

AP History Project
 May 17 2004
 10:19-10:50
 Interviewers-Tracey Rodriguez and Pavel Panfilov
 Interviewee-Marcia Arganbright

Tracey-Date May 17 2004 10:19am interviewers Tracey Rodriguez and Pavel Panfilov, interviewee Marcia Arganbright. uh, alright Mrs. Arganbright how are you involved with the Hispanics in the district?

M.A: Currently or...

T.R -Currently and in the past.

M.A-Currently of course we have 28% of our students here at our school are Latino students and so a big part of my job is to make students { cannot understand what she is saying}----- in the past my history with the district is I came to the Hillsboro school district in 1986 and my second year there in, that would have been 1987 I um actually had the wonderful opportunity to begin what at that time was a new program in the district um and it was teaching Spanish for Spanish speakers is what we called it then we call it Spanish Literacy and it was a new program in the district so I was able to start that program at Glencoe high school and um during my six years at Glencoe high school I taught that class I also taught for one year was the home school consultant for the migrant education program that's the person that links students and their families to the services that are gonna help make them successful in school I was doing that cause somebody was on a leave of absence for a year, and I also was a teacher in migrant summer school one summer and I was the director of migrant summer school for two years.

T.R-Why did you chose to work with Hispanic children?

M.A-One of the things that happened it just sorta happened actually, but the fact that I spoke Spanish, I speak Spanish I'm fluent in Spanish at that point in time in the mid-80's was a talent, it still is a talent but one that not so many people had and it was a needed of resource actually so I guess my Spanish language is what gave me the open door to get into working with the community.

P.P- What methods are use to transition Hispanic ESL students into mainstream classes?

M.A- Well ok, well one of the things that happens is that they start out from the very beginning in mainstream classes in classes that are going to be rich in-in visual and in hands-on and something other than written and oral language, written or oral English so we get kids started from the get go in going to mainstream classes and then they have the support of the ESL classes, and the ESL staff, and the assistants in those regular classes,

at then over time they become more confident more efficient and can gradually transition into regular school classes too.

T.R- You said you were involved with the migrant school program what exactly does the migrant school do?

M.A-Ok, every summer we have summer school here in the Hillsboro school district and have for many years, and we were actually, if not the first one of the first in the state to have a migrant summer program and it dates way back to when there were a lot of students who would come here just in the summer to be with, their families come here, and so they could use the extra time in the summer in school. So there's the elementary program that goes all morning long and the buses go around the apartments, the camps, and pick up students and bring them to school there's actually even a pre-school where its, pretty cute, lots of care seats and helpers to get the kids to a head start a mayor head start and then there's the elementary school which we usually host in one of our schools here sometimes Beaverton and then in the evening after the work day is done because many of the students in summer school actually work all day and then come to summer school at night from like 6-9 at night, to improve their English skills and for those kids that are in school to get them some supplemental credit for required classes like economics, or social studies.

In detail for the programs, how they work

P.P-You said you've been in this district since like, 1986 have you noticed any significant progress in the meeting the need of Hispanic students since then up till now?

M.A-Yes many of the things that were in place back then just have grown tremendously so we have a lot more people aware of the needs of our Hispanic population. So just by sheer numbers of population thus our needs for staff has grown the community itself has become more aware of the needs and more taken responsibility we have wonderful people in our community who give generously one of the things we have Dentist who give services generously we hook people up with the county health department, with Virginia Garcia clinic so that they can get their health care needs met, Pacific University provides services for glasses and for eye exams for students. So we've accessed a lot more and really a lot more aware of the resources that are available here just the sheer numbers in school, students-more students are coming to school now but we made services available to them and they also, of course everybody likes being with their friends and so if their friends are here numbers grow.

Other organ. doing things. does it mean success? progress?

T.R-Alright, Do you follow up on dropouts?

M.A-we- our school follows up on drop-outs, most all the high schools do, we have a meeting actually once a week where somebody who hasn't gone to school, anybody who doesn't come to school we contact them, their family to find out why, to find out if there not planning on coming back, and if they aren't then we find them another kind of education that's going to meet their needs. So this will be for all students.

T.R- You've been in a lot of programs with Hispanic kids, to what extent do you feel that you understand the aspects of the Hispanic students lives?

?? M.A-Oh, very good question I don't think you ever understand anybody's life unless your actually living the life. I try my best to talk with students, over the years I had involment with families and that's really what it takes, it takes being involved with the families themselves, because often the students don't tell you the whole story, you don't know about their whole life. Their family to them is very important and until you become part of that family you never really understand that connection. I had the great opportunity of being involved in families, I've attended many weddings of students, I've attended Quinceneras, when girls turn 15 and that's a very big important date in their life where family and close friends are invited and so I've been invited there, I've gone into peoples homes, and been able to have tortillas and cafe with the families, but until you've actually, with the families, I mean, I still have a surface understanding.

could it
be taken as
progress
because of
the program?

P.P-What are the parents reaction to academic outreach programs provided for their children?

IV M.A- What are the parents reaction to academic outreach...Parents in general, parents are very appreciative of any services the school provides, and as long as we can make that connection so the parents know there's a service, you asked before if there's been anything significantly different over the years, and one of the things that we started this year is the Office of Hispanic Outreach, I, hopefully in you interviews your going to be interviewing Olga Acuna who's a director of that office.

P.P-She gave a speech in our class.

M.A- She's amazing, she's an amazing story in and of herself, we have other wonderful stories here in our school district, but that's what it takes it takes parents understanding what's available, because they trust the school completely, and if they don't have all the information, sometimes their students don't give it to them just like anybody's students don't give it to them.

T.R- Is it hard for the parents of Hispanic children to sometimes, trust the school or the district?

IV M.A-Again, I don't know that if it's a matter of trust, I think there's a big trust, that, maybe a blind trust. And so, I think families trust so much that sometimes they don't ask the right questions or advocate enough for their children, and I feel bad because without advocacy Things don't happen as much as they should.

P.P-What type of feedback do you receive from Hispanic children?

M.A-Well...this year...mmm, that's a good question. I don't know that I-----but that's something that by listening to your questions that's something maybe I should do. Unfortunately sometimes you get into the mind set that if you don't hear complaints then everything's fine, and that's not necessarily true, but we haven't had at least the last half of this year too many complaints.

T.R-But all the programs that you've been involved in, do you think there's something that can be done to improve them?

M.A-To improve what?

T.R-To improve the programs, the migrant school, the Outreach { Of Hispanic resources}?

V M.A-There's always something that can be done to improve the any kind of service that where giving to students. I'm saying right here at Liberty High School, it would just be, it's so far away from where peoples homes are, and apartments are and so forth. If we could provide some kind of a connection whether it be transportation to our school, transportation to evening events, or even us being actually in the community where the families live, that a big challenge for us, cause we need to be with the families {so they can get to know us.}?

T.R-Do you know that so far in this school or the district what's is the average Hispanic students score on CIM and state test?

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VII M.A-We can find that for you, I don't have that in my head, but that's very available for you, and you would just need to find that number, we need to report out with the No Child Left Behind and adequate yearly progress is required by the federal Government. We have to report out all indicators by race. So that's one of the groups we aren't doing very well with.

P.P-What are some of the recurring issues for Hispanic students?

III? M.A- recurring issues with Hispanic students, feeling like they belong feeling like school is for them, accessing services either here at school or in the community, language for new comers, and even language for students who lived here quite a while but sometimes students have oral language really good, oral language, which mask the fact that they don't have academic language for reading and writing.

T.R- So how do you decide if a students needs to be in ESL?

Why?
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B1 M.A-When students come to us they're giving a series of test, and we have other people that can explain this to us better than I----would be a person at the district office to talk to, but there is a series of tests that we give them about there English proficiency, as well as their literacy level in their first language and then we place them accordingly.

T.R- In your opinion how successful has the Hillsboro school district ESL migrant education programs been?

IV M.A-In many ways where're very successful, we're a model, people have come around the state for sure, if not the country and looked at some of our services and programs that we offer-our we perfect? No way, you know when you look at our test scores of our students and you can get test scores of all migrant students and you can get test scores of Latino students, and where're not successful. Students are not successful so we have long ways to go.

P.P-What improvements do you believe could be made to better adjust the needs of Hispanic students?

? M.A-----and what does support look like? Support could look like additional 1 on 1 tutoring, it can look like mentoring by native, English, native speaking students really the best way to learn language is to be around language, and so if we could provide opportunities where our Latino students are involved with everybody, then they're going to, their language is going to improve and their language skills improve, their academic language improves. Pretty proud of the fact this year that of all the high schools in the Hillsboro district we have more Latinos involved in activities, then any of the schools do.

T.R- You mentioned before that even though that you think that the migrant school program is successful in many ways and so is the ESL program, but still the students CIM scores and test scores aren't as high as you would like it or as other races are, why do you think that is?

IV M.A- Mobility is one, I mean students move, poverty is a reason students no matter what their race who live in poverty tend to move more don't necessarily have a structured learning environment at home, and once you, and you can just start feelings good about yourself then, you don't necessarily put all your efforts into learning either. So those are some of the reasons, also I just think it's difficult for teachers and we haven't perfected the way to improve students in regular mainstream classes so that they feel like their learning.

P.P-What programs as well as some strategies and policies are being used here at Liberty to address the needs of Hispanic students?

IV? M.A-One of the things that we have, is we have after school tutoring three days a week, and we have bilingual folks helping with that, that's why we have a club "Unidos" is a club is one of our larger clubs that giving kids a sense of belonging. Just our academy structure sets up so that a smaller, there's a smaller group of students known well by a smaller group of teachers, and each kids have their counselor, who is the counselor for the academy helping {others?} see that, and then like all the school we have the ESL program, we have instructional systems in the classrooms.

→ To help students succeed?

T.R Where do you see most problems with Hispanic students, do you think in elementary schools and Jr. highs or in high schools?

M.A-That's a really broad question are you asking in what level do I see the most problems?

T.R-Yea, where do you see the most problems?

M.A- I don't have that strong of awareness of what life is like for them at elementary or even middle schools, I think high school is a struggle, its a scary time for everybody because you know that after high school is your next step, and are you prepared and do you know what your going to do, and will you have support, and all that so that's a challenge for everybody.

T.R-The test scores and everything, I just want to ask you more about that, so is it probably the language barrier, or I don't know something like that do you think that it would help a student out if they take state testing and CIM testing in Spanish?

M.A- That's available now in some of the test, in some of the test they can do, like math and problem solving they can actually answer the question in Spanish. Math, multiple choice they can have that in Spanish if they chose. The difficulty is that our current students come to us without the academic knowledge that goes behind, so if you say quadratic equation, and you say that same word in Spanish, the word in Spanish isn't going to make any more sense then the word quadratic equation does for somebody that doesn't know the concept. So its not just language, it's academic background also.

T.R-Do you believe it's important to teach the Hispanic students academic language in their native language first and then in English?

M.A-I think it, it helps if you can teach it along side and so when students, young students, elementary students are learning about stems and leave and flowers and photosynthesis and pollen and stamens and all of that. That they also learn hojas and flores and the words that go along with that in, in Spanish cause they made {no voz?} to their family talking to them, and then its not so {formal?} So I think, I think learning academics together is really...helpful.

T.R-Do you think that some of the schools here in the Hillsboro district should be like, say some schools in California in which they have bilingual classes?

M.A-Depends on what you mean by bilingual, I mean that's a word that has a lot of meaning for a lot of people, but like I just described in an elementary classroom, in a science class if they can be teaching all students using both languages, and you just, you just use one language just as easily as you use the other language, your going to get more students understanding it better.

Programs
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T.R- Do you think that type of thing will be successful in high school?

M.A- Could be, the difficulty with high school is that is, is how do you do that? And there is some interesting models out there, I've seen models work where your teaching for example, history, in both languages and you'll have your students who are in upper level Spanish classes, or native English speakers, along with the native Spanish speakers in order for bilingual classrooms to work you gotta have bi, the bi's is the two languages, right? It doesn't, it's not a bilingual classroom if everybody's first language is the same language and that's kind of where bilingual classrooms can be {mutated?}. ▽ 8.4

know
of immersion

P.P- Also some schools in California use the Sink or Swim approach with their Hispanic students what is your take on that?

M.A- Like I said at the very beginning you know, putting students in an environment where they're going to be surrounded by English, they'll learn, but to do that all day in a way that's there's nothing for them to grasp on to, will cause students to just leave, drop out of school and you don't want that. So you want them, you want to do a little bit of that, but you need to provide the support around them, so instructional assistance or some ESL classes so that their learning language at the same time. Immersion, it's called immersion, and immersion is a really great way to learn the language that's really what cemented Spanish for me. After my sophomore year in high school, when I was 15 years old, I spend two months living with families where nobody spoke English, and nobody near them spoke English, I didn't, hardly hear or speak English all summer long for two months, and I had enough, a little bit of background but it really cemented Spanish for me. ▽?

T.R- Before becoming a principal at liberty I read that you where an ESL teacher and a Spanish teacher is that correct?

M.A- No, I was a Spanish teacher just a Spanish teacher, I didn't teach ESL, I did teach the Spanish literacy or Spanish for Spanish speakers, which was, which was a class that was absolutely wonderful, I taught two classes one was beginners for students who didn't have literacy skills in Spanish and so to give them experiences to learn, to be able to read, recognize words, know how to write a sentence, capital letters, punctuation, and then I taught another class which was like a literature class in Spanish for students whose first language is Spanish, we read literature, we wrote poetry, {we read some plays so?} ▽ c.

T.R- What is your favorite part in working with Hispanic families?

M.A- I think, I think that once, once they know, the families that know me, and they may see me as part of their family, it's an amazing feeling. To be able to be part of the family and a treated honor guest at a Quincenera, or a wedding is wonderful to go riding with in the limousine with the bride and the groom, it was cool.

Family
is
HUGE in
hispanic

T.R-Do you think that with these programs, do you think that if these programs motivate the students to stay in school, they motivate them that to know that, there's a better life out there, that they can go to college, and that they can succeed in life? ~~VII~~

M.A-Yes, all of the above. I think that all the support that we provide only helps reinforce {the programs?} Anything is possible.

T.R -And do you think that Liberty high school has some of the same goals from the district as a whole for Hispanic children?

M.A-We know what the district goals are where working in every way to help support the district goals. So I don't see our goals being any different then the districts. ~~VIII~~ ?

T.R- Do you know some of the district goals to help Hispanic children succeed?

M.A-Yes, I mean one of our goals in our strategic plan is to lower the drop out rate of Hispanic students, where doing that every year, it's getting better. District goals, the federal government has gives us our district goals, with No Child Left Behind and we need to have Hispanic students being as successful as every other student and that's a district goal, that's a liberty goal, that's a federal government goal, we need to do that. ~~VI~~ F

T.R-Do you think the No Child Left Behind is affective in, and maybe rational in the goals that they give the district? ~~VII~~ F.

M.A-~~No~~. I just know that that's what they given us so that's what where required by law to work toward and at that point I do guarantee it.

T.R-Alright but do you think the No Child Left behind Law is a good idea?

M.A-The basic premise is a good idea, yes. To have all students successful is a great goal, we need to have all, we can't say well never mind you don't need to be successful and you don't need to be successful, where're just going to pay attention to this group of people cause there the ones that really have to be successful. That's not ok. We need to find a way so all students can be successful. Now how we define success, that's a challengge. Right now its with test scores and I don't think the test scores, test scores and drop out rates, drop out rates are probably a better indicator then test scores. ~~VII~~ F.

T.R-So do you think it is, do you think it is or it isn't a good idea to just judge how a race or certain students are doing just by test scores?

M.A-Just by test scores is not, is not fair. ~~VIII~~

T.R-Do you think it should also involve the grades that they get or what activities are they in or..? ~~VII~~

M.A-Activities might be if, you know, but yea activities could be helpful, grades...I don't know, grades, grades I don't know if they indicate achievement.

T.R-Why do you think that mean achievement or success with Hispanic children?

M.A- As with all students our job in high school is to prepare them for their next step, to be successful contributing citizens and so if students can leave high school and be successful contributing citizens, maybe no the year that they leave us but we prepare them to take that next step so we give them all the tools they need to go to a college, or to go to a trade school or to even know how to go to community college and apply or even know where they might be beauty school to get enrolled in or to know how to get a job and apply for a job that's going to make them enough money to live on and support a family on. That's success for everybody. But they can't do that if they can't read.

T.R-Does Liberty high school have any different programs then other high schools?

M.A-(pause) you know not being totally aware of what the other high schools have as far as programs for Hispanic students, I think some of the other schools have after school tutoring, we have the assistants in classrooms, we have the "Unidos" club(pause) Nothing probably outstanding or unique specifically for Hispanic students. I think what we do a good job is to me all students belonging to a academies and activities and so forth.

T.R- Do you think that perhaps the academies that you have at Liberty high school probably helps out the Hispanic kids fit into a certain kind of group or feel like its a great place to learn, and a great place to focus on just one area that they really enjoy?

M.A-Yeah, I think it serves two purposes-One is that they have a group of peers other than just the other students that are just like them it mixes it up a little bit and so that's one of the things the academy provides that sense of belonging with a whole group of kids and the other one is a focus goal for the future, it's an application goal that for example business and media, we have students every, already I mean as soon as we got our T.V studio up and going who were editing, editing script, and inputting it into the computer and editing film and actually on T.V So I think where're doing a good job that way...I have about 5 minutes

T.R: Is there something else you want tell us that we didn't already ask?

M.A-Oh good question at the end...No, you've done a good job. Good questions good follow up questions too.

P.P-Straying from the initial topic and what, do you feel that discrimination is a significant problem here at Liberty? And in the district in general I suppose?

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M.A-You know I think wherever you go, in this entire world, your going to have discrimination of some kind, if every one of us is honest about ourselves...we all have discrimination inside of us, in some ways. But general, generally my feeling here at Liberty is that there is less of that, that I've experienced in other places. And part of it is, is because we have a significant population, and we have very engaged students that are doing wonderful things, they're on television, Blanca Aguilar I don't know if you know her story, she would be a great one to interview and she's you know a very committed, she was, she was elected to go to World Congress On Child Labor, she was one of six students in the entire United States chosen to represent out country, on that topic and she just got back this weekend from Florence, Italy where she was the Chairman of the U.S Delegation. So if you haven't, she better be on your interview list. She's quite a story(laughter) you know another person that I don't know if is on your list of you know somebody to interview, but somebody I like to recommend, there's a teacher-I think she's at W.L Henry, her name is Bertha Lule, and she, she was actually my student at Glencoe High school and come from a family of migrant workers, kind of a similar story to Olga Acunas story, she-her senior year actually was elected to be on the Spring time court, her senior year just went on to go to college, first in her family to go to college and she's a teacher in our district so another recommendation of another success story in the town of Hillsboro.

T.R- Well, thank you for your time.