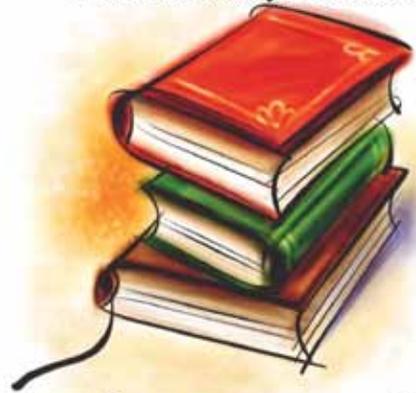




# LEAD

*Latinos Educated And Dedicated*



## HAL 2011

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT INITIATIVE

#### Hispanic Austin Leadership EDUCATION TEAM 2010-2011

Nadia Jafar Burns

Elvira Chavarria

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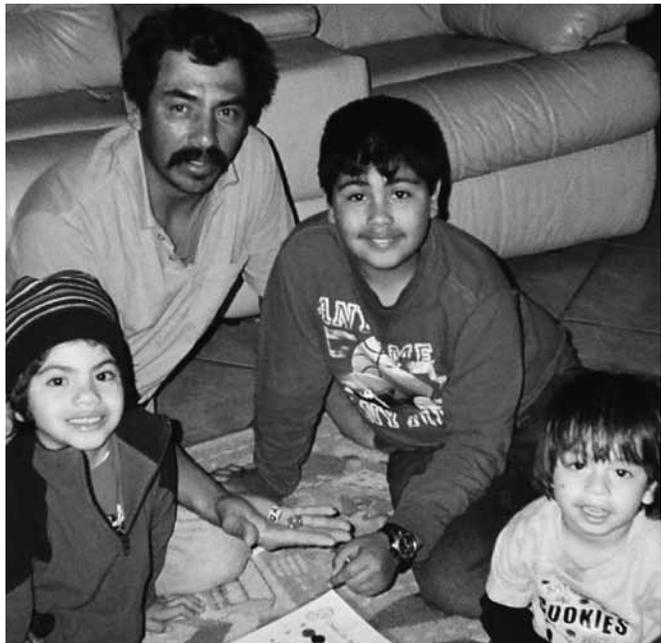
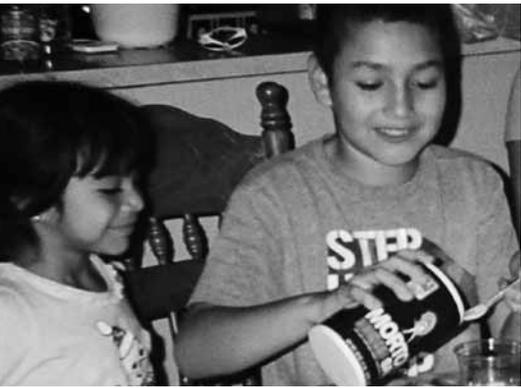
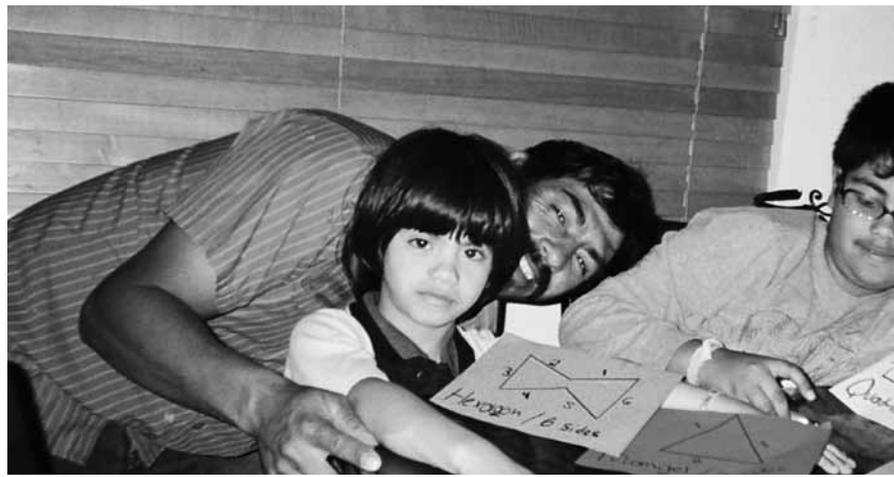
Mary Velasquez



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Chamber of Commerce  
*Expanding Business Culture*



# EDUCATION





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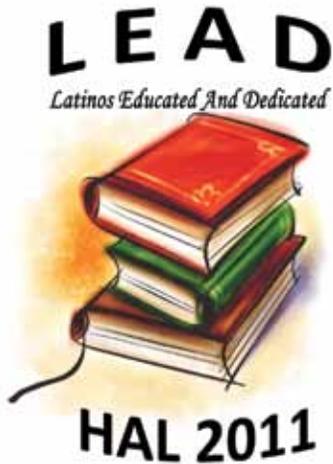
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The **2011 Hispanic Austin Leadership Education Team** undertook an initiative to help increase the level of involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's education. *In particular, the Team focused its effort on parents of fifth grade elementary students with the intention of motivating and empowering parents to be involved and stay involved as their children make the critical transition into middle school<sup>1</sup>.* To accomplish its goal, the Team formed itself under the name LEAD (Latinos Educated and Dedicated) and implemented the LEAD Parental Involvement Initiative at Widen Elementary School of Austin, TX.



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After consulting with various local leaders in education, conducting online research, meeting with Widen School officials, and reviewing survey results from the fifth grade teaching staff and parents, the Team identified four areas of parental involvement in need of improvement: communication with the school<sup>2</sup>, creation of a stronger home learning environment<sup>3</sup>, volunteerism at school<sup>4</sup>, and access to bilingual educational resources<sup>5</sup>. With the help of the Widen Elementary Parent Support Specialist, sixteen parents, many of whom were unaware of the benefits of involvement, were identified to participate in a two month Initiative consisting of two bilingual workshops designed to educate, motivate, and empower them to be more involved in their children's education.

The workshops were held at Widen Elementary School. At the first workshop, parents were invited to enroll in the Initiative and agree to the following requirements to be met during the two month period: 1) Perform four science and math activities with their children; 2) Schedule a formal conference with their children's teachers; 3) Volunteer at least one hour with the school; 4) Discuss college attendance with their children; and, 5) Have their children write a brief essay on their future life expectations.

Upon program completion, 100% of parents met the requirements of the Initiative; all met with their children's teachers; all volunteered at least one hour at the school (a total of 40 hours were recorded by the parents); all assisted their children with homework; and all performed educational activities at home, documented with a disposable camera provided by the Team. A final survey indicated that of the parents who were surveyed, all believed that the Initiative had helped both them and their children in managing the challenges of the children's education.

## Identifying Challenges Through Community Leader Partnerships

In its design of the LEAD Initiative, the HAL Education Team targeted the Widen Elementary School fifth grade class in the Austin Dove Springs area, an area predominantly populated by a low income, Spanish speaking population. According to the AISD 2010 Report Card, 93% of all families are economically disadvantaged.

In conversations with Susan Dawson, Director of E3 Alliance, and Dr. Paul Cruz, Chief Officer of the Austin Independent School District, fifth grade presents a major challenge for most students as it is a pivotal point for their transition to sixth grade. The transition to sixth grade brings such trials that children experience extraordinarily high rates of behavioral and academic problems which, when ignored, result in high dropout rates.

Ms. Dawson and Dr. Cruz also disclosed that there is a simultaneous drop in parental involvement in the change from fifth to sixth grade for students. This drop in parental involvement intensifies the problems already experienced by the students in their transition.



With the assistance of the **Parent Support Specialist, Idalia Salinas**, the HAL Education Team selected sixteen parents of which a significant portion were identified as “disengaged.”

The transition to sixth grade brings such trials that children experience extraordinarily high rates of behavioral and academic problems which, when ignored, result in high dropout rates.

## Identifying the Need

**To help confirm Ms. Dawson's and Dr. Cruz's statements and help the HAL Team narrow its project focus, a survey of Widen Elementary fifth grade teachers and parents was conducted with the guidance of the school's parent support specialist and school counselor. Results of the survey showed the following areas in need of critical attention:**

1. Communication between parents and teachers<sup>6</sup>
2. Parent-child engagement in at-home activities, including homework<sup>7</sup>
3. Creation of a supportive learning environment at home
4. Parental volunteering at the child's school

## Addressing Barriers

**In design of its Initiative, the HAL Team acknowledged potential barriers to success and reconciled them in its workshops' designs.**

1. Language – need for bilingual content
2. Parental inhibition – reticence or lack of confidence in dealing with the educational needs of their children
3. Socio-economic factors – varying levels of education of parents
4. Major family obligations - late work schedules, caring for multiple children
5. Lack of resources – need for school supplies both at home and at school
6. Insufficient positive messages

## Addressing the Need

**The HAL Education Team created two workshop with specific objectives: to educate, motivate, inform, empower and celebrate parents who enrolled in the Initiative. These objectives would be met when parents fulfilled five tasks: To 1) perform four science and math activities with their children; 2) schedule a formal conference with their children's teachers; 3) volunteer at least one hour with the school; 4) discuss college attendance with their children; and, 5) have their children write a brief essay on their future life expectations.**

**The workshops included the following unique features:**

- Informative bilingual content<sup>8</sup>
- School location and food<sup>9</sup>
- Incentive for parents
- Simultaneous educational activities for children supervised by volunteers
- Motivational messages from speakers with similar backgrounds
- Learning centers to teach and empower parents how to conduct activities
- All materials for home science and math activities, with disposable cameras for documentation and verification<sup>10</sup>
- Audits on task performance through teacher input
- Recognition and celebration of accomplishments

# SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

## Workshop #1 - INFORMATIONAL AND MOTIVATIONAL

January 20, 2011

- Informed the parents on the state of education for students in Central Texas
- Used official State data to demonstrate why school graduation and college graduation are economically critical to their children's future
- Invited two powerful motivational speakers to present: **Dolores Sanchez**, a migrant mother from Mexico who has been involved in rights for migrant workers in Texas, including education for their children. Dolores commuted from Baytown, Texas, to speak to the parents about the importance of motivating their children, being involved in their school, and advocating for their children and themselves. **Geronimo Rodriguez**, Vice President of Diversity and Community Outreach at Seton Family of Hospitals, who shared many of his life experiences, including the importance his parents' actions and words played in his academic success.
- Provided volunteer-supervised activities for children while parents attended the workshop
- Signed up sixteen parents for the two month initiative
- Assigned homework to parents: discuss college with your child and have your child submit a brief summary of his/hers life's goals and aspirations.



## Workshop #2 - EMPOWERING

January 27, 2011

# EMPOWERING

- Conducted an interactive session with the parents on methods to use to encourage and help their children in the areas of reading, science, math, homework, and school attendance
- Advocated parents to volunteer with the school and illustrated different ways to do so
- Counseled parents to communicate with their children's teachers and the types of questions to ask the teachers when they do
- Demonstrated and provided all materials needed to perform science and math activities with their children as a bonding experience
- Provided a disposable camera to document activities performed with their children at home



# WORKSHOPS

# SCHEDULE AND EVENTS

## Graduation-CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION

March 10, 2011

### Speakers

Key community members addressed parents and graduates

**Dr. Paul Cruz**, Chief Schools Office, AISD - congratulated the parents for their commitment and hard work and encouraged them to keep helping their kids with school work

**Claudia Santamaria**, Supervisor of Parent Programs, AISD

**Leslie Montoya**, News Anchor, Univision Austin – served as the master of ceremonies and gave key note address. Univision also brought a camera crew and aired a brief story about graduation

### Donations and Gifts

**Hayden Vitera**, Musician/Vocalist – donated an hour of live performance during dinner for families

**Anthony Diaz**, Photographer – donated professional photography of the presentations

### Parent Gifts

Certificates of completion and keepsake pictures of the parent child activities were presented

An **W-E-B** \$50 gift card and product gift bags with donated items from corporate sponsors





**GRADUATION**

# INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

## LEAD Initiative Requirements Met

- Parents collectively completed a total of 64 Math and Science projects at home
- Parents volunteered a total of 40+ hours at school
- Each student wrote an essay with their parents about their future life expectations
- All 16 families scheduled and completed a parent-teacher conference at school
- All 16 families completed the program requirements

## Teacher Feedback

Social and Academic Improvement

**Post-Project:** Teachers reported more enthusiasm from students during math/science classes as well as increased parental interaction

## What Teachers Had to Say About LEAD!

“It’s a pleasure to see both parents come to school and participate with their son during tutoring.”

“Mother seldom came before the workshops and she is now coming to our parent meetings.”

“Before the workshop, mom would not return phone calls and is now calling us.”

“Student has challenges in math. She would have a hard time focusing, she is receiving tutoring and mom stays in the classroom. There has been an improvement. Thanks.”

## Parent Feedback

### Pre-Project:

Approximately 50% of parents who responded did not do educational activities with their children at home.

### Post-Project:

100% of parents who responded (13) reported that the LEAD program not only helped their students but also helped teach them what they can do to help and encourage their children.

- **100% of parents who responded said they felt their children's grades improved**
- **91% of parents who responded said that their children's confidence improved**
- **87% of parents who responded said that their children's interest in math and science improved**
- **72% of parents who responded said that their children's attendance went up**
- **63% of parents who responded said that their children's behavior improved**
- **81% of parents who responded said that for them LEAD:**
  - Made them feel more capable of helping with math, science and reading
  - Empowered them to have a positive impact on the future of their kids
  - Motivated all members of the family
  - Improved their confidence in talking with school staff and volunteering at school

## What Parents Had to Say!

“ My daughter has changed in different positive ways. ”

“ It motivated me to help my children so that they can attend college. ”

“ This program has helped bring my family together and have more family activities. ”

“ My daughter was making F's in Math, now she is getting 100's. ”

# INITIATIVE OUTCOMES *continued*

I want to be a doctor when I grow up. I want to be able to help people when they are in need. I want to do great things when I grow up.

when I grow up I would like to take a class that is called the humanities and law class because I would like to become a lawyer or police officer and go to a good university.

Yo quiero ser veterinaria o quizás estudiar musica yo pienso que por eso es importante porque te va a preparar para lograrlo, tambien es importante para mi porque puedes conseguir una beca para que te ayude a pagar la escuela, siempre y cuando tengas buenas notas. La universidad es importante por que de ella depende tener un buen trabajo y así poder ayudar a mi familia.

Yo quiero ser doctora porque me gusta ayudar a los bebés enfermos. Tambien porque quiero verles una sonrisa dibujada en sus caritas, sus padres estarían felices y mis padres tambien estarían muy orgullosos de su única hija que se va a graduar de la universidad. Ese sería mi sueño más grande y que sea una realidad.





# TEAM MEMBERS/STRUCTURE



**Christopher Rios** Team Director  
BBVA Compass

**Elvira Chavarria** Funding Lead  
3M



**Mary Velasquez** Marketing Lead  
State Farm

**Nadia Jafar Burns** Project Binder Lead  
Seton Family of Hospitals



**Jose Ortiz** Technical and Translation Lead  
IBM



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## Sponsorships

3M Donation	\$300
BBVA Bank Donation	\$350
State Farm Insurance Donation	\$500
Joe Pelayo	\$50
H-E-B	\$850
HAL Seed Money	\$500
IBM (In-Kind Donation)	\$100
Joe Pena (In-Kind Donation)	\$200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,850</b>

## Expenses

Food (Pizzas for Workshops #1 and #2)	\$200
Home Project Materials*	\$140
3M Goodie Bags	\$80
Disposable Cameras	\$80
Gift Cards from HEB for 16 Families (@ \$50/each)	\$800
Photo Frames for Graduation Certificates	\$80
Photo Development of Disposable Cameras	\$140
Graduation Catering	\$487
HAL Project Binder	\$119
T-Shirts and Bags	\$200
IBM Notepads and Misc.	\$100
Misc. Printing	\$124
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,550</b>
<b>NET PROJECT INCOME</b>	<b>\$300</b>

\*Materials used for two math and two science projects for 16 families. Included: crayons, pencils, game die, play money, protractors, scissors, construction paper, folders with instructions in Spanish and English, etc.

Making  
it happen  
through  
sponsorships



Compass



Sandra Alcalá, [Executive Director, Con Mi Madre](#)  
 Rexford Burns, [Binder Design](#)  
 Guillermo Calderon, [State Farm Insurance, HAL Alumnus](#)  
 Jose Carrasco, [Parent Support Specialist, Mendez Middle School](#)  
 Paul Cruz, [Chief of Schools Officer, AISD](#)  
 Susan Dawson, [Executive Director, E3 Alliance](#)  
 Jon Eckert, [BBVA Compass](#)  
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 Bernardo Martinez, [Parent Support Specialist, Wooten Elementary](#)  
 Leslie Montoya, [Univision](#)  
 Martha Ralston, [Parent Support Specialist, Rodriguez Elementary](#)  
 Dottie Riemer, [Former Principal, Allan Elementary School](#)  
 Geronimo Rodriguez, [VP, Diversity and Community Outreach, Seton Healthcare](#)  
 Kim Royal, [Principal, Widen Elementary](#)  
 Idalia Salinas, [Parent Support Specialist, Widen Elementary](#)  
 St. Edward's University, [College Assistance Migrant Program](#)  
 Esther Yacono, [Migrant Program Coordinator](#)  
 Dolores Sanchez, [Motivational speaker/migrant program participant](#)

### Special Thanks

Special thanks to Susan Dawson, President and Executive Director, E3 Alliance, who provided us with a strong foundation from which to begin work on this Initiative. Ms. Dawson courteously shared and encouraged us to use the CommuniCard message presentation “Piercing the Cultural Bubble,” which delivers three critical and consistent messages to young Hispanic children:

1. Graduate high school = +\$1M in your lifetime
2. Graduate college = +\$2M in your lifetime
3. Speak two languages = more opportunity, better job, higher pay

### General Reference Sources

TEA Lone Star Reports, [loving1.tea.state.tx.us/lonestar/Home.aspx](http://loving1.tea.state.tx.us/lonestar/Home.aspx)  
 State of Dove Springs, [www.wesleycenterofaustin.org/reports/dovespringsreport.pdf](http://www.wesleycenterofaustin.org/reports/dovespringsreport.pdf)  
 AISD 2010 State Report Card, [ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/nclb/2010/state.html](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/nclb/2010/state.html)  
 The Blueprint for Educational Change, [www.theblueprintfor educational change.org](http://www.theblueprintfor educational change.org)  
 E-3 Alliance, [www.e3alliance.org](http://www.e3alliance.org)

<sup>1</sup>Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997 (86% of the general public believes that support from parents is the most important way to improve schools)

<sup>2</sup>Epstein J.L. (1992) School and Family Relationships: Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement (Making communication with schools easier is critical to improving parental involvement)

<sup>3</sup>Id. (Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning are essential to parental involvement)

<sup>4</sup>Floyd, L. (1998, March). Joining hands: A parental involvement program. *Urban Education*, 33(1), 123-135. Fuentes, F., Cantu, V.D., & Stechuk, R.; Sosa, A.S. (1997). Involving Hispanic parents in educational activities through collaborative relationships. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 21(2), 1-8; Hampton, F.M., Mumford, D.A., & Bond, L. (1998, September). Parent involvement in inner-city schools: The project FAST extended family approach to success. *Urban Education*, 33(3), 410-427.

<sup>5</sup>Chavkin, N.F. & Gonzalez, D.L. (1995). Forging partnerships between Mexican American parents and the schools. *West Virginia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED388489); Hyslop, N. (2000). Hispanic parental involvement in home literacy. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 446340)

<sup>6</sup>Floyd, L. (1998, March).

<sup>7</sup>Hampton, F.M., Mumford, D.A., & Bond, L. (1998, September). Parent involvement in inner-city schools: The project FAST extended family approach to success. *Urban Education*, 33(3), 410-427; Ramirez-Smith, C. & Lofland, G.D. (1995, Feb.). Stopping the cycle of failure: The corner model. *Educational Leadership*, 52(5), 14-19.

<sup>8</sup>Floyd, L. (1998, March).

<sup>9</sup>Fuentes, F., Cantu, V.D., & Stechuk, R. (1996).

<sup>10</sup>Ramirez-Smith, C. & Lofland, G.D. (1995, Feb.); Bright, J.A. (1996). Partners: An urban black community's perspective on the school and home working together. *New Schools, New Communities*, 12(3), 32-37.  
 (Studies confirm training parents in ways to help with homework can help get parents involved and improve academic achievement)



4.14.2011