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# Representation and Hispanic School Boards in North Central Texas: Confirming a Lack of Representation

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*This paper provides an overview of representation as defined by scholars and applies their theories to school boards. The paper presents a study of 156 school districts in the North Central Texas region to reveal the degree of Hispanic school board representation in two educational regions. The study includes an overview of the number of seats on each school board; Hispanic school board membership and percentages; Hispanic student enrollment in each district, and the percentage of Hispanic students in each district. The study concludes that Hispanic children are underrepresented.*

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The 2010 United States Census verified what scholars and educators have known for years – the Hispanic population has grown and will continue to grow significantly. This growth has implications for various sectors within our communities and a number of government and nonprofits groups are learning to adapt to the reality of a large Hispanic population. Today, Hispanic representation remains low on school boards even though the Hispanic population continues to grow and is the largest ethnic minority in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau -2, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2003). In Texas alone, the overall Hispanic population is expected to nearly double by 2040 when Hispanics will become 45 percent of the overall population in the state of Texas (Texas State Data Center Office of the State Demographer, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau - 1, 2008). The notion that today's Hispanic student represents the future population and will become tomorrow's leaders not only in Texas but throughout the United States, underscores the importance of their educational success.

This new demographic distribution will continue to have major consequences for our educational system including representation of those students matriculated in K-12 education. For instance, in 2010 the Texas Association of School Boards conducted a survey of 7,237 Texas school board trustees. Of the 5,438 respondents, 810 board members reported their ethnicity as Hispanic, roughly 15 percent of those responding. In contrast,

4,267 or 78 percent of board trustees reported their ethnicity as White (TASB-1, 2010). The disparity between the percentage of Hispanic and White school board members is disconcerting in light of the data reflecting that the Hispanic student population is actually greater than the Anglo student population. The data indicate that Hispanic students represent 50.3 percent of the overall student population while the Anglo student population represents only 31.2 percent (Texas Education Agency, 2011). In fact, a Texas Education Agency (TEA) analysis of enrollment trends in Texas finds that the Hispanic population is exponentially growing as demonstrated in a pipeline of Hispanic students at younger grade levels. Their analysis found that over 65 percent of prekindergarten students and over 50 percent of kindergarten students are Hispanic (TEA, 2009). Today's primary Hispanic children will continue to be an overwhelming majority in the K-12 educational system in the coming years. Therefore, unless significant changes occur, Hispanic's underrepresentation on school boards throughout Texas will become more noticeable over the years.

Ross, Rouse, and Bratton (2010) find that there is a positive correlation between the number of Latino students in a district and Latino representation on school boards. Their study, however, does not examine proportional representation to assess the extent of representation in districts where the Hispanic student population is most dense. Therefore, numerical and proportional representation is examined further in our study. Another issue to consider is the degree of underrepresentation most notably in cities where the Hispanic population is most dense. Former Texas state demographer, Steve Murdock, reports that from the year 2000-2009 Dallas, Fort Worth, and Arlington demonstrated the highest population growth than any other geographical location in Texas. He reports that the overall population grew by 24.9% followed by the Houston area (Murdock, 2010). This makes the Hispanic population more compact and the issues affecting Hispanics more pressing. Some individuals, however, argue that Hispanic underrepresentation is not as pronounced as is often reported.

Our paper begins by looking at an overview of representation as defined by Hannah Pitkin and Frederick Mosher to provide a theoretical grounding for representation. School districts are not unlike local governments. Key concepts such as representation, electioneering, voting rights, vote dilution, bureaucracy, policy-making body, constituents, etc. are applicable to both public administration and public education. Next the paper provides a brief analysis of recent U.S. District Court case, *Benavidez vs. Irving Independent School District* (2010), to examine one possible reason for the lack of Hispanic board membership. *Benavidez* challenged the use of at-large elections by claiming that they diluted the Hispanic vote rather than provide Hispanic representation on school boards. At this point, the paper presents a study of school board representation in 156 school districts in the North Central Texas region to uncover the degree of Hispanic school board representation in two educational regions – Region X and Region XI. The study includes an overview of the number of seats on each school board available for electioneering; Hispanic school board membership and percentages; Hispanic student enrollment in each district; and the percentage of Hispanic students in each district. We hypothesize that it would be reasonable to expect that larger Hispanic student populations result in greater Hispanic representation on school boards. We conclude with findings and considerations for future research.

## **Representation: An Overview**

There are varied meanings attributed to the term representation and the debate about an actual meaning continues to linger (Pitkin, 1969; Mosher, 1968). Pitkin (1969) explains how the term has continuously changed, and has been applied in different ways throughout history. She goes on to argue that new concepts of representation have evolved and events, such as the American Revolution, can give way to new perceptions about representation. In her book *Representation* (1969), Pitkin proposes that there are different meanings to representation. She explains that one interpretation of representation can be descriptive, “the idea not of acting on behalf of other individuals but rather standing in their absence” (10). In this sense, the representative is a stand-in figure that resembles or mirrors the individuals being represented. When applying the concept of descriptive representation to a representative legislature, Pitkin explains that “a legislature must be an accurate map of the whole nation, a portrait of the people, a faithful echo of their voice, a mirror which reflects accurately the various parts of the public” (10). She emphasizes that descriptive representation is measured by a representative’s ability to accurately reflect those being represented. Pitkin goes on to argue that representation can also be symbolic where an animate or inanimate figure or person can act as a symbol of those being represented. Exact likeness is not relevant in symbolic representation as it is in descriptive representation.

Rather, the focus is on the representative’s actions which serve to demonstrate what the symbol stands for or what the symbol signifies. Pitkin notes, “A symbol seems to be the recipient of actions or the object of feelings really intended not for it but for what it symbolizes” (12). In summary, she believes that descriptive representation addresses the correspondence or the likeness between the representative(s) and constituent(s) where symbolic representation entails a belief in what the symbol stands for or suggests. Finally, she offers a third meaning of representation. She proposes that “the real substance” underlying the “activity of representing” is key in understanding how a representative can act on behalf of others (14). Substantive representation emphasizes the magnitude or impact of the activity where the representative, or more appropriately, the agent acts for others, in behalf of them, and in their welfare or interest (Pitkin, 1969).

Frederick Mosher (1968) also contributes similar, yet distinct, meanings to representation. According to Mosher, a representative bureaucracy is composed of public service members – also referred to as open service bureaucrats – that represent the entire society. Although his analysis defines levels of bureaucrats, which are beyond the scope of this study, he explains that there are two different kinds of representation – active and passive. Active representation, or functional representation, exists where the person in public service is expected to promote the constituents’ interests. These constituents can be whole groups of individuals that are represented or segments of the whole group. The meaning is akin to Pitkin’s substantive representation in that there is a focus on the acts of representing constituents’ welfare. In active representation, there exists a sense of accountability to the constituents that ensures that they are accurately represented or the representative risks discontinuance or removal. Mosher explains that while active representation can provide benefits to the constituents, active representation can be devastating to an organization if left unchecked or balanced because open service members are to serve the general public’s interests not simply one sector of the public.

Passive representation, or descriptive representation, on the other hand, is where the person in public leadership is said to represent constituents’ diverse collective values and interests through their presence in open service. Ideally, passive representation provides everyone opportunity for accessibility and advancement in public service. Mosher states:

A broadly representative public service, especially at the level of leadership, suggests an open service in which access is available to most people, whatever their station in life, and in which there is equality of opportunity...The importance of passive representativeness often reside less in the behaviors of public employees than in the fact that the employees who are there are there at all. (17)

Mosher further clarifies that the most severe “violations of passive representativeness... are the shortages of minority races in middle and upper levels of service in most public (as well as private) agencies” (17). Passive representation extends beyond mere reflection and considers representing constituents’ interests as a whole rather than an individual constituent group.

Mosher’s theory of representation, in addition to Pitkin’s, provides a framework for this study which helps understand how both active and passive representation is played out through Hispanic representation on school boards. Active representation is evident when board members act with intention, and in favor of Hispanic students, teachers, and administrators; thus, providing benefits to them. Passive representation is manifest when board membership reflects that there exists open service, in other words, that all aspiring representatives have accessibility and opportunity to ascend to a position of leadership or open service. No barriers to entry into an organization or advancement within the organization occurs but this does not guarantee that the representative will act on behalf of those represented. Ideally, passive representation dictates that Hispanics are provided with access and opportunities to serve on school boards. Active representation denotes taking further steps to assure that those being represented are affirmatively given the opportunities to participate.

### *Benavidez vs. Irving Independent School District (2010)*

To illustrate the lack of representation we briefly review a court case in Irving, Texas that brought the issue of representation and election system methods to the forefront. However, in doing so we do not suggest that this paper is about voting rights, rather the case is simply presented as an example of the difficulty for some Hispanics in some communities to get elected to school boards. In January, 2010, U.S. District Judge Sidney Fitzwater ruled in favor of Irving Independent School District (ISD) in a lawsuit in which the plaintiff, Manuel Benavidez, alleged that the district’s at-large election system violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act which bars a state from imposing any standard, practice, or procedure which denies or abridges a U.S. Citizen’s right to vote on account of their race or color. Benavidez believed that the district’s at-large election system resulted in less opportunity for active participation and did not allow Hispanic voters the right to elect a Hispanic representative. Historically, the district elected one Hispanic board member in 2000, but by 2008 the Hispanic student population was at 68 percent. His attorney claimed that the non-Hispanic vote essentially “vetoed” or diluted the Hispanic vote and prevented the Hispanic electorate to participate meaningfully in the political process and on the school board (“Lawsuit: Does Irving,” 2009).

The Benavidez v. Irving ISD case (and other similar cases, see Bartlett v. Strickland, 2009), give rise to key issues related to Hispanic school board representation. First, the case highlights Hispanic constituents’ desire to have descriptive representation on school boards. Citizens, like Benavidez, believe that representation on the school board should “mirror” the ethnicity of the constituents – in this case the students. Second, the case

demonstrates Hispanic's awareness or expectation that descriptive representation is a means of achieving substantive or active representation. Third, this case inadvertently sheds light on issues related to parental legal status or more precisely the effects it has on students' representation on school boards. The reality that some parents cannot vote consequently denies their U.S. born children of representation. Logically then, Hispanic children are consequently denied access to descriptive representation because they happen to be children of unauthorized residents which is no fault of their own. Therefore, we argue, that the focus should be on the representation of Hispanic children – their needs and concerns. Nevertheless, the issues surrounding representation and the election system utilized will continue to surface in the future as constituents seek representation.

### *Representation and School Boards*

The concept of representation is not unique to federal or state government; it is also applicable to localized governments such as school boards. School boards in Texas consist of representatives, or trustees, that are elected by constituents as in other governments. Although there exists exceptions where vacant seats are appointed or where trustees run unopposed resulting in a placement by default, these are not the norm; in general, school board trustees are elected. School board representation, however, does not fall squarely under either Mosher or Pitkin's definitions. Further analysis leads to the understanding that school board representation takes on qualities of both Mosher and Pitkin's theories and becomes an amalgamation of both.

Therefore, the appropriate point of comparison is not so much voters, but rather school age children. Thus as a result of underrepresentation, some Hispanic children and parents face a lack of responsiveness from governing bodies, particularly school boards. Responsiveness is important because it is often considered a measure of a representative's effectiveness and success. For instance, Eulau and Karp (1977) assert that representation can lead to responsiveness such as service responsiveness, allocation responsiveness, policy responsiveness, and symbolic responsiveness. A Ross, Rouse, and Bratton (2010) study, for example, identifies that Hispanic board representation leads to increased spending or what Eulau and Karp might consider allocation responsiveness. The lack of responsiveness can also negatively result in a lack of policies that benefit Hispanic students. Policies which benefit Hispanics are less likely to be implemented if Hispanics are unsuccessful at retaining positions on school boards which are policy-making bodies. Policies are important because they can result in Hispanic student achievement. This is evident in the research which indicates that Hispanic representation can lead to increased academic achievement through policy implementation so long as the representation is active or substantive and not simply descriptive in nature (Ross, Rouse, & Bratton, 2010; Meir & Stewart, 1991). Ross, Rouse, and Bratton (2010) further examined Hispanic student achievement in Texas as measured by state-mandated testing. Their findings indicated that there is a positive correlation between Hispanic board representation and Hispanic student performance. Their findings conclude that descriptive representation or Hispanic board membership and substantive representation or Hispanic students' educational outcomes are indirectly linked.

Studies have found that Hispanic representation at the school board level initially benefits the employment of Hispanic administrators and Hispanic teachers before directly benefitting Hispanic students (Ross, Rouse & Bratton, 2010; "A Question," 2008; Meir & Smith, 1994; Meier & Stewart, 1991). Leal, Ebers, & Meier (2004) examine the determinants and consequences of Hispanic representation on school boards. Their findings

indicate that descriptive representation can lead to more substantive effects on the practice of hiring Hispanics. They show that an increase of Hispanic school board members leads to an increase of Hispanic administrators. Their studies identify a positive correlation between Hispanic representation on school boards and Hispanic representation among administrators. The salience of this increased representation appears to be that administrators are the frontline individuals who influence hiring at the campus level. This in turn potentially accelerates the employment of Hispanic teachers. These effects are significant in that street level bureaucrats such as teachers are found to most impact Hispanic students' education (Leal et. al., 2004; Ross, Rouse & Bratton, 2010; Meier & Stewart, 1991). The significance of this literature lies in the fact that it is evident that Hispanic school board members do have an impact on the policies and practices of school boards. Therefore it would be expected that Hispanic school board members would passively and actively represent the needs of the children they were elected to represent.

## **Methodology**

Our study examines the gap in numeric and proportional Hispanic representation on school boards. It looked specifically at the North Central Texas area because it is identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as having the fastest growing Hispanic population in Texas (Texas State Data Center Office of the State Demographer, 2009). We hypothesize that it would be reasonable to expect that larger Hispanic student populations result in greater Hispanic representation on school boards.

This study utilizes a descriptive research methodology. Descriptive statistics can be a powerful tool of analysis and can yield informative results. Gall, Gall, & Borg (2007) define descriptive research as a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena. The phenomenon under consideration is Hispanic school board representation. Ross, Rouse, and Bratton (2010) have found that there is a positive correlation between the number of Latino students in a district and Latino representation on school boards. Therefore, our study here in an attempt to confirm previous findings by looking at Hispanic school board representation as examined and determined by the proportion and number of Hispanic students within the district. This particular methodological distinction will add to the research on Hispanic School boards. Additionally, having this knowledge can help school systems and their communities understand the issue on a broader level and help adopt practices to address it.

The Texas Education Code (1995) establishes twenty educational regions in Texas which are defined by the Texas Commissioner of Education. Data pertinent to school districts is generally maintained according to region through the region's Education Service Center. The population under consideration is school districts within Regions X and XI. Our reasons for selecting these regions are twofold. First, as mentioned previously it is one of the fastest growing areas in Texas with a large Hispanic population. And second, these areas encompass a population of over 6 million residents many of whom are Hispanics. The Texas Education Code (2001) requires that the Texas Education Agency maintain a clearinghouse of data relevant to all school districts. The data is maintained and made available to the general public via AskTed, a search engine found on the Texas Education Agency website. Data were extracted from the website which included districts within Regions X and XI, school district name, district website address, district enrollment, and ethnicity enrollment. A document analysis was conducted to assess the level of Hispanic board representation in both samples. These samples was based on the percentage of Hispanic student enrollment.

School district websites were used to determine the number of board positions on each board. This information was used to determine the percentage of Hispanics on the school board by conducting simple mathematical calculations. For example, school districts with one Hispanic on a seven member panel were determined to have 14.3 percent Hispanic representation. Unfortunately, AskTed does not keep ethnicity information on school board members nor were school districts in Regions X and XI able to provide us with this information. Therefore, we utilized school district websites to make ethnicity determinations. Where additional information was necessary, the ethnicity of board members was based on their Hispanic last name and a visual determination based on their picture on the school district website. Board members of Hispanic origin and those identifying themselves as Hispanic were coded Hispanic. In a small number of situations where the name could not produce a Hispanic ethnicity with certainty, the information was not counted at all. In all cases where information may have been provided in part, the information was coded with an asterisk. We are aware of situations that involve non-Hispanics with Hispanic surnames and the reverse for instance, Hispanics with non-Hispanic surnames. These instances were few and not meriting concern on the validity of our results. Nevertheless, we utilized multi-coder analysis to “increase the likelihood of finding all the examples in the text [or on the website] that pertain[ed] to [our] given theme” (Ryan, 1999, 319). This process helped build reliability in our analysis and connect our abstract concept and process with the empirical data (Berends and Johnston, 2005; Carmines and Zeller, 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Lu and Shulman (2008) argue that multi-coder agreement “can also function as the validity measure for the coded data demonstrating that multiple coders can pick the same text [or information from a website – in our case a picture] as pertaining to a theme” (113). They further note that an added benefit of multi-coder analysis is to identify evidence of typicality or confirming additional themes within the data. Therefore, each coder individually looked for information on the websites to identify Hispanic names and pictures. Once coders had finished their individual assignments, a comparison of datasets was conducted to look for differences in the data obtained. The raw data was merged into one dataset for analysis after adjustments were made per multi-coder analysis.

## **Findings**

Region X consists of 80 school districts which are governed by school boards consisting of five to seven members as established by the Texas Education Code (1995) except in circumstances where boards petition the commissioner for additional places on the board – i.e. Dallas ISD and Fort Worth ISD. Similarly, Region XI consists of 76 school districts governed under the same standards. Samples were drawn from these populations to assess Hispanic board representation.

To provide a descriptive analysis of representation, two purposefully selected samples were considered. The first sample considered the proportion of Hispanic students within a school district. The study considered school districts with a Hispanic student population that was equal or greater than 25 percent and equal or greater than 50 percent. While the 2010 census indicates that the Hispanic or Latino population in the U.S. is 16.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), this analysis considered school districts with a denser Hispanic population. The purpose in selecting these thresholds was to directly respond to our hypothesis that larger Hispanic student populations result in greater Hispanic representation on school boards. Thus as the Hispanic student populations increases so does

the Hispanic school board representation. In Region X, 23 districts met the criteria of 25 percent or more and five districts met the criteria of 50 percent or more (Appendix A). In Region XI, 26 districts met the criteria of 25 percent or more and five districts met the criteria of 50 percent or more (Appendix B).

Given that the study sought to assess Hispanic representation in districts with a dense Hispanic student population, school board membership was examined in districts that met both the 25 and 50 percent Hispanic student population thresholds. In Region X, 126 board positions met the 25 percent or more thresholds and 37 board positions were examined that met the 50 percent threshold (Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary for Region X Total of 80 School Districts**

Hispanic Student Population	Total Number of School Districts	Total Number of Board Positions	Total Number of Hispanic Board Members	Hispanic Board Representation
≥50%	5	37	5	13.5%
≥25%<50%	23	126	7	5.5%

Source: Adapted from Texas Education Agency Ask Ted, Data retrieved July, 2010

Of the 80 school districts in Region X, 23 districts had a Hispanic student population that was equal to or greater than 25 percent of the overall student population. Seven, or 5.5 percent, of the available 126 seats were occupied by Hispanics. Additionally, five of the 80 school districts in Region X had a population that was equal to or greater than 50 percent of the overall student population. The number of school board seats that could have been filled by Hispanic board members was 37. Only five, or 13.5 percent, of 37 seats were occupied by Hispanics. In general, Hispanic representation was greatest in school districts where the percentage of Hispanic students was greater. This, however, should not imply that the level of representation is acceptable. Put another way, 94.5% of the available seats for Hispanic student populations between twenty-five and fifty percent and 86.5% of the available seats for Hispanic student populations over fifty percent are not currently occupied by Hispanic board members. Numerical representation would suggest that board member participation for school districts with a Hispanic student population over fifty percent should be at least 18 and not the current 5 members. As for Hispanic student populations between twenty-five and fifty percent the school board participation rate should be between 31 and 63 school board members and not 7.

In Region XI, 147 board positions met the 25 percent or more thresholds and 35 board positions were examined that met the 50 percent threshold (Table 2). Of the 76 school districts in Region XI, 26 districts had a Hispanic student population that is equal to or greater than 25 percent. Eight of 147 available seats were occupied by a Hispanic board member. This reflects a 5.4 percent level of representation. Five districts have a population that was equal to or greater than 50 percent and only 6, or 17.1 percent, of the available 35 seats were occupied by a Hispanic. For region XI numerical representation numbers would also suggest higher participation rates with respect to Hispanic board members. For school districts with a Hispanic student population over fifty percent the participation should be at least 17 and not the current 6 members. As for Hispanic student populations between twenty-five and fifty percent the school board participation rate should be between 36 and 73 school board members and not 8. This scenario presents the same limitation as in Region X and it once again appears that Hispanic representation is greater in school districts where the percentage of Hispanic students is greater.

**Table 2. Summary for Region XI Total of 76 School Districts**

Hispanic Student Population	Total Number of School Districts	Total Number of Board Positions	Total Number of Hispanic Board Members	Hispanic Board Representation
≥50%	5	35	6	17.1%
≥25%<50%	26	147	8	5.4%

Source: Adapted from Texas Education Agency Ask Ted, Data retrieved July, 2010

To address this apparent representation we combined the data from both sample populations. When considered in aggregate, 49 out of 156 school districts had a Hispanic student population that was equal to or greater than 25 percent. Specifically, the number of school board seats that can be occupied by Hispanic members at the twenty-five to fifty percent level was 273. However, only 15 out of the 273 seats were Hispanic. Therefore, Hispanic representation at this level was scarcely 5.4 percent. Ten districts had a population that was equal to or greater than 50 percent. The number of school board seats that could have been filled by Hispanics at this second level was 72; however, only eleven of these seats were Hispanic. This represents 15.3 percent of this population (Table 3).

**Table 3. Summary for Region XI Total of 76 School Districts**

Hispanic Student Population	Total Number of School Districts (1)	Total Number of Board Positions (2)	Total Number of Hispanic Board Members (3)	Hispanic Board Representation (3) / (2)	t-Test Group Mean
≥50%	10	72	11	15.3	14.5
≥25%<50%	39	273	15	5.4	5.5
Totals	49	345	26	7.5	

Source: Adapted from Texas Education Agency Ask Ted, Data retrieved July, 2010

To assess whether under-representation is equally or unequally problematic between density levels, we ran independent sample t-tests between the two combined density classifications (>50% and >25% <50%). We concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the average representation of the two groups. The results indicated that ( $t=-2.533$ ,  $df=47$  at  $p<.05$ ). These findings confirm those of others scholars mentioned previously that with a larger Hispanic population the likelihood of greater Hispanic board representation goes up. Furthermore, we conducted a Pearson's correlation test and found that there was a positive association between Hispanic school board members and Hispanic students (.330). Although moderately weak it was statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence.

Nevertheless, we argue that statistical significance provides marginal relief when comparing the numbers of actual board members to Hispanic students. We find it disconcerting that only 11 of 72 board members are Hispanic in school districts where half of the students are Hispanic. It is even more alarming that only 15 of 273 board members are Hispanic with student populations between 25 and 50 percent. It is troubling that 30 of

the 49 school districts (or 61%) with 25% or greater Hispanic student populations do not have a single Hispanic board member. And finally, when looked at aggregately, it is distressing that only 26 of the 345 board seats (or 7.5%) are Hispanic board members in regions X and XI. This number and percentage in our opinion are much more significant numbers in that they truly reflect the reality of Hispanic school board membership. A limitation to examining a population in terms of strict percentages is that *percentages* do not speak to or consider the actual *number* of Hispanic students. A statistically significant number means little when looking at the actual number of Hispanic board members that can actually have an impact on young Hispanic children.

## **Discussion**

From a theoretical standpoint, the level of representation would not meet the conditions of Pitkin's theory of descriptive representation or Mosher's theory of passive representation. We argue that representation that does not reflect or mirror the constituents would not be descriptive at all. Hispanic students in these scenarios lack representation that mirrors both their population size and ethnicity. We contend that both active and passive representation is nonexistent because of the lack of Hispanics on school boards. The preliminary analysis suggested that Hispanic representation was greater in school districts where the percentage of the Hispanic student population was larger. However, the analysis only considered the percentage of Hispanic students as a raw score. A significant limitation in only using percentages as a criterion for judgment lies in its failure to consider the total Hispanic student population across a region. For instance, the number of Hispanic students was relatively smaller in some districts and larger in others which impacted overall percentages. This preliminary data points to a severe lack of descriptive representation as defined by Pitkin.

The findings reported here are provocative and ultimately lead to the question, why is representation for young Hispanic children so important? The answer in part was referenced earlier in that previous studies have shown that representation does have an impact on the condition of Hispanics in a number of areas (Leal et. al., 2004; Ross, Rouse & Bratton, 2010; Meier & Stewart, 1991). Our contribution is that school board representation also contributes to improve their opportunities. The significance of this study is that it confirms what has already been examined and highlights that we continue to have the same problems. We contend that despite the fact that the Hispanic population continues to grow at a rapid pace, there is no equal or equivalent growth in the leadership of and for the Hispanic population at any level of government. We argue that if left unchecked the majority minority population will be subjugated to second class status with leadership for this group coming from other more educated ethnic groups. Therefore our attention to young Hispanic children has merit. They need both active and passive representation which will improve their notion of Hispanic leadership while at the same time enabling a path that secures their educational needs.

In the final analysis, Hispanic representation and the Hispanic student population have significant connections. In Region X and XI, representation increases and decreases as the Hispanic student percentage increases or decreases by small increments. This phenomenon should not serve to establish that an increase in Hispanic representation rises to a sufficient level. Hispanic underrepresentation is currently disproportionate. When a comparison between Hispanic student percentage and Hispanic school board representation was conducted, the results were grim. In Region X and XI, overall school board representation was merely 7.5 percent where the Hispanic student population in Texas is

50.3 percent. This finding was inconsistent with the analysis conducted by the Texas Association of School Boards which found that state-wide Hispanic school board representation was 15 percent. It would appear that despite student compactness there is still a lack of school board representation in certain areas in Texas. When a comparison between Hispanic student numbers and Hispanic school board representation was conducted, the findings are far more disconcerting. These findings indicate that Hispanic school board representation was least found in districts where it is most needed. Overall these findings indirectly suggest that Hispanic school board representation throughout the state is diluted which may be, at a minimum, considered a violation of Hispanic's right to representation. It is concluded then that Hispanic school board representation is absent in the areas of the state's fastest growing Hispanic population.

### **Conclusion**

The Hispanic population is increasing in many areas throughout the country. The areas with the highest numeric changes are in the south and in the west such as Texas. Within Texas, however, the growth is not evenly distributed. The growth is predominantly occurring in the North Central Region which includes school districts in Regions X and XI. In Region X, the Hispanic student population is nearly 40 percent and in Region XI it is approximately 30 percent. Hispanic representation, however, is starkly different within the regions. While the notion that underrepresentation exists for Hispanics is not a novel one; this study sought to emphasize that the problem persist and is becoming worse. The data suggests that representation is diluted, and Hispanic students lack descriptive representation which may impact the level of active or substantive representation that could be available to them.

Although our study finds that Hispanic school board representation increases slightly as the percentage of Hispanic students increases thus confirming our hypothesis and previous studies; it should be noted that these increments are miniscule at best. Our study shows that proportionally, and by looking closely at the number of Hispanic students within a district, that statistics can be misleading and that in fact Hispanic underrepresentation on school boards is problematic. However, underrepresentation is a reality that plagues Hispanics in areas where the Hispanic population is most compact. In the North Central Region of Texas, for example, Hispanic school board representation is a mere 7.5 percent where the population is over 25 percent. Numerical representation would suggest that school board representation should be at least 50 percent or even with the student population. Hispanic constituents are not accessing representation regardless of whether the student population constitutes a majority. Mosher would agree that the greatest violation of passive representation exists because school board membership is not open to people and particularly lacks the presence of minorities, Hispanics being the most affected. Although Hispanics are underrepresented in both instances (percentages and overall numbers), they are grossly underrepresented in districts where they are greater in number. A final argument taken from the review of literature is that Hispanic representation on school boards results from election systems in which neither Hispanic students nor their parents have a voice or political voting power. The Hispanic constituency, both parental and student, is simply not represented because of the inability to vote. This results from the basic reality that a number of Hispanic student's parents have no political power due to their lack of citizenship. By default, individuals who are not citizens have no right to vote which in turn is interpreted as having no right to representation. Consequently, it is often the case that children of parents who are unauthorized to be in the United States have no representation.

Further research is needed to establish if the phenomenon of underrepresentation in Hispanic compact districts can be generalized to more areas than just Region X and XI. An analysis of the electioneering methods in Hispanic compact districts may also provide further insight into the causes of underrepresentation as well as provide a possible avenue to increasing representation. Finally, another underlying argument that needs to be explored is whether or not school board members that are not Hispanic/Latino will implement policies, which are in the best interest of Hispanic/Latinos. Can they be the appropriate role models that the children and community needs? Can an understanding surrounding cultural competency be fully explored in the educational setting?

The paper begins with the claim that Hispanics are underrepresented on school boards and provides evidence of this along with the deleterious effects of underrepresentation. The data analysis confirms our claims. The significance of this study is that it confirms what has already been examined and points out harmful effects of inaction. What we see in the United States today is the development, reinforcement, and participation of leaders from selected ethnic groups and an increase in the growth, expansion, and lack of leadership of the Hispanic community. If these trends continue, we fear the creation of a majority minority Hispanic underclass ill equipped to lead when called upon, lacking institutional knowledge to run governments (or school boards in this case), and unable to truly represent the largest segment of the U.S. population. The significance of our paper is not to simply point out the obvious (the lack of Hispanic representation), but to highlight the importance of this issue by acting now to avoid unconventional type struggles in the future. Our attention to these issues goes beyond Texas because the Hispanic population is increasingly growing nationally.

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## Appendix A

Region X	Notes rom Webpage Address	No. of Hispanic Board Members	No. of Board Positions	% Hispanic Representati on	% Hispanic Students
IRVING ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	68
DALLAS ISD	picture available: Adam Medrano, Edwin Flores	2	9	22.2	67
GRAND PRAIRIE ISD	picture available: Paul E. Martinez	1	7	14.3	62
FERRIS ISD	picture available: Elizabeth Munoz, Jorge Lopez	2	7	28.6	58
CARROLLTON-FARMERS BRANCH	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	51
ENNIS ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	46
DUNCANVILLE ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	45
GARLAND ISD	picture available: Cindy Castaneda	1	7	14.3	44
MESQUITE ISD	picture available: Kevin Carbo	1	7	14.3	43
KAUFMAN ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	36
AVALON ISD *	no picture available: Harrison Romero, David Arriaga, Wendy Rodriguez	3	7	42.9	35
RICHARDSON ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	35
TERRELL ISD	picture available:	1	7	14.3	34

<b>Region X</b>	<b>Notes rom Webpage Address</b>	<b>No. of Hispanic Board Members</b>	<b>No. of Board Positions</b>	<b>% Hispanic Representati on</b>	<b>% Hispanic Students</b>
	Benito Carmona				
WAXAHACHIE ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	33
PALMER ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	33
GREENVILLE ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	32
SHERMAN ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	29
PRINCETON ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	29
TIOGA ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	28
RED OAK ISD *	picture available: Henry Lozano	1	7	14.3	27
ROYSE CITY ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	27
ITALY ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	25
BLAND ISD	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	25

Source: Adapted from Texas Education Agency Ask Ted, Data retrieved July, 2010. \*Either no picture or no name.

**Appendix B**

<b>Region XI</b>	<b>Notes From Webpage Address</b>	<b>No. of Hispanic Board Members</b>	<b>No. of Board Positions</b>	<b>% Hispanic Representation</b>	<b>% Hispanic Students</b>
THREE WAY ISD*	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	5	0.0	74
CASTLEBERRY ISD	picture available: Mary Lou Martinez, Kenneth Romero	2	7	28.6	69
FORT WORTH ISD	picture available: Angel Rangel, Carlos Vasquez	2	9	22.2	60
LAKE WORTH ISD	picture available: Joe Migura, Armando Velasquez	2	7	28.6	54
DUBLIN ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	52
LINGLEVILLE ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	49
GAINESVILLE ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	48
EVERMAN ISD	picture available: Vicki Garza	1	7	14.3	44
KEENE ISD *	no picture available: Carmen L. Curubo	1	7	14.3	42
VENUS ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	40
ARLINGTON ISD	picture available: Gloria Pena	1	7	14.3	39
BRIDGEPORT ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	39
LITTLE ELM ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	38
CLEBURNE ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	1	7	14.3	37
BIRDVILLE ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	32

<b>Region XI</b>	<b>Notes From Webpage Address</b>	<b>No. of Hispanic Board Members</b>	<b>No. of Board Positions</b>	<b>% Hispanic Representation</b>	<b>% Hispanic Students</b>
MINERAL WELLS	picture available: Joe Ruelas	1	7	14.3	32
EAGLE MT-SAGINAW ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	31
DENTON ISD	picture available: Rudy Rodriguez	1	7	14.3	30
DECATUR ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	30
PILOT POINT ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	30
WHITE SETTLEMENT ISD *	no picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	27
GLEN ROSE ISD	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	26
HUCKABAY ISD *	picture available: no Hispanic names	0	7	0.0	26
CROWLEY ISD	picture available: Melva Bazon	1	7	14.3	25
STEPHENVILLE	picture available: no Hispanics	0	7	0.0	25
STRAWN ISD *	no picture available: Narciso Martinez	1	7	14.3	25

Source: Adapted from Texas Education Agency Ask Ted, Data retrieved July, 2010. \*Either no picture or no name.