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March 8, 2010

Via Email & U.S. Mail

Dr. Eugene T.W. Sanders  
Superintendent, Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1380 East Sixth Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Dear Dr. Sanders:

Since its creation, the Hispanic Roundtable of Cleveland has addressed issues related to the education of Hispanics in Cleveland. A major concern for our organization has been the steady increase in the dropout rate of Hispanic students in the Cleveland Schools. During our 2007 *Convencion Hispana* we initiated efforts to get the community involved in addressing the involvement of parents and opened the conversation on the dropout rates of students.

As the transformation plan was rolled out in January we met individually with Mayor Frank Jackson, with you, and with Ms. Denise Link in her role as Board Chair to discuss the concerns we have in educating our next generation of Hispanic professionals. As you heard from us, Hispanics continue to grow in the City of Cleveland and be active stakeholders within the school district. As a population, they depend on the Cleveland Schools to be able to reach their educational and career aspirations. After a strong interest from all the participants in the meetings and verbal commitment from you to support the issues of interest to the Hispanic constituents of the school district, we have decided to endorse the Transformation Plan on the condition and with the expectation that the issues discussed during our meetings will receive your support.

In summary those issues are:

1. A strong curriculum and administrative structure to be adopted for Lincoln West that allows for student retention and graduation. Our preference is a STEM focused curriculum.
2. Redesign of the Bilingual Program; we want to see other alternatives such as immersion programs and dual language programs. A robust Multilingual Multicultural Program is clearly in order.

*Building and Empowering the Hispanic Community.*

3. Assign proper funding for psychological services and learning disabilities services in order to meet the needs of Hispanic students.
4. Implement strong innovation programs to West side schools serving Hispanics (STEM, medical, architecture). The curriculum at Thomas Jefferson (New Comers School) needs to include these types of initiative programs.
5. As mentioned in the plan, only select high performing charter school providers to offer services such as the best practice models available through National Council of La Raza or ASPIRA.
6. Identify and recruit administrator and teachers that are culturally and linguistically proficient and sensitive to the needs of Hispanic students. Lincoln West High School has an immediate need for such a principal.
7. Develop more specific metrics to increase and make retention of Hispanics a higher priority.
8. Partner with Esperanza, Inc. in its efforts to provide academic and outreach programs to Hispanic CMSD students and families.

If all of the above are given the attention we are asking for we expect to see the dropout rate of Hispanic students reduced and the college admission rat increased.

We agreed to endorse the plan with a commitment to support these issues. Your verbal commitment and our willingness to be involved (including your offer of quarterly meetings) will help reach the goal of making the Cleveland schools a premier educational system. We look forward to further collaboration in strengthening the schools serving our most deserving population.

Very truly yours,

Jose Feliciano  
Chairman, Hispanic Roundtable

Members of the Hispanic Roundtable

Sister Alicia Alvarado  
Diana Centeno-Gomez, Biomedical Engineer, NASA Glenn Research Center  
Maureen Dee, Assistant Executive Director, Catholic Charities Services  
Diana delRosario, Dean of Student Affairs, CCC  
Andres Gonzalez, Director, Office of Diversity, Cleveland Clinic Foundation  
Gustavo A. Hoyas, President, Gus Hoyas & Associates, Nationwide Insurance  
Abelino Lopez, President, Lopez Consultant  
Joseph Lopez, President, New Era Construction  
Miriam Lugo, Founder of Latinas  
Adrian Maldonado, Logik Construction Services, Inc.

Reverence Max Rodas, Executive Director, Nueva Luz  
Victor Ruiz, Executive Director, Esperanza  
Felicia M. Soto, VP, Recoveries Process, Chase BankCard Services  
Robert Torres, Director, Dept. of Development, City of Canton  
Sonia Troche, Executive Director, Adelante, Inc.  
Lorraine Vega, Senior VP, Key Foundation

Padres Unidos

Hispanic Education Taskforce

cc: Hon. Frank Jackson

Ms. Denise Link

Ms. Monyka Price

Mr. John Hairston

Ms. Shirrell Greene

Ms. Iris Rodriguez

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