

Immigration and Higher Education Study Committee

Issue

As Minnesota's immigrant population has increased over the last three decades, our institutions of education have wrestled with questions of how to integrate immigrant students into our schools – and whether our schools are up to the task. This much is clear: both moral and economic imperatives demand that immigrant students (and all other students) are ready for and successful in higher education.

Study Committees

The Citizens League has partnered with the MACC Alliance of Connected Communities to study this issue in two phases. Phase I, completed in 2007, determined the most important facts and trends about immigrant students in Minnesota, and used that information to identify the key choices and policy issues facing the state. Phase II, which will wrap up in spring 2008, will develop recommendations to address the key questions identified in Phase I. In Phase II, in addition to convening a traditional study committee, we partnered with Marnita's Table to hold seven dinner-table conversations around the state. At those dinners, we heard from immigrant students and parents and other community members about the challenges they face and how they can be overcome.

Findings

The Phase I Study Committee identified the following key questions:

- Information: How are information and services about K-12 and higher education best delivered to immigrant students and their families?
- Culture: How can educational institutions and individual educators learn to adapt to the changing cultural makeup of their student populations?
- Cost: What do immigrant families need to overcome the financial challenges related to higher education?
- Preparation: What is the best way to prepare immigrant students for college-level English skills?

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study will conclude this spring, and the report will be released early this summer.

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