

Quality Education has Positive Effects on Hispanic Public Charter School Students



October 2015



Academic year 2014 marked the first time a majority of public school students in the United States were from minority groups. At the same time, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Hispanics comprised nearly one in every four students attending public school across the country.

As we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month, the District of Columbia is home to a thriving Latin American and Caribbean community, making up 10.4% of the city's entire population and 16.5% of its public school students.

DC public charter schools play a role in supporting this growth by providing quality educational options that meet the specific needs of the Latino community.

Snapshot of Washington, DC



Almost 6,000 Hispanic students attend public charter schools

More than 3,000 students are in prekindergarten through 12 grade.



DC public charter schools educate around 2,000 Hispanic adult learners.

75% of DC public charter school Hispanic students graduate in four years compared to the city's average of 62% for Hispanic public school students.



Proficiency Rates



Average reading proficiency for Hispanic DC public charter school students. The District's average is 50%.



Average math proficiency for Hispanic DC public charter school students, which is on par with the citywide average of 59%.



Overall, the reading median growth percentile for Hispanic students in the sector was 53, 3 points above the overall district median growth percentile.



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Many Quality Options Educating Hispanic Students

At 19 of the 115 public charter schools, at least 35% of students are Hispanic:

- Five elementary schools
- Two middle schools
- Three schools with elementary and middle grades
- Three high schools
- Five adult schools (including one that also offers pre-kindergarten)

Of these schools there are:

- Three expeditionary learning schools;
- One Montessori;
- And three language immersion programs.

16% of DC public charter school students are Hispanic.

The schools with a large Hispanic student population are:

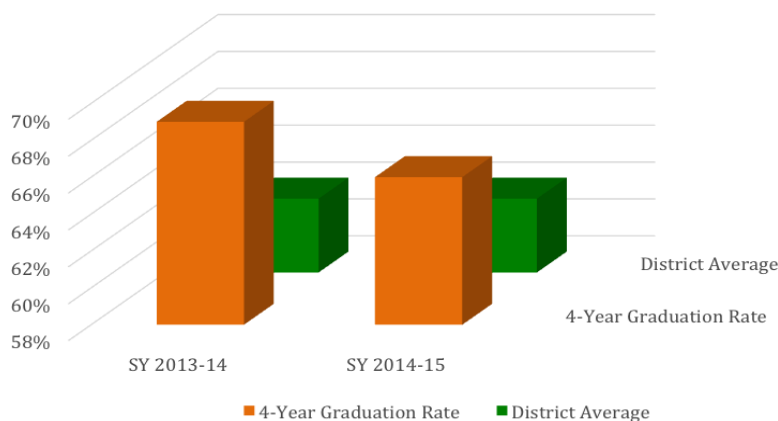
- Briya PCS (Pre-Kindergarten & Adult School) - 80.1%
- Capital City PCS - Lower School - 35%
- Capital City PCS - Middle School - 46%
- Capital City PCS - High School - 56%
- Carlos Rosario International PCS (Adult School) - 74%
- Center City PCS - Brightwood - 58%
- Center City PCS - Petworth - 54%
- Cesar Chavez PCS for Public Policy - Chavez Prep PCS - 75%
- DC Bilingual PCS - 83%
- EL Haynes - Elementary School - 37%
- EL Haynes - Middle School - 41%
- EL Haynes - High School - 36%
- Latin American Montessori Bilingual PCS - 50%
- LAYC Career Academy PCS (Adult School) - 48%
- Meridian PCS - 36%
- Mundo Verde PCS - 45%
- The Next Step/El Proximo Paso PCS (Adult School) - 86%
- YouthBuild PCS (Adult School) - 39%

75% of Hispanic Students Graduate in Four Years

DC's public charter schools are preparing Hispanic students for high education and beyond. Gerson*, a graduate of Capital City Public Charter School, turned his fear of not going to college into the subject of his senior high school project. Gerson is among the 75% of Hispanics who graduate in four years from public charter schools versus 62% of Hispanics citywide. He researched colleges and scholarships that would accept undocumented students and then created marketing materials for what parents, counselors, and teachers could do to help. "The senior project gives you the opportunity to do a project on what you feel passionate about. After that, I felt like I could do anything."

Gerson is a junior at UDC studying computer science, programming and web design. He also coaches the elementary soccer team and mentors three undocumented students at Capital City PCS. He has shared his story with First Lady Michelle Obama and it is also featured in the film "Risers" which was showcased at the Media Rise Film Festival.

Four Year Graduation Rate for Hispanic Students



*Name has been changed to protect identity.

Achieving Success through Programming

DC Bilingual Public Charter School - Grades PK to 5

Number of students: 364

Number of Hispanic students: 296

Program: Two-way bilingual and biliteracy immersion Spanish and English program

Tier: 2

DC Bilingual PCS was born out of an innovative partnership with a community-based organization. It was founded in 2004 by the parents, community and board members of CentroNia. CentroNia specializes in early childhood bilingual education and provides an array of support services for Latino families. Since CentroNia's program ends at PK, forming DC Bilingual was a natural extension of CentroNia's mission and a way to provide continuity to their growing number of families.

DC Bilingual serves students from grades PK3 to 5 and has 850 students on the waitlist. "Our mission is to serve the high need families in the city. We go to The Family Center and to Mary's Center," says Daniela Anello, the principal at DC Bilingual, "85% of our students are Latino, mostly first or second generation."

DC Bilingual provides a dual-language immersion program where students spend part of the day learning in English, and the other half in Spanish. Students learn how to read and write in Spanish and English, Math is taught in English, and Science is taught in Spanish. They have a strong emphasis on parent engagement and building community. "We've learned to make PTA meetings more culturally aligned, separating parents into small clusters with bilingual facilitators. Last month we had 90 parents at our PTA meeting," says Anello. "It's the school's job to know what the parents need."



Latin American Montessori Bilingual Public Charter School - Grades PK to 5

Number of students: 364

Number of Hispanic students: 175

Program: Montessori dual language immersion program designed to develop biliteracy in English and Spanish

Tier: 1

Graduate Amanda Sanchez has fond memories of LAMB, "We are like a big family. My dad is a contractor. He helped build it up. My dad still works on it today because my siblings go there. My family really believes in the school." Amanda is now a junior at the Field School.

LAMB's parent engagement and innovative community partnerships is what the founder and executive director Diane Cottman calls the "incredible history of the little train that could."

LAMB was founded by the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC), a much-admired non-profit in Columbia Heights with a 40 year history of delivering the full range of social services, educational support, and job readiness programs to teenagers in the neighborhood.

Diane Cottman and LAMB's principal Cristina Encinas noticed the growing disparity and achievement gap between Latino students and their more affluent peers despite all of their work being done at LAYC. They asked themselves, "If you got rid of the gang involvement, made teenage pregnancy disappear, and leveled the playing field, would our kids be ready for higher education?" The answer was "No." It is because of this disparity they decided to seek a charter to open LAMB.

After they were awarded the charter, Cottman and Encinas spent the next 18 months on airplanes and in classrooms scouring the country for best practices in dual-language immersion programs and Montessori pedagogy in public schools. They opened their doors in 2003 to 57 children in a church. Most of those families stayed with the school for almost eight years.

LAMB now has more than 800 students on the waitlist. It has been rated as a Tier 1 school on DCPCSB's Performance Management Framework (PMF) for the last four years in a row. Cottman explains, "it takes 6-7 years to gain full bi-literacy. There are no shortcuts. The first time our students take the standardized tests in the third grade, they have had more than 70% of their formal instruction in Spanish. Each year as you look at student performance in reading and math, the score goes up."

At LAMB students learn the big picture and their place in the world through a series of lessons designed to spark their natural curiosity. This leads them to see the interconnectedness of all the liberal arts and sciences. LAMB also has a robust visual arts, music, and dance program, all imbued with a decidedly Latino flavor. Students are then able to take their knowledge onto the stage every month at a ceremony.

Adult Schools with Innovative Partnerships in Hispanic Community

Briya Public Charter School - Grades PK & Adults

SY 2014-15 Number of students: 492

Number of Hispanic students: 384

Program: Integrated adult and early childhood education, using a family literacy model

Briya PCS, known for its "two-generation" approach to education, where parents and children learn alongside each other, opened in 2006. While their parents are taking classes, children ages 0-5 attend the early childhood learning program down the hall, in a dual-language environment. The Brookings Institute, Aspen Institute, and the New America Foundation are advancing Briya's model as a strategy for increasing upward mobility in low-income communities.

"We serve the most in need immigrant population in DC. They trust us," says the founder Mark Faloni. Of the 496 students enrolled in 2015-16, 350 are adults. The rest are pre-kindergarten (PK). More than 95% of Briya students live in poverty and are English Language Learners (ELL).

Just over 40% of adult students read English on a first grade level and 70% of entering PK students score below Widely Held Expectations for their age on the Gold Assessment System. Briya helps adult and child students overcome these obstacles to success by integrating adult and early childhood education in a mutually reinforcing way.

At the heart of Briya's whole family approach is a robust partnership with Mary's Center, ranked in the top 25% of all federally funded healthcare clinics in the nation,

Mary's Center provides comprehensive health care from prenatal to senior care and a wide range of social services to help families strive for self-sufficiency. Two-thirds of Briya's students access the services of or were referred by Mary's Center.

Mary's Center and Briya Public Charter School are located together to provide education, health care, and social services. Together, they offer two credentialing programs, a Childhood Development Associate and a Registered Medical Assistant program. Briya students earn a 90% pass rate on the credentialing exams, and many graduates go on to work at Mary's Center, creating a cadre of bi-lingual medical assistants that radiates into the community. Just under 90% of adult graduates retain employment, enter post-secondary education or career training.

"We're a community school," says Cara Sklar, Briya's research and policy director. She believes that being a charter school has given them the resources and flexibility to innovate with Mary's Center and serve the whole system of needs of new Americans. "It's incredible. It's the best way to serve a community."

Carlos Rosario International and Briya Public Charter School, were recognized last month by the White House as "Bright Spots" in the Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics. The Initiative recognizes programs in "Bright Spots" in Hispanic Education that support and/or ensure access to a quality education for Hispanics.



Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School - Adult Education

SY 2014-15 Number of students: 1,973

Number of Hispanic students: 1,434

Program: Educates DC's immigrant population to prepare them to become citizens and invested members of American

Carlos Rosario International PCS combines a GED, career certification and citizenship programs with wrap-around social support services, including childcare and transportation. The school offers courses in English, literacy, and technology and three separate career tracks in the culinary arts, nurse aid, or computer support specialist. In 2015-16, the school enrolled 2,500 students, age 16 years or older each year and has educated more than 70,000 students (including Hispanics) for more than 40 years.

Sonia Gutierrez, founder and president emeritus of Carlos Rosario International PCS, recently received the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's highest honor in recognition of her accomplishments, leadership, and lifetime of outstanding service to the Latino community. Ms. Gutierrez's passion and commitment to help Latinos achieve the American Dream permeates the school culture. This summer a group of teachers and administrators went to El Salvador to see and understand first-hand where the majority of their students were coming from.

National recognition is not new to Carlos Rosario International PCS. Prince Charles, Justice Sonia Sotomayer, and Vice President Joe Biden have visited the school. And the school has received numerous awards, including being named as a national model for excellence in adult education by the U.S. Department of Education.

Conclusion

As we conclude Hispanic Heritage Month, let us recognize that DC's public charter schools are helping to close the achievement gap and preparing Hispanic students for the work force, higher education and beyond. ■

