



STATE OF INDIANA

**INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS**
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 27, 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)
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Andrea Perez, Designee, Department of Health
Lenee Reedus, Designee, Dept of Education
Gerardo Gonzalez, House Lay Member, Bloomington
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Pedro Ledo, Jr., Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne

Commissioners Not Present:

Diego Morales, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki
Senator Frank Mrvan
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Senator Greg Walker
Virgil Madden, Designee, Lt. Governor's Office

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

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

Approval of Minutes

With no quorum, minutes could not be approved. However, two omissions needed to be corrected, and Executive Director Danny Lopez said those corrections would be made for approval whenever quorum was established.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez began by discussing his partnership agreements and said that agreements were being developed in accordance with the Commission plans laid out in the Strategic Plan. In addition to that with the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy, Lopez said that one of the important partnerships would be with El Campito Center in South Bend, a Parents-As-Teachers program serving primarily Latino children. A new executive director was being hired and Lopez said he was working to develop a clear action and responsibility plan.

Noting Hispanic Heritage Month, Lopez said that the umbrella agency, the State's Civil Rights Office, did participate in La Plaza's Fiesta and he was able to speak to families from the stage. He said that the Commission had in the past partnered with La Plaza in sponsorship of the Fiesta, and while it is a strong event with great participation, the agencies had not been able to develop a more comprehensive partnership that would allow for funding as opposed to simply sponsorship. Given that the Commission is not a granting agency, straight sponsorships are not considered proper use of Commission funds and funding must come through active partnership and engagement with other agencies.

Lopez then asked for commissioner feedback on an issue being dealt with by a community group in Tippecanoe and Clinton counties. The group had considered the idea of providing an identification card to Latinos, some of whom could be undocumented. Some of the concerns raised both at the local and state levels were in reference to education and the use of the card. For example, would there be a false understanding by Latinos in the community that these cards could in fact be used as legal documentation or identification, driver's licenses, etc. Chairman Christian Gallo had initially raised concerns, and he and Lopez had met with the Mayor of Frankfort to discuss. Espinosa said that he had heard that in South Bend something similar had been done. Commissioner Pedro Ledo asked what the purpose of the identification cards is. Commissioner Teresa Velez said that the lack of required information would be a concern for her.

Approval of Minutes and Financial Reports

With quorum established as commissioners had arrived late, minutes and financials were approved unanimously.

Executive Director's Report (continued)

Commissioners discussed the possibility of engaging La Plaza in the coming year for greater participation in La Fiesta. Commissioner Herb Hernandez said that he attended late in the day and the booths had been torn down. Lopez said that ICHLA participation had happened in collaboration with the ICRC and that Commissioner Virginia Hernandez had attended, passed out information, etc. Espinosa suggested it was positive in the past for ICHLA to be represented at the event, and Lopez said that constructing a long-term partnership with la Plaza would absolutely be beneficial in helping the commission better serve its mission.

Unfinished Business

Lopez started by discussing the Youth Leadership Council idea. The goal was for ICHLA to bring together a group of young Latinos to help provide feedback on issues being dealt with by younger individuals in our community. Lopez said that only two commissioners had provided recommendations for potential participants from their communities, and more would be needed in order to move forward.

Lopez asked if commissioners had any feedback on things happening during Hispanic Heritage month in their areas. Hernandez provided a thorough breakdown of everything happening in Fort Wayne and said he would be emailing a complete list to the entire commission. Commissioner Jesusa Rivera also shared a couple of events happening in South Bend.

New Business

Lopez provided statistics on General, Core 40, and Core 40 Plus high school degrees attained by students in school districts across the state. Commissioner Lenee Reedus from IDOE provided a breakdown of each type of diploma and said that Core 40 was the degree type required for graduation and by State universities for admittance. She said that parents could request that their students be allowed to graduate with the General diploma. Anecdotally, it has been discussed around the state that some districts push students to a General degree in order to improve their district-wide graduation rates. It was determined that the statistics were for the population at-large, not specific to Latinos. Lopez said he would request, through Reedus, data related to graduations by Latino students.

Additionally, commissioners suggested that an optimal function for the Commission might be to engage local education leaders, superintendents, and others in a discussion about the status of their Latino student populations in an effort to identify key challenges and issues from which comprehensive legislative and policy recommendations could be crafted. Hernandez and Ledo both weighed in that meetings could be arranged in Fort Wayne with Wendy Robinson, Superintendent in Fort Wayne Schools.

Hernandez also said that information from the districts can sometimes be difficult to attain because some districts are not willing to share it. Commissioners asked Lopez to make a public records request from IDOE for the information being sought.

Commissioners asked about elections. Lopez said that elections for a new executive board would take place at the January meeting.

Finally, the annual Commission retreat was discussed. A couple of commissioners asked about a Saturday retreat. Lopez said that a virtual retreat could also be held. After some discussion, it was decided that Lopez would send out a handful of possible dates and commissioners could vote on their most convenient day.

Adjournment

At 4:23pm, the meeting was adjourned by Espinosa.