Hispanics push for equality in Palm Beach County school district

PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. -- A group of Hispanic business and community leaders pack the Palm Beach County School board meeting Wednesday night.

They call themselves the Hispanic Education Coalition. The say the district has not done enough to attract and retain Hispanics for leadership and management jobs.

"Regardless of whether this was intentional or neglectful, this matter needs to be addressed," said Donia Roberts, a concerned citizen.

"Hispanic students are still dropping out of high school in this district at a rate double that of their white counter parts," said Carlos Diaz, FAU professor.

Currently, 29 percent of Palm Beach County Students are Hispanic. Meanwhile, less than 10 percent of teachers, principals, or administrators are Hispanic.

Margarita Pinkos is the highest ranking Hispanic at the Palm Beach County School district, as the executive director of multi-cultural education. She says the disparity is alarming, and not enough has been done in the past to address the issue. She says that needs to change.

"I have already spoken to a few people in the administration and they say this is something serious that they want to look at," said Pinkos.

"It's vital for the well being of these students and we're not having that. We don't have that," said Dr. Joaquin Garcia, Hispanic Education Coalition of Palm Beach County.

"It's important right now because we are becoming the largets minority in the United States. And we are going to keep on growing and growing. If we don't address these issues now, when are they going to be addressed," said Santos Arroyo, Puerto Rican Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The coalition says it understand things are not going to change overnight. But 40 principals were promoted since July, not one is Hispanic. People say that's a sign that the district needs to recruit more Hispanic teachers who can be promoted.