This manuscript seeks to gain a better understanding of the causal dynamics behind Latino political representation and Latino educational performance, and uses data on Texas public school districts from 1997-2001. Specifically, the authors examine whether political representation directly or indirectly enhances Latinos’ educational performance, as measured by their standardized test scores. This MS would be of interest to scholars of state politics in more than one sub-field and makes a modest contribution the general field of political science. This manuscript should revised and resubmitted to SPPQ, conditional on several revisions.

**Major Points:**

As the other contend, “Beyond Polinard, Wrinkle, and Longoria (1990), no previous analyses have clearly demonstrated the direct and indirect relationships between political representation, bureaucratic representation, and student performance. A model is needed to clearly delineate the effects of both political and bureaucratic representation on Latino educational outcomes and build consensus regarding the causal relationships among these variables.” Given that this is the main purpose of this article, the authors need to do a better job at offering a substantive interpretation of their results. For example, having an increase in the percentage of Latino school board members would improve the likelihood of Latino passage rates by what percentage. How would this compare if we were to only focus on the direct effects (e.g. Latino school teachers) on Latino educational performance? By doing so, they would be able to more clearly delineate how their research findings extend the work by Meier and his collaborators on this topic.

The literature review overlooks several key areas of research pertaining to both the empirical and theoretical work on representation. First, given that the bulk of the work that looks at the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation has been done on Blacks, there need be some mention of this. From a theoretical standpoint, the work by Pitkin (1967) on the concept of representation is also another important piece. Given that much of the research on minority representation has been done with respect to Blacks, the authors need to mention that the relationship between school board member/administrator/teacher ethnic composition and minority educational performance also holds for other ethnic/racial minorities (e.g. Blacks). Either Meier or one of his students has found this relationship to be true with respect to Blacks, so some citation is needed. Finally, while the authors discuss the existing research documenting the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation, a growing body of literature has also questioned this relationship (see Swain 1991). It is important for the authors to acknowledge that descriptive representation does not always lead to
substantive representation, but perhaps given the fact that the research focuses on local representation, this relationship is stronger and more dynamic.

**Minor Points:**

In Figure 1, based on the existing research, shouldn’t there be arrows going from % Latinos on school board and % Latino administrators to the percentage of Latinos passing TAAS?

Figure 2 is very difficult to read and follow—there is simply too much information provided. Give that the coefficient estimates are presented in the Appendix B, I would recommend rethinking the manner in which these estimates are presented.

The authors need to tell readers what TAAS significance when they first introduce it in the text (first paragraph on page 10).

It would be helpful to the reader if the authors provided some information on good to average percentage of Latinos who pass the TAAS and how it compare to non-Latinos. Also, have the authors considered conducting the same analysis on Blacks?
Review

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Latino Representation and Education: Pathways to Latino Student Performance

The purpose of the research is to demonstrate the direct and indirect effects of descriptive representation on Latino student performance on standardized tests. This study contributes to the larger body of research on representation and education. The efforts to develop a causal model and tease out the effects of representation on outcomes addresses an important gap in the literature that has established the link between descriptive representation and various outcomes. That said, there remain some fundamental issues that the authors need to address in both discussion and empirical testing in order to draw out the causal claims they make. A careful revisions of this study should address the role of diversity context on both theoretical and empirical aspects to the study. The recommended revisions are feasible and would make the findings and larger conclusions substantially more robust. This is a solid manuscript that can make a significant contribution to the state politics and policy literature.

1. Diversity and Demographic Context in the Districts

In accord with the literature in this area, the authors find that districts with more Latino representation (measured as school board members, school administrators and teachers) also have a larger percentage of Latino students pass the state standardized test. Here, the authors argue that larger percentages of Latino students in a district yields more Latino school board members, who in turn hire more Latino administrators and teachers. Ultimately, pass rates are higher among Latino students in districts with more co-ethnic representatives.

The authors must attend (in both theoretical discussion and empirical testing) to the role that ethnic and racial composition of the district and local community have on the sequence of relationships they posit.

The theory and findings rest on two necessary conditions: First, the community has to have a candidate pool of Latinos for multiple slots on the school board. Second, there must also be a college educated candidate pool of Latinos for administrative and teaching positions. It seems intuitive that districts with this profile would also have a larger supply of Latino students that perform well on standardized minimum skills tests.

They show more Latino board members and administrators hire more co-ethnics and that Latino students perform well in these conditions. This is not necessarily substantive representation, it could be that there are simply more Latinos in the applicant pool and more able Latino students in these districts.

Are the authors simply showing that communities with a more educated Latino labor force (demonstrated by number of Latino professionals in the school system) also have school districts
where Latino students perform well on a minimum skills test? Demonstrate that this is more than an artifact of educational patterns and demography in Texas.

If it is indeed co-ethnic boards, administrators and teachers driving higher scores, then the authors would need to demonstrate that the scores are significantly improved within districts, from one year to the next, as representation increases. Table 2 does not state whether the different years are statistically different from each other along any of the measures.

Finally, the relationships are described as linear. By this rationale, 100% representation would equal 100% pass rates among Latinos. Certainly this is not the case. Most representation literature (including many studies cited in this paper) accounts for curvilinear effects of descriptive representation on outcomes. This should be tested and reported somewhere in this paper as well.

Tests for endogeneity are important for this paper that takes causal modeling seriously.

2. Descriptive and Substantive Representation

The authors state they illustrate that descriptive representation becomes substantive representation. Yet there is no public opinion measure to assess what substantive representation would be for the group in the analysis. Substantive representation means there is a degree of convergence between group and elite preferences. This paper has no measure for Latino group preferences on any education oriented public policy. Thus it is not quite accurate to say that they demonstrate substantive representation. If they are using Latino student population and pass rates as a proxy for Latino preferences, this should be stated in the paper.

What is the explanation in the cases where Latinos are the majorities on boards and bureaucracies and scores are poor? How do they account for descriptive representation associated with both very high and low pass rates?

It seems that all board members, administrators and teachers should have the same district/state incentives and punishments for pass rates. What is the theoretical reason that one would expect non-Latino representatives and bureaucrats to lack interest in Latino student outcomes if the schools face the same incentives and disincentives for performance? What does it mean for “race to be a salient factor”? This is used several times in the paper but unclear about which actors think race is salient or how it is salient for districts or other actors. How the salience of race for these actors measured?

3. Other Issues

This paper undersells itself. Do not wait until page 7/8 to tell the audience the important gap that is being filled with this study. Explain early on and with more clarity, how this is different than all the other articles that study effects of representation using Texas school board dataset; not just a twist on them. For example, this study offers larger theoretical insight on direct and indirect
effects of descriptive representation that can be studied in other local/state governing bodies and policy areas. The conclusion/discussion portion of the paper should discuss how the findings and theory here can be applied beyond the school district setting to demonstrate broader impact of the research.

The broader impacts, in my view, can be presented best in terms of state politics and policy. As the Latino population continues along its growth trajectory, the states remain the best laboratory to observe how demographic change influences politics and policy. The diversity in the Texas population makes it especially useful for state politics studies. The state population mirrors the rest of the country in many ways (sizeable white, black, Asian, Latino, US and foreign born) that influence politics and stress public institutions.
Reviewer's comments on MS 8-53 Latino Representation and Education

This is a very well done paper. It clearly is deserving of publication. The authors address the question of the impact of Latino representation on educational outcomes of Latino students. This is a significant addition to the literature. The authors build upon the previous work done by scholars in this area and expand it.

The authors focus their attention on examining the effects of both political and bureaucratic representation on Latino student outcomes. Following Meier and O'Toole (2006), they examine the reciprocal nature of the relationships. It is in this area that the authors make their most significant contribution.

While I think that this is a very good paper, I do have some suggestions. First, the authors could do more to make a case for examining a single state (what is gained and what is lost). While I find their expressed rationale convincing, I fear that some readers might need more convincing (See Nicholson-Crotty and Meier, 2002). Secondly, briefly (in three or four sentences), explain the impact or difference that greater heterogeneity among Latinos might make in the analyses. As the majority of Latinos in Texas come from a Mexican background, might this reduce the generalizability of their findings to states with different ethnic heritages?

The analyses and conclusions are clear and well explicated. The authors lay out a course of future work that should further establish the examined relationships. To their work, I suggest adding (or trying to add) more than one state to the study.