



Center for  
Program  
Evaluation

**Best Practices for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students in PK-12 Schools: A Literature Review**

**CPE 2204**

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## **Best Practices for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e in PK-12 Schools: A Literature Review**

Under the leadership of Jill Hendrickson Lohmeier, Ph.D., Co-director of the Center for Program Evaluation (CPE) and an Associate Professor in the School of Education, and Teresa Irene Gonzales, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, the CPE analyzed the Lowell Public School (LPS) District's PK-12 Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e student experience. Through this analysis, the CPE team also assessed LPS's current policies and procedures that have an impact the K-12 Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e community within LPS to determine existing strengths and potential ways to improve the experience and academic performance of Latino/a/x/e students in LPS. This report provides an overview of the best practices found in the literature for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students in PK-12 schools.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this integrative literature review is to provide an overview of the best practices for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students. Integrative literature reviews are helpful for synthesizing literature in a particular area especially when researchers want to develop new conceptual frameworks or present new perspectives on a topic (Snyder, 2019).

### **Guiding Questions**

To accomplish our goal, this literature review was guided by the following research questions:

1. What best evidence-based practices have been documented in peer-reviewed literature for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students?
2. What strategies do researchers suggest deploying to close opportunity gaps for the Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students?

## **Search Strategies**

To gather articles for this literature review, EBSCO databases were queried through the university's library. Combinations of keywords such as *best practices*, *Latino*, *Latina*, *Latinx*, *Hispanic*, *pre-K*, *elementary school*, *middle school*, *high school*, *education*, *students*, and *innovation* were used. Each search was narrowed down using filters (i.e., scholarly peer-reviewed journals, full-text available, a date range of 2000 to the present, non-repeating titles, relevance). The abstracts of the first 100 articles were reviewed to find articles relevant to the focus of this literature review: best practices in PK-12 schools for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students. If they were not relevant based on these criteria, they were excluded. In addition, one of the principal investigators shared five articles. We settled on 221 articles that were most relevant to the topic of best practices in PK-12 schools for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students. The gathered literature was read by several members of the evaluation team, and each article was summarized into a table then the gathered information was synthesized into this report.

## **Findings**

In this section, we will present the types of literature we read, the geographic locations focused on in the articles, sample sizes, as well as the best practices brought forth in the articles.

### **Types of Literature**

We reviewed several types of literature. Of the 221 articles reviewed, the largest group of article type was quantitative research while the smallest group was mixed methods. Table 1 provides further details on the types of the literature we reviewed.

**Table 1***Type of Literature Reviewed (n=221)*

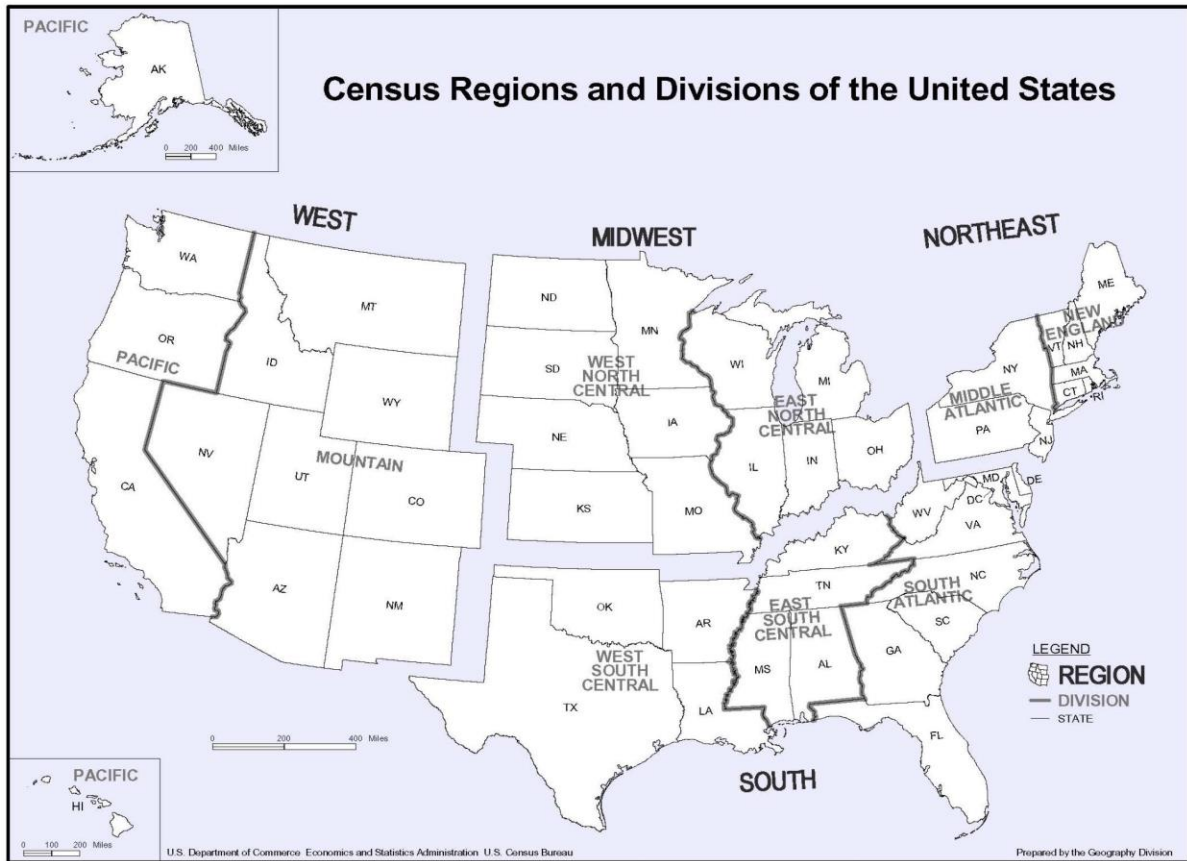
Type of Article	n	%
Quantitative Research	96	43.44%
Qualitative Research	68	30.77%
Literature Reviews	21	9.50%
Case Studies	15	6.79%
Commentaries	11	4.98%
Mixed-Methods Research	10	4.52%

**Geographic Locations**

Of the 221 pieces of literature we reviewed, most of the articles (93%) were about Hispanics-Latinos/as/xs/es within the United States. Articles outside of the US (n = 5) were from Australia, Canada, Mexico, and Norway. Around 30% did not provide a specific location within the US. Eleven articles did not provide any location. We used the U.S. Census Bureau (2021) census regions and divisions map (Figure 1) to identify the regions in the US. The highest number of articles came from the West (n= 59, 29%), whereas the lowest amount came from the Northeast (n=17, 8.3%). A total of 25 U.S. states were mentioned in 117 articles. Among those, California had the highest number of articles (30%). Table 2 provides the literature sources for each region.

**Figure 1**

*Regions of the United States*



*Note.* This map was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau (2021).

**Table 2***Geographic Locations*

<b>Geographic Locations</b>	<b>Articles</b>
West (59)	Aceves et al. (2020); Assari et al. (2019); Assari et al. (2020); Assari et al. (2020); Bámaca-Colbert et al. (2017); Beattie (2011); Borjian (2008); Castro et al. (2022); Chang & Le (2010); Comfort et al. (2018); Cruz et al. (2013); D'Amico et al. (2016); Dee & Penner (2017); Delgado et al. (2021); Dematthews & Izquierdo (2017); Dever et al. (2016); Dill & Ozer (2019); Escaron et al. (2020); Ezzani (2020); Gonzalez & Villalba (2018); Haboush et al. (2015); Hickman & Anderson (2019); Huerta et al. (2020); Jiang et al. (2021); Johnson et al. (2019); Kinzer & Taft (2012); Kogachi & Graham (2021); Kraemer & Fabiano-Smith (2017); Langdon (2020); Liu et al. (2019); Lorenzo-Blanco et al. (2012); Martinez-Fuentes et al. (2021); Mireles-Rios et al. (2020); Morales-Chicas & Graham (2015); Nation et al. (2019); Nelson (2009); Nguyen & Riegle-Crumb (2021); Ochoa & Cadiero-Kaplan (2004); Ordoñez-Jasis et al. (2010); Otero & Cammarota (2011); Ozer et al. (2008); Power et al. (2021); Ramirez & Jaffee (2016); Rastogi & Juvonen (2019); Rios (2013); Rios & Galicia (2013); Rodriguez (2010); Sanford et al. (2019); Sims et al. (2020); Smith et al. (2021); Soto-Lara & Simpkins (2020); Stickl Haugen et al. (2021); Stritikus & Garcia (2005); Szeszulski (2021); Thomas et al. (2022); Torrez (2004); Turner & Celedón-Pattichis (2011); Vitali (2016); and Youngquist & Martinez-Griego (2009)
South (42)	Alvarado & Ricard (2013); Anglin et al. (2012); Barrocas & Cramer (2014); Beal & Rudolph (2015); Beasley et al. (2017); Beltrán(2012); Bennett et al. (2020); Cardoso et al. (2021); Collins et al. (2009); Collins et al. (2016); Corbin et al. (2008); Diaz & Bussert-Webb (2013); Fletcher et al. (2019); Flores-Duenas (2005); Fuhui et al. (2008); Galindo et al. (2019); Gillanders et al. (2011); Gonzalez et al. (2012); Hill & Torres (2010); Huq et al. (2016); Jackson et al. (2020); Kantor et al. (2015); Kelder et al. (2003); Landmark & Zhang (2013); Larrotta & Yamamura (2011); Machado-Casas et al. (2014)' Martin Romero et al. (2022); McDonald (2021); Meléndez Guevara et al. (2021); Neubrandner & Hall (2011); Platt et al. (2020); Reece & Nodine (2014); Reyes (2000); Rodriguez (2001); Smith et al. (2021); Sommer et al. (2020); Stein et al. (2020); Taube et al. (2006); Turcios-Cotto & Milan (2013); Uddin (2020); Warner et al.(2005); and Wilkerson et al. (2020)
Midwest (26)	Areba et al. (2020); Areba et al. (2021); Arizaga et al. (2020); Borman et al. (2021); Chen et al. (2020); Constante et al. (2019); Durkee et al. (2019); Fernández (2002); Gonzalez (2012); Gutierrez

	(2009); Gutierrez et al. (2017); Hoffman et al. (2019); Jans-Thomas (2009); Johnson (2009); Karcher & Sass (2010); Kelly (2013); McMahon et al. (2011); Mroczkowski & Sánchez (2015); Papadakis et al. (2018); Puntí (2018); Scribner & Fernández (2017); Shogren et al. (2018); Stovall (2006); Wasserman et al. (2021); Wiemelt & Welton (2015); and Zerquera & Gross (2017)
Northeast (17)	Banales et al. (2020); Calzada et al. (2013); Cortina et al. (2015); Feder et al. (2009); Figueras-Daniel & Li (2021); Flanagan et al. (2007); Guilamo-Ramos (2009); Jacoby & Lesaux (2014); Knight (2003); Lange (2019); Lugo-Candelas et al. (2015); Mc Wayne et al. (2018); Nochajski & Schweitzer (2014); Ong et al. (2006); Quiroz & Dixon (2012); Ramirez & Jaffee (2016); and Skriner & Chu (2014)
U.S. Region Not Specified (64)	Adams & Pilloud (2021); Alveraz (2017); Basch (2011); Beattie (2017); Becerra (2012) Campbell (2004); Carrell et al. (2021); Crabtree et al. (2019); Cycyk & Hammer (2018); Diemer et al. (2010); Dudovitz et al. (2021); Durand & Perez (2013); Elsaesser et al. (2018); Evans et al. (2019); Frew et al. (2013); Fryer (2006); Gandara (2017); Guo et al. (2014); Hill et al. (2020); Hirsh & Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) (2019); Huang & Connell (2019); Hughes et al. (2007); Iruka et al. (2020); Jackson et al. (2021); Jeynes (2015); Jimenez (2002); Johnson et al. (2011); Koo et al. (2012); Kummerer (2010); Lee et al. (2009); Lieberman et al. (2010); Lopez et al. (2005); Lynd (2007); Martinez & Guzman (2013); Montoro et al. (2021); Morrison et al. (2002); Niehaus et al. (2016); Park et al. (2021); Peguero et al. (2015); Peguero et al. (2017); Peguero et al. (2019); Perreira & Smith (2007); Rieggle-Crumb & Grodsky (2010); Rodriguez & Braden (2018); Rodriguez & Oseguera (2015); Roegman et al. (2019); Rubens et al. (2020); Saleem et al. (2022); Scott et al. (2021); Seo & Lee (2021); Seo et al. (2019); Shewach et al. (2017); Souto-Manning (2006); Stein et al. (2019); Storlie & Jach (2012); Suarez-Morales et al. (2017); Varela et al. (2019); Vinci et al. (2020); Wallander et al. (2019); Webb et al. (2021); Wright (2009); Young (2005); Cagle et al. (2018); and Fischer et al. (2019)
Out of the U.S. (5)	de los Rios (2013); Parada et al. (2021); Villenas (2005); and Fischer et al. (2019)
No Location Specified (11)	Benner et al. (2017); Crum (2008); Flores & Rosa (2015); Flores & Rosa (2019); Garcia & Jensen (2007); Higgins et al. (2019); Littenberg & Cohen (2016); Malik (2020); Palmer & Martinez (2013); Paolini (2015); and Spain et al. (2021)

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*Note.* The total count exceeds 221 because a few articles focused on more than one region.



## Sample Sizes

Of the 221 articles reviewed, a total of 169 articles (76.5%) had population samples ranging from 1 to 200,000. The remaining 52 articles did not have population samples because they were either literature reviews, commentaries, and document reviews. Of the 169 articles, most had a sample size less than 1,000. The types of people within the samples included Hispanic-Latino/a/e/x K-12 students and parents, as well as educators (e.g., teachers, administrators, support staff) that work with Hispanic-Latino/a/e/x students. See Table 3 for more details.

**Table 3**

*Sample Sizes of Articles (n=169)*

Sample Size	n	%
1-99	57	33.7%
100-999	60	35.5%
1,000-9,999	34	20.1%
10,000-200,000	18	10.7%

*Note.* Articles without population samples are not included in this chart.

## Best Practices for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students

This section of the report provides a summary of the best practices we found in the literature. We identified the following 12 themes (listed in Figure 2), which are described in detail in the sections that follow.

**Figure 2**

*12 Best Practices for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students*

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- 1. Developing and Implementing Inclusive Policies And Practices**
  - 2. Encouraging Bilingualism and Multilingualism**
  - 3. Connecting Curricula to Students' Cultural Backgrounds**
  - 4. Engaging Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students in Classes and Having High Expectations**
  - 5. Strengthening Communication Between Schools And Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Families**
  - 6. Supporting and Understanding Familism**
  - 7. Empowering Students**
  - 8. Strengthening Relationships Between Students And School Personnel**
  - 9. Increasing Community Connections and Partnerships**
  - 10. Addressing Racial and Ethnic Inequalities, Prejudices, and Stereotypes**
  - 11. Increasing Resources and Supports for Students and Families**
  - 12. Increasing Mental Health Resources and Supports.**

## ***1. Developing and Implementing Inclusive Policies and Practices***

Schools should have instructional leaders that develop and implement inclusive policies and practices that take into account students' ethnic and cultural identities (Aceves, 2020; Alvarado, 2013; Cagle, 2018; Constante, 2019; Ezzani, 2020). Such policies should focus on fair and equitable treatment towards students coming from all racial backgrounds to ensure their safety from victimization (Flanagan, 2007; Koo et al., 2012), and help students adapt and explore their cultural identity to foster their developmental demands (Cruz, 2013). Furthermore, policies should address issues Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students experiences with low expectations from teachers and family members (Fletcher, 2019; Nochajski, 2014). By introducing inclusive policies and incorporating those into practices, school stakeholders may come to understand how students and families with differing long-standing sociocultural norms are discriminated against in the schools because of their differences (Cycyk, 2018; Montoro, 2021). Inclusive practices that can be used to bring awareness to the student population include promoting bullying prevention strategies, implementing self-affirmation interventions, and identifying technological challenges (Lange, 2019; Shogren, 2018; Webb, 2021). Additional policies schools should consider include reforming school readiness frameworks and employing a more sensitive afterschool design that addresses systemic inequities by not prioritizing students from White, English-speaking, and middle-class families (Borman, 2021; Gillanders, 2011; Iruka, 2020; Shogren, 2018).

Educational practices and school policies should also take into consideration a variety of socio-cultural and education strengths and barriers that are rooted in the family. In other words, school practices and policies should align with parents' perspectives, beliefs, and practices, such as familism (discussed below) (Durand, 2013; Hill, 2010; Stritikus & Garcia, 2005). Decision

making within districts and schools should be transparent and families should be included in such processes as their voices are needed within the school legislature (Gonzalez, 2018; Hill, 2010; Kinzer, 2021; Lynd, 2007). For Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students with disabilities, more inclusive policies that include transition services and employment options are needed (Nochajski, 2014).

Students problem-solving skills can be increased through the use of additive policies that allow Spanish to be practiced and learning materials written in Spanish in the classroom; such practices also simultaneously build an inclusive education system (Jacoby, 2014; McMahon, 2011; Stritikus & Garcia, 2005). Teachers should stay vigilant for students who feel linguistic isolation and remain attuned to their students’ needs (Ordoñez-Jasis, 2010). Most importantly, an inclusive school environment for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e requires the school system to support multilingual students and their parents (Areba, 2020). Figure 3 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 3**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Inclusive Policies & Practices*

<b>Developing &amp; Implementing Inclusive Policies &amp; Practices</b>
1. Aid students in adapting and exploring their cultural identities.
2. Address low expectations for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students.
3. Promote anti-bullying programming.
4. Implement self-affirming interventions.
5. Identify technological challenges.
6. Reform school readiness frameworks.
7. Employ sensitive afterschool programming.
8. Consider unique programming for disabled students.

## ***2. Encouraging Bilingualism and Multilingualism***

Institutions should ensure that language policies support bilingual and multilingual programs (Kelly, 2013). Altering curricula, such as increasing the general understanding of historic Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e culture, can strengthen the connection of the bilingual population's culture and life experiences to academia (Rios, 2013). Schools should also alter the characteristics of language learning environments to serve large numbers of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e children and influence their learning trajectories (Jacoby, 2014). By incorporating multi-language programs and biliteracy in language policies, curricula, and teaching practices, schools can extend equitable opportunities and resources to all students of different genders, races, and backgrounds (Crabtree, 2019; De Los Rios, 2013; Hill, 2010; Ochoa, 2004). School programs and resources, classroom-based assessment tools, learning contents and materials in student preferred languages would ensure equitable access for students to all facilities and create opportunities for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students to succeed in new academic environments (Figueras-Daniel, 2021; Gonzalez, 2012; Ochoa, 2004; Shewach, 2017). Most importantly, implementing these measures will challenge the status quo by changing the current way languages are taught in schools (Flores, 2015).

To foster academic success and effective comprehension of curricula, schools should encourage bilingualism and multilingualism by providing bilingual and multilingual services to ensure students have equitable access to materials in their own and their families' preferred languages (Calzada, 2013; Dematthews & Izquierdo, 2017; Diaz & Bussert-Webb, 2013). Students' native-speaking capabilities should be drawn upon in class so they can see the parallels between their cultural perspectives at home and what they are learning in school (Garcia, 2007; Stritikus & Garcia, 2005). More translators or interpreters should be made available so parents

and their children can communicate in their primary language and can receive all school-related documents and materials in the language most accessible for them (Beltrán, 2012; Evans, 2019; Lopez, 2005; Rodriguez, 2018).

Recruiting bilingual/multilingual teachers, who understand bilingualism/multilingualism and its interactional dynamics, also helps schools communicate with Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and parents effectively and efficiently (Garcia, 2007; Jimenez, 2002; Palmer & Martinez, 2013; Youngquist & Martinez-Griego; 2009). Language policies can make schooling more consistent and rigorous if they allow more room for literacy learning opportunities that increase the academic standards and expectations of English language learners (Flores-Duenas, 2005; Ochoa, 2004). In addition, schools can seek suggestions from speech language pathologists who can determine whether English learning children are receiving meaningful educational experiences (Kraemer, 2017). Moreover, providing more multilingual resources for families promotes scholastic learning not only in school, but also at home, enabling families to engage with the school community, and consequently furthering the academic resources that are made available for students (Beasley, 2017; Beltrán, 2012; Calzada, 2013). Figure 4 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 4**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Bilingual and Multilingual*

<b>Encouraging Bilingualism &amp; Multilingualism</b>
1. Create policies that support bilingual and multilingual programs.
2. Alter curricula to include Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e culture.
3. Provide resources and materials in students’ preferred languages.
4. Draw upon students’ native-speaking capabilities in class.
5. Have translators/interpreters available to aid in verbal communication.

6. Provide translated school-related documents and materials in multiple languages.
7. Recruit bilingual and multilingual teachers.
8. Seek suggestions from speech language pathologists.
9. Provide more multilingual resources for families.

### ***3. Connecting Curricula to Students' Cultural Backgrounds***

Educators can improve their teaching by focusing on and connecting curricula to students' personal lives, cultural strengths, and backgrounds, as well as family and community assets (Galindo, 2019; McWayne, 2018; Puntí, 2018; Varela et al., 2019). When schools offer cultural spaces and ethnic courses<sup>1</sup> along with culturally responsive support systems, an inclusive safe learning environment for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students develops (Areba, 2020; Cardoso, 2021; Zerquera, 2017). Such environments encourage students to explore and accept their own cultural identities so they can meet developmental and contextual demands (Cruz et al., 2013). School communities should respect culture specific beliefs and practices, celebrate different cultural holidays, and have verbal conversations about them (Kummerer, 2010; Saleem et al., 2022). Moreover, educational communities should embrace the long-standing sociocultural norms and practices of families from diverse backgrounds (Areba, 2020; Cycyk, 2018; Larrotta, 2011; Perreira, 2007; Soto-Lara, 2020).

To help improve Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e education, schools should take the families' cultural values into consideration (Constante, 2019; Cycyk, 2018). Educators should instill ethnic pride and academic well-being by including relevant content within the curricula (Saleem et al., 2022). Curricula should therefore include the history of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e people, and

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic courses are the interdisciplinary study of races, ethnicities, and nationalities that are typically not covered in traditional curriculums.

teachers should find ways to connect these academic materials to students' life experiences, their family and community ethnic backgrounds, in addition to helping students understand unfamiliar cultures (Galindo, 2019; Jans-Thomas, 2009; Rios, 2013; Rodriguez, 2018; Varela et al., 2019).

Teachers can also actively incorporate students' cultures and ethnic diversity into their classrooms by using culturally responsive teaching principles to guide their pedagogy, and by integrating classroom-based assessments as tools (Anglin 2012; Collins, 2016; Cortina et al., 2015; Durkee et al., 2019; Ezzani, 2020; Gonzalez, 2012; Huang, 2019; Jans-Thomas, 2009; Littenberg, 2016; Morales-Chicas, 2021; Reece, 2014). The learning materials and assignments should be inclusive, culturally relevant, hands-on, and engaging, even when teaching occurs online (Malik, 2020; Rodriguez, 2001; Storlie, 2021). Bilingual materials that support students should also be developed (Gonzalez, 2012; Malik, 2020; Souto-Manning, 2016; Wilkerson, 2020; Youngquist & Martinez-Griego, 2009). Teachers should stay unbiased and set high expectations for students when they practice reading, writing, and share experiences in their native language (Becerra, 2012; Flores-Duenas, 2005). Teachers should implement new teaching methods for academically struggling students and teach relevant events from different cultures (Dee, 2017; Gutierrez, 2017). In addition, they ought to support and care about students' cultures and home languages (Kelly, 2013).

To connect curriculum to students' backgrounds effectively, professional development and training opportunities as well as other approaches are needed. Ethnic awareness classes and training for teachers on how to instruct bilingual children should be made available (Malik, 2020; Wilkerson, 2020; Youngquist & Martinez-Griego, 2009). Better peer faculty mentorships should be created to develop cultural spaces and ethnic based courses for students (Zerquera, 2017). Educators may want to speak about different racial and ethnic identities when discussing



civic participation and diversity (Littenberg, 2016). Schools should educate educators and students on not only ethnic and racial diversity, but also a true acceptance of difference and support for those who have faced inequalities or discrimination from adults in their school (Adams, 2021; Banales, 2020; Beattie, 2017; Martinez-Fuentes, 2021; Stovall, 2006). In addition to teachers, parents who are racially and ethnically educated can better support students (Bennett, 2020; Soto-Lara, 2020). Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students, their families, and teachers can work together to create safe learning environments (Barrocas, 2014; Cardoso, 2021). Moreover, schools need more culturally diverse teachers that match the backgrounds of the student population, so students can see others like themselves in leadership positions in their community (Garcia, 2007; Gonzalez, 2012; Souto-Manning, 2016). Figure 5 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 5**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Culturally Relevant Curricula*

<b>Connecting Curricula to Students' Cultural Backgrounds</b>
1. Connect academic materials to students' life experiences, as well as the ethnic backgrounds of families and community members.
2. Offer cultural spaces, ethnic courses, and culturally responsive support systems.
3. Respect and talk about cultural beliefs and practices.
4. Celebrate different cultural holidays.
5. Embrace long-standing sociocultural norms, values, and practices of families.
6. Incorporate the history of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e people into the curriculum.
7. Help students understand unfamiliar cultures.
8. Employ culturally responsive teaching principles.
9. Conduct classroom-based assessments.
10. Incorporate inclusive, hands-on, and engaging learning assignments.

11. Set high expectations for students.
12. Provide professional development for teachers (e.g., ethnic/cultural awareness).
13. Hire more culturally diverse teachers that match students' backgrounds.
14. Develop bilingual learning materials and assignments.
15. Focus on anti-discrimination education for the entire school community.

#### ***4. Engaging Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students in Classes and Having High Expectations***

Educators should engage Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students more in their classes and have high expectations for all students regardless of their cultural backgrounds (Flores-Duenas, 2005). In other words, all students should be challenged to succeed, and underrepresented groups should experience more inclusion and involvement in higher-level classes, such as honors classes or advanced placement (AP) classes (Martinez & Guzman, 2013). For instance, Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students should be encouraged to take more Science Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-oriented subjects (Seo, 2019), and teachers should integrate disciplines more, use interdisciplinary approaches, and present science as a continual process (Jeynes, 2015; Nation, 2019). Teachers can help Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students meet such expectations by building social capital<sup>2</sup>, facilitating appropriate actions, providing problem-solving opportunities, and supporting students in their academic success (Morrison et al., 2002; Turner, 2011; Young, 2005). A focus on literacy and personalized learning opportunities should be employed so that Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students can reach higher expectations across more subjects (Borijian, 2008; Crum, 2008).

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<sup>2</sup> We can understand social capital as the relationships through which groups, organizations, and individuals access resources and new information.

Classrooms should be inclusive environments that offer materials in various languages and accept all cultures and backgrounds as some students' first languages are not English (Borjian, 2008; Ochoa, 2004; Shewach, 2017). Along with inclusivity, schools should implement a more balanced and hands-on curriculum that allows equal time for all subjects, paired with devoted and encouraging teachers that will help students thrive and want to learn (Kelly, 2013; Malik, 2020; Rodriguez, 2001, 2010; Stickl Haugen et al., 2021; Taube, 2006). Educational plans for students should be based on their individual needs by integrating evidence-based practices into their daily routine as well as offering opportunities for students with higher needs from the school system to improve their experiences and success rate (Landmark, 2013). Most importantly, efforts to promote the value of academic achievement in the Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e communities are especially important when students reach the middle school years (Rubens et al., 2020).

For Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students to reach higher expectations, more engagement from their families is also essential. Such engagement should include families encouraging and motivating their children to succeed (McWayne, 2018). Moreover, Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e families should get customized help from STEM programs and diversity awareness programs (Anglin, 2012; Delgado, 2021). In addition to including families, schools can also encourage student engagement through student peer groups and school staff (Morrison et al., 2002). Figure 6 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

## **Figure 6**

*Summary of Best Practices for Engaging Students*

### **Engaging Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Students in Classes & Having High Expectations**

1. Have high expectations and challenge all students to succeed.

2. Promote the involvement of underrepresented groups in higher-level classes (e.g., Honors, Advance Placement).
3. Provide opportunities for building social capital.
4. Focus on literacy so students can reach higher expectations in all subjects.
5. Offer materials in various languages.
6. Create educational plans that are based on students' individual needs.
7. Promote the value of academic achievement.
8. Engage families in school activities.
9. Encourage families to motivate their children to succeed.
10. Foster student engagement through peer groups.
11. Use interdisciplinary approaches.
12. Employ personalized learning.
13. Develop a balanced and hands-on curriculum.

### ***5. Strengthening Communication between Schools and Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Families***

Efforts should be made to strengthen communication between schools and Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e families as both are important influences in students' academic and personal lives. Effective two-way communication channels and connectedness with families should be established, so they feel comfortable reaching out about their concerns related to their child's education (Karcher, 2010; Turcios-Cotto, 2013). Parada (2021) claims that two-way communication reduces language obstacles. Such communication also helps both entities support each other, and address the needs of students (Assari, 2019, 2020; Campbell, 2004). Therefore, schools should offer multilingual services that offer the preferred language(s) of students and families so better communication can occur (Beasley, 2017; Calzada, 2013; Lopez, 2005; Ramirez, 2016). Through increased communication, parents will be able to learn more about college requirements and how to better support their children academically and personally

(Beltrán, 2012; Parada, 2021; Torrez, 2004; Turcios-Cotto, 2013). When schools and families work together and have open communication, students can achieve their educational goals, and families can have their concerns addressed (Johnson, 2009; Scribner, 2017; Turcios-Cotto, 2013; Villenas, 2008). Moreover, school administrators and teachers should actively engage students and families in school activities so that decision making and lesson planning processes are transparent (Kinzer, 2021). Moreover, Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e parents' involvement in school-sponsored activities and school leadership can help improve the education system for their children (Durand, 2013; Frew, 2013).

Another way schools can strengthen the communication with Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e families is to provide school materials in the preferred languages so that language barriers do not stand in the way of families and schools empowering children together (Beltrán, 2012; Campbell, 2004; Lopez, 2005). Schools should invest in bilingual faculty and staff so they can better communicate with families who do not speak English as a primary language. In addition, changing the way languages are taught will change the racial status quo by showing families that schools prioritize communication (Flores, 2015; Weimelt, 2015).

Teachers can create an inclusive environment by communicating with families about their child's education and how they can support their children and family structures and values in the classroom while creating an inclusive environment for families who are unfamiliar with the U.S. school system (Larotta, 2011; Power, 2021; Soto-Lara, 2020). When parents/guardians feel comfortable communicating with schools, they take initiative by clarifying what resources they need such as parent classes to learn English (Anglin, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Scribner, 2017). Such classes and other multilingual services should be offered to create a space for parents/guardians and teachers to be able to communicate more effectively with each other and

lessen the language gap (Calzada, 2013; Johnson, 2009). Learning English can be useful for parents, especially when they need to communicate in their day-to-day life, help their children with homework, and make connections within the school system (Sommer et al., 2020). By keeping families involved in students’ education, students are more likely to have successful outcomes in their educational experiences while creating strong family bonds (Gonzalez, 2018; Lynd, 2007). Figure 7 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 7**

*Summary of Best Practices for Strengthening Communication*

<b>Strengthening Communication between Schools &amp; Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e Families</b>
1. Establish effective two-way communication channels with families.
2. Offer multilingual communication services.
3. Actively engage students and families in school activities and decision-making processes.
4. Involve parents in school leadership.
5. Provide school materials in preferred languages.
6. Invest in and hire bilingual/multilingual faculty and staff.
7. Change the way languages are currently taught.
8. Communicate with families about how they can support their child(ren)’s education.
9. Create an inclusive environment for families who are unfamiliar with U.S. school system.
10. Create a space where families and teachers can communicate.
11. Provide English learning opportunities for parents/guardians and/or family members.

**6. Supporting and Understanding Familism**

*Familism* (i.e., the value of one’s family) promotes cohesion, support, respect, and obligations towards the family (Lorenzo-Blanco, 2012; Papadakis et al., 2018). Parents can

maintain strong family ties by encouraging a strong ethnic identity in their children (Huq et al., 2016). Research has shown that promoting familism is important when schools support and work with Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and their families (Papadakis et al., 2018). Such promotion also benefits Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e youth transitioning to higher education (Park et al., 2021). Schools should expand programs that encourage familism in students’ activities, reaffirm common values, and support the positive effects of the values of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e communities (Stein, 2020).

To create parent and guardian engagement programs that understand the needs of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e families, educators and administrators should learn more about the importance of familism, the relevance of cultural factors, and the values and structures of students’ families in their school community (Huang, 2019; Park et al., 2021; Soto-Lara, 2020). Overall, better connectedness between schools, teachers, and families can help improve the student’s overall well-being and provide the best aid for students to succeed (Arizaga, 2020; Barrocas, 2014; Elsaesser, 2018). Figure 8 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 8**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Familism*

<b>Supporting and Understanding Familism</b>
1. Promote the importance of one’s family (i.e., familism) within the school system.
2. Encourage the development of a strong ethnic identity in children.
3. Expand programs that encourage familism in students’ activities.
4. Create parent/guardian engagement programs.
5. Understand the needs of families.
6. Learn about the values and structures of students’ families.

## ***7. Empowering Students***

Strong connections between schools and families can also lead to the empowerment of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students within school and their personal life because such connections can contribute to students becoming more involved in their community, which helps them establish relationships with adult role models and develop strong ethnic identities and family bonds (Aceves, 2020; Scribner, 2017). An inclusive and empowering environment also allows students to determine their own success and encourages the use of student-led self-affirming interventions that help them persevere (Borman, 2021; Landmark, 2013; Ozer, 2008; Sanford, 2019; Shogren, 2018). Success in empowering students can also come from interdisciplinary approaches that allow multiple perspectives and encourage students to partake in STEM programs and other communities that support their academic pursuits (Campbell, 2004; Jeynes, 2015; Landmark, 2013; Seo, 2019). For example, presenting science as a continual process and engaging girls in science learning can empower students to pursue further education in STEM (Nation, 2019).

Schools should focus on empowering Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students for not only their own well-being, but also their family's (Escaron et al., 2020). To empower students, it is important for teachers and district leaders to provide a more inclusive environment for students in school, as well as encourage parents to take part in the district and their child(ren)'s education (Campbell, 2004; Huerta, 2020; Scribner, 2017). A strong sense of identity can start with families encouraging a strong sense of ethnic pride at home (Guilamo-Ramos, 2009). Students who can be open and expressive with their parents, especially their mothers, feel empowered in their personal and academic activities (Lugo-Candelas, 2015). Another way to empower students



is to provide a supportive environment that teaches them how to communicate their thoughts and cope with racial discrimination and stereotypes in a healthy way (Romero et al., 2022; Sanford, 2019). Moreover, schools should educate students on prejudices and inequalities in school to help them face inequalities and encourage self-love (McDonald, 2021; Stovall, 2006). School administrators and teachers should not perpetuate stereotypes of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e youth's academic identities or promote lower expectations that negatively affect students' well-being (Fletcher, 2019; Flores-Duenas, 2005; Punti, 2018). Instead, schools should work to empower Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students to academically succeed by instilling a strong sense of cultural and ethnic identity, engaging students in hands-on activities that relate to their experiences, and showing them healthy ways to cope with personal issues (Beattie, 2017; Haugen et al., 2021; Seickl Vitali, 2016).

Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students should also be engaged in more youth-led research and youth research interventions (Ozer, 2008). Such youth programs can positively influence students by allowing them to express themselves in authentic ways (Higgins, 2019; Lee, 2009). Such programs can also help students build positive relationships with adults, develop better social skills, and instill a sense of safety (Lee, 2009). Figure 9 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 9**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Student Empowerment*

Empowering Students
1. Encourage students to become more involved in their community.
2. Use student-led, self-affirming interventions.
3. Employ interdisciplinary approaches that allow for multiple perspectives.

4. Encourage students to partake in STEM programs.
5. Engage girls in science learning.
6. Provide a more inclusive and empowering school environment.
7. Encourage parents to take part in the district and their child(ren)'s education.
8. Promote a strong sense of cultural identity, self-love, self-expression, and ethnic pride.
9. Provide environments that help students cope in healthy ways.
10. Educate students on prejudices and inequalities.
11. Do not perpetuate stereotypes.
12. Engage students in hands-on activities that relate to their experiences.
13. Involve students in more youth-led research and interventions.
14. Allow students to express themselves in authentic ways.
15. Build positive relationships, develop social skills, and ensure safety.
16. Develop tools for healthy dialogue around sensitive topics and racial discrimination.
17. Educate students, faculty, and staff on prejudices, implicit bias, and inequalities.
18. Develop youth programs for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students.

### ***8. Strengthening Relationships between Students and School Personnel***

Relationship building should be a priority for teachers and school personnel. If a strong connection is established between Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and teachers, it can encourage students to pursue their current and future academic goals (Niehaus et al., 2016; Rastogi & Juvonen, 2019). Providing training for teachers might help them to better understand immigrant families and their experiences inside and outside the classroom so that they can help such students get the most out of their education while also establishing strong connections with them and their families (Landmark, 2013; Perreira, 2007). Teachers should work to create safe spaces

for students by showing that they care about students' cultures by getting to know them and using culturally relevant materials (Cardoso, 2021; Kelly, 2013; Malik, 2020; Shewach, 2017; Zerquera, 2017). They should take time to listen to students, so students do not experience isolation (Ordoñez-Jasis, 2010). Teachers, who communicate with students, can encourage, and motivate them to engage in school activities (Hickman, 2019; Ozer, 2008). Teachers can also build relationships with students by employing hands-on activities that engage students, allowing students to express themselves in the classroom while they are learning, and helping students to work through personal issues by using mindfulness (Stickl Haugen et al., 2021; Taube, 2006; Vitali, 2016).

Building trusting connections and relationships between students and teachers should be a priority (Alveraz, 2017; Gutierrez, 2009; Mireles-Rios, 2020; Wright, 2009). This trust can build when teachers inspire students to love thyself (McDonald, 2021). School leaders can encourage teachers and other school personnel to maintain a balance between academics and classroom culture, so that teachers' attempts to connect and build relationships with students are supported (Rodriguez, 2015). In addition to strong relationships with teachers, students can benefit from strong relationships with other school personnel such as school and district leaders, counselors, and nurses (Gandara, 2017; Johnson, 2011; Paolini, 2015). School personnel should provide both bonding and bridging social capital<sup>3</sup> to increase opportunities for students. For instance, such opportunities might include serving as role models that encourage relationship building within the school community and offering opportunities to connect with potential role models outside the school (Beattie, 2011; Otero & Cammarota, 2011; Young, 2005). Figure 10 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

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<sup>3</sup> Bridging social capital includes increasing access to resources and information across different kinds of groups. Bonding social capital is strengthening within group relationships.

**Figure 10**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Strengthening Relationships*

<b>Strengthening Relationships between Students and School Personnel</b>
1. Make relationship building a priority.
2. Provide training for teachers on the unique experiences of immigrants.
3. Create safe spaces for students.
4. Get to know students.
5. Listen to students.
6. Incorporate culturally relevant materials into the curriculum.
7. Employ hands-on activities that engage students and tap into their unique experiences.
8. Have students use mindfulness to work through personal struggles.
9. Maintain a balance between academics and classroom culture.
10. Provide opportunities for building bonding and bridging social capital.

***9. Increasing Community Connections and Partnerships***

More organizations and partners beyond the school community are needed to help students prepare for a successful post-secondary education (Collins, 2009). They can also provide parents with the resources and supports needed to aid students in their pursuit of higher education and other academic needs through more parental engagement and outreach programs (Barrocas, 2014; Carrell, 2021; Fischer et al., 2019; Huerta, 2020). Opportunities for bridging social capital should also be provided, especially ones that teach financial literacy and offer adult role models for students (Dill & Ozer, 2019). Moreover, schools and other organizations, such as the college boards, need to work together to increase the number of minorities in advanced placement classes and other high honors classes (Rogeman et al., 2019). Lastly, an effort to

involve students and their families in the local community should be made by schools (Comfort, 2018). Families that get involved in their community and school-sponsored activities demonstrate community support and ethnic pride to their children (Comfort, 2018; Frew, 2013; Guilamo-Ramos, 2009; Stein, 2020). Figure 11 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 11**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Community Partnerships*

Increasing Community Connections and Partnerships
1. Connect students and their families to community resources.
2. Provide opportunities for building bridging social capital.
3. Connect students with adult role models in the community.
4. Involve students and their families in community-based initiatives.
5. Develop strategic community partnerships to support students and parents/guardians.
6. Collaborate with partners on programming focused on increasing the skillsets of students and their families.

**10. Addressing Racial and Ethnic Inequalities, Discrimination, Prejudices, and Stereotypes**

Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students need support from schools to combat racial and ethnic inequalities, discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes (Castro, 2022). To support students, inclusion starts with school community members suspending judgments, changing their views of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e families and their family structures, and embracing the diversity that students bring to classrooms (Anglin, 2012; Cczyk, 2018). In addition to acknowledging students' culture in the classroom, schools should incorporate education on ethnicity and diversity as well as prejudices, inequalities, and stereotypes (Banales, 2020; Beattie, 2017; Castro, 2022; Cortina et al., 2015; Jans-Thomas, 2009; Morales-Chicas, 2021; Nguyen, 2021;

Seo, 2021; Stovall, 2006; Zerquera, 2017). Such practices build safer learning environments and develop trust and positive relationships by providing teachers with a deeper understanding of the struggles faced by students so they can help students learn how to cope with such issues (Cardoso, 2021; Mireles-Rios, 2020; Romero et al., 2022; Stovall, 2006).

In addition to raising awareness of prejudices and inequalities, administrators should ensure that their schools have culturally responsive missions that promote the acceptance of all students and actively recruits faculty who are ethnically and linguistically diverse (Crabtree, 2019; Ezzani, 2020; Fletcher, 2019; Seo, 2021; Stein et al., 2019; Stovall, 2006; Webb, 2021; Wiemelt, 2015). They should also incorporate strategies that will prevent actions of inequality such as bullying, racial/ethnic discrimination, and systemic disadvantages (Chen, 2020; Shogren, 2018; Webb, 2021). Working towards an open and accepting setting where teachers and peers can address larger issues of vulnerability and marginalization among races in the American school system will contribute to increased understanding of the relationships between perceived racial discrimination, ethnic identity, and attitudes towards education (Fernández, 2002; Kogachi & Graham, 2021; Mrockowski, 2015; Seo, 2021).

Schools can also address inequalities by explicitly acknowledging the inequities Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and their families are experiencing and addressing them through improved policies and practices that promote positive school climates (Fletcher, 2019; Peguero et al., 2019). Schools need to avoid categorizing the academic identities of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e youth because if parents feel their children are being labeled as unintelligent, they will not want to be involved with the school's efforts in encouraging their student's academic pursuits (Punti, 2018). Educators need to be well informed on racial and ethnic topics and how to address racial inequalities in schools so they can better support students and their families (Anglin, 2012;

Bennett, 2020; Littenberg, 2016; Martinez-Fuentes, 2021). Changing how Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students are viewed requires the suspension of judgment for what one may believe families should be doing to support young children (Cycyk, 2018). Educators also need to unpack their perceptions of urban, low-income Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students (Mroczkowski, 2015) and acknowledge the pervasive use of stereotypes of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students as unintelligent when they struggle academically and acting White when they excel academically (Durkee et al., 2019; Nation, 2019; Puntí, 2018). Educators need to be responsive to such student experiences, especially within middle schools (Durkee et al., 2019; Ezzani, 2020; Fernández, 2002; Jans-Thomas, 2009; Kogachi & Graham, 2021). Students found to be battling racial discrimination should be provided with support by schools, so it does not affect their academic success (Beattie, 2017; Castro, 2022).

Discussions that promote awareness of prejudices and inequalities in the education systems should occur not only among the adults in a school community, but also the youth enrolled (Stein et al., 2019; Stovall, 2006; Webb, 2021). Allowing students to discuss their ideas openly and safely in schools provides an encouraging environment where they can share their thoughts in a healthy way (Stanford, 2019). Having students talk out issues and problem solve together in safe spaces like ethnic courses or cultural spaces within the school can be beneficial because it allows students to stand up for themselves or cope with adversities (Romero et al., 2022; Zerquera, 2017). Inclusive materials can also help change stereotypical beliefs and empower students by showing people of various backgrounds, genders, and cultures working and overcoming setbacks in various professions such as positions in STEM fields (Nation, 2019; Nguyen, 2021). Furthermore, students can also work on broader political projects that are geared toward dismantling structures of oppression (Flores, 2019). It is important to note that

educational frameworks should extend such opportunities to all races, genders, and backgrounds (Crabtree, 2019; Iruka, 2020). Figure 12 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 12**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Addressing Inequalities*

<b>Addressing Racial &amp; Ethnic Inequalities, Discrimination, Prejudices, &amp; Stereotypes</b>
1. Suspend judgments, change views, and embrace diversity.
2. Incorporate education on ethnicity, diversity, prejudices, inequalities, and stereotypes.
3. Develop trust and positive relationships.
4. Provide teachers with a deeper understanding of students' struggles.
5. Help students learn to cope with adversities.
6. Ensure schools have culturally responsive mission statements.
7. Promote the acceptance of all students through inclusive educational frameworks.
8. Actively recruit ethnically and linguistically diverse faculty.
9. Incorporate strategies that prevent bullying, discrimination, and disadvantages.
10. Explicitly acknowledge the inequities students and their families face.
11. Engage in proactive measures to limit inequalities and create a positive school climate.
12. Avoid categorizing the academic identities of youth.
13. Inform teachers on racial and ethnic topics and how to address inequities.
14. Acknowledge the pervasive use of stereotypes.
15. Provide support to students battling racial discrimination.
16. Hold discussions that promote awareness of prejudices and inequalities within educational systems.
17. Allow students to discuss their ideas openly and safely.
18. Have students talk out issues and problem solve together in safe spaces.
19. Use inclusive materials that incorporate people of various backgrounds.
20. Have students participate in projects that are geared towards dismantling structures of oppression.



## ***11. Increasing Resources and Supports for Students and Families***

Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and their families as well as others benefit academically, socially, and emotionally when increased resources and supports are available (Areba, 2021; Bámaca-Colbert, 2017; Beal, 2015; Chen, 2020; Huerta, 2020; Platt, 2020; Quiroz, 2011; Varela et al., 2019; Wasserman, 2021). Teachers should encourage students to become involved in educational programs that can help them grow into adulthood (Nelson, 2009) because marginalized students who are also in need require more support programs that engage them in problem-solving and have them express themselves; such programs can also help increase school connectedness (Areba, 2011; Higgins, 2019; Turner, 2011). Support from teachers and administration can encourage student self-determination (Landmark, 2013; Ong, 2006). Schools can also provide support by funding programs and resources, such as accommodating afterschool programs. Such programs can make students feel safe, allow students to view staff in a positive light, and support students who are struggling academically (Cagle, 2018; Lee, 2009).

However, schools should provide resources and supports that go beyond classroom supports and afterschool programs (Johnson, 2011; Seo, 2019; Smith, 2021). For instance, schools can make a positive impact on Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students when they support parents and guardians in their efforts to help their children succeed academically by providing individualized and personalized help (Anglin, 2012; Hickman, 2019; Huerta, 2020; Power 2021; Puntí, 2018; Soto-Lara, 2020). Parent education programs should be made available for those who are unfamiliar with the U.S. education system (Fischer et al., 2019; Larrotta, 2011; Wasserman, 2021). Students and their families might also need more support and guidance to overcome certain knowledge barriers related to college and career readiness so students can pursue their goal, whether it is to pursue a career in the workforce or degree in higher education

(Huerta, 2020; Neubrander, 2011). Schools can give students access to interest inventories and vocational opportunities (Diemer, 2010) as well connect students and families to financial and social emotional resources that can help students pursue their goals (Huerta, 2020; Puntí, 2018).

Additionally, parents might need the school’s support if students transition into a new school before they graduate (Benner, 2014), and high school graduates especially need transitional services as well as employment opportunities (Nochajski, 2014). Educational institutions should also provide support programs for teachers along with parental support programs, so both parties are able to properly assist students (Barrocas, 2014). Schools should provide the racial and ethnic backgrounds of students to teachers so they can better prepare themselves to understand and support their students (Bennett, 2020). Trained teachers are more equipped to work with struggling students both outside and inside of school (Landmark, 2013). Figure 13 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

**Figure 13**

*Summary of Best Practices Related to Resources and Supports*

<b>Increasing Resources and Supports for Students and Families</b>
1. Encourage students to become involved in educational programs and extracurriculars.
2. Fund accommodating programs and resources for Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students (e.g., afterschool programs).
3. Provide individualized and personalized help for children and their families.
4. Develop and make available parent education programs.
5. Offer support and guidance for college and career readiness to students and families.
6. Give students access to interest inventories and vocational opportunities.
7. Connect students and families to financial and social emotional resources.
8. Offer transitional services as well as employment opportunities.
9. Provide support programs (e.g., cultural awareness) for teachers and parents/guardians.

## ***12. Increasing Mental Health Resources and Supports***

More culturally responsive school programs that encourage a healthy lifestyle, touch upon health-promoting factors, highlight strategic resources, and encourage youth to succeed in school are needed (Langdon, 2020; Liu, 2019; Wallander, 2019). In terms of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and their families, educators must learn to gain a deeper understanding of the mental health challenges faced in such communities to establish trust and emotional connections (Mireles-Rios, 2020; Suarez-Morales, 2016). Schools should also work to provide more equitable mental health support systems within schools to help address behavioral issues and help students cope with trauma without depending on standard disciplinary practices (Meléndez Guevara et al., 2021; Sims, 2020). Schools should provide resources that inform students about reckless behaviors and effects of substance abuse, so they do not deviate from their goals (Corbin, 2008). Bringing in mental health professionals who specialize in handling suicidal ideation and acculturative stress as well as offering parents insights and resources on the best ways to support their children can help ease the integration of cultural and school relations (Haboush-Deloye, 2015; Ong, 2006; Soto-Lara, 2020). Teachers, parents, and district leaders can all be sources of support for students by encouraging practices that promote a positive well-being (Cardoso, 2021; Johnson, 2011; Kelly, 2013; McWayne, 2018; Wright, 2009). In addition, peer tutors can also serve as a resource for health-related information (Warner et al., 2005). Overall, researchers agree that more focus should be placed on promoting positive mental health, assessing any issues, and providing mental health education, supports, and resources for students and their families (Bámaca-Colbert, 2017; Guo, 2014; Ong, 2006; Platt, 2020; Sims, 2020; Skriner, 2013; Suarez-Morales, 2016). Figure 14 summarizes the best practices outlined in this section.

## Figure 14

### *Summary of Best Practices Related to Mental Health*

Increasing Mental Health Resources and Supports
1. Establish trust and emotional connections.
2. Provide more equitable mental health support systems within schools.
3. Help students cope with trauma.
4. Provide learning materials about mental health education and substance abuse.
5. Establish access to mental health professionals for students and families.
6. Offer resources to parents on the best ways to support their children.
7. Encourage practices that promote positive well-being.
8. Have trained peer tutors serve as a resource for health-related information.
9. Provide mental health education and resources for students and their families.
10. Develop culturally responsive mental health programs.
11. Provide teachers with professional development focused on the mental health needs of Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students and families.

## Limitations

All articles have limitations, and it is important to note such limitations as they shed light on possible avenues for future research. Our search capabilities for the literature review were limited to what was available without additional cost through our university's databases. Our search strategy therefore might not have captured all references on best practices for Hispanic-Latina/o/x/e.

Of the 221 articles reviewed, the most salient limitations were: methodological limitations, lack of translated materials, and stereotypical beliefs about races /ethnicities. Methodological limitations include small sample sizes, convenience sampling, and limited

samples that are not generalizable. In addition, limited experimental approaches have been conducted and most articles look at a specific point in time. Although the literature on best practices has limitations, their findings are still important for educational practitioners.

## **Conclusion**

School districts need to continue adapting to the varying needs and cultural backgrounds of the students (Khong & Saito, 2014). This report outlined some of the best practices that schools can use to support Hispanic-Latino/a/x/e students.

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