

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION

OF LATINO LEADERS

Community-based cultural organizations like Sociedad Latina support students in building up six forms of capital that researchers have identified as prevalent among Latino youth.¹

ASPIRATION

For adolescents, a stronger sense of ethnic identity is correlated with higher self-worth, self-confidence, and purpose in life.² Organizations like Sociedad Latina offer safe settings where students can explore and build a shared identity alongside youth and adults who come from a similar cultural background.

LANGUAGE

Bilingualism supports cognitive development and can help young people adapt to new settings.³ By operating in bilingual and bicultural environments, youth maintain proficiency in their native language and see its value as a cultural asset and practical skill.

FAMILY

Building on the importance of the family in Latino culture, organizations that engage caregivers and support networks alongside youth help nurture stronger identities and more welcoming communities.⁴

SOCIAL NETWORK

Participating in programming and events can help young people forge new connections to support their success in college and careers. In particular, adult mentors can serve as role models and offer emotional support and guidance as students engage in new activities.⁵

NAVIGATIONAL SKILLS

Community organizations help Latino youth build the skills, knowledge, and self-awareness needed to pursue college and career pathways.

RESISTANCE TO INEQUITY

By developing young people's self-advocacy and leadership skills, community organizations help advance their consciousness of social conditions and their ability to spark social and political change.



Latino youth regularly face discrimination in their daily lives—in one national survey, close to **83%** of Latino youth named **discrimination** as a personal problem for them.⁶



Latino youth have the highest rates of **depression** of any ethnic group.⁷



For immigrant youth in particular, navigating a new environment and the **fear of detention and deportation** produces high levels of stress, with negative side effects on physical and mental health.⁸

Sociedad Latina works in multiple areas to support positive development for Boston's Latino youth population. Each area is critical for building young people's resilience, growing their self-confidence, and gaining the skills to advocate for themselves and transform their communities. By working across these fields, Sociedad Latina helps support the next generation of Latino leaders.

ARTS & CULTURE

- » High participation in the arts is linked with better academic and career outcomes, especially for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds⁹
- » The developmental benefits that young people receive from arts education carry into adulthood¹⁰

EDUCATION

- » Students benefit from having teachers who share their cultural identity to serve as positive role models, forge stronger relationships, and hold high expectations for student success¹¹
- » Culturally responsive education (such as that practiced by Sociedad Latina) has been shown to raise academic achievement and engagement among Latino students¹²

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- » Graduates from the BPS class of 2012 who reported that they had participated in an internship during high school were more likely than their peers to enroll in—and complete—college¹³

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- » Family-centered programming to promote nutrition, exercise, and healthy habits among Latinos can lead to decreases in obesity and reduced risk of associated diseases¹⁴

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- » Participating in community programming allows youth to build democratic skills like facilitation, public speaking, and how to engage with public figures¹⁵
- » Civic engagement positively impacts mental health and can reduce the likelihood of risky behavior such as violence and substance abuse¹⁶

¹ Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth (Tara J. Yosso (2005), *Race Ethnicity and Education*)

² The Effects of Ethnic Identity, Ethnicity, and Gender on Adolescent Well-Being (Rubén O. Martinez and Richard L. Dukes (1997), *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*)

³ Promoting and Maintaining Bilingualism and Biliteracy: Cognitive and Biliteracy Benefits & Strategies for Monolingual Teachers (Debra A. Giambo and Tunde Szecsi (2015), *The Open Communication Journal*)

⁴ Resilient Latino Youth: In Their Own Words (UNIDOS US)

⁵ Resilient Latino Youth

⁶ Speaking Out: Latino Youth on Discrimination in the United States (UNIDOS US)

⁷ Mental Health Services for Latino Youth: Bridging Culture and Evidence (UNIDOS US)

⁸ Economic, Social, and Health Effects of Discrimination on Latino Immigrant Families (Migration Policy Institute)

⁹ Hearts and Minds: The Arts and Civic Engagement (The James Irvine Foundation)

¹⁰ Arts Education and Positive Youth Development: Cognitive, Behavioral, and Social Outcomes of Adolescents who Study the Arts (Kenneth Elpus (2013), National Endowment for the Arts)

¹¹ The many ways teacher diversity may benefit students (Brown Center Chalkboard, Brookings)

¹² The Theory and Practice of Culturally Relevant Education: A Synthesis of Research Across Content Areas (Brittany Aronson and Judson Laughter (2016), *Review of Educational Research*)

¹³ College, Career and Life Readiness: A Look at High School Indicators of Post-Secondary Outcomes in Boston (The Boston Opportunity Agenda)

¹⁴ Interventions for improving metabolic risk in overweight Latino youth (Jaimie N. Davis et al. (2010), *International Journal of Pediatric Obesity*)

¹⁵ Cultures of engagement: The organizational foundations of advancing health in immigrant and low-income communities of color (Irene Bloemraad and Veronica Terriquez (2016), *Social Science & Medicine*)

¹⁶ Cultures of engagement

¹⁷ Boston Public Schools at a Glance 2018-2019 (Boston Public Schools)

¹⁸ Boston at a Glance - 2019 (Boston Planning & Development Agency)

¹⁹ Imagine All the People: Latinos in Boston (Boston Redevelopment Authority)

²⁰ Boston Public Schools at a Glance 2018-2019

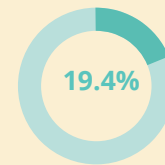
²¹ The Silent Crisis II: A Follow-Up Analysis of Latin@ Participation in City Government Boards, Commissions, and Executive Bodies in Boston and Chelsea, Massachusetts (Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy)

²² Resilient Latino Youth

Boston's Latino population is growing:



42% of Boston Public Schools students are Latino, the largest demographic group in the district¹⁷



Latinos make up **19.4%** of Boston's population¹⁸

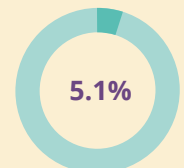
Boston's Latino population grew **43.9%** between 2000 and 2013 and continues to grow¹⁹



Yet Latinos are currently underrepresented in leadership roles across Boston:



Only **11%** of BPS teachers and guidance counselors are Latino²⁰



As of 2017, Latinos held only **10.5%** of executive positions in the City of Boston and **5.1%** of positions on Boston's boards and commissions²¹



Latino youth often have limited access to contacts in higher education or the professional world to help them access postsecondary and workforce opportunities²²