



**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 25, 2012
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 2
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Pedro Ledo, Jr., Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis

Commissioners Not Present:

Lenee Reedus, Designee, Dept of Education
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Gerardo Gonzalez, House Lay Member, Bloomington
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Diego Morales, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki
Senator Frank Mrvan
Senator Greg Walker
Virgil Madden, Designee, Lt. Governor's Office

Visitors:

Angela Adams, Attorney, Lewis & Kappes, LLC

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Vice-Chairman Richard Espinosa called the meeting to order, noting lack of quorum.

Approval of Minutes

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Danny Lopez noted that, per the Commission's latest financial reports, no unobligated expenses had been made during the month of October and the Commission remained considerably under budget. Lopez stated that this was mainly due to pending partnerships for which obligated funds had yet to be released, though once those did clear the budget projections would be more current and on pace.

Lopez then said that he had traveled to South Bend to meet with El Campito program, a Parents as Teachers initiative in north central Indiana. He said that the center is well positioned in the Latino community and has extensive partnerships there, resources that they're using to offset costs for needed programmatic and capital upgrades. This is one of the Commission's regional partners, and Lopez said that he is in talks with them to establish a course of action for how to utilize funds to help augment their services through the partnership.

Lopez then said that he had traveled to New Albany and learned more about the New Neighbors program's achievement metrics. He said that per their annual report, 49 Hispanic ESL third-grade children had participated in the program and all had successfully completed the State's I-READ 3 test in language proficiency. Lopez reiterated that the partnership between the Commission and New Neighbors will facilitate their being able to pilot the program to communities throughout the state, in line with the former's commitment to resource- and information-sharing.

Finally, Lopez recapped ongoing meetings with IU's Center for Evaluation and Education Policy (CEEP) to lay out logistics for planned focus groups held throughout the state. These sessions will be facilitated by CEEP staff with help from translators and will look to gather grass roots-level information on education and other topics related to public programs and services in the Latino community. Ultimately, the partnership will generate policy recommendations for State agencies and the 2014 legislative session. Treasurer Herb Hernandez asked what geographic areas would be focused upon, and Lopez said that Fort Wayne, Evansville, Hammond, South Bend, and Indianapolis were set in stone. One other location had yet to be decided. Hernandez suggested that the possibility of Logansport be explored since the young Latino population there had grown significantly in the past couple of years. Espinosa asked whether the reports would be made public, and Lopez said it all would be. Hernandez also asked whether the same questions would be asked to all the groups, and Lopez said that the sessions were extremely conversational but that CEEP would be looking to get comparable data from each area. Hernandez also asked if Lopez would send out the dates, and Lopez said he would. Commissioner Charlie Garcia asked about program costs, and Lopez said that \$15,000 had been set aside for the partnership to help offset CEEP's costs. Espinosa said that using this information to create across-the-state collaborations would be critical.

Unfinished Business

During the September meeting, discussions were had about the rate at which Latino students in various school districts were graduating. At the time, the data that was presented was incorrect, but Lopez said he would request the appropriate information from the Department of Education. Lopez said that he had been given the data and that time should be spent analyzing and discussing its impacts at the meeting.

Lopez provided a spreadsheet with the total number of Latino students across districts who had graduated with varying degrees (Core 40, Core 40 with honors, General, etc.). The General track must be requested by each parent, and Indiana's four-year institutions of higher education will not accept them. Anecdotally, he said, Latino and Black students are sometimes pushed into the General category because they will graduate and lift or maintain that district's graduation rates. Lopez reiterated that this information is just anecdotal.

Lopez also noted that in some districts, such as Fort Wayne, many more kids graduated Core 40 and General combined than with Core 40 Honors. He said that looking at the data from differing perspectives would be important to understand why kids move into certain tracks, such as understanding whether they connect with the curriculum or whether some should be steered toward technical or career education. Other perspectives, articulated by some in the community, state that all kids ought to be college-ready by the end of their 4-year high school careers. Lopez encouraged commissioners to dialogue on this issue. Particularly, what should the curve look like? What percentage of high school Hispanic students should we reasonable expect to be average students, how many exceptional, and how many poor?

Commissioner Pedro Ledo asked how many students graduating from Fort Wayne schools would be able to apply to 4-year colleges. Lopez said that all graduates, including those receiving the General diploma, would be able to apply to at least a two-year college. Ledo said that analyzing school-specific data would be important to understanding whether the kids are prepared or not.

Lopez used Logansport School as an example for commissioners to look at. In that case, 29 of the 54 students were receiving Core 40 or Core 40 Honors diplomas. Garcia said that on average given the statistics, nearly 50% of the Hispanic students were receiving the qualifications to potentially apply to four-year institutions immediately after high school. He noted that this figure was higher in some districts than other cohorts.

Lopez reiterated that the receipt of a Core 40 diploma only means that any particular student has received the state baseline accepted by public four-year institutions. This should not, however, be taken to mean that 50% of Latino students are academically qualifying for or applying or being accepted to these institutions.

Espinosa said that we should be using the data to advance our students level by level. For example, we should be looking to increase the number of Core 40 Honors and commission recommendations should reflect a push to that end. Hernandez added that using this data could help make local funding determinations for districts in their approach to minority students and

that one of the functions of the commission should be to provide this information to education leaders in a digestible way.

Lopez went on to state that there is an immediate tendency to see college or university as the better option, but the question that must be answered is whether or not that holds true. He proposed the situation for a student who in his freshman or sophomore years has struggled in traditional English or Mathematics classes but continues to get pushed on the college track. Lopez asked whether we should identify these students and ensure that there are other available tracks for them. He noted the fear that, with this approach, students could be tracked unjustly.

Garcia noted that this same challenge is facing all cohorts of students, not just Latinos. Hernandez said that when he was in high school, his guidance counselor helped him think through his options. Many counselors have been stripped, and others have stated that they are overwhelmed. Ledo said that the main challenges come back to parenting and support from home. He said that the mentality has changed because students that used to have manufacturing or other professional options available to them are now, given the specialization of the economy, on college tracks. He says that differentiates schools in different areas and the way their students perform.

Hernandez said that the nature of education has changed and that there is a push from “job security” to “skill security.” Lopez said that the private sector must be engaged to tell local schools what skills are necessary for the current labor market. Garcia says that he knows from his company’s work in Texas that the private sector is currently being engaged in this way in san Antonio. Commissioner Jesusa Rivera said that a group with whom she works is doing similar work in Chicago’s public schools and gave anecdotal examples of how this has worked for specific students.

Lopez said that from a policy perspective, there are advocacy groups that push for traditional education and are concerned that we’re training students for workforce. Hernandez said that in Fort Wayne they have seen just this kind of push-back when the effort was made. He says that with the emphasis of standardize testing, teachers are teaching to the tests and not addressing needed skills.

As a close, Lopez suggested that benchmarks be set to determine what the numbers should look like by type of graduate and to begin to then determine what steps should be taking to meet those benchmarks.

Guest Presentation

Angela Adams from Lewis Kappes joined commissioners to discuss the Federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals executive order. She noted that there is some concern, due to the 2012 election, among those who might qualify but might not want to come forward. She said that both candidates have said they would at least honor the deferments that have been granted, though Mitt Romney did say he would not look to continue the program but would instead pursue comprehensive immigration legislation. Angela listed the requirements under the order as:

- Entered before the age of 16

- Been in the US on the day of the issuance of the executive order, June 15, 2012
- Been in the US at least five years prior to June 15, 2012
- No serious offense conviction or multiple misdemeanor offenses
- Enrolled in a “qualified program” or high school
- Under the age of 30 when the order was issued, but older than 15

Angela said that applications must be accompanied by the various pieces of proof. The cost for the application is \$465, but with attorney’s fees applicants should be prepared to pay closer to \$1,000. She also noted that, as per current Indiana law, recipients of DACA would not be eligible to receive in-state tuition.

Adjournment

At 4:31pm, the meeting was adjourned by Espinosa.