

Teacher and Administrator Perceptions of Educational Barriers in Newly Latino Schools

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Georgia and its educational system are in the process of adjusting to a rapidly growing Latino population. Understanding teachers' and administrator's perceptions of barriers to educational success with this population is vital for supporting this success. Results from Likert-type questionnaires of 79 educators participating in CLASE professional development in 2003 identify their perceptions of educational barriers and needs in school systems serving Latinos in north Georgia. We highlight three key areas—language barriers, professional development needs, and school climate—that these educators focused on.

Some key findings:

- Participants believe themselves personally to be generally well prepared and hold high expectations and good attitudes towards working with Latinos
- Even when their specific level of knowledge (e.g., about Latino culture, of Spanish, of language acquisition) is low, they believe themselves up to the task
- They believe others at their schools to be less well prepared for helping Latinos, but think their schools are generally a welcoming place for Latinos
- They identify as crucial areas for improvement: staff development, school- and system-wide planning, and overcoming language barriers

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