

Education Positions

Position on the State of Wisconsin Charter School Law

Under Wisconsin charter school law (Sec. 118.40), applications for charter can only be approved by local school districts with the exception of Milwaukee and Racine counties. Expanding the number of authorizing entities to include universities and/or technical colleges throughout the State of Wisconsin will effectively create more parental choice in education. Charter schools also have increased curriculum flexibility, yet adhere to the same state testing requirements, allowing them to specialize their services to meet the needs of certain student populations such as economically disadvantaged or English language learners. Therefore, La Casa de Esperanza supports the expansion of authorizing entities to include at least University of Wisconsin institutions and technical colleges, and also the development of a fair appeals process.

Early Childhood Education

La Casa believes that the early learning years are critical in a child's development and future success in school and life. Eighty-five percent of a child's intellect, personality, and skills are formed by age five.¹ In Waukesha County, 60 percent of children under age 6 have working parents making access to high quality childcare and early childhood education even more critical.² For these reasons, La Casa supports federal and state policies that improve the access and quality of early education programs for children from economically disadvantaged families, Latino children, and English Language Learners (ELLs); increase childcare assistance for working families; and enhance opportunities for the professional development of teachers working with young children.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

La Casa de Esperanza believes that the No Child Left Behind Act creates greater transparency of the academic achievement of all groups of students by reporting test scores by gender, race/ethnicity, English language proficiency, and socioeconomic status. These data provide significant insight into the performance of our children – where they are succeeding and where they need more help.

La Casa also supports fully funding NCLB and its components that require high standards for student achievement particularly for Latinos and English Language Learners (ELLs), use of assessments to uniformly measure levels of achievement, and additional resources and accountability mechanisms for school districts.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

La Casa de Esperanza believes that English Language Learner (ELL) test scores and achievement must continue to be a separate subcategory in the reporting and accountability standards required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Schools should ensure that ELL programs are effective by developing rigorous ELL coursework; preparing teachers to work with ELLs through on-going staff professional development and training; the development and use of standardized tests that accurately assess ELL student achievement; and distribution of information to parents of ELL students so that they may fully participate in their child's education and the decision-making process at the local school and school district levels.

Higher Education

La Casa supports policies and practices that increase access to higher educational opportunities of Latino and students from economically disadvantaged families. Specifically, La Casa supports policies to increase access to programs that educate high school students on the college application process and financial aid such as the College Bound Program, and to increase federal and state resources dedicated to student financial aid and grants.

¹ Brain Initiative, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 2006

² American Community Survey, 2005