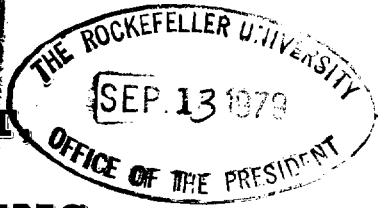


CHICANO EDUCATION PROJECT
WESTERN SERVICE SYSTEMS, INC.



September 7, 1979

Joshua Lederberg
Office of the President
Rockefeller University
60th & York Avenue
New York City, NY 10021

Estimado Senor Lederberg:

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your assistance.

Since 1973, the Chicano Education Project has worked towards the goal of insuring that Chicano children receive quality education in the Southwestern United States. In our own state of Colorado, we have made great strides in obtaining that goal. Nationally, we are beginning to have a significant impact on policy decisions that affect educational opportunities for Chicanos. Specifically, our accomplishments nationally have included:

1. Participation in a national coalition established by the Federal Education Project, Washington, D.C., to monitor Title I Compensatory Education law.
2. Participation in the writing of the Title VII Bilingual Education regulations for 1979.
3. Participation in the National Institute of Education's Conference on Discipline.
4. Serving on the American Civil Liberties Union, New York City, Task Force on Desegregation.
5. Participation in a National Carnegie-funded study of five effective advocacy groups.

As we move into the national arena, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need support to publicize the plight of Chicano students.



The Chicano Education Project works nationally to help Chicano parents make public education become responsive to their needs and truly a source of equal educational opportunities for all children. Our strategies of public education, community leadership training, litigation, and research are aimed at peaceful fostering of adherence to educational law.

According to a U. S. Census Bureau Report released in the fall of 1978, twelve million persons of Hispanic origin were living in the U.S. in 1977, and about 42 percent were school-aged (under 18). Twenty-one percent had incomes below the poverty level, while only 9 percent of all U.S. families were classified as poor. Only half of Spanish-origin people aged 25 to 29 had completed a high school education, but only 30 percent of those 45 to 64 years old had diplomas. Hispanos are the nation's fastest growing minority, and now make up 9 percent of the total population, as opposed to 12 percent for Blacks. As a group, Hispanics are the most under-educated in America. Hispanics will become the largest minority group towards the end of this century. We need your assistance in addressing these educational problems faced by Hispanic people throughout America, and most particularly in our own Southwest.

Equal educational opportunity is guaranteed by state and federal laws. Yet, statistics show that the needs of Chicano children are not being met. Almost 35% of Chicano children drop out of school. At least 75% of those who remain in school are achieving at a markedly lower level than are Anglo children. Many conditions have been identified which cause Chicano children to experience school as a threatening, unhealthy environment, which fosters failure and feelings of low self-esteem.

As a result of the Chicano Education Project's work with community people to alleviate these conditions, the following changes have occurred:

1. The Colorado Bilingual Act is now five years old. Many of the programs are functioning at less than full capacity, due to decreasing and less than full commitment at the various levels. Nevertheless parents continue to be involved with their school bilingual programs, as members of the local community committees. They are beginning to ask for district commitment to bilingual education, to supplement federal and state dollars.

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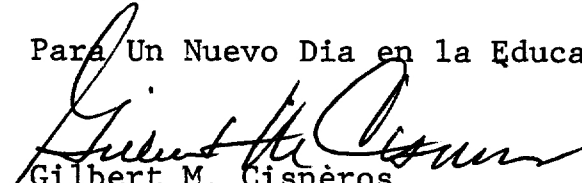
2. Parents have become more involved with the decision-making processes that affect their children. Many parents who began their efforts on bilingual community committees are now placing themselves on regular school accountability committees. Sixteen parents around the state who are part of the Chicano Education Project network chose to run for school board in the 1979 elections. Eight of them are now school board members.
3. Community understanding of educational rights under law has increased, as have people's abilities to work with school districts for reform. In the wake of complaints, filed by parents to the Office for Civil Rights, parents are learning to negotiate strongly with district officials to pursue equal opportunities for their children.

We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience to discuss further the activities of the Chicano Education Project. Please advise us when it would be possible to meet with you.

We have taken the liberty of enclosing copies of our Newsletter "Un Nuevo Dia", a recent copy of the Carnegie Quarterly, and an "op-ed" we wrote for the New York Times.

We appreciate your time and interest.

Para Un Nuevo Dia en la Educacion,



Gilbert M. Cisneros
Co-Director

GMC/yr
Enclosures