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Latino Students in Springfield: An Educational Profile

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Now Available

Third in Series of Fact Sheets on Education in Massachusetts

With financial support from the National Council of La Raza, the Gastón Institute is developing "Educational Profiles" for the sixteen Massachusetts public school districts with the highest Latino student enrollments: Boston, Springfield, Lawrence, Worcester, Holyoke, Lowell, Lynn, Chelsea, New Bedford, Brockton, Fitchburg, Salem, Chicopee, Framingham, Haverhill, and Somerville. The profiles present basic data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education including information on student enrollment, MCAS results, dropout rates, and student aspirations. We hope this information will be used by Latino students, parents, educators, and policy-makers to make informed decisions and improve public education for Latino students in Massachusetts.

— Lorna Rivera, Ph.D.,
Research Associate

Latino Students in Springfield: An Educational Profile

Enrollment

Latino student enrollment in the Springfield public schools is more than four times higher than it is statewide, with Latino students making up 42% of total student enrollment in Springfield compared with 10% statewide (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Springfield Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2000

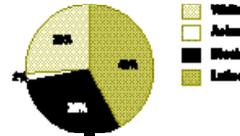


Figure 2. Massachusetts Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2000



Source: Massachusetts Department of Education, School Profiles 2000.

Other facts about student enrollment in Springfield:

- 11% of Springfield public school students are enrolled in Limited English Proficiency classes, compared with the statewide average of 5%.
- 72% of Springfield public school students are eligible for free or reduced-fee lunch.

Achievement

In 1998, Massachusetts adopted the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to assess student learning in English language arts, math, science and technology, and history and social science. From 1998 to 2000, the Massachusetts Department of Education reported MCAS results using the four categories of Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Failing. In 2001, 10th-grade public school students were required to score above failing in English language arts and math to graduate from high school.¹

Tenth-grade Latino students have the lowest rates of passing in all subject areas (see Figures 3, 4, and 5) and have consistently scored poorly on the math portion of the test since it was first administered in 1998, with passing scores ranging from 6% to 12% (see Figure 6).

Figure 3. Springfield Public Schools Grade 4 MCAS Results By Race, 2000 (Percent Passing²)

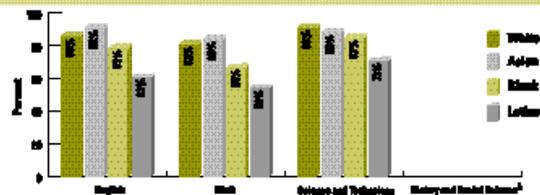


Figure 4. Springfield Public Schools Grade 5 MCAS Results By Race, 2000 (Percent Passing²)

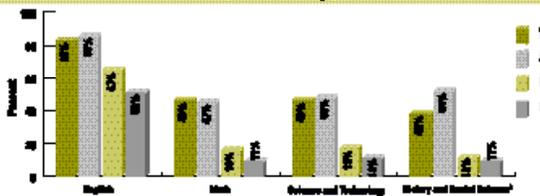
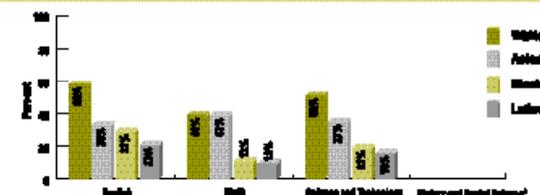


Figure 5. Springfield Public Schools Grade 10 MCAS Results By Race, 2000 (Percent Passing²)



Source of MCAS results, pages 6 and 7:
Massachusetts Department of Education, *MCAS Local School Districts Results by Race/Ethnicity, 1998, 1999, 2000*.

Notes to figures 3, 4, and 5:

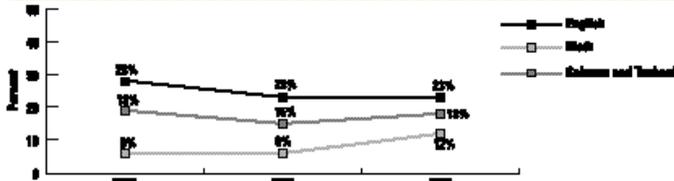
²Percent passing indicates combined percent of advanced, proficient and needs improvement.

³The history and social science test is administered to 8th graders only.





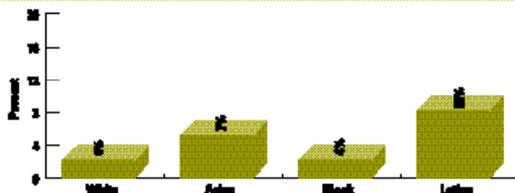
Figure 6. Grade 10, Percent Passing, Latino Students in Springfield, 1998, 1999, 2000



Student Dropout Rates²

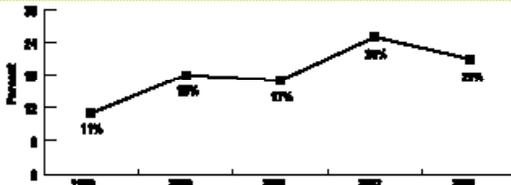
In 2000, 10% of the students who dropped out of the Springfield public schools were Latino. Statewide, the Latino student dropout rate decreased from 9.8% in 1998-1999 to 8.2% in 1999-2000, but remained the highest among all racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 7. Annual Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity in Springfield, 1999-2000



Source: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ata/dropout/9899/drrates/drrates_hm.html

Figure 8. Projected Four-Year Dropout Rates in Springfield (all students)

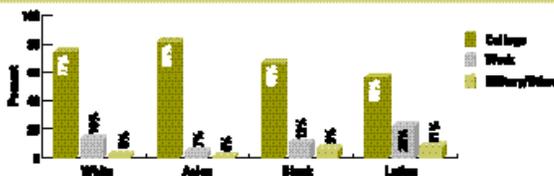


Source: http://www.doe.mass.edu/ata/dropout/9899/4year/4year_gl.html

Student Aspirations

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, the majority of public school students, regardless of racial and ethnic background, aspire to go to college. In 1999, 59% of Latino students graduating from high school in Massachusetts indicated that they wanted to attend college. In Springfield, 71% of all students indicated that they want to attend college.³

Figure 9. Plans of High School Graduates 1999 (by percent)



Conclusion

Massachusetts Latino students have the lowest 2001 MCAS scores and the lowest competency determination results for the class of 2003. Therefore, it seems likely they will continue to have the lowest high school graduation rates among various racial and ethnic groups in Massachusetts. According to a progress report on the class of 2003, only 38% of Massachusetts Latino students had earned a competency determination by passing the Spring 2001 MCAS and the Fall 2001 Retest. We can therefore assume that the graduation rates of this cohort will be below 50%. Over the past three years of MCAS testing, most 10th-grade Latino students in Springfield have not passed the MCAS. The high MCAS failure rates are likely to increase the dropout rates of Latino students in Springfield. Educators, parents, and community leaders must better understand and address the needs of Latino students in Springfield and throughout Massachusetts to avert such a situation. ▲

Resources

City of Springfield
 Official website:
<http://www.ci.Springfield.ma.us>

City of Springfield School Department
 Joseph P. Burke, District Superintendent
 195 State Street
 Box 1410
 Springfield, MA 01102
 Phone: (413) 787-7000
 Fax: (413) 787-7211

MCAS Parent Resource Center:
 Peter Levanos
 195 State Street
 P.O. Box 1410
 Springfield, MA 01102
 Phone: (413) 787-6769
 Fax: (413) 787-7171
 E-mail: levanosp@sps.springfield.ma.us

Massachusetts Advocacy Center
 100 Boylston Street, Suite 200
 Boston, MA 02116
 (617) 357-8431

For information about a particular school, visit the following website:
Massachusetts Department of Education
<http://www.doe.mass.edu>

Notes

¹The 2001 MCAS results by race/ethnicity for each local school district are not available. In 2001 the Massachusetts Department of Education made a number of changes to the MCAS test. For example, three tests were shifted to new grade levels, two tests were added, one test was suspended, and the lowest performance level was changed from failing to warning. There were also changes in content standards in each subject area and the reporting of scaled scores below 220 and above 260. Because of these changes, the MCAS 2001 scores are not directly comparable to previous test results. For more information, see *Progress Report on the Class of 2003: Percentage of Students who have earned a Competency Determination Statewide & by District, Guide to Interpreting the 2001 MCAS Reports for Schools and Districts*, Massachusetts Department of Education.

²The annual dropout rate indicates how many students left school for reasons other than transferring to another school in the course of a year. Cohort dropout rates measure the four-year rate of school dropout in the group of children that begin the 9th grade in a given year.

³The specific figures for Latino students in Springfield are not yet available.

