

**WHAT'S NEW IN "AMERICAN" EDUCATION:
THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

The two continents, North America and Latin America, that make up the Americas differ tremendously from the continent of Europe. We have only two major languages here; Europe has a multitude. Spanish speakers dominate the Americas, outnumbering the English speakers seven to five.ⁱ None of the Western European languages clearly dominates the others, at least not as a home-spoken language.

The Americas' minority language speakers, the Canadian and the United States English speakers, share roughly the same population as all of the Western Europe continent. Both Europe and the Americas, however, share English as a dominate economic language.

Last year, the United States signed an economic agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), with English-speaking Canada and Spanish-speaking Mexico. Because the agreement limits itself economically to North America, it definitely involves Mexico's significant Spanish speaking population. Indirectly, of course, all of North America will continue to do business with all of Latin America. Both Spanish and English, in other words, play active roles in the growth and success of NAFTA.

Wondering about the direct implications of NAFTA upon the educational needs of San Antonio, Texas, John Moore, of Trinity University's education department, initiated discussions with interested members of the San Antonio community. In response, the Northeast Independent School District and three businesses,

(Southwestern Bell Corporation, Valero Energy Corporation, and Harcourt Brace) created a magnate school that co-exists with the traditional curriculum on the campus of Robert E. Lee High School.

The magnate school carries the title of International School of the Americas.

This academic year, 1994-95, 110 ninth grade students enrolled in the school. Next year 110 new students will enroll. Enrollment is by choice; acceptance competitive.

All students learn educated Spanish and English, because instructors use both languages in all classrooms, teaching all subjects. In addition, all students study a third language, albeit in a traditional classroom setting.

The curriculum also stress science and technology. All students must utilize interactive telecommunication systems, in English and in Spanish, not only with teachers and students throughout the NAFTA region, but throughout the world. All students and all teachers will participate in at least one educational exchange program in a foreign country.

While still in flux, the curriculum offers a new model for United States high schools that have been caught in the burgeoning international community.

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i. Obtaining population figures for the Americas proves more difficult than one might imagine. These figures came from 1992 estimates by the World Bank.