

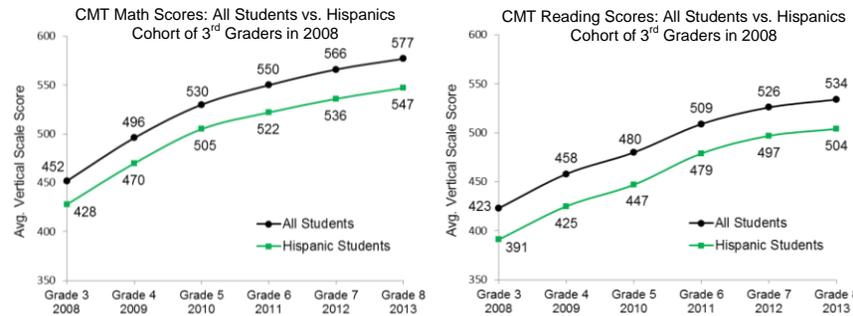
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Quality of Life Result: That all students in the Latino and Puerto Rican population of the state will achieve educational success when teachers and school administrators take a more holistic approach to educating Latino children.

Stakeholders: Thirty-four participants representing fourteen organizations including school administrators, charter schools, advocates, business, teachers' unions, researchers, as well as parents, active teachers, retired teachers, and LPRAC commissioners.

What We Know

In Connecticut from 2008 to 2013, there was an improvement in annual single point-in-time mastery test scores (e.g. CMT) but there remained a significant gap in achievement between Hispanic students and the overall student population.¹ Some suggest that increases in test scores were because students got better at taking tests and it does not reflect improved education outcomes. Connecticut still has among the highest achievement gaps in the country between Hispanic students and white students even after requiring annual mastery testing.



Story Behind the Baseline

Annual single point-in-time mastery tests are used to: (1) allow administrators to measure overall school/district performance, and (2) give teachers input to improve education outcomes for individual students. However, classroom instruction cannot benefit from annual mastery tests because the data is reported after students have moved to the next grade. Delayed reporting will continue with the new annual SBAC testing. Therefore, the utility of annual mastery tests is limited to addressing a perceived need for public education “accountability” by vested stakeholders and the public, but annual testing has limited value for classroom instruction.

Overall, Latino students do not fare well on annual mastery tests for a number of reasons. Latino children are disproportionately from low-income households and reside in racially segregated communities with low performing schools. This cultural isolation hinders education and limits opportunities. In particular for ELL students, these tests can be demoralizing, “... *we have in effect instituted discouragement and shame.*”²

September 1st, 2015

Trend: ◀▶ (Trend Going in Right Direction? ▲ Yes; ▼ No; ▶ Flat/ No Trend)

Proposed Legislative Actions to Turn the Curve

Action 1: Schools with a sizeable population of low-income Latino students should reduce the frequency of annual single point-in-time mastery tests (e.g. legacy CMT and future SBAC) but not eliminate them. Consideration should be given to the stigma and demoralizing effect of repeated low performance that may be due to the student’s status as an English Language Learner (ELL) or the family situation, which is beyond a student’s control.

Action 2: Schools with a sizeable population of low-income Latino students should place more emphasis on progress monitoring that measures a student’s academic growth from the start to the end of the school year.

Action 3: Schools with a sizeable population of low-income Latino students should adopt a holistic approach to assess achievement that includes multiple assessment measures such as, among others: (1) the incidence of English Language Learners, (2) student transiency, (3) achievements in extracurricular activities, (4) mastery tests, and (5) academic growth.

Data Development Agenda

Design school performance measures such that they do not foster the segregation of communities by income or race.

Notes:

¹ CT State Dept. of Education at <http://solutions1.emetric.net/cmtpublic/Index.aspx>.

² RBA participant on June 9th 2015.

