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Education and Hispanics in Hypergrowth Areas: The Georgia Question in American Schooling

Robert A. DeVillar  
*Kennesaw State University*, rdevilla@kennesaw.edu

Binbin Jiang  
*Kennesaw State University*, bjiang@kennesaw.edu

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Education and Hispanics in Hypergrowth Areas: The Georgia Question in American Schooling

Robert A. DeVillar and Binbin Jiang, Kennesaw State University

National Hispanic Demographic Profile

The Hispanic population growth rate in the United States over the past 15 years may be characterized as explosive in its own right, and more so when compared to its counterpart racial and ethnic U.S. population groups (InfoPlease, 2006). Over the 1990-2000 decade, the U.S. Hispanic population increased by 58% (U.S. Census Bureau, May 2001, p. 4), 4 times the pace at which the nation itself grew. In the most recent national census, Census 2000, Hispanics in the United States numbered 35,305,818, or 12.5% of the total population, converting this group into the nation's largest minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001) and increasing its real numbers over the decade by 12,951,759 individuals. Its recent growth has been predicted as increasing at a rate of over 1.7% per year, translating into some 100,000 Hispanics immigrating to or being born in the United States every 3 weeks, or 4,800 people daily (Gillula & Bailey, 2006). In fact, recent census figures corroborate this measure as the group's national growth rate continues its remarkable pace, with the Hispanic population having grown to 39,898,889 by July 1, 2003, and accounting for 13.7% of the total U.S. population (InfoPlease, 2006). The population of the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, 98.8% Hispanic, citizens of the United States, and counted in the U.S. census, adds another 3.9 million persons to the U.S. Hispanic population (World Fact Book, 2005), all of whom are legally embraced within the governing institutions and territory of the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs, 2003), resulting in a snapshot total of 43.8 million persons of Hispanic origin. The Hispanic economic profile has followed suit, totaling 653 billion dollars in buying power as of December 2003, a sum that was greater than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Australia (Swivel, 2007), and, that by 2008, is projected to generate 1 trillion dollars in buying power (Humphreys, 2004). Hispanics, however, continue to lag behind other ethnic groups in the United States in educational achievement (grades and completion rates) and attainment (high school diplomas and postsecondary degrees).
Regional Demographic Profile

The Southeastern United States is a geographic region comprising Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (Leacock, 2002). The Hispanic presence in this 12-state region first began in 1513, with the explorations of Ponce de Leon to Florida; this excursion was followed by the first, though short-lived (1526-1527), European settlement in what was to eventually become the United States by Spain's Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, resting, it is believed, somewhere along the coast of present-day Georgia and South Carolina (Cook, 1992; Smith, 1992); Spain's explorations in the region culminated in our future country's first permanent European settlement (St. Augustine, Florida) being founded in 1565, by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, a Spanish naval officer 42 years before the founding of Jamestown (Lyon, 1976). Historically, this was a violent period, involving battles across geographies between the Spaniards and French Huguenots and Native Americans, and later, the English, which took the Spaniards in their ships and on foot along the coasts of what are now Georgia and South Carolina (Bennett, 1981; Gannon, 2003; Spikes, 2002), establishing forts and outposts (Tebeau, 1971) and missions (Geiger, 1937/1989), but apparently not founding further permanent settlements once Menéndez died in 1574 (Tebeau, 1971).

Dr. Manuel Gamio (1883-1960), renowned Mexican anthropologist, studied Mexican immigration to the United States at the invitation of the U.S. Social Science Research Council during 1927 and 1928 and published his findings in 1930 and 1931 in two volumes entitled, respectively, Mexican Immigration to the United States and The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant. Gamio found that Mexican immigrants resided in every one of the then 48 states of the Union (Gamio, 1930/1969, p. xii), although the geographic preferences of these immigrants, and of Hispanics in general, definitely has been the U.S. Southwest, particular metropolitan areas of the East and Midwest, and, since 1959, Florida (Acosta-Belén, 1988; Camarillo, 2007).

Given this historically strong regional-centric pull, the relatively sudden Hispanic growth rate in areas of the U.S. Southeast since 1990 has proved to be as phenomenal as it was unpredictable, catching schools, communities, businesses, and health providers, among others in the Southeast, ill-prepared to effectively understand, culturally or linguistically, the Hispanic newcomers. The 12 states comprising the Southeast accounted for 2,167,324 Hispanic individuals in the 1990 U.S. Census; by 2000, this group had grown to 4,506,603 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), more than doubling its numbers. This 108% growth in the Southeast translates into 619 individuals of Hispanic descent arriving daily over a 10-year period, and adding on to the original 1990 base.
When comparisons are made among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States (Suro & Singer, 2002, p. 12), the growth rate of Hispanic populations in the Southeast from 1980 to 2000 far exceeds Hispanic growth rates in any other region of the United States. From the 1990 census period to that of the 2000 census, only seven metropolitan areas in the United States, all in the Southeast, exceeded growth rates of 300% or more. From 1980 to 2000, within the same 100 largest metropolitan areas referred to above, only nine metropolitan areas—termed hypergrowth metros (Suro & Singer, 2002)—grew at rates of over 500%. Eight of the hypergrowth metro areas were in the Southeast, including the top five. The Atlanta hypergrowth metro area was second in Hispanic population growth (995%) in 2000. This same hypergrowth metro area population in July 2003 had grown by 30%, to 347,768 individuals of Hispanic origin—a rate 3 times that of the national Hispanic population growth of 9.8% (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2003b).

Georgia's borders are contiguous with five states: Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. These six states account for 86% of the Census 2000 Hispanic population in the Southeast and maintain a dramatic growth rate. From 2000 to 2002, for example, Georgia's Hispanic population was the fastest growing group among all the states in the nation (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2003a), with an average of 102 Hispanics moving to Georgia each day. The pattern of intense growth being concentrated in particular states in the Southeast also is visible at the county level. In Georgia, for example, the four metro Atlanta counties of Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett—2.5% of the total number of Georgia counties (159)—account for nearly 50% (48.6%) of the state's Hispanic population (Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, 2007). Of these counties, Cobb and Gwinnett counties remain the fastest growing (Scott, 2004). The Atlanta metro area's general population of 2.23 million in the year 2000 characterized it as having experienced the largest growth in the Southeast, adding 2.9 million residents as of July 2003, and passing the 5 million population mark on March 22, 2007 (Auchmutey, 2007). Metro Atlanta from 2000 to 2006 added more population to its area than any other metropolitan area in the United States (Feagans, 2007).

The Changing Profile of Students in Georgia's Schools

General population growth of this intense nature has a concomitant effect on the general enrollment growth in grades K-12. In 1990, 1,150,462 students were enrolled in Georgia's K-12 public educational system; by 2000, the K-12 student population had increased by 28% to 1,471,650 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990), and to 1,629,157 by October 3, 2006 (Georgia Department of Education, 2007), an 11% increase. Between 1990 and 2000, the student population in grades K-12 increased...
by 28%, relatively close to the percentage of the whole state’s population increase during the 1990s (26.4%). According to the Georgia Department of Education, in the 2001-2002 school year, “Hispanic students accounted for 5.5 percent of the total enrollment in grades K-12 and 5.8 percent of pre-kindergarten enrollment” (University System of Georgia Board of Regents, 2003). This is comparable to the estimated 5.3% overall state Hispanic population in 2000. The Latino student growth rate has remained dynamic in Georgia. Hispanic-origin students accounted for 7.8% (120,505) of the total preK-12 student enrollment (1,544,044) in Georgia’s public schools in the 2004-2005 academic year (Georgia Department of Education, 2005), and, by October 2006, had experienced a 24.4% increase, representing a total of 149,947, or 9.2% of total school enrollment at the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year (Georgia Department of Education, 2007).

Thus, the profile of the general student body in Georgia schools is changing—and rapidly. Data from the Georgia School Council Institute, between 1994 and 2004, illustrate the comparative growth rates among racial and ethnic categories of students as follows: 41.3%, African American; 34.1%, Hispanic; 10.3%, Multiracial; 7.6%, Asian; and 6.6%, White (Georgia School Council Institute, n.d.). These data do not reflect percentages of the total ethnic composition in Georgia’s K-12 public education system; however, they do reflect the changing nature of its ethnic composition. Another Georgia School Council Institute report states that, since 2004, “over half (50.6%) of all students enrolled in public schools in Georgia are minority students” (Georgia School Council Institute, n.d.). On March 3, 2005, the total ethnic composition of Georgia’s K-12 public schools was 49% White, 38% African American, 8% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 2% Multiracial (Georgia Department of Education, 2005). By October 3, 2006, students designated as White accounted for 46.9% of the total student population; African American students remained stable at 38.1%; Hispanic students had increased to 9.2% of the total student population; Asian students remained stable at 2.9%; and students designated as Multiracial had increased to 2.7%. Thus, Hispanic and Multiracial students comprised the growth areas, while the White student population decreased and the African American and Asian American student populations remained stable.

Population projections indicate that students from Hispanic, Asian, African American, and Multiracial categories will form the overwhelming increase in enrollment figures, as the non-Hispanic White population continues to decline relative to its replacement level while other groups grow. The disparity is transformational in terms of race and ethnicity, particularly as the non-Hispanic White population, from 2030 to 2050, "would contribute nothing to the Nation's population growth," and, conversely, "after 2020 the Hispanic population is projected to add more people to the United States every year than would all other race/ethnic groups combined" (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1996). As Georgia’s
population becomes more diverse in culture, language, and ethnicity, and as its schools experience accelerated growth in Hispanic and Multiracial students and diminishing growth in the White student population, the question of the state's response to infrastructure and instructional demands becomes paramount.

**Funding of Education in Georgia**

According to Fleischmann and Pierannunzi (1997), two elements characterize education in Georgia: First, as an issue, it is perennial as opposed to cyclical or temporary. The second element is the issue of funding and its relationship to Georgia's long-time, low-ranking educational profile. "Funding," Fleischmann and Pierannunzi note, "for Georgia's public schools and colleges remains the big-ticket item in the state budget" (Fleischmann & Pierannunzi, 1997, p. 285). The researchers, using data ranging from 1988 to 1995, summarize the issues and outcomes that comprise the educational profile of Georgia: widespread poor performance on national indicators such as SAT verbal and math scores and comparative eighth grade math scores; the state's extremely high percentage of low-income students as measured by students qualifying for free or reduced meals at school (77%) and high dropout rates from high school (29% in 1990); the low per pupil funding allocation ($4,730 in 1993), which was reported as 15% lower than the national average ($5,528); and lower-than-the-national-average teacher salaries (in 1994, $30,700 vs. $35,800). Rubenstein, Doering, and Gess (1998), in their policy study of public education funding in Georgia, examined the levels of real per pupil revenue increases by Georgia from 1988 to 1996 and found:

Real state and local revenues for education have generally declined since 1988. While nominal per-pupil revenues for education (from state and local sources) increased in each year from 1988 to 1996 (rising from $2,919 to $4,404 per pupil), real revenues generally declined between 1990 and 1994, and then increased slightly through 1996. Despite this increase, real revenues remained lower in 1996 than in 1988.

Thus, Georgia has the dual problem of being a relatively low-income state in terms of its comparative per capita income ranking, with a population growth rate that is comparatively high. For example, as its ranking fell from 30th in 2003 ($29,000) to 34th ($30,051) in 2004 in comparative per capita income, and its ranking fell to 49th in per capita income percentage growth change (3.6%), its percentage change in population growth (1.8%) was ranked 5th highest in the nation (U. S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2005). Georgia's ranking in per capita

Funding for public education in Georgia underwent substantial transformations during the 1990s as more resources were allocated, more revenues were obtained for funding, and demographics in public school districts and colleges exploded. National, regional, and state data regarding Hispanic population growth are staggering, particularly when compared to non-Hispanic population growth rates. Table 1 illustrates the actual and projected figures for these two categories at the national level as reported by Humphreys (2002):

Table 1. U.S. Hispanic Population Statistics

(Percentage Change in Population)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>124.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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Nationally, Hispanic demographics relative to average household size continued a stable growth pattern over the years 1970 through 2002, while African American, Asian, and White average household size demographics exhibited a negative growth trend, as Table 2 illustrates (AmeriStat, 2003).

Table 2. Average Household Size Growth Trends

1970-2002
(By Race/Ethnicity)

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The U.S. Census of 2000 reported that the average household size in Georgia was 2.65. Average household size by group category followed a similar trend to that of the nation—the exception being in the Other Race category: White, 2.53; Black/African American, 2.81; American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2.87; Asian, 3.21; Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, 3.27; Other Race, 4.34; Two or More Races, 2.97; and Hispanic, 4.0 (Georgia Office of Planning and Budget, Census Data Program, n.d.). In 2000, there were 16,816 live births by Hispanic-origin women recorded in Georgia, representing 13% of all live births, a percentage more than double the estimated percentage (6%) that Hispanics represented in Georgia's population that same year (University System of Georgia Board of Regents, 2003).

Thus, referring once more to Fleischmann and Pierannunzi's 1997 study, we see in the intervening years since its publication, Georgia's preK-12 public education system has raised its per pupil expenditures and teacher salaries to reflect or exceed those of the national average. Teacher salaries in Georgia now average $45,848, which in 2004 ranked 15\textsuperscript{th} in the nation, and are virtually on par with the national average; however, teacher salaries in Georgia are not keeping up with the rate of national inflation (American Federation of Teachers, 2005). As mentioned previously, Georgia's average per pupil expenditure is greater than the national average, and the percentage of its total budget devoted to education (26.9\%) is greater than the average percentage of all states (21.7\%). Increased funding in Georgia is, of course, a necessary but not sufficient performance variable toward effective educational reform. The question remains as to the efficacy with which the funds invested in its institutions of higher education and preK-12 districts have addressed the professional development of teachers, administrators, and staff to meet the educational needs of Georgia's ever-increasing and diverse student population, and the degree to which this investment can be correlated to students' school-related learning experiences and performance outcomes.

Currently, the state average school completion rate (that is, high school graduation) remains very low at 53\% (Georgia School Council Institute, 2003); low SAT scores continue to place Georgia at the bottom or near-bottom of all states (Georgia Department of Education, 2004a); and "the $5.6 billion in FY 2005 is at least $1.4 billion or 20\% less than what is needed to meet the most basic State standards" (Georgia School Council Institute, 2004b). In 2003, Georgia's average SAT score of 984 was the lowest of all 50 states. In that same year, one state's average SAT score was greater than 1200 (2\%); 18 states' average SAT scores were greater than 1100 (36\%); 27 states' average SAT scores were greater than 1000 (54\%); and 4 states' average SAT scores were lower than 1000 (8\%), specifically, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, and Florida—all states being in the South, and, 3 of the 4 states, in the Southeast.
Periodically, spokespersons from the educational agencies in Georgia, such as the State Board of Education, and from the state government point proudly to the gains made by Georgia students on their SAT scores or the state's ranking. The argument is made that the scores continue to increase at a greater pace than do those of the nation as a whole. From 1993 to 2003, for example, the gap between Georgia's average SAT score and that of the United States fell from a 54 point differential to a 42 point differential (Georgia Department of Education, 2003c).

By this logic, and assuming that all existing relationships across the nation and within Georgia remain stable, at the current rate of a 1.09 point gain each year, in 38.5 years (2041) Georgia's average SAT score will have reached the current national average SAT score. However, on August 26, 2003, the Georgia State Board of Education distributed a press release stating that, in fact, Georgia's pace in SAT score gains was not keeping up with that of the nation (Georgia Department of Education, 2003d), as Georgia's average SAT score increase was 4 points, while that of the nation was 6 points. The official practice of touting Georgia's differential point gains has not had an impact on Georgia's comparative ranking among states with respect to average SAT scores, and placing emphasis on these incremental gains has not gotten, is not getting, and will not get Georgia where it needs to be in terms of educational transformation.

The problem is exacerbated significantly by the fact that average "minority" (reported as a composite grouping) SAT scores, as compared to those of White students, over the period 1993 to 2003, maintained a 14% differential in 8 of the 11 years reported, including the last 5 years, regardless of the incremental gains reported (Georgia Department of Education, 2003d). In two of the 11 years (1993, 1994), the percentage difference in average scores was 15%; in 1998, the difference was 13%. These one point shifts occur infrequently on either side of the usual differential (14%), and therefore do not impact the strength or direction of the trend line, or the fact that over the 11-year period from 1993 to 2003 incremental gains by minority students have been cancelled out by the parallel incremental gains of White students.

Educational Attainment of Hispanics

Comparative data at the national level over the 60-year period from 1940 to 2001 (InfoPlease, 2006) with respect to the educational attainment of different racial or ethnic groups in the United States indicate that the educational gap between Whites and their African American and Hispanic group counterparts remains wide. As Hispanics were collapsed within the White category through the 1970 census, educational attainment data for Hispanics are available as a separate category only since 1980. Essentially, Whites and African Americans
have experienced substantially greater gains than have Hispanics in high school and college graduation rates since 1980, thus increasing the graduation rate gap between Hispanics and their African American and White counterparts. The high school graduation rate for Asian and Pacific Islanders in 2001 has been reported as 87% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Hispanic gains have been comparatively modest in high school graduation rates from 1980 to 2000, increasing approximately by 6 percentage points every 10 years: 44.5% to 50.8% to 56.5%, respectively, compared to the larger percentage point increases of White (71.9%, 81.4%, and 88.7%) and African American (51.4%, 66.2%, and 79.5%) students for the same three decades.

According to data regarding high school graduation rates in 2001, the states comprising the Southeastern United States have lower rates than any other state in the nation, with seven of the twelve states having the nation's lowest high school graduation rate statistics (Manhattan Institute, 2003). Georgia's overall high school graduation rate has been among the nation's worst, 49th in 1999 and 2000 (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004) and in 2001 (Manhattan Institute, 2003). In the academic year 2001-2002, Hispanic students in Georgia numbered 78,399, accounted for 5.5% of the total K-12 student population, 5.8% (1,934) of the pre-K student population, 6.1% of retained students, and 2.4% (1,618) of all Georgia public high school diplomas (Georgia Department of Education, 2003b). In 1998, two of every three Hispanic high school students in Georgia did not graduate on time. They were slower in graduating than Hispanic students in any other state in the nation, and the three counties of Cobb, DeKalb, and Gwinnett had the lowest Hispanic graduation rates in the country, with the exception of Cleveland (Sazler, 2001). Hispanic high school graduation rates in 2001 in these same counties were, respectively, 51.3%, 31.9%, and 55.1% (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006). This is especially disconcerting as high school graduation rates of their Asian and White student peers continue to rise (75%)—exacerbating the already wide achievement gap (Urban Institute Education Policy Center, n.d.). Results of Hispanic kindergarteners' performance on the 2003 Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R) demonstrated that they were the least prepared group for first-grade readiness among the six racial/ethnic group classifications; Georgia's Hispanic fourth-, sixth-, and eighth-graders' reading performance was also the lowest among the same six racial/ethnic classifications (Georgia School Council Institute, 2004a). Thus, the overall state of K-12 educational readiness, preparation, and achievement remains lower for Hispanic students in general than for any other racial or ethnic group, both nationally and in Georgia. Naturally, the lower the schooling achievement record of the student and the longer time to high school graduation, the less likely it is that the student will attend college, or, if attending, do well or complete
it (Education Commission of the States, 2004). In 2000, only 10% of college graduates were Hispanic, as opposed to 18% who were African American, 34% who were White, and 54% who were Asian (Education Commission of the States, 2004). In sum, the pattern established within the K-12 experience extends into the Hispanic students' postsecondary experience. Such performance begs the two-fold question: What transformational educational policies and practices must the state of Georgia implement to radically alter educational outcomes, and how will the process of improving school achievement be funded?

There are major paradigmatic shifts to consider and address that are, in nature, (a) structural (sufficient buildings, sufficient teachers), (b) instructional (quality of teachers hired, of programs, and of materials that support instruction and learning), (c) administrative (number and quality of administrators hired), and (d) professional (number and quality of preservice, advanced degree, and advanced certification programs offered by institutions of higher education), among others. All of the above considerations require funding—to which we now turn.

Public Education Finances

Local, state, and federal governments finance education in the state of Georgia. The state utilizes the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula for determining the amount of resources to allocate from each of these funding sectors to each school district, basing the funding allocation mix on the local revenues generated for education and the district’s needs. Thus, some school districts obtain most of their education budget through local revenue generation, while other school districts require more federal and state funding. For example, the city of Atlanta obtains 63.9% from local revenue, 25.3% from the state, and 10.7% from the federal government; in comparison, Walker County receives 28.4% from local revenues, 63.2% from the state, and 8.4% from the federal government (Georgia Department of Education, 2004c). In Georgia, the amount of local fund generation tends to relate to the amount of property tax revenues a particular school district can generate (Fleischmann & Pierannunzi, 1997). In fact, at the national level, local property taxes “constitute the dominant source of local government funds, providing three-fourths of all local taxes and almost half of all local revenues” (Mikhailov, 1998).

In Georgia, during fiscal year 2004, local revenues accounted for 41.34% of total revenues, state revenues accounted for 51.26%, and federal revenues accounted for 7.4% (Georgia Department of Education, 2004c). Total property taxes collected in Georgia as of March 2005 for the 2005 fiscal year were $62,361 million (Office of the Governor, 2005). Local revenue shares of the four metro Atlanta counties of Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett are 50.10%, 52.93%, 65.40%, and 49.23%, respectively; as noted previously, these four counties
represent 2.5% of the counties in Georgia (159) and collectively account for nearly 50% (48.6%) of the state's Hispanic population. The degree to which Hispanics, as immigrants or native-born, contribute to local revenue through property taxes serves as an indicator of fiscal participation.

There were, in 2005, 5.8 million Hispanic homeowners in the nation, accounting for 37% of the nation's total minority homeownership of 15.7 million, and 8% of the national total of 74.5 million homeowners (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2005). From 1997 to 2002, the foreign-born Hispanic first-time homebuyer accounted for 44% of this total market segment, versus Asian foreign-born, first-time home buyers, who accounted for 30%; Whites, for 19%; and Blacks, for 7% (Drew, 2002). Georgia's real estate community is acutely aware of the buying power of Hispanics, as evidenced by Metro Brokers/GMAC Real Estate's announcing in April 2005 that it had "made history [that] month by becoming the first real estate company in Georgia with a Spanish language web site that allows Hispanic-speaking homebuyers to search for homes in Spanish" (Metro Brokers/GMAC Real Estate, 2005). The announcement further reported that the Hispanic homeownership growth rate of 16.7% from 1994 to 2001 had far outpaced that of Whites, which had grown by 6.6% during the same period. Hispanic foreign-born, first-time home buyers—as do the foreign-born in general—tend to place larger down payments on houses than do their native-born White counterparts and purchase more expensive homes, averaging 50% higher ($150K) than those of the native-born first-time home buyer ($100K) (Drew, 2002).7 Hispanic renters in Georgia also pay property taxes, as do other renters—and at a rate that, in 1998, was 1.35 times higher than that of those who pay property taxes on single family dwellings (National Multi-Housing Council, 1998). On May 1, 2005, the effective tax rate (ETR) differential in Atlanta, Georgia, was 2.36, representing the eighth highest differential ETR in the country (National Multi-Housing Council, 2005). Hispanic homeowners are expected to grow in Georgia, as evidenced by the statement of a vice president of Wachovia Corp., reported in EconSouth (a publication of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta): "Hispanic households with more than $100,000 in annual earnings are growing at more than twice the pace of the general population" (Dougherty & Anservitz, 2005). In Georgia, real estate professionals report that hundreds of homes have been financed in metro Atlanta for people with federal tax ID numbers, despite interest rates that may be 3 to 4 percentage points higher than average home loans—there were 125 such loans in February 2004, representing $16 million in one bank's case. In another bank's case such loans have accounted for $46 million since 1999 (McCarthy, 2004).8

As census projections note, the non-Hispanic White population will steadily decline and be characterized by an increasing average age, while the Hispanic
population will continue to grow, particularly in the Southern states, and be characterized by its youth. By 2025, for example, Hispanics will account for one third (9.5 million) of the projected 30 million additional people; non-Hispanic Whites for another third (10.5 million); and Blacks and Asians (non-Hispanic) for a quarter (7.6 million) and 6% (1.8 million), respectively (Henry, 2003). Furthermore, Hispanic population distribution, while numerically concentrated in metropolitan areas, is also responsible for the strong percentage of growth in rural areas of the South. The population, age, education, and wealth disparities among the groups in all geographic areas emphasize the immediate need to identify and embrace specific strategies for academic improvement, as well as to secure the financial and professional development means to implement them. As stated above, the incremental approach will not close the gap.

Mention was made earlier regarding Georgia's educational expenditures (see “Funding of Education” section above). Actual revenues and expenditures, however, do not tell the whole story, as postsecondary institutions and preK-12 school districts in Georgia have lost anticipated revenues based on funds not being allocated, as should have been the case when student enrollment criteria were met. The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (November 2004) reports that the 21% increase in college and university enrollments over the past 5 fiscal years has actually been met with funding shortfalls totaling $450 million. The budget shortfall for FY2006 is projected to be, minimally, $35 million (i.e., if the Board of Regents were allocated 105% of its funding formula and teacher pay raises were granted), and as much as $164 million (i.e., if the Board of Regents were allocated 97% of its funding formula and teacher pay-raises were granted). If funded at 100%, the shortfall would be $116 million (Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 2004).

A consequence of this shortfall over the past 5 years is that the institutions of higher education have dramatically increased student enrollment growth by more than 20%, while full-time faculty hires have not kept pace (Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 2004), thus inducing larger classes or the hiring of part-time instructors, or both. The inverse relationship between student enrollment growth and funding formula allocation has held true since FY2002 for the Department of Education, as well. Given enrollment growth and teacher salary raises, appropriations between FY2002 and FY2005 should have increased by $450 million rather than have decreased by that same amount (Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 2004). One outcome, as the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute (2004) report points out, has been the attempt by slightly more than half (94) of the 181 school systems in Georgia (Georgia Child Care Association, 2004) to raise property taxes:
The combination of decreased state funding, increasing number of students, and increasing teacher salaries has led to larger class sizes and considerably less funds for books and supplies, media materials, equipment, training, pupil transportation and the operation of school facilities. ... Ninety-four school districts have raised property taxes in FY 2003 and FY 2004. (Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, 2004, p.4)

It is clear that Hispanic growth in school enrollment has not caused the extreme and persistent shortfall in educational funding. The lack of sufficient funds to meet the educational needs of Georgia's students—its future leaders, professionals, specialists, and contributing community members—is perhaps the most critical obstacle to implementing any educational or economic vision that the state of Georgia and its agencies may have. The problem is compounded by universities' and schools' generally and persistently poor track record in successfully educating poor, minority, or linguistically different students. Georgia has a high percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch, 48% (Georgia Department of Education, 2004b), and, as noted in other sections of this report, a growing percentage of both linguistically different students and minority students.

**Providing Education to Limited English Proficient Students**

The greatest challenge to preK-12 schools in Georgia is to significantly increase the academic performance of their students and improve high school graduation rates. To do so inclusively and in accordance with federal mandate, the state must ensure that students whose native language is other than English learn English and receive subject matter instruction in a comprehensible manner to them while they are learning English, as mandated by the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision of 1974. In 2004, there were 106,126 Hispanic students in Georgia's K-12 student population, a substantive difference (349%) from the 23,632 students enrolled in 1995, the 58,096 enrolled in 2000 (83%), and the 93,100 enrolled in 2003 (14%) (Georgia Department of Education Title III Office, 2005). English Language Learners (ELLs)—those students whose English is insufficient to receive subject matter instruction without complementary instruction in learning English—comprised 3.9% (59,125) of the total 1,513,521 student enrollment in Georgia during the academic year 2003-2004 (Georgia Department of Education Title III Office, 2005). Hispanic students represent the vast majority of English language learners.

Rapid population increases, and different counting methods and sources, create parallel census counts. As discussed in an earlier section, federal funding...
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is a source that augments state and local funds; Title III is one such program. In the “Biennial Evaluation Report to Congress on the Implementation of Title III” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), the state of Georgia reported that the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students served in Title III was 66,695 in 2003-2004, an increase of 45% over the number of students (46,000) served the previous year (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). States report the actual number of “certified/licensed teachers working in language instruction educational programs” each year and are also required to provide the estimated number of such teachers needed over the next 5 years, which includes the current number of working teachers certified in language instruction educational programs. The number of certified language instruction teachers in 2003-2004 was 2,831, or one teacher per 24 LEP students. The estimated number of certified language instruction teachers needed in the next five years (2008-2009) is projected to be 3,460 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), an increase of 22%.

The types of technical assistance provided in 2003-2004 included “identifying and implementing English language instructional programs and curricula that are based on scientific research,” and “identifying or developing and implementing measures of English language proficiency,” but did not include “helping LEP students to meet academic content and student academic achievement standards expected of all students,” or “promoting parental and community participation in programs that serve LEP children,” or “providing recognition of sub-grantees that exceeded the English language proficiency annual measurable achievement objectives” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Thus, the technical assistance was of a conceptual nature rather than an applied nature, perhaps indicating that Georgia is at the initial building stage of its program development rather than at the implementation stage.

The state of Georgia also reported that it had exited (“transitioned out”) 12,712 LEP students from language instruction educational programs into regular programs (“not designed for LEP students”) in 2003-2004, a significant percentage of the total LEP student population served by Title III in Georgia—and one that may be inconsistent with the state’s conceptual, rather than applied, stage of LEP program development. LEP students’ scores within the state of Georgia are not included in the body of the Evaluation Report. There were 40,150 “immigrant children and youth” in 2003-2004, 38,919 (97%) of whom were served by Title III, the same percentage of these students that were served the year before (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). These programs are applied in nature and involve the following: family literacy, parent outreach, training, support for personnel (including teacher aides), mentoring and academic counseling, identification and acquisition of curricular materials, software and technologies, and basic instructional services (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).
The development and implementation of a successful educational program for all students in Georgia remains a vision, and incremental steps toward the realization of the goal will not ensure achievement at the levels and percentages targeted by the state. Increased and refined collaboration among institutions of higher learning, the preK-12 schools, business, government, and other institutions and agencies is a *sine qua non* for coordinated development and success. A research-informed, coherent, and enlightened language policy with respect to second language learners who are also students in the preK-12 schooling cycle is also required. Statements of policy by the Georgia Department of Education regarding the use of native and non-native languages to ensure content mastery while students learn English is a positive indicator regarding the development of a coherent and enlightened language policy (Georgia Department of Education, 2003a):

> While English is designated as the official language of the state of Georgia, and the state high school graduation test is in English, our responsibility is to successfully prepare our students to access all postsecondary options available. This objective requires that our instructional approach be flexible to accommodate the needs of a very diverse student and parent population. Our aspiration is to have students succeed in all four language skills both socially and academically. We also wish for them to understand and function successfully in our American culture. *To accomplish these goals, we may need to provide some support in the native language at times and this accommodation is entirely acceptable.* [Emphasis added]

The provision of appropriate services, in the form of language and subject matter content, to Hispanic and other students whose English language proficiency is insufficient to participate in regular classroom instruction, is compromised by persistent budget cuts. Institutions of higher education must take the lead in preparing preK-12 teachers by restructuring their curricula to integrate and address the needs of Hispanic and other immigrant groups, both from other states and other countries. Institutions of higher education must also focus research on the problems of education in Georgia and disseminate widely their findings. Finally, the hiring of university professors whose field of expertise—both research and curricular—is in area studies (e.g., education of language minority students, bilingual/second language education) is immediately required. Elementary and secondary school teachers must engage in long-term professional development that enables them to become competent professionals in successfully teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Immigration has historically made
a positive contribution to U.S. culture in many ways, including economically, artistically, socially, academically, spiritually, and philosophically. In today's extended economic culture of globalization, there is even a clearer and more urgent need for an educated citizenry if Georgia, and the United States, are to develop and prosper.

Notes

1. The U.S. Library of Congress utilizes, arguably, the most comprehensive and inclusive definition of the term Hispanic in the United States: It relates "to those parts of the world encompassing the geographical areas of the Caribbean, Latin America, and Iberia; the indigenous cultures of those areas; and peoples throughout the world historically influenced by Luso-Hispanic heritage, including Latinos in the U.S., and peoples of Portuguese or Spanish heritage in Africa, Asia, and Oceania" (Library of Congress, n.d.). In this chapter, we use the term interchangeably with other markers of Hispanic-origin identification, including Latino and Latina, when addressing Hispanic individuals or groups in the United States, whether by birth or by immigration, and limit its extension to Spanish-influenced heritage groups.

2. Buying power is defined as "the total personal income of residents that is available, after taxes, for spending on goods and services—that is, the disposable personal income of the residents of a specified geographic area" (Humphreys, 2002, p. 1).

3. For demographic data related to this stage of Georgia and the Atlanta Metroplex area, see National Council of La Raza (2005).

4. Demographic data differ according to the sources' definition of metropolitan area; the Atlanta Journal-Constitution uses a 20-county area to define the metro area, and thus uses the population figure of 4.4 million (Scott, 2004); for reasons of consistency, population figures from the Brookings Institution report are used in the text.

5. Note that American Indian/Alaskan Indian students in Georgia numbered 2,273, or less than one seventh of 1% of total student enrollment.

6. Other studies use different methodological approaches to counting, resulting in higher or lower graduation rates and ratings; see Imbriano and Denly (2004).

7. It is important to note that renters as well as homeowners pay property taxes, which are embedded in their rents. Georgia, in 2003, had one million renters and an average monthly rental of $687 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

8. Real estate professional sites and associations over the past few years have integrated and disseminated research findings regarding immigrants and minority group members via their website home pages, newsletters, blogs, etc. One real estate home page, http://www.alicedonahue.com/News/tabid/59/ctl/ArticleView/mid/829/articleId/95/Default.aspx, to make a point about immigrants as prospective home buyers, refers to a study by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University and, within the same sentence, to another by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia. The National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals displays the full text of the prepared remarks by Senator Mel Martinez (Republican, Florida), in which he addressed, in 2003, the state of the Hispanic home-buyer market and reiterated President Bush's explicit commitment to strengthening minority home-ownership by 5.5 million additional units. The remarks can be found at http://www.hud.gov/news/speeches/hispanicestate.cfm.

9. As stated in Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficiency and Immigrant Students, "The purpose of Title III Part A is to help ensure that children and youth who are limited English proficient, Native American and/or
immigrants, attain English language proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and meet the same challenging State academic standards that all children are expected to meet” (Title III of Elementary and Secondary Education Act, n.d., p. 1).

References


