

Samuel Rodriguez Asks This of You and Your Church Come Sunday

For the first time ever, National Education Sunday—an initiative of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference's Faith and Education Coalition—will be celebrated across all 50 states.

From Alaska to Alabama, congregations, especially those representing minorities and other low-income and marginalized communities, will unite in support of a common goal: quality education for all students regardless of ZIP code, ethnicity or income. National Education Sunday will be held on Sept. 3, 2017, and invites congregations from multiple denominations and ethnic backgrounds to commit to advocating for and working on behalf of education excellence in their communities.

Dr. Andrea Ramirez, Executive Director of the Faith and Education Coalition – NHCLC, adds, "Churches are central to much of American life, but this is perhaps especially true when it comes to Hispanic, African-American and immigrant communities. As such, church gatherings are a natural place for parents and community leaders to discuss education. So often, these communities have been left out of the discussion or unsure of how to even begin to get involved. Education Sunday is an effective means by which more people at a grassroots level can engage this critically important conversation."

Dr. Ramirez notes that Education Sunday is an ideal time to invite a principal, teacher or district leader to share ways the church can best serve and support local students and schools.

"This is a great opportunity to invite all local stakeholders

to the table. Our prayer is that education equity can become a reality for all children across our country. The era of families moving solely to gain access to 'the good schools' needs to end, and churches can be a part of the solution."

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of NHCLC/CONEL and a former public-school educator adds, "A lot of people are unaware that, according to multiple polls, education is consistently the No. 1 or No. 2 most important issue to Hispanics. This is largely because we know that education is—or at least should be—our society's great equalizer. Education Sunday is about helping local communities ensure that remains true for the next generation."

The NHCLC hosts a resource page at [for churches participating in Education Sunday](#). Bilingual tools, resources and other information for parents and church leaders include:

- Education Sunday Tools for Churches: resources include a sample sermon, Bible studies for a variety of age groups, bilingual "Back to School" tips from Scholastic, bilingual information from the College Board and more.
- More through the year: Resources are provided year-round, including a monthly education enewsletter and an electronic bilingual college. Church leaders will learn how they can participate in state-based conversations such as school accountability and guaranteeing English language learners have access to information for student success.
- Parent Toolkit: Parents can plan for a successful school year with tips for student success, parent-teacher conference guides, suggestions for test prep and links to academic standards by grade level.

Dr. Antipas Harris, a member of the NHCLC Board and a leader in the Faith and Education Coalition, encourages African-American churches to join Education Sunday: "From both practical and moral perspectives, education is a key mechanism

in pursuit of equality in society. Education sharpens students' critical thinking and prepares them for an outstanding future. Education Sunday shows that the church advocates for children to rise to fulfill their God-given potential. That is as true of the African-American community as it is for Hispanics, whites and Asians. All groups and communities should be involved in ensuring education equity for our children."

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC/CONEL), the nation's leading organization for 16 million Hispanic-American Evangelicals, founded Education Sunday in 2005. The NHCLC holds education as one of its core directives, advocating for education equity and high academic standards for all students. "When we come together on behalf of our children and our students, we act as an influencing agent within our culture and an agent of change within our communities.

Join us on Sept. 3 as we support excellent education options for every child in America," adds Rev. Rodriguez.