

Members of the OEIB and members of the Equity and Partnership subcommittee:

I am here to testify in support of the OEIB adopting the “Equity Lens” to govern all decisions pertaining to the educational reforms associated with 40/40/20.

As an advocate for the Latino community the reasons for adopting the Equity Lens are clear.

- The achievement gap that exists between Latino students and their white counterparts
- High dropout rate/ Low graduation rate for Latinos
- The absence of Latinos in advanced placement opportunities
- Disproportionate discipline administered to our youth
- Disproportionate numbers of Latino students identified as SPED but underrepresented in TAG
- The systematic exclusion of Latino parents from their student’s school and school governance
- ELL students languishing in English as a Second Language courses without opportunity to exit fluent in English
- The lack of role models – Latino teachers and administrators to inspire students to strive for a post -secondary education
- The fact many of today’s educators are unprepared or ill-equipped to serve Latino students or students of color
- Often times Latino students regardless of their legal status are viewed as undocumented persons undeserving of an education

It is time to level the playing field and provide the opportunity for all students to be successful. The Equity lens, providing it is used with consistency and fidelity, is the framework to drive the work.

As an educational system we need to be intentional and purposeful in the decisions we make in programs, practices and in financial investments to ensure the issues of race and ethnicity do not impede anyone’s education.

In 1969 a Chicano poet – Abelardo Delgado wrote about a “Chicano student, who could not read or write, dying with 1000 masterpieces hanging only from his mind.” The conditions that led to the writing of this poem 40 plus years ago - still exist today.

I respectfully request you adopt the Equity Lens as presented by the Equity and Partnership Subcommittee to drive the work so important to the educational success of the state’s Latino students and all students in general.

Thank you

Carlos Perez