

National PTA and Hispanic Heritage Foundation Convene Parent and Education Leaders to Strengthen Engagement and Support of Latino Families

Education 2015-06-25 11:12:16

ALEXANDRIA, VA — With a shared commitment to educational excellence and the success of every child, National PTA and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF) will convene parent and education leaders from across the country for the first **Hispanic Family Engagement Symposium from 9 - 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 25, at the Convention Center in Charlotte, N.C.** The symposium is designed to strengthen engagement and support of Latino families, and ultimately, create a better learning environment for Hispanic students, who currently make up nearly one in four students nationally. The symposium is being held in conjunction with the [2015 National PTA Convention & Expo](#). Watch the live stream on the [National PTA's YouTube Channel](#).

White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics Executive Director Alejandra Ceja and Univision Executive Vice President and Corporate Officer Roberto Llamas will participate in the symposium along with National PTA President Otha Thornton; National PTA Executive Director Nathan R. Monell, CAE; and HHF President and CEO Jose Antonio Tijerino, who also is a member of National PTA's Board of Directors. As Tijerino rolls off the National PTA Board this National Convention, President Thornton honored him with a National PTA Lifetime Achievement Award.

"The Hispanic Heritage Foundation is proud to collaborate with National PTA to ensure Latino students benefit as much as other students from parents who are not only engaged but in leadership positions with PTA in communities nationwide," said Tijerino. "Twenty-five percent of students today are Hispanic, and we are working with National PTA, the White House Initiative and Univision to reflect that number with Latino parents in PTA as well as teachers in classrooms. Through the Taking the Pulse of the High School Student in America study we executed with MyCollegeOptions.org, we found that Hispanic students are the least likely to say that their parents are involved enough in their education and the most likely to report that they want more parental involvement. The need is certainly there from the student perspective."

National, state and local PTA leaders also will participate in the symposium, including Mercedes Cerrato, president, Hispanic/Latino Statewide (Ga.) Community PTA; Mercedes Sandoval, National PTA Board member; Matthew John Rodriguez, president-elect, Illinois PTA; and Juan San Miguel, president-elect, Alaska PTA.

During the event, National PTA will answer the [White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics'](#) call for ["Commitments to Action"](#) by committing to educate school and PTA leaders about effective engagement of Hispanic families, increase the number of Hispanic PTA leaders, and cultivate and expand partnerships with others serving Hispanic families. As part of the commitment, National PTA and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation signed a Memorandum of Understanding during a National PTA Board of Directors meeting on June 22, providing a framework for ongoing collaboration in support of Latino students and families.

"Latino children and youth are the fastest-growing population in America and an important part of our nation's future. Research also shows the critical role families play in children's success and achievement," said Otha Thornton, president of National PTA. "We are pleased to announce our Commitment to Action and formalize our collaboration with the Hispanic Heritage Foundation to strengthen engagement of Hispanic families in education and PTA and ensure all Latino students have access to high-quality learning and development opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential."

Key findings on parental engagement from the new Pulse Study by HHF and MyCollegeOptions.org, which had a sample size of nearly 5,000 students, include:

Hispanic students are the least likely to say that they use their parents as a resource to learn about paying for college and three out of four Latino students rely on their guidance counselor for information about paying for college.

Hispanic students are the least likely to say that their parents are involved enough in their education, while Caucasian and African-American students are the most likely to say their parents are involved enough. Forty percent of first-generation, college-bound students report that they wish their parents were more involved in their education compared to 23% of students whose parents attended college. Students from lower income families are almost twice as likely to say they wish their parents were more involved in their education compared to students from higher income families. Hispanic and African-American students are the most likely to report they would like their parents to be more involved in their education. African-American and Hispanic students are the least likely to say that their parents will help them choose a college, least likely to say their parents will help them with the financial aid process, and the least likely to say that their parents will help them pay for college.

About National PTA

[National PTA®](#) comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

About HHF

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation, a nonprofit originally established by the White House in 1988, inspires, prepares, positions and connects minority leaders in the classroom, community and workforce to meet America's priorities. HHF also promotes cultural pride, accomplishment, and the great promise of the community through public awareness campaigns seen by millions. HHF has been recognized for their work by the White House, Congress, Fortune 500 companies and other countries in Latin America. HHF is headquartered in Washington, DC, and has offices in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and the LOFT Institute housed at Michigan State University. Visit www.HispanicHeritage.org. Follow Hispanic Heritage Foundation on Facebook and HHFoundation on Twitter.

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WHEN : 2015-06-25 11:12:16
WHERE :

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