faculty members. The average was 1.7% Hispanic teachers for all the school districts. The range for all school districts was zero Hispanic teachers to 41 Hispanic teachers.

Hispanic Teachers in Kentucky School Districts

Number of Hispanic Teachers	Number of Kentucky School Districts	Percent
0	80	58.8
1-5	52	38.2
6-10	2	1.5
10+	2	1.5

Question 10. Identify your district as either rural, small town, or urban.

There were 115 responses to this question. The majority of the school districts 69 or 60.0% identified their school district as being rural. There were 37 school districts or 32.1% that identified their school district as being located in a small town. Only 8 school districts or 6.9% of the school districts indicated they were urban districts.



The majority of the 12, 386 Hispanic students were located in eight urban school districts. These eight urban districts account for 7,264 or 58.6% of the Hispanic students. Small towns have 2,847 or 22.9% Hispanic students and rural Kentucky school districts have 2,275 or 18.3% Hispanic students.

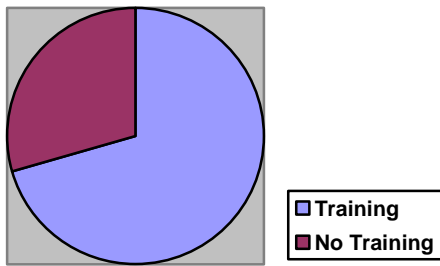
Question 11. Identify your district in terms of wealth? (Wealthy, Average, Poor)

There were 113 responses to this question concerning district wealth. Only 2 or

1.7% identified themselves as being a wealthy school district. The majority of the school districts (63 or 55.7%) responded they were average in terms of wealth. There were 48 or 42.4% of the districts that indicated they were poor school districts. The majority of Hispanic students (7,109 or 57.3%) were identified in school districts of average wealth. Another large group of Hispanic students (4,897 or 39.5%) are in districts of poor wealth. The two of the districts that identified themselves as wealthy reported having 380 or 3.0% of the total Hispanic students that were reported.

Question 12. Has your school district provided multicultural training for school district personnel? Yes or No

There were 112 responses to this question. The majority, 70.5% of the responding school districts, indicated they have provided multicultural training for their personnel. There were 23 school districts or 29.4% that indicated they provide no multicultural training for school district personnel.



Conclusions:

- 1.** A majority of Kentucky school superintendents that responded to the survey (109 or 81.0%) reported they have Hispanic students enrolled in their schools.
- 2.** Only 26 or 19.0% of Kentucky school districts reported having no Hispanic students.
- 3.** The superintendents reported a total of 12, 386 Hispanic students in attendance in their school districts. This figure was greater than the 11,464 Hispanic student count reported in 2007 for the entire state of Kentucky by the U.S. Department of Education.
- 4.** A majority of the Hispanic students, 7,264 students, are located in eight urban Kentucky school districts.
- 5.** The range of Hispanic students reported was from zero students in 26 school districts to a high of 4,039 students in one school district.
- 6.** A near majority of school districts, 65 or 48.0%, offer English as a Second Language (ESL) for Hispanic students.
- 7.** Hispanic students were rated as having good academic scholarship in 44 or 42.7% of reporting Kentucky school districts.
- 8.** Superintendents reported a total of 191 Hispanic teachers in their districts.
- 9.** A majority (93.0%) of the reporting school districts identified themselves as rural or small town.
- 10.** The survey indicated that 98.0% of Kentucky school districts identified themselves as being average to poor in wealth.

Implications:

1. Government reports indicate a steady growth in Hispanic students and teachers in Kentucky.
2. Additional school facilities will be required in urban areas impacted by the growth of Hispanic students. In particular, the eight urban school districts that have the majority of Hispanic students must develop a strategic plan to deal with the social and educational needs of this group. This will likely involve the construction of new buildings or the addition of new classrooms, the expansion of Hispanic programs and school services, and the preparation of additional Hispanic teachers and administrators to serve as role models.
3. Kentucky universities must prepare the required number of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to meet the needs of Hispanic students.

Questions for Further Study:

1. Which subject areas and grade levels are Hispanic teachers teaching in Kentucky?
2. What level of teacher certification do Hispanic teachers possess (Elementary, Middle, or High School)?
3. How many Hispanic administrators are there in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
Where are they located? (Urban, small town, or rural) What is their assigned school level (Elementary, Middle, or High School)?
4. How many Hispanic school counselors are there in the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
Where are they located and what is their school level assignment?

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**Appendix B:
Letter to Superintendents**

April 1, 2007

Dear Superintendent:

The enclosed survey has been designed to gather information about Hispanic education from Kentucky School Superintendents. This is information that we plan to collect and compile to add to the information that is currently available concerning Hispanic education in the Commonwealth.

Please give us a few minutes of your valuable time to complete the survey. A self-addressed, stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience in returning the survey. Please assist us by returning your survey by April 27th. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Victor Balletero
Associate Professor

Dr. Sam Wright
Assistant Professor