Chicano School Failure and Success

This new edition of the best-selling and award-winning *Chicano School Failure and Success* has been updated and expanded to provide state-of-the-art coverage of the Chicano school experience. The contributors include experts in the fields of anthropology, psychology, educational history and policy, special education, and child and family studies, reflecting the wide and complex range of issues affecting Chicano students. The book is in five parts:

- **Part I**: A comprehensive review of schooling conditions and outcomes; the educational implications of a rapidly growing Chicano population; segregation, desegregation and integration; issues arising from the high dropout rate of Chicano students.
- **Part II**: Language, public policy and schooling issues for English language learners; the effectiveness of bilingual education in the U.S.A.
- **Part III**: Chicano/Latino ethnography of education; the relationship between Chicano families and schools.
- **Part IV**: Select testing issues that impact on Chicano students; the role of special education in the history of Chicano schooling.
- **Part V**: Analysis of systemic factors contributing to the success or failure of Chicano education; a synthesis of ideas to help promote success.

This is a timely new edition that will be of great interest to academics, researchers, and students in the areas of education, sociology, and anthropology.

Richard R. Valencia is Professor of Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. He has previously worked at Stanford University and the University of California, Santa Barbara, and has published widely, particularly on the issues of test validity and bias, and Chicano education.
Chicano School Failure and Success
Past, Present, and Future
2nd edition
Richard R. Valencia

London and New York
This book is dedicated to the memory of my dear mother, Veronica, who taught me how to read and helped put me on the path to acquire knowledge.

Richard R. Valencia
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Contributors

Alfredo J. Artiles is Associate Professor at Vanderbilt University. Dr. Artiles’ main affiliation is with Peabody College; he also holds a joint appointment in the Departments of Special Education and Teaching and Learning. His work focuses on the representation of students of color in special education and teacher learning about diversity. Recent work (with R. Rueda, J. Salazar, and I. Higareda) includes “Factors associated with English learner representation in special education: Emerging evidence from urban school districts in California” (in D. Losen and G. Orfield [Eds.], Minority Issues in Special Education in the Public Schools, Harvard Publishing Group, in press).

Rubén Donato is Associate Professor and Chair of Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice in the School of Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder. His research focus is on the history of American education and Mexican American educational history. Dr. Donato is the author of The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans During the Civil Rights Era (State University of New York Press, 1997). A recent publication is “Hispano education and the implications of autonomy: Four school systems in Southern Colorado, 1920–1964.” Harvard Educational Review, 1999, 69, 117–149.

Douglas E. Foley is Professor of Education and Anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin. His research interests are race and ethnicity in American education, ethnic social movements, and immigration. Dr. Foley is the author of From Peones to Políticos: Class and Ethnicity in a South Texas Town, 1900–1989 (University of Texas Press, 1989); Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); and The Heartland Chronicles (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). A more recent publication is his co-edited book (with B. Levinson and D. Holland), The Cultural Production of the Educated Person: Critical Ethnographies of Schooling Practices (State University of New York Press, 1996).

Eugene E. García is Professor of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. He has published extensively in the area of language teaching and bilingual development. He served as a Senior Officer and Director of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs in the U.S. Department of Education from 1993–1995. Dr. García is currently conducting research in the areas of effective schooling for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations. His most recent book is Hispanic Education in the United States: Raíces y Alas (Rowen and Littlefield, 2001).

Michael D. Guerrero is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction at The University of Texas at Austin. His research examines issues such as the academic Spanish language proficiency of bilingual education teachers, Spanish literacy development of children, and language testing. A recent publication is “The unified validity of the Four Skills Exam: Applying Messick’s framework.” Language Testing, 2000, 17, 397–421.
Ignacio Higareda is a doctoral candidate in Education at the University of Southern California. His research interests focus on sociocultural influences on academic achievement for English language learners. He has worked on research projects involving symbolic representation of objects in hearing and deaf preschoolers’ collaborative play, and is investigating the impact of paraeducators’ strategies and funds of knowledge during instruction with language minority students.

Martha Menchaca is Professor of Anthropology at The University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests are in the field of historical and legal anthropology. She is the author of *The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California* (University of Texas Press, 1995), which won two coveted awards (CHOICE “Outstanding Academic Book,” 1995; Gustavus Meyers Award, 1996). Dr. Menchaca’s most recent book is *Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (University of Texas Press, 2001).

Robert P. Moreno is Associate Professor of Child and Family Studies at Syracuse University. His research examines familial and cultural influences on children’s learning and academic achievement among Latinos and low-income families. He is a recent recipient of the National Academy of Education/Spencer Fellowship for his work on effective everyday instruction of Mexican American mothers with their preschool children. A recent publication is “Teaching practices of Mexican American mothers with everyday and school related tasks.” *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 2000, 15, 613–631.

Arthur Pearl is Professor Emeritus of Education, University of California, Santa Cruz. His primary research focus is on structural determinants of “disadvantaged/at risk,” and implementing democratic education into classroom practices. One of his many publications is “Cultural and accumulated environmental deficit models” (in R.R.Valencia [Ed.], *The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice*, pp. 132–159, Falmer Press, 1997). Dr. Pearl’s most recent book (with T.Knight) is *The Democratic Classroom: Theory to Guide Educational Practice* (Hampton Press, 1999).

Gloria M. Rodríguez is Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at the California State University, Hayward. In addition to Chicano/Latino education issues, Dr. Rodríguez is also a specialist in school finance with a focus on equity issues. Her current research focuses on local school leaders’ conceptualizations of equity in resource allocation in Texas and California. She serves on the Board of Directors for the American Education Finance Association. A recent publication is “Education finance developments in the United States: The influence of ‘deficit model’ views of low-income children and communities of color on school finance formulas and policy” (in *In Search of a More Equitable and Efficient Education System: The State of the States and Provinces*, pp. 159–163, American Educational Research Association, Fiscal Issues, Policy, and Education Finance Special Interest Group, Monograph, August, 2001).

Robert Rueda is a Professor in the Division of Learning and Instruction at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. His research focuses on the sociocultural basis of learning and instruction with a focus on academic achievement (especially reading) and the acquisition and uses of literacy with English language learners in at-risk contexts and students with mild learning handicaps. A recent publication (with A.Arzubiaga and L.Monzo) is “Family matters related to the reading

**Russell W. Rumberger** is Professor, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Director of the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. His research focuses on the education of disadvantaged students in such areas as school dropouts, student mobility, and school segregation. His research has appeared in such journals as *Economics of Education Review, Sociology of Education*, and *American Educational Research Journal*. A recent publication by Dr. Rumberger is “The distribution of dropout and turnover rates among urban and suburban high schools.” *Sociology of Education*, 2000, 73, 39–67.

**Jesús Salazar** is a doctoral student at the University of Southern California School of Education. His research interests include studying early literacy development and identifying effective English language learner programs. He has been working 15 years with the Program Evaluation and Research Branch at the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). He is responsible for evaluating the achievement outcomes and English proficiency gains of LAUSD’s 315,000 English language learners.

**Moises F. Salinas** is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Central Connecticut State University. His research focuses on the effects of stereotypes on academic performance, and reducing the performance gap between minorities and non-minorities. Dr. Salinas is currently completing a book about education, stereotypes, and affirmative action. A recent publication (with J. Aronson, C. M. Steele, and M. J. Lustina) is “The effect of stereotype threat on the standardized test performance of college students” (in E. Aronson [Ed.], *Readings About the Social Animal* [8th ed.], pp. 415–430, Worth Publishers, 1999).

**Bruno J. Villarreal** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin. His research interests are on factors that contribute to the successful identification and placement of English language learners in programs for the gifted/talented. He is currently working as a research assistant on a language test development project for bilingual Latino children.

**Sofia Villenas** is Assistant Professor of Education, Culture and Society at the University of Utah. In working with Latina mothers in North Carolina, her research centers on investigating Latino home and community education within the dynamics of racial/cultural community politics. She is co-editor (with L. Parker and D. Deyhle) of *Race Is...Race Isn’t: Critical Race Theory and Qualitative Studies in Education* (Westview Press, 1999).

**Ann-Marie Wiese** is Assistant Professor of Education at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She has published in the area of bilingual education policy, and has most recently completed her dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, focusing on the local implementation of bilingual education policy in three elementary teachers’ classrooms. A recent publication (with E. E. García) is “The bilingual education act: Language minority students and U.S. federal educational policy.” *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 2001, 4, 229–248.
The United States of America, the most powerful country in the world, with an amazing array of research universities, is experiencing a historic change in its population with the emergence of a group, Chicanos/other Latinos, currently 35.3 million strong based on 2000 U.S. Census data, and growing at a dramatic rate. If this group were a nation unto itself, it would rank 34th among the world’s 50 most populous countries. Yet Chicanos/other Latinos are, for the most part, terribly isolated and in trouble, both in education and in access to decent jobs. Although Chicanos/other Latinos have been recognized as the nation’s largest minority in the 2000 U.S. Census, they face a threatened future, and society faces serious risks. Chicanos—the subject of this book—comprise, by far, the largest share of the Latino population, experience particularly acute educational problems, and are concentrated in states (e.g. California and Texas) that have witnessed some of the most negative policy changes in recent years.

It seems reasonable to think that there would be an urgent mobilization of research and many constructive policy initiatives to help develop the potential of this huge and growing community and to avoid the creation of an isolated, locked-out, and socially distressed population—issues so obviously significant to the nation’s future—but that has not been so. There has been little constructive work in the conservative era of the last quarter century. In fact, many of the policies intended to produce educational opportunity—bilingual education, desegregation, affirmative action in college admissions, expansion of the minority teaching force, multiethnic curriculum, and other policies are under attack or abandoned in the states where the Chicano/other Latino population is most concentrated. Scholarship has been far too limited. The dropout crisis has not been addressed, and testing reforms threaten to make a bad situation worse.

For years, I have relied on the first edition of *Chicano School Failure and Success* to introduce my students to a deeply important set of issues, and a remarkable group of Chicano/ Latino as well as White scholars. It has had a deep impact. The arrival of a new, expanded, and updated version reporting many more research findings, theories of educational change, and recommendations for policy changes is a major event. This is a book that will help researchers, teachers and educational leaders, policymakers, and students across the country understand educational questions of great consequence to the nation’s future.

*Dr. Gary Orfield, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard University*
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To my dear wife, Marta, I extend my deep affection and gratitude for your great support while I worked on the book. And, as always, I thank Carlos and Juan, my twin boys, who were so patient and supportive while Daddy did his writing. You’re the best sons a father could have.
Richard R. Valencia is Professor of Educational Psychology and Faculty Associate at the Center for Mexican American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin. His area of scholarly specialization is racial/ethnic minority education, with a particular focus on Mexican Americans (educational history; testing/assessment issues; social thought; demographic trends; educational litigation; factors of intellectual/academic test performance; educational policy). He is the author/editor of several books, including the first edition of Chicano School Failure and Success (Falmer Press, 1991), which won an “Outstanding Academic Book” award (selected by CHOICE, 1993). He is also the editor of The Evolution of Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice (Falmer Press, 1997). His most recent book (with L.A. Suzuki) is Intelligence Testing and Minority Students: Foundations, Performance Factors, and Assessment Issues (Sage, 2001). Dr. Valencia’s recent honors include the 2001 Distinguished Career Contribution Award, awarded by the American Educational Research Association (Committee for Scholars of Color in Education), and the 2001 Distinguished Faculty Award bestowed by the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education.
Introduction

It has been over a decade since the publication of the first edition of *Chicano School Failure and Success*. Much has transpired in the educational arena in the last ten-plus years affecting Chicano students. Some of these developments have been positive, some negative. Regarding the former, there have been important scholarly publications on Chicano schooling that have enhanced our knowledge base (e.g., Donato, 1997; Garcia, 2001; Moreno, 1999; San Miguel and Valencia, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). Another significant development was the 2002 launching of the *Journal of Latinos and Education*, a long overdue scholarly venture.

With respect to negative developments, there have been a number of issues that do not bode well for Chicano students—for example, the growing anti-bilingual education and antiaffirmative action movements (San Miguel and Valencia, 1998), the demise of school desegregation (Orfield, 2001), the expansion of high-stakes testing (Valencia and Bernal, 2000), and the resurgence of deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997). In the 1998 issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*, San Miguel and Valencia asserted that due to a trilogy of oppressive Propositions passed in California and the adverse effects of the Hopwood case in Texas, “Mexican Americans [in California and Texas] face an educational crisis of unprecedented magnitude in the history of racial/ethnic minority education” (p. 354).

With both the positive and negative developments in mind, the contributors of this second edition offer updated, comprehensive, state-of-the-art coverages of their respective chapters. As was the focus of the first edition, the second edition explores—from various perspectives—the school failure and success of Chicano students, with particular emphasis on elementary and secondary education. By its very nature, school failure among Chicanos is a complex and multidimensional construct. Thus, to understand the factors and processes of such low academic achievement (and academic enhancement as well), it is necessary to study the educational problems, research findings, and policy/reform implications through various windows and perspectives. As seen in the present volume, the contributors’ research specializations range widely—cultural anthropology, bilingual education, educational history, special education, educational psychology, educational policy, child and family studies, tests and measurement, educational anthropology, school dropouts, and the political economy of education. Given the broad nature of schooling problems experienced by Chicano students, it is necessary to cast a wide scholarly net to capture the complexities of the issues and the resultant research findings and policy implications. I believe that understanding the educational plight and improvement of schooling for Chicanos benefits greatly from having such interdisciplinary teams.

The content and structure of the second edition deviates somewhat from the first edition of *Chicano School Failure and Success*. First, in several chapters, there is a much closer examination of schooling in the Southwest region of the U.S. (Arizona, California,
Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas), home to 75 percent of the nation’s Mexican American population. Second, the population growth of the Chicano people and the resultant educational implications are more fully examined. The attendant question here is: As the Chicano population dramatically grows, will its educational status commensurately increase, or will the Chicano people’s quest for educational equality remain elusive? Third, there are several chapters covering new material. These include sustained coverage of the Chicano/Latino population growth (Chapter 2), Chicano/Latino critical ethnography of education (Chapter 7), and Chicano parental involvement in their children’s schooling (Chapter 8). Furthermore, I can assure the reader that the remaining chapters are thorough updates of material covered in the first edition. As editor of this volume, I sought to produce a book that was intended to be authoritative, comprehensive in scope, and would serve as a valuable reference text. I believe that this goal has been met. This is evidenced by the solid analyses and syntheses of the respective chapters and by the sheer number of references (1,340 compared to 976 references in the first edition). Fourth, the contributor list has undergone considerable change, thus allowing fresh perspectives. Of the 12 authors who contributed to the first edition, eight provide chapters for the second edition; there are ten new contributors. In sum, my team of contributors consists of senior scholars of national reputation, junior scholars whose stars are rising, and several outstanding Ph.D. candidates. I feel that I have assembled a team of colleagues who are among the most accomplished and promising scholars in writings and research on the Chicano schooling experience.

The book consists of five parts. In Part I, “Current realities of the Chicano schooling experience,” there are four chapters. Chapter 1 ("The plight of Chicano students: an overview of schooling conditions and outcomes"), written by Richard Valencia, examines 15 schooling conditions and outcomes germane to Chicano students (e.g., segregation; school financing; teacher-student interactions; high-stakes testing). This chapter provides a foundation for the remainder of the book. Chapter 2 ("The explosive growth of the Chicano/Latino population: educational implications"), also written by Valencia, discusses the extraordinary growth of the Mexican American people, as well as other Latino groups. Based on 2000 U.S. Census data, the Chicano/Latino sector experienced the greatest increase from 1990 to 2000 (in both percentage rate and absolute numbers) of any other racial/ethnic group in the country. Also, Chicanos/Latinos eclipsed African Americans in the 2000 Census to become the nation’s largest minority group. Valencia provides rich data on the remarkable growth of Chicanos/Latinos and concludes the chapter by discussing a number of implications of such growth for education. In Chapter 3 ("Segregation, desegregation, and integration of Chicano students: old and new realities"), Richard Valencia, Martha Menchaca, and Rubén Donato provide a comprehensive update of the isolation of Chicano students. The authors cover the history of school segregation, early desegregation litigation, the prevalence of segregation and its adverse effects on Chicanos, contemporary issues (with a focus on resegregation), and suggestions for integration. One of the most disturbing trends discussed by Valencia et al. is that Chicano students are presently maintaining a pattern of hypersegregation that was first reported in the first edition of this book. Chapter 4 ("Chicano dropouts: an update of research and policy issues") is written by Russell Rumberger and Gloria Rodriguez. The authors cover one of the most significant schooling outcomes faced by many Chicano