



PRESS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FLORIDA'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES UNLIKELY TO BE PREPARED TO
ENGAGE IN FLORIDA'S GLOBAL TRADE, REPORT SAYS**
~REPORT CALLS FOR FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN~

Tampa, FL- According to a report released today by ENLACE Florida, only **0.6%** of Florida's high school students take a course on Latin America and the Caribbean—home to Florida's most valuable trading partners. In fact, sixty-percent of Florida's total exports were destined for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2006, and with so few students in Florida learning about the region, high school graduates are unlikely to be prepared to engage and compete in Florida's global trade. "The first question educators should ask when developing a curriculum designed to prepare students to compete in the global economy should be: who are we trading with?," said Dr. Paul Dosal, Executive Director for ENLACE Florida. Approximately 30,000 companies export from Florida today and most trade directly with Latin American countries, making the region of significant importance for students graduating from Florida's schools and looking to participate in Florida's economy. According to a Florida businessman and former member of the State Board of Education Charles Garcia, the global marketplace requires future employees to prepare for the markets beyond Florida's borders. "Barriers are quickly disappearing and in order to survive, companies have to compete in the international marketplace," said Garcia. Florida's State Board of Education is currently revising its Sunshine State Standards to develop World Class Education Standards that will "prepare Florida's students to effectively engage, communicate, and compete in a global economy." In the upcoming legislative session, Speaker of the House Marco Rubio has once again placed a high priority on the development of a "world-class curriculum to improve the rigor and relevance of our schools." Rubio explains that "our children are no longer just competing with children in Birmingham and Seattle for the jobs of the future; their competition sits in the classrooms of Bangalore and Shanghai." Revisions to the math and science standards

have been completed, and the state's Social Science Standards are currently being revised. It is therefore appropriate and timely for state educators and policy makers to consider the essential elements of a rigorous and relevant social studies curriculum that will prepare our students to participate fully, communicate effectively, and compete advantageously in the global economy of the twenty-first century.

***ENLACE FLORIDA** is a statewide network funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and managed by NCCEP to promote college readiness, access, and success for Latinos, African-Americans, and other underrepresented students through non-partisan research, communication, advocacy, and support.*