

Press Release

The Best School Districts in Texas for Latino Students 1998-2002

COLLEGE STATION--A report released by the Texas Educational Excellence Project (TEEP) finds that Latino students continue to increase performance in Texas. However, while Latino students have made impressive gains over the past decade, these improvements have not been equally distributed across districts. Some Latino school districts have made even more impressive gains while others have fallen behind.

Statewide averages allow TEEP to identify and rank the top 25 school districts that do a better job of educating Latino students. The programs and policies used by exemplary districts then may be used as a standard by which other districts can measure and improve their own performance.

"It is important to take into account the differences across districts when assessing district performance, and how well they educate Latino students," said Kenneth Meier, TEEP coordinator. In order to do this, the authors of the report use a technique that allows them to see how district policies, teacher quality, financial resources, and environmental constraints impact Latino students' performance.

Bangs ISD is an example of one such exemplary district. Bangs has ranked first among districts in Texas for the last two years. James Hartman, Bangs ISD superintendent, attributes the district's success to stressing the involvement of all students despite ethnicity. Bangs ISD works hard to provide opportunities for student involvement in scholastic and extracurricular activities. Hartman also believes that scholastic and extracurricular involvement leads to a sense of belonging among the students, and a sense of belonging contributes to greater success.

The top-ranked districts represent a wide spectrum of Texas school districts. Some are quite large, others very small. In ranking the districts, the report recognizes that larger school districts face different issues, so it has an additional ranking for school districts with more than 10,000 students. The top-rated large school district is Galena Park, followed by Ysleta and Aldine. These districts consistently rank among the higher-performing large districts in the state.

The report also shows that certain districts are making significant strides in improving education for Latino students. Daniel Hawes, TEEP Research Assistant, said, "La Marque has made substantial improvements in Latino education, advancing from 19th in last year's report to 4th in the current report."

Rankings for all districts and statistical data can be found at <http://teep.tamu.edu/>. The Texas Educational Excellence Project seeks to apply scholarly research to educational policy issues in order to make recommendations for greater quality and equity in Texas

school systems. TEEP is a joint program of Texas A&M's George Bush School of Government and Public Service and the university's Department of Political Science, with research associates at the University of Texas - Pan American, University of Texas at Dallas and Oakland University.

To see the entire report visit the TEEP web site at <http://teep.tamu.edu>

Contact: Nick Theobald, theobald@polisci.tamu.edu