



**Moving English Language Learners to College- and Career-Readiness
Rio Grande Valley, Texas
May 6-8, 2009**

Hotel:

Embassy Suites McAllen
1800 South Second Street
McAllen, TX 78503
(956) 686-3000

Wednesday, May 6, 2009

Evening *Arrival of Group*
Flights into McAllen Miller International Airport

Please use the hotel's complimentary airport shuttle upon arrival

Thursday, May 7, 2009

7:00 **Registration and Breakfast**
Location: Embassy Suites, Marrs Room

7:30 **Introductory Panel: English Language Learners (ELLs) in the Rio Grande Valley Context**
Location: Marrs Room

This panel will help to set the stage for understanding the context of programs and policies affecting ELLs in Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. The Texas Education Agency will present an overview of the state's initiatives to help all students achieve college- and career-readiness, and will discuss the state's approach to incorporating its ELL population into these goals. An overview of the school systems and programs for ELLs in the Rio Grande Valley region will be provided by the Region One Educational Service Center (ESC), one of more than 20 regional ESCs in Texas providing a level of institutional support between the State and district.

Speakers will include: Lizzette Reynolds, Deputy Commissioner of Statewide Policy and Programs, Texas Education Agency; Jack Damron, Executive Director, Region One ESC; Connie Guerra, Director of Bilingual Education/ ESL/ Title III Programs, Region One ESC; Dr. Claudia Rodriguez, Director of Secondary School Initiatives, Region One ESC.

9:30 *Board bus for Hidalgo Independent School District*



10:00

Visit to Hidalgo Independent School District (HISD)

Location: Hidalgo Early College High School

910 E. Pirate Dr., Hidalgo, TX 78557; (956) 843-4300

HISD is a small district serving a student body that is more than 99% Hispanic and predominately low-income, with a large ELL population. The district has developed a reputation for high academic achievement and has earned either Recognized or Exemplary ratings on the Texas Education Agency's Accountability Review System since 1999. Hidalgo's entire high school has been converted into an Early College High School, in partnership with the University of Texas, Pan American (UTPA) and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Early College High Schools provide students an opportunity to earn college credit at the same time that they are working toward their high school diploma. Hidalgo Early College High School serves 850 students, of which 26% are classified as Limited English Proficient. The graduation rate is 94%, which is significantly higher than the state-wide graduation rate of 84%. The graduating class of 2010 will be the first class to have completed the entire Early College High School experience.

Speakers will include: Eduardo Cancino, Superintendent; Jose Rangel, Principal, Early College High School; Edward Blaha, Assistant Superintendent of College Readiness; Irma Hinojosa, Director of Special Populations; Gloria Cepeda, Executive Director for Teaching and Learning; Ana Maria Rodriguez, Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Academic Assessment and Retention, UTPA.

Lunch will be provided by parents during the site visit.

2:00

Board bus for South Texas College

2:30

Panel on Institutional Partnerships for College- and Career-Readiness

Location: South Texas College

3201 W. Pecan, McAllen, TX 78501

South Texas College (STC) is a 2008 recipient of the MetLife Foundation's *Community College Excellence Award* for promoting educational and economic advancement, and has been recognized as one of the top 10 public colleges and universities in enrolling and graduating Latino students in the country. This panel will highlight college-readiness initiatives involving cross-systems collaboration that bring together partners from the local school districts, institutions of higher education, and the business sector. The featured strategies include expanded access to career pathways for ELL students and expanded learning opportunities that use 21st Century Community Learning Center funds to provide academic support for ELLs.



Speakers will include: Dr. Shirley Reed, President, STC; William Serrata, Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, STC; Luzelma Canales, Community Engagement and Corporate Training, STC; Yvonne “Bonnie” Gonzalez, CEO, Workforce Solutions Board; Susan Valverde, CEO, Sylvan Learning Center; Oscar Rodriguez, Mission Consolidated Independent School District; Dr. Daniel King, Superintendent, Pharr San-Juan Alamo Independent School District.

4:00 *Return to Hotel*

6:00-8:00 **Dinner with Keynote Speaker**

Location: Embassy Suites, Marrs Room

Francisco Guajardo of UTPA (College of Education) will speak about the importance of community engagement and culturally and linguistically relevant education in preparing an immigrant community for postsecondary success.

Friday, May 8, 2009

Breakfast on your own; please visit the hotel’s complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast

7:30 *Board Bus to Pharr San-Juan Alamo School District*

8:00 **Site Visit to Pharr San Juan Alamo (PSJA) district**

Location: PSJA High School

805 West Ridge Road, San Juan, TX 78589; (956) 783-2200

PSJA provides an example of a larger district with a well-established dual language immersion program, which began at the elementary school level 13 years ago. The program has been expanded to the secondary level, offering students the opportunity to take advanced content courses in both English and Spanish, and it is also used as a strategy to promote the academic achievement of recent immigrant students. PSJA’s Superintendent, Daniel King previously served as the Superintendent of HISD, where he received the Texas Superintendent of the Year Award in 2006.

We will visit PSJA High School, a large, comprehensive high school, which has implemented a successful cohort model program to serve second language learners. This school has a population of 2,300 students, and 22% are classified as Limited English Proficient.

Speakers will include: Dr. Daniel King, Superintendent; Berta Palacios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction; Janet Robles, Assistant Superintendent for



Finance; Dr. Virginia Richter, Area I Administrator; Pilar Garza, Area IV Administrator; Leonila Izaguirre, Bilingual ESL Director; Rosalva Silva, Dual Language Program Director; Corina Ramirez, Principal of PSJA High School; Marisela Zepeda, Principal of Liberty Middle School; Oralia Gonzalez, Title 1 Program Director; Eleazar Romero, Migrant Department Director.

10:30 Site visit to College, Career and Technology Academy (PSJA district)

Location: College, Career and Technology Academy

1100 E Business Hwy 83, Pharr, TX 78577; (956) 784-8515

This alternative school offers an innovative program to connect overage, under-credited students with dual enrollment opportunities at the same time that they earn their high school diploma or GED. The small school serves 211 students up to age 25 who only need a few credits or an improved score on the state high school exit exam to graduate, many of whom are ELLs.

Speakers will include: Leonore Tyler, Principal of College, Career and Technology Academy.

11:45 Lunch

Location: College, Career and Technology Academy

12:30 Debrief on Lessons Learned

Location: College, Career and Technology Academy

1:30 Adjourn; Board Bus to Airport or Hotel

Return flights