
Hey, How Smart Is Your School?

Supporting science and mathematics in our schools

By **Kat Avila** | Published on LatinoLA: July 17, 2014



"We are in a race in the global economy. The problem is not that we're slowing down. The problem is that the other runners are getting faster."

--Jan Rivkin, Harvard Business School professor

I sat through a marketing presentation that claimed California is 47th in science, and I wondered how that conclusion had been arrived at. After all, we have Silicon Valley, and in Southern California we have a great number of high-tech industries.

It turns out the claim had come from an Orange County Register 2012 article, and the dismal ranking was arrived at from a small sampling. However, in the article, **former Orange County Department of Education Superintendent Bill Habermehl warned, "We just don't teach enough science. In elementary school, science education is often just an hour a week."**

Still, California boasts some of the best STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) high schools in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report 2014 listings. Five of the top 10 schools are in California. In Southern California, we have Whitney High School (no. 4) in Cerritos and Troy High School (no. 6) in Fullerton.

I looked at the racial demographics. **California schools doing the best job of preparing students for high-paying careers in the sciences and engineering had mostly Asian-majority student bodies.** Whitney High School is 82% Asian, 9% Latino, 5% White, 2% Black, and Troy High School is 46% Asian, 25% White, 23% Latino, 1% Black. The other top-ranking California schools are Henry M. Gunn in Palo Alto (no. 5; 44% White, 41% Asian, 8% Latino, 2% Black), Lynbrook High School in San Jose (no. 7; 81% Asian, 14% White, 3% Latino, 2% Black), and Monta Vista in Cupertino (no. 8; 78% Asian, 18% White, 3% Latino, 0.3% Black).

What does that say about the other schools the majority of Latino students, as well as Black students, are going to? What kinds of futures are those schools preparing them for?

The news isn't all bad. For best overall high schools in California, three in the top 10 have Latino majorities. They are The Preuss School at UC San Diego (no. 5; 67% Latino), Hawthorne Math and Science Academy in Hawthorne (no. 9; 73% Latino), and Lennox Mathematics, Science & Technology Academy in Lennox (no. 10; 98% Latino).

Promoting science education is not simply the job of science teachers. It is also a social responsibility to recognize its importance. We need to push back the tide of ignorance swollen by anti-science religious zealots and pseudoscience practitioners.

It's all nice and well that the U.S.A. is no. 1 in sports, but we couldn't even break into the top 20 out of 65 countries for the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test results. The PISA measures student performance in science, mathematics, and reading.

Additionally, as a state, California should be in the top 25 and not the bottom 25 for science,

HOT STORIES IN LATINOLA

A Time to Remember Ruben Salazar

David Fernandez Jr. Joins Cast of The Man on Carrion Road

Las Palmas Keeps So-Cal Beaches Clean This Summer

An Enchanted Night by the Sea

¡LATINOLA RECOMMENDS!

Carne: The Taco Maker
Friday, July 25
to Thursday, July 31

Atrevete Danza Show Spectacular
Friday, July 25
to Saturday, July 26

Piedras del Solsticio (The Solstice Stones)
Friday, July 25
to Sunday, August 3

Americas & Americans Festival: Gloria Estefan
Friday, July 25
to Saturday, July 26

ALL LATINOLA CONTENT IS CONTRIBUTED BY OUR COMMUNITY OF AMIGOS.
To submit your stories and events, go to <http://latinola.com>

especially since as a nation we are already not doing so hot. **Besides grapes, almonds, and strawberries, we need to grow our own scientists, engineers, inventors, and mathematicians to keep jobs, companies, and a brighter future here.**

Find this story online at latinola.com/story.php?story=12843

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Commercial distribution without prior written authorization is strictly prohibited.

© 2000-2008. LatinoCities Inc.