WELCOME AND CALL TO ACTION

Friends and Colleagues,

As ALL In Education nears its two years as an organization, I reflect back on the work that our organization and team has accomplished and the impact we have made in such a short period of time. I stand today proud, humbled and optimistic about the future of Arizona and our community. At the present moment, however, I am reminded that while we have made improvements, we cannot ignore that there is significant work that needs to be done. This work will take partnership, values-based leadership and collaboration with one another and our communities - the critical work that lies ahead cannot be done by a single entity or organization.

If we truly seek to create an Arizona where we ALL thrive and succeed, then we must begin to address the gaps in opportunity and justice that have plagued our systems for decades. If the coronavirus pandemic taught us anything, we know that while education can and will make a difference in the lives of students and families; there have always been and continue to be key factors outside of the classroom that impact educational attainment. These circumstances which include poverty, access to quality healthcare, food insecurity, immigration, mental health, safe and affordable housing, access to employment and the economy, disciplinary practices and the environment can determine whether a student comes to school ready to learn. Educators are not able to focus on teaching and learning adequately without the tools and resources to address these factors first. ALL In Education is calling these factors The Social Determinants of Education.

To be real advocates for systems change we need to shift the thinking that these issues live singularly and have no impact on one another. I would like to propose a scenario for us to think about and carry as leaders when thinking about the decisions we make that impact the lives of students and families. Imagine coming to your workplace hungry, unsure of whether you will have a home to go to - or coming to work feeling sick without access to a doctor and proper medication. Chances are your performance would suffer. You would probably not be best equipped and prepared to fulfill the duties expected of you. These scenarios can be the day to day reality for the 55% of students in Arizona’s K-12 schools who qualify for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch. We cannot expect a majority of students and families struggling with the impacts of poverty to arrive at school prepared for teaching and learning. We must do more to support ALL Arizona families.

ALL In Education plans on tackling the issue of how all these factors play a role in the overall well-being of a student and their families. We will do this by working collaboratively with organizations that are experts in their respective fields of advocacy. We know that these issues will not be addressed and solved overnight, but we also know that the sooner we begin to elevate the impact these issues will have on the future health and success of Arizona - the sooner we can reach long-term, meaningful solutions and systems change.

Alongside these efforts, we will continue to develop values-based leaders who are committed to serving our community with courage, compassion and a data-driven equity lens. Our work to address the lack of Latinos in education leadership and decision-making roles will be the core of our work. In the 2021-2022 academic year, Arizona’s K-12 student population remains largely Latino at 45%, while only 28% of local school board members, 14% of state education board members, 16% of administrators and 16% of the teaching workforce in Arizona are Latino (Arizona Department of Education [ADE], 2021). We believe that it is imperative for our leaders to be reflective of the student population they serve in order for critical decisions to be made with the knowledge, wisdom and valuable perspective that our community brings to the table. As nearly half of the K-12 student population, Latino students also represent a large portion of Arizona’s future workforce. We must prepare and equip this segment of students to effectively participate in our local economy and take on the jobs of the future.

Our organization will continue to address the gaps in Latino and values-aligned representation across our school systems, at a state and local level. MAPA: The State of Arizona Latino Education, Power and Influence, is the tool we will use to evaluate and share findings on the makeup of Arizona education leadership from classroom teachers, administrators to local and state education governing boards. MAPA will also report on Latino student academic achievement and hold us accountable in advancing our work. Every year we will report on our progress towards increasing Latino representation and attainment in Arizona education.

We know this critical work cannot be achieved alone. As leaders in Arizona, we must come together around a collective vision of a more vibrant and thriving community where ALL students have access to opportunity and justice. I ask that you join us at ALL In Education on our journey to drive and lead action towards that vision.

With gratitude and respect,

Stephanie Parra, M.Ed.
Executive Director | ALL In Education
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resilient, talented, bi-cultural and bi-lingual - these are all descriptors of the Latino communities in Arizona. While these words may represent positivity and value, the reality is that respect, opportunity and justice are actions that are missing in these same communities. Regardless of the immense amount of talent and resiliency that Latinos offer, many times they are viewed as problems to be solved. This narrow lens that Latinos have been viewed through has been the unfortunate reason that many of these communities have been continuously left behind throughout the years.

The pandemic exposed the long standing social and economic systemic inequities that have been responsible for the gaps in achievement and growth for Latinos of all ages. From educational attainment, access to quality healthcare, to low-wage jobs that the pandemic uncovered to be considered essential to the welfare of our country. As the Latino population in Arizona and nationally continues to grow, so does their significance to our societal and economic stability. As reported by the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, in 2020 Latino purchasing power in Arizona reached $63 billion (2021). Regardless of the data and numbers that are associated with their contributions, Latinos are still underrepresented, under-valued and their communities under-resourced.

IN 2020, HISPANIC BUYING POWER IN ARIZONA REACHED

$63 BILLION

AND ARE EXCEEDING POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS IN ARIZONA AND NATIONALLY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Arizona, 45% of PK-12 students are Latino, but only 14% of state education board members are Latino, including the Arizona State Board of Education, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, and the Arizona Board of Regents. While the numbers of Latinos serving on our education boards tell a bleak story, when looking at the education workforce there’s an even more somber tale. In this year’s report we look at both school administrators and the teaching workforce. With 16% of the teaching workforce and school administrators identifying as Latino, we know the vast majority of critical decisions impacting Latino students are being made without the community’s perspective.

As mentioned in the 2020-21 MAPA report, the disproportionate representation in positions of leadership and power has been a critical component to why students and families continue to face inequities in the systems that are there to support them. There’s a growing body of research that indicates that test scores, suspension rates and attendance are impacted by the demographic match between teachers and students (Figlio, 2017). The longer we wait to address the issues that have long plagued Latino students and their families, the more significant the damage to our future economic growth and stability. The current 45% of PK-12 students, represent a large majority of Arizona’s future workforce. At our current trajectory, we are failing to prepare these students to take on the jobs required to secure the welfare of our state and nation. We have a moral and economic obligation to choose a path that rejects harmful and discriminatory policies that impact Latino and communities of color. It is time for us to realize that these policies have created division, are ineffective and are responsible for the rise in poverty and decrease in educational achievement for Latino students and their families.

ALL In Education realizes that in order to enact significant and long-lasting change in our systems, we must also present solutions. Our response has been the successful launch of our Parent Educator Academy, Adelante Fellowship and LISTO (Leaders In Support Of Transformational Opportunities) Academy. Adelante is currently comprised of 25 emerging leaders and is designed to provide them an understanding of advocacy in education and explore the role that identity and lived experience play in influencing systems change. LISTO graduated its first cohort of 13 values-based leaders that have gained the skills and knowledge to make decisions through a data driven, equitable lens.

MAPA: THE STATE OF ARIZONA LATINO EDUCATION, POWER AND INFLUENCE REPORT, WILL SERVE AS OUR ROADMAP TO IDENTIFY THE EXISTING GAPS IN OUR STATE AND HOLD OUR ORGANIZATION AND LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS.

We are committed to our work and will update our findings annually so that they reflect the work that has been done and what we have accomplished as a state in regards to addressing the issue of equity and providing students with access to opportunities and justice in our systems.
THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF COVID-19

The pandemic exposed the long standing social and economic systemic inequities that have been responsible for the gaps in educational attainment for Latinos. In Arizona, Latinos make up 39% of COVID-19 cases, while being 32% of the state's population, indicating over-representation in exposure and infection rates. Lack of access to quality healthcare and disproportionate representation in low-wage essential employment are factors in this data. In education, while all students were impacted by unfinished learning, data released by the Arizona Department of Education highlights significant declines for Latino students (as noted in figures on page 8).

REDLINING AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Redlining has had long-lasting impacts on the segregation and economic viability of communities of color. Research has shown a variety of adverse outcomes for redlined communities, such as increased segregation, greater economic inequality, higher firearm injury, adverse birth outcomes, reduced homeownership rates, home values, access to healthy foods, incarceration, and public infrastructure investment. These adverse outcomes for redlined communities have long been responsible for the negative effects on educational attainment.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EDUCATION

There are many factors outside of the classroom that impact whether a child comes to school prepared to learn. It is our belief that we must begin addressing these external factors and launch more holistic strategies that take into account a child’s full educational experience. We have defined the social determinants of education to be encompassed by social and economic factors like - access to quality healthcare, mental health services, poverty, food insecurity, immigration, stable and safe housing, disciplinary practices in and out of school, the climate and environment, and access to stable employment.

LATINO STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At 45%, Latino students make up nearly half of Arizona’s K-12 student population, however, the gap in academic achievement has continued to widen in Reading, Math, and High School Graduation rates (as noted in figures on page 17) - all of which are key education performance indicators.

UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY’S TALENT AND LEADERSHIP

In Arizona, 45% of PK-12 students are Latino, but only 14% of state education board members are Latino, including the Arizona State Board of Education, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, and the Arizona Board of Regents. Furthermore, only 16% of the teaching workforce and school administrators are Latino. By investing in Latino and values-based leaders, we can ensure that decisions being made on behalf of the students we serve are appropriate and reflective of their needs.
The Pharos Foundation has a bold vision for our nation and that vision is to be a successful country that is able to compete on a global scale. In order to turn that vision into a reality we must focus on providing a high quality education for all. While that might seem like a simple enough solution, the problem behind it is much bigger. At the current moment, there are several segments of our student population that are being underserved in Arizona and across the country. Failing to provide even one segment of our student population with a quality education will have massive consequences to the overall well-being of our communities and our state and country will not have a good chance at succeeding.

For these reasons, the Pharos Foundation has chosen to focus their efforts on addressing the inequities that exist in Arizona’s school systems. While much of the conversation around schools in Arizona has focused on a family’s ability to choose a school of their liking, the conversation lacks a major component - quality choices. For many families the issue of having access to a quality school for their students is a much bigger problem as there may not be one close to home. This is an issue that Adriana Murrietta, Executive Director of Pharos Foundation is committed to addressing.

To begin addressing this issue, the foundation believes that parents and families should have the knowledge and understanding of what a high quality school and education look like. Many families are trusting of institutions meant to serve them to a fault. They put their full trust into these institutions and don’t know that they have the power and right to question practices and policies, and be involved and included in the educational journey of their students in order to produce better outcomes. To that end, Adriana and Pharos Foundation have been big champions of the Parent Educator Academy (PEA) since the conceptualization stage.

What they saw in PEA was more than a program that would provide participants with tools to families to better support their student’s learning. Through PEA they knew that parents would be able to identify their power and understand what high performing schools look like and be able to determine whether the schools in their communities would fall under this category. The Pharos Foundation, like ALL In Education, sees parents and caregivers as an incredibly significant part of this work. Through PEA participants, our unified vision is to create a network of leaders and community activators that are ready to be education advocates and create the needed systemic changes in our education systems.

“The team at ALL In Education is a testament to the incredible talent that has existed in our community. National organizations are recognizing that talent and are looking to partner and replicate efforts. I am incredibly proud to be part of their work.”

Adriana Murrietta, Executive Director, Pharos Foundation
A DREAM DEFERRED

Approaching a full year of living through a pandemic, Luz and her three school-aged children - Samuel, Linda and Jackie, sit at their dining room table working through their homework. Each student blurting questions, jumping from one subject to the next, while Luz sits with a smile nodding and agreeing. Behind Luz’s smile and cheerful appearance there lives a different story. A story of uncertainty and worry. At the start of the pandemic, Luz lost her stable, full-time job and along with it her health insurance that also protected her children. Coupling this along with her children now attending school from their dining room table with one working computer and slow internet connection - the stress has consumed Luz.

For nearly eleven months, Luz has been helping out her sister Alma at her restaurant, but the pandemic hasn’t been kind to the business leaving Luz with barely enough earnings to cover her family’s essential expenses. Luz had always dreamed of providing her children with the support they needed to succeed in school and life, but for her the worry of where their next meal will be coming from or whether she will have enough money to pay rent has taken precedence.
COMMUNITIES DISRUPTED
The Profound Impact of COVID-19

The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic cleared out supermarket aisles and classrooms desks, while simultaneously ravaging our most vulnerable communities as the number of cases rose. The virus has caused major devastation and has disproportionately affected low-income, Latino, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) the most. Communities where systemic inequities have deep-seated roots. In Arizona, Latinos make up 39% of COVID-19 cases, while being 32% of the state’s population, indicating over-representation in exposure and infection rates (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2022). Lack of access to quality healthcare and disproportionate representation in low-wage essential employment are factors in this data.

In March 2020, early in the pandemic and in anticipation of its full impact, ALL In Education held a series of community conversations to better understand what Latino parents and their children were facing. What we heard was worrisome. Across the state Latino families reported:

- There was a lack of communication from school systems in both English and Spanish formats.
- There was a lack of access to technology in the form of devices and reliable internet.
- Parents did not feel supported and were ill-prepared for at-home learning.
- Families faced employment and financial challenges.
- Families were concerned about special education, English Learners, and other at-risk student populations falling further behind.

In October 2021, our community’s concern about the pandemic’s effects on our students’ academic achievement were realized. The Arizona Department of Education released the results of the AzM2 statewide assessment, and highlighted gaps in attainment during the 2020-2021 academic year. The data demonstrates a significant drop in 3rd grade reading levels and 8th grade math scores for all students but especially for Latino students. Latino student academic outcomes have fallen to unprecedented levels. In fact, the data released demonstrates that 20 years of progress in reading and math scores have been set back.

* The Arizona Department of Education included the following disclosure regarding the Fiscal Year 2021 AzM2 and MSAA Assessment Combined Results Report: There are many factors at play when considering this year’s results. The aggregate scores need to be viewed with extreme caution since a significant number of our students did not take the test. It is impossible to know how the students who did not participate in the assessment may have scored. Students who were not assessed may need additional supports next school year than what the results of this report implies. When considering the results of students who did not take the test, it is important to remember the learning disruptions from COVID-19 that may have impacted student learning in unforeseen ways.
COMMUNITIES DISRUPTED
The Profound Impact of COVID-19

DROP IN READING PROFICIENCY

DROP IN MATH PROFICIENCY

PERCENT PASSING

FISCAL YEAR

ALL STUDENTS
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
ENGLISH LEARNER
HISPANIC/LATINO
SPECIAL EDUCATION
WHITE

SOURCE: MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, APTITUDE RESULTS TO THE REAL NUMER 2020-21
COMMUNITIES DISRUPTED
The Profound Impact of COVID-19

These figures are particularly important to Arizona’s future since high 3rd grade reading proficiency scores are strong predictors of increased graduation levels, and low 3rd grade reading proficiency is correlated with increased crime and incarceration. Similarly, 8th grade math scores are a strong indicator of our state’s population’s ability to fill jobs in the technology sector. Our state’s fiscal and economic health is dependent on our ability to effectively educate Latino students.

As we focus on addressing the impact of unfinished learning, we have both a moral and economic imperative to ensure the students and families most negatively affected are prioritized with resources and support systems to get caught up. Specifically, we must review both the state’s data on the academic outcomes and the demographic breakdown in order to strategically target those resources and supports. When we consider the state’s student population, Latinos are the largest ethnic group in Arizona surpassing White, Black, Indigenous and Asian students within the Arizona education system. In fact, Latinos represent 65% of all children in district K-8 elementary schools. We must ensure our Latino students and families receive the adequate support to thrive beyond the pandemic school years.

In Arizona, we are faced with two very distinct education systems. The first is an underfunded and underperforming school which if you walked into, the student population would be Latino, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), and students living in poverty. On the other hand, the student population of a well-funded, resourced and high achieving school would be majority white. This disparity in our state’s education system has long been responsible for the opportunity and achievement gaps that exist for Latino, BIPOC, and students in poverty.
If you walk into Carl Hayden High School on any given day, you will find that at first glance it appears to be like any typical high school. Students in their classroom being taught by teachers knowledgeable in their subjects, administrative staff in the main office or running around campus tending to the day to day activities, janitorial staff keeping the school clean - not much different than other high schools in Arizona and the United States.

Looking deeper into the culture of Carl Hayden, you will come across a much different story. Making up one of the 22 schools in the Phoenix Union High School District, Carl Hayden which is located in Southwestern part of Phoenix, serves a high concentration of Latino students. In fact, 98% of parents of their students are Latino immigrants and for many, this is their first encounter with the education system in the U.S. While many may perceive this as a problem or disadvantage, Mr. Julio Rubio, Principal of the high school, views it as a huge asset and value to his community and school.

In his third year as principal of Carl Hayden, Mr. Rubio has created a culture of collaboration and community. He knows that one of his most important roles as a school leader is to cultivate an environment where everyone feels safe, welcomed, valued and respected - starting with the students, staff and all the way to the families and community the school serves. Mr. Rubio’s approach to parent and community engagement has shifted the culture of the school and made a space where families feel part of the school activity.

Mr. Rubio attributes these successes to two things, his parent liaison Ms. Lilia Dinicola and hosting monthly Cafecitos With The Principal. Ms. Dinicola’s role at the school has been instrumental in fostering an active parent and caregiver community in the school. From resources to guidance and support in helping parents navigate the school system, Ms. Dinicola is the go to for many of the families in the community. Going even a step further, Ms. Dinicola has worked on activating a group of parent leaders to help host and promote resource fairs that bring much needed services and resources to their families. This same group of parent leaders has also been active in helping the school create stronger relationships with the extensive community within the Carl Hayden boundaries.

Seeing the power and interest families expressed in becoming active participants, Mr. Rubio began hosting monthly Cafecitos With The Principal. These events have helped create a direct path for parents to express their concerns and ideas with the principal in a courageous space while also creating stronger, more meaningful relationships. Listening and understanding the needs of the families he serves, Mr. Rubio sought out to partner with ALL In Education to be one of our Parent Educator Academy (PEA) school sites.

Since offering PEA as a resource to his families, Mr. Rubio has seen families more invested and connected to school, and increased comfort with asking questions and engaging with administrators. He has also noticed that families are asking more about AP and Honors classes for their students, as well as asking more detailed questions about their students’ academic standing. Mr. Rubio knows that in order for families to be fully engaged, it will take more than a simple quarterly or monthly newsletter. Both he and his staff are fully committed to continue fostering an environment that values and appreciates meaningful parent engagement.
Luz had always considered herself to be an engaged parent, always present with her children when it came to school and their lives. Having two elementary school aged children and one high school student at home who constantly came home with good grades and rarely got in trouble, Luz had trusted that the schools were doing the best for her children. The pandemic quickly made her realize how little she really knew about the school system. Nearly three weeks after schools shut down in April of 2020, Luz still hadn’t received any communication from either school.

Unanswered phone calls causing unanswered questions led Luz to rely on her local Spanish language news as the source for information. Scouring their Facebook page for information, Luz came across a post with information on a program called Parent Educator Academy, which was being offered through a local organization at her student’s high school. Luz joined an information session during a back to school fair and decided to apply for the academy which she was accepted into shortly after.

During her first sessions, Luz felt shy and embarrassed that she didn’t have much to contribute. She often attended the sessions with her computer camera off and chose to listen and absorb the information. In one of the sessions, the instructor was talking about equity and how not all schools function the same. This got Luz thinking about her children’s schools and whether they had been offering them the best possible opportunities in their classrooms. She knew that the neighborhood they lived in wasn’t the most affluent and there was a big population of Latino and Black families. She remembered her daughter Linda mentioning that only 150 out of the 205 seniors in her school were graduating. Luz didn’t give it much thought until now that she was learning about redlining in communities.
REDLINING AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

The concentration of undervalued housing stock in low-income neighborhoods has its beginnings in discriminatory redlining practices of the 1920’s, 1930’s, and 1940’s. The Encyclopedia Britannica (2021) defines redlining as:

“AN ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE IN WHICH A MORTGAGE LENDER DENIES LOANS OR AN INSURANCE PROVIDER RESTRICTS SERVICES TO CERTAIN AREAS OF A COMMUNITY, OFTEN BECAUSE OF THE RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APPLICANT’S NEIGHBORHOOD. REDLINING PRACTICES ALSO INCLUDE UNFAIR AND ABUSIVE LOAN TERMS FOR BORROWERS, OUTRIGHT DECEPTION, AND PENALTIES FOR PREPAYING LOANS.”

In the 1930’s, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration established the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC), which color-coded neighborhoods as green or blue “desirable” areas, yellow “declining” areas, and red “hazardous” areas effectively limiting access to federally backed home loans to undesirable areas. Red “hazardous” areas had a larger minority population, higher poverty rates, and older housing stock. In 1938, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) further segregated communities by publishing home loan lending guidelines that favored areas with a higher level of society, lower levels of incompatible racial elements, and areas that were occupied by the same social and racial classes (Cleveland et al., 2021).

Redlining is not something we can ignore as an unfortunate event in our history, its impact lingers. Researchers Andreas et al. (2021) developed a statistical model that quantifies the effects of redlining and segregation and found that earnings, health, environmental conditions, violent crime and police violence. Similarly, researchers from Harvard University, Dylan Lukes and Christopher Cleveland, find legacy effects from redlining practices on school funding, diversity, and performance. Their research concluded that “districts and schools located today in historically redlined neighborhoods have less district-level per-pupil revenues, larger shares of black and non-white student bodies, less diverse student populations, and worse average test scores relative to those located in A, B, and C neighborhoods” (Cleveland et al., 2021).

Redlining has fostered long-lasting impacts on the segregation and economic viability of communities of color. Research has shown a variety of adverse outcomes for redlined communities, such as increased segregation, greater economic inequality, higher firearm injury, adverse birth outcomes, reduced homeownership rates, decreased home values, access to healthy foods, incarceration, and public infrastructure investment (Aaronson, 2021; Andres, 2021; Hoffman, 2020). These adverse outcomes for redlined communities have long been responsible for the negative effects on educational attainment.
The evidence surrounding Latino student achievement paints a worrisome picture. On average, Latino students often perform at rates that lag their peers from other racial and ethnic groups. While lagging achievement is in part a function of the education process itself, policymakers and advocates recognize that student outcomes are subject to the influence of disparities that exist beyond the school system, such as those associated with redlining. These disparities create significant disadvantages for Latino families. Disparities in healthcare, financial conditions, and access to other key resources affect parents’ abilities to cultivate environments that bolster academic prospects of Latino youth. In turn, these disadvantages place Latino students on perpetually uneven ground.

To improve educational outcomes in Latino communities, school systems must cultivate organizational climates that can shield students from the effect of the disparities present in other arenas of American democracy. Viewing the issue through this lens may help school leaders invest in organizational cultures that improve achievement, in part, by acknowledging the ways in which school governance can respond to challenges posed by inequities in other policy arenas.

As Molina 2019 argues, underrepresentation in local governance is the root of two larger problems. “In the first, disparate levels of public-sector representation mean that the preferences of ethnoracial minorities are often excluded from the management and delivery of democracy’s public services. In the second, unequal representation in service-providing organizations acts as a predictor of other long-standing forms of inequality, many of which severely inhibit the inclusion of historically marginalized populations.”

Consequently, one way to improve organizational climates is through investment in representation across the various levels of school governance. This can help create a foundation for substantive improvements in organizational climates by incorporating the needs of Latino parents and students throughout each phase of the policy process. For example, representation on school boards can also encourage Latino parents to become more engaged in school politics. It has also been linked with greater numbers of Latino school administrators and teachers. This matters not only from the vantage point of being able to better serve Latino students, but it may also influence how other teachers serve Latino students.

Creating responsive organizational climates is also key because Latinos often lack agenda-setting opportunities in local policymaking. Furthermore, discrimination can have an adverse effect on their opinion of schools and school officials (Molina and Pedraza 2015). Although schools lack the ability to address all controversies that are relevant to Latinos and ethnoracial minorities, enhancing their organizational climates through culturally inclusive outreach can improve community attitudes towards schools and, potentially, how Latinos engage with the school system (Molina and Pedraza 2015).
REDLINING AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Historical map of redlining in Phoenix, made available by the University of Richmond.
As Luz continued to gain more skills and knowledge through each session of the Parent Educator Academy, so did her confidence in advocating for her children. Immediately after one of her sessions, Luz wrote an email to her daughter Jackie’s fourth grade teacher. Luz had felt for a while that Jackie had trouble with reading but never knew that there was an actual benchmark that measured reading proficiency.

In her email, Luz expressed her concern and also pointed out that Jackie shuts down everytime she is asked to read out loud in front of a large group and prefers smaller group settings. Two days later, Jackie’s teacher replied to email and thanked Luz for expressing her concerns and also providing her with information on Jackie’s learning style. Within weeks Luz began to see an improvement in Jackie’s reading skills and her confidence. This made Luz ecstatic knowing that she was able to quickly apply what she was learning in the academy and that it was her helping her children.

Similarly, with her seventh grader, Samuel, Luz knew that he was really interested in science. This prompted her to reach out to his science teacher and ask about a club or program that Samuel could join. Samuel’s teacher happily agreed to host an after school program where students could come in and work on experiments and learn more about science. This led to a partnership between the school and a local organization that promotes STEM and hosts an annual statewide science fair for schools.
EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION

Latino students are falling further behind in key subject areas that are indicators of their future success and one of the problems is that there are not enough people in positions of decision-making and power representing their best interests.

If we are to close the opportunity gap for Latino youth, we need to simultaneously close the representation gap in public and charter school boards, administration, state level education boards, and in the classrooms.

Latino Student Trajectory

75% of Latinos graduate high-school in four years
22% of those that graduate high-school, only 22% enter a 4-year college
54% of those that enroll in college, only 54% graduate

2020 4-Year Graduation Rate Cohort to Bachelor Degree Completion

Although college graduation is an important goal for all students, system leaders must invest in the 85% of students that did not graduate from high school, did not enroll in college or those that did not finish college. We must expand economic opportunity and career options to non-college grads.
**2021 Reading Proficiency Gap**

<table>
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<th>White 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency</td>
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</table>

**27 Point Gap**

**2021 Math Proficiency Gap**

<table>
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<th>White 8th Grade Math Proficiency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino 8th Grade Math Proficiency</td>
<td>16</td>
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**23 Point Gap**

**2021 Graduation Gap**

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino 4 Year Graduation Rate</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8 Percentage Point Gap**
Let me ask you a question. From the time that a child is born until the time they graduate from high school (18 years old), what percentage of their life do students spend in school?

The answer: On average, students spend approximately 15% of their lives in school before they graduate. Did the percentage surprise you? When I ask this question, people commonly report 30%, 40%, even 50%. To me, this is an insightful question because it sheds light on how much people expect from teachers. If people think that students spend 50% of their lives in school, they will have some very high, maybe even unrealistic, expectations for teachers.

Now, think of everything that teachers are expected to pack into the 15% of students’ lives that they spend in school. Teachers are expected to teach academics (reading, writing, and math), college readiness, character education, civic education, life skills, etc. But after learning that students spend only 15% of their lives in school, did your perspective shift from “why don’t teachers do more with less?” to “how can teachers get it all done in so little time?”

But what about the other 85% of students’ lives? The other 85% includes the transformative influences of families, communities, peers, and health conditions. What happens in the other 85% of students’ lives is critical to academic achievement because it can either set the stage for learning or create insurmountable challenges for even the grittiest of students.

Intuitively, we know this. We understand that students who face difficult conditions outside of school face challenges in schools. The challenges are even more daunting for students living in poverty.

When it comes to education policy, however, our elected leaders rarely act like they know it. The legislature continues to exacerbate inequities by increasing the amount of school funding that is dependent on unequal property values and family wealth, such as local overrides and tax credits. Students in high poverty neighborhoods are suing the state (again) to fix their crumbling school buildings. And, the legislature should add a poverty weight into the school funding formula, so that those students who need more, receive more.

ALL In Education gets it. They are focused on improving the other 85% of students’ lives outside of school to improve the odds that students can succeed in school. They pay attention to policies such as health and housing because these are education issues. Their approach is consistent with a long-standing tenet in education – a quality education requires meeting the needs of the whole child.
THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EDUCATION

A student’s educational outcomes aren’t simply based on their intellectual ability. The fact is, there are many factors outside of the classroom that impact whether a child comes to school prepared to learn. It is the belief of ALL In Education that we must begin addressing these external factors and launch more holistic strategies that take into account a child’s full educational experience. These strategies must address educational content, instruction, administration and the social determinants that impact education in low-income and communities of color everyday due to the systemic inequities caused by irresponsible, discriminatory policies and practices like redlining. The local social environment must be supportive of learning. In fact, the average student in Arizona spends 85% of their time away from school. Supervised and unsupervised time at home, with friends, and in the community play an important role in the education of a child.

The global health community has long understood the impact that social factors have on health. The United Nations Millennium Summit formalized the importance that social determinants have on health by adopting the Millennium Development Goals. These goals identified the social determinants as a central pillar of their strategy to improve global health and human welfare. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have found that approximately half of health outcomes are due to social and economic factors. Health doesn’t only happen in the doctor’s office. Similarly, education doesn’t just happen inside the classroom.

We have defined the social determinants of education to be encompassed by social and economic factors like - access to quality healthcare, mental health services, poverty, food insecurity, immigration, stable and safe housing, disciplinary practices in and out of school, the climate and environment, and access to stable employment. These determinants play a significant role in education and the educational outcomes of students. Addressing the social determinants that affect education can create the long-term impact that education advocates have long been working towards. Adopting a more holistic approach to education can create a favorable climate for multisectoral action, similar to the unique efforts that have arisen to improve health outcomes.
At many schools, family engagement is often times reduced to a newsletter, some form of sporadic email communication or a flyer that gets lost at the bottom of a backpack. For schools lack of time, budget or capacity to launch effective family engagement efforts are major barriers. At Pecan Grove Elementary School in the Yuma Elementary School District #1, family engagement has been a top priority for several years and it has been a change maker in student performance and active family participation.

Ms. Laura Vanegas, Family Literacy Specialist at Pecan Grove Elementary and former Parent Liaison for the school, is a huge champion for parent engagement and has been the lead for many of the schools efforts. At Pecan Grove there is an understanding that parents are a child’s first teachers and they have a significant impact on the trajectory of a students educational journey. To that end, the school has continuously launched programs and opportunities for their families to become involved and grow their expertise and skills when it comes to supporting their children’s learning beyond the classroom.

The programs they offer for parents range from helping them obtain their GED’s, to inviting them to come into the classroom to see firsthand what their children are learning and acquire skills to help them grow academically at home. Furthermore, Ms. Vanegas and Pecan Grover Principal, Nicole Wilhelmy, truly value the talent in their community of families. Serving 80% Spanish speaking families and a large percentage of immigrants, many of them come to the U.S. with university degrees and certificates from their countries of origin, but not all of them are valid here. Both Ms. Wilhelmy and Ms. Vanegas are working on finding a way to help these individuals obtain the proper licenses to help them put their degrees and skills into practice.

With the value that Pecan Grove places on family engagement and skills development for their parents, Ms. Wilhelmy was ecstatic to add the Parent Educator Academy as an offering to their parents. With one cohort down, Ms. Vanegas has already seen changes in the individuals that graduated from PEA. These changes include an increase in participation and interest in parent involvement. Two of the participants of PEA are also the President and Treasurer of Pecan Grove’s Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) group. These two individuals have shown stronger leadership skills and are beginning to get other parents motivated to become active in the PTO and school.

While the school has always served a large percentage of Latino families, they had not always been actively involved, especially in leadership roles within groups like the PTO. Now, because of programs like PEA and the efforts of both Ms. Vanegas and Ms. Wilhelmy, Latino families are seeking opportunities to lead and become more involved in whatever way they can. These changes are leading to changes in the school culture, the school community and more importantly in the academic success of the students.
AN EQUITABLE RESPONSE

Raising academic outcome levels to pre-pandemic levels will not be enough. Our state must commit to rebuilding and reimagining an education system where ALL students can reach their full potential and have access to high-quality, fully resourced schools. This means equitable funding and assessments, teacher and administrative support, relevant curriculum, modern technological infrastructure, and equitable representation across our classrooms and boardrooms.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers defines equity as follows:

“The term ‘equity’ refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.”

Advancing equity does not require removing resources from one community to give more to another. It simply means that Latino, BIPOC and students in poverty may require additional and different resources in order to achieve the same academic outcomes as their affluent and white peers.

An equitable response will yield higher profits, more skilled workers and healthy, vibrant communities. As any business person knows, in order to maximize the success of your business and idea, you need to cultivate and tend to every aspect of it - from your operations to an effective and trained labor force. Otherwise, if you give all your attention to only certain parts of your business you risk having it all fail. In Arizona, we are currently only cultivating a small percentage of the business. If we were to shift our thinking and provide ALL students with high quality learning opportunities our yield would be more than profitable.
UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY’S TALENT AND LEADERSHIP

By investing in Latino and values-based leaders, we can ensure that decisions being made on behalf of the students we serve are appropriate and reflective of their needs. In return, Latino students will experience academic gains and successful outcomes. As Dr. Molina points out, equitable representation at all levels of the education system serves as a shield to disparities present in other arenas of American democracy, improve educational services and increase active participation in decision-making. The school setting has become more alienating than welcoming to Latino families, especially for Spanish speaking families and English Learners. It is no wonder why family engagement and involvement has been so difficult to encourage given the imbalance of representation in state school boards, local school boards, administrative positions and among the teaching workforce.

Family involvement and engagement has long been viewed by educators and policy makers alike as key to improving the academic achievement of low-income students of color (Alameda-Lawson, 2014). Research has shown that students who had regular family engagement had higher attendance rates, earned higher grades and test scores, had a higher rate of enrollment in advanced courses, and higher graduation rates (Ambrosso et al., 2021). Paradoxically, while research supports the positive impacts of family engagement and school and system leaders understand its effectiveness, the implementation of strategies to increase involvement within low-income, Latino, and communities of color have not been successful.

The myth that Latino parents and caregivers are disinterested or don’t care about their children’s education is an irresponsible excuse that must no longer be accepted. A well established list of barriers to engagement exist, which include: long work hours, lack of transportation, limited English proficiency, immigration status, unfamiliarity with the public school system in the United States, lack of a designated school representative and/or bilingual staff - coupled with having to overcome racism, classism and rejection in school communities (Ambrosso et al., 2021). Only when we begin to understand these barriers and actively build bridges, will we see an increase of family engagement along with all of its positive effects on student achievement. We must change this unuseful narrative because families can, have, and are being engaged in successful partnerships with schools systems and community partners.

The ALL In Education Parent Educator Academy (PEA) is paving the way to meaningful family engagement and involvement, the development of social capital, intellectual capital, and community transformation. Born from the turmoil that school systems and parents experienced from the COVID-19 pandemic, PEA offers an introductory leadership development program for caregivers that want to strengthen their skills to better support their students in navigating the virtual and classroom learning environment, the school system, and have agency over decisions that affect their families and communities. Online facilitated workshops by our curriculum partner, TNTP, guide participants through foundational coursework addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the classroom, effective communication skills, and provide a vehicle for collaboration between PEA participants and school representatives.
Parent Educator Academy participants for the 2020-2021 cohort exhibited the following statistically significant changes:

**IMPROVED**
- confidence in helping their children with homework assignments

**IMPROVED**
- comfort in communicating with their children’s teacher

**INCREASED**
- ability in using email for educational needs

**INCREASED**
- ability to navigate online classrooms

**INCREASED**
- knowledge about where and how to continue their education

Beyond the ability to navigate school systems, parents gained a sense of agency, belonging, and personal growth. Participants both reported and exhibited an increase in confidence and mastery of their personal narrative. Facilitators noticed a drastic change in participants’ self-confidence and connection to program staff and one another. Henderson’s (2004) review of parent leadership programs found that parents have grown beyond cosmetic partnerships with schools and have become partners within and outside the school, advocates, decision-makers, and community organizers, which create solutions and hold schools, and themselves, accountable for improvement. This social capital and network building are benefits that the local school community can gain from long past the span of the academy.
The journey for many immigrant children is often much like a roller coaster ride - full of ups, downs, with many twists and turns. Rarely is that ride a smooth and straight path. That was the case for Gloria Castejon who moved to the United States when she was 14 years old. As a child, her mother left Mexico in search of a better life for her and her children. The search for that better future came with the sacrifice of leaving her children behind with her parents in Mexico while she navigated a new world.

For Gloria, growing up in rural Mexico came with its own challenges. From a poor education to an economically challenging upbringing, Gloria lacked support and mentorship throughout her young life. When she was finally able to join her mother in California, Gloria was met with a different set of challenges. During her first experience with public education in the United States, Gloria quickly realized how different the systems were while trying to learn how to navigate them and figure out where she belonged. She attended a great school, where the majority of the students were college bound. Even though her education level was basic, her competitive nature pushed her to reach the level of the other students.

As her high school graduation neared, Gloria was proud of herself for her achievements. She was able to keep her grades up and was accepted into University of California Irvine. However, she would realize that she was not prepared for college life. After two years at UC Irvine, Gloria decided she wasn’t ready and didn’t know what she wanted to study or do for a career. She realized that there were many missing components throughout her life that didn’t prepare her for college. After returning to Los Angeles, she started working as a teaching assistant. That is when she fell in love with education and knew that it is what she wanted to do.

Gloria enrolled at California State University and obtained her Bachelor’s Degree in Education and Spanish Literature. From there she went on to teach elementary school in California. After several years, Gloria moved to South Phoenix and enrolled her son at Cesar Chavez High School. While checking her emails one day, she came across one from the high school where they were announcing their partnership with ALL In Education and offering the Parent Educator Academy (PEA) to their families. Having a passion for education and wanting to learn more about the system in Arizona, Gloria applied.

In the program Gloria learned not only about navigating the school system as a parent in Arizona, but also how to be the role model for her children. Another impactful part of the program was how it sparks curiosity and the urge to ask questions - essentially how to become more involved. For Gloria, she sees PEA as a program that begins to open the doors for families to help their students pursue an education in a meaningful way. One of her favorite parts of the program is seeing participants of all ages. For her it showed that it is never too late to learn something new.

“A LOT OF OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS THIS PROGRAM - OUR PARENTS NEED TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE PROGRAMS AND PEOPLE THAT ARE WILLING TO HELP AND CARE ABOUT THEIR SUCCESS. WE ALL START SO EXCITED ABOUT SCHOOL BUT IT FADES AWAY AS THINGS GET HARDER. THE ENTHUSIASM NEEDS TO CONTINUE AND PROGRAMS LIKE THIS HELP.”

GLORIA CASTEJON, FALL 2021 PEA GRADUATE
Graduating from the Parent Educator Academy, Luz gained more than skills and confidence, she also gained a network of allies and support through the other participants. From this network, Luz was able to find a full-time position that would provide her with stable hours and decent pay. This lifted a huge weight off of her shoulders and allowed Luz to be able to be fully engaged and present with her children. With Luz’s new found confidence and knowledge, she became a regular volunteer at Jackie and Samuel’s school. She even began hosting monthly gatherings for families to come together, network and share their resources. Part of the gathering is the opportunity for the families at the school to talk to the principal and ask questions in a courageous space.

Looking to the future, Luz is ready to grow her advocacy skills. Her goal is to share her experience with other parents in her community so that they don’t have to deal with challenges and uncertainty she had to face when it came to her children’s education. She now knows the power parents and families hold to push for changes that are needed to create schools that provide their students with opportunity and justice. She is ready to use her power as a parent and elevate her voice for her children and her community.
CONCLUSION

Arizona’s students are currently facing a challenge that they cannot fix for themselves. As advocates and values-based leaders, they are depending on us to bring forth and implement solutions that will help create an equitable and just education system that offers pathways to a successful life. Since Arizona State University’s Morrison Institute published its Five Shoes Waiting to Drop on Arizona’s Future report in 2001, over 20 years ago, not much has improved for Latino students. As the population of Latino students increases, their reading scores, graduation and college-going rates are decreasing.

Our communities don’t have the luxury to keep waiting for meaningful solutions and policies. We are truly at a crossroads where we can choose to do right by our communities or simply keep ignoring the problem hoping it will go away or fix itself. Our belief is that ALL students, regardless of race, ethnicity, income level, zip code, immigration status, religion, special need or ability, native language, gender or orientation, deserve investment and access to high quality education. To that end, ALL In Education is dedicated to investing in the talent and potential of our community through our leadership programs. Parent Educator Academy has now graduated 118 parents and caregivers, and will enroll another 100 participants in spring 2022. Adelante is currently comprised of 25 emerging leaders and is designed to provide them an understanding of advocacy in education and explore the role that identity and lived experience play in influencing systems change. LISTO graduated its first cohort of 13 values-based leaders that have gained the skills and knowledge to make decisions through a data driven, equitable lens.

We firmly believe that ALL students deserve to feel loved, respected, honored and valued in their schools and communities. Our commitment is to continue building power within our communities by creating spaces and opportunities for families to strengthen their advocacy skills and ensure that they have the confidence to elevate their voices. We are working towards creating an Arizona where the systems meant to work for our communities are actually functioning equitably and through a lens of opportunity and justice. We invite you to join us on this critical journey towards a more vibrant and inclusive Arizona.
REFERENCES


Education equity is an issue that is a passion for everyone on the ALL In Education team. This report is an expression of the dedication of the organization and our team to working to ensure that ALL students in Arizona have access to opportunity and justice - in their classrooms and beyond. MAPA will be an annual initiative of ALL In Education and used as a guide to help inform the effectiveness of our work and that we are working towards creating a more equitable education system in Arizona.

We are grateful to everyone who partnered with us and shared their stories to help bring this report to life.

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Laura Venegas, Family Literacy Specialist, Pecan Grove Elementary School
Gloria Castejon, Fall 2021 Parent Educator Academy Graduate

"STRONG AND EFFECTIVE LEADERS ARE COURAGEOUS, COMPASSIONATE AND BOLD IN THEIR CONVICTIONS TO CREATE CHANGE FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES. THEY LEAD WITH THEIR VALUES, NOT THEIR EGOS. WE NEED MORE VALUES-BASED, DARING LEADERS IN THE WORLD. THIS IS WHY WE EXIST."

STEPHANIE PARRA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALL IN EDUCATION
ALL In Education Team

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