The New Demography of America’s Schools

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This presentation includes some preliminary findings and observations from a multi-year study of the No Child Left Behind Act and its implications for elementary and secondary students from immigrant families and with limited English skills. The study began in Fall 2004 and has been funded primarily by the Foundation for Child Development, with additional support provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Given during a breakfast briefing at the Migration Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., on September 30, 2005, this presentation marked the public release of The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act, by Randy Capps, Michael Fix, Julie Murray, Jason Ost, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Shinta Herwantoro.
Promise or Peril? Study Components

- **Census-based demographic profile of LEP students, children of immigrants**
- **Analysis of characteristics of high-LEP schools (25%+ LEP students)**
- **Road map of NCLB issues affecting children of immigrants, LEPs**
- **Case studies of high-LEP elementary schools in 3 districts**

Creation of immigrant education network

Our study is titled “Promise or Peril” to highlight both the potential positive and negative implications of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for children of immigrants, limited English proficient (LEP) children, and the schools that serve them. (Please note we use the term “LEP” here, defined by the Census as persons ages 5 and over who do not speak English at home and speak English less than very well. School districts and others often use the term “English Language Learner” (ELL) to refer to the same population.) The study focuses primarily on the early grades (Prekindergarten through 5th grade), but also considers some issues affecting older children in secondary schools. It includes four main components:

1. A demographic profile of children in the nation’s schools, enrolled in Prekindergarten through 12th grade. This profile is mostly based on 2000 Census data, and includes information about children and parents’ countries of birth, citizenship, legal status, the languages they speak, their English language ability, income, poverty and other characteristics.

2. A road map describing the ways in which NCLB has changed requirements for states, districts and schools under Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs. This document focuses on how these changes may affect children of immigrants and LEP children in terms of their assessment, instruction, and other aspects. It also addresses changing requirements for teachers and staff, parental involvement, and the potential impact of NCLB sanctions on under-performing schools with large LEP and immigrant student populations.

3. An analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data on high-LEP schools. This analysis uses the SASS to compare high-LEP schools to other schools in terms of student demographics, instructional programs, and other factors.

4. Case studies of two high-LEP elementary schools each in three major urban school districts. We will visit two elementary schools in three sites during two school years—2004-05 and 2005-06—to see how NCLB implementation is affecting these schools and their large LEP and immigrant student populations.
**NCLB: Promise or Peril**

**NCLB has potential to improve education of LEP/immigrant students:**

- **Test score disaggregation:** Schools are accountable for the academic performance of LEP students.
- **Sanctions for failure:** Schools must offer transfer, supplemental services.
- **Tracking language acquisition:** LEP students must make progress in learning English.
- **Appropriately trained staff:** Every bilingual/ESL classroom must have a qualified teacher.
- **Expanded parental involvement?**

The No Child Left Behind Act has the potential to improve the education of children of immigrants and LEP students in several important ways. For the first time there is a federal mandate for schools to measure and improve the performance of LEP students. Under NCLB, LEP students are one of the key groups that must be tested, with their passing rates on tests increasing over time, and with schools held accountable for their performance. This ensures that educating LEP students will be a top priority of schools across the country.

Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) curricula are likely to change in order to ensure that LEP students perform better on standardized tests in the future. Since LEP students will be required to learn the same content and take similar tests as other students, NCLB has the potential to better integrate and align LEP students’ classroom instruction with instruction for other students. This has the potential to enhance the quality of education for LEP students.

Parents of LEP students, and immigrant parents have the same rights as other parents under NCLB: to be informed of their child’s progress on tests, their school’s progress on meeting standards, and their right to access supplemental services and/or transfer their child to another school if that school fails to make sufficient progress. This may enable immigrants to transfer their children out of low-performing schools.

Additionally, every bilingual and ESL classroom, just like other classrooms, must have a fully qualified teacher. This should help ensure that LEP students receive the same quality of instruction as other students.

Finally, since mandatory testing begins in third grade, NCLB may result in more emphasis on Kindergarten and Prekindergarten, in order to fight fade-out and better prepare children for classroom instruction and tests. This would benefit all children, including LEPs and immigrants.
Points of Departure

- Mismatch between immigration and integration policy
- NCLB: A revolution in immigrant integration policy?
- Bridge education and immigration experts, advocates

Three points set the context for this work:

First, we contend that there is a mismatch between immigration and immigrant integration policies: Despite high sustained admissions, integration policy remains ad hoc, underfunded, largely a creature of the states.

Second, we contend that the NCLB may be the most important piece of integration legislation enacted in a decade. It not only requires that schools identify and teach LEP kids, but also holds schools accountable for their performance.

Third, despite its centrality to integration, education has not been a central focus of many immigration advocates and experts. The complexity of education policy, its extreme devolved character and the resulting high barriers to intellectual entry make it difficult for advocates and experts to enter the debate.
Six Challenges for NCLB

- **Rapid change and dispersal to new growth communities**
- **Higher share of foreign born “late entrants” in secondary vs. elementary schools**
- **Children of immigrants fit into multiple “protected” groups, complicating accountability**
- **High concentration of LEPs**
- **Over half of LEPs in both elementary and secondary schools are U.S.-born**
- **Most LEP children live in linguistically isolated families**

The first challenge is rapid, immigration-led demographic change – especially in the states with the most rapidly growing immigrant populations. The second challenge is the concentration of late-entering immigrant and recently arrived immigrant kids in secondary schools, highlighting the fact that secondary schools in the U.S. are often not equipped to teach basic language skills and content courses to these late entrants.

A third, related challenge is the fact that children of immigrants fall into multiple protected groups under NCLB – they’re not only often considered low income but minority and LEP – a kind of triple jeopardy that means schools in which they are concentrated have more standards to meet and that they are less likely to meet them.

The fourth challenge is high concentration of LEP students in few schools.

Fifth is that over half of both LEP elementary and secondary students are natives at minimum stands as eloquent testimony to the need for the kind of accountability that NCLB at least promises.

Sixth and last is the fact that most of these children do not just attend segregated schools but also live in linguistically isolated families: this underscores the value of holistic programs that serve the whole family.
Although some uncertainty remains over the number of immigrants coming to the United States during the 1990s, there are indications that at least 14 million and perhaps as many as 16 million immigrants entered the country during the decade (according to our estimates based on Census 2000); this figure far exceeds flows in any decade in the nation’s history.

Given the overall levels of legal immigration (about 800,000 or so per year), it is likely that the net in-flow of undocumented immigrants averaged about 500,000 per year over the decade, but the level of undocumented entries was much higher, since many undocumented immigrants return to their home countries.

Barring a major change in the nation’s immigration policy or a sustained deterioration in the economy, we project that at least 15 million immigrants will arrive between 2000 and 2010.

The pattern of immigration before the 1960s reflects economic upturns and downturns of the U.S. economy and those of major sending areas. Other fluctuations can be traced to wars and restrictions in U.S. policy. For instance, U.S. immigration fell substantially following the National Origin Quotas Act of 1924, which reduced legal immigration from Europe and Asia. The two decades with the least immigration were the 1930s and 1940s, immediately following this legislation and corresponding with the Great Depression and World War II.

In 1965, the National Origin Quotas were repealed, legal immigration quotas were increased substantially, and a new system emphasizing family reunification was enacted. Since then, increasing immigration flows have proved largely impervious to changes in economic conditions and foreign wars, although flows have decreased somewhat since September 11, 2001.

Sources: Department of Homeland Security Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (various years); Urban Institute estimates and projections.
Immigrant Numbers at Peak – Percentage Is Not

This chart depicts the “stock” of immigrants in the United States—in other words, the foreign-born population—from 1850 through 2004 with a projection to 2010.

The foreign-born population reached 34 million—an all-time high—in 2004 (The chart suggests a very rapid increase in the late 1990s, but the true growth trajectory is probably smoother with the rapid change at the end of the decade representing significant improvements in measurement between the Current Population Surveys done in the 1990s and those done following the 2000 Census.)

The sustained rapid growth and high levels of immigration, shown in the previous chart, have led to the foreign-born population more than tripling in only 30 years, shown in this chart.

The percentage of the total population that is foreign-born was about 12 percent in 2004—more than double the 4.7 percent in 1970. That said, the 1970 levels are probably the lowest in the history of the country (certainly the lowest since we have data).

Looking ahead a decade, we project that the the foreign-born population will rise to more than 40 million, representing more than 13 percent of the total population—a level that remains below the historical peak of almost 15 percent in 1910, the end of the last great wave of immigration.

Just as immigrants are a rising share of the total population, the children of immigrants—both foreign and U.S.-born—are a rising share of the nation’s K-12 student population: The share of children who are children of immigrants has tripled from 6 to 20 percent between 1970 and 2000.

The share of the overall student population that the children of immigrants represent will continue to expand, driven primarily by increases in the second generation. If current trends continue, children of immigrants will constitute 25 percent of the nation’s school population by 2010.

Three out of four children of immigrants are born in the U.S. and are members of the second generation. Only one in four children with immigrant parent(s) is foreign-born and a member of the first generation. Thus in 2000, only about 5 percent of school-age children were themselves foreign-born immigrants.

Another major demographic story of the 1990s is a broad rise in the undocumented population. The chart sub-divides the foreign-born population in 2004 according to estimates of legal status from the Pew Hispanic Center (Passel 2005).

In 2004, there were roughly equal shares of undocumented immigrants (those who entered without authorization, overstaying visas, or in a few cases have temporary protected status), and legal immigrants (i.e., green card holders, or those admitted for permanent residency who had not yet become citizens): about 10 million each. A slightly larger share (31 percent) were naturalized citizens (legal immigrants who had been in the U.S. long enough to become citizens, had applied, and been approved). Much smaller shares of immigrants were refugees (immigrants who fled persecution—7 percent) and legal temporary residents (visitors such as students and temporary workers—3 percent).

The undocumented population has been steadily increasing in size (and possibly by larger and larger increments since the early 1990s). Similarly, the naturalized citizen population has grown rapidly in recent years as increasing numbers of legal immigrants have become eligible and taken advantage of the opportunity to naturalize. The legal permanent resident (LPR) alien population, on the other hand, has actually been decreasing as the number who have naturalized (or left the U.S. or died) has exceeded the number being admitted.

Foreign-born children, referred to in this chart as the “first generation,” compose a very small share of all students in PK through 5th grade (3 percent). Second generation children make up 16 percent of all children PK – 5. Thus, over 80 percent of children of immigrants in the lower grades are U.S.-born.

In grades 6-12, foreign-born children are a somewhat larger share of the total student population (7 percent), and second-generation children are a smaller share (12 percent). Just under two thirds of children of immigrants 6-12 are U.S.-born.

At both levels, foreign-born children are evenly divided between legal and undocumented immigrants, with a relatively small share who have naturalized and become U.S. citizens. Nonetheless, only 1 percent of all children PK - 5 and 3 percent of children 6-12 are undocumented.

Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2000 Census, 1 percent Public Use Microdata Sample.
Along with the rapid growth in their total number, immigrants also became increasingly dispersed across the United States during the 1990s, with many immigrants settling in communities that have comparatively little recent experience with newcomers. Prior to 1995 the six major destination states (CA, NY, TX, FL, IL, and NJ) shown here in dark blue had roughly three-quarters of the nation’s immigrant population for several decades. That share declined somewhat during the late 1990s, and by 2000 only about two-thirds of the immigrant population lived in these six states.

Especially rapid growth occurred during the 1990s in the 22 “new growth” states shown here in red (or medium shade if in black and white); growth was particularly rapid during the last half of the 1990s. The new growth states are located in a wide band across the middle of the country, and include many of the Rocky Mountain, Midwest and Southeastern states. The fastest growth rates occurred in the 10 states shown here in solid red. (Despite rapid growth many still have relatively small, total immigrant populations.)

Unlike the major destination states, the immigrant population in the new growth states is disproportionately made up of recent arrivals – almost 60 percent arrived in the 1990s, most since 1995. Recency of arrival is correlated with lower incomes and limited English language skills.

Many of these “next destination” states have limited experience and infrastructure for settling newcomer families.

This chart illustrates the 10 states with the largest percentages of children of immigrants in Prekindergarten (PK) through 5th grade – the best approximation of elementary school years available in the census data. More than any other state, California is the home of the largest number of young children of immigrants. It far surpasses the national average, 19 percent, weighing in at 47 percent of all students and accounting for 1.5 million children in California. The next highest state is Nevada, where 29 percent of elementary-school age students is the child of an immigrant.

The majority of states (38 out of 50) have proportions of children of immigrants below the national average, so children of immigrants are most heavily concentrated in just a few states. In fact, the number of children of immigrants (PK – 5) in three of these states (California, Texas and New York) outnumber all young children of immigrants in the rest of the United States combined.

Except for Hawaii, all of the top 10 states with the highest proportions of children of immigrants are in the Southwest or on the East Coast. Florida is the only Southeastern state, and none of the Midwestern states are on this list.

Throughout the remainder of this presentation, most of the data displayed are for PK through 5th grade. In most cases, patterns for the higher grades are similar, unless otherwise specified.

Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2000 Census, 1 percent Public Use Microdata Sample.
The states with the fastest growing populations of school-age children of immigrants are not the same, for the most part, as the states with the largest population of these children. They are located in the Southeast, Midwest, and interior West (neighboring California), regions which also experienced the fastest growth in their overall immigrant populations (Capps, Fix, and Passel 2002). States in these regions mostly experienced growth rates exceeding 50 percent for the number of children of immigrants in PK to 5th grade between 1990 and 2000. Nevada had the fastest growth rate (206 percent). North Carolina, Georgia, Nebraska, Arkansas, Arizona, and South Dakota all had growth rates exceeding 100 percent.

By contrast, the national growth rate for children of immigrants was only 39 percent during the 1990s. The six major immigration states—California, New York, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey—all experienced growth rates in the number of children of immigrants under 50 percent.

Similar trends are evident for states in terms of growth in the population of children of immigrants in 6th to 12th grade.

Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2000 Census, 1 percent Public Use Microdata Sample.
Now we turn briefly to countries of origin for children of immigrants in PK through 5th grade. Over half of foreign-born children were born in Mexico, other Latin American countries or the Caribbean. In fact, over a third of all foreign-born children were born in Mexico. Another quarter were born in Asian countries. Only 17 percent were born in Canada, Europe, or “Oceania” (Australia or New Zealand). The smallest share (4 percent) was born in Africa.

The breakdown shown here reflects the overall pattern for immigrants in the United States. Whether we look at younger immigrant children, older children, immigrant adults, or immigrant parents with children, we see the same pattern: just over half were born in Latin America and the Caribbean, with over a third born in Mexico.

The country of origin distribution shown here is relatively recent. Until about a generation ago, most immigrants and their children were born in European countries—a pattern that extends to the nation’s earliest days. During previous large waves of migration there were times during which individual countries—for instance Germany and Italy—accounted for 30 percent or more of all immigrants, and so the high share of immigrants from Mexico is not unusual by historical standards.

Spanish Increasingly Prevalent – Sharp Increases in 1990s

Rising immigration has been accompanied by growth in the number of children from homes where a language other than English is spoken.

The number of children who speak a language other than English at home more than doubled from 5.1 to 10.6 million between 1980 and 2000.

There has been a steady rise in the share of children from Spanish-speaking families who represented two thirds of all non-English speaking families in 2000. Spanish speakers grew faster than speakers of other languages.

The number of children from families that speak neither Spanish nor English doubled from 1.7 to 3.5 million between 1980 and 2000.

The increase accelerated after 1995 as we see substantial increases registered in the number of children from Spanish-speaking families as well as from those that speak Asian and “other non-English” languages between 1995 and 2000.

Put differently, both the number and diversity of students from families speaking a language other than English rose rapidly in the late 1990s.

One in 10 Kindergarteners is Limited English Proficient

Share of Children by Grade Level
* Only measured for ages 5 and over.
** All persons over 14 in household are LEP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Limited English proficient*</th>
<th>Linguistically isolated**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st to 5th grade</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th to 12th grade</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census, 1 percent PUMS, 2000

There are fewer than half as many LEP children as children of immigrants, according to the 2000 Census. (3.3 versus 10.8 million in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade) The definition of “limited English proficient” used in this presentation includes all those children who speak a language other than English at home, and speak English less than “very well” (The other responses are “well”, “not well” and “not at all”). Please note that the Census only measures spoken English proficiency, while schools are also concerned about English reading and writing, and that school data tend to show higher shares of LEP students than the Census.

The LEP share is highest in kindergarten (10 percent), falling to 6 percent in the lower grades and 4 percent in the upper grades. Thus as children move through the school system, the share with limited English proficiency falls but does not disappear altogether. New arrivals—first generation children who recently entered the country—account for a substantial share of the LEP children in the upper grades.

The LEP share in PK is only 7 percent, suggesting some under-representation of LEPs in PK. Please note that the Census only asks English proficiency of persons starting at age 5. Thus, only those children in PK who are age 5 are included in the LEP share shown here (Our definition of PK includes children ages 3 to 5).

The share of children living in linguistically isolated families—those where all members over 14 are LEP—is slightly lower but shows a similar pattern. About 8 percent of children in kindergarten live in linguistically isolated households, dropping to 4 percent for children in grades 6-12. Once again, the linguistically-isolated share is substantially lower in PK (5 percent), suggesting under-enrollment of children in linguistically isolated families.

Finally, 8 out of 10 LEP children in kindergarten and 6 out of 7 in grades 1-5 are also linguistically isolated. In the upper grades, this ratio is only about two-thirds. This means that LEP children in PK - 5 have fewer resources at home to help them learn English than do children in the upper grades.
More LEP Children are Native Than Foreign-Born

Limited English Proficient Students in Grades K-12

- First Generation 35%
- Second Generation 46%
- Third+ Generations 19%

Source: Urban Institute tabulations from C2SS PUMS. Includes Puerto Ricans.

LEP students in kindergarten through 12th grade are overwhelmingly the children of immigrants, as over 80 percent are first or second generation.

- However, only slightly over one-third of the LEP students K-12 were born abroad themselves.
- The largest share of LEP students K-12 are second generation, the U.S.-born children of immigrants, accounting for just under half of the LEP students.

Put differently, about two-thirds of the LEP K-12 students are U.S. natives.

Almost one-fifth of LEP students are U.S.-born children of U.S. natives (i.e., the third generation). About 15 percent of this group are students of Puerto Rican descent. A significant share may also be third or higher generation children of Mexican origin living in the Southwest.

If we disaggregate the previous slide by grade level, we see very different patterns for children in the younger and older grades. Here we show the same data separately for elementary school (PK through 5th grade) and secondary school (6th through 12th grade).

Among LEP children PK-5, over three quarters are U.S. born citizens. Over half are second generation (U.S.-born with foreign-born parents), but a substantial share (18 percent) are third generation or higher (i.e., they and their parents were born in the United States). Only about a quarter of LEP children pre-K-5 are themselves immigrants.

The share of immigrants among LEP children in grades 6-12 is much higher (44 percent) and the share second-generation much lower (27 percent). The higher share of third generation among LEP children 6-12 may be explained by late-entering children from Puerto Rico.

These figures support our earlier conjecture that secondary schools may feel the impact of immigrant students—especially late entrants—more than elementary schools. Secondary schools have more LEP students born abroad and in Puerto Rico, while in elementary schools the majority of LEP children have U.S.-mainland born parents.

Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2000 Census, 1 percent Public Use Microdata Sample.
Poverty has increased substantially among children of immigrants over the past thirty years, just as their numbers have increased. By 1995, 30 percent of the children of immigrants (both U.S. and foreign-born) and over 40 percent of immigrant children (i.e., foreign-born) lived in families with incomes below the poverty line. Their poverty rates were almost as high as those of African Americans—representing a major shift from 1970 when immigrant rates were closer to non-Hispanic whites. High poverty among the children of immigrants is thus a relatively recent phenomenon.

Rapid increases in the number and share of the children of immigrants coupled with patterns of income inequality shown here will continue to be important factors in the distribution of NCLB Title I funding at state, district and school levels, with more and more funding following streams of poor recent immigrants’ children.

However, we see a striking reversal in this 25 year trend occurring between 1994 and 2000 with poverty rates for African American, immigrant children and children of immigrants falling rapidly. The steepest proportionate declines are registered by the children of immigrants.

We see only a small decline for white, non-Hispanic children. With the slowdown in the economy and an upturn in poverty rates after 2000, poverty increases across each of these groups of children, but more for immigrant children than others.

In this slide we see a very strong correlation between LEP and economically disadvantaged status. Fully two-thirds of LEP children in pre-K through 5th grade are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; 60 percent of LEP children in grades 6-12 are eligible for free or reduced price lunch (not shown). These rates are about twice as high as the rates of disadvantage for English proficient children. This finding is in keeping with our previous research in Los Angeles and New York City, which showed that limited English proficiency is the single factor most associated with poverty and hardship among immigrants in those two cities.

These figures also suggest a very large overlap between LEP and economically disadvantaged students, both mandated groups under NCLB. Many schools with large LEP student populations also have large economically disadvantaged populations, adding further complications for the education of these children.

About one half of LEP children pre-K – 5 have parents with less than a high school education and one quarter have parents with less than a 9th-grade education. In comparison, only 11 percent of English proficient children have parents with less than a high school education, and just 2 percent have parents with less than a 9th-grade education.

These findings suggest another challenge that faces elementary and secondary schools with high LEP student populations. Not only must they overcome the limited English skills of children and their parents, but in many cases they must also educate and involve parents with very limited experience with formal educational institutions.

Source: U.S. Census, 1 percent PUMS, 2000