



## First Summit for Education without Borders: California-Mexico

June 28, 2017

Earlier this month, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson met with top-ranking education officials in Mexico to promote closer ties, and to identify ways California and Mexico can collaborate to improve educational opportunities for students they share across borders.



Figure 1. UC President Napolitano, Dianne Klein, SEP SubSecretario Jara (hidden), SEP Secretario Nuño Mayer, and Benito Mirón (March 2017).



Figure 2. Mauricio Velazquez Lopez, Veronica Aguila, Salvador Jara Guerrero, Tom Torlakson, Benito Mirón, Patricia Gándara, and Emiliano González Blanco (June 2017).

The First Summit for Education without Borders: California-Mexico was facilitated by the UC-Mexico Initiative and led by its education director, Patricia Gándara. The summit builds on the research presented and held discussions at the UC-Mexico Initiative's *Students We Share Symposium* (Casa de California, Mexico City, Sept. 2016) and from recent discussions held during President Napolitano's trip to Mexico City in March 2017.

The research concluded that the US and Mexico share hundreds of thousands of students but their educational needs go unmet and their potential is put at risk because of poor communication, bureaucratic challenges, language barriers and inadequate and unequal educational opportunities on both sides of the border.

Superintendent Torlakson met with Mexico's Secretary of Education Aurelio Nuño Mayer as well as other governmental officials to discuss ways California could work more closely with Mexico to address such challenges.

"It is critical that we work together to provide support to students who end up attending schools in both California and Mexico so they are not left behind and can receive a world-class education," Torlakson said.

The summit was attended by both

### SETTING THE STAGE:

State of California has the largest public education system in the nation with more than 6.2 million students at 10,000 schools:

- 54% of these students are Latino.
- nearly 1.4 million are English learners.
- ~1 million children in California have parents who are undocumented.
- 750,000 students are at risk of deportation because of their migratory status or that of their parents.
- 21% of San Diego students in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades studied and lived in Mexico.

Mexico launched in March 2017 a "Educación sin Fronteras" initiative to benefit the thousands of students that return to Mexico:

- Mexico Senate approves 13 modifications to the General Education Law, including the *revalidación* of studies undertaken abroad.
- 500,000 students (preK-12) were born and studied in the U.S., and 10% of these youth residing in Baja California.
- 11% of students in Tijuana of 3<sup>rd</sup> secondary and 1<sup>st</sup> preparatoria lived and studied in the US.



US and Mexico researchers as well as representatives of NGOs who shared updates on the current data, and collaborative programs that could be launched during the next 18 months.

Identified deliverables include:

- Amending Mexico's 911 form to include not only the country of origin of a new student but the State and the school district as well.
- Training the Trainers or "Formadores de Formadores o Docentes": This project would be jointly sponsored, to train the people who train the teachers on both sides of the border-- an effort to increase the impact by rather than having individual teachers do exchanges or *intercambios*, have a joint program, partly in person and partly online, to train bilingual, binational teachers.
- Expansion of Proyecto SOL 2.0, the online bilingual/binational secondary math (algebra) program with Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG) and San Diego/Tijuana schools. UDG is interested to expand the focus to other subject areas, and there's interest to further test the algebra modules in schools along the California-Mexico

border.

- Increasing the numbers of bilingual teachers on both sides of the border.
- Mexico's interested in applying California's *Seal of Biliteracy* that recognizes high school students' proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation.

While it is true that we cannot fix all the schools to better serve the students we share, we can identify mechanisms between California and Mexico institutions, and within respective regions, to enable and incentivize communications and collaborations. Examples of such collaborations may range from sharing of digital curricular materials, bilingual books and facilitation of periodic regional education workshops. And linking California school districts with available Mexico resources in California, such as the Mexico consulates and the *plazas comunitarias*.



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*The UC-Mexico Initiative was launched in January 2014 to foster a sustained, strategic and equal partnership between the UC system and institutions in Mexico to address issues of mutual concern, and educate our next generation of leaders.*

*Additional information may be found at [ucmexicoinitiative.ucr.edu](http://ucmexicoinitiative.ucr.edu).*