



**Illinois Association of
Latino Administrators and Superintendents**

Quarterly Newsletter

Dear IALAS Members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to the 2017-18 school year. **IALAS** has a very ambitious plan for this year. Our goal is to lay a strong foundation for future administrators by enhancing the mentoring program in support of aspiring administrators. We are exploring different ways to support aspiring administrators and providing professional learning opportunities for new administrators related to both practical aspects of their positions such as the responsibilities of building and district administrators. We want to equip our membership with the tools necessary to run more effective programs, schools, and/or districts. The overarching vision for our future work is to encourage all to aspire to administrative positions and to improve instruction for all children in Illinois.

In addition to enhancements of our mentoring program, we are planning events to bring people together to network and support one another. Our hope is to see everyone at these events! Remember - we can only make a difference if we work together. We would also like to encourage you to participate in the committees that we have established to support the organization and to run an efficient and effective operation. We want to hear your ideas as to how we can continue to build **IALAS** and which topics you would like to discuss at workshops. In order for us to meet everyone's needs, we need you to complete the surveys, which will be mailed out before the events.

Save the date - **November 10th, 2017!** We will host our first Fall Network Mixer at **Buca Di Beppo** in Lombard. We hope you can join us as we get ready to begin a new school year.

Together we make a difference!

Respectfully,
Rudy Hernandez
IALAS President



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BEHIND YOU: PUTTING RELATIONSHIPS FIRST WITH GLORIA TREJO

Written by IALAS Board Member: Virginia Valdez

In *Knowing the Right Thing to Do: School Improvement and Performance-Based Accountability* (2003), Harvard scholar Richard Elmore indicates that the key to improving schools and increasing student achievement is having the right focus for change. Identifying the right focus for change appears to be a big challenge for school leaders. Fortunately, this has not been the case for Gloria Trejo, the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents' Latino Administrator of the Year. For Ms. Trejo, establishing and strengthening relationships with all stakeholders was the right focus for change when she became the principal of Pioneer School in West Chicago Elementary School District 33. Pioneer School serves over 400 students, who are predominantly Latino and low-income, from kindergarten to fifth grade.



Gloria Trejo, IALAS Member

When Ms. Trejo joined Pioneer School, students were really struggling academically across all grade levels. Understanding that all adults within the school community impact student achievement and student social-emotional development, she knew that it was critical for her to focus on building relationships with staff and parents. Instead of trying to do everything at the same time, she focused first on staff and then on parents.

Ms. Trejo began by getting to know her staff. What did this mean? This meant going beyond the formal introductions and resume reviews. This meant listening to and talking with her staff on both professional and personal levels. This led to putting herself in their shoes when having conversations and making decisions as well as focusing on their professional, social and emotional needs. In essence, getting to know her staff meant being connected to them and having an authentic relationship where they knew that she was “behind them” every step of the way. This kind of relationship made a significant difference on staff culture and student-teacher relationships.

BEHIND YOU: PUTTING RELATIONSHIPS FIRST WITH GLORIA TREJO (Continued)

Ms. Trejo created a positive staff culture defined by camaraderie, cohesion, and collaboration. Staff began working really hard together. They began attending in-house professional development with a different lens - one where they believed that the learning acquired would be relevant and applicable to student growth in all areas. They began opening their doors to their colleagues and having peer observations. They began pushing and challenging themselves as well as empowering each other. This enthusiasm and change in staff relationships transferred over to student-teacher relationships. The relationships between students and teachers transformed into caring and trusting relationships where students felt that they were being seen, heard and cared for. Like staff, students knew that their teachers were “behind them” every step of the way. This is the kind of experience that Ms. Trejo worked on developing next with parents.

Just like with her staff, Ms. Trejo began by getting to know parents. To do this, she began creating activities where parents could be engaged in a more meaningful way. One of the most successful activities was Family Reading Night. Once parents began attending school activities, her staff and she began recruiting and supporting them to become parent leaders and active participants in the Parent Teacher Organization. In this process, they developed strong relationships with parents. Parents felt welcomed and valued. They felt like true collaborators in their children’s education. They continued to serve in various capacities because they knew that their school community was “behind them” every step of the way.

Was putting relationships first the right focus for change? Absolutely! Student achievement in Pioneer School has increased dramatically over time. For example, four years ago, 25% of kindergarten students were performing at grade level in reading. Now, 81% of kindergarten students are performing at grade level in reading. This was accomplished by not only the dedication of staff, students and families but also the ability of these stakeholders to work together. This level of success only happens in the presence of strong relationships. Thus, establishing and strengthening relationships with all stakeholders was the right focus for change.

1st Annual Statewide Conference

On Friday, May 12th, 2017, IALAS hosted its first Annual Statewide Conference at Northern Illinois University's Naperville Campus. Seeing all of the participants network, learn, and enjoy the activities within the conference was terrific!

This was the second professional development opportunity provided through our organization. We had the pleasure of welcoming Eddie Soto, an ambassador of ALAS. He was so gracious in swearing in our new Executive Board Members. We officially welcomed Rudy Hernandez as our new President as well as Virginia Valdez as our Historian and Angelica Romano as our Members-at-Large Board Members. We also said farewell to our Board founding members: Ivette Dubiel, Gloria Trejo, and Eulalia Valdez.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Kim Potowski from University of Illinois at Chicago, provided a wonderful speech entitled *Building Bridges, One Student at a Time*. And, we had the privilege of seeing student performances from West Chicago Elementary School District 33.



1st Annual Statewide Conference

IALAS EVENTS



Founding Partners



ATTENTION Membership

We are looking forward to you re-newing your membership with our organization! We are also encouraging you to bring a friend, a colleague, or an acquaintance along to join! You can join by clicking [here!](#)

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Upcoming IALAS Events

Fall Network Mixer

Socialize with colleagues across the state.

Friday, November 10th, 2017

6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

**Location: Buca Di Beppo
90 Yorktown Road; Lombard, IL**

Price will include food and unlimited beverages. Tickets can be purchased through our website at www.ialas.org in the events page.

