



**Illinois Association of  
Latino Administrators and Superintendents**

## **Quarterly Newsletter**

Dear IALAS Members,

I would like to thank you for your support and participation in the IALAS events for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. All of our events were well attended, which is a direct reflection of your commitment not only to our organization but also to high quality education. I would also like to extend my gratitude to members who have signed up for and/or participated in our committees to further our efforts as an organization.

This past May 25<sup>th</sup>, we held our **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual IALAS Statewide Conference** and hosted our **Spring Network Mixer** at Northern Illinois University's Naperville Campus. I am so grateful to all the presenters and members who were able to attend. The IALAS Board received several compliments about the quality of the presentations that were shared on that day as well as the opportunities to network at the two events. We look forward to additional opportunities to learn and grow together. Our next event will be our **Fall Network Mixer** at DeColores Mexican Restaurant in Chicago on Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.

I am proud to announce that one of our very own, Maria Burgos, was the recipient of the Hispanic Serving School District Latino Administrator of the Year from the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). Ms. Burgos is the Director of English Learners at Cicero District 99. We believe that it is important to recognize the extraordinary work of our members. Thus, we will continue to highlight our members both within and outside of our organization as well as enhance our mentoring program to ensure that our members have the opportunities to develop and/or strengthen their capacity to lead successfully in their districts across our state.

The success of our organization lies on your continued commitment to our organization and to our mission of helping transform education for our Latino students and students in general. We look forward to your continued support in moving our organization to the next level of excellence. Remember that good is not good enough.

Sincerely,

Rudy Hernandez  
IALAS President



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## ADMINISTRATOR SPOTLIGHT LEADER

Name: **Jaime Barraza**

Occupation: **Director of Biliteracy at Distinctive Schools Charter Network in Chicago**



Jaime Barraza is the Director of Biliteracy for the Distinctive Schools charter network based in Chicago, Illinois. In his position, Mr. Barraza oversees the development of bilingual programming and best practice language acquisition for culturally and linguistically diverse students. He joined the Distinctive Schools team in the summer of 2017.

Prior to his current position, Mr. Barraza led language programming in a northern suburb of Chicago. He also has had the honor of presenting at the local, state, and national levels on a variety of topics. The topics include Dual Language best practice, digital learning for English Learners, building a strong home/school connection, building a professional network, and maximizing presentation effectiveness.

Mr. Barraza began his career in education working in nonprofit organizations focused on supporting student growth with enriching after school and summer opportunities. He started his teaching career as a middle school dual language teacher. He specialized in social studies and Spanish.

As the first in his family to attend college, Mr. Barraza holds a strong belief in the power of education. He also holds a strong belief in the power of collaboration. In line with his beliefs, he worked with other Latino/a professionals to support each other for the advancement of opportunities for our students in Illinois and across the country. This led to his involvement as a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (IALAS). At IALAS, he not only served as the Historian but also contributed to the organization's development and growth.

Mr. Barraza received his Bachelor's degree in Latin American/Latino Studies from DePaul University. He also received his Master's degree in Education Leadership from Benedictine University.

## Summer Reflection

Written by IALAS Member: Mary Mycyk

Summer is not just a time to clean out your inbox and organize your desk for the next year. Summer is the perfect time to reflect - reflect on your leadership in your organization, reflect on your purpose, reflect on your growth.

Deep reflection requires intentional actions, and it requires practice. Luckily, there are a variety of models to visit to find the reflective practices and topics that best meet your needs. The remainder of this article will give a brief description of three reflective practices. Read through them, try a few out, find the one that works for you, and start your intentional reflective practices this summer!

**Reflect on Engagement** - Are you truly engaged in your leadership role? According to Daniel Pink in *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, there is a distinction between autonomy and engagement. Autonomy means having a sense of control over the tasks you complete, how you use your time, the techniques and strategies you use, and how you organize and manage your team. Having autonomy as a leader is important, but without a clear goal - one that is challenging yet attainable; one that requires focus to achieve and provides satisfaction in attaining it - autonomy is not enough. Highly effective leaders seek engagement, living deeply in the moment with a perfect balance of autonomy and challenge.

Reflection Activity #1: Identify the autonomy that exists in your leadership role. List what you control, specifically the tasks you are responsible for completing, how you manage your time, the strategies you use in completing the tasks, and how you organize and manage your team. Do you have a clear goal towards which all of these actions point? Is your goal challenging you and your team, requiring focus and intentional work? If so, continue using your goal setting process. If not, consider reworking your autonomy with a focus on goal setting that creates a challenge, yet is attainable with intentional actions.

**Reflect on Focus** - Is your leadership focused? In *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*, Mike Schmoker identifies the simple elements needed to improve all schools: a common curriculum, sound lessons, and authentic literacy. These elements are not a new innovation and they don't require more funding. They simply need to be the focus of all implementation efforts. When all efforts are aimed at these simple elements, schools can accomplish great improvement.

## Summer Reflection

### (Continued)

Reflection Activity #2: List your school/district initiatives. Do they focus on a common curriculum, sound lessons, and authentic literacy? Consider those initiatives you directly lead. Are you keeping the focus on the most essential elements for school/district improvement? If so, continue to engage in the work - you are focused! If not, consider initiatives you can abandon. Or, find ways to align your current initiatives to the most essential elements - a common curriculum, sound lessons and authentic literacy.

**Reflect on Reflecting** - Are you a reflective leader? If you choose to conduct one of the first two reflection activities, you might consider reflecting on your reflection! Take the work of Pete Hall and Alisa Simeral in *Teach, Reflect, Learn: Building Your Capacity for Success in the Classroom* and apply it to reflecting on your leadership. The reflective cycle includes having an awareness of your reality - knowing your team members' strengths and needs, knowing your content area or department and how it relates to the bigger picture of the district. The reflective cycle includes being intentional in your actions. Actions you take must impact student learning. The reflective cycle includes assessing the impact of your actions. The data you use to determine effectiveness must be valid and accurate. The reflective cycle includes adjusting actions throughout the year. The use of data to make informed decisions throughout the year must take place. The reflective cycle includes ongoing reflection.

Reflection Activity #3: Identify your current reality - list your team members and identify their strengths and areas of need. Write a succinct description of your major work for the past year. Identify how your team members supported your major work and how your work improved academic achievement in your district. Identify data that supports your actions were effective or ineffective. Did you make adjustments to your plan throughout the year? If so, were they effective? If not, why were they ineffective? Consider adding this reflective cycle into your yearly strategic planning to ensure you build capacity for success in your district.

As the summer kicks into full swing, take some time to reflect! The reflective activities in this article can help you refocus your energy, redefine your purpose, and create solutions to the shifting needs of your school or district. Work towards creating a habit of reflection.

## 2nd Annual IALAS Statewide Conference and Spring Network Mixer

On Friday, May 25, 2018, we hosted our *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual IALAS Statewide Conference and Spring Network Mixer* at Northern Illinois University's Naperville Campus. Over 70 members participated in this sold-out event. They had the opportunity to gain more knowledge and insights from incredible presenters as well as build new relationships. And, we were all fortunate to hear the dynamic duo keynote speakers, Dr. DJ Skogsberg and Dr. Debbie LeBlanc, talk about building a leadership legacy.

Once again, we had the pleasure of having Eddie Soto, an ambassador of ALAS, join us to swear in our new members of the Executive Board of Directors. We officially welcomed Mary Kassir as our new Vice President, Mariana Nicasio as our new Secretary I, and Israel Perez as our new Historian/Publicist. We also said farewell to the following members of the Executive Board of Directors: Luis Narvaez, Yesenia Sanchez, and Virginia Valdez. We are truly grateful for their commitment and contributions to IALAS.

IALAS would like to thank Northern Illinois University for hosting our event. IALAS would also like to thank IXL Learning for sponsoring our Network Mixer as well as the outstanding student performers from East Aurora School District 131 and J. Sterling Morton High School District 201. We look forward to seeing you at our next scheduled event, *Fall Network Mixer*, on Friday, September 28, 2018 at DeColores Mexican Restaurant in Chicago.





# I ALAS EVENTS





# I ALAS EVENTS



## Upcoming IALAS Events



# Fall Network Mixer

Meet, Greet, and Build Relationships

September 28, 2018

DECOLORES MEXICAN RESTAURANT

1626 SOUTH HALSTED STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

### TICKET INFORMATION

**\$45 MEMBER AND \$65 NON-MEMBER**

**TICKET INCLUDES FOOD AND OPEN BAR.**

Due to limited space, ticket must be purchased in advance online.



## 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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## Thank you for your service!

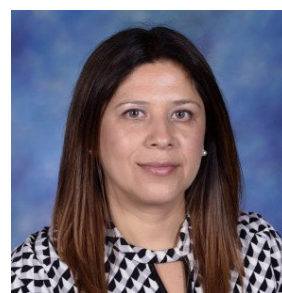
We would like to thank our outgoing members of the Executive Board of Directors. These individuals have dedicated significant time and effort to strengthen our organization. We appreciate their hard work, dedication, and contributions!



Yesenia Sanchez  
Vice President



Luis Narvaez  
Secretary I



Virginia Valdez  
Historian