

2012 Hispanic/Latino Summit Report

The Ninth Annual 2012 Hispanic/Latino Summit was held on October 22, 2012 at the Kearney Younes Conference Center. This year's theme was "Your Future Depends On Your Success Today." The purpose of the Summit is to increase the academic success of Hispanic/Latino students. This year the Summit was moved from Omaha to Kearney to provide attendance opportunities for students located further west. The day long Summit provides:

- Opportunities to showcase student success through positive role models,
- Information sessions on how to graduate ready for college and career,
- Guidance on how to plan for the future with intentionality, and
- Resources available to support student success.

The Summit was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education and the Latino American Commission with support from the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, Nebraska State Education Association, Avenue Scholars Foundation, Nebraska Association of School Boards, and Cargill Meat Solutions. Over the past years the planning committee has focused on adding more sessions for youth and more sessions led by youth. Conference registration this year totaled nearly 550 students and staff.

Each year the Summit features students who are role models for other students. The students and the description of their accomplishments were featured in the conference brochure "*Gallery of Stars*". This year 32 students were showcased in the *Gallery of Stars*. The students were nominated by school staff, who described how they have demonstrated exemplary leadership capabilities in the classroom, community, and with their peers.

The 2012 evaluations were again very positive. The keynote session on "The Courage to Dream: My Journey from There to Here" was presented by Reyna Grande who gave a motivational account of how she overcame many challenges to become a college graduate and an award winning author. On a 5 point scale with 1 low and 5 high the keynote session received a 4.48 rating. Some of the student comments about what they learned in her session were:

- Set high expectations
- Work hard to achieve your goals
- Be proud of who you are
- Even if life has obstacles, stay in school no matter what.

Always highly rated by participants was the general session featuring the Student Panel. The panelists gave students and staff opportunities to learn their paths to success. The four students who participated in this year's panel attended either UNL or Southeast Community College. Each student shared insights on how they were able to pursue a college education.

A sampling of the concurrent session topics were: “Hungry for college?” – tips on how to identify your priorities and shop for a college; “Planning for Your Future – Steps to Turn a Dream into a Reality” – tips on how to graduate from high school and plan for a post-secondary experience; “The Miracle Worker” – how to be successful through adversity; “The Leader Within” – the power of words and listening to positive messages; “Make your School No Place for Hate” – how to make your school a place of respect, unity & character; “A Smart Start for Your College Education” – the role of community colleges. Some of the student comments on the concurrent sessions were:

- Never too early to start thinking about college
- Different types of colleges and the costs
- Scholarship information
- Work hard to get a degree to become someone in life

Students were encouraged throughout the day to think about how this information could be used to plan for their futures. Some of the comments on how they would use what they learned were:

- Find your path to do something good in life
- Keep trying because your future matters
- Share what I learned to help others
- Networking helps
- I will take the advice of the student panel and use it
- I won't dropout

Summit highlights which give perspective on the value of this day were:

- One staff member noted that some of their students who attended the Summit last year were ready to drop out of school but because of attending the Summit decided to finish high school.
- Make something out of yourself, make yourself proud.
- I will bring more students next year.