

La Voz de South Austin

Informando a la comunidad
en Austin, Texas

78704

Free
Gratis

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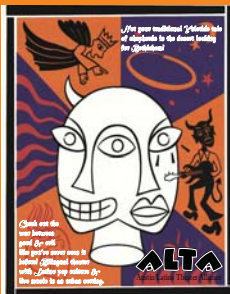
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“I Would Die for Johnston High School”



Rocky Medrano
Class of 1964

ABOVE: Johnston High School Alumni, Rocky Medrano gesturing at a recent high school redesign meeting in the library

“I would die for Johnston High School,” so said **Rocky Medrano**, a class of 1964 alumni of **Johnston High School** at a November 2nd meeting of **Campus Advisory Council (CAC)**.

Mr. Medrano was one of several **Johnston** alumni in attendance at this CAC meeting to find out what was in store for the school given all the talk and plans about high school redesign. Some of those in attendance came to the meeting because they had heard rumors that **Johnston** was going to close.

Mr. Medrano, who has had a career in boxing and served as a constable in **Travis County** stated that he and other members of the alumni association wanted to make sure that everything possible was being done to keep **Johnston High School** open and functioning.

Dr. Celina Estrada who chaired the meeting assured all those present that the school was not going to close. She stated that the school will continue to keep the same colors and the same mascot. She did say that part of the plan for

Johnston High School was the development of the academies and the elimination of her position of chief academic officer.

In addition to the concerns of **Mr. Medrano**, **Susana Almanza** and others raised several questions about the state of **Texas’** ability to come in and take over. **Dr. Molina**, a monitor with the **Texas Education Agency** and another individual in the audience made the point that the state has already taken over as evidenced by the fact that they have been assigned to monitor **Johnston**.

A recent front page story in the **Austin American Statesman** highlighted many of the challenges the school is facing as it figures out how transform itself from an academically unacceptable school into a higher performing one.

As the **Texas Education Agency** continues to watch **Johnston High School** it is important the everyone who cares about the future of this school make contact with the alumni association or school and offer to help out before it is too late.

People in the News



Dr. Juan Sanchez Hosts NCLR Region Meeting In Austin

Dr. Juan Sanchez, President of the Southwest Key Program, Inc. hosted the National Council of La Raza Regional Affiliates meeting in Austin, Texas on November 15th, 2006.

Among the affiliates present were, The Raul Yzaguirre Charter School from Houston, Texas, Community Health Development and Community Council of Southwest Texas both from Uvalde, Texas, Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Inc. from El Paso, Texas, Avenida Guadalupe Association from San Antonio, Texas, American Youth Works from Austin and the Texas Migrant Council from Laredo, Texas.

Joining these organizations in their day long meeting was the President of the National Council of La Raza, Janet Murguía from Washington, D.C. The purpose of the gathering was to bring everyone up to date on

each others activities and plan strategies for the coming year. Murguía explained to those present how even at the national level there is a whole of new thinking going on about how to organize and run advocacy based organizations.



Muere Raúl Velasco de Siempre en Domingo

El conductor de televisión Raúl Velasco falleció el domingo en su lecho de enfermo rodeado por su familia, informó la cadena de televisión Televisa en su portal de internet.

Velasco condujo "Siempre en Domingo" durante 29 años (1969-1998), una emisión en la que nacieron varias de las grandes estrellas musicales latinoamericanas.

El presentador del programa de variedades "Siempre en Domingo", que se transmitió durante varios años en muchos países de América Latina, murió a los 73 años de edad. "Se cerró

un capítulo más en la historia de la televisión mexicana", con el deceso de Velasco el domingo a las 7:45 horas, "luego de una intensa lucha contra distintos padecimientos", señaló la breve nota.

La muerte de Velasco se adelantó apenas por unas horas a la transmisión de un especial de televisión de cuatro horas en su honor, llamado "Aún hay más: Homenaje a Raúl Velasco" y programado para las 18:30 horas del domingo. El especial fue grabado a mediados de octubre en Acapulco.



Bill Richardson Says he is running the Presidency of the United States

Bill Richardson is running for President of the United States. He recently told FOX News, "I'm running. I've dealt with issues that are very important to the nation's security, immigration and energy." Get ready to hear more from Richardson's camp.



Luis Orozco Wins 2006 Pat Dobbs Leadership Award

(Austin) Lanier High School student Luis Orozco was honored at a dinner and reception at the Hilton Hotel in Austin, Texas as the winner of the 2006 Pat Dobbs Student Leadership Award. Together with a certificate, he was given a scholarship check for \$1,000.00 dollars.

Orozco, who is originally from Michoacan, Mexico, was one of the student leaders who organized the walkout at his high school in March of this year to protest the pending legislation in Congress that he believed would adversely affect his family and others. He continues to remain active and is currently participating in the Social Justice Saturday School at the University of Texas at Austin and works part-time for Austin Voices for Education and Youth. He looks forward to becoming a lawyer some day and returning to Mexico.



Salinas Working to Educate People on Environmental Racism

Iris Salinas, an undergraduate at The University of Texas at Austin is mother, works two jobs and still makes time to be involved in the community. Her speciality is education and environmental racism. Salinas believes it is no coincidence that the health problems of some groups of people are tied to the economic decisions of business who choose to look the other way when it comes to industrial production.

She is passionate about the need to educate people about the growing number of cancer related cases that are showing up around the state of Texas. Salinas recently spoke at the Social Justice Saturday School in Austin about her work and invited students to think seriously about the health of their own families.

Quality Vision Eyewear

<p>2 pares de lentes sencillos, por sólo:</p> <h3 style="font-size: 2em;">\$89</h3>	<p>Especial para la Navidad</p> <p>Marco, lentes y transición para visió sencilla</p> <h3 style="font-size: 2em;">\$99</h3>	<p>Examen de los ojos</p> <h3 style="font-size: 2em;">\$25.00</h3>
<p>Hablamos Español</p> <p>2800 S. IH-35) salida en Oltorf Lunes a Viernes 8:30am hasta 5:30pm Sábado de las 10am hasta las 3:00pm</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Su amigo el oftalmólogo Valentino Luna, con gusto lo atenderá</p> <h2 style="font-size: 1.5em;">462-0001</h2>		

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78704

Offense vs. Defense:

Why La Raza Fails to Score Points in the Game of Political Change

Editorial



Alfredo R. Santos c/s
Editor and Publisher

Here we are in the year 2006, and as community activists we are still allowing others to define and frame the public policy debates that impact *La Raza*.

By now you have heard the news: The City Council of **Farmers Branch, Texas** has passed a series of ordinances (local laws) designed to push out immigrants who cannot produce documents that show they are in the United States legally.

Not too long ago, the City Council of **Hazleton, Pennsylvania** did the same thing. Among the ordinances: fines for landlords who rent to people without proper documents, revocation of business licenses to those who engage in commerce with people who cannot produce documents showing they can be in the US.

On Sunday (11-19-06) the popular television program **60 Minutes** ran as its lead story a piece about **Hazleton, Penn.** In the *Dallas Morning News* (11-19-06) there was a front page story about immigrants who live and work in **Cactus, Texas** at the **Swift Meat Company**.

Yes, the publicity and attention generated from these stories serves to inform and en-

lighten people. And, as in years past, Latino community activists who happen to be watching the nightly news will proclaim to be incensed and insulted.

Some of them will rush to the scene with the intention of lending support. Others will fire off angry comments on the internet or in a letter to the editor.

While these responses by community activists and others are carried out in the spirit of wanting to help or address a perceived injustice, they are in essence nothing but reactions. They are responses to the actions of others who have set and defined the tone of a debate or public policy.

What is wrong with this? I'll tell you what is wrong. When you find yourself reacting to attacks or declarations of others you are playing defense. And as we know from the game of football, when you play defense you only get to put points on the board if the other side fumbles or is intercepted.

Is it necessary to play defense? Yes it is. Sometimes you find yourself surprised or out smarted by the opposition and defense is your only option. . . at the time. My principal com-

plaint about community activists who say they are about political and social change is that they play too much defense and do not invest enough time in setting the political and social agenda in their respective communities.

When you stop and thinking about the serious gains people of color have made over the years, it has been the result of stepping up and challenging the status quo, not reacting to it. When you stop and think about what got **Cesar Chavez** mileage in the farmworkers movement it wasn't the labor strikes (defense) as much as it was the boycotts. (offense) When you reflect on the actions of **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, it was the **Montgomery** bus boycott (offense) that helped to put the civil rights movement front and center.

Just this year, the immigrant marches shocked the hell out of many people. Very few people thought that *La Raza* had the capacity to still take to the streets in the United States.

Now you might be saying, well these marches, and everything **Cesar Chavez** and **Martin Luther King, Jr.** did were in essence a "reaction." And you

would be correct. They were responding to institutional conditions and economic practices that had gone on for many years. What I am talking about here is the "knee jerk reactions" that some people try and pass off in the name of being concerned or angry.

Political and social change is the product of setting an agenda, putting the resources behind it to insure its progress and making sacrifices to see it succeed. Today in the United States of America, **Latinos** and are not taken seriously because it is believed that we are not organized.

There are many who believe that **Latinos** can be pitted one against the other and *solitos se cortan*. We need to learn how to play offense *porque si no, se nos van a pasar otros 300 años en las rodillas pidiendo limosna*. We need to look and think strategically.

Ciro Rodriguez Beats Henry Bonilla

In a shocking election night finish, former congressman **Ciro D. Rodriguez** beat 7 term incumbent congressman **Henry Bonilla** in a run-off election on December 12, 2006.

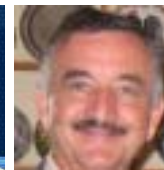
Many people had told **Ciro**, forget it, you don't have a chance against **Bonilla**. He has too much money. He has too much organization. But **Rodriguez** wouldn't listen. **Terco**, stubborn, as we say in Spanish, he kept on with this idea that he could somehow return to **Washington** and work

for the people.

At around 9:00pm on Tuesday night **Ciro D. Rodriguez** got what he wanted. The telephone was ringing and **Henry Bonilla** was on the line. He was calling to concede defeat in the **23rd Congressional District**. The vote was coming in and he was too far behind to catch up. There were still 40 voting boxes that had yet to be counted, but mathematically there were not enough votes in them to make a difference. For the first time in his political career, defeat



Bonilla



Rodriguez

was indeed knocking on the door of **Henry Bonilla**.

After everything was said and done, the final vote was 38,247 for **Rodriguez** to 32,165 for **Bonilla**. **Rodriguez** even won the early vote by 2000 votes.

So now **Ciro Rodriguez** has to deal with a bunch of new "friends" who will come knocking at his door to wish him well. "Friends" who before wouldn't return his phone calls, friends who before wouldn't write him a check for a campaign donation. *Ahora si, todos quieren ser amigo de **Ciro Rodriguez***. That's the way politics is. Lose an election y no te conocen. Win an election y todos te dicen que they were there for you from the beginning.

Harvard Graduate School of Education to Provide Three Years of Funding for All Doctoral Students

The Dean of the **Harvard Graduate School of Education**, **Kathleen McCartney** announced that, as part of a multi-year doctoral funding opportunity, **HGSE** has guaranteed to pay full tuition and health fees for all doctoral students through the end of the third year. The announcement, made at a meeting of doctoral students in **Askwith Hall**, left some students crying and others shaking their heads in stunned disbelief.

The new funding will begin next semester. Over the course of three years, doctoral students could save an estimated \$88,000. The generosity of donors and new gifts to the school provided for this multi-year doctoral funding. "As dean, one of my top priorities has been to secure more funding for financial aid and fellowships," said **McCartney**. "Last year, we initiated the **Urban Scholars Fellowship** program for master's students, and this year we will begin multi-year fellowships for all doctoral students. We are grateful to our donors and to the president's office for their help. The reaction to the

announcement about our doctoral fellowships from students and alumni alike has been most heartening to the HGSE faculty. This is but a first step—we have ambitious financial aid goals for the future."

The change became possible because **HGSE** administrators recognized the importance of providing this funding. "Pursuing a doctorate is a big challenge on many levels. The work is demanding, the process of becoming an independent scholar is rigorous. And unlike some advanced degrees, the remuneration that awaits you at the end of this process is sometimes less than ideal (and sometimes less than you made before you started the program)," said **James Stiles**, associate dean for degree programs. "We want our doctoral students to focus more on what they are learning and researching and less on how they are going to pay our tuition. We still have a way to go to match what Harvard's other schools can offer, but this is a huge step for **HGSE** and more importantly for its students."

New Book Announcement

The **2007 Directory of 100 - A Guide to Community Based Latino Organizations in Austin, Texas** will be available January 20, 2007. This directory contains the most up to date listing of community based organizations, their contact numbers, year of founding, officers, meeting times and number of members. To reserve your copy, send \$24.95 to: **MACED P.O. Box 19457 Austin, Texas 78744**

This directory is a project of the Mexican American Center for Community and Economic Development www.mexicanamericancenter.com

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Coming from a Hispanic background, I know it can be hard for some students to enroll in a high school that seems far from their reach because they feel like they don't belong and [would] stand out in the crowd. In my search for a high school that would please me, the Liberal Arts and Science Academy stood out to me. This was not only because of its rigorous courses, but also for everything else it had to offer.

-Karla Berrones, sophomore



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-Rene Sanchez, principal



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High School Redesign

¿Qué es eso? What's That?

by
Alfredo Rodriguez Santos c/s

On November 14th, 2006 the **Austin Independent School District** announced it was receiving 15.6 million dollars from the **Bill and Melinda Gates** and the **Susan and Michael Dell Foundations** to continuing working on high school redesign. The district has already received **Gates** money in the form of a planning grant to start the process of high school redesign.

But what exactly is high school redesign? How does it work? Who gets to define what constitutes high school redesign? Here are some thoughts to consider. First, is high school redesign something new? The answer is no. Is change in the public schools new? Again, the answer is no. Have the public schools in **Texas** struggled at times to "get it right?" Here the answer is yes. Starting in reverse order are several examples of past efforts to improve schools in **Texas**.

Rigor

Before **President Bush** left for **Washington, D.C.** in 2000, he was the **Governor of Texas**. He supported the idea that there must be clear standards about what a student should know before being allowed to move on to the next grade level. He supported other ways of delivering a public education and came out for charter schools. **Governor Bush** also believed that school vouchers should be considered where failing schools were producing failing children. Would these efforts qualify as redesign efforts? I believe they would. **Governor Bush** was essentially talking about rigor.

Results

In 1982, **Ross Perot** was asked by then **Governor Bill Clements** to come and help improve the quality of public education in **Texas**. **Perot** answered the call and led the legislative efforts that resulted in the "No Pass, No Play" law. He also played a key role in creating an educational system in **Texas** that according to **Dr. Linda McNeil** from **Rice University**, shifted public oversight of the education profession toward a business-controlled management accountability



ABOVE: Dr. Forgiione announces the high school redesign grants on November 14th. Principals from various Austin ISD schools are standing behind him.

system. Would these changes qualify as examples of efforts to redesign public education? A lot of people would answer in the affirmative. **Ross Perot** was in essence talking about results.

Relevance

During the years of the **Chicano Movement** from 1966 to 1978, there were no less than 39 school walkouts in **Texas**. Students who participated in these acts of civil disobedience included in their list of demands, that they be taught about the societal contributions of Mexican Americans. They demanded the schools to hire more Spanish speaking counselors and teachers and that books be placed in the library that discussed the Mexican American experience. The students were in essence asking that the schools be redesigned, that education be made relevant.

Relationships

On June 15, 1948, **LULAC** (League of United Latin American Citizens) filed suit against the **Bastrop Independent School District** and three other districts. (*Delgado vs. Bastrop ISD*.) **Minerva Delgado** and twenty other Mexican-American parents, were charging that the segregation of Mexican children from other white races was in violation of the

law. **Judge Ben H. Rice** of the **United States District Court, Western District of Texas**, agreed and ordered the cessation of this separation by September 1949. The students and parents of this era were talking about relationships.

We could go back further in time but by now you get the point, educational change, and the reinvention of schools is not something new.

What is new is the direction from where change is coming. In the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s, it was coming from the bottom up. Students, parents and community activists were demanding access to the educational system. In **Texas** they were demanding changes they believed would improve the plight of the Mexican American.

In the 1980s and beyond, educational change seems to be coming from the top down. More specifically, the changes schools are being asked to make seem to be in response to the business community's insistence that the schools produce a workforce that can at least count and give correct change. These two directions of change carry serious public policy implications not only for the students enrolled in the public but also for "the business of schooling" that is conducted in the name of the children.

Continued on page 10

Dr. Pat Forgione, Jr. Super

“We have got to be

We have got to show America that invest

On November 10th, 2006, The University of Texas at Austin inaugurated the Texas Center for Educational Policy under the director of Dr. Angela Valenzuela. This new research center is committed to equity and excellence in PK -16 education.

As part of the inaugural activities a convening was held titled College Readiness and Student Success. Among the many speakers was Dr. Pat Forgione, Jr., Superintendent of the Austin Independent School District. The following transcript contains the remarks he shared with the audience on this historic day.

Good morning and thank you for this kind invitation. I think it wonderful to be here as we inaugurate a wonderful capacity for the state of Texas. The academy, the university must have that independent voice to raise those questions so we can be accountable to the children and taxpayers of this state. Angela, I hope this is going to be the first of many collaborations we can on together.

You should have two handouts in front of you. I am sorry I'm not a power point guy. I have outlined some education data I want to share with you and I want to posit a bold proposition that not only should elementary and secondary public schools, but also higher education institutions must change their core practices of teaching and learning if they are going to retain and successfully graduate the future populations of this state.

Now I want to share a couple of the bold values we have and see if in your coursework you're seeing this kind of teaching because you must teach and not in a lecture format, but in a deep way so students can really go to those next levels.

The final point I want to talk about is high school redesign. If I don't get there, next week you are going to hear a major announcement of a foundation that wants to invest in our district. And if that happens I think it will give you a real indication of how serious we are about rigor, relationships, relevance and results.

Because we do not have a research base to guide high school



ABOVE: Dr. Pat Forgione speaking at the Inaugural Convening of Texas Center for Educational Policy. Dr. Angela Valenzuela, the director of the new center is seated to his right.

reform. We do not. We have an elementary research base. We know how to do elementary, but we don't know how to do middle or high school. And that's clear across this country and we need your help and the heart of that is English language learners.

We believe in bilingual education in Austin: cognitive, academic Spanish and cognitive academic English for all children. And if you're really going to do that, you are going to teach in profound ways.

We have been having an African American men and boys conference every month since June. There is one in November, December, January thru May. And every month we are talking about these deep issues because we must as a community understand who we are and address those issues. And it isn't one size fits all. And that is why in fact we created an Hispanic Task Force on Quality of Life which the city didn't have to go with the African

American (Task Force). But let's hold that for a subsequent discussion because I welcome continuing that discussion.

As I said earlier there are two handouts. If you go to the first page you see something called the trajectory. How many people were in Austin 25 years ago? Please raise your hand. We are not the same place folks. Look at these data. Seven out of ten are kids of color. Six out of ten are kids in poverty.

We're a poor school district on average in a wealthy community. But we are a poor school district and I am giving away a 133 million dollars and I am not against recapture. Robin Hood is not the problem. The problem is adequacy of funding. You have to put more water in the well to get it

out. But the key is we must be about all children. My board and I stand for that. I don't care where you are from in Texas, we are going to fight for resources for all children. But certainly urban complex environments are challenging.

Not on here (the handout) we have tripled the number of immigrants in five years. Tripled the number of immigrants! And they are not coming in at early childhood, they are coming in at middle and high school. And that is a different programming challenge than any of us have faced in years. So we are a "minority/majority/minority" in a majority poverty school district but we are on average a wealthy district.

Now if you go to page 2 and 3. This is the history of my administration. Page 2 has the TAAS data. Let's take African Americans, my most challenging population. In 1999, I inherited a district where 59% of African Americans passed the easier math test. In three years we went to 76%.

We went from a 31% gap to a 20 point gap. And I want to make a point. I got the best Anglos in this state. I'll take on any district. I'll take on Alamo ISD. So I am going

to have the greatest gap because I really have Anglos and middle class with me. The challenge is keeping them. And I like that gap cause I want to go to that gap, not the gap where they all go to private and charter schools. (Because) then you have a low standard.

So when you look at my Anglo scores on any of these pages, we are over 90%. Now what happens? In the middle of my tenure they didn't fire me they just said we are going to have new and harder test . . . and I wanted that test. It is called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

I have built 30 tests in my life and I'm going to purgatory for a long time.

Go to page 3 and look at page 3 and look at African Americans. We phased it in a little different Angela but here is what it really meant. If you applied that standard of the panel recommendation in the first year, we went from 76% the year before, down to 33%. I have built thirty tests in my life and I'm going to purgatory for a long time. It's like when you have the old NRT and every ten years they give you a new NRT . . . and you go down. There is no difference except this is the good stuff folks.

That job was open. But I said I want to do this (ASID) job because this is where the Lord's work is!

We want to double the difficulty of this test. And you can see we have now gone from one out of two African Americans . . . not good enough certainly. But the question is about continuous progress. When I came here I could have been the Ames ISD superintendent 8 years ago. That job was open. But I said I want to do this (ASID) job because this is where the Lord's work is . . .

Austin ISD Basic Data

Student Profile		
African American	10,833	13.5%
Asian	2,353	2.9%
Hispanic	44,517	55.4%
Native American	190	0.2%
White	22,533	28.0%
TOTAL	80,426	100.0%
School Profile		
Elementary Schools	74	
Middle Schools	17	
High Schools	12	
Special Campuses	8	
TOTAL	111	

Source: PEIMS (Public Education Information Management System)

Superintendent of Austin ISD "Be the shining star!"

Investment in urban public schools pays off

2005 Nation's Assessment of Educational Progress Mathematics 4th Grade Average Scale Scores for Hispanics

Austin	234
Charlotte	234
Houston	232
New York City	226
Boston	225
Nation	225
Large Central City	223
San Diego	222
Chicago	217
Los Angeles	216
District of Columbia	215

helping urban kids . . . kids in poverty. We have got to be the shining star. We have got to show America that investment in urban public schools pays off, and that is the challenge!

Go to the next page. This blew me away. **Dr. Uri Triesman** (from the Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin) put this together folks. I don't match districts. Look at the right hand column. Our Hispanic men and women in Austin in the 4th grade are number one in the country . . . 9 scale score points ahead of the national average!

Look at the African Americans, 8 scale score points (above the national average) second only to **Charlotte, North Carolina**. Then you can flip over and go to 8th grade. So folks, we may have a lot of challenges and we do . . . and we are making progress. But relatively speaking if you are a Hispanic young man in Austin, **James Coleman** you were wrong! Where you go to school matters! Remember, **Coleman** said it doesn't matter, it is the external effects. It does matter! A school district that is being aligned and focused can make a difference.

I would now like to shift to the second handout because I only

have about 6 more minutes. I have outlined here what I think are the 6 areas when I read over House Bill 1. Let's go over them briefly. Aligning high school exit and college readiness standards, expanding dual credit and AP (Advance Placement) opportunities, requiring 4 years of math and science, requiring the articulation and course redesign. And I am now going to focus on a few of these because I only have a few minutes.

Under the first one, aligning it, I really have to say to you all, why doesn't higher ed have any consistency in its standards? I've got a moving target I'm trying to hit. Every institution my kids apply to they don't have any accountability. That's not acceptable! We should have plenty of standards. That is the only way you get kids to go to excellence. You don't hide the ball. You make the ball very clear. And then the question is how do you do it . . . you need resources.

You have to invest in elementary, secondary and higher ed. On to the next one about dual credit, again what I worry about here, and I've got 52 dual credit courses with **ACC** (Austin Community College), but again, how do I know when you take that course you're really getting the standards, the **TEKS**, to take the exit test? Once you get that credit, you don't take another course. And that is why we have got to rely on higher ed.

I have worked in higher ed and there is no tougher constituency than that professor who has got that syllabus and isn't going to change or tell you how it aligns with anything. That is your job though, higher ed has to be at the table. You have got to have the political will to change not just elementary and secondary.

What about 4 years of math and science? This is a real challenge.

Let me give you some statistics. With the recent class we had that graduated, one out of two kids had four years of math, one out of three kids had four years of science. What would you expect? One out of four kids have both. So I am going from one out of four to four out of four. And all I ask is give me time to implement and give me resources to do it right.

The state board (is) meeting next week, and you need to make your voice heard. What they did in September was good. (increase standards). Ask them to stay with the September recommendations. I don't have time to get into it but it is a big issue. But we are committed to it folks.

You can't have these symbolic goals. You gotta deliver in my business. Look at the completion rates, look at the recommend plan. No one ever thought that we could have better than two out of three kids on the recommended plan. Well, they are! Our future is in these children.

What do students need to be successful in college?

Going over to the Pre-K and standardization, I just want to say to you, under this one, what do colleges require? What do students need to be successful in college? I think it's 21st century workplace that's changing the requirements. If you had the standards of my day, many of the kids would be well qualified and would be welcomed into higher ed. But today, we are realizing that the 21st century workplace is more



You can do that in higher ed and that would be a full strategy helping me with the push strategy. Higher ed has stood back there and said what . . . push to gain. I need you to sending signals to my kids because they listen. And if they drop that AP course in January you send them a letter, you're not getting into **A&M** or **UT** anymore.

I had six parents drop out of AP last January 'cause their kids were working too hard, or it might hurt their GPA. You've got to be at the table with clear signals. It's both of us push and a pull because we can't do it alone. You are very powerful in your messages.

The final two things I just want to say in concluding, we believe we are an effort-based, standards-based school district. We believe in the **TEKS** standards for all children. Go on our website and you'll see an instructional planning guide of 36 weeks for every course. We're also effort-based.

We believe effort creates intelligence and those people's notions of heredity and genetics . . .

We believe effort creates intelligence and those people's notions of heredity and genetics are wrong. The new cognitive literature says if you work hard and you have that help of the system and **Uri** showed that at **Berkeley** comparing the African Americans to the Chinese students, wondering why the African Americans. . . bright kids at **Berkeley**, imagine getting into Berkeley and not persisting . . . because they were isolated. You need study groups . . . you need learning teams.

So I want to ask you in higher ed, are you creating that? And just reading **Ed Gordon's** literature on supplemental education, we've got to help these kids. Too often we troll in the deep end because of the top ten percent and think they can make it. They can't. That's not fair. We are a better society than that.

I am not going to cover the high school redesign because of time limitations so I want to thank you for this opportunity to paint a picture. We know research is important, we understand our partnerships are important. The university's clear voice of independence and clarity is excellent and it needs to be re-enforced and I have confidence this center will move that ball forward. Thank you.

demanding so I think that's the issue. It's not that public schools have not been performing, it's that the bar is being moved up and it should be. That has to be taken into account because I've seen longitudinal studies that **John Stevens** help design and if you take that NAPE test, that little test we have given for forty years, that same the little test, you'll see that kids are doing better today than they did in 1970. But people don't want to admit that. That's the longitudinal data, not the nation's report card. We can talk about that at another time.

I want us to go down to the very last one. In the last one I tried to draw a little diagram because I am kind of a symbolic guy. Your college readiness should equal college entry, right? Well I'm doing the push strategy with four years of math and science. Where is your pull strategy? Where are you sending a message you can't get into **A&M** or Plan II or **UT** without four years of math?

Fotos en Pueblo

La Junta del Campus Advisory Council en Johnston High School



ABOVE: Parents and teachers listen to the options

BELOW: Susana Almanza asks for a clarification regarding the plans for Johnston High School.

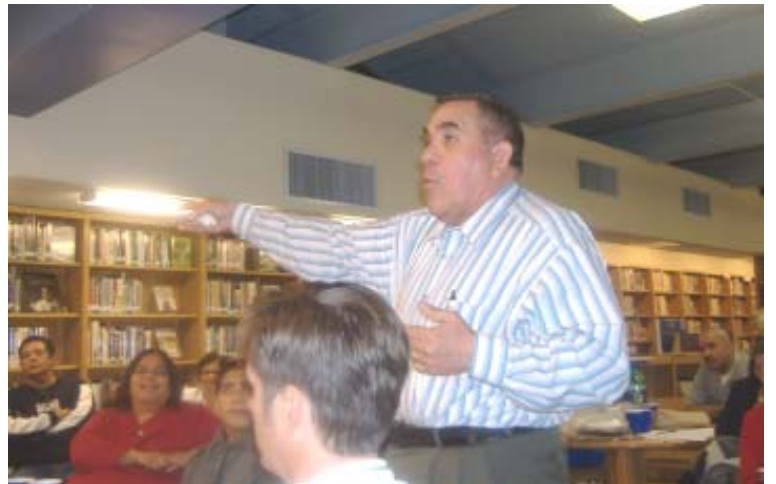


The Johnston High School Alumni Association meets monthly and encourages everyone who ever attended Johnston to please join. Call



RIGHT: Dr. Celina Estrada describes the steps Johnston High School will take to make sure every student is achieving academically.

BELOW: Mr. Medrano asks what is going to happen when all of these high school redesign plans begin to take effect at Johnston High School?



ABOVE: Dr. Molina answers a question during the meeting at the CAC meeting at Johnston.

Fotos en Pueblo

The Announcement of the Gates and Dell Grants



ABOVE: Various Austin Independent School District principals stand behind Dr. Pat Forgione as he announces the Gates and Dell grants.



ABOVE: AISD members and members of the community listen as Dr. Forgione discusses the significance of high school redesign.

The Editor of the New UT Newspaper



ABOVE: Stephanie Sanchez and Linda Cavazos are the new editors of a campus based newspapers that focuses on Latinos at The University of Texas at Austin.

Social Justice Saturday School Students Attended Election Night Festivities with Jim Coronado



High School Redesign

Today the education community is being romanced by the **Gates** and **Dell** foundations with their millions of dollars. We can speculate about their motives, but for now it is sufficient to accept the fact that **Bill Gates** and **Michael Dell**, both college dropouts, have made the decision to invest in public schools for the 21st century.

What is on the table in terms of high school redesign?

We of course welcome their commitment, their concern and their resources. But we should not be shy about asking important questions. For example: What is on the table in terms of high school redesign?

So far in **Austin, Texas** high school redesign includes creating smaller learning communities without knocking down any buildings, implementing student advisories (where students are advised and interact with one teacher for the entire four years), moving to block scheduling (instead of 55 minute periods students stay in a class for 90 minutes) and something called "instructional improvement." (Yes, I know this one sounds very ambiguous.)

What is not on the table for high school redesign?

Now let us ask what is not on the table? Here are some questions to consider: Is there any talk of reducing the number of days in the school year from the current 187? Is there any talk of extending the length of the school year? How about the

school day? Should it be longer? Should it be shorter? What about learning? Should we dare ask the serious question of who really wants to learn? Let's be honest, not every student who comes to school wants to learn. Some students are not "morning students." Some are really awake in the late afternoon. Should we continue to jeopardize the daily learning experiences of students by placing everyone in the same building at the same time? Will high school redesign address an issue like this one?

In the area of teaching, should we continue to allow teachers to come to school who have lost the spirit and desire for teaching? Are some teachers so burnt out with all of the paper work and other things that are required of them in today's public education setting that they are actually doing more harm than good? Should this issue be a part of the discussion of high school redesign?

why can't we pay teachers \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year?

How about teacher compensation? If our children are indeed our "most treasured possession", why can't we pay the people who spend the day with teachers \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year? Given the size of teacher turnover, should we think of a way to give teachers a paid sabbatical every five years? If we are going to redesign our schools, should we redesign the way we treat teachers?

Now to the parents, what role should parents play in the high school redesign process? How much say should parents have

in how schools are supposed to look and operate in the 21st century. What about discipline in the high schools? How much responsibility should parents accept for disruptive behavior that interrupts the learning process? Is this something that should be included in the discussions of high school redesign?

In 1930, in **Del Rio, Texas**, Mexican American parents sued the **Del Rio Independent School District** over the question of equal access to education. They believed segregation had no place in America and they were willing to fight. **Jesús Salvatierra**, the original plaintiff in the case, was trying to change public education for his children. Like many parents he wanted his children to have an education that was filled with rigor, results, relevance and relationships. **Mr. Salvatierra** was what we would call an involved parent.

As the **Austin** public schools are reinvented for the 21st century everyone needs to be a part of the discussion and implementation. The superintendent of the **Austin Independent School District** and his staff cannot do it by themselves . . . nor should they be expected to. The challenge of improving education in the 21st century requires the participation of everyone in the community.

Alfredo Rodriguez Santos c/s is a community activist now residing in Austin, Texas. He is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and currently works for Austin Voices for Education and Youth. His night time job is editor of this newspaper.

A Glimmer of Hope Foundation Austin is requesting proposals for funding from nonprofit organizations working with disadvantaged youth (25 years and under) in East and South East Austin. Other areas (zip codes) that are eligible include: 78751, 78752, 78757, 78758. For more information and grant guidelines, please visit www.aglimmerofhope.org or call (512) 328-9944. Deadline for submission is January 15th, 2007



Word Power

En Palabras Hay Poder

No one can ever argue in the name of education, that it is better to know less than it is to know more. Being bilingual or trilingual or multi-lingual is about being educated in the 21st century. We look forward to bringing our readers various word lists in each issue of **La Voz de Montopolis**

Nadie puede averiguar en el nombre de la educación que es mejor saber menos que saber más. Siendo bilingüe or trilingüe es parte de ser educado en el siglo 21. Esperamos traer cada mes a nuestros lectores de **La Voz de Montopolis** una lista de palabras en español con sus equivalentes en inglés.

Present	Regalo
Merry Christmas	Feliz Navidad
Joy	Alegria
Children	Niños
Family	Familia
Church	Iglesia
Christmas Tree	Arbol de Navidad
Santa Claus	Santa Claus
White	Blanco
Snow	Nieve
Cold	Frío
Coat	Abrigo
Singing	Cantando
Angel	Ángel
Reindeer	Reno
Ornament	Esfera
Wise Men	Reyes Magos
Blessing	Bendición



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LA CASA DE MI ABUELITA

By Marisa Cano

"Oh, Mija, I am impressed," exclaimed my mother as I pulled my pants over my oversized pampers for the first time, all by myself. It was Easter of 1988, I was just a month shy of turning two and we were having Easter supper at my Grandmother's house. And yes, I was the baby of the hour. How do I remember this? Well, I don't actually. It is on an old family videotape.

But I don't need any videotapes to remember life at my grandma's house. Even though I didn't grow up there, I did grow up there. You see, I was born and raised in **Austin, Texas**, thousands of miles away from my grandmother's house two-story house on 12th street in **Saginaw, Michigan**.

For months at a time, I was separated from the house, but for a few times of the year the house on 12th was my home. It was the place of good food, laughter and family. For those few weeks out of the year I truly knew what it was to have and be surrounded by family.

And I don't need any videotapes to remember her, my grandmother, either.

I have so many memories at that house, too many. But like I said, I don't need any videotapes to remember. And I don't need any videotapes to remember her, my grandmother, either. How can I forget her?

How many other grandmothers will tell you about your aunt's conception! She was silly sometimes, but she was the family's rock and center. She cooked good, she smelled good, she was good. She took care of everyone and somehow had a way of making everyone feel special. Sometimes this was by cooking for them, by talking with them or by giving them a precious gift. As for me, I was one of the ones who got to hear her

stories. She told me about a lot of things — her life, her pains, her disappointments and her dreams — and through these stories I felt I had a better idea of where she came from, where I came from. I loved her for that. I love her for that. I always said that one day I was going to go to **Michigan** by myself and that I was going to stay and visit her for two weeks. Then she could tell me



more stories and teach me how to cook. But I never did get to take that trip.

On Aug. 20, 2004, my world came crashing down when the morning before I was to move into my dorm my freshman year, my mother called and informed me that my grandma wasn't doing so well. By the time I got home that afternoon, she was already gone. Two days later, when I should have been meeting my floormates and celebrating my new college life, I was on a plane to **Michigan** and saying good-bye to one of the people I most adored.

That weekend was a blur. I don't think I'd ever cried as much as I did that weekend.

That weekend was a blur. I don't think I'd ever cried as much as I did that weekend. But once the funeral was over, I returned to Austin and tried to continue with my life. I knew that's what she would have wanted. As time went on, I hurt less and the wound of emptiness I felt, though never to be whole again, began to heal. Until last month.

My mother returned home from one of another trips back to **Michigan**. She'd been going back every few months to work with her brothers and sisters on all the legal matters, so this was not out of the ordinary and like always, she brought more things home with her from the old 12th Street house. But this time was different. This time, she informed me that the house would be put up for sale this coming spring.

My heart dropped. All of the memories came flooding back. That house is everything to me. It is family reunions, weddings, graduations, birthdays, holidays. It is late night talks on the front porch, family picnics in the back yard, mariachi serenades. It is **Selena** look-alike contests; hide and go seek; all-night conversation with my cousins; goofing off with my aunts in the kitchen; yelling at someone to get out of the bathroom; seeing my mother smile. It is laughter, my childhood, life, death and everything in between.

The house is my grandmother.

How can I say good-bye to everything it stands for? How can I not be upset that the house my mother grew up in, that I grew up in, will no longer be ours? How can I not mourn the fact that my unborn children will never know what it means to be at the center of our family? How can I not be upset that this is one other part of me, of my family that my children will never know and never understand—that once the house is gone, they will never know her.

The chances of my going back to **Michigan** are **Michigan** before the house is sold are slim to none. Upon the news, I realized I will never step foot inside that

house again. I will never see the Virgin statue in the living room, the *recuerdos* and knick-knacks in the kitchen, the pictures on the wall, hot food on the table. None of it. I felt angry.

Maybe it's better to remember the house just the way it was, before she passed away,

But then I got to thinking that, maybe, it's better this way. Maybe it's better to remember the house just the way it was, before she passed away, before it was cleaned out, when it was full of life and everything hers. When it was her.

I've been looking a lot in the mirror lately and slowly I am beginning to see her, and not just in the hips. I see her in my bluntness, my goofiness, my overshares, my tears, my compassion, my pain, my patience, my honesty, my love for family, my sincerity and in my tireless ambition. And as much as it upsets me that my children will never know her or the house, I came to realize something: *I am her*. And for my children, I will be that house.

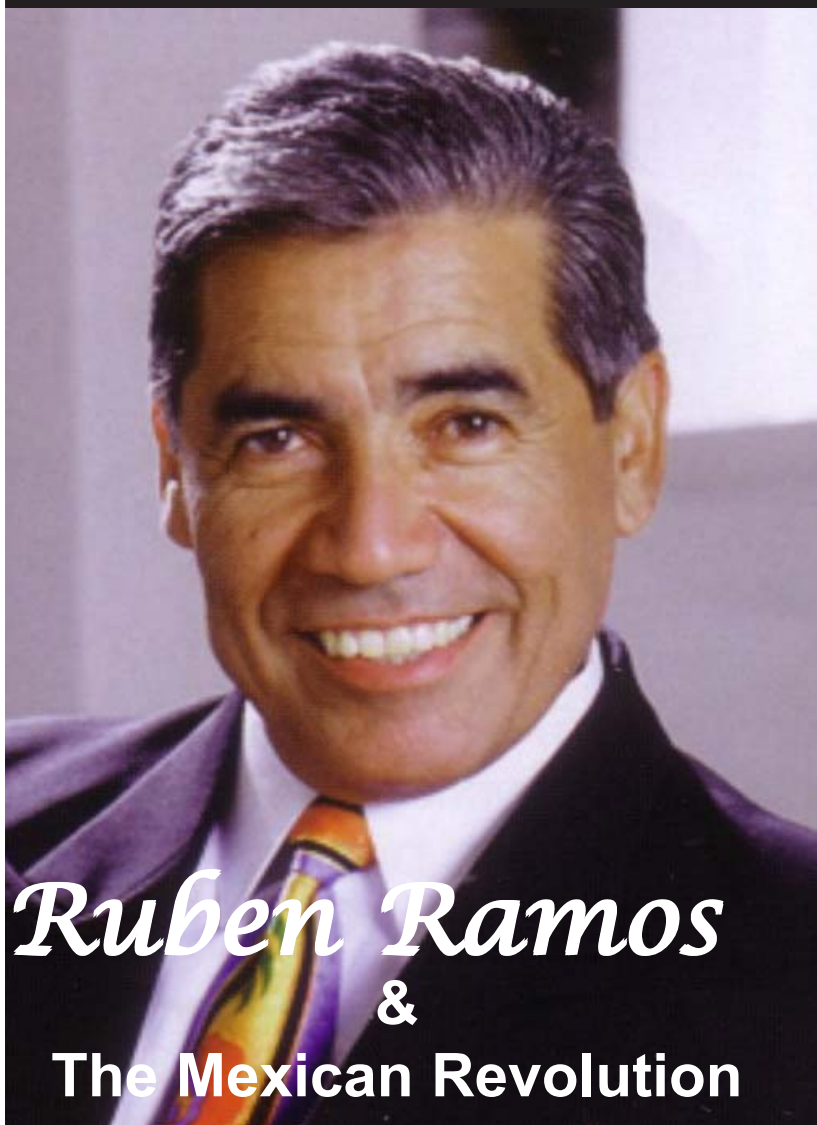
For my cousin Sarah

Marisa Cano is a student at The University of Texas at Austin.

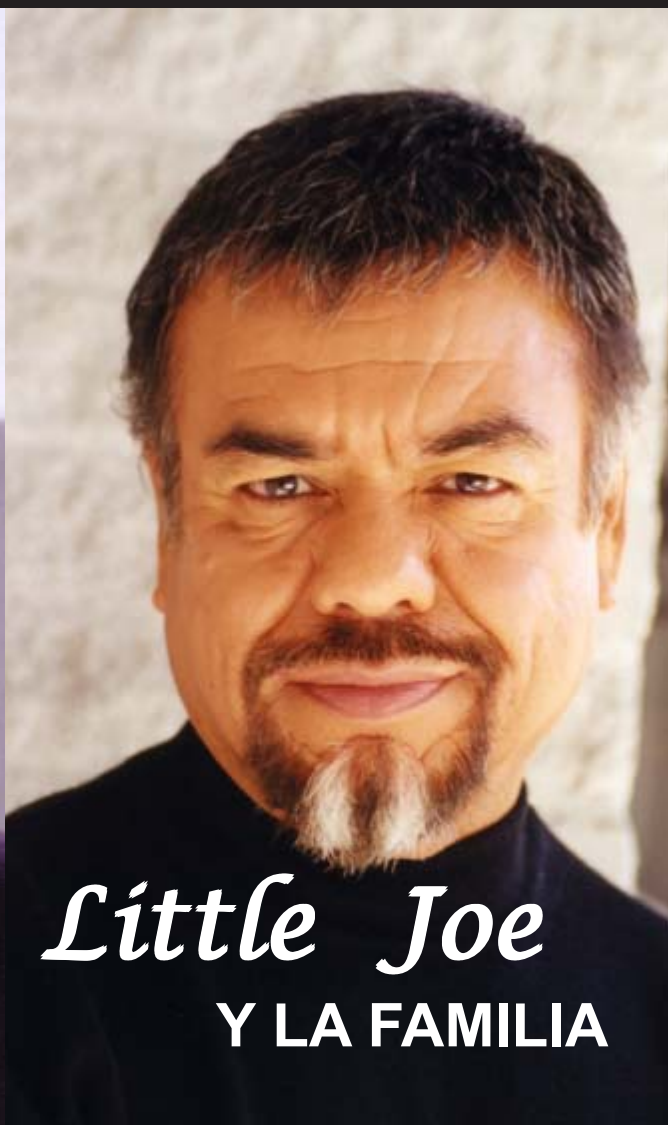


Marisa and her grandmother in one of the last photographs.

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