



## Illinois Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents Quarterly Newsletter

Dear IALAS Members,

Hard to believe that the holidays and winter break is quickly approaching. We encourage you to enjoy the upcoming time off. It is a nice reminder for all of us to slow down and balance life and work as best as possible.

Our last IALAS event was quite successful. The Network Mixer on October 21<sup>st</sup> at the Chicago Oak Brook Marriott hotel in Oak Brook allowed for connections with new and old colleagues, enjoyable instances of laughter and professional growth as a result of a dynamic keynote speaker and expert breakfast panelists. We have seen incredibly positive and professional networking associations made and are thrilled that IALAS has been able to provide a platform for such occurrences to take place.

Also, in October, a majority of the Board members and several other IALAS members participated in the national summit in Philadelphia with the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). It was a memorable and powerful experience to learn from and get to know our educational partners throughout the country. We remain excited about the future collaborations with ALAS and the other state affiliates.

IALAS has two major events coming up in the next few months. On **Friday, February 3, 2017**, we will host another Network Mixer (based on popular demand). We are seeking a location in Chicago or close to the city in our continued efforts to offer a variety of event locales. In **April 2017**, we will host our first conference and encourage our members to submit a proposal to host a breakout session. Additional information about details of the conference and requests for proposals will be available soon. As part of the IALAS membership benefits, IALAS members are given priority to host sessions and their requests will be considered first.

Finally, several IALAS Executive Board member seats will reach the end of their term in June 2017 and may not be running for re-election. These new seats will be effective on **July 1, 2017**. In January, we will announce the upcoming Board vacancies and include information on how to apply for candidacy of that seat. An election of those Executive Board seats will be open to IALAS members only. We anticipate collecting all candidate interest and presenting to membership in early March for voting during the month of March. Please be on the lookout for more information about those vacancies and candidacy packets. It is an AMAZING leadership opportunity that will allow for shaping the dialogue and action to support IALAS vision and mission.

As always, thank you for all that you do!

Ivette M. Dubiel  
IALAS Board President



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### NEXT IALAS EVENTS



## ADMINISTRATOR SPOTLIGHT

Name: **Rodolfo Hernandez**

Occupation: **Superintendent  
Cicero District 99**

Mr. Hernandez has worked in public education as a teacher, principal, and superintendent in both elementary and secondary levels for over 28 years. With a results-oriented approach to improve academic achievement, work with diverse groups, increase parent/community involvement, implement systems-thinking, and provide a positive school and work environment, Mr. Hernandez has repeatedly demonstrated effective leadership skills. Under his tenure, Mr. Hernandez has implemented state of the art facilities in the district, committed to a robust biliteracy program and spearheaded numerous progressive initiatives. ISBE named Cicero School District 99, a model district for its exemplary Early Childhood Programming and most recently, Mr. Hernandez received recognition for 2015-16 reading and math scores.

With a continued focus on innovation and sound instructional pedagogy, Mr. Hernandez is creating a vision of achievement that promises to catapult Cicero District 99 to one of the top schools in the nation, while fostering an environment that truly celebrates diversity.

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Name: **Mary Kassir**

Occupation: **High School Teacher  
Indian Prairie School District 204**



Mrs. Kassir is recognized for her unrelenting love of language and culture. As a World Languages teachers, she is passionate about her ability to connect with students and families. She is the sponsor of the Spanish Honors Society and serves as the liaison to the Hispanic Parent Advocacy Group. Mary is a member of her school's Equity Team, championing the cause for increased participation by minority students in Advanced Placement course. Mary has been able to steadily increase the interest in her AP class, resulting in triple enrollment. She is proud that her students reflects the demographic of their school. In 2011, Mrs. Kassir was the recipient of the Outstanding Woman Student Award in Romance Languages. She is currently working on her second Master's degree where she is focusing her efforts toward bridging the achievement gap.

"Mary is a staunch advocate of equity and has repeatedly demonstrated her authentic care for her students and their families. She is the type of educator you want for your own child. I am honored to know her." said Ivette Dubiel, IALAS President.

# THE POWER OF COLLABORATION: A CONVERSATION WITH RICARDO CASTRO

Written by IALAS Member: Virginia Valdez

Over the years, the field of education has shifted from having teachers work in isolation to having teachers work in collaboration. One reason for this shift is that research demonstrates that effective collaboration has a positive and significant impact on student achievement. To bring research and practice together, I interviewed Ricardo Castro, the 2017 Illinois Teacher of the Year. Mr. Castro, a Spanish teacher at Elk Grove High School, has had tremendous success with improving student performance. He has credited his success to teacher collaboration.

In just one year, 80% of Mr. Castro's 9<sup>th</sup> grade Latino students, who are English learners, transitioned into the general education courses. When asked what were the key contributors to his success, Mr. Castro immediately responded that it was a "collaborative effort." That collaborative effort involved a team of teachers working together to ensure student success. In this case, Mr. Castro, who teaches Spanish Language Arts for Native Speakers, worked closely with his colleagues who teach English Language Arts and English as a Second Language. Essentially, these teachers taught the same content and provided additional supports to ensure that English learners had the same learning experience as their counterparts in the general education courses. As evidenced by student outcomes, this strategy proved to be extremely effective and continues to this day.

Understanding that social development also plays an important role in student achievement, Mr. Castro co-founded a tiered student leadership program, *Estudiantes Unidos*, that operates in both the high school and junior high school levels. In this program, high school students mentor junior high school students throughout the school year. During the summer, the high school and junior high school students come together to provide a summer camp for elementary school students and begin the mentoring process with them. All of this is possible as a result of a team of teachers working closely together at both the high school and junior high school levels to support students as they develop their social skills and leadership abilities.

Throughout his 10 years of teaching, Mr. Castro has had many other experiences of effective collaboration that has had an incredible and meaningful impact on students' academic, social, and emotional development. As Mr. Castro has demonstrated, there is power in collaboration. When teachers believe that collaboration makes a difference and work together towards a common goal, their collaborative effort will improve learning outcomes for all students. The challenge is for administrators and superintendents to foster a culture of teacher collaboration that goes beyond the "requirement," provide teachers with ongoing professional development on collaboration, and support teachers as they work together.

## Network Mixer

On Friday, October 21st, 2016 and on Saturday, October 22nd, 2016, IALAS hosted an overnight Network Mixer event at the Chicago Oak Brook Marriott hotel in Oak Brook. West Chicago School District 33 Superintendent and recent IALAS spotlight administrator, Dr. Charles Johns, provided words of inspiration and reminded us that *Si Se Puede*. Keynote speaker and another recent IALAS spotlight administrator, LaMoille Unit School District 303 Superintendent from Dr. Ricardo Espinoza, shared his dissertation expertise and how critical race theory supports our work to advocate for experienced and well-versed leaders for student. Comedian, Patti Vazquez, provided us with a fit of laughter allowed for connections with new and old colleagues, enjoyable instances of laughter and professional growth . We also were lucky to participate in a breakfast panel event with educational experts in Chicago.





# Network Mixer



IALAS EVENTS

## Founding Partners



## ATTENTION

The next public Committee Updates and IALAS Board meeting is scheduled for **Saturday January 7, 2017**, Exact time and location to be determined.

Please to visit [www.alasedu.org](http://www.alasedu.org) to learn about all the amazing work of National ALAS.

### IALAS EXECUTIVE BOARD

Yesenia Sanchez  
Vice President

Eulalia Valdez  
Treasurer

Rafael Segarra  
Historian

Gloria Trejo  
Members-At-Large

Luis Narvaez  
Secretary I

Beatriz Maldonado  
Secretary II

### Upcoming IALAS Events

#### Spring Network Mixer

**Friday, February 4, 2017**  
**Further details announced soon**

**April 2017**  
**IALAS First Conference**  
**Further details announced soon**



**IALAS, P.O. Box 817, Oswego, IL 60543**  
**[www.ialas.org](http://www.ialas.org)**