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Latinos Excel at DeKalb PATH Academy

A **new report** by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools says a growing number of the nation's more than 12 million Hispanic/Latino students are choosing to enroll in charter schools.

According to the report, Latino students now make up 30 percent of all charter school enrollment. That's more than the 25 percent of Latino students represented in traditional schools and is an increase from 21 percent in 2004. The report was based on a national parent survey and revealed that nearly 85 percent of Latino parents "favor or strongly favor allowing parents to choose which public school their child attends, regardless of their address."

The report also states as "new charter schools continue to open their doors in neighborhoods with concentrated Hispanic populations, they are also investing in the future of the Hispanic community." Locally, strong evidence of that can be seen at DeKalb PATH Academy in DeKalb County, which is approximately 80 percent Latino.



"A school like this changed my life," said DeKalb PATH Academy Principal Crystal Felix-Clarke. "We seek out charter schools in the Latino and immigrant communities to change the trajectory of our children's lives. That's why we are 80 percent Latino, because they seek us out."

This school year, Felix-Clarke (pictured with students left and below) is piloting a program for students called PATHFinders, which is based on the book *StrengthsFinder 2.0*. Those taking part have taken an assessment to identify their top three strengths. The program identifies and builds on students' natural strengths and abilities. Felix-Clarke said the goal of the program is to help students

become more successful in the classroom and beyond.

“What I ultimately want for our kids is to have a choice to do what they want to do and to be able to have healthy, sustainable and joyful living conditions for themselves that they are able to earn independently,” said Felix-Clarke.

Felix Clarke believes an extended school day, Saturday classes, summer school and DeKalb PATH's dedicated teachers have all contributed to the school's success. As a result, DeKalb PATH has consistently beat state and district College and Career Ready Performance Index scores and received the maximum amount of points for growth and progress on the 2015 CCRPI. The fifth through eighth grade school also recently had the highest percentage of eighth grade students in DeKalb County who were proficient or better in Math on the Georgia Milestones tests.



The school's mission is to create a safe and nurturing learning environment in which refugee, immigrant and local children from the Chamblee, Doraville and Clarkston areas in DeKalb County can develop the knowledge, skills and character needed to succeed in top-quality high schools, colleges and the competitive world beyond regardless of their socio-economic and linguistic barriers.