

2004 Century High School Local History Project Interview Transcript
“Describe, analyze and evaluate the response for the Hillsboro School District to the needs of Hispanic students from the 1970s to the present.”

Interviewee: Manuel Ruiz, head custodian of Century High School

Interviewer: Xiang Gao

Date: June 1, 2004

Place of interview: Century High School

Xiang Gao: So were you an immigrant here from Mexico or were you born here?

Manuel Ruiz: I was actually born in Texas.

Xiang Gao: In Texas, okay. And when did you move to Hillsboro?

Manuel Ruiz: Since I was like, three years old.

Xiang Gao: Oh, okay, so you've lived here for a while then. And you've had schooling here... [Manuel nods]... oh good, so can you tell me a little bit about your background as a student in Hillsboro School District?

Manuel Ruiz: I went to Mulberry for elementary school 1-6th and Poynter as a what do you call that... Junior high... 7th and 8th. And then I went to what was then Thomas, and that was 9th and 10th, and then I went to 11 and 12 at Hilhi and graduated in '79 from Hilhi.

Xiang Gao: Okay. So did your family really emphasize education? Was it like a big part of your upbringing, your life?

Manuel Ruiz: I know my dad wanted us to graduate. He really didn't go on any further than that. You know he thought finishing school was important, but I don't think.... Because he came from Mexico and they didn't have very much schooling over there. so, I mean **he thought once you were in school and you finish school, and he really didn't talk too much about college.**

Xiang Gao: Okay. Did you feel that your needs were met by the HSD as a Hispanic student, whether economic or social...

Manuel Ruiz: You mean did I learn what I needed to learn?

Xiang Gao: Yeah, and also, did your family have any special economic circumstances?

Manuel Ruiz: Not really, yea and I think for the most part they met the needs, and I'm not the fastest reader or anything but I knew when I graduated that I really didn't want to continue education. I mean, I know that's probably the way to go but... once I got through it I was one of the six kids that actually graduated- we had six kids in our family. And I struggled through and I finished it and that was about it.

Xiang Gao: Were you involved in any programs? At school?

Manuel Ruiz: Programs as far as what? Sports- I played sports.

Xiang Gao: What did you play?

Manuel Ruiz: I played football in 9th grade. I did a lot of sports in the younger years but not really in the high school years.

Xiang Gao: Why do you think you stopped once you hit high school?

M.R.: I went to work.

X.G.: You went to work!

SE TA

M.R.: Yeah, they had a ~~CIDA~~ program when I was actually in 9th grade, I believe it was.

X.G.: What program I'm sorry?

M.R.: CIDA.

X.G.: What is that?

M.R.: It was like a YMCA club where they hired kids to work at school, parks, highways, and different jobs. But it was like a job experience. And I went to work because, you know, there was six of us in the family, we didn't have a whole lot of money. And I wanted to have my own money and I started when I was 14.

X.G.: Do you think that had a role on how you viewed education? The fact that, you know, your family was big and you needed to take care of yourself- make sure you had your own income?

M.R.: Yea, yea. Probably, if we had... if we didn't have a finance, I'd prolly ... I don't know I don't know if I would've continued education because, you know school came hard for me, I really had to work pass the classes. So it came hard, and it could be because I'm bilingual, because you know some classes were was awful hard, some were boring, some were hard.

X.G.: Can you tell me a little more about your bilingual experience? Just in the district and within the family

MR: Really there's not much to tell other than I don't use Spanish very much. SO I'm kinda, it's kinda getting choppy. My dad used to talk to us in Spanish and my mom would talk to us in English and if you don't use it you kinda loose it, it comes back to you but it gets choppy.

XG: How bout when you were a student. When you were in HSD, did you have a struggle between Spanish and English? Or, which one did you struggle with more if you did at all.

MR: Well, when I was real little I struggled with English, I can remember it because the first school I actually went to, it must've been a preschool or something, because **I was real young and I remember sitting across the street from Hank's and Cornelius and just crying and looking out the window because I didn't understand what they were saying.** But once I got into the Hillsboro schools, I think I kinda understood English because.. I don't' have any persey, bad memories of the kind looking out the window [laughs].

XG: Were you apart of ESL at all? Or like a dual language program?

MR: Yea. I think I was. At poynter I know they had a ESL. We had a really cool teacher. He'd take us camping and stuff, and a whole bunch of things.

XG: Can you just tell me a little bit about that experience? How did ESL help you, was it effective in helping you learn both languages, or.

MR: I think it did. It was mainly reading and writing, you know speech, learn how to write it. And yea, I think it did help. Even though, I think in those years, my junior high years, I think were the most rebellious days. So, you learn some, but really rebelled a lot of it. It didn't all sink in I think.

XG: How long were you in ESL for?

MR: The only ones I can remember were 7th and 8th at Poynter.

XG: And you weren't in ESL in elementary school?

MR: Well, I don't remember. Some people have good memories for this stuff, I don't [laughs].

XG: Yea, okay, were just trying to get some...[Manuel: yea, okay]. Do you think as a student you had the same opportunities as non Hispanic students?

MR: I think so.

XG: Do you think you were reaching for them as much as non Hispanic students? Whether it be activities, or job opportunities, whatever the school offered.

MR: Well, I think that's a hard question because I don't know. I think I was an average kid, you know. I don't think I reached for them anymore than a lot of them, did what I had to do.

XG: Do you remember facing stereotypes or racism while you were in school because of you Hispanic background?

MR: No, not too bad.

XG: Oh really? That's excellent. Do you think the school had anything to do with that? Were they, did they try to control, was it a factor in your school?
[interview briefly interrupted by message for Manuel].

MR: What was your question?

XG: Do you think racism, or stereotyping was a factor at your school?

MR: I don't think too much. I think right now there are a lot more Hispanics than there was at my time. We were kind of the minority, but, I don't think we were too... there wasn't too much racism or anything.

XG: Do you think there's more right now?

MR: I don't know if there's necessarily more. I think that the numbers have come up, we're almost... equal... I don't know if it's equal but there's as many Hispanics as there is everything else. At least in Hillsboro. Some people tell me that there is a large population of Hispanics here. I don't really pay attention to the kids so I don't really know. I know I see a lot of Hispanics, but I see a lot of everything else.

XG: Do you think Hispanic students today, and maybe back when you were a student, have problems that pertain to them more often than others because they come from bilingual backgrounds, because the culture barriers and their economic situations.

MR: You know what we see today is, **I think it's kinda sad to say because Hispanics are that way, they're more closed mind about their young daughters. So a lot of them end up pregnant because they don't talk about it.** I know my wife and I, we just kinda try to talk to the kids and so it doesn't aim off that way. But other than that, I think they're more... yea more sheltered I guess .

XG: So you work here at Century as the main custodian?

MR: Yea, the head custodian.

XG: When you observe around the school , do you see any special trends in Hispanic students that they follow culturally, social.

MR: Trends... give me an idea of trends, like I see little cliques, I mean little groups...

XG: Like for example, academically, there's less of Hispanic students in advanced placement classes and there aren't as many Hispanic students in sports or extra curricular. Do you notice things like that? Or do you think it's a factor or a problem at this school?

MR: I don't know if it's a problem , I think it's, I don't know the correct words for it, bit its like they don't participate as much maybe?

XG: Why do you think that is?

MR: I don't know. Maybe they don't feel real welcomed... I don't know

XG: Can you tell me more about that? The fact that you think Hispanic kids might not feel welcome at school.

MR: Well, I don't know if 'welcomed' is the right word, or 'measure up'? You know, because I remember a couple of years ago, there was a kid, of course he was more American than he was Hispanic, maybe he just had a Hispanic name. Because like my son, he doesn't really know much in Spanish, because my wife is American so we kinda speak English all the time and my heritage so to speak sort of kept sliding back so we didn't talk to him in Spanish. Because of my first memory of school when I was crying and looking out the window, so I said to myself, 'my kids are gonna know English. If we're in American, we're gonna know English'. And Spanish will pick up as second. And unfortunately we didn't talk too much in Spanish to him. He knows a little bit and he's got a Hispanic girlfriend, so she talks to him a lot and if we wouldn't have lost my dad in '92 I think my son would've known more now. Because my wife can speak it pretty fluently and she learned it from my dad. And my dad would come over for coffee every morning and speak nothing but Spanish; so if you wanted to be in the communication you kinda had to speak it and understand it.

XG: You mentioned about Hispanic students feeling like they don't measure up. Can you just expand more on that?

MR: Just like my feelings? You know, I don't know because I wasn't a student here but I know there's a lot of talent. You know, a lot of sports talent. **But you don't see a whole lot of Hispanics making it up there. Again, my opinion, maybe they don't feel like they measure up or don't care to measure up maybe?**

XG: Do you have any idea why that may be?

MR: Not really because I would think any kid would want to be in the popular groups per se, you know, so you'd think they'd try hard, but maybe they don't, I don't know.

XG: Do you think the school has a duty to make sure everybody gets involved or they should outreach more towards Hispanics?

MR: I would think so because my daughter played for a couple of years of softball and she wasn't no superstar or anything, but I know a couple of them... there's a lot of politics in sports and a lot of people don't play that game, you know what I mean? If you're super good, you get on the varsity team and you get to play all the time. And if you're not, you get to warm the bench. And a lot of people... I don't know, I think, just in my head, that many hispanics don't play that game. **But you don't see a whole lot of Hispanics making it up there. Again, my opinion, maybe they don't feel like they measure up or don't care to measure up maybe?.** I don't know, that's kind of a tricky question, because I know when I played football I wasn't the greatest, but we went undefeated in the 9th grade and the coach said 'hey, don't give up'. and I just did it for one year because I wanted to see what it was like. And it was fun and everything but I don't think I'd ever become one of the real well known names or anything.

XG: Do you think that way Hispanic students are more realistic? Or is kind of like they do try as many other students do to go for- I guess- their dreams or whatnot.

MR: I don't know. Like I said, I think every kid within himself, wants to be the best at something. **But it's almost like they aim their energy and everything at something else, I mean, when you can't reach that goal. And I don't know whether it's more realistic or they give up early or... I don't know.**

XG: What do you think Hispanic student's goals are?

MR: Boy... Again, I'm thinking for myself. I knew when I got through school, I struggled through that, so I didn't really need to look into something else even though I'd always wanted to become a pilot or a pilot mechanic or something like that. **But, knowing the harder education was in front of me and with that big of a hurdle I don't know if I would really want to handle that.** And I got into this cleaning, like I said earlier, through the CIDA program and I really liked it, you get a lot of satisfaction. Event though the kids tear it up, right after you fix it kind of, but you get a lot of satisfaction. You can't let that bother you too much. You know, we're here to make it better for the kids, we keep it clean for the kids, and if they break it down, you pick it back up. And it's a constant battle but it's very satisfying, and on the second side, it is like you keep getting kicked, that's why you make vacations and all that ... you go on vacation and forget it and say 'hey, I can do this big job'. And sometimes you have to turn away from it, and sometimes you have to go back and attack. And you get it done. I've been at it for 26 years, so there's something good in it.

XG: Now CIDA, is that a part of HSD's programs or is it something run by the state or the city?

MR: I think it was federally funded. And this was years ago. This was back in '73, '74? Yea, I think it was federally funded because I remember there was CIDA kids and there was the high school would hire kids too. And it was kinda funny because the CIDA kids would get paid a few cents more an hour- not that it made it a big deal, it was just federally funded. And it was mainly the trained kids, you know when they were young.

XG: Now were the most kids in the program Hispanic or white or...?

MR: Both. It was probably a little more Hispanics.

XG: Do you think the HSD does an adequate job of making sure that every single student, especially, in this case, Hispanic students, know about college and their changes at college and push them for higher education?

MR: Do I think the school does that good?

XG: The district, yea. Do you think they do good enough of a job?

MR: I don't know, you know. My own experience- my son should've been graduating this year and he's behind on his education and I don't know if ADD is a reason or excuse but I sometimes felt like we just kept pushing him forward. He started going to an alternative school now because really he was just wasting his time and the school's time here. **But the only thing I see wrong is that we keep moving kids through and they don't completely have it all.** You know what I'm saying? If he's in 9th grade, is he 9th grade ready to move on to 10th grade? And I don't think he was. And we moved him. And I think it takes a big act to stop the movement. You know, they don't want to hold kids back, if I remember right. And we had a few discussions about that, but, I don't know. You know, my wife is pretty upset because my son isn't going to graduate this year. But I said, 'you know, we don't all graduate.' And maybe I'm giving up too quick. We don't all graduate but with that age of kid, we can't make him learn. **We gotta make it interesting enough to grab it, to grab him. And him want to learn, and him want to work at, you know, getting his education.** So you know, he's trying to make up his credits through that alternative school and he'll probably go again next year but I don't see him putting a whole lot of effort into it. And we've tried different angles and he just doesn't really want to commit and try hard.

XG: Do you think these factors are on an individual bases or do you think it's maybe a culture thing with Hispanic students? Because of course, there are statistics that show high dropout rates, or you know, low test scores, but do you think that's individual based or do you think there's some kind of reason...

MR: I think it's a little both. Because it's not only my son. I've known a few of his friends, they're kind of in the same boat. I know one of his friends was... we called him 'lifer'...because he did the junior year twice and the senior year twice so we called him lifer you know, because he's gonna go to school for life. But like I said, I don't know if I stopped too soon or if I should push him harder but there's only so much you can push in a 17 year old kid and they just rebel. And really, he's a good kid, he doesn't get into drugs or anything, he don't get in trouble a lot or anything, nothing really major. So they're good kids, but education just wasn't on the top priority. And like I said, it could be a little bit of culture it could be a little bit of individual, you know, lack of interest.

XG: We've been talking about some cultural problems, language problems with Hispanic students and the rest of the district. Do you think the district has done enough in overcoming those problems or lend he extra hand to help Hispanic students with whatever programs or things they set up? Are you aware of many of the programs or can you tell us about some of them and how effective they are?

MR: Well, I know when I talk to Ms. Montgomery [Century High School's principal at time of interview] about this she more or less said you know, 'we need to talk.' The impression I got is she didn't want him to fall through the cracks and I think he's already fallen. You know, so I don't know... I think he's already fallen because we needed to catch him back up in 9th grade, 9th and 10th grade. 11th [grade] or 12th [grade], if he was already in that mode of not really wanting to be here, not really participating or putting force a whole lot of effort, I think we've already kind of lost him. And I think he's just going to be another one in society who's just gonna work hard and earn a living. And that's okay because it takes all kinds. And that's what I told my wife. Just like I said, she gets upset about it, but I said, 'you know, it's not the end of the world. There's a lot of rich people who didn't even finish school!' You gotta look at it both ways but yet I wish he would've you know, completed, maybe continued. I know my nieces, there's a couple of my nieces that are

real sharp at school. I mean, they're straight A and everything. Is it culture, is it inherited, I don't know. You know, just like any kids here in Century, some are smart, some get the schooling real quick and easy. Some get in pencil and some get it in their hands. Some people work with their hands, some people are sharp with book learning. It's all over the spectrum. There's no...

XG: What do you think the district has done to help out Hispanics kids?

MR: I've seen... you know, we've tried the GED program and that was too open for my son. You know they said 'you come'.... more or less this is the impression that I got... more or less you come when you're ready and you work and you're ready. Well, he's never gonna be ready. He needs more of a structured and it's real hard to structure kids when they get over 15, 16 years old. I mean, you have to give him some sort of structure, but yet, you can't leave it too open you know. My daughter would come home everyday, turn on the TV, but do her homework. Some people say that's not a good idea but she always got it done, she passed her classes and she finished school and she graduated. My son, he'd always have a lot more interesting things to do so... You know, we tried the GED we tried the, now he's going to like a Miller Ed. in Forest Grove- it's an alternative school. It's called CREATE and the staff there really likes him. They've called me a couple of times and they said that 'we really like Joey. He's a really lovable kid but he's just not putting forth a whole lot of effort.' And I said, 'well, what can I do? What can I do to help? I just remember that back in grade school, there was teachers that when they taught, you were eager to learn and some, when they talked, you couldn't get away far enough. So, I mean, it's a real talent to be a teacher, I know. And unfortunately there's not a whole lot of those that hit my son and really caught his interest. Plus like I said, he's ADD so he's real forgetful and can't concentrate or lose interest quick, so... I mean, I think the combination of all that, he's just not interested.

XG: I know you mentioned your son learning both languages and you thought that English was most important. Now was he in ESL or any of the language programs? For both Spanish and...

MR: I know he was in ESL but it was really for the English.

XG: Do you think the ESL program was effective in teaching him?

MR: Not really.

XG: No?

MR: No....

XG: How come?

MR: because he, well, I would get called up there once in a while and she'd say, you know, 'he's not doing a whole lot, just kinda sitting there.' Well, how can you make him do something? You know what I mean? I could be up there as a parent, kinda embarrassing him and just saying, 'get to work,' but I've seen teachers embarrass him. One teacher embarrassed him and she totally lost him. You know she made the comment, 'you're just gonna sit there like a bump on a log or something?' and that didn't go over real good with him, I mean, it made him feel dumb, so he just tuned her off. So, again **you gotta learn how to get those kids' interest. Or else you'd just... you lost it.**

XG: Do you think this sign of disinterest is more prominent in Hispanic students because, you know, maybe education isn't the highest priority?

MR: I think it might be more in Hispanics, but I think it's throughout.

XG: How do you think HSD can make that change? Maybe make education more of a priority in their lives so they kinda see it as a way to you know, go to college and...

MR: boy, what would I do different if I could try to catch the interest of all those kids.

XG: do you think the district is aware of the problem and try to do something about it?

MR: Well, I don't know if they do. I know they have a lot of programs out there. I know they have like the migrant schools in the summer, but... I don't know. Because I haven't gone to them I don't know if it's... you know, to try to ... that's a hard question. I don't know how they would try to grasp the mind of a kid that's not interested. It's real hard for them. Because I think it happens in all you know people. You gotta somehow get the interest of them.

XG: You were talking about how you and the teachers at Miller Ed. were kinda communicating. I think one of the problems with Hispanic families in the school district is communication. How do you think the school district deal with more parent involvement or just better communication between the school and the families?

MR: I think communication is okay. Because there's a lot of people that speak Spanish and all you gotta do is speak Spanish, speak their language, and they do just fine. It's getting the people to do it. You know, **there's probably a lot of parents, Hispanic parents, that understand what the leaders here, or the teachers here are saying but it's getting to actually get it into the kids and have the kids perform.** I don't know, like I said, that's a hard one. If you had the answer to that one, I'd like to run my kid back through [laughs].

XG: Do you think it's been an improvement throughout the years? Before, maybe when you were a student, communication between parents and school, do you think maybe improved through the years. Pertaining to Hispanic families.

MR: Well I don't know if it really has improved. I know that, that was a good memory that I have when **I was at Poynter and they had the ESL program and I know we had a... his name was Mr. Garcia, big tall guy. He'd take us camping and stuff, and do fun things with the boys you know. And that in a way caught your interest. Even though he had education in there, he had a hold of your interest.** Because we liked to hang out and go camping and crabbing or whatever. I know dollars are a problem nowadays, but I would think we have more dollars now than we had then. And to do stuff like that. And at Miller Ed. that... he tried that, I think it was Miller Ed. It was some type of program where they worked out in nature. In parks and stuff like that. He kinda didn't like that too much because it was just cold and wet out there. And he didn't really like to travel all that much. It was an hour drive to get to where he was going to work and learn all about nature and all that. So he didn't really like that. I don't know if the schools... really I can't really say they've improved a whole lot. But I can't really say if they have or haven't because I mean when I went through it as a student and trying to compare it to now. I know in 7th and 8th grade I didn't absorb all the teaching that they were throwing out. And you know my son didn't. And it just could be the nature of the beast. We're not really book learners. I don't know if that has a nationality to do with it or anything but we weren't really book learners. Even my daughter, when she struggle through it, I asked her, 'would you like to continue in PCC or some kind of college?'. She said, 'nah, I had enough of that school.'

XG: Do you notice any difference between Hispanic students growing from elementary school to middle school to high school. There's like charts and graphs and what not that show Hispanic students are more involved at the younger age than they are at the older age. Can you think why that may be and how the district has been dealing with that/

MR: Boy, you know, now that you say that, it is true. Just staying back and looking at it. I don't know. Other than it might be and I know me and Ms. Montgomery have had long talks about this one time. And it might be when your younger you're more natural, you're more... they threw you in a group, nobody really even noticed, or looked, or even questioned. And when you're older you notice difference and they start more cliques, they start more little groups. Don't really want to call them gangs, but you start more little group functions and you hang out with your little group and that could be why. Because when you're young you don't think of that, you don't look at that, you jump in.

XG: do you think the integration of Hispanic students into mainstream classes, activities, whatnot, is a problem or a factor at the district?

MR: I don't know if it's a problem. I would agree to mainstream everybody and that's how they do it when they're young. But somehow between when they're young and when they're older we start together but we spread, we divide. And I don't know how to really put that in words. Because I remember, even when I was in my rebellious ages in 7th and 8th grade, I felt more like an American than a Hispanic. I remember it clearly like if it was yesterday. And if you ask me when did I start falling into a category of more of a Hispanic, I think

it would have to be in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th... why? I wouldn't know why.

XG: It just kinda happened?

MR: Yea, it happened that way.

XG: Was there a culture clash between you and your family? You know, when you were younger you were more American...

MR: Culture class... I don't really understand...

XG: Oh, you know, maybe your family had more of the Hispanic values while before 9th grade, you were more American. Was there like a conflict with that?

MR: not really. It might be because once you're in 9th 10th 11th, you're more 'out', when you're in elementary you're more... it's a little school and you go home. When you get into Junior High you start to branch a little bit. Now your walking to, or riding the bus further. I don't know, it's kinda weird. Because I think if I had to blame it on something- why people start together and kinda spread out, I wouldn't know what the correct answer was. Because I know in 7th, 8th grade, we just kind of mingled with everybody. And it could be because the way the school is set up. Because when you're in grade school you're kind of in that.. 'Mrs. Jones' class'. Everybody was in 'Mrs. Jones' class' right? But when you get to Poynter and the middle schools you don't have 'Mrs. Jones' class' anymore. It's everybody spread out. So you get some of the kids from Brookwood, some of the kids from Barnes, David Hill, everything. You know you get all these different cliques, I mean not cliques, but you get all these different feeder schools into the middle schools and you just kinda start looking around saying, 'well, I don't really know that many people but...' actually you kinda cling to somebody you knew in grade school, and they knew somebody that went to a different school and you kinda start forming friendships there. And when you get passed the middle school, it's more of a I think the culture. I never thought about that.

XG: when did you graduate from the...

MR: '79.

XG: Have you been working in the district since then?

MR: Yea.

XG: So have you noticed a lot of change with Hispanic students and their families? And the relationship with the Hillsboro District?

MR: Not really.

XG: No changes? [Manuel shakes head]. Okay.

MR: Not much, I mean... You mean, how Hispanics look at school or work with school...

XG: Yea, or vice versa.

MR: How the school addresses the Hispanic community?

XG: Right.

MR: I think they have more... like here they have more ESL meetings and you know, I've never looked at one or participated in one I just write them on the calendar. But I don't really know what happens there. Do all the Hispanic kids from here go to the meetings?

XG: Do you think there's been an improvement? Have you heard about some of the statistics of low test scores, or ...

MR: No... no. Other than one time I see Ms. Montgomery's email, but I don't remember exactly what it said. Something about test scores. Like the highest kid count or the lowest test score and I don't remember what

else. Do you remember that?

XG: I think that was about... was it this year?

MR: It might've been this year or last year.

XG: It was about how we have like some of the lowest test scores in nation or the state and how she was going to try to bring that back.

[interview briefly interrupted by message to Manuel]

XG: So you've sent two of your kids just through the Hillsboro schools?

MR: Yea.

XG: Do you think the school did well in meeting their needs? Whether it be language, or culture, or activities?

MR: My daughter- I think they did okay with. With my son- I think he slipped through the cracks.

XG: Do you think that's more of your son or what the district could've done in their way of programs and classes?

MR: Probably 50/50. I think my son, well I know my son should've put more effort into it. Plus he had the ADD. Plus we don't need to just keep pushing kids through. I mean I question that from a long time ago; I think even before my son. And I think back to the ESL. I think why I didn't know much about it was because we spoke English. We didn't have trouble with English. WE spoke English. And I think ESL is more for more of Spanish speaking that don't understand English. But my son, I think he needed to put more effort and I think we need to somehow, like I said, get the interest of those kids and not let them slide through. And not keep passing- if they're not doing it, somehow it's gotta stop or... why push him through if he's not... because I don't think I'm that sharp of a reader. I can read to kinda get through and I graduated. And before me, there was some... I mean, I know one guy that's ten years older than me... and he went to school in Washington and it's not a good comparison but, they pushed him through and he says he barely even knows how to read. He's got his diploma- so what's wrong with this picture? I mean, **lets not just push him through school just to say, "hey, he's completed twelve years." Lets make sure he's got something that's worth the twelve years.**

XG: What do you think the district can do other than making sure students are ready for the next level that could help, especially the Hispanic students with their education.

MR: Other than like do the camping trip or more fun stuff, or try to get their interest somehow. I know my son enjoyed music, cars... you know, they had auto-mechanics when I was here, I went through auto-mechanics . Yea that was somewhat interesting of a class and I'm sure they had it offered when my son was here but he wasn't really interested. He's more interested in it now that I work on cars and he helps me a little bit... but I don't know what else the school could do. That's a hard question.

XG: Are you satisfied overall as a parent with what the district provides for your children?

MR: Yea, **I'm satisfied with what they provide. I guess I'm not satisfied with how we push them through.** You know if I had to do over, I'd say somehow make him jump through all those hurdles before we keep moving him through. Make him sure he knows it all. And if they don't know it all, maybe we have to repeat or summer school, or... I guess persistence would be the best. I mean if you keep telling the kid the same information until he passes the test, maybe he'll get it. I don't know.

XG: So overall, you don't really see any patterns of problems that pertain a lot to Hispanic students and your children, or do you?

MR: Problems...

XG: Well, I guess, trends with Hispanic students. Whether it be high dropout rates, lower test scores, just like something statistics show.

MR: Not really. I think the only think I see is not a whole lot of them continue higher education.

XG: Do you think that should be a focus of the district or more of 'let them pursue what they will.'

MR: you know, I know in Mexico, there schooling is suppose to be a whole lot better. I don't know... if I understand their system right... they start 7th, 8th, 9th, maybe it's 9th, 10th 11th, 12th... they start teaching them on a topic of their choice kinda. Like if you wanted to be a plumber they teach you from then on and you kind of aim towards plumbing if you wanted to be a plumber, or teaching if you wanted to become a teacher. Kinda start there and aim yourself towards that. To here, where it's kind of a general school- history, read, and write and arithmetic all the way through, including some electives- mechanics, photography, science- you know, everything- science ..

XG: So do you think more career oriented classes that specifically teacher students a certain trade would be more helpful for Hispanic students?

MR: It might be because again, you have to catch their interest. **You gotta find out what makes them click.** What makes them want to go to school. **You know there's too much things drawn away from it. You need to have something to draw them here and keep them interested. Even if it's the least popular thing to do is to go to school, somehow just keep them going.**

XG: What do you think is the biggest problem between the district and Hispanic families or students?

MR: The biggest problem? Boy, and I keep going back to getting their interest.

XG: Do you think there's been improvement throughout the years with...

MR: I think probably... more programs, more focus on the maybe? I think if my dad... like I said, I was one of six kids that graduated in my family... I think if my dad would've... if I would've known no different, and he talked college, slept college, ate college, everything, I think I would've come outta high school knowing to continue. But he didn't. He just kinda said hey 'I'd like you to get through.' I think there is some kind of a... I think people should probably do that. Talk college to you kids even when they're 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th grade. Just so they know that after they graduate there's continuing... you know you're not done with school because you graduated and got your high school diploma. It's continued. I think that would be something. Or maybe they're mentally out there, you know, they have more to reach for.

XG: [Do] You think the district does a good job pushing that?

MR: I think the district probably does. I know me as a parent, I don't think I did.

XG: How do you think the district can help reach that to the parents? Is it something they can do with classes or better out reach or how? How can they do that?

MR: Well, that might be an idea you know, reach the parents to teach this to the kids. Because **it's a combined effort between the parents and the school to try to reach those kids interested in continuing their education.**

XG: When do work at Century High School, do you observe any problems with segregation or discrimination of Hispanic students at Century, or any other schools you may have worked at.

MR: No, not really. Like I said, I don't really have a whole lot to do with the kids so I only see them if I'm passing in the halls or something. You know you see a few fights every now and then, but not... I do see cliques. You know, there's a lot of Hispanics hanging together, a lot of Asians hanging together, a lot of Americans hanging together. And I know that even through the school they try to kinda make them blend. I don't know how successful they are but you do see that.

XG: Is there anything else you can tell us as a parent, as a staff, or as a former student about how Hillsboro District has been helping Hispanic students throughout the years and how well they've done overall. Anything else you'd like to say?

MR: Not really. I know we shouldn't quit what we're doing. I know it's a good thing, you know, educating the kids. Because that's our future. I guess somehow just learn to really get their interest get them wanting to learn. I know when I went to some PCC classes after, actually after my daughter was born, I chose classes I wanted to learn in and I was really interested in. And nobody had to make me go. And it was a whole different atmosphere. You were there because you wanted to learn. And you absorbed this stuff to where in school, in high school where you're there because you're made to go. You don't absorb. I think there's a combination there that somehow we need to find where you want to go and want to absorb. And I've always said, like my son, he might be in his later years ready to absorb some knowledge. I know he wasn't as a student. And hopefully he is later. That's weird because, you know, I'm sure you haven't been through any PCC classes or anything but, you choose what you want to learn and you're really absorbing and interesting and you really want to learn everything. You don't really worry about the test. I mean, you want to pass them, I mean, you worry about passing them, but you're just absorbing so much information that you want to learn that it's just a natural thing. To where you don't want to be here, you just kinda shut it all off.

XG: Do you think our school offer the opportunities the students need or want?

MR: I think so. Probably for the majority of the kids. But there are some that are slipping through the cracks. That aren't interested and I don't what you would have to do to get them interested. Big puzzle, big mystery.

XG: Anything else?

MR: No, that's about it.

END OF INTERVIEW.