

National Report Demonstrates Widespread Discrimination in Jefferson Parish Public School System

Latino Students Denied Access to Critical Educational Services

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) contracted with a nationally renowned research group, the Equal Rights Center (ERC) based in Washington, DC, to conduct a four week study on the availability of Spanish-language services at individual schools and district-level ESL centers within the Jefferson Parish Public School System. The ERC's final report demonstrates the widespread discrimination against Latino students with Spanish-speaking parents in the school system:

PHONE TESTING: 50 SITES IN 65 CALLS

70.3% of sites were unable to offer any Spanish-language assistance over the phone.

50.8% of the calls were disconnected because the tester was trying to communicate in Spanish.

75.4% of testers rated language access services as "poor," due to Jefferson Parish school staff responding to a Spanish-speaking caller by:

- Laughing at the caller and then hanging up.
- Loudly complaining to another staff member, stating, "They are speaking in Spanish, like I know Spanish. Who do they think I am? I'm hanging up. I don't want to deal with this today."

0% of sites utilized an automated system whereby callers could select a Spanish-language option.

IN-PERSON TESTING: 28 SITES IN 28 VISITS

53.6% of testers were not provided any Spanish-language assistance after clearly requesting and waiting for Spanish-language assistance.

17.9% of sites provided Spanish-language assistance by pulling Spanish-speaking children out of class or by asking other parents waiting in line at the front office to translate.

14.3% of sites knew to contact district staff whose primary responsibility is to provide Spanish-language assistance.

3.6% of sites were able to disseminate a full set of Spanish-language documents regarding the enrollment process.

21.4% provided a mix of Spanish and English documents.

57.1% provided no documents about how to enroll in a Jefferson Parish public school.

7.1% of sites displayed signage on how to obtain Spanish-language assistance.

E-MAIL TESTING: 32 SITES IN 32 E-MAILS

25% of Spanish-language e-mails received a response.

Of the responses received, **25%** responded in English to a Spanish-language e-mail. One response stated, "I do not speak Spanish. Please submit in English."

POSTAL TESTING: 24 SITES IN 24 LETTERS

12.5% of Spanish-language letters received a response.

Of the responses received, **66.7%** were in English.