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Texas Association for Bilingual Education *Text and Photos by Robert H. Leos*

The 32nd annual conference of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education was held in Arlington, Texas on October 22-25, 2008. The organization serves as a resource for teachers, researchers, administrators, and policy makers. According to the conference program, the organization believes "that only enrichment (additive) forms of bilingual education ensure that language minority students are successful academically and develop age-appropriate English proficiency. To this end, TABE fully endorses and promotes the implementation of research-based two-way/dual language programs and maintenance (late-exit) bilingual programs." I was very pleased with the endorsement and promotion of dual-language bilingual programs.

Many topics pertaining to dual language programs were addressed in the sessions at TABE. In fact, the program even included a pre-conference institute on dual language. Additional sessions on current research in bilingual education reached into areas that have not been fully explored, such as the growing number of ELL students in the middle and high school grades and what it takes to sustain a program once it has been implemented. More information about the conference can be found at the TABE website: www.tabe.org.

Among the highlights of the conference for me was listening to the keynote speeches of two long-time advocates and supporters of bilingual education: Dr. Joe Bernal and Dr. Felipe Alanis. Dr. Bernal served in the Texas House of Representatives, the Texas Senate, and on the State Board of Education. He began his career in education as a teacher and retired from public education as assistant superintendent of the Harlandale Independent School District. During his tenure in the Texas Legislature, Dr. Bernal introduced legislation, in 1969, that successfully led to the removal of the penal code violations if a teacher taught using a bilingual education approach. He was also instrumental in the enactment of legislation that provided teachers with planning time during the school day, created free statewide kindergarten, authorized the first minimum wage law in Texas, and expunged from state statute all laws that supported racial segregation. A profile of Dr. Bernal was published in "The Report" in October 2006 (see www.robertleos.com/Bernal.pdf).

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During his keynote address, Dr. Bernal traced the historical roots of bilingual education in Texas and motivated the audience, comprised of many young educators, to continue their dedication and work on behalf of English language learners.



Dr. Joe Bernal

Dr. Felipe Alanis, Associate Dean of Continuing Education at The University of Texas at Austin, began his career in the Rio Grande Valley as a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. He continued his career in Ector County, serving as executive director for secondary education and as deputy superintendent. Prior to joining the Texas Education Agency as deputy commissioner, Dr. Alanis served as superintendent of the San Benito Consolidated Independent School District, also in the Rio Grande Valley. At the university level, Dr. Alanis served as associate vice chancellor for academic affairs at The University of Texas System. He was named Commissioner of Education in 2002.

*In his address to participants in the TABE conference, Dr. Alanis spoke of his humble beginnings, the influences of his teachers and his mother, and the need to continue the cause of seeing that all children receive a high-quality education. A profile of Dr. Alanis, published in “**The Report**,” can be viewed at www.robertleos.com/Alanis.pdf.*



Dr. Felipe Alanis