

New York City BETAC Bulletin

Issue #13

May/June 2006



BREAKING NEWS ...

The NYS Education Department Awarded the NYC BETAC a New Five-Year Contract to Continue Its Mission and Programs/Activities.

Congratulations!!!

The Latino Dropout Prevention Symposium

A Successful Dialogue Among Concerned Educators

On May 5, 2006, a group of educators and administrators attended the NYC BETAC's second Latino Dropout Symposium, a joint collaboration between the NYC BETAC and Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños (CENTRO). The participants came to hear a group of distinguished presenters and panelists address the urgent issue of how to prevent "dropout" among Latino students with promising programs and practices.

The Symposium opened with a warm welcome from Prof. Yvonne De Gaetano, *Principal Investigator, NYC BETAC*, followed by greetings from Dr. Anthony De Jesus, *Interim Director, CENTRO*.

The keynote address—*Succeeding with Latino Students: What Do We Know?*—was given by Dr. Luis O. Reyes, *Visiting Fellow, Bronx Institute, Lehman College*. Dr. Reyes, a scholar in the field, presented an excellent analysis of the research and data on the topic. He also pointed out the discrepancies in published statistics on dropouts.

The panel presentation—*Promising Practices that Support Latino Students'*

Success—brought together middle and high school educators who represented different models of successful schools and practices. Prof. De Gaetano moderated the panel of prominent educators: Hector Calderon, *Principal, El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice*; Prof. Ofelia Garcia, *Teachers College, Columbia University*; Gregorio Luperon, *High School—Math & Science*; Howard A. Friedman, *Principal and Founder, Manhattan Comprehensive Night & Day High School*; Roberto Rodriguez, *Director, Graduate Support Services, Nativity Mission School*; Dr. Robert Lubetsky, *Principal, City-As-School High School*, and Sandra Ruiz, *Chief of Staff to the President, Hostos Community College, CUNY, Hostos Lincoln Academy*.

The panelists shared their effective strategies for meeting not only the educational needs but also the social and psychological needs of Latino students. They provided tangible evidence, by means of their distinctive schools, that successful educational outcomes for Latino students can be achieved using diverse educational models and practices.

At a time when so many reports paint a negative picture of schools with high rates of Latino dropouts, the panelists painted an inspiring picture for us—one of hope and admiration for their success in motivating and engaging Latino students in the educational process. Each school's high graduation rate is a tribute to the dedication of the school's administrators, teachers, and support staff to work together as a community to level the playing field.

The audience interacted enthusiastically with the panelists, presenters, and moderator. The lively exchanges resulted in a dynamic, informative sharing of important ideas and best practices ...

Some comments from the participants: "Outstanding, highly informative ... Great presenters ... Excellent conference, would like to see if it can be presented in our district... Superb presentation ... Get the DOE to implement objectives discussed in this event ... The best conference that I ever attended ... Thank you for the presentation. It's tremendously useful!"



The NYC BETAC coordinated this year's 16th annual HYLI event which

2006 Angelo del Toro Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute

took place April 29 to May 1, 2006, in Albany. Among the 200 students from all over New York State that attended this year's institute, 98 students were from the New York City Region.

The highlight of the event was when the students entered the Assembly Chamber, sat in the seats of the Legislators

and conducted a lively Mock Legislative Session. The students had the opportunity to debate bills that they researched and became familiar with during their training sessions prior to their trip to Albany.

Students also had the opportunity to meet and interact with various legislators; among them were Assembly members

Naomi Rivera, Chair of the Hispanic/Puerto Rican Task Force, Ruben Diaz, Jr., Jose Rivera, and Senator Effrain Gonzalez.

The New York City Delegation presented a Forum to a panel consisting of Andres Rodriguez, Director of the Spanish Language BETAC at LIU, George Marquez, Vice President of Education and Career Development, and Anthony Miranda, Executive Chairman, National Latino Officers Association. The Forum

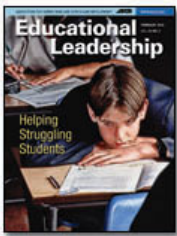
consisted of student teams which presented issues on the following topics: (a) Community: Providing Employment Opportunities for NYC Low-Income Neighborhoods; (b) Education: Are We Drowning in Tests? Alternative Assessments; and (c) Health: Low Cost Health Insurance for NYC Low-Income Families. The panelists were highly impressed with the students' tenacity, motivation and passion for the topics they

presented. They commented on how articulate, well prepared, and knowledgeable the students were in presenting their topics and how creative they were in offering viable solutions.

All in all, the entire weekend was a great success. The resiliency of our students has shown bright. The evident leadership skills of our students are a cause for celebration; we can rest assured that our future will be in capable hands.

~IN VIEW~

Accelerating the Learning of Low Achievers ...



The senior editor of *Educational Leadership*, Deborah Perkins-Gough, summarized some timely research undertaken by a group of Education

Trust researchers who posed the following question to themselves—“What can we do to help the students who arrive in high school lagging far behind their peers?” They then attempted to answer the question in a new report, *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students*.

During the 2004-2005 school year, the researchers studied four schools in different states that served a large proportion of low-income or minority students; the schools were identified as exceptionally successful at improving the performance of struggling students. To identify and analyze data, the researchers made extensive classroom observations; conducted student and teacher focus groups; surveyed administrators, teachers, and students; and collected data and materials on schedules, student transcripts, assignments, etc. They then compared the four high-impact schools with three demographically similar average-impact schools. Their findings: *There were significant differences among the high-impact and average-impact schools.*

School Characteristics

• Culture

High-Impact Schools—High expectations; policy focused on academics; school practices were geared toward preparing students for college and career; administrators consistently stressed achievement and either embraced external standards or created their own.

Average-Impact Schools—Policy documents focused on rules; teachers' attitudes about external standards were lukewarm; practices paid more attention to merely enabling students to graduate.

• Academic Core

High-Impact Schools—Educators took responsibility for helping all students succeed; they removed barriers to high-level and advanced courses and encouraged students to take on academic challenges; assessment data was used to plan for future and improved curriculum.

Average-Impact Schools—Students had less access to challenging courses; they had to jump more hurdles; schools tended to use data primarily to measure past student performance.

• Support

High-Impact Schools—Provided extra instructional time in English and math for students who started 9th grade far behind their peers in a way that kept them on track with college-preparatory requirements; identified struggling students early and got them the help they needed; counselors took an active role in monitoring performance.

Average-Impact Schools—Often offered students extra help but made it optional;

provided remedial help after students had fallen further behind; provided extra help in a way that delayed students' entry into grade-level courses.

• Teachers

High-Impact Schools—Established teaching assignments to meet needs of students; support for new teachers focused on instruction and curriculum; principals had more control over teacher hiring.

Low-Impact Schools—Tended to determine assignments by teacher preferences and staff seniority; support for new teachers more personal and social; principals had less control over teacher hiring.

• Class Size

High-Impact Schools—Reduced class size to provide more attention for struggling students even if it meant larger classes for other students.

Average-Impact Schools—Class size was more uniform.

• Time and Other Resources

High-Impact Schools—Used instructional time more efficiently and deliberately; e.g., students lagging behind when entering 9th grade spent a larger portion of their time in “college-prep” courses.

Average-Impact Schools—Students who were lagging behind were more likely to be found in “support” or “remedial” courses.

Time to mobilize educators to set a new agenda for struggling students and take action ...

(Adapted from “Accelerating the Learning of Low Achievers,” ASCD’s Educational Leadership, February 2006.)



KUDOS to Dr. Yvonne De Gaetano, our Principal Investigator!

On May 24, 2006, Dr. De Gaetano was the recipient of the *Harold S. Ladas Award for Exemplary Teaching*.

~TID BITS~

Computer Ruminations



How will the sheer amount of time spent plugged in affect our kids?...

In a recent article (May 2006) in the San Francisco Chronicle, *Young and Wired*, Katherine Seligman captured the following scene of a high school student: "He settled at the computer table in the living room and began what he calls 'my rounds.' That includes checking e-mail, friends' blogs, his Wikipedia watch list and scanning for news about 'Lost.' If he has time, he might post a blog, peruse his spreadsheet of baseball statistics or cyber window shop. He also listens to music, using headphones so he won't bother his parents or younger brother."

The article indicated that according to a survey released last year by the Kaiser Family Foundation, young people reported spending about 6 1/2 hours per day occupied with various media. That's about an hour a day more than they were plugged in five years ago, with most of the increase coming from video games and computer use. And about a quarter of kids said they did more than one media activity at a time—listening to music, watching TV, instant messaging, Internet surfing, playing games, you name

it—with this multitasking adding up to the equivalent of 8 1/2 hours a day of media exposure.

And the long term consequences of kids constantly being plugged into media? The jury is out; we do not yet have enough reliable evidence to support or refute the claims of different studies.

We highlight two views below:

Students assert that technology is integral to a 21st century classroom ...

Results of a new national "Speak Up" survey released May 3, 2006, indicate that students who were polled in grades 6-12 said that a mobile computer is integral to a 21st century classroom. More than 40% of this group said a modern classroom should include cell phones, interactive whiteboards, televisions, digital camera, video cameras, scanner, and CD/DVD burners.

Teachers polled said that they were now using more technology; 97% of them say that they use email to communicate with colleagues, administrators and the parents of their students; 35% say that they use e-mail to communicate with their students. The problem, however, is that most students now think that email is outdated. They only use it to communicate with adults.

Yes, the students have left adults behind by forging ahead to the next cool, more sophisticated way of

communicating—instant messaging (IM)—particularly when communicating with each other... (Adapted from NetDay's third annual "Speak Up" survey, sponsored by Dell Inc. and the BellSouth Foundation.)

Second thoughts on computers boosting achievement—are they creating more distractions?

Just when taxpayer-supported computer and Internet giveaways have been praised for helping to increase student achievement, new research presented at the American Educational Research Association's annual meeting raised doubts about the achievement claims. According to the researchers who examined a middle school student-laptop program, the research was mixed. The teachers and students felt that there were more distractions with the laptops. Teachers reported more classroom disruptions because students check email. But students also felt distracted and believed that their "time is not used as effectively as before."

This report did not tackle the potential distractions resulting from internet surfing, chat rooms, and the newest classroom gadget competing for attention—the cell phone and text messaging.

Is it time to bring back the paper and pencil or should we seek a balance and impose limits? ...

(Adapted from an article in USA Today)

Reader's Digest RD.com All in a Day's Work

I was working as a school psychologist in a major city when I was reassigned to a different school. I arrived at my new location early and started to get acquainted with the staff. The secretary checked for the correct spelling of my name so she could place it on the directory posted near the school entrance. Later in the day I happened to walk past the directory and saw that she had completed the job, though not in the format I would have expected. There, in front of my name, was the word psycho.
—Joke contributed by Richard E. Busey, Jr.

New Resources for English Language Learners (ELLs) Now Online

☞ The Technology Solutions Center covers every major category of technology—providing you with the ability to search and find detailed white papers, product updates and funding resources from over 4000 company profiles. Start using the Technology Solutions Center today and let your fellow educators know about this great new FREE resource available 24/7.

☞ **MathMedia Educational Software, Inc.** <http://www.eschoolnews.com/tsc/index.php?id=3471&t=details&cat=25>

Instructional, interactive K-College math software -- improve proficiency with rigor and relevance. Use as a self-tutorial for missed class work... use for the motivated student who wants to get ahead... use in the classroom as an electronic blackboard... or use in a group lab setting on a network.

☞ **Carson-Dellosa School Division** <http://www.eschoolnews.com/tsc/index.php?id=3848&t=details&cat=48>

Carson-Dellosa School Division is a fully owned business unit of the Carson-Dellosa Publishing Division of Cookie Jar Education, Inc. Carson-Dellosa School Division develops and markets supplemental instructional materials designed to improve Math and Language Arts learning outcomes with special emphasis on solutions for intervention, ELL/ESL, and kindergarten learners.

☞ **Discovery Learning** <http://www.eschoolnews.com/tsc/index.php?id=3483&t=details&cat=183>

Discovery Education is a division of Discovery Communications, Inc., the leading global real-world media and entertainment company. It produces and distributes high-quality digital video content in easy-to-use formats, in all core-curricular subject areas.

☞ **Children's Grief Education Association** www.childgrief.org

Children's Grief is a website for K-12 Teachers and Administrators is an important educational resource for needs that may come up in a classroom when a student experiences a significant death loss. The content of the website is research based and prepared by an experienced children's bereavement professional.

Website Features:

- Children and Grief: Parents' Page;
- Teachers Page; Counselors' Page
- Education Opportunities
- Military Families
- Children's Page
- Teen's Page
- Newsletter: How Grief Affects Thinking and Learning

☞ **Teacher Blogs/Teacher's Toolkit** www.answers.com

Answers.com, an answer-based search engine, is developing a directory of teacher blogs for its Teacher's Toolkit, a free online resource for educators that also includes lesson plan tools and citation help for students. Within the education blog directory, Answers.com says it will provide links to general-information blogs, language-related blogs, history and social studies blogs, and mathematics blogs....

Coming Attraction ...



*September 2006 launch
features bilingual
programming for all
children*

In an unprecedented combination of distribution and content players in children's television, Scholastic, NBC Universal, Corus Entertainment and Classic Media/Big Idea are joining forces with the national TV distribution systems of ION Media Networks, NBC and Telemundo to form a unique new

children's network featuring bilingual content for all children.

The partners will combine content and distribution assets to create an unparalleled multi-platform children's network powered by ION's national footprint of 60 broadcast stations, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, the market-leading education, literacy, and creative franchise of Scholastic, as well as the combined content libraries and production capabilities of Classic Media/Big Idea, Corus

Entertainment's subsidiary Nelvana, and NBC Universal.

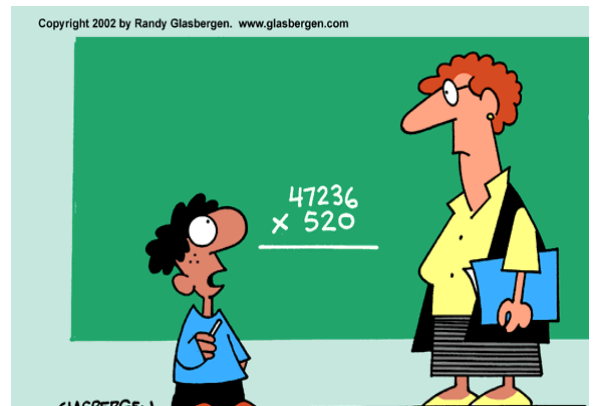
Uniting behind a common mission, championing literacy and values in the children's television category, the partners will launch a "Smart Place for Kids" as a consistently branded destination accessible across multiple media platforms, as well as provide dual-language options to serve both English- and Spanish-speaking children and families.

Laughter is the best medicine...

Copyright 2005 by Randy Glasbergen. www.glasbergen.com



"IF WE MOVE TO ANTARCTICA, START AN ARTICHOKE FARM,
AND DONATE ALL THE PROFITS TO A POLAR BEAR DELOUSING
PROJECT, I CAN GET A \$25 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP."



"AREN'T THERE ENOUGH PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD ALREADY?"



Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (HYLI) Follow-Up Celebration

The NYC BETAC will host a HYLI Follow-up Celebration to honor the 100 students and their parents. The students participated in the three-day Institute in Albany. The ceremony is by invitation only and will take place in the Auditorium of Brookdale Health Science Center, Hunter College, on *June 1, 2006, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM.*

Flag Your Calendar ...

Date & Time:	Event:	Place:	Registration:
5/26/06	<i>Annual Children's Spelling Bee (Grades 4-6)</i>	The Scholastic Auditorium, 557 Broadway	For more information, please contact the Regional Spelling Bee Coordinator in your region.
5/30/06 8:00-4:00 pm	<i>City wide NYSESLAT Scoring Training</i>	St. John's University 101 Murray Street	
6/1/06 6:00-8:00 pm	<i>HYLI Follow-UP Celebration</i>	Brookdale Health Science Center of Hunter College, Auditorium	By Invitation Only
6/12/06 9:00a.-4:25 pm	<i>Workshop: Demographic Analysis Using the 2000 U.S. Census—Focus on New York</i>	71 West 23 rd Street, Suite 515/Lower Level, NYC	Phone: 800 707-2256 Email: CalmRiver.com Cost: \$245
6/29-30/06	<i>Workshop: Undoing Racism: Anti-Racism Leadership Training for Educators</i>	New York City	Contact: Edward Fergus via email: eaf7@nyu.edu

Our Staff:

Dr. Yvonne De Gaetano, Principal Investigator
Ms. Maria Garcia Underwood, Director
Ms. Maria E. Torres, Resource Specialist
Ms. Pamela Patur, Resource Specialist
Ms. Gloria Zuazua, Resource Specialist
Ms. Moe-Swe Myint, Administrative Assistant
Ms. Velma Rosario, Special Projects Coordinator

Our Address:

New York City BETAC
Hunter College, CUNY
695 Park Avenue, Room W949C
New York, New York 10021-5024
Tel: (212) 772-4768 Main Office
Fax: (212) 650-3815
www.hunter.cuny.edu/nycbetac