

# **Introducing a Support Model for English Language Learners in Catholic High Schools**

“I’m not racist! In fact, I try to be color blind. I don’t even notice the color of my students. I try to look at them as being all the same.” (Statement made by a Catholic high school administrator and teacher).

Tragically, this mentality has contributed to the academic failure of many English Language Learners (ELL) and students of color. For decades, educators and administrators have struggled to close the achievement gap between white students, African American students, and Hispanic/Latino students. Then, COVID-19 hit. The result was disastrous for many ELL students (who represent the fastest growing student population in the nation) and students of color. Adding to the challenges, racial tensions erupted across the nation in protests, riots, and pleas for change—while calling upon teachers and administrators to move forward with diverse and effective advancements (to be achieved with dwindling resources and while wearing COVID-safe masks).

Where do we go from here?

Although the task can feel insurmountable, there are practical steps that Catholic high school leaders and classroom teachers can take to realize positive gains in

academic achievement for all students, emotional and spiritual healing, as well as cultural and racial awareness and growth. Pamela Patnode, Ed.D. articulates these manageable steps in her research-based text *¿Me Puede Enseñar?: A Guide to Educating Hispanic/Latino Students in Catholic High Schools*. In this text, Dr. Patnode identifies successful practices related to

- the daily school schedule,
- in-class student validation,
- school-wide cultural affirmation,
- discipline,
- daily spiritual exercises,
- teacher professional development,
- tutoring,
- college readiness,
- school – home communication,
- mental health, and more.

Ave Maria Press is making this text, summary information, and a series of webinars available to Catholic administrators and teachers. Let's close the gap. Working together, we can be the source of positive change in a world that needs healing and hope. Join us!