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## ABSTRACT

The Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) was created in 1993 by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to focus on immigrant secondary education and the challenges faced by older limited English proficient students and the high-poverty schools they attend. This report documents the changes in immigrant student populations and notes the challenges faced by demonstration projects created by PRIME, responses of participating schools and their reform partners, and lessons learned. The report emphasizes immigrant teens who arrive in American schools with significant educational gaps and students from language minority homes who have been in American schools longer but have not mastered basic language and literacy skills. PRIME involved a series of studies of how the children of immigrants fare in American schools. Research for this report involved quantitative analyses of aggregate databases and qualitative analysis of policy and practice issues facing PRIME demonstration projects. Researchers visited project schools, interviewing and observing teachers, administrators, and project leaders. Eight chapters examine: (1) "Overlooked and Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools: Core Findings and Conclusions"; (2) "A Profile of Immigrant Students in U.S. Schools" (Jennifer Van Hook and Michael Fix); (3) "The Program in Immigrant Education, Demonstration Sites and Communities"; (4) "New Faces, New Challenges"; (5) "Organizational Barriers in Secondary Schools"; (6) "LEP Immigrant Youth: Standards and School Accountability"; (7) "Responding to the Challenges: The Program in Immigrant Education"; and (8) "Policy Lessons." (Contains a glossary and 101 references.) (SM)

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Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco  
& Michael Fix

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# Overlooked & Underserved

## **Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools**

**Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco  
& Michael Fix**

**with  
Beatriz Chu Clewell**

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We strongly emphasize, though, that the descriptions and assessments of the projects, the overall program, and the lessons it has generated are very much our own.

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## INTRODUCTION

The United States is being transformed by high, continuing levels of immigration. No American institution has felt the effect of these flows more forcefully than the nation's public schools. And no set of American institutions is arguably more critical to the future success of immigrant integration.

Previous studies have found that most children of immigrants fare as well as or better than their native peers in schools, but certain subpopulations have lagged, most notably Mexican and Central American students. These earlier studies have also suggested the importance of focusing greater attention on the educational needs of older (middle and high school-age) limited English proficient (LEP) immigrants and on the challenges facing the high-poverty secondary schools in which they are found.

In 1993, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supported the creation of a program of local demonstration projects focused on immigrant secondary education that addressed some of these challenges. The projects were brought together under what was referred to as the Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME). This report documents the changes in the immigrant student population to which the Program responds,<sup>1</sup> the challenges the demonstration projects faced, and the responses that participating schools made in collaboration with their reform partners. The report also distills lessons drawn from the demonstration projects about improving education for immigrant secondary students.

This report focuses in particular on two subpopulations of immigrant children that pose special challenges to secondary schools but have received little attention. One subpopulation is immigrant teens who arrive in the U.S. school system with significant gaps in their schooling. Many of these children are not fully literate in their native language, much less in English.

The second subpopulation is students from language minority homes who have been in U.S. schools longer, but have yet to master basic language and literacy skills. While these students may be orally proficient in English, their reading and writing skills lag those of their student counterparts. We refer to these students here as long-term LEPs.

This report then focuses on four institutional challenges that the PRIME demonstration schools faced in strengthening education programs for immigrant children. The first challenge was the limited capacity of school staff to instruct these learners. At one level, this capacity issue is caused by a simple shortage of teachers specially trained to teach LEP/immigrant students. At another level, it is the result of the limited number of content teachers (i.e., math, science, or social studies) who can communicate effectively with LEP/immigrant children.

A second challenge to teaching LEP/immigrant students derives from the ways in which secondary schools are organized. The division of secondary schools into departments along the lines of universities, the isolation of language development teachers, and the division of the day into 50-minute periods militate against the kind of individualized instruction students with special learning needs may require.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, our reference to immigrant students includes foreign-born immigrant children as well as the native-born children of at least one foreign-born parent.

Third, the systems of accountability that are now in such ferment as a result of the movement to higher standards in U.S. schools have historically omitted LEP/immigrant students. With few incentives to improve outcomes for these students, little has been expected of them or the schools responsible for educating them.

Finally, institutional analyses revealed that reformers confront wide knowledge gaps about how to simultaneously build both language and subject-matter learning among LEP/immigrant students. Both types of learning are necessary for immigrant teens to graduate from high school in the limited number of school years that are available to them.

**Earlier Studies of Immigrant Education.** As suggested previously, PRIME built on a series of studies of how the children of immigrants fare in U.S. schools and postsecondary institutions. (Many of these studies had been funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.) The studies found that, in the aggregate, immigrants perform as well as or better than their native-born counterparts along a number of dimensions. They were more likely to report high personal and parental aspirations, more likely to take advanced math and science courses, more likely to take advanced placement tests in preparation for college, and as likely to graduate from high school.<sup>2</sup> Immigrant students were also more likely than their native-born counterparts to graduate from college.<sup>3</sup>

However, these larger trends masked the different educational trajectories of several important subpopulations of immigrant children. Central American and Mexican-origin children, especially, were less likely than their native-born counterparts to enroll in school past the 8th grade. If they did enroll, they were more likely to be retained in grade and fail to graduate.

The aggregate performance data also failed to reflect the challenges facing immigrant students who arrive with significant gaps in their schooling. One 1993 study found that approximately 20 percent of LEP<sup>4</sup> students at the high school level and 12 percent of LEPs in middle school had missed two or more years of schooling since the age of six.<sup>5</sup>

Evidence was also mounting that immigrant teens suffered extraordinarily high dropout rates—associated with both how recently they arrived and how difficult they find it to speak or comprehend instruction in English.<sup>6</sup> LEP immigrant students were also found to be concentrated in high-poverty schools troubled by shortages of appropriately trained teachers and instructional materials, and with generally low capacity to educate either immigrant or native-born children.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> White, 1997, RI: Brown Univ, results reported to the U.S. Department of Labor, April 1997; Vernez and Abrahamse, 1996. RAND Corp.

<sup>3</sup> Vernez and Abrahamse, 1996. See also Gray, Rolph, and Melamid, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> A student is limited English proficient (LEP) for purposes of this analysis if there is a reported difficulty in understanding oral English or in speaking, reading, or writing the English language that may impair the student's success in classrooms where the language of instruction is English. To be eligible for federal LEP services, a student must meet additional legal requirements, including coming from a home where a language other than English is the primary language. State and local school districts often develop more specific criteria for LEP status that determine the types of services the students are required or allowed to receive.

<sup>5</sup> Fleischman and Hopstock, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 1995. See chapter 1 for more recent Urban Institute analysis.

<sup>7</sup> McDonnell and Hill, 1993. See also U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994.

**Nature of the Analysis and Organization of the Report.** In carrying out the research for this report, we conducted both quantitative analyses of aggregate databases and a qualitative analysis of the policy and practice issues facing the PRIME demonstration projects. As part of our review, we visited 10 project high schools and middle schools in five school districts. We interviewed more than 60 teachers, school administrators, and project leaders about immigrant education and school reform at their sites. We also observed teachers and students in their classrooms and conducted focus groups with parents and student teachers at selected sites. Although we examined data on student achievement that some sites collected, our assessment does not have the type of comparison data necessary to draw rigorous, empirically based conclusions about project impacts.<sup>8</sup>

Our primary emphasis has been on the challenges the projects faced. While we provide a general description of the reforms the projects introduced, we refer the reader to the separate reports that the projects have themselves published, which explore the curricular and other changes they implemented in much greater depth.<sup>9</sup>

**Organization of the Report.** Chapter 1 reports the main findings and conclusions in a manner accessible to readers without a background in education policy. Chapter 2 provides a statistical profile of immigrant children in the nation's schools, drawing primarily on two national databases: the U.S. Census and the U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Chapter 3 profiles the three demonstration projects and the sites at which they were implemented. Chapter 4 turns to a discussion of the challenges the projects confronted, beginning with the needs of underschooled students, those with low literacy skills, and those who have spent substantial time in U.S. schools but remain limited in their English proficiency. Chapter 4 also discusses special challenges facing secondary schools with large numbers of immigrant students.

Chapter 5 discusses the organizational structure of the secondary school and the barriers it presents to meeting the needs of immigrant students. Chapter 6 considers accountability issues in secondary schools and their relationship to the incentives teachers, principals, and school systems confront in educating immigrant students. Chapter 7 focuses on responses the demonstration sites made to these challenges. Chapter 8 closes with lessons drawn from the demonstration sites and the policy implications that flow from their experiences.

<sup>8</sup> In this connection, we note disagreement among experts as to whether such studies would be profitable given the current scarcity of knowledge about how adolescents develop language literacy and subject-matter knowledge when learning in a second language. Cummins, for example, has argued that the dominant theories about bilingual education remain too formative to guide the generation of predictions about program outcomes under different conditions that are necessary for casual analysis (Cummins, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> A list of these reports is provided in the publications list at the end of this volume.

## Origins and Nature of This Report

This report examines the challenges of educating immigrant children in secondary schools. The principal lens through which we view the issue is an assessment that the Urban Institute conducted of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME). The report's point of departure—like the program itself—is that immigrant students tend to be invisible and omitted from accountability systems, even in schools engaged in systemic reform. The limited attention and dollars dedicated to immigrant children reflect the continuing mismatch between the nation's comparatively generous legal immigration policies and its laissez-faire approach to integrating immigrants into U.S. society following their arrival.<sup>1</sup>

**PRIME.** The demonstration projects that constituted PRIME focused on immigrant children (those who are born abroad or in the United States to immigrant parents) in middle and high schools. The Mellon Program in Immigrant Education involved three major research/demonstration projects in five school districts. The projects were administered, respectively, by California Tomorrow in Hayward and Salinas, California; California State University at Long Beach in Long Beach and Paramount, California; and the University of Maryland Baltimore County, in Prince George's County, Maryland. (Chapter 3 provides descriptions of the demonstration sites.) The program was coordinated by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) in Washington, D.C. The projects focused on three overarching goals:

- Improving immigrant students' English language and literacy.
- Improving their mastery of academic content and skills.
- Improving their preparation for postsecondary opportunities.

## A National Profile of the Immigrant Student Population (Ch. 2)

To understand the larger immigration-related trends in the nation's schools, we developed a national profile of the school-age children of immigrants—both U.S. and foreign born. The profile relies on information from two national data sets: the U.S. Census and the U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Several trends emerged.

### **Steady Growth in the Number of Immigrant Children in the Nation's Schools.**

We found that high, sustained levels of immigration over the course of the past three decades were having a pronounced impact on the nation's schools. As of 1997, 20 percent of school-age children in the United States were the children of at least one immigrant parent, a share that had tripled between 1970 and 1997. In contrast, in 1997, roughly 16

<sup>1</sup> See Fix and Zimmermann, 1994.

percent of the nation's school-age children were black. However, despite their demographic prominence, we contend that the needs of immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) children have been largely absent from national debates over school reform and the equity issues they raise.

**Growth in the LEP Population.** Not surprisingly, growth in the share of the immigrant child population has been accompanied by a rise in the size of the LEP population in the nation's schools. According to parent-reported Census data, 5 percent of the total student population is LEP; 40 percent of foreign-born students in schools are LEP. The school-reported data from the Schools and Staffing Survey yield very similar results. The fact that these school- and parent-reported data generate such similar results reinforces the validity of our LEP measures.

When the school-based LEP population is decomposed, several patterns emerge. First, there is a steady, expected decline in the share of children that are LEP across generations. Nonetheless, 10 percent of LEP children appear to be members of the third generation (i.e., native-born children of native-born parents). The LEP status also varies widely among populations whose native language is not English. In both first and second generations, for example, school-age Mexicans are twice as likely to be LEP as their Asian counterparts.

**Spanish Speakers Increasingly Predominant.** Census data reveal that between 1980 and 1995, the share of immigrant children from homes where Spanish was spoken rose by 64 percent from 3.4 to 5.6 million. During this time, the number of school-age children from homes where another foreign language was spoken rose by only 7 percent from 1.7 to 2.0 million. As a result, the share of immigrant children from homes where Spanish was spoken rose from two-thirds to three-quarters of all children from non-English-speaking homes.

**Mismatch Between Distribution of Children and Resources.** Foreign-born immigrant children represent a larger share of the total high school population (5.7 percent) than of the total elementary school population (3.5 percent). Recently arrived foreign-born immigrants (i.e., those in the United States less than 5 years) also represent a larger share of the secondary than elementary school populations (2.7 versus 2.0 percent). These recently arrived students, in particular, are likely to require additional language and other services.

Despite these patterns of grade distribution, spending on language acquisition programs tends to be concentrated in elementary schools. The SASS reveals that a significantly smaller share of LEP students receive some form of English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual instruction in either middle or high school than in elementary school. Thus, it can be argued that there is a mismatch between the distribution of language resources and the grade distribution of immigrant children.

**Growing Number and Share of Poor Immigrant Children.** The profile also paints a portrait of increasing poverty among school-age immigrant children. In 1970, the poverty rate among immigrant children was essentially comparable to that among non-Hispanic whites: 12 versus 10 percent. By 1995, this comparative poverty rate had more than doubled for all immigrant children. It was three times the non-Hispanic white rate for foreign-born children: 39 versus 13 percent. In fact, between 1970 and 1995, the overall U.S. child poverty rate rose from 14.7 to 20.4 percent. About 60 percent of this 5.7 percentage point increase is associated with immigrant children.

**Segregation of LEP Students.** In addition to rising levels of child poverty, there are surprisingly high levels of segregation among the nation's LEP student population. Nationwide, almost two-thirds of students attend schools where less than 1 percent of students are LEP. However, almost half of the LEP students attend schools where 30 percent or more of their fellow students are LEP. Thus, new patterns of ethnic, economic, and linguistic segregation may be emerging.

**Varying Dropout Rates by Immigrant Group.** We also examined several measures of student performance. While the school attendance rates of immigrant children exceeded those of native-born children, dropout rates tell a rather different story. According to the Census, dropout rates for the second generation are lower than for the first and third generations.<sup>2</sup> In constructing these dropout rates we included only children who attended school in the United States, that is, those who have chosen to drop in at some point.

Dropout rates vary widely by group. Mexican dropout rates are roughly double national averages for each of the first, second, and third generations. By contrast, first-generation Asian dropout rates are less than one-quarter of the national average for all foreign-born children.

## Challenges to Educating Immigrant Children at the Secondary Level (Chs. 3 & 4)

The schools that participated in the demonstration projects, like others charged with educating immigrant children, faced a number of challenges. Some stemmed from the special characteristics and needs of immigrant teens themselves, such as limited schooling in their sending countries. Others had institutional origins. These included the basic organizational structure of secondary schools, the historic exclusion of immigrant and LEP students from school accountability systems, an abiding scarcity of specially trained teachers, and a generally limited knowledge base about how to best educate newcomers in secondary schools.

These challenges were magnified by high concentrations of poor children in the schools that immigrants attended. The challenges were, in turn, compounded by the contentious politics that surround immigration generally, and immigrant education in particular. And they were further complicated at some sites by the introduction of new student performance standards that raise the bar for grade promotion and high school graduation.

**Late Entrants and Long-Term LEPs.** Two particular subpopulations of immigrant students became a special focus of the demonstration projects. One was the set of immigrant children who arrived not as young children but as teens. Many of these late entrants had to overcome critical literacy gaps and the effects of interrupted schooling in their home countries. The time available to these late-arriving secondary (versus elementary) school students to master a new language and pass subjects required for high school graduation was limit-

*One of the central challenges the projects faced was the organization of traditional middle and high schools.*

<sup>2</sup> First-generation immigrants are the foreign-born children of foreign-born parents; second-generation immigrants are the U.S.-born children of foreign-born parents. Third-generation immigrants are the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born (second-generation) parents.

ed. As a result, language and content area instruction had to be offered simultaneously, rather than sequentially.

In addition to the challenges that recently arrived immigrant children presented, teachers in California demonstration schools reported that a substantial number of the LEP/immigrant children reached high school after having “graduated” from special language service programs (ESL or bilingual education). They did so despite the fact that they were still not sufficiently literate in English to meet state or local criteria for promotion from LEP status. (Teachers in the demonstration schools often referred to these students as long-term LEPs.)

**High Achievers and Postsecondary Opportunities.** The challenges secondary schools faced were not confined to students whose language and other skills lagged. High-achieving immigrant youth—that is, immigrant children who have age-appropriate literacy skills in either English or their native language—also faced barriers to realizing their full potential in school. These students and their parents were often unaware of the range of postsecondary opportunities available or the ways in which further study could be financed. Accordingly, this population required a new institutional focus on their transitions to postsecondary education.

## Organizational and Accountability Structures of Secondary Schools (Chs. 5 & 6)

One of the central challenges the projects faced was the organization of traditional middle and high schools. The organization of secondary schools into subject departments (mathematics, sciences, social sciences) created barriers to integrating language and content learning for LEP students. Subject area teachers—as well as counselors and administrators—had too few incentives to assume responsibility for LEP students’ outcomes, which often fell, by default, to language development (ESL/bilingual) teachers. The departmentalization of secondary schools also effectively barred language and content teachers from collaborating to improve immigrant student outcomes. In addition, the structure of the typical secondary school day, typically divided into seven 50-minute periods, often proved too discontinuous to promote the kind of sustained, interactive, and comprehensible instruction LEP secondary students needed.

The absence of curriculum content and student performance standards for language development and content area courses that LEP students take also presented challenges. Without curriculum standards, individual teachers were left on their own to determine what instructional methods they would use and content they would cover. As a result, teachers often focused only on the most basic oral English and reading comprehension skills. Because there was little standardization, the content of instruction at any given level often varied widely across schools in the same district and across classes in the same school. In the absence of a clearly articulated set of skills and knowledge to be mastered at each level of a language development program, it was also difficult for teachers of upper-level courses to make assumptions about what students could be expected to have mastered when they completed lower-level courses.

Data issues also arose. Efforts to identify LEP students and their changing instructional needs were hampered by the limited amount of data collected and shared with teachers on

immigrant and LEP students, their backgrounds, and their performance. Limited performance data also made it impossible to assess the effectiveness of differing approaches to instruction.

**Gaps in Knowledge and Staffing Capacity.** These organizational and accountability issues were aggravated by research gaps and shortages of appropriately trained staff. The limited research base left administrators and classroom teachers with few materials or curricular models to follow. Research gaps were particularly evident in the area of content (versus language) instruction for English language learners. The lack of proven, reliable assessment tools was also evidence of the limited knowledge base.

*Nationwide, only 2.5 percent of teachers with English language learners in their classes have any special preparation to work with them.*

In the sites—as in the nation as a whole—only a small share of teachers, administrators, and guidance counselors were specially trained to work with English language learners. In California, for example, the 1996–97 ratio of fully credentialed bilingual teachers to LEP students was 1:85 for Spanish-speaking students, and 1:889 for Vietnamese-speaking students.<sup>3</sup> Nationwide, only 2.5 percent of teachers with English language learners in their classes have any special preparation to work with them.<sup>4</sup> These wide gaps meant that shortfalls in trained

teachers could not be overcome by new hires alone, but would have to be met by veteran classroom teachers. They, in turn, would have to be trained and engaged more fully in meeting the needs of immigrant students.

**Political Challenges to Reform.** The demonstration program's implementation coincided with one of the more anti-immigrant periods in recent U.S. history. In California, where four of the five participating school districts were located, initiatives were passed by large voter margins that sought to bar undocumented immigrants from elementary and secondary schools and severely restrict the use of bilingual instruction. The political environment limited program efforts to promote transitional native language instruction for low-literacy teens at some sites, and legitimated faculty resistance to the introduction of reforms (such as sheltered instruction) at others.

## Reform Strategies/Responses (Ch. 7)

PRIME represented a process, not a design model of institutional reform. That is, there was no single curriculum or staff development model introduced across sites. As a result, numerous reform strategies emerged, ranging from new curricula, to block scheduling, to classroom teachers' use of schoolwide student performance data to inform curricular change.

**Responses to Organizational Barriers.** One strategic response adopted across the sites was to reach beyond the ESL/bilingual teaching staff to mainstream subject teachers, counselors, and administrators. The goal was to ensure that the language faculty did not serve as de facto caretakers for immigrant children. Subject teachers were important

<sup>3</sup> Ed-Source, 1998. Report based on data supplied by the California Department of Education available at [http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/edfact\\_bilingual\\_rep.html](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/edfact_bilingual_rep.html).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1993–94.

because immigrant students needed to master core courses such as science and history while they were increasing their English language skills. But nonteaching staff were also central to school reform. Projects sought to involve counselors because they controlled student schedules (and hence access to credits and graduation) and served as gatekeepers for advanced placement and other high-level courses. The projects also involved school administrators, who were critical to determining whether reforms would be institutionalized when foundation support ended.

A second strategy responded to the limited time newcomer secondary students have to develop language skills and accumulate course credits to graduate. The focus was on extending the hours in which immigrant students can learn. The projects not only extended the simple chronological time available for learning by offering after-school classes and summer school, they also expanded direct instructional time during the standard school day. They did so by means of peer and cross-age tutoring programs and by experimenting with block scheduling in which the teaching process can be more interactive and fewer disruptive transitions occur.

In a third strategy, the projects sought to free teachers to plan, organize, and begin to break down the organizational divisions between language and content instruction. Increased planning time also served to develop a better coordinated transition process for LEP students from native language instruction, to sheltered-English classrooms, to mainstream classrooms.

**Increasing Accountability for Newcomer Students.** A core reform premise was that data could be used to spur reform and evaluate its progress. One project innovation was to collect a wide range of data, disaggregated by LEP immigrant status, on such student performance indicators as the accumulation of course credits, grades, and participation in extracurricular clubs. The data helped increase teacher awareness of immigrant students' needs, and helped them monitor student progress and assess the effectiveness of instruction.

PRIME projects also helped secondary school leaders establish content standards for language and literacy programs. Standards were intended to help guide classroom instruction. In this regard, the projects anticipated the rapid, subsequent movement to standards-based reform in both California and Maryland. It should be stressed, though, that to date standards are rarely applied to students in sheltered instructional settings—or to language development courses for LEP students.

**New Courses.** ESL/bilingual programs at the secondary level typically assume a level of literacy that underschooled teen immigrants often do not possess. Developing new courses and teaching strategies for immigrants with special literacy needs was, thus, a focus of activity. All sites worked to establish new courses featuring modified or sheltered instruction in the core subjects (especially social studies and science) to accelerate content learning for LEP students. This innovation responded to the fact that unlike elementary school students, LEP teens have comparatively few years to master content and language courses.

Professional development programs were instituted to help veteran content teachers work more effectively with second language learners in sheltered and mainstream classes. The centrality of professional development for existing staff responded to the simple but powerful fact that the supply of new bilingual teachers would not keep pace with increases in the size of the LEP student population.

## Selected Practice and Policy Lessons (Ch. 8)

The available data did not allow us to conduct a rigorous empirical evaluation. Nevertheless, evidence did emerge of the projects' success: most notably their institutionalization following the end of foundation support. Among the reforms that had been institutionalized at one or more schools or districts as of January 1, 1999, were the following:

- New curricula for underschooled youth and sheltered instruction for all newcomer LEPs.
- The inclusion of language development staff in schoolwide planning
- Expanded professional development for content-area teachers on educating LEP/immigrant students.
- New practices in data collection and use at the school level for program improvement.
- Broader adoption of block-scheduling, including training for teachers in how to use longer time blocks effectively.
- Extended day programming for underschooled LEP students.

One lesson that we take from the institutionalization of these reforms is that reform strategies involving the whole school are especially promising. Many of the projects' innovations—expanding instruction time, reorganizing the school day, focusing on teen literacy, and improving student assessment—hold substantial promise not just for immigrant students but for other student populations as well. Their broader applicability added to their appeal, political viability, and potential institutionalization. As an example, the techniques that content area teachers developed to make their lessons more accessible to LEP students made them more accessible to other low-performing students as well. In parallel fashion, involving language development teachers in the planning of mainstream reforms worked to the benefit of all.

Many apparently successful reforms that the demonstration projects introduced did not require substantial new external funding. Most key activities, such as professional development, data collection, or involving ESL teachers in schoolwide planning, were largely supported with existing funds. In this regard, budget estimates from the Northern California demonstration projects, where interventions were most intensive, reveal that the marginal additional cost per student of the experiments falls below the modest support most school districts receive under the federal Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA). (The EIEA provides funds to local school districts to offset the costs of recently arrived immigrants, that is, those who have been in the United States less than three years.) A relatively few reforms, namely special summer school programs and the opening of parent involvement centers, did require new support.

We should note, though, that reforms that were more narrowly targeted—such as providing summer school for underschooled LEP/immigrant students—were less likely to be institutionalized, even when they carried modest price tags.

The extremely limited knowledge base regarding how to best educate LEP/immigrant secondary students suggests that more demonstration projects could be useful—projects that might build on many of the reforms PRIME introduced. This strategy of building the knowledge base by means of demonstration projects that test particular curricula or hypotheses was explicitly embraced by the National Research Council's report *Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda* (August and Hakuta, 1997). Time for planning and implementation should be long enough to evaluate results empirically.

Further, quantitative assessment should be built into the projects from the start. Both are expensive propositions that may be beyond the capacity of most private foundations. This raises the question of how best to institutionalize a more systematic investment in demonstration projects and their evaluation on the part of the public sector.

In this regard, the projects may hold some lessons for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ESEA is the federal government's principal funding vehicle for elementary and secondary education. In our opinion, the program's experiences would appear to support proposals to

- Provide a greater share of funding to secondary schools undergoing schoolwide reform.
- Target funds to schools with high concentrations of poor students.
- Increase schools' accountability by requiring annual tests of LEP students' progress in learning English, and by including LEP students in new state accountability systems.
- Increase incentives for offering extended day and year services to immigrant/LEP students.
- Expand funding for school districts that have rapidly growing immigrant populations but little experience serving LEP students.

However, several core innovations that the projects adopted are absent from the thrust of current ESEA proposals. These include

- Increasing incentives to train mainstream subject teachers to collaborate with language development teachers and work more effectively with LEP students.
- Establishing a program of ongoing data collection and research focused on the educational needs of LEP immigrants.
- Providing special funding offsets to help high schools serve late-entering immigrants and other LEP populations with literacy needs that extend beyond basic language acquisition. One potential source of this funding is the Emergency Immigrant Education Program.

Finally, we note that the experiences of the sites, coupled with the limited understanding of the most effective teaching strategies for underschooled teen immigrants and long-term LEPs, seem to militate against policies that limit the pedagogical approaches available to classroom teachers.

Jennifer Van Hook &amp; Michael Fix

This chapter documents 1970 to 1995 trends in the growth, composition, performance, and geographic concentration of immigrant children—both those who are foreign born and those who are U.S. born. One distinguishing characteristic of this profile is that it derives largely from two national data sources: the U.S. Census and the U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). Each periodically interviews large, nationally representative samples of respondents: the former representing the U.S. population generally, the latter representing school personnel nationwide. Thus, unlike many other analyses of immigrant children in schools, this analysis presents consistent measures across time and states.

Overall, immigration has brought about significant changes in the U.S. student population. In particular, the number and share of immigrants in schools have tripled since 1970, with especially rapid growth occurring at the middle and high school levels. Despite this disproportionate growth in the higher grades, the resources dedicated to language acquisition remain concentrated at the elementary level. Immigrant children are also far more likely to be poor than they were two decades ago. Achievement levels among such children are mixed. School attendance rates are high, and the school completion rates of certain subgroups, such as Asians, far exceed those of native-born children. However, many—most notably children of Mexican origin—drop out at rates two to three times that of native-born children. Finally, limited English proficient (LEP) students are likely to attend schools where other LEP children are concentrated, leading to new and disturbing patterns of both ethnic and linguistic segregation.

### Immigration and Demographic Trends

**Size and Growth.** Following a hiatus in the 1930s, the number of immigrants arriving in the United States increased from a low of 500,000 for the 1930s to an estimated 11 million for the 1990s. Trends among immigrant children have mirrored this rise in immigration flows. From 1970 to 1995, the number of immigrant children ages 5 to 20 living in the United States more than doubled, from 3.5 to 8.6 million (table 1, upper panel); 40 percent of this growth took place after 1990. During the same 25-year period, the number of children of U.S. natives declined and the number of immigrant children grew larger than the number of African-American children. In 1970, there were half as many immigrants as African-American children (3.5 versus 7.4 million); by 1995, there were 500,000 more (8.5 versus 8.0 million).

As the number of immigrant children grew, the share that they represent of all students in schools also rose sharply, from 6 percent in 1970 to 16 percent in 1995 and 19 percent in 1997 (figure 1, table 2). This rise owes to two phenomena. First, the number of immigrant children in grades K-12 rose from 3.1 to 7.9 million (+154 percent) (table 1,

lower panel). Second, the number of children of U.S. natives in schools fell from 45.7 to 41.4 million (-9 percent). The steepest declines occurred among non-Hispanic whites: from 37.6 to 31.0 million (-18 percent).

**Foreign- versus U.S.-Born Children of Immigrants.** It is useful to distinguish between U.S.-born and foreign-born children of immigrants, because children born outside the United States are more likely to require remedial and English language instruction than U.S.-born children. Further, children born outside the United States may or may not be citizens, depending on whether their parents have naturalized.<sup>1</sup> The citizen status distinction is significant, because the eligibility of noncitizen children—especially those arriving after August 22, 1996—for health and other public benefits was substantially diminished by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, the number of foreign-born children enrolled in grades K–12 increased at a faster rate than the number of U.S.-born immigrant children (200 versus 140 percent) between 1970 and 1995, although U.S.-born children of immigrants grew faster during the 1990s (42 versus 27 percent) (table 1, lower panel). Half the growth among U.S.-born immigrant children since 1970 occurred during the 1990s, versus one-third among the foreign born. As of 1995, 29 percent (2.3 million) of the children of immigrants attending schools were foreign born; 71 percent (5.6 million) were U.S.-born citizens (table 2). (Some foreign-born children have naturalized and are citizens.)

**Distribution by Grade Level.** Most special programs dedicated to the language and other needs of immigrant children are directed to the elementary grades, where the number of immigrant children is greatest. But foreign-born immigrant children as well as recently arrived immigrant children (i.e., those who have been in the United States for five years or less) are increasingly found in middle and high schools (table 3). Rapid growth at the upper grade levels has meant that foreign-born immigrant children now represent a substantially larger share of the total high school student population (5.7 percent) than they do of the primary school population (3.5 percent) (figure 2, table 4). As we discuss later, many of these recently arrived older students pose difficult challenges for the secondary schools in which they enroll.

**Country of Origin and Legal Status.** In addition to increased numbers, the composition of the immigrant child population has changed rapidly. The share of immigrant children who were born in Mexico or whose parents were born in Mexico increased from 15 percent in 1970 to 37 percent in 1995 (figure 3, table 5). The share coming from Asia or from Latin American countries other than Mexico also increased rapidly. By 1995, approximately 20 percent of immigrant children came from Asia and 20 percent from Latin American countries other than Mexico. The share of children of immigrants from Europe or Canada declined from 60 to 13 percent.

Again, these trends within the school population reflect larger trends in immigration. While 66 percent of immigrants came from Europe during the 1960s, only 20 percent of immigrants came from Europe during the 1990s. More than 75 percent now come from

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<sup>1</sup> U.S.-born immigrant children are citizens under the birthright citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> See Fix and Zimmermann, 1998.

Asia, Latin America, or Mexico. The rapid rise in Mexican migration to the United States is particularly striking. Between 1990 and 1999 alone, the Mexican population in the United States grew 65 percent, from 4.3 to 7.2 million. Mexicans now account for 30 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population, and Mexico is now the largest source of immigrants to the United States.

The sharply rising legal Mexican immigration has been accompanied by increased illegal immigration. Currently, of the roughly 1 million immigrants who enter and stay in the United States annually, approximately 750,000 enter as green card immigrants, 70,000 as refugees, and 200,000 to 250,000 as undocumented immigrants (Warren, 1997; Passel, 1999). As a result, a growing share of immigrant children are either themselves undocumented or the children of undocumented parents. It has been estimated that roughly 1 million children of immigrants (12 percent) are themselves undocumented (Passel, 1999). While undocumented children in the United States retain the right to attend elementary and secondary schools, they are barred from working after they leave school, from receiving most public benefits, and from attending at least some public postsecondary educational institutions.

*Foreign-born immigrant children now represent a substantially larger share of the total high school student population than they do of the primary school population.*

**Poverty.** Changing national origins have been accompanied by increased poverty. Between 1970 and 1995, poverty levels increased for all groups of children (including non-Hispanic whites), with the overall child poverty rate rising from 14.5 to 22.0 percent (table 6). During this period, poverty increased far more rapidly among immigrant

children than among native blacks, non-Hispanic whites, or other natives. Among immigrant children, poverty rates rose from a level that was almost comparable to that of non-Hispanic whites in 1970 (11.9 versus 9.6 percent) to one that was almost three times higher (33.0 versus 11.8 percent) (figure 4). The rise in the foreign-born immigrant child poverty rate was particularly pronounced (from 17.0 to 43.8 percent).

About 60 percent of the 5.7 percentage point increase in overall child poverty between 1970 and 1995 (from 14.7 to 20.4 percent) is associated with immigrant children. Half of that 60 percent can be ascribed to the growing population share that immigrant children represent, the other half to increased poverty among immigrant families. In other words, if all immigration stopped after 1970 and other factors were held constant, child poverty levels in the United States would have risen by only 3.0 rather than 5.7 percentage points.

Another lens for examining immigrant income status is the changing share of immigrant children in families with incomes over 300 percent of the federal poverty level. The numbers tell a consistent story. Between 1970 and 1995, the share of immigrant children in families with incomes over 300 percent of poverty declined by 30 percent, from 33.2 to 23.9 percent (table 7). During the same period, the share of natives' children in families with incomes over 300 percent of the federal poverty level rose by 24 percent. This pattern of growing income inequality between native and immigrant children holds far-reaching implications for education funding and policy in a period of comparatively high immigration.

**Home Language and English Proficiency.** Between 1980 and 1995, the share of all students speaking a language other than English at home increased by almost half, from 8.8

percent of the student population to 13.3 percent (table 8).<sup>3</sup> Much of the growth occurred among U.S.-born immigrant children, among whom the share from minority-language homes rose from 43.4 to 60.1 percent. The share of foreign-born children from minority-language homes (75 percent) remained high.

The key education policy question, of course, is what share of children in these households are not fully proficient in English? According to the Current Population Survey (CPS), roughly one-quarter of immigrant children—about 2.9 million K–12 students in 1997—are reported by their parents to speak English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all”<sup>4</sup> (table 9). These children are to be contrasted with children whose parents report that they speak English “very well” or speak “English only.”

It is important to note that these figures may substantially underestimate the language challenges that foreign-born children actually face. This is because oral language proficiency for social communication purposes precedes—by as many as 3 to 5 years—full acquisition of the academic English skills required for success in secondary schools (Hakuta, Butler, and Witt, 2000; August and Hakuta, 1997; Collier, 1995). Forty percent of foreign-born immigrant children and 20 percent of U.S.-born immigrant children are LEP using these Census definitions (table 9). While the great majority (90 percent) of LEP students are immigrant children, a significant minority (10 percent) are the children of natives. As noted later, this population of third-generation LEPs appears to evidence little economic mobility.

The number and share of LEP children are important for legal and resource reasons. However, strategies for identifying and counting them vary from district to district and national aggregates have always been suspect. In this respect, this analysis may make a particularly useful contribution. The two databases we analyze here—the Census and the SASS—are nationally representative, with consistent definitions across jurisdictions and time periods. Their reliability is reinforced by the consistency of their estimates. To illustrate, the parent-reported LEP numbers in the CPS of the Census indicate that 5.0 percent of all students and 39.5 percent of foreign-born students are LEP. The school-reported numbers in the SASS indicate that 5.6 percent of all students and 42.4 percent of foreign-born students are LEP. The consistent results confirm the reliability of the numbers, because the incentives of the two reporting groups are presumably not the same. They also suggest that we can use the CPS measures of English proficiency as a proxy for LEP status among children. This allows us to associate LEP status with parents’ place of birth as well as other social and economic characteristics<sup>5</sup>—information that is not available in the SASS.

<sup>3</sup> Although the 1970 Census asked questions about “mother tongue,” it did not include the English language proficiency question. Hence, our analyses involving language usage and proficiency are limited to 1980–95 trends.

<sup>4</sup> This construction of LEP status using the CPS data (i.e., classifying those claiming to speak English “well,” “not well,” or “not at all”) is consistent with the approach taken by the National Center of Education Statistics (see, e.g., NCES, 1997, table 4-1); the U.S. Census Bureau (see, e.g., Language Use Data, table 5) “Detailed Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for Persons 5 Years and Over—50 Languages with Greatest Number of Speakers: United States 1990.” available at <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/language/table5.txt>; and independent analysts (see, e.g., Rong and Preissle, 1997, pp. 44–46).

<sup>5</sup> The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) also conducts an annual survey of the number of LEP students in U.S. schools. OBEMLA reported that there were 3,341,545 LEP students (8 percent of total public school enrollment) in U.S. schools in the 1996–97 school year. Because of differences in the way states count LEPs, these numbers include students who may be orally proficient in English but lack the academic literacy skills needed to succeed at the appropriate grade level. Like the SASS data, the OBEMLA survey does not include information about parents’ place of birth or other social and economic characteristics. See Macias, 1998.

The percentage of immigrant children who are LEP varies considerably by country of origin (figure 5, table 10). Mexican and other Hispanic immigrant children are about twice as likely to be LEP as Asians and other non-Hispanic groups—differences that persist into the second generation (i.e., U.S.-born children of immigrants). As a result, while Hispanics make up 56 percent of the entire population of immigrant children, they represent 75 percent of LEP students. By contrast, Asians make up only 13 percent of the LEP population despite the fact that 22 percent of all children of immigrants are Asian.

**Language.** Between 1980 and 1995, the number of immigrant children coming from homes in which Spanish is spoken rose by 64 percent, from 3.4 to 5.6 million, while the number from homes where another foreign language is spoken rose by only 17 percent, from 1.7 to 2.0 million. The number of students coming from homes in which an Asian language is spoken doubled over the period, but remained low in absolute numbers, under one million (figure 6, table 11). As a result, immigrant children from Spanish-speaking homes represented two-thirds of all non-English-speaking households in 1980 but three-quarters of such households by 1995.

Both the prevalence of households in which a language other than English is spoken and the predominance of Spanish-speaking households vary substantially across states. Three states illustrate the variation (table 12):

California: Thirty-seven percent of students come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken; 74 percent of those students come from Spanish-speaking families.

New York: Twenty-five percent of students come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken; 60 percent of those are Spanish speaking.

Maryland: Nine percent of students come from homes in which a language other than English is spoken; 43 percent of those are Spanish speaking.

The impacts of immigration are forcefully felt not only by states such as California with large numbers of students from non-English-speaking households but also by those such as Maryland with more diverse language groups to accommodate.

**English Language Instruction.** How are schools responding to the language needs of immigrant children? In the 1993–94 school year, almost two-thirds of LEP students were enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) classes, bilingual classes, or both (table 13). The percent receiving language instruction varies considerably by grade level; however, LEP children in primary schools are much more likely than those in secondary schools to be enrolled in ESL or bilingual classes. Seventy-six percent of LEP children in primary schools receive some kind of instruction, for example, compared with only 42 percent of middle school and 48 percent of high school LEP students (figure 7). This pattern is at odds with the increasing percentages of foreign-born children and recent arrivals in secondary schools noted earlier.

Some of this disparity in secondary-level language services may be explained—and felt—by “long-term” LEPs who have placed out of those services but not become fully English proficient. These long-term LEPs are predominantly language minority children who have been enrolled in school systems for a substantial period and have received special language services, but continue to perform several years below grade level in English reading, comprehension, and/or writing skills.

**Geographic Distribution of Immigrant Children and LEP Students.** Immigrant children are highly urbanized. Eighty-two percent live in metropolitan areas—a higher share than white, black, or “other” native children (table 14). But while immigrant children are more likely than African-Americans to live in urban settings, they are less likely to live in central cities.

Immigrants are not only concentrated in urbanized areas, they are concentrated in six states that together account for nearly three-quarters of all immigrant children: California (35.0 percent), Texas (11.3 percent), New York (11.0 percent), Florida (6.7 percent), Illinois (5.0 percent), and New Jersey (4.0 percent). (Percentages represent share of all immigrant children nationwide. See table 15.) Taken together, about one-third of all students in these six states are immigrant children. In California, almost half of all students are the children of immigrants.

The high, sustained levels of immigration are accompanied by the dispersal of both immigrants and immigrant children into places that have not been traditional receiving communities. The number of immigrant children in states that are not among the top six immigrant-receiving states rose by 40 percent, from 1.5 to 2.1 million, between 1990 and 1995 alone. These states are less likely to have the institutional capacity to deliver language and other services that recent immigrant students need.

**Segregation of LEP Children.** The rising number of immigrant children, the shifting racial and ethnic makeup of the immigrant child population, a decline in the non-Hispanic white student population, and the patterns of spatial distribution noted above have collectively led to increased segregation of Hispanic children. In 1996, Hispanic students were more likely than blacks to attend schools that are more than half minority: 74.8 versus 68.8 percent. Although the level of African-American segregation in schools is quite high, it is essentially unchanged since the early 1970s. But Hispanic segregation from non-Hispanic whites has increased. Even though Latino and African-American students tend to go to schools that are multiethnic, only about 12 percent of Latinos go to schools with large percentages of African-American students. Correlatively, African-American students attend schools with relatively small shares (about 10 percent) of Latino students (Orfield and Yun, 1999).

Similarly, while both immigrant children and African-Americans are likely to attend schools that contain few whites, for the most part these two groups attend different schools. Thus, blacks and immigrant children are largely isolated not just from whites but from each other. Accordingly, African-Americans, together with non-Hispanic whites, are unlikely to encounter many LEP students in their schools. On average, non-Hispanic white students go to schools in which 2.0 percent of the students are LEP. The situation is very little different for African-American students, who attend schools in which 3.7 percent of the students are classified as LEP (table 16).

In contrast to African-American and white students, Hispanic and Asian students—and especially LEP students within these groups—are far more likely to go to schools where LEP students are concentrated. Nearly half of all LEP students attend schools that are at least 31 percent LEP (figure 8, table 16). The segregation of LEP from other students is particularly pronounced in elementary schools; 53.3 percent of LEP primary school students versus 31.3 percent of LEP secondary school students attend schools in which 30 percent or more of the students are LEP. These findings suggest that many immigrant children are attending schools that are not just ethnically segregated but *linguistically* isolated.

The results further suggest that one of the reasons African-Americans and non-Hispanic whites may be unlikely to attend schools with a high concentration of LEP students is that LEP students themselves are isolated. One explanation for these patterns is that, unlike racial/ethnic groups for whom segregation is largely determined by residential patterns, LEP segregation is compounded by the practice of pooling ESL/bilingual services and personnel in specific schools within districts to concentrate scarce resources in a few places.

**Performance of Immigrant Children.** Perhaps the central question regarding immigrant children in the nation's schools is: How well are they performing? Unfortunately, national data on the performance of foreign-born and U.S.-born immigrant children—their achievement, school and grade completion, and college attendance—are of limited use. Many LEP students are excused from taking standardized achievement tests, such as those administered by National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), because of their limited English language skills. Those who do take the tests, thus, represent a selected group of LEP students. Before 1995, for example, about 50 percent of all students identified as LEP were excluded from the NAEP assessments, usually because they could not be meaningfully tested in English (NCES, 1997). Thus, not only have large numbers of LEP students been excluded from national tests, but those weakest in English have been disproportionately excluded.

The SASS and the Census do, however, provide information on school attendance and completion for a representative sample of immigrant children, and achievement test scores have recently become available for other sources. The SASS data suggest that both foreign-born and LEP students have better attendance rates than U.S.-born children.

In terms of *school completion*, while first-generation immigrant children (foreign-born children) have higher dropout rates than the children of natives, dropout rates for the second generation (U.S.-born children of immigrants) are lower than for natives (figure 9, table 17). In this analysis we count only school leavers who at one time have attended schools in the United States, thereby excluding young adults ages 16 to 24 who never "dropped in" to U.S. schools.<sup>6</sup> As figure 9 illustrates, among all young adults, dropout rates decline from the first to the second generation, but then increase again in the third or higher generations. Except among non-Hispanic whites, this pattern can be observed among all race/ethnic groups. These results conform to earlier analyses that document higher levels of achievement within the second than either the first or third generations (Bean et al., 1994; Kao and Tienda, 1995).

Dropout rates vary substantially across national origin groups for all generations. Asian immigrant children, with dropout rates of 4.0 percent in the first and 4.2 percent in the second generation, are more likely to complete high school than any other immigrant or native group. However, their dropout rates rise significantly in the third and subsequent generations. Certain other groups also exhibit relatively low dropout rates, including non-Hispanic white children of immigrants, second-generation blacks, and Hispanics who do not come from Mexico. Mexicans have substantially higher dropout rates than all other national origin subgroups, with at least double the average national rates of leaving school for first-, second-, third-, and higher-generation students.

<sup>6</sup> Because our results exclude persons who were never enrolled in U.S. schools, they are a better measure of "dropping out" than statistics that include all persons ages 16 to 24. This is because a significant share of both labor and family migrants enter the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 and never attend U.S. schools (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1996; Passel, 1999).

*Mexicans have substantially higher dropout rates than all other national origin subgroups, with at least double the average national rates of leaving school for first-, second-, third-, and higher-generation students.*

**LEP Student Performance.** For the LEP student population, the great majority of whom are children of immigrants, it is not surprising that LEP youth lag significantly behind non-LEP students in both reading and math (Buron et al., 1998). In 1998, California required all students in grades 2 through 11—including LEP students—to participate in standardized testing. When LEP students' results on standardized tests administered in English and Spanish were compared with those of all students in grades 2 through 11, LEP students performed worse at all grade levels and in all subject areas (science, math, and especially reading) and were substantially more likely to score below the nationally ranked 25th percentile (figure 10, table 18). As figure 10 illustrates, the reading scores of LEP students in grades 9–11 were lower than those of LEP students in grades 2–8, again indicating the need to devote increased attention and more resources to secondary schools with immigrant and LEP students.

The CPS data also show that LEP students are substantially less likely than non-LEP immigrant children to finish high school. About 20 percent of LEP children ages 16 to 24, versus 10 percent of their English-speaking counterparts, were not enrolled in school and did not have a high school diploma (table 19). Again, these estimates exclude immigrant children who never attended school in the United States. While those LEP students who stay in school appear in some ways to perform as well as non-LEP students with regard to attendance and grades, LEP students as a whole score below English-speaking students on standardized tests and are less likely to receive a high school diploma or its equivalent.

When high school/GED completion rates by LEP status and generational status are examined, strikingly different patterns emerge. LEP children of *natives* are twice as likely to be dropouts (38.7 percent)

as either the foreign-born (21.5 percent) or U.S.-born immigrant children who are not LEP (21.0 percent) (table 19). One possible explanation for these results might be the negative impacts of intergenerational linguistic isolation. Groups that are linguistically isolated may experience social isolation and associated disadvantages that compound from one generation to the next. Another possible explanation may be that the results reflect a selection process. Most immigrant groups are fully proficient in English by the third, if not the second, generation. Thus, those who have poor English proficiency despite the fact that their families have lived in the country for three or more generations represent an unusual—if small—group. Noncompletion rates may have increased among LEPs in the third generation simply because the successful immigrant groups—who have higher completion rates—have learned English and are no longer included among the LEP group.

Finally, when high school/GED completion rates by both language proficiency and national origin are analyzed, English language proficiency has very little effect on the already low levels of Asian school noncompletion. Only 4.3 percent of LEP Asians ages 16 to 24 are not enrolled in school and have no diploma, versus 4.5 percent of non-LEP Asians (table 19). In contrast, LEP Mexicans are substantially more likely to drop out than their non-LEP counterparts (37.9 versus 24.2 percent).

## Summary

This analysis conveys many of the trends and challenges facing U.S. schools in educating immigrant children. These include

- Rapid growth in the number of immigrant children (particularly among Mexicans) that outpaces growth in the number of children of natives.
- Poverty levels that are increasing and diverging from non-Hispanic white children of natives.
- High and increasing numbers and shares of LEP students, particularly among U.S.-born immigrant children.
- Rapid growth among foreign-born and recently arrived foreign-born students, most notably in middle and high schools.
- High levels of ethnic and linguistic school-level segregation.
- Wide variation by national origin regarding achievement and school completion rates, with Asian performance exceeding white non-Hispanic natives' performance and Mexicans' lagging it.

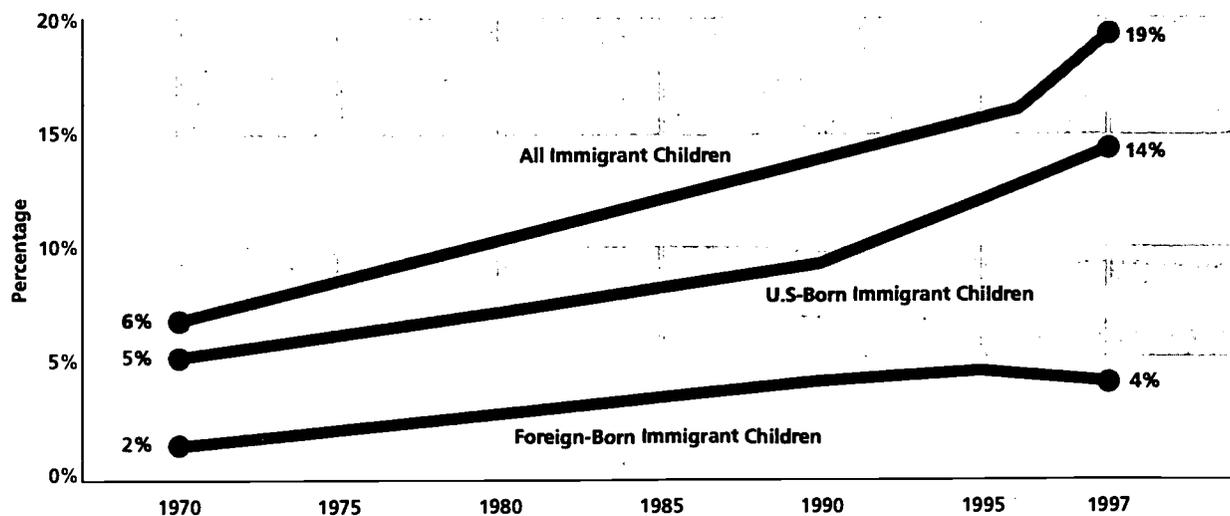
Overall, immigrant children's needs exceed current institutional support. A number of specific policy concerns emerge from our analysis that were addressed directly by the immigrant education reform projects. Perhaps most striking is the mismatch between the number and needs of immigrant middle and high school students and the limited resources targeted to them. A second policy concern is the low academic achievement and school completion rates of some immigrant students, including some second- and even third-generation children of immigrants, who have been promoted through U.S. schools but remain LEP. More research is necessary to determine the factors that have led to both the growth and the high dropout rates of this population. A third policy concern—one that goes beyond the scope of the demonstration programs—is the new ethnic and linguistic concentration of immigrant children. More research in this area is necessary, both because the degree of such concentration is unlikely to be reduced by current trends in school segregation and because its effects on immigrant children remain largely unknown.

**Table 1. Population Ages 5–20**  
by Nativity/Parentage, 1970–1995

	NUMBER (in thousands)				CHANGE		GROWTH %	
	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970–95	1990–95	1970–95	1990–95
<b>ALL CHILDREN (in thousands)</b>								
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	3,527	5,158	6,510	8,575	5,049	2,065	143	32
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	952	1,810	2,237	2,703	1,750	466	184	21
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	2,575	3,348	4,273	5,873	3,298	1,600	128	37
<b>Children of Natives<sup>a</sup></b>	51,833	45,477	39,691	44,060	-7,773	4,369	-15	11
<i>African-American</i>	7,472	7,333	6,615	7,954	482	1,339	6	20
<i>Non-Hisp. White</i>	41,988	35,409	30,058	32,759	-9,229	2,701	-22	9
<i>Other</i>	2,373	2,735	3,018	3,347	974	329	41	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,360</b>	<b>50,635</b>	<b>46,201</b>	<b>52,635</b>	<b>-2,725</b>	<b>6,434</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>NUMBER ENROLLED (in thousands)</b>								
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	3,104	4,674	5,744	7,897	4,793	2,153	154	37
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	770	1,506	1,817	2,307	1,537	490	200	27
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	2,334	3,169	3,926	5,590	3,256	1,664	140	42
<b>Children of Natives<sup>a</sup></b>	45,676	41,621	35,523	41,451	-4,225	5,928	-9	17
<i>African-American</i>	6,160	6,614	5,814	7,465	1,305	1,651	21	28
<i>Non-Hisp. White</i>	37,535	32,642	27,095	30,955	-6,580	3,860	-18	14
<i>Other</i>	1,981	2,365	2,614	3,031	1,050	417	53	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,779</b>	<b>46,295</b>	<b>41,267</b>	<b>49,348</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>8,081</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>

Sources: 1970, 1980, and 1990 1% PUMS, 1995 October CPS.  
a. Includes those not living with a parent; excludes Puerto Ricans.

**Figure 1. Immigrant Children Are a Rising Share of Students**  
Share of K–12 Enrollment



Sources: 1970, 1980, and 1990 1% PUMS, 1995 October CPS.

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**Table 2. Share of K-12 Enrollment**  
by Nativity/Parentage, 1970-1995

	PERCENTAGE OF ALL STUDENTS				CHANGE	
	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970-95	1990-95
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>						
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	6.4	10.1	13.9	16.0	9.6	2.1
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	1.6	3.3	4.4	4.7	3.1	0.3
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	4.8	6.8	9.5	11.3	6.5	1.8
<b>Children of Natives<sup>a</sup></b>	93.6	89.9	86.1	84.0	-9.6	-2.1
<i>African-American</i>	12.6	14.3	14.1	15.1	2.5	1.0
<i>Non-Hisp. White</i>	76.9	70.5	65.7	62.7	-14.2	-2.9
<i>Other</i>	4.1	5.1	6.3	6.1	2.1	-0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>
<b>SHARE OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS</b>						
<b>Foreign-Born</b>	24.8	32.2	31.6	29.2	4.4	-2.4
<b>U.S.-Born</b>	75.2	67.8	68.4	70.8	-4.4	2.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>

Sources: See table 1.

a. Includes those not living with a parent; excludes Puerto Ricans.

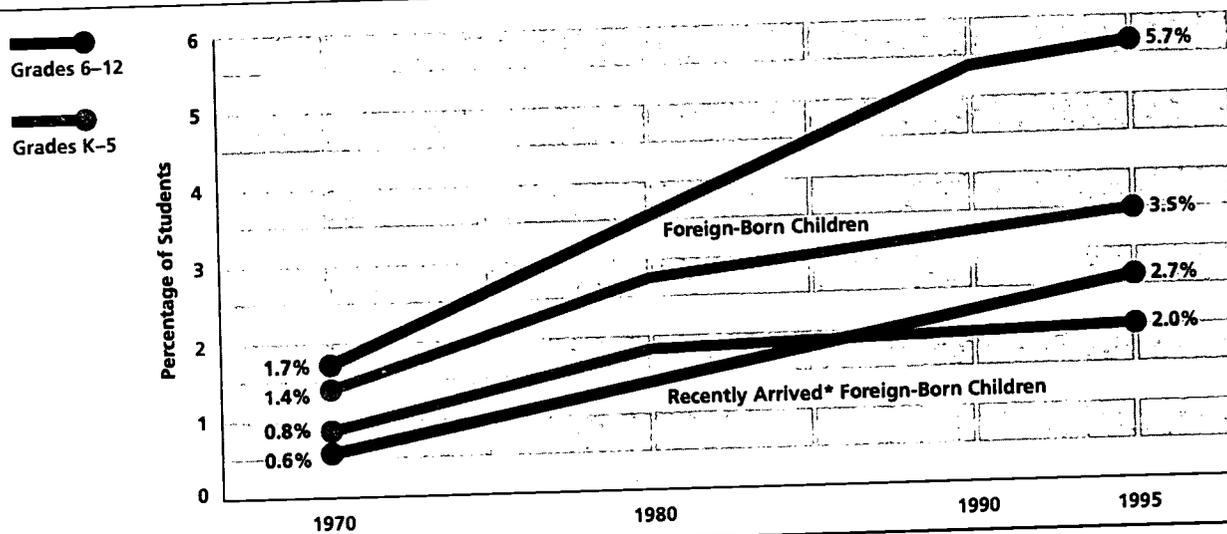
**Table 3. Number Students Enrolled**  
by Nativity/Parentage and Grade Level, 1970-1995

	NUMBER (in thousands)				CHANGE, 1970-95	
	1970	1980	1990	1995	Number	Percent
<b>GRADES K-5</b>						
<b>All Immigrant Children</b>	<b>1,269</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>3,703</b>	<b>2,434</b>	<b>191.9</b>
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	270	480	561	821	551	204.2
<i>Recent Arrivals</i>	156	315	377	479	323	207.4
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	999	1,359	1,899	2,881	1,883	188.5
<b>GRADES 6-12</b>						
<b>All Immigrant Children</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>2,835</b>	<b>3,284</b>	<b>4,194</b>	<b>2,359</b>	<b>128.6</b>
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	500	1,026	1,257	1,486	986	197.2
<i>Recent Arrivals</i>	179	420	520	696	517	288.6
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	1,335	1,809	2,027	2,709	1,373	102.9

Sources: See table 1.

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**Figure 2. Percentage of Foreign-Born Students Increases Most in Grades 6-12**



Sources: 1970, 1980, and 1990 1% PUMS, 1995 October CPS.  
 \*Less than five years in the United States.

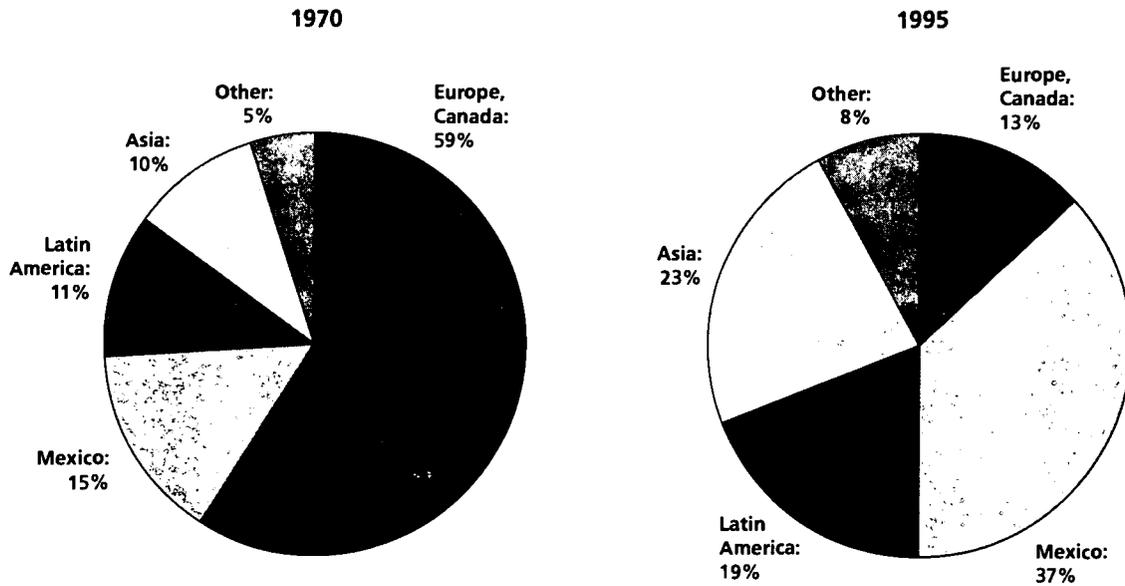
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**Table 4. Percent Share of Grades K–5 and 6–12 Enrollment**  
by Nativity/Parentage, and Recency of Arrival, 1970–1995

	PERCENT SHARE OF ALL STUDENTS IN GRADE		CHANGE		
	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970–95
<b>All Immigrant Children</b>					
<b>Grades K–5</b>	6.5	10.5	13.3	15.6	9.1
<b>Grades 6–12</b>	6.2	9.7	14.1	16.1	9.9
<b>U.S.-Born Immigrant Children</b>					
<b>Grades K–5</b>	5.1	7.8	10.3	12.1	7.0
<b>Grades 6–12</b>	4.5	6.2	8.7	10.4	5.9
<b>Foreign-Born Immigrant Children</b>					
<b>Grades K–5</b>	1.4	2.8	3.0	3.5	2.1
<b>Grades 6–12</b>	1.7	3.5	5.4	5.7	4.0
<b>Recent Arrivals (in U.S. less than 5 years)</b>					
<b>Grades K–5</b>	0.8	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.2
<b>Grades 6–12</b>	0.6	1.4	2.2	2.7	2.1

Sources: See table 1.

**Figure 3. Foreign-Born Students' Country/Region of Origin**  
1970 and 1995



Sources: 1970 1% PUMS. 1995 October CPS.

**Table 5. Country of Origin among Immigrant Children, 1970–1995**

	NUMBER (in percentage)				CHANGE
	1970	1980	1990	1995	1970–95
<b>All Immigrant Children</b>					
<i>Mexico</i>	15.0	22.2	30.8	37.0	22.0
<i>Other Latin America</i>	10.6	15.3	20.3	19.2	8.6
<i>Asia</i>	9.8	17.3	24.2	22.8	13.0
<i>Europe or Canada</i>	59.7	36.9	19.6	13.0	-46.7
<i>Other</i>	5.0	8.2	5.1	8.1	3.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>
<b>Foreign-Born Immigrant Children</b>					
<i>Mexico</i>	15.4	22.9	28.0	37.7	22.3
<i>Other Latin America</i>	24.1	19.9	23.8	19.0	-5.1
<i>Asia</i>	12.1	27.8	32.4	25.2	13.1
<i>Europe or Canada</i>	42.5	20.0	9.7	12.6	-29.8
<i>Other</i>	6.0	9.5	6.2	5.6	-0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>
<b>U.S.-Born Immigrant Children</b>					
<i>Mexico</i>	14.9	21.8	32.1	36.7	21.8
<i>Other Latin America</i>	6.1	13.2	18.6	19.3	13.1
<i>Asia</i>	9.0	12.4	20.4	21.8	12.8
<i>Europe or Canada</i>	65.4	45.0	24.2	13.2	-52.2
<i>Other</i>	4.6	7.6	4.6	9.1	4.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>

Sources: See table 1.

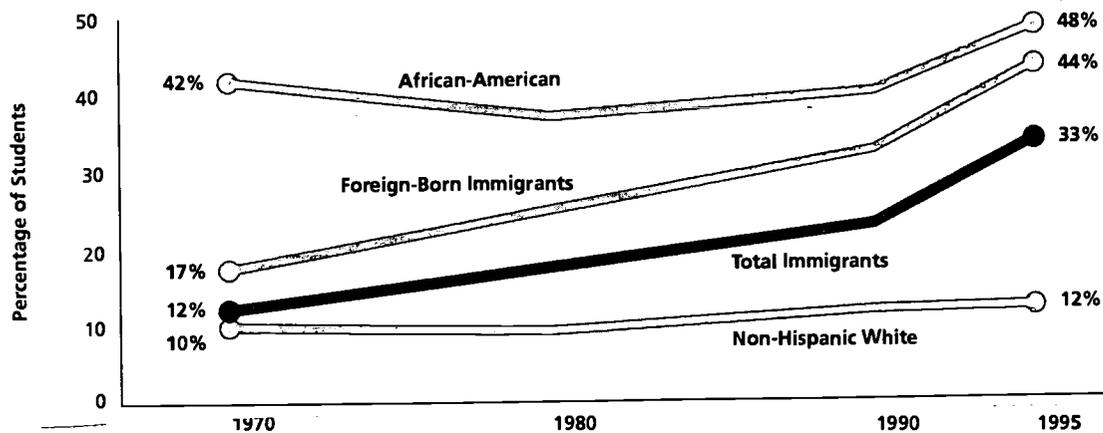
**Table 6. Children Living in Poverty**  
by Nativity/Parentage, 1970-1995

	NUMBER (in percentage)				CHANGE 1970-95
	1970	1980	1990	1995	
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	11.9	17.1	23.0	33.0	21.1
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	17.0	25.1	32.4	43.8	26.8
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	10.2	13.3	18.6	28.7	18.5
<b>Children of Natives<sup>a</sup></b>	14.7	14.5	17.5	19.9	5.2
<i>African-American</i>	41.8	36.2	40.0	47.7	5.9
<i>Non-Hisp. White</i>	9.6	9.3	11.4	11.8	2.2
<i>Other</i>	28.1	24.2	30.4	36.3	8.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>

Sources: See table 1.

a. Includes those not living with a parent; excludes Puerto Ricans.

**Figure 4. Sharp Poverty Increases among Immigrant Children**



Sources: 1970, 1980, and 1990 1% PUMS, 1995 October CPS.

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**Table 7. Percentage of Children with Family Incomes at or above 300 Percent of the Poverty Threshold by Nativity/Parentage, 1970–1995**

	NUMBER (in percentage)			CHANGE
	1970	1990	1995	1970–95
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	33.2	33.9	23.1	-10.1
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	27.2	21.6	14.9	-12.3
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	35.4	39.6	24.6	-10.8
<b>Children of Natives<sup>a</sup></b>	29.7	41.9	36.7	7.0
<i>African-American</i>	8.3	19.8	14.2	5.9
<i>Non-Hisp. White</i>	34.3	48.1	43.8	9.5
<i>Other</i>	14.4	26.9	19.0	4.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>4.8</b>

Sources: See table 1.

a. Includes those not living with a parent.

**Table 8. Percentage of Children Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home by Nativity/Parentage, 1980–1995**

	NUMBER (in percentage)			CHANGE
	1980	1990	1995	1980–95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	53.0	67.0	64.2	11.2
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	73.0	86.7	74.5	1.5
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	43.4	57.9	60.1	16.7
<b>Children of Natives</b>	3.9	5.0	3.3	-0.6

Sources: See table 1.

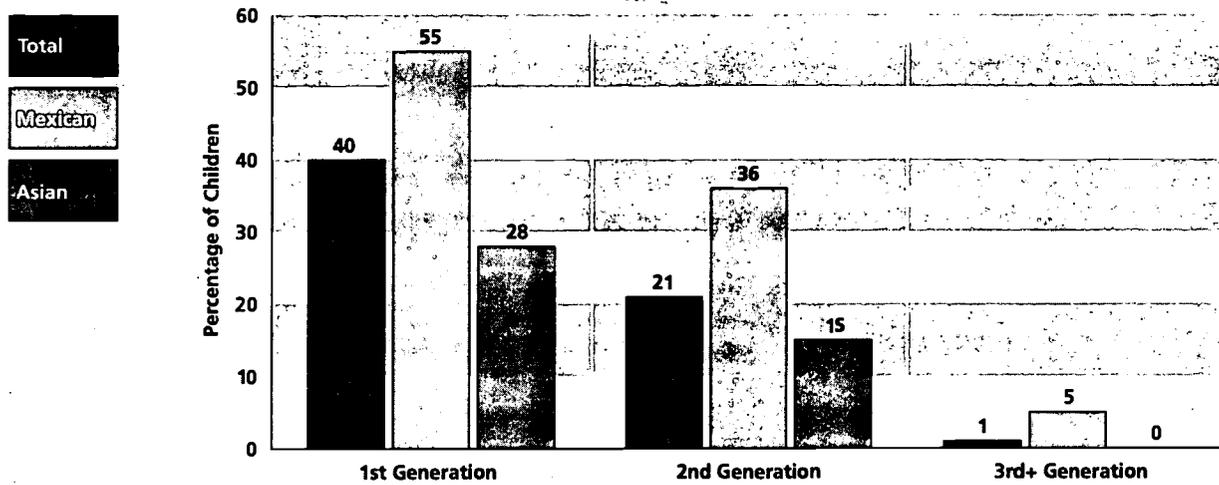
**Table 9. Percentage of Children Who Speak English "Well," "Not Well," or "Not at All" by Nativity/Parentage, 1980–1995**

	NUMBER (in percentage)			CHANGE
	1980	1990	1995	1980–95
<b>ALL U.S. STUDENTS</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	22.5	25.8	26.2	3.7
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	37.9	42.8	39.5	1.6
<i>U.S.-Born</i>	15.1	17.9	20.9	5.8
<b>Children of Natives</b>	1.3	1.6	0.5	-0.8

Sources: See table 1.

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**Figure 5. Share of LEP Children Declines Sharply across Generations**



Sources: 1995 October CPS.

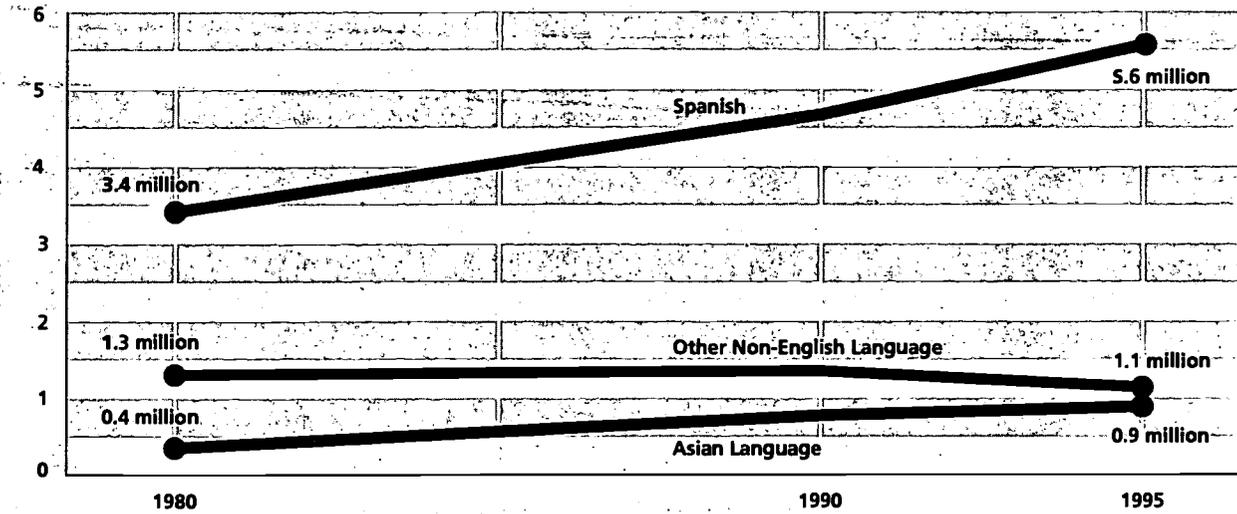
**Table 10. Percentage of Children Who Speak English "Well," "Not Well," or "Not at All" by Country of Origin and Nativity/Parentage, 1995**

	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation
<b>Mexican</b>	55.3	35.7	4.9
<b>Other Hispanic</b>	42.3	28.3	7.1
<b>Asian</b>	28.3	15.3	—
<b>Other</b>	24.1	5.0	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	39.5	20.9	0.5

Sources: 1995 October CPS.

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**Figure 6. Spanish Increasingly Prevalent in Non-English-Speaking Homes in Millions**



Sources: 1980 and 1990 1% PUMS, 1995 October CPS. Includes Puerto Ricans.

**Table 11. Number and Percentage Who Speak Spanish or Other Language, among Children Who Speak a Language Other than English at Home, 1980-1995**

	1980	1990	1995	CHANGE 1980-95
<b>NUMBER (in thousands)</b>				
Spanish	3,411	4,656	5,602	2,191
Asian Language*	403	843	945	542
Other Language	1,349	1,415	1,112	-237
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,163</b>	<b>6,914</b>	<b>7,659</b>	<b>2,496</b>
<b>NUMBER (in percent)</b>				
Spanish	66.1	67.3	73.1	7.1
Asian Language*	7.8	12.2	12.3	4.5
Other Language	26.1	20.5	14.5	-11.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>—</b>

Sources: See table 1. Includes Puerto Ricans.

\* Asian children who speak a non-Spanish language at home.

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**Table 12. Percentage of Non-English-Speaking Children by State, 1990**

	% NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS			% AMONG NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS	
	Total	Spanish	Other	Spanish	Other
California	37.2	27.5	9.8	73.8	26.2
New Mexico	31.1	23.8	7.2	76.7	23.3
Texas	29.7	27.3	2.4	91.9	8.1
New York	25.2	15.2	9.9	60.5	39.5
Arizona	23.2	16.9	6.3	72.7	27.3
New Jersey	19.2	11.4	7.8	59.3	40.7
Florida	18.7	14.6	4.2	77.7	22.3
Connecticut	16.9	9.5	7.3	56.5	43.5
Massachusetts	15.9	7.3	8.5	46.2	53.8
Illinois	14.8	9.7	5.1	65.8	34.2
Rhode Island	14.2	6.3	7.9	44.1	55.9
Hawaii	14.1	0.9	13.2	6.6	93.4
Nevada	13.3	10.1	3.1	76.3	23.7
Alaska	13.1	2.2	10.9	16.9	83.1
Washington, DC	13.0	8.3	4.7	64.1	35.9
Colorado	9.5	6.5	3.0	68.4	31.6
Washington	9.4	4.3	5.2	45.1	54.9
Maryland	8.9	3.8	5.1	42.8	57.2
Oregon	7.7	4.7	3.0	61.2	38.8
Pennsylvania	7.7	3.4	4.3	44.0	56.0
Virginia	7.7	3.2	4.5	41.3	58.7
Delaware	7.1	1.7	5.3	24.2	75.8
Utah	6.7	3.2	3.6	46.9	53.1
Idaho	6.5	5.6	0.9	86.1	13.9
Kansas	6.4	3.4	3.1	52.3	47.7
Michigan	5.7	2.0	3.7	35.7	64.3
Wisconsin	5.5	2.8	2.7	51.0	49.0
Louisiana	5.4	1.4	4.0	26.2	73.8
Ohio	5.3	2.1	3.2	40.5	59.5
Minnesota	5.3	1.6	3.7	30.3	69.7
Wyoming	5.2	2.9	2.3	56.1	43.9
Indiana	5.2	2.0	3.2	38.5	61.5
Nebraska	5.1	2.9	2.2	56.4	43.6
North Carolina	5.0	2.9	2.2	56.9	43.1
South Dakota	4.8	1.1	3.7	22.0	78.0
Iowa	4.8	2.0	2.8	40.8	59.2
Georgia	4.6	2.4	2.2	52.3	47.7
Oklahoma	4.6	2.5	2.1	54.1	45.9
New Hampshire	4.1	0.8	3.3	19.4	80.6
Mississippi	3.9	1.4	2.5	36.7	63.3
Maine	3.8	0.8	3.0	21.1	78.9
South Carolina	3.6	1.8	1.8	49.7	50.3
Missouri	3.6	1.5	2.1	42.4	57.6
North Dakota	3.5	1.1	2.4	32.1	67.9
Tennessee	3.2	1.3	1.9	40.8	59.2
West Virginia	2.9	1.1	1.8	38.7	61.3
Kentucky	2.7	1.1	1.6	42.4	57.6
Arkansas	2.6	1.6	1.0	60.8	39.2
Vermont	2.6	0.2	2.4	8.7	91.3
Alabama	2.4	1.1	1.3	45.8	54.2

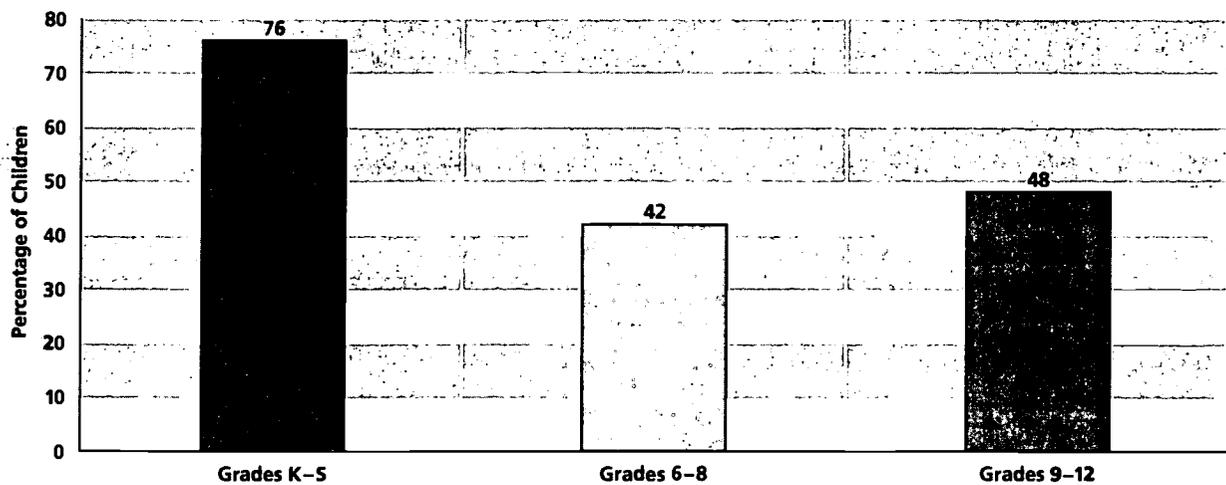
Source: 1990 Public Use Microdata Sample. Includes Puerto Ricans.

**Table 13. Percentage of LEP Students Who Receive Special English Language Instruction at School, 1993-94**

GRADE LEVEL (in percentages)	ESL Only	Bilingual Only	ESL & Bilingual	Not ESL or Bilingual
K-5	31.2	11.1	33.7	24.0
6-8	27.0	12.2	2.6	58.2
9-12	24.7	4.8	18.8	51.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>36.2</b>

Source: 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey of Students. Includes Puerto Ricans.

**Figure 7. LEP Secondary Students Receive Less Special English Language Instruction**



Source: 1993 Schools and Staffing Survey (Student Surveys).

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**Table 14. Percentage of Children Living in a Metropolitan Area and Central City by Country of Origin and Nativity/Parentage, 1995**

	Total in Metro Area	Central City	Not Central City
<b>Immigrant Children</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>45.4</b>
<b>Foreign-Born</b>	<b>82.6</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>45.0</b>
<b>U.S.-Born</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>45.6</b>
<b>Children of Natives</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>40.2</b>
<b>African-American</b>	<b>72.2</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>25.2</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic White</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>44.6</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>30.9</b>

Sources: 1995 October CPS.

Note: Sample excludes Puerto Ricans.

**Table 15. State Residential Patterns of Immigrant and Native Children, 1995**

	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACROSS STATES		PERCENTAGE SHARE WITHIN STATES	
	Immigrant Children	Children of Natives	Immigrant Children	Children of Natives
<b>Six Largest Immigration States</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>69.3</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>54.4</b>
<b>Texas</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>76.3</b>
<b>New York</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>71.9</b>
<b>Florida</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>76.3</b>
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>82.1</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>77.9</b>
<b>Other States</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>67.8</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>92.8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>84.2</b>

Source: See table 14.

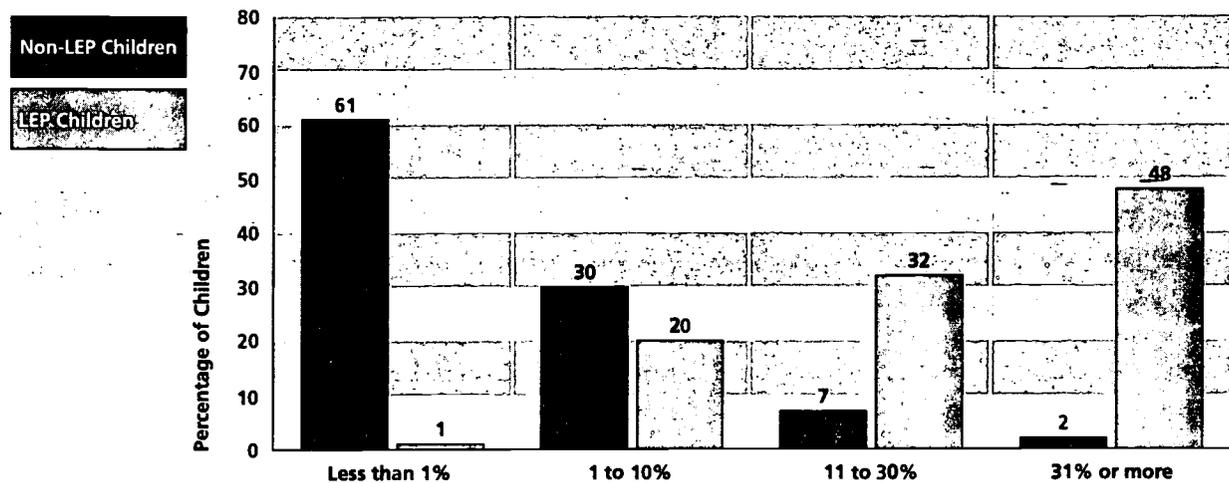
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**Table 16. Percentage LEP in School of Typical Student**  
by LEP Status, Nativity/Parentage, and Race/Ethnicity, 1993

Race/Ethnicity	% LEP in School of Typical Student	% IN A SCHOOL WITH LEP STUDENTS	
		0-10%	50-100%
<b>African-American</b>	3.7 (0.4)	89.7 (6.0)	1.2 (0.3)
<b>Non-Hispanic White</b>	2.0 (0.1)	94.8 (2.6)	0.4 (0.1)
<b>Hispanic</b>	19.5 (2.3)	47.9 (3.9)	12.8 (2.2)
<b>Asian</b>	10.6 (1.8)	68.0 (6.9)	5.6 (1.9)
<b>LEP Status</b>			
<b>LEP-Students</b>	35.4 (4.9)	19.9 (1.5)	30.9 (5.4)
<b>Non-LEP Students</b>	3.2 (0.2)	90.8 (2.2)	0.8 (0.1)

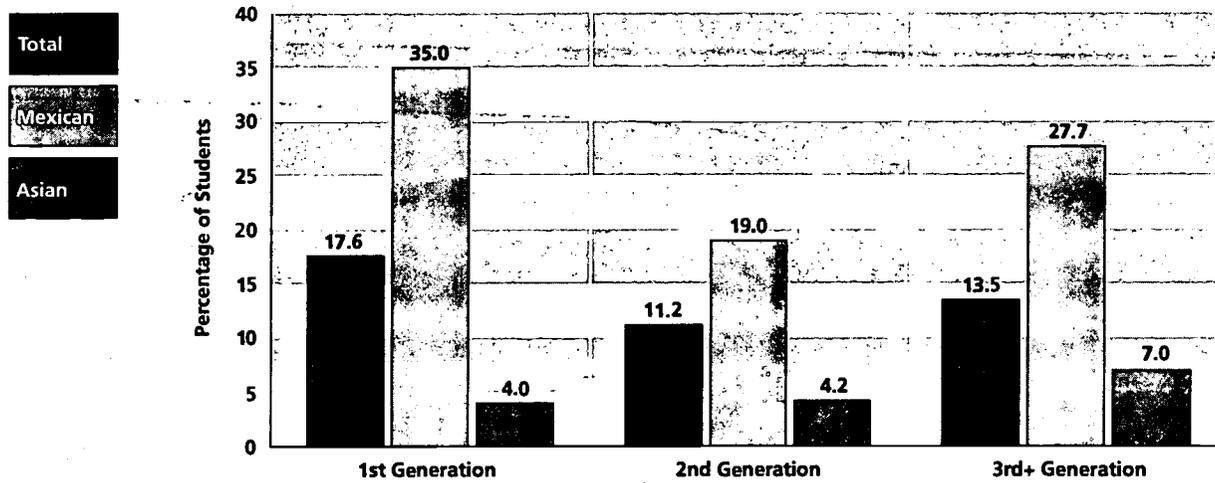
Sources: Schools and Staffing Surveys (School Surveys, 1993-94). Includes Puerto Ricans.  
Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

**Figure 8: LEP Students Are Concentrated in Linguistically Segregated Schools**



Sources: Schools and Staffing Surveys (School Surveys, 1993-94). Includes Puerto Ricans.

**Figure 9. Second Generation Least Likely to Drop Out**



Source: 1995 October CPS. Sample excludes those never enrolled in U.S. schools and those born in Puerto Rico or with Puerto Rican parents.

**Table 17. High School Completion (Percent Dropped Out) by Race/Ethnicity and Nativity/Parentage**

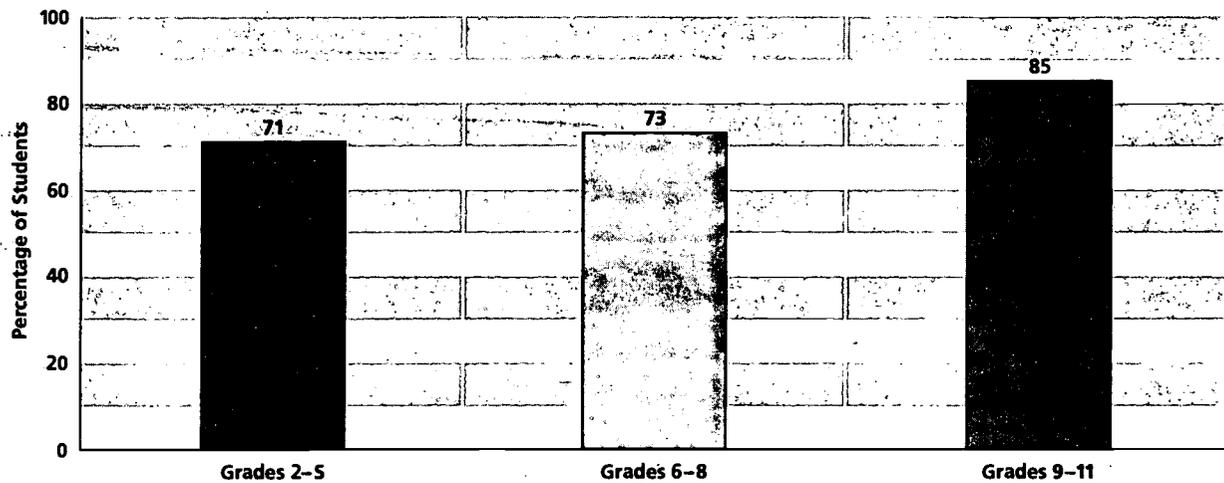
	Foreign-Born	U.S.-Born Children of Immigrants	Children of Natives	Number of Cases
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17.6*</b>	<b>11.2*</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>1,171</b>
<b>Mexican</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>19.0*</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>Other Hispanic</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>9.7*</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>176</b>
<b>Asian</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Non-Hispanic White</b>	<b>7.5*</b>	<b>9.2*</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>5.1*</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: 1995 October CPS. Sample excludes those never enrolled in U.S. schools and those born in Puerto Rico or with Puerto Rican parents.

\*Significantly different from children of natives (comparisons made within race/ethnic groups;  $p < .05$ ).

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**Figure 10. Percentage of California LEP Students Scoring below Nationally Ranked 25th Percentile in Reading**



Source: California Department of Education (1998) (test results of 4.1 million California students grades 2-11 administered in English and Spanish).

**Table 18. Achievement Test Results among California Schoolchildren, 1998**

	GRADES 2-5			GRADES 6-8			GRADES 9-11		
	Non-LEP	LEP	Diff.	Non-LEP	LEP	Diff.	Non-LEP	LEP	Diff.
<i>% Above Nationally Ranked 25th Percentile</i>									
Reading	61	29	32	67	27	40	59	15	44
Math	63	43	20	65	37	28	69	46	22
Language	63	37	26	69	37	32	65	30	35
Spelling	61	35	26	62	28	34	—	—	—
Science	—	—	—	—	—	—	70	42	28
Social Science	—	—	—	—	—	—	69	42	27

Source: California Department of Education (1998) (test results of 4.1 million California students grades 2-11 administered in English and Spanish).

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**Table 19. High School Completion (Percent Dropped Out)**

by LEP Status, Nativity/Parentage, and Race/Ethnicity, 1995

	LEP	NON-LEP
<b>PERCENT DROPPED OUT</b>		
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	<b>23.3#</b>	<b>13.3</b>
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	21.5*#	16.0
<i>U.S.-Born Children of Immigrants</i>	21.0*#	10.5*
<i>Children of Natives</i>	38.7 #	13.4
<i>Mexican</i>	37.9††#	24.2††
<i>Other Hispanic</i>	28.5††	17.6††
<i>Asian</i>	4.3††	4.5††
<i>Black</i>	—	16.2††
<i>Non-Hispanic White</i>	13.5	11.8
<b>NUMBER OF CASES</b>		
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>14,152</b>
<i>Foreign-Born</i>	300	754
<i>U.S.-Born Children of Immigrants</i>	88	1,249
<i>Children of Natives</i>	59	12,149
<i>Mexican</i>	155	734
<i>Other Hispanic</i>	68	408
<i>Asian</i>	114	498
<i>Black</i>	—	1,815
<i>Non-Hispanic White</i>	83	10,508

Source: See table 17.

Note: For all tests of significance,  $p < .05$ .

\*Significantly different from children of natives (comparisons made within LEP/non-LEP groups).

††Significantly different from non-Hispanic white children (comparisons made within LEP/non-LEP groups).

#Significantly different from non-LEP children (comparisons made between LEPs and non-LEPs).

In 1993, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation launched the Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) to stimulate development and evaluation of exemplary school-based programs for immigrant secondary school students. The program had three components: (1) demonstration projects in middle and high schools, (2) guidance from school reform experts, and (3) a national coordinating organization. The timeline for the local demonstrations included three years of implementation at the sites from September 1994 to August 1997, followed by a period for documentation and dissemination of findings from September 1997 to August 1998.

Local demonstration projects were designed to strengthen the participating schools' capacity to meet immigrant students' needs by helping school staff plan, organize, and implement reforms. Participating schools agreed to pursue the following three immigrant student outcomes:

- Improve student literacy and English language acquisition.
- Improve student mastery of academic content and skills.
- Improve student access to postsecondary opportunities, including both college and workforce preparation.

Three organizations were selected to work with demonstration schools. California Tomorrow, a research and policy organization in Oakland, led reform efforts at three high schools and at a secondary school newcomer center in two northern California school districts, Salinas and Hayward. The Center for Language Minority Education and Research at California State University, Long Beach, led demonstration projects in a Long Beach middle school and a high school in Paramount. Faculty in the Department of Education at University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) led demonstration projects at the district level and in two high schools and two middle schools in Prince George's County, Maryland.

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), in Washington, D.C., was selected as the national coordinating organization. CAL undertook the following four major functions:

- Provide technical assistance to the demonstration projects and their reform partners.
- Coordinate research and evaluation activities.
- Commission research papers from immigrant education specialists on topical concerns.
- Make the outcomes of project activities widely available.

In addition, CAL coordinated the involvement of a six-member advisory committee—all specialists in areas related to immigrant education—who gave feedback on activities, plans, and policy implications of the work of the program.

## The Demonstration Sites and Their Communities

The demonstration projects and their communities illustrate the impact of recent immigration on U.S. schools. In California, the racial/ethnic makeup and the demographics of the state's foreign-born population have changed dramatically in the past 20 years, with important consequences for nearly all of its schools. School districts as geographically dispersed as Long Beach Unified (the state's third largest), located in Los Angeles County, and Salinas Union High School District, located in a northern agricultural valley, have experienced high and sustained immigration levels. These high-immigrant schools have also undergone dramatic shifts in the poverty levels and in the racial/ethnic makeup of their enrolled populations.

In contrast, Maryland has experienced immigration levels that more nearly approximate the national average. Even so, since 1990 Maryland has attracted an increasing share of newly arrived immigrants.<sup>1</sup> Their impact has been unevenly distributed both across and within school districts. Secondary schools that only 10 years ago had little or no experience with limited English proficient (LEP) immigrant youth have been transformed into centers for English as a second language (ESL) instruction.

The diversity of the participating schools and districts reflected the range of immigrant-receiving communities. Some schools were in communities where immigrants first settle on arriving in this country. Others were in areas of secondary migration, where immigrant families tend to move after their economic situations improve. Still others were in communities where foreign immigration is a relatively new phenomenon. One district was in an agricultural region and included students from seasonal migrant families as well.

**California.** California has the largest foreign-born population in the United States, both in numbers (about 8 million) and as a percentage of the total population (25.1 percent).<sup>2</sup> Moreover, California has historically experienced the highest rates of international in-migration in the country, averaging a net gain of about 260,000 people per year from international migration since 1990.

California also leads the nation as a destination for refugees to the United States. This fact is significant because, in contrast to voluntary migrants, refugees often arrive with few possessions or financial resources and without a network of relatives in this country who might help them to understand the American education system. In the five-year period between 1990 and 1994, over 191,000 refugees settled in California, representing nearly one-third of all refugees admitted to the United States during the period.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Los Angeles County (where two of the demonstration sites were located) received more refugees

<sup>1</sup> See Immigration and Naturalization Service (1997), table 18, Immigrants Admitted by State of Intended Residence, Fiscal Years 1988-96.

<sup>2</sup> Hansen and Faber, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> California State Department of Finance, 1996. This analysis was based on data collected by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. The term "refugee" here includes both refugees and asylum seekers granted permanent resident status.

during that period than the total for any individual state except New York, Florida, and California itself. Spanish-speaking immigrants have consistently been the largest language group entering California.

Nowhere is the impact of these immigration trends more evident than in the public school system. Since 1990, California has led the states in both number and percentage of newcomer immigrant students. In 1995–96, one-third (33.7 percent) of all newcomer immigrant children in the United States attended a California public school.<sup>4</sup>

Data from the federal government's Emergency Immigrant Education Act (EIEA) assistance program provide a window for viewing the impact of recent immigration on school districts.<sup>5</sup> To qualify for EIEA funds, a school district must have at least 500 newcomer immigrant children who have attended U.S. schools for less than three academic years, or have newcomer children constituting at least 3 percent of its enrollment. In 1997–98, about 36 percent of all California school districts (378 districts) met the EIEA criteria for funding. About 62 percent of newcomer immigrants attended a school district within the San Francisco-Oakland, Los Angeles-Orange County, or San Diego metropolitan areas. Significant numbers were also enrolled in small town and rural community schools. For example, about 8.5 percent of California's newcomer immigrant children enrolled in schools in the Central San Joaquin Valley<sup>6</sup>—a percentage roughly equivalent to that in the metropolitan San Francisco-Oakland region (8.1 percent). Altogether, California reported 212,676 recent immigrant students in its schools. Of these, 55.8 percent were from Mexico. The next most numerous recent immigrant groups were from the Philippines (5.6 percent), Vietnam (3.9 percent), and South Korea (3.1 percent).<sup>7</sup>

The impact of immigration on schools can also be gauged by the number of LEP students in public schools. California's LEP children represent one-quarter (24.6 percent) of all public school students in the state. In 1997–98, more than 1.4 million LEP students enrolled in California public schools, over 80 percent (1.1 million) of whom speak Spanish as their primary language. The next most common primary languages were Vietnamese, spoken by 3.1 percent (43,008); Hmong, spoken by 2.2 percent (30,551); Cantonese, spoken by 1.8 percent (25,362); and Filipino/Tagalog, spoken by 1.4 percent (20,062) of LEP students.<sup>8</sup>

The enrollment of recent immigrant students is relatively even across elementary and secondary schools.<sup>9</sup> In 1997–98, of the 54,600 EIEA-eligible newcomer immigrants in the five districts with the largest newcomer populations,<sup>10</sup> 47.3 percent were enrolled in grades

*Since 1990, California  
has led the states  
in both number and  
percentage of newcomer  
immigrant students.*

<sup>4</sup> These data are from the Department of Education's most recent biennial report to Congress on the EIEA, June 15, 1999 (reporting aggregate data for the 1994–95 and 1995–96 school years).

<sup>5</sup> The EIEA is currently the only federal education program that targets funds to school districts experiencing rapid demographic change attributable to immigration.

<sup>6</sup> Includes school districts in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, and Tulare.

<sup>7</sup> The Urban Institute obtained state-level EIEA-eligible pupil counts and EIEA funding distribution to local districts from the California Department of Education (CDE), Language Policy and Leadership Office, for FYs 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998. The CDE provided additional district and grade-level data for a sample of four high-immigrant districts (see previous footnote) and for the four Mellon-funded project districts.

<sup>8</sup> Characteristics of California LEP students, 1997–98, supplied by the California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit. Data sources are the California Basic Education Data System (CBEDS) and the Spring 1998 School Language Census, California Department of Education.

<sup>9</sup> As we note in chapter 2, however, the proportion of newcomer immigrants to total enrollment is generally greater at the secondary school level.

<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles, San Francisco, Compton, Fresno, and San Diego Unified School Districts. EIEA data provided by the California Department of Education.

6-12. About 506,800 of LEP students (36.5 percent of all California LEP students) were enrolled in those grades.<sup>11</sup>

Rapid growth and demographic change among LEP immigrants have outpaced the state's capacity to meet student needs. According to one analysis of state data, the 1996-97 ratio of fully credentialed bilingual teachers to LEP students was 1:85 for Spanish-speaking students and 1:889 for Vietnamese-speaking students. During the same period, over one-third of teachers working with LEP students were employed on emergency waivers pending completion of academic work required for an appropriate teaching credential.<sup>12</sup>

## The California Tomorrow Demonstration Sites

**Hayward, California.** Hayward is a metropolitan suburb of about 123,000 persons, 14 miles south of Oakland and 25 miles southeast of San Francisco. Linked to its larger neighbors by a rapid transit system, Hayward's workforce ranges from professional to technical, retail, wholesale, and manufacturing occupations.

Hayward is also among the most racially and culturally diverse communities in California. At the beginning of the 1990s, its residents were 51.1 percent white (non-Hispanic), 23.9 percent Hispanic, 15.5 percent Asian, and 9.8 percent black. About 21.1 percent of Hayward's population was foreign born, more than half of whom (52.4 percent) came to the United States between 1980 and 1990. Among Hayward residents five years and older, almost one-third (31.6 percent) reported speaking a language other than English at home and 14.2 percent were LEP (using our definition of speaking English less than "very well"). Of this LEP population, 46 percent spoke Spanish and 32 percent an Asian language as their primary language.

State school data and interviews with local school officials indicate that the Hayward School District experienced a rapid population shift in the 1980s and through the mid-1990s, due in large measure to foreign immigration.

In the five-year period between 1992-93 and 1997-98, for example, the school district's total enrollment increased by 8.9 percent, even as white student enrollment fell by 26.3 percent. The number of students the district designated as LEP increased during this period by 24.6 percent (from 4,762 to 5,932 students). The rate of increase among LEP students was more than double that for enrollment as a whole.

In 1997-98, Hayward operated three comprehensive high schools serving a total of 5,545 students. Thirty-two percent were receiving free or reduced-price lunches, 18 percent were in families on public assistance, 18 percent were LEP, and 9 percent had been in the United States less than three years.

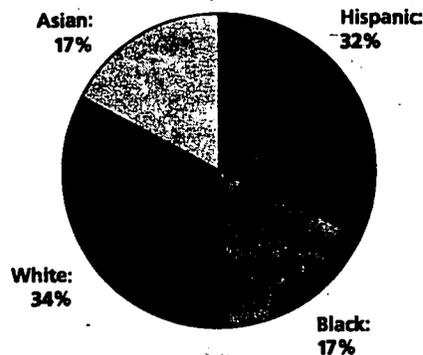
Although Spanish is the language spoken by most (60 percent) of the LEP high school students at Hayward, the district reported serving substantial numbers (at least 30 per group) whose primary languages were either Vietnamese, Tagalog (Filipino), Hindi, Punjabi, or Farsi (Persian).

Project staff implemented demonstration projects at two of these schools, Tennyson High School and Hayward High School, and at a special newcomer center for LEP immigrant youth, The English Language Center. Hayward was the only demonstration project to operate a newcomer center. This center, started in 1981, serves students with the lowest

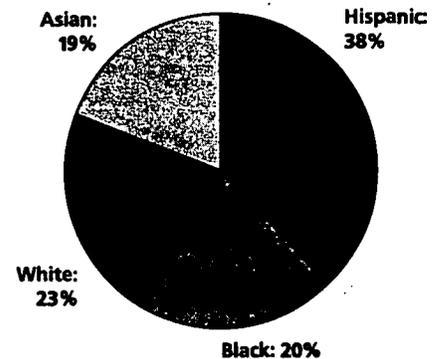
<sup>11</sup> These grade distribution numbers do not include 18,215 LEP students in ungraded special education programs or special alternative schools. Source: Spring 1998 School Language Census, California Department of Education.

<sup>12</sup> Ed-Source, 1998. Report based on data supplied by the California Department of Education available at [www.ed-data.k12.ca.us//edfact\\_bilingual\\_rep.html](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us//edfact_bilingual_rep.html).

Enrollment 1992-93



Enrollment 1997-98



English proficiency in grades 7-12. Depending on English proficiency level, students are offered services in their native language, in ESL, and/or specially modified English instruction in the core subjects. Hayward operates a five-level ESL program. Students in the first three levels of ESL spend half of their day at the newcomer center and the other half at their regular middle or high school. Students with the lowest English proficiency (ESL 1 and 2) are also offered American and world history in their native languages at the newcomer center. Students in ESL 4 and 5 are generally mainstreamed at the regular schools, but may receive modified English instruction in content areas (science, history, etc.) depending on the availability of specially trained teachers.

**Salinas, California.** Salinas is a city of about 109,000 residents in the heart of one of the richest agricultural regions in the world, about 10 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean and 100 miles south of San Francisco. Although it is home to more than 100 industrial and manufacturing facilities, civic leaders often promote Salinas as the "salad bowl of the world." Among working persons ages 16 years and older, agriculture and retail trades are by far the most common occupations.

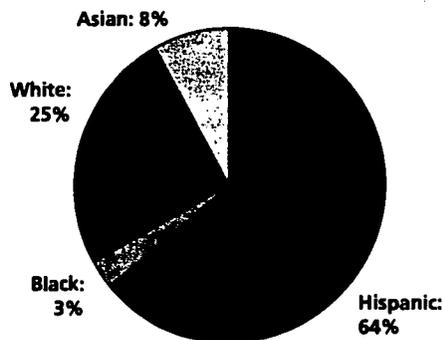
In 1990, Hispanics accounted for slightly over half (50.6 percent) of the population of Salinas City. About 39 percent of residents were white, 8 percent Asian, and 3 percent black. More than a quarter of city residents (26 percent) were foreign born, about 45 percent of whom arrived in the United States in the 10 years between 1980 and 1990. Among Salinas residents five years and older, 47 percent spoke a language other than English at home and 27 percent were LEP. The vast majority of Salinas's LEP population (88.5 percent) speak Spanish and 9 percent speak an Asian language as their first language.

In the 1992-93 school year, the Salinas Union High School District<sup>13</sup> enrolled 9,589 students. By 1997-98, its enrollment had grown to 11,462. During that period, the portion of students designated as LEP by the district increased 46.8 percent (from 3,310 in 1992-93 to 4,860 in 1997-98). As in Hayward, the number of LEP students in Salinas increased at more than double the rate of overall enrollment growth.

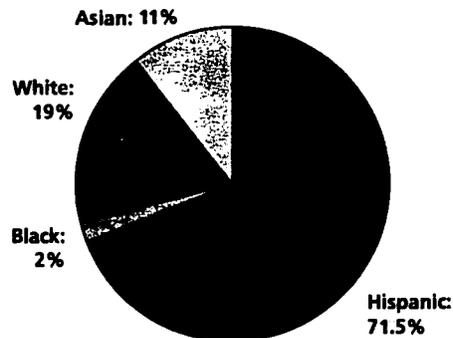
In 1997-98, Salinas Union operated four comprehensive high schools serving 7,313 students, the overwhelming majority (68 percent) of whom were Hispanic. The proportion

<sup>13</sup> Unlike Hayward Unified, which operates schools for students in K-12, Salinas Union operates schools for students in grades 7-12 only. Consequently, trend data are reported only for secondary school enrollments.

**District Enrollment 1992-93**



**District Enrollment 1997-98**



(39 percent) of Salinas high school students classified as LEP in 1997-98 is more than double the average for all California high schools. The district has a low proportion (5 percent) of newcomers relative to LEP students, reflecting stable residency patterns among Salinas's Hispanic families and the fact that many LEP students remain classified as LEP long after completing three or more years of schooling. Spanish is the language spoken by an overwhelming 94.4 percent of LEP high school students in the district. The next most prevalent languages are in the Filipino group (Tagalog, Ilocano, and Cebuano), together accounting for about 3 percent of LEP students in Salinas high schools.

Project staff worked with one comprehensive high school in Salinas, Alisal High School. The school offers limited native language instruction for newcomer students, a multilevel sequence of ESL courses, and sheltered instruction in content areas. The education of LEP children at Alisal is governed by a court-ordered consent decree stipulating that LEP pupils in grades 7-12 are to be served in a "structured bilingual education program...designed to promote English language proficiency and sustain academic achievement through the use of the student's primary language...."<sup>14</sup>

Almost two-thirds (61.7 percent) of students at Alisal High School in 1997-98 were LEP, the highest among Salinas high schools. Alisal also has the highest percentages of students receiving free/reduced-price lunches and families receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)<sup>15</sup> assistance, as well as the lowest average SAT scores in the district.

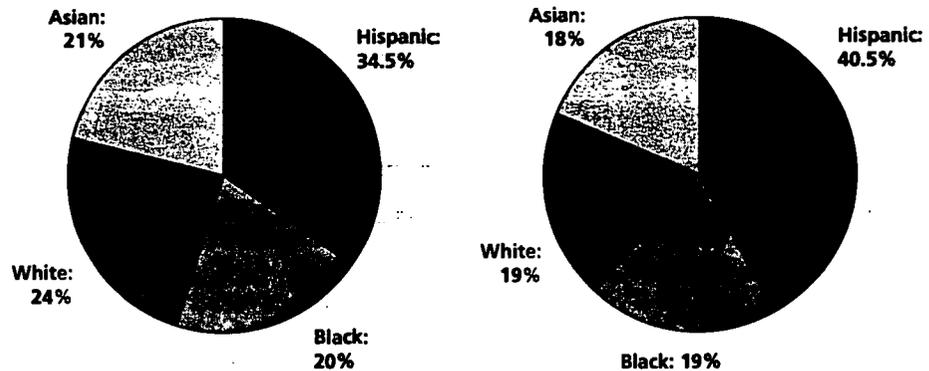
## The Center for Language Minority Education and Research Demonstration Sites

**Long Beach, California.** Long Beach is an urban community in Los Angeles County about 25 minutes' driving distance from downtown Los Angeles. With about 453,000 residents, Long Beach is California's fifth-largest city. It has a diverse economy, including a strong tourist industry (more than 4 million visitors annually) and significant manufacturing, health, and education labor markets.

<sup>14</sup> *Atilano v. Salinas Union High School District*, N.D. California, 1975. Consent Agreement, Revised May 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Aid to Families with Dependent Children. Data on welfare cash assistance were collected and reported by the state before the federal aid program's name was changed to the current Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

**District Racial/Ethnic Enrollment 1992-93      District Racial/Ethnic Enrollment 1997-98**



In 1990, Long Beach was 49.5 percent white, 23.6 percent Hispanic, 13.7 percent black, and 13.6 percent Asian. Almost a quarter (24.3 percent) of Long Beach's population was foreign born, of whom 61.1 percent (63,612 individuals) reported entering the United States between 1980 and 1990. Among Long Beach residents five years of age and older, 32.8 percent spoke a language other than English at home and 17.9 percent of residents were LEP. Among this LEP population, about 61.0 percent spoke Spanish and 34.5 percent an Asian/Pacific Island language as their primary language.

In the 1992-93 school year, the Long Beach Unified School District enrolled 75,414 students. Hispanic students were the largest racial/ethnic group in the district. In the five years between 1992-93 and 1997-98, district enrollment increased to 85,900 students, a 14 percent net increase, despite an 8.4 percent decline in non-Hispanic white student enrollment. The number of students designated LEP increased by 21 percent (from 24,692 to 31,263 students) in the five years between 1992-93 and 1997-98. This is an average annual addition of over 1,300 LEP students per year and a net increase of 6,577 LEP students in the five-year period. LEP students accounted for 36.4 percent of the total district enrollment in 1997-98. The California State University collaboration with Long Beach Unified included one of the district's middle schools.

In 1997-98, Long Beach Unified operated 16 middle schools, serving 16,789 students in grades 6-8.<sup>16</sup> About 31.1 percent of Long Beach's middle school students were identified as LEP by the school district, a number substantially higher than the statewide average for California middle school students (21.1 percent). About two-thirds of all middle school students (67.8 percent) were receiving free/reduced-price lunches and more than one-third (36.8 percent) of middle school students reported living in families receiving AFDC.

Among LEP middle school students in Long Beach, 77.5 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language, 14.7 percent spoke Khmer (Cambodian), and 1.7 percent spoke a Filipino language. The district also reported serving substantial numbers of middle school students (at least 30 per group) whose primary languages were Vietnamese, Samoan, and Lao.

The demonstration project site in Long Beach was at the Hill Middle school. About 32.8 percent of the students at Hill Middle were identified as LEP in 1997-98, a number roughly equal to the middle school districtwide LEP average. About two-thirds of LEP stu-

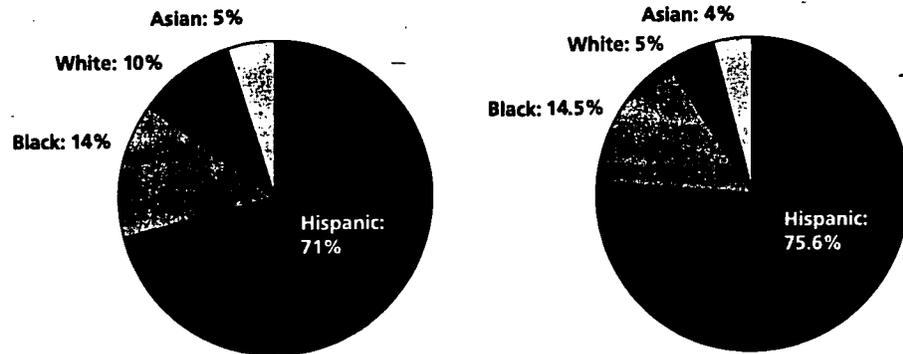
<sup>16</sup> Including a special 8th-grade academy with 383 students.

dents in this school were Spanish speakers, and another third spoke languages in the Southeast Asian group (including Khmer, Lao, Vietnamese, and Hmong). The curriculum and organization at Hill Middle followed the Accelerated Schools Model developed by Henry Levin at Stanford University.<sup>17</sup> This model involves teachers and administrators in theme-focused planning and problem-solving teams called cadres. At the Hill Middle School, the organization included an academic cadre (focused on curriculum development), a parent involvement cadre, and a school harmony cadre (focused on student relations and multiculturalism). The school also implemented the district's multilevel English Language Development (ELD) program for LEP children, including core subject courses taught by teachers trained in the Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) sheltered instruction method.<sup>18</sup> Rather than create new reform teams, project staff worked within the existing Accelerated School and district ELD program structures to promote project goals.

**Paramount, California.** Located in Los Angeles County, Paramount is a town of about 48,000 residents bordering the city of Long Beach. Paramount has been transformed in the past three decades from a predominantly white, suburban community to one that shares the more urban, multicultural characteristics of its larger neighbors, Long Beach and Los Angeles. As recently as 1970, only 19.5 percent of Paramount's 34,892 population was Hispanic, less than 1 percent was African-American, and only 5.9 percent was foreign born. By 1990, the city had grown almost 37 percent (to 47,669 persons), and Hispanics had become the majority (60.8 percent). About a quarter (23 percent) of the population was white, 10.7 percent black, and 5.8 percent Asian. As in Long Beach, retail and manufacturing jobs were the most common occupations in 1990 (48.6 percent of the workforce) among persons ages 16 and older.

By 1990, Paramount's foreign-born population had increased to 37.6 percent, almost half (48.6 percent) of whom had entered this country in the period between 1980 and 1990. Among Paramount residents five years and older, 49.4 percent spoke a language other than English at home, and one-third (33.3) of residents were LEP. The vast majority (90.6 percent) of Paramount's LEP population spoke Spanish and another 7.6 percent spoke an Asian language as their primary language.

**District Racial/Ethnic Enrollment 1992-93      District Racial/Ethnic Enrollment 1997-98**



<sup>17</sup> See Levin, 1987, pp. 19-21.

<sup>18</sup> See Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 100.

In the 1992–93 school year, the Paramount Unified School District enrolled 13,585 students, of whom 42.3 percent were designated LEP. By 1997–98, the number of students in the district had increased to 16,203, of whom 44.9 percent were designated LEP.

Over the same period, the Hispanic student population in the school district increased from 71 percent to 75.6 percent and the non-Hispanic white student population declined to 5 percent of the total.

In the 1997–98 year, Paramount Unified operated only one high school, Paramount High School. Demonstration projects were implemented at this school and its adjacent 9th-grade academy, which together served 3,401 students.<sup>19</sup> Of these, 32.9 percent (1,118) were identified as LEP. This is more than double the average (15.2 percent LEP) for all California high schools. Spanish is the primary language spoken by practically all (98 percent) of Paramount's high school LEP students. Khmer-, Urdu-, Tagalog-, and Thai-speaking students together account for about 1.5 percent. Paramount High School's standard program for LEP students included a multilevel ESL program, sheltered instruction in the required subjects, and some limited subject-matter instruction in the primary language for newcomer students with very limited English proficiency.

**Maryland.** Although Maryland has not experienced the dramatic pace of foreign immigration evident in California, immigration is becoming increasingly important demographically. In 1990, roughly 7.0 percent of Maryland residents were foreign born, a number comparable to the national average (7.9 percent) at that time. Between 1991 and 1996, however, the share of new immigrants coming to Maryland more than doubled.

Among the 8.9 percent of Maryland residents who spoke a language other than English at home in 1990, just over one-third (37.6 percent of second-language speakers) were LEP. This statistic suggests that Maryland receives a higher proportion of immigrants with advanced English language skills than has recently been the case in California. The impact of immigration to Maryland has been concentrated in two counties. Two-thirds of Maryland's foreign-born population (67.3 percent) and nearly two-thirds of individuals in Maryland over five years of age who were LEP in 1990 (61.6 percent) resided in either Montgomery or Prince George's Counties. These counties include the northern and eastern suburbs of greater metropolitan Washington, D.C.

## The University of Maryland, Baltimore County Demonstration Sites

**Prince George's County Public Schools.** Prince George's County is part of the greater Washington metropolitan region encompassing nearly 500 square miles immediately east of the District of Columbia. The county ranges from large equestrian farms to densely populated residential communities and commercial centers. The federal government was the single largest employer (21.2 percent) as late as 1990. All public schools are governed by a unitary county board, the Prince George's County Public Schools system.

Prince George's County has undergone dramatic demographic shifts in the past two decades. More than half white (58.8 percent) in 1980, the county had become half black (50.7 percent) by 1990. In 1997, the county's population was about 56 percent black.

The county's foreign-born population share has also been increasing. It jumped 74.4 percent from 1980 to 1990, to account for 9.5 percent of the county's total population—

<sup>19</sup> Although 9th-grade students were served in a "9th-grade academy" in a separate building, data for grades 9–12 are reported together as one high school unit by the state.

more than half (55.4 percent) of the county's total foreign born in 1990 had entered the county during the previous decade. The characteristics of the county's foreign-born population also changed in that decade. In 1980, almost one-quarter (24.3 percent) of the county's foreign-born residents were from Europe; about 35 percent from Asian countries; 23.7 percent from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central or South America; and 4.6 percent from sub-Saharan Africa. By 1990, the European and Asian shares had declined to 11.0 and 30.4 percent, respectively; the Caribbean and Latin American share had grown to almost 40 percent; and the sub-Saharan African share had also grown to 12.0 percent. Finally, the proportion of residents five years and older who were LEP had increased from 2.8 percent of the population in 1980 to 4.6 percent in 1990. Spanish was the predominant primary language spoken among almost half (47.4 percent) of the LEP residents in 1990. Asian languages were the primary language spoken by another quarter (24.5 percent), with several Arabic and sub-Saharan African language groups also represented among Prince George's County residents.

In 1997–98, the school district enrolled 125,637 students, of whom 3.8 percent were LEP (up from 2.5 percent in 1992–93). Of the 4,736 LEP students enrolled in 1997–98, 26.4 percent were in middle school or high school. About 2,450 of the district's immigrant students had been in U.S. schools for less than three years. Just over 40 percent of district students were receiving free or reduced-price lunches.

The relatively modest LEP and immigrant numbers mask the impact of recent immigration on the Prince George's County schools that actually serve LEP children. Because the LEP numbers are small relative to the district's total population, the district concentrates its special language development programs for LEP students in only a few schools and reassigns LEP students from other neighborhoods to those schools. This practice is common in school districts that have only recently become destinations for significant numbers of new immigrants. Prince George's County operates special language development programs—English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)—in only 6 of its 26 middle schools and 7 of its 24 high schools. In 1997–98, the average proportion of LEP students at LEP-serving schools was 5.8 percent at the high school level and 10.3 percent at the middle school level. At some of the middle schools the percentage of LEP students was as high as 14 to 16 percent.

Spanish was the dominant primary language spoken by LEP high school students in the county in 1997–98, accounting for 45 percent of all LEP students. Amharic, an Ethiopian language, is the next most common primary language, accounting for about 6.5 percent of LEP students. The district also serves significant numbers of students (at least 30 per group) whose native languages are Arabic, French (predominantly among African and Caribbean immigrants), Krio (Sierra Leone), Somali, and one or more of the Chinese languages.

The Prince George's County demonstration projects took place in two immigrant-serving high school/middle school pairs: Northwestern High School and one of its feeder schools, Orem Middle School; and Bladensburg High School and its feeder, Wirt Middle School. Unlike the California projects, where university consulting partners worked directly with schoolteachers, the UMBC projects were structured as collaboratives with the school district's Office of ESOL and Language Minority Affairs. UMBC staff directed the project

*The relatively modest LEP and immigrant numbers mask the impact of recent immigration on the Prince George's County schools that actually serve LEP children.*

and served as consultants, but district staff took day-to-day responsibility for working with teachers and coordinating activities at the school sites.

## Summary

The PRIME demonstration sites are emblematic of how immigration has affected schools in the United States. California has experienced high and sustained levels of immigration in almost all geographic regions of the state and in urban, rural, and suburban school districts. Newcomers have dramatically affected the ethnic/racial makeup, poverty levels, and language ability of the school-enrolled population. The California sites mirror this diversity and the challenges it presents to educators. Maryland has experienced immigration levels more nearly approximating the national average, but the impact of this immigration has been unevenly distributed both across and within school districts. Many immigrants to Maryland have settled in communities where foreign immigration is a relatively new phenomenon. In almost all cases, the changes wrought by immigration have outpaced the capacity of schools to meet changing student needs.

We begin this chapter with a focus on two limited English proficient (LEP) immigrant subgroups increasingly found in grades 7–12: underschooled teen newcomers and long-term LEP students. Underschooled newcomers have typically been in U.S. schools for four years or less. Most arrive with little or no English language fluency, have limited literacy in their native languages, and perform three or more years below the age-appropriate grade level in math and other core academic subjects.

Long-term LEPs, as previously noted, is a term teachers have coined to describe a growing number of first (and sometimes second)-generation teen children of immigrants, who have been educated in U.S. elementary schools, are usually orally fluent in English, but continue to perform several years below grade level in English reading comprehension and writing skills.

Both underschooled and long-term LEPs share a common dilemma: The typical English as a second language (ESL), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), or bilingual program is not designed to meet their specific needs.

The second section introduces four challenges to immigrant education that occupied center stage in the Mellon demonstration projects: (1) the search for ways to address the literacy needs of students within secondary schools not designed to focus on basic literacy development, (2) the challenge of accelerating subject learning for students who are not ready for English instruction in mainstream classes, (3) the lack of appropriate assessment tools for evaluating the progress of LEP students in secondary schools, and (4) long-term shortages of new teachers specially trained to work with English language learners. We revisit these challenges in chapters 5 and 6 in light of the structure of secondary schools and the school accountability movement.

We close this chapter with an overview of how the political and fiscal contexts in which secondary schools operate tend to constrain educators' abilities to respond effectively to LEP immigrants. Federal assistance to LEP and other disadvantaged children often is a critical source of assistance in high-poverty school districts.<sup>1</sup> But local officials tend to target federal assistance to elementary schools, thus limiting services to students in the upper grades. Educators working in districts experiencing rapid immigration-related demographic change also note that anti-immigrant sentiments in their local communities tend to constrain reform and often limit the use of available resources for language-related services.

### New Faces: Underserved Groups

Immigrant youths enter U.S. schools with such diverse educational backgrounds that it is almost impossible to generalize about immigrant education. This section focuses on specific immigrant subgroups whose education poses special challenges to secondary schools.

<sup>1</sup> Federal dollars accounted for 4 to 10 percent of annual district revenue in project schools, for example.

**Underschooled Newcomer Teens.** High school teachers we interviewed emphasized that the single strongest predictor of academic success for newcomers, outside of English language fluency, is how much prior schooling students have had in their native countries. Students who learned basic grammar rules in their native languages—who can identify the functions of an adjective, subject, or verb in a sentence—are well positioned to make successful transitions to English language literacy. Yet many schools are admitting growing numbers of newcomer teen students who arrive in the United States with significant gaps in their formal schooling, having often been out of school for three or more years before entering this country. This trend is particularly evident in schools, like those we studied, that receive refugee students or proportionally large numbers of students from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Publicly supported schooling in many of those countries ends at the equivalent of 6th grade; in some countries adolescent students are only required to attend school part-time.

Schools rarely collect data on the immigrant student's prior schooling, so it is not known how many underschooled newcomer teens there are in American schools. Nevertheless, data on LEP students (which include first-generation newcomers as well as second-generation students) suggests that the number of underschooled LEP immigrants in secondary schools has grown significantly in the past two decades. One published estimate, for example, indicates that 20 percent of all LEP students at the high school level and 12 percent of LEP students at the middle school level have missed two or more years of schooling since age six.<sup>2</sup> Demonstration project teachers in one California school district estimated that as many as 15 percent of their high school LEP students could be classified as underschooled.<sup>3</sup> Project estimates ran higher in Maryland schools that received large numbers of refugee students during the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

The educational predicament that these students share is clear. They enter U.S. secondary schools with a weak foundation for learning a second language and have difficulty working at age-appropriate levels in required subjects even when taught in their native/primary languages.<sup>5</sup> Teachers report that underschooled teens also tend to lack basic study skills that promote classroom learning. One teacher, for example, described new refugee students in a middle school who did not know how to use a pencil and were unaccustomed to sitting in a classroom for extended periods or raising their hands to be recognized.

Making classroom instruction fruitful for these students required that teachers devote several months to helping them learn the study habits and classroom behavior expected in their new environment. Teachers also noted that the imperative many underschooled newcomers feel to take a job, at least part-time, further complicates the already daunting tasks of language and subject-matter learning.<sup>6</sup>

The dilemma facing secondary school teachers of underschooled youth is also clear. Because most ESL and bilingual education programs for secondary school youth assume

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<sup>2</sup> Fleishman and Hopstock, 1993.

<sup>3</sup> Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, and White, 1999, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed account of how the Prince George's County demonstration projects addressed diversity among high-achieving and underschooled immigrant youth, see Crandall and Greenblatt, 1998, and Crandall et al., 1998.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of similar findings from a study of programs for underschooled immigrant secondary school students in New York City, see Garcia, 1999. In her New York City study, Garcia found that in addition to possessing significant continuity gaps in their formal schooling, many poor Caribbean and Latin American immigrant teens were previously taught by teachers who themselves had limited formal schooling.

<sup>6</sup> Indeed, teachers observed that their underschooled students are especially vulnerable to dropping out because they (or, in some cases, their parents) often perceive smaller short-term returns from continued schooling at this age than from entering the workforce.

some native language literacy as a foundation for secondary language learning, they are not designed to develop the basic literacy children usually acquired in elementary schools.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, few instructional materials are commercially available to guide teachers who work with underschooled teens.

**Long-Term LEPs.** Another subgroup of students who puzzled teachers in the demonstration secondary schools were variously described as long-term LEPs or low-literacy students. Often included in this subgroup were "world-English" speakers from African and Caribbean nations. The common characteristic of these students is that they are orally proficient in English but continue to experience serious difficulties in reading comprehension and writing. These students also tend to perform poorly in mainstream classes. A California Tomorrow report illustrates the challenge. Teachers in one northern California district found that over 42 percent of the district's secondary LEP students are still classified LEP after six or more years in U.S. schools.

"[Of these students, O]ver one-third were born in the U.S.; others immigrated at a young age or were bi-national, living alternatively in Mexico and California.... [T]hey had the highest course failure rates (grades of D's and F's) and greatest lack of credit accrual among their peers. Spanish was the language of 88 percent of these long-term LEP students, though Spanish speakers only represented 54 percent of [the district's] LEP population."<sup>8</sup>

The percent of orally proficient LEP students ranged from about 45 percent to over 70 percent in California Tomorrow's project high schools. Although no state or national data give the number of long-term LEP students,<sup>9</sup> there is evidence that the problem is pervasive. According to the 1998 California School Language Census, for example, more than 201,840 (about 14 percent) of the state's 1.4 million LEP students are not served in any special language instructional services.<sup>10</sup> Research by California Tomorrow at the Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) sites suggests that the vast majority of these students may be long-term LEP.<sup>11</sup>

The dilemma for teachers working with long-term LEPs is that these students have typically already taken, and been promoted from, their schools' English language development programs (bilingual/ESL) and so have exhausted all available special language development services. Although still formally classified as LEP, they are now served almost exclusively in mainstream classes by regular subject-area teachers with no language development support. In fact, many of these students speak only English and usually have no formal training in their parents' native languages. The education needs they face are no

<sup>7</sup> See Garcia, 1999; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparik, and Queen, 1998; Crandall and Greenblatt, 1998; and Crandall et al., 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Olsen et al., 1999, p. 194.

<sup>9</sup> In some local jurisdictions, students who are orally proficient in English may no longer be formally classified as LEP. In one Mellon-sponsored survey, the Council of Chief State School Officers found that roughly a third of all states had no requirements or criteria for guiding local schools in determining when LEP students should be redesignated as fully English proficient and ready to leave language assistance programs. See Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Likewise, national data from the U.S. Department of Education's "Office for Civil Rights, Fall 1994, Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report" indicate that 12.6 percent of LEPs in U.S. schools are not receiving any special language development services. Although no research has been done to determine why these students are not served, the experience of the demonstration schools suggests that many unserved LEP students are long-term LEPs who are orally proficient in English and have placed out of a school's special language services.

<sup>11</sup> Olsen et al., 1999, pp. 193-200.

longer rooted in language per se but rather in the more basic reading and writing skills usually acquired in primary grades. As with the underschooled youth, there is little research on long-term LEP students and few instructional models, books, or materials are adapted for use by low-literacy students in secondary schools. And as we discuss in the next section, few of the teachers long-term LEPs encounter in mainstream classes have any special training on how to work effectively with them.

## Special Challenges of Meeting the Language and Literacy Needs of LEP Immigrant Youth in Secondary Schools

This section briefly introduces four special challenges school reformers faced as they worked to improve learning conditions for poor-performing LEP immigrant students. Each of these topics is revisited in the chapters that follow in light of the organization of secondary schools and the advent of the standards-based school reform movement.

### **Confronting the Need to Teach Basic Literacy Skills in Secondary Schools.**

As teachers and project leaders learned more about the special educational needs of underschooled and long-term LEPs, they realized that meaningful reform would necessarily entail a curriculum and a set of basic literacy development strategies typically associated with elementary, not secondary, schools. In addition to learning a new language, underschooled students often needed to learn elementary reading comprehension strategies (e.g., learning to identify main ideas or comparisons in texts) and needed to work at acquiring basic writing skills (e.g., mastering formal sentence structure, chronological narration, or summarization). Working on these fundamental skills in turn implied organizational structures not normally found or easily arranged within the typical secondary school schedule. That is, they required small classes and opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration or individualized instruction over expanded periods of the school day. Indeed, the challenges presented by teens with poor literacy skills suggested the need for schoolwide reform and the participation of teachers and professional staff from all school departments. (Chapter 5 is devoted to an expanded analysis of these organizational challenges to literacy learning in secondary schools.)

*The challenges presented by teens with poor literacy skills suggested the need for schoolwide reform and the participation of teachers and professional staff from all school departments.*

### **Accelerating Subject Area Learning for LEP Youth in Grades 7–12.**

The high school's most basic mission is to have every student master the core curricula. This is a formidable task for students struggling to learn English and is especially daunting for students working to bridge literacy gaps in secondary schools. In the typical social science class, for example, students must be able to construct arguments and discuss alternative solutions to social problems in English. In mathematics, students must work with English texts containing vocabulary specific to math (e.g., integer, algebraic) as well as everyday words that have different meanings in mathematics (e.g., table, irrational). The predicament for many LEP immigrants is that this level of academic English may take four to seven years to acquire under the best of circumstances,<sup>12</sup> while the window of time students have to master the subjects required for graduation is limited.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the task of making content instruc-

<sup>12</sup> See Hakuta, Butler, and Witt, 2000; August and Hakuta, 1997; and Thomas and Collier, 1997.

<sup>13</sup> See Anstrom, 1997.

tion accessible to LEP students places new strains on mainstream subject teachers who increasingly find LEP immigrants in their classes. This challenge has grown as states adopt more stringent performance standards for secondary students in the core academic subjects.

Educators in demonstration sites struggled with the problem of promoting content learning among English language learners.<sup>14</sup> Still, despite the urgency of subject learning for newcomer teens, school reformers acknowledge that little basic research exists on how best to teach content in the various knowledge domains (science, math, social studies, and the humanities) to adolescent students learning in a second language at various stages of proficiency.<sup>15</sup>

**Few Assessment Tools for Evaluating the Academic Progress of Secondary LEP Students.** LEP student assessment was a controversial issue in nearly every demonstration project we visited. An often-cited concern was that the lack of authoritative instruments for assessing newcomers' language, literacy, and content knowledge frustrated the school improvement process. In some areas, such as reading comprehension and oral English proficiency, teachers preferred to use multiple measures (e.g., portfolios, teacher observations, criterion-referenced tests) to assess student progress. But without authoritative methods or standards, assessment of students' language development often varied widely from school to school and became an object of contention among educators.

In other areas—measuring knowledge in the academic subjects, for example—teachers could not find assessment instruments professionally validated for use with students learning these subjects in a second language. Teachers believed that to accurately assess LEP student knowledge in subject areas, some students should be evaluated in their primary languages while others should receive special accommodations (i.e., extra time or modified questions) on existing assessments. Although education experts have endorsed these assessment strategies,<sup>16</sup> the policy trends appear to be going in the opposite direction. That is, state and local authorities are requiring that all LEP students take the same assessment tests, under the same conditions, as all other students. Without authoritative assessment instruments validated for use with LEP students, teachers argued that it was difficult to evaluate student progress or draw fair conclusions about school effectiveness. And without progress measures, it was difficult to make the case for resources to mount school improvement programs. (We return to this topic in chapter 6 as it relates to the standards-based school accountability movement.)

**Shortages of Specially Trained Staff.** A long-term shortage of new teachers specially trained to work with LEP students underscores the importance of training veteran teachers to work more effectively with new populations of LEP immigrants. In 1994, for example, leaders in the California Tomorrow demonstration project estimated that 60 percent of LEP students in its three participating Hayward high schools were receiving inappropriate services because of an insufficiently prepared workforce. National data suggest that Hayward's problems are shared by a large number of schools across the country. According to data from the 1993–94 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), only 30 percent of public

<sup>14</sup> See also Olsen et al., 1999; Crandall, 1993, 1995; Echevarria, Vogt, and Short, 2000; also, Echevarria and Graves, 1998. (Echevarria, a Mellon project associate, elaborates on the sheltered-English concept implemented at demonstration sites in Long Beach and Paramount, California.)

<sup>15</sup> See August and Hakuta, 1997, pp. 73–74.

<sup>16</sup> See Gottlieb, 1999; Anstrom, 1997; and Navarrete and Gustke, 1996.

school teachers instructing LEP students reported receiving any special training for working with these students. Fewer than 3 percent of teachers with LEP students reported holding a degree in ESL or bilingual education. Moreover, 27 percent of all schools with bilingual/ESL staff vacancies—and 33 percent in central city school districts—reported finding them “difficult” or “impossible” to fill.<sup>17</sup> In this environment, schools in high-immigrant communities are finding that they must invest in school-based professional development for veteran mainstream teachers to help them learn new skills and gain an understanding of how students acquire language.<sup>18</sup>

## The Politics of Immigrant Education

The capacity of schools to respond to the needs of LEP immigrants is substantially shaped by fiscal and political forces external to the schools. Consistent with other studies, educators in the demonstration schools emphasized that (apart from English language acquisition initiatives) immigrant integration and education is not an explicit policy concern among state and national education leaders.<sup>19</sup> One consequence of this policy void is that few resources are targeted to the schools that bear much of the fiscal and institutional burdens of immigration. Also, language policy and immigration issues have been hotly contested in the high-immigration states and localities where the demonstration projects were located. These political battles, and the anti-immigrant rhetoric that often surrounds them, have had largely negative consequences for public school educators struggling to meet the needs of LEP immigrant youth.<sup>20</sup> Most notably, school leaders in the Southern California sites, citing legal and political uncertainty surrounding bilingual education, avoided offering any native language instruction courses to LEP students.

**Federal Resource Policy.** The vast majority of support for public schooling comes from state and local governments.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, political analysts have long recognized that poor and minority students fare poorly in the local competition for limited resources. Thus, state and local initiatives for special needs populations have been strongly influenced by federal funding and civil rights enforcement.

The Department of Education reports, for example, that more than 90 percent of all LEP students in this country are served in special programs supported by federal targeted assistance.<sup>22</sup> California, with its large and demographically diverse student population, is no exception. Its state programs for LEP students and for economically disadvantaged and learning disabled students—and, most recently, its standards-based reform initiatives—are structured to meet federal policy priorities and funding requirements. As already noted, however, explicit attention to the needs of immigrant populations has been weak at the national level and, perhaps as a consequence, at the state level as well.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993–94.

<sup>18</sup> See Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 1997.

<sup>19</sup> See also, e.g., Hill and McDonnell, 1993.

<sup>20</sup> See Christian, in press.

<sup>21</sup> In 1995–96, the state share of support for elementary and secondary education was 47.5 percent and the local share was 45.9 percent. The federal share of support was 6.6 percent. See National Clearinghouse for Education Statistics, 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Macias, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> In an earlier study of immigrant education in six high-immigration states, McDonnell and Hill found that immigrant students were not viewed by federal or state policymakers as a distinct group requiring policy remedies independent of immigrants' need to learn English.

Currently, for example, the Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984 (EIEA) is the only federal targeted assistance program specifically for immigrant education.<sup>24</sup> To qualify for EIEA funds, as noted, a school district must have either at least 500 newcomers (defined as immigrant children enrolled in U.S. schools for less than three academic years) or at least 3 percent of its enrollment composed of immigrant newcomers. Historically, funding for EIEA has been small relative to funding for other federal education programs.<sup>25</sup> In fiscal year 1998, for example, the \$150 million EIEA appropriation was less than one percent of the Department of Education's 15.2 billion dollars supporting elementary and secondary education.<sup>26</sup> The Department of Education's EIEA participation data indicate that districts received only about \$170 for each eligible immigrant student during fiscal year 1999.<sup>27</sup> Since these dollars are intended as impact aid, there is great flexibility in how districts may use them. On average, districts spend about 15 percent of their EIEA funds to defray general operating costs (e.g., construction, space acquisition, transportation, overhead, and administration).<sup>28</sup> But because these funds go to districts, rather than schools, it is not known how much support goes to school-level activities or how these funds are distributed among elementary and secondary schools. In any event, this small funding source is not likely to be a significant portion of most individual schools' resources.

By contrast, state and federal governments have increased targeted funds to high-poverty schools where LEP/immigrants are often served, although there is evidence that secondary schools have benefited comparatively little from these new resources. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the single largest targeted assistance program for poor children administered by the Department of Education.<sup>29</sup> In 1999, the Department of Education made about \$7.6 billion in grants to local schools and estimated that in the year 2000 Title I grants would serve as many as 12 million students in 44,000 schools.<sup>30</sup> These Title I dollars constitute an important potential resource for secondary schools that need to implement literacy, language development, extended day, parental involvement, and professional development programs. Such programs may be critical to LEP/immigrant education but are not typically found in secondary schools, in good part because such schools are substantially less likely than elementary schools to receive Title I funds. Although secondary schools accounted for about one-third of all Title I-eligible poverty students in 1997-98, they received only 15 percent of Title I funds and constituted only 11 percent of Title I schools. Moreover, when secondary schools did participate in Title I, they tended to receive smaller allocations—averaging \$372 per Title I-eligible student, compared with \$495 in elementary schools.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>24</sup> In 1999, Congress earmarked 1997 surplus refugee assistance funds to establish a small program (\$14 million in FY 1999) to assist states with school districts receiving large numbers of school-age refugee children. These funds are available on a competitive basis, and individual grants are projected to range from \$100,000 to \$1.5 million for the largest states. Because these funds come from a previous year's surplus, there is some uncertainty whether Congress will continue the program beyond FY 1999.

<sup>25</sup> See U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, 1998.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 1998, "Fiscal Year 1999 Budget," and "Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs and Resources."

<sup>28</sup> See U.S. Department of Education, 1999, "Biennial Report."

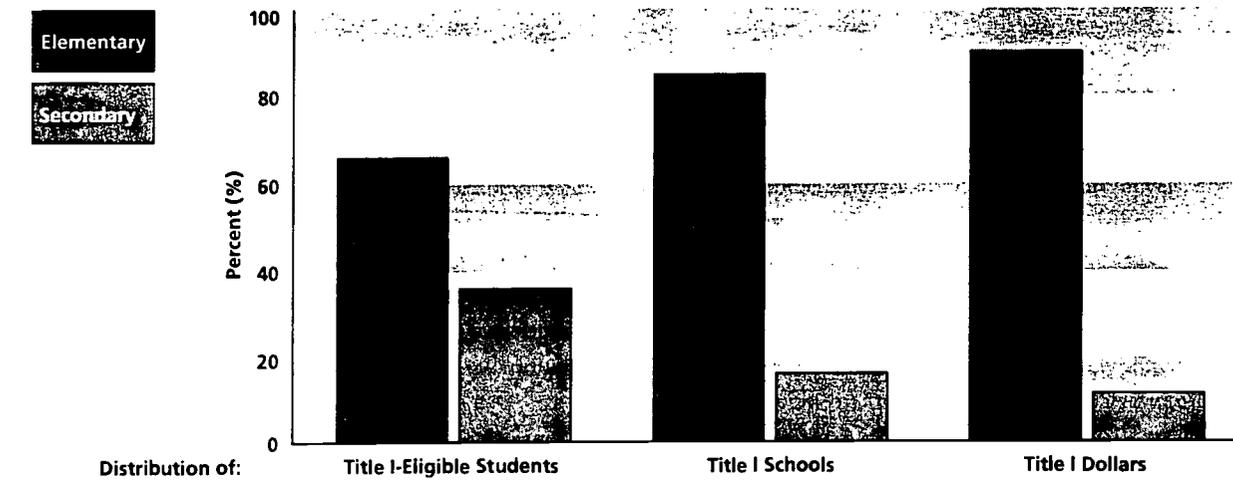
<sup>29</sup> Only the Department of Agriculture's child nutrition program is larger, at about \$8.8 billion in FY 1998. In fact, about 93 percent of all school districts in the nation receive Title I funds. See U.S. Department of Education, 1999, "Study of Education Resources."

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 1999, "FY 2000 Budget Summary."

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 1999, "Targeting Schools."

## Exhibit IV-1. Title I-Eligible Students, Schools, and Dollars

Elementary versus Secondary Schools



Since 1994, changes to the ESEA have made it easier for secondary schools to use ESEA funds to mount comprehensive school reform projects such as school restructuring, school-community partnerships, class size reduction, and other reforms.<sup>32</sup> But the Department of Education reports that most schoolwide reform initiatives using ESEA funds have still been at the elementary level and, further, that Title I has not spurred significant reforms in participating secondary schools.<sup>33</sup> The PRIME demonstration projects were all in districts receiving Title I and EIEA assistance. Prior to project implementation, however, only two of the five participating districts were leveraging targeted assistance funds at the secondary level to mount comprehensive school reforms or schoolwide professional development efforts around LEP immigrant education.

The federal government's only assistance program targeted specifically to LEP students is Title VII of ESEA (Bilingual Education Act). The \$204 million appropriated for Title VII programs in 1998 (excluding the EIEA program)<sup>34</sup> is also relatively small by comparison to other federal school aid programs. Further, because these funds are intended primarily for start-up, capacity building, or demonstration purposes, they are awarded to school districts on a competitive basis and for limited periods of time. The Department of Education reports that roughly six of every seven school districts that applied for Title VII funds in 1998 were turned away because of the limited amount of funds available to the program.<sup>35</sup> Only one of the five participating districts was operating a Title VII-supported program during the demonstration project implementation period.

**Language and Immigration Politics.** The dramatic increase in the number of new immigrants in many communities has stirred high levels of public debate over the impact

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of Education, 1999. "Education Excellence."

<sup>34</sup> Congress reorganized the EIEA program as a subset of Title VII in 1994.

<sup>35</sup> See U.S. Department of Education, 2000. "Q&A Fact Sheet."

of immigration on schools and the role schools should play in immigrant integration. In November 1994, almost 60 percent of California voters approved a ballot initiative (Proposition 187) designed to end public school services for undocumented immigrants in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. The proposed law would have required California public school teachers to demand proof of legal residency from students and report suspected undocumented aliens to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The resulting statute was immediately challenged in the federal courts and remained in legal limbo for five years, until a newly elected governor reached an accord with civil rights groups that effectively shelved the law in July 1999.

In June 1998, California voters approved another ballot initiative (Proposition 227) aimed at severely restricting all forms of bilingual and native language instruction for LEP students in California schools.<sup>36</sup> Although it prompted various legal challenges, federal courts declined to bar implementation of the new law pending legal appeals. Responses to Proposition 227 have varied widely across the state—with the effect on bilingual education programs determined, in part, by the local political climate toward immigrants and immigrant education.

In two PRIME demonstration districts, Long Beach and Paramount, the law was narrowly interpreted and school officials moved swiftly to implement the English immersion provisions of the law. In neighboring Los Angeles, the state's largest school district, school leaders responded to Proposition 227 by offering two types of English language immersion programs: Model A, an English-only environment with bilingual aides offering limited help to non-English speakers, and Model B, English immersion taught by certified bilingual teachers. An additional 10 percent of students are taught in bilingual settings approved for students whose parents request waivers from the law's provisions. Even so, the district's Model B English immersion program drew threats of a lawsuit from local activists, who contended that bilingual teachers were using too much native language instruction to teach core subjects.<sup>37</sup> The impact of these events on the education of underschooled LEPs and others who are not ready to profit from full-time instruction in English has not yet been fully evaluated.<sup>38</sup>

In Hayward, where community support of native language instruction has been strong, Proposition 227 thus far has had no practical effect on classroom instruction. Hayward school officials initially convinced a local court to order state consideration of a districtwide waiver from Proposition 227's requirements. Although a state appeals court ultimately rejected the district's legal challenge to the law in September 1999, district officials announced that they would enlist parental consent to continue most bilingual programs.<sup>39</sup> Bilingual programs in Salinas are protected by a

*The dramatic increase in the number of new immigrants in many communities has stirred high levels of public debate over the impact of immigration on schools and the role schools should play in immigrant integration.*

<sup>36</sup> Proposition 227 generally prohibits bilingual or native language instruction in California schools subject to specific exceptions. "Sheltered English immersion" is allowed for all LEP students for up to one year; parents may apply for a waiver of the limit on bilingual/native language instruction for (1) children who already possess good English language skills, (2) children older than 10 for whom school staff determine that bilingual/native language instruction would best contribute to rapid English language acquisition, and (3) children with special physical, emotional, psychological, or educational needs, subject to standards set by the local Board of Education.

<sup>37</sup> Louis Sahagun, "L.A. Schools Are Abusing Prop. 227, Report Says," *Los Angeles Times*, Thursday, July 1, 1999, Metro Section, p. B-3.

<sup>38</sup> But see Hakuta et al., 2000.

<sup>39</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Districts Give Parents Final Say on Proposition 227. Schools Will Grant Waivers as Law Permits," September 29, 1999, p. A15; also, "Court Strengthens Ban on Bilingual Education," September 28, 1999, p. A18.

long-standing federal court order that retains jurisdiction over LEP immigrant education in that district. Even in Hayward, however, political turmoil at the state level has caused confusion among educators about how to proceed.

These events in California are perhaps extreme examples of political trends that affect LEP immigrant education across the country. At this writing, four proposed English Only laws were pending in the 106th Congress.<sup>40</sup> These laws would variously repeal the Bilingual Education Act, terminate the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs in the Department of Education, repeal bilingual election requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and raise the level of English language proficiency required of all applicants for U.S. citizenship. One of the pending bills would achieve these purposes through a constitutional amendment. Between 1990 and 1998, at least nine states passed Official English laws<sup>41</sup> and several other states considered such legislation. The effect of such political activity on school programming for LEP immigrant students has not been systematically studied, but project teachers emphasized that their colleagues and school leaders find it difficult to commit to reforms in the absence of political consensus in support of change.

## Summary

This chapter introduced a number of challenges faced by schools charged with educating immigrant children. Teachers are struggling to address the literacy needs of underschooled and long-term LEPs within secondary schools not designed to focus on basic literacy development. Teachers must also find ways of accelerating the subject learning of students working to master the core curricula in a second language. This work is frustrated by the lack of appropriate assessment tools for evaluating the progress of LEP students in secondary schools and by long-term shortages of new teachers specially trained to work with English language learners. All of these challenges are compounded by the often contentious politics that surround immigrant education in many communities.

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<sup>40</sup> H.R. 123 (Barr); H.J.Res. 21 to Amend the Constitution (Doolittle); H.R. 50 (Stump); and H.R. 1005 (King).

<sup>41</sup> Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, South Dakota, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Teachers and administrators in demonstration schools frequently observed that the organizational structure and division of work in high schools and middle schools are fundamentally incompatible with the educational needs of limited English proficient (LEP)/immigrants. As a consequence, teachers who work with immigrant students must find ways around the school's established norms to make its opportunities accessible to their students.

### Baseline: The Typical Secondary School

The logic supporting the division of our educational system into primary and secondary schooling is that the primary grades are dedicated to helping children develop English language and literacy skills, good study habits, shared understanding about academic expectations, and appropriate student behavior. These primary skills make it possible for students to master academic subjects when they get to secondary school.<sup>1</sup> As Theodore Sizer observed more than a decade ago, secondary schools are about "taking subjects" in a highly ordered and efficient way.<sup>2</sup> To achieve this purpose, professional staff are specialized: Classroom teachers are organized into discipline-based departments and teach outside their fields only in unusual circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Principals and counselors rarely teach.

Despite decades of demographic change and strong local control, the structure of most secondary schools has not changed since the 1950s. The typical secondary school day is divided evenly into a series of seven or eight time blocks, usually 50 minutes in length. Teachers are expected to work steadily through these blocks, usually teaching five classes and between 100 and 150 different students each day with two free periods for lunch and planning.

Students are grouped by age into grades, and all are expected to take about the same time—about 180 school days—to complete the courses required for promotion to the next grade. They are expected to work steadily through consecutive periods interrupted only by a brief lunch break. Before the typical day is over, students will have covered four or five academic subjects and worked with as many as six different teachers.

Two important assumptions about entering students underlie the organization of the secondary school: (1) that they are prepared to speak and comprehend oral communication in English, and (2) that the literacy level of students is at, or near, grade level. One or both of these assumptions does not hold true for many LEP/immigrant students. As we discussed in chapter 4, many enter grades 7–12 with limited command of the English language. Others enter with large gaps in their prior schooling and low literacy skills, even in

<sup>1</sup> For a historical discussion of how modern American school organization evolved, see Tyack, 1974; Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985; Tyack, 1990; and Tock, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Sizer, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> This does not take account of the recent phenomenon of out-of-field teaching, which refers to the growing practice of responding to teacher shortages by assigning teachers to courses for which they do not have special training. See e.g., Ingersoll, 1999, which reports data from the Schools and Staffing Survey indicating that one-third of all mathematics teachers and one-quarter of all English teachers in all secondary schools have neither a major nor a minor in those fields.

their native languages. In discussing their work with LEP/immigrants, language development teachers and project staff described two broad organizational barriers that bear on teaching and learning: the division of work and responsibility among professional staff, and an inflexible school schedule that does not accommodate student or teacher needs.

## Division of Work and Responsibility

**Special Instruction for LEP Immigrants: Organizationally Isolated.** Secondary schools typically respond to the needs of growing numbers of newcomer LEP/immigrant students by creating special programs. This institutional response reflects the prevailing norm of staff specialization that characterizes the secondary school as a whole. In demonstration schools, for example, LEP students were served in transitional bilingual programs, English as a second language (ESL) programs, or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programs. In one project district, LEP/immigrants split their day between comprehensive secondary schools and a half-day newcomer school.<sup>4</sup> In others, they were served in double-period classes with a single teacher for a large part of the school day. Teachers in these programs usually have special certification in language development, and the programs often constitute a separate self-contained department within the school.

The school professionals we talked with tended to agree that the initial segregation of LEP/immigrant students makes good pedagogical sense for meeting their first-order needs: All LEP students need to work intensely on basic oral English language skills. Some may be unfamiliar with the Roman alphabet or specific sounds associated with its letters in English. Underschooled immigrant students with low literacy skills also need immediate and extended time to improve reading comprehension and writing skills. Some severely underschooled and refugee youths need specialized attention to learn basic American classroom conventions like raising their hands and taking turns. Teachers often mentioned that language learners who are self-conscious about their English skills or accents respond better to instruction in a sheltered environment, with teachers specially trained to encourage language learning. Instruction in self-contained newcomer or language development programs serves all these purposes. Beyond the first-order language acquisition tasks, however, lies the ultimate educational goal for all LEP/immigrant students: to be prepared for effective participation in mainstream classes with their native-born peers.

**Organizational Barriers to Helping LEP/Immigrants Make Smooth Transitions to Mainstream Instruction.** Gaining access to the core curriculum and to the school's extracurricular life requires that students master the academic English used in mainstream classrooms. They must study academic subjects taught entirely in English, using texts and materials that assume advanced English language competence. But the short time span and rigid sequencing of courses in secondary schools demand that LEP students begin (or resume) content learning in the core subjects before they have acquired strong academic English skills. High school students especially, who might have only four years to complete the requirements for a diploma, cannot wait the two or more years it might take to fully master English<sup>5</sup> before resuming instruction in math, science, and social studies.

<sup>4</sup> Newcomer schools are specially designed for immigrant students, usually offering educational programs and support services tailored to their special needs. Newcomer schools or programs are generally short-term or part-time placements emphasizing effective transitions to mainstream classrooms by providing cultural orientation and intensive language instruction. See Short and Boyson, 1999; Short, 1998; and Chang, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Non-English-speaking immigrants may take anywhere between 1 and 10 years to acquire English as a second language, depending on a number of factors, including age, level of native language literacy, parental influence, and motivation. See Hakuta, Butler, and Witt, 2000, and August and Hakuta, 1997.

Teachers in demonstration schools ultimately came to agree, through experience, that to help LEP secondary students make smooth transitions to mainstream classrooms they needed to provide a combination of content-based ESL<sup>6</sup> or bilingual instruction coupled with some form of sheltered instruction<sup>7</sup> in the core content classes. Sheltered instruction involves adapting the language of subject-matter texts, classroom lectures, discussions, and other learning tasks in regular courses (like social studies) to the English proficiency levels of second language learners. This approach is used by regular subject teachers specially trained to use techniques familiar to language teachers—such as demonstrations, visuals, graphic organizers, and cooperative work. Unlike content-based language instruction, which emphasizes English language acquisition, the focus of sheltered content instruction is on subject learning and mastering the core curriculum. Both content-based language instruction and sheltered content instruction have been successful in helping LEP/immigrants make the transition to mainstream classes taught in English.<sup>8</sup>

Implementing these new techniques in demonstration schools (and, of course, other schools) places unfamiliar demands on secondary school staff. Both language and mainstream subject teachers found that they needed to assume new roles for which their college teacher-training programs did not prepare them. Language teachers needed to learn how to infuse their lessons with content drawn from the core subjects. Mainstream subject teachers likewise found they needed to learn more about how students acquire and use language. Both types of teachers needed more time to plan their lessons and a more flexible schedule that would allow for cross-departmental collaboration so that they could learn from each other. Classroom teachers also found that they could not generate schoolwide support for these changes without the active and knowledgeable involvement of school administrators, counselors, and support staff.<sup>9</sup> On all these fronts, the fragmented and specialized nature of the typical secondary school organization often posed serious barriers to effective reform.

### **Administrators, Counselors, Librarians, and Support Staff: The Gatekeepers.**

Resources and opportunities in the modern high school are not as concentrated in the teacher-student relationship as they are in elementary school. Librarians and computer technology staff, for example, function as somewhat autonomous gatekeepers of a complex information system that is becoming increasingly critical to student success. Counselors, too, are gatekeepers of every student's course assignments. They are charged with guiding students through a maze of requirements for admission to specialized magnet and advanced placement programs, as well as for graduation and postsecondary work and study. Ensuring equal and effective access to these opportunities may require that key non-classroom staff throughout the school become aware of LEP/immigrant student needs and act to eliminate language and cultural barriers to the services they provide. Yet, principals, counselors, and other support staff typically have no special training to work with LEP immigrant youth and often do not possess the language skills necessary to communicate directly with them.

<sup>6</sup> In content-based language instruction, language development teachers draw on instructional materials and classroom techniques from the academic subject (math, science, social studies, etc.) as a medium for helping students to simultaneously acquire a new language and age-appropriate content knowledge and study skills. The focus of instruction is on language learning (vocabulary building, discourse style, and syntax) with content learning secondary. See Echevarria and Graves, 1998, and Crandall, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> See Genesee, 1999; Echevarria and Graves, 1998; Cuevas, 1996; and Crandall, 1994.

<sup>8</sup> See Anstrom, 1997; Echevarria and Graves, 1998; and Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 1997.

<sup>9</sup> See Adger and Payton, 1999, documenting early findings from the Mellon Program in Immigrant Education.

The task of preparing LEP/immigrants to participate effectively in mainstream classrooms is organizationally conceived as a special or add-on activity outside what school staff often consider the "normal" functions of the secondary school.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, not only are key nonteaching staff frequently unprepared to work effectively with LEP/immigrants, but the departmentalized nature of most language development programs actually encourages administrators, counselors, and others to see the integration of LEP/immigrant youth as a duty assigned to special language development staff—thus outside the scope of their own duties. As a result, language development teachers assume administrative, placement, and advising functions that for mainstream students would be routinely handled by principals, counselors, registrars, librarians, or other administrators.

In one demonstration school, for example, an ESOL teacher noted that she and other language development instructors were responsible for providing a full range of counseling, placement, and precollege planning services to their ESOL students. She described the difficulties she and her LEP/immigrant students experienced with the guidance department at her school:

"When I first started here four years ago...the level of awareness among counselors [about LEP/immigrant youth] was shockingly low. Some were not even aware that foreign students had school records from their home countries that would be helpful in making placement decisions.... A lot of academic and precollege counseling for ESOL students falls to us because the guidance counselors have not really learned how to work with these students. We see students who aren't even in our classes...but they learn through the grapevine that we can help answer questions about college financial aid forms, or [college] entrance exams [SAT, TOEFL] and they come to us after school, in the morning, or during lunch for guidance."

In another school, language development teachers were expected to assume responsibility for teaching computer keyboarding skills and conducting library orientations for their students—duties normally handled by the librarian or technology instructor. They were also expected to tutor LEP students in math, science, and history—subjects for which they had no special training. In one school, language development teachers described their difficulties getting learning-disabled students into special education classes because the school's special education teachers insisted that they could not be responsible for students who did not speak English. In the short term, the language development teachers at this school compromised by writing explicit lesson plans for learning-disabled LEP students and otherwise supervising the students' work—again a function for which they had no formal preparation.

Language development teachers noted that administrators' lack of training and foreign language skills often meant that language development teachers ended up mediating conflicts between parents, administrators, and regular classroom teachers, thereby assuming responsibility for disciplinary matters normally handled by assistant principals. Some principals acknowledged that their language development teachers were indispensable, precisely because of their "special responsibilities" and because of the "multifaceted" roles they played in their schools. They did so without acknowledging or fully recognizing that many of the roles they expected their language development teachers to assume vis-à-vis LEP/immigrant students were routinely handled by nonteaching staff when they involved mainstream students.

<sup>10</sup> See Adger and Payton, 1999, and authorities cited therein.

**Language Development Staff: Isolated from the Mainstream.** Ironically, even as language development teachers are burdened with a full range of duties more appropriately handled by nonteaching staff, they report that rigid departmentalization often excludes them from functions, such as curriculum planning and standards development, that are squarely within their professional competence. This was especially true in high schools where large numbers of students compel greater specialization. It was somewhat less true in the middle schools we visited, where teaching staffs were smaller and language development teachers frequently split their time between work in ESL/bilingual departments and the core subject departments.

*As the district developed new content standards for its core subjects, little consideration was given to how LEP students might be helped to meet new requirements.*

One district coordinator for language development programs explained that, through the 1980s and 1990s, administrators in her district experimented with new school and district governance structures designed to enhance teacher participation in policymaking: curriculum councils, school site councils, and subject area committees. But these changes did little to overcome the organizational isolation of teachers who work primarily with English language learners. Language development teachers, for example, were not included in districtwide core subject committees. Consequently, as the district developed new content standards for its core subjects, little consideration was given to how LEP students might be helped to meet new requirements. Within high schools, participation in the new site governance structures continued to be channeled through the established core-subject departments. Although teachers were now making more decisions, decisionmaking authority remained insular:

“This means,” said the district coordinator, “that the normal decisionmaking structure of the high school works against teachers and students who do not fit neatly into the central concerns of the core departments...we realized early on in the [PRIME] project that to effect schoolwide change we had to persuade subject-matter department leaders and school administrators to include our teachers and to give them voice in the governance of the [regular] departments.”

This marginalization had consequences for teachers on both sides of the departmental divide. Language development teachers believed that their insights would contribute to curriculum decisionmaking in the departments, and that they had a large arsenal of effective classroom techniques that would be useful to core subject teachers open to learning them. Language development teachers also believed subject-matter teachers could help build more effective ESL/bilingual programs. Many language development teachers were experimenting with ways to infuse their ESL/bilingual lessons with relevant content material tied to the school's core curriculum. They believed their success hinged on developing collaborative relationships with core subject teachers, because they usually had no special training in content areas (e.g., history) and were unfamiliar with the content standards their LEP students would eventually have to meet in mainstream classes. But division of responsibility across departments often did not provide a supportive framework for the necessary collaboration. While many subject area and language development teachers did, in fact, work together on a voluntary basis, sustained collaboration could not come about without formal support and recognition from department leaders and school administrators.

**Core Subject Teachers: “Not My Job.”** Teachers and administrators in the demonstration schools agreed that developing a well-articulated language development curriculum<sup>11</sup> that moves LEP students smoothly from self-contained ESL/bilingual instruction, to sheltered content learning, and on to mainstream classes requires the active participation of core subject teachers. There is much about the departmentalized structure of secondary schooling, however, that militates against such participation.

First, teachers we interviewed frequently noted that their formal location within a particular specialty or department not only defined their principal responsibilities within the school but also signaled those tasks for which they would not be held accountable. Thus, the division of labor in the typical secondary school encouraged mainstream teachers to believe that addressing the language development needs of their LEP students was the responsibility of other school staff or departments.

Second, core subject teachers in secondary schools (including many English teachers) have little or no preservice training in basic language development strategies or how to incorporate such techniques into math, science, or history classes. So, even when subject teachers recognized the need to modify their teaching styles, they often felt intimidated by the task or completely at a loss about how to work more effectively with LEP youth. These otherwise willing teachers also noted that getting help in the form of professional development opportunities or interdepartmental collaboration was often difficult, if not impossible. Both subject and language teachers emphasized that obtaining staff development for all teachers around literacy and language development required administrative support and resources. Project staff reported that getting administrators and core subject staff to recognize the potential benefits of institutional reform was among the greatest challenges in the demonstration schools.

### **Overcoming the Lower Status of Working with English Language Learners.**

Teachers in the project schools agreed that the division of labor and responsibility across a “mainstream” and “special” program divide reinforces a belief among many teachers and students that language development programs are remedial—hence, not part of the normal function of the secondary school. Under these circumstances, language development programs become viewed as second rate or less important to the school’s core mission, especially in competition for scarce institutional resources.

Language development teachers noted, for example, that their marginal status often made it difficult to obtain a broad range of professional development opportunities and that their students were often considered last for participation in field trips, library activities, and computer and arts programs. Core subject teachers noted that when contact with LEP/immigrants was limited, they often felt intimidated by LEP students and had low expectations for their performance. In fact, they would express surprise when LEP students showed up on the honor roll at their schools or demonstrated initiative in the arts or extracurricular activities.

When work was reorganized so that mainstream teachers worked more closely with the language development program, their own attitudes and expectations of LEP immigrants changed. They reported that this shift in their awareness led them to take greater responsibility for their LEP students’ success and seek further professional development opportunities.

We observed that negative attitudes about LEP students, and the consequences that flowed from the marginalization of language development programs, were mitigated in

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<sup>11</sup> Curriculum articulation here refers to an ordered or sequential program of skill and knowledge acquisition that prepares students for each successive stage or grade and is adhered to by all teachers within a given grade level and across schools in a district.

schools when principals and mainstream department heads demonstrated commitment to LEP immigrant education. In fact, when asked to identify the most critical element in fostering and sustaining school improvement, teachers invariably identified “buy-in” by the site principal to the importance of a schoolwide focus on student outcomes. Their support, they said, could provide reform projects the legitimacy and status needed for success by enabling teacher collaboration, providing release time for professional development activities, and recognizing and rewarding teachers who found ways to improve student outcomes.

## The School Schedule

As noted, teachers and project staff complained that the typical school schedule (50-minute time blocks) and calendar (180 school days) are powerful barriers to effective teaching for LEP immigrant students. Teachers cited two critical needs that go unmet when these students and their teachers confront an inflexible schedule. First, the students need to spend more time on all tasks that require English language proficiency; second, their teachers need to devote more time to planning and collaboration when facing greater skill diversity.

**Need to Extend Instruction Time.** Most teachers who worked closely with LEP/immigrants described the task of helping newcomers make successful transitions to English language instruction as a race against an unforgiving calendar. Teachers know from experience that even the most motivated newcomers need more time than allotted to acquire the language skills that will give them effective access to the mainstream curricula. Indeed, prior to beginning a Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) demonstration project, each participating school had already been experimenting with various program adaptations to extend student time on language-learning activities. These experiments included doubling the average class period for language development classes, creating a half-day newcomer school, and instituting peer or cross-age tutoring services before and after the regular school day. But many challenges to extended schooling remained. In particular, most adaptations in secondary schools were limited to language development programs. Efforts to extend instruction time in academic subject classes were rare, because they required a schoolwide focus on LEP/immigrant education that included content teachers. Scheduling changes that required district-level support—such as specially designed summer school, or tutoring and extended day programs staffed by paid professionals—were rarely supported.

**Need to Extend Teacher Planning and Collaboration Time.** As students’ language and literacy backgrounds grow more diverse, so does the flexibility required of teachers—and schools.<sup>12</sup> Teachers in the demonstration schools found that, as their schools admitted more newcomers, they were forced to reassess the effectiveness of their teaching strategies in light of the different needs of their new student bodies—needs that changed from year to year. The complex task of teaching students at differing and changing levels of language and literacy development, coupled with the limited body of professional knowledge about effective teaching strategies, made working in isolation an often insuperable challenge. Much more than teachers working within a stable discipline or with students performing within a predictable range, teachers of immigrant youth needed to learn the approaches that other teachers were taking with similar students.

<sup>12</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the challenges facing teachers of immigrant youth, see Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 1997.

Thus, as the demonstration projects got under way, teachers communicated their need for more time for planning their work, collaboration, self-assessment, reflection, and practical inquiry into teaching and learning issues. Indeed, creating time for teachers to critically examine their approaches, learn new techniques, and assess their effects has emerged as a major challenge in other recent analyses of school change.<sup>13</sup> The project directors concluded that they had to convince school leaders to allocate scarce time to teacher in-service planning and collaboration.

## The Parent-School Disconnect: Barriers to Immigrant Parental Involvement

The broad curricular offerings of the typical high school, and the student guidance and counseling systems that support it, are designed to maximize student choice and facilitate self-determination.<sup>14</sup> In fact, our civil rights laws strongly discourage schools from predetermining academic tracks or career paths for students.<sup>15</sup> Teachers, counselors, and administrators are available to guide students through the process of selecting courses, programs, and postsecondary planning, but they do not generally serve as advocates for individual students. Instead, the system rewards personal initiative and self-directedness among students, particularly with regard to the pursuit of postsecondary education. Educators rely on parents to be informed about their children's progress, act as advocates for their children, and frame student planning and goal-setting. In the demonstration schools, however, immigrant parent-school communication was characterized as very weak at the outset of the projects.

*Educators rely on parents to be informed about their children's progress, act as advocates for their children, and frame student planning and goal-setting.*

Our discussions with parents and teachers revealed that one reason for the weak communication could be found in the stark differences between how LEP/immigrant parents and school staff viewed both the school and the parents' role vis-à-vis the school. These differences had important consequences for the way information and expectations were communicated between school and home.

Teachers described immigrant parents as "not very vocal," "reluctant to be critical," and as being generally passive or nondemanding. But teachers and principals also acknowledge that, in a competitive institutional environment that rewards advocacy and depends on feedback from parents, it is easy for school staff to lose sight of some students' special needs and to be lulled into a false sense that, as teachers, they are doing an adequate job.

Although they understood that high schools are not as parent friendly as elementary schools, teachers and principals generally viewed their schools as open and inviting places for students and parents. They expected parents to be supportive of the school's efforts and to act as advocates for their children. However, teachers often expressed frustration at the lack of school involvement among immigrant parents. They described parents who did not appear to supervise their children's homework, did not attend parent conferences, and did not participate in the PTA or other less formal school events. Still, most teachers seemed sympathetic to the limited time and resources of many parents. They noted, for example,

<sup>13</sup> Corcoran and Goertz, 1995; McDiarmid, 1995; and Fullan and Miles, 1992.

<sup>14</sup> An influential description and critique of the high school can be found in Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985.

<sup>15</sup> Although not illegal per se, student tracking practices may run afoul of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 if they result in courses with substantially disproportionate enrollments of minority or nonminority students. See 34 C.F.R. § 100.3 (iii) (1998).

that their immigrant parents often worked odd hours or lacked transportation, but school staff felt powerless to overcome these barriers.

Immigrant parents typically told a very different story. In demonstration schools with strong school-community programs, we asked immigrant parents active in school affairs what factors were key to promoting their participation. While some agreed that time and economics did, in fact, work against parental involvement, most discounted their effect. Language was usually cited as the most crucial barrier to participation. Many parents noted that their children's English language ability was stronger than their own, and that they did not feel competent speaking with monolingual teachers or administrators about their child's schooling. As a result, they depended on their children to interpret for them and help them understand school norms and expectations.

Other parents explained that before they became involved, they viewed the school as an intimidating place. Because they had not been educated in an American—or sometimes in any—school, they did not know when it was appropriate to approach a teacher or administrator. Some parents had come from countries where public schools were closed institutions and where parental advocacy was neither expected nor desired. One bilingual school-community liaison said it was not unusual for her to receive phone calls from immigrant parents asking for permission to come to the school—sometimes calling from pay phones across the street from the school office.

In explaining why they became involved with the schools, parents usually cited personal outreach by a bilingual school staff member or encouragement from another parent who spoke their language. Moreover, parents agreed that the level of their involvement depended on the degree to which school teachers and administrators encouraged parents to serve as advocates for their children and partners with teachers in their child's education.

## Summary

The organization of work in most secondary schools tends to isolate LEP immigrants and their language development teachers from the mainstream school program. As a consequence, the work of mainstream teachers, administrators, counselors, and nonteaching support staff often fails to keep pace with important changes in student demographics. PRIME reform leaders focused on promoting cross-departmental collaboration and efforts to change the school schedule so that students and teachers could use time more productively. Although most high school teachers and principals described parental involvement in school activities as important to student success, immigrant parents described language and cultural differences as barriers to their effective involvement. Moreover, the role of parental involvement in secondary schools remains poorly defined and understood by educators and parents alike.

In this chapter we focus on the challenges reform leaders faced in trying to increase school accountability for the educational outcomes of limited English proficient (LEP) immigrant youths. We consider these efforts in light of the traditional civil rights framework for ensuring equal opportunity for LEP students, as well as more recent state and federal efforts to improve local accountability through implementation of curriculum and student performance standards.

### From Procedural Safeguards to Substantive Standards

The central goal of any school reform effort is student achievement. To affect achievement, reforms must reach the classroom and influence the ways teachers teach and students learn. Since the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Lau v. Nichols*,<sup>1</sup> state and federal reforms have emphasized procedural safeguards to ensure that LEP youth have "effective access" to public school programs. Thus, state and local districts that serve LEP students must develop procedures to identify, assess, and place LEP students in appropriate services. The *Lau* framework, though, does not prescribe substantive curriculum standards, assessment measures, or monitoring provisions for LEP education. Rather, these decisions are left to the discretion of state and local school authorities.

In recent years, educators have grown concerned that procedural and resource-oriented reforms are not sufficient in and of themselves to improve school performance or hold local schools accountable for student outcomes. A central premise of current standard-based reforms is that accountability systems in schools serving LEP and disadvantaged youth have been especially weak.<sup>2</sup> Research in states now undergoing standards-based reforms strongly indicates that the performance of students at risk for academic failure can be substantially improved when all educators in a given school are given appropriate incentives to focus on these students and are held accountable for student outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

The essential elements of a strong accountability system include clear academic content standards to guide classroom instruction, strong student performance standards that define what students are expected to learn, and mechanisms for monitoring school performance that enable educators to identify effective practices and generate public scrutiny of failing schools.<sup>4</sup> These elements have now been embedded in the national Goals 2000 legislation<sup>5</sup> and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).<sup>6</sup> Since 1994,

<sup>1</sup> 414 U.S. 563 (1973). *Lau* required that local school officials take affirmative steps to make educational services accessible to children who are LEP.

<sup>2</sup> See Cohen, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Grissmer and Flanagan, 1998

<sup>4</sup> See Elmore, Abelman, and Fuhrman, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 20 U.S.C. § 5801 et seq. (1994).

<sup>6</sup> Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1964, as amended. 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. (1994).

virtually every state has adopted content standards in the core academic subjects and begun to administer statewide tests to measure student performance.

Nevertheless, states have been slow to establish content standards for English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual language development programs. There is also evidence that LEP/immigrants have been left out of new accountability reforms in some places.<sup>7</sup> Secondary school teachers in both California and Maryland told us how difficult it is to work in the absence of clear curriculum and student performance standards, and they underscored the importance of strong school accountability measures for LEP students. The Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) demonstration projects were implemented between 1994 and early 1998, before either California or Maryland fully implemented standards-based reforms. Although both states subsequently developed new standards for the core subjects, neither state had implemented content standards for language development programs designed to help LEP students eventually meet the academic English standards required of all students.<sup>8</sup>

## The Relationship of Standards to LEP Immigrant Education

Clear curriculum standards guide classroom instruction; student performance standards signal what students are expected to master. In the absence of clear standards, teachers report that deciding what they will teach, what techniques and materials they will use, and what pace they will impose is largely determined by responding to a web of often conflicting demands from department heads, principals, parents, and the students themselves. Likewise, principals report being guided as much by the squeaky wheels of demand from parents, staff, and superiors as by their own professional judgment and training. These pervasive and powerful sources of demand drive the formation of priorities and the distribution of human and capital resources in a school.<sup>9</sup>

Teachers and principals in the demonstration schools emphasized, however, that these important sources of demand are relatively weak with respect to LEP youth, owing in part to a lower level of advocacy among immigrant parents. The demands are especially weak with respect to recent immigrants living in communities where poverty and low English literacy levels undermine parents' ability to monitor school performance. Under these circumstances, the specific educational needs of LEP immigrants often go unmet.

<sup>7</sup> See August, Piche, and Rice, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> California became one of the first states to issue content standards for language development programs in July 1999. See California Department of Education, "English Language Development Standards," adopted by the California State Board of Education, July 1999. Texas implemented content standards for language development programs in 1998, but neither California nor Texas has developed tests to measure student progress relative to those standards. In 1997, the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) published model content standards, including a guide to standards-based assessment for English language learners (TESOL, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> These findings are consistent with the idea that schools, like other local public agencies, operate within and respond to "markets" or communities that exert varying degrees of demand and vigilance on agency action. See Wirt and Kirst, 1997, and Weeres and Cooper, 1991.

**Recognizing the Importance of Curriculum Content Standards.** A common concern among school leaders at the outset of demonstration program participation was that without clear content or skill standards for language development courses, individual teachers were left to determine the instructional methods and content they would cover with little guidance from any source. As a result, most teachers focused on helping students develop basic oral English fluency and reading comprehension. Attention to writing ability among students in bilingual or ESL programs was spotty and inconsistent across sites. Moreover, what one ESL-1 instructor taught in her class might differ significantly from what another ESL-1 instructor covered in his class. This diversity within levels complicated, in turn, service delivery across levels, as ESL-2 or ESL-3 instructors could not assume much about the specific skills a student would possess upon promotion to a new level. The absence of a uniform curriculum specifying an ordered set of skills that should be taught at different levels or grades within a district likewise meant that what teachers at one high school taught at a given level was substantially different from what teachers taught at other schools in the same district. Students commonly experienced widely inconsistent expectations and little continuity when they moved from one school to another or from middle school to high school. Ultimately, teachers found that it was very difficult to plan their work and collaborate with their colleagues in the absence of the shared academic goals that clear standards might provide.

**Student Assessment and Performance Standards for LEP Youth.** What should students be able to do when they complete a language development course? When are they ready to move out of special language development services? How do teachers measure that progress? Ideally, the answers to these assessment questions should flow from the content of the curriculum. But where that content varies, both within and across levels, the resulting absence of common skill and knowledge benchmarks makes it difficult for school leaders to monitor student progress and evaluate the effectiveness of their language development programs.

At the project's start, each demonstration site followed state or district rules for assessing LEP students annually or biennially. But teachers and PRIME project leaders reported that in the absence of student performance standards linked to a challenging language development curriculum, student assessment focused on measuring only a set of minimal or basic competencies in reading, writing, and oral English. In this context, school leaders could not be confident that language development programs were helping LEP students to acquire the academic English competencies necessary to prepare them to succeed in mainstream classes and meet graduation requirements.

School leaders emphasized that assessment of LEP students remains a challenge for local schools, in part, because of political and technical reasons beyond their control. First, they noted that student assessments have to follow the establishment of curriculum and performance standards. As long as standards remain hotly debated by the public or within the teaching profession, appropriate assessment tools cannot be developed. In California, for example, demonstration projects were implemented as the public debated and ultimately approved a ballot measure to limit native language and bilingual instruction in the public schools.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Proposition 227, English Language Learner Education; California Education Code § 330; 5 California Code of Regulations § 11300 (1998). Assessment of LEP students remains a controversial topic in the teaching profession as well. See, e.g., Gottlieb, 1999, and de Avila, 1990.

LEP student assessment is also hampered by the unproven reliability of tests used to measure LEP students' content knowledge and language acquisition.<sup>11</sup> Measuring the content knowledge of LEP students is especially difficult when students have been instructed in languages other than English or Spanish, given the lack of assessment tests in other languages.

### School Accountability

**"Invisible" LEP Immigrants.** At the project's start, PRIME project staff found teachers and principals who were not aware that there might be a problem with the services provided to LEP/immigrant students at their schools. School staff were generally aware that some LEP/immigrant students did well, but believed most performed poorly, failing at higher rates than the school norm. But teachers frequently attributed variation in performance among LEP students to observable differences in student effort and attitudes about school. There was only limited awareness that certain differences in student performance were associated with specific academic needs that could be addressed by better or modified programming. In fact, when asked to characterize their schools prior to the Mellon-sponsored reforms, many teachers volunteered that immigrants had been largely "invisible" to them.

Surprisingly, staff in schools with large immigrant populations were as likely to note the invisibility of LEP/immigrants as were staff in schools with small groups of newcomers. Even more puzzling, teachers volunteered these assessments in schools that had been selected for PRIME project participation precisely because of their faculty's openness to reform. How is it possible that LEP/immigrants can make up more than a quarter of a school's population and their needs still remain invisible to an otherwise caring professional staff?

PRIME demonstration teachers gave two answers to this question. First, many pointed out that students' skills in any given classroom vary widely and that teachers typically know very little about any new student's prior academic preparation. If students are coming into their classroom from prior placement within the school or school district, the teacher may have access to their previous academic records and recommendations from other teachers. But even this limited information often goes no farther than the offices of the counselor or placement officer. Language development teachers may have data on the new students' most recent results on English language assessments; content teachers have even less information about new LEP/immigrants.

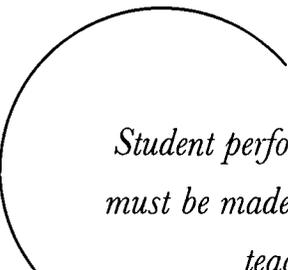
Confronted with a wide range of skills and little information, teachers said they operate mostly on intuition and experience—developing a sense of "where most of their students are" academically and gauging instruction to that norm. The limited time they can spend in a day with any student (typically in a 50-minute class), along with language and cultural differences, complicates their ability to learn much about their students beyond observable student performance. In this daily routine, any individual's special needs can easily be lost.

*When asked to characterize their schools prior to the Mellon-sponsored reforms, many teachers volunteered that immigrants had been largely "invisible" to them.*

<sup>11</sup> August and Hakuta, 1997, and de Avila, 1990.

A second answer to the puzzle of invisible special needs populations came from teachers and school leaders who observed that teachers, like other professionals, practice their problem-solving skills within a limited amount of time, knowledge, and resources. Within these constraints, they “do what they can” or “do what they know.” One former teacher and school principal observed that good teachers, and principals, learn quickly to focus on what is “doable”—on where they think they can make a difference. She added that if they get a sense something cannot be changed, rationality demands that they “move on.” Another project participant said many teachers and principals go even further—making an affirmative effort not to see certain problems. She suggested that disappointing student performance outcomes for which there appear no available solutions never become defined as problems. They are simply accepted as “the way things are.”

**The Importance of Collecting and Reporting Student Data.** These explanations from teachers about invisible students convinced PRIME project directors that one reason schools are not more responsive to the academic needs of LEP/immigrant youth is that teachers and administrators have so little information about them. Project directors found schools that did not routinely collect even basic information about how much math, science, or English instruction new immigrants had received in their native countries. Where such information was collected, it was frequently not made available to classroom teachers. Many school leaders were unaware of such basic facts as how many LEP students attended their schools, how many of those were native or foreign born, and what percent were served in language development programs. Few Mellon project schools collected achievement information disaggregated by language ability, nativity, or immigrant status, preventing teachers and school leaders from identifying subpopulations that were not adequately served by existing programs. Taken together, these information gaps made it possible for problems to remain invisible and ultimately retarded the search for solutions.



*Student performance data must be made available to teachers and the public in ways that spark creative responses.*

**Making Student Performance Data Available to Teachers and Parents; Using It to Drive Change.** Recent research on school reform makes clear that higher standards and stronger data collection systems do not, alone, ensure change. Student performance data must be made available to teachers and the public in ways that spark creative responses.<sup>12</sup>

Demonstration project leaders found that teachers lacked the time, supportive organizational structures, and incentives to analyze available data, use them to identify patterns in student performance, and relate those patterns to classroom practices. Project leaders realized early on that to effect schoolwide change, they needed to transform the culture of their project schools from one where teachers focused on teaching subjects to one where teachers were encouraged and rewarded for focusing on student outcomes. The difference is critical, one project director explained, because teachers who are rewarded solely for focusing on the routines of subject-matter teaching tend to assume students bear sole responsibility for their academic performance. In this reward structure, teachers have no incentive to explore how changes in their own classroom teaching methods might improve student outcomes. Where student outcomes are a critical question for every school professional, responsibility becomes a shared issue that requires constant reevaluation of practice in light of student performance.

<sup>12</sup> Ladd, 1996; Goertz et al., 1996; McLaughlin, Shephard, and O'Day, 1995; and O'Day and Smith, 1993.

### **Identification and Placement Procedures; Student Progress Monitoring.**

Secondary schools, like giant sorting machines, regularly match thousands of students with hundreds of teachers, programs, courses, and elective activities. College-bound students must be identified early and guided through a maze of requirements if they are to make successful transitions from high school to college. Educators have recognized the implications of this sorting function for LEP youth and agree that effective monitoring is essential to ensure that LEP youth get the services they need.

In fact, state education agencies and professional groups have devoted considerable attention in the last decade to developing effective identification and placement procedures for schools that receive LEP immigrant students.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, demonstration project leaders found that LEP immigrant students often fell through the cracks of the school's monitoring processes. In some cases the school's procedures were plainly inadequate. Initial identification of LEP students was assigned to untrained clerical staff, or counselors made placement decisions without input from teachers with direct knowledge of student performance skills. In other cases, conceptually sound procedures were poorly understood and thus poorly implemented by school staff. As a result, LEP students were often placed in inappropriate classes. High-achieving immigrant students—who were performing at or above their age-appropriate grade level—were not identified for advanced placement courses and programs that would position them for college admission. On this subject, teachers and project directors frequently pointed to the continuing (and largely unmet) need to target district administrators, principals, and counselors for professional development around the needs of LEP/immigrants.

### **Summary**

Accountability systems in programs serving immigrant LEP youth are generally weak. Most language development programs lack clear content standards that might guide classroom instruction and lack student performance standards that articulate what students are expected to know and be able to do after completing a language development course. The absence of standards, and the failure of schools to collect and disseminate information on LEP student performance, frustrates the school improvement process. Parents and school leaders are left without the information they need to evaluate the effectiveness of language development programs.

<sup>13</sup> See TESOL, 1998, and August and Hakuta, 1997. Also see National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; California Department of Education, 1997; and Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992.

The preceding chapters have focused on how accountability systems and the organization of work in secondary schools are at odds with the educational needs of limited English proficient (LEP) immigrant teens. The discussion drew on the experiences of demonstration project participants to illustrate particular points. In this chapter we focus directly on the strategies the demonstration projects used to make their schools more responsive to their students' language and literacy needs. We begin with an overview of reform elements common to all sites and then discuss each in turn. Each of the projects has separately published more detailed accounts of their efforts. Those publications are listed in the publications list at the end of this volume.

**Common Reform Elements.** Demonstration project leaders understood that the immigrant populations at their different sites varied significantly in language, countries of origin, legal status, and recency of arrival. The schools themselves also varied in their previous experience with recent immigrants, staff preparation, and organization. Given this diversity, a prescriptive reform model (i.e., a model with standard cross-site curricula or a unified reform design) would not have been workable. Demonstration projects instead adopted a process reform model that promoted development of shared schoolwide reform goals at each site and focused on building school capacity to teach immigrant students and increasing accountability for LEP immigrant student outcomes. This process model generated a variety of initiatives across sites, but those initiatives shared important elements across sites. They

- Responded to organizational challenges by developing more productive working arrangements among professional staff; involving all teachers, administrators, counselors, parents, and students in reform; and increasing the amount of direct instruction time available to LEP immigrant students.
- Promoted accountability mechanisms (e.g., new curriculum or student performance standards, data collection and evaluation) that focused on LEP immigrant students' progress and the success of reforms.
- Worked to improve the quality of instruction on both language development and core subject classes.
- Emphasized sustained, long-term professional development for all school professionals.

### Responding to Organizational Challenges

At the beginning of the Program in Immigrant Education (PRIME) project implementation, language development faculty in project schools tended to work in isolation from academic teachers and were held solely responsible for helping LEP students learn English. At the same time, academic teachers were departmentally insulated from responsibility for addressing the language and literacy needs of LEP immigrant students. In addition, the limited foreign language and cross-cultural skills of administrators, counselors, librarians, technology teachers, and others contributed to LEP students' isolation.

Project leaders addressed these organizational challenges by involving coalitions of teachers, counselors, and administrators in efforts to change traditional working arrangements.<sup>1</sup> The goals of school reorganization were twofold: (1) to promote language literacy learning throughout the curricula, and (2) to raise awareness among administrators, counselors, and other key nonclassroom staff about how to be more involved in creating supportive learning environments for LEP immigrant youth.

### **Reforms Aimed at the Division of Labor.**

*School-Based Planning and Action Teams.* Project leaders established school-based planning and reform teams that brought together language development teachers, mainstream content teachers, and, in most cases, key administrators, counselors, and university partners. These teams focused on identifying the educational needs of LEP immigrant students, analyzing existing practices, and jointly planning responses.

An earlier project review summarized the guiding logic behind the school-based teams adopted at demonstration sites:

School-site professional communities bring a practical, realistic view of needs and possibilities in their schools.... Moreover, since maintaining a responsive posture toward student needs over the long term depends heavily on teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and commitment, involving them in reinventing their schools contributes to [the] institutionaliz[ation] of reform.<sup>2</sup>

Teachers examined school-level student performance data, studied research on LEP immigrant education, and participated in workshops to share instructional strategies with university faculty and teachers from other districts. Teams also determined what professional development and administrative support classroom teachers would need to improve schools.

On some campuses, independent teams were convened to focus solely on LEP/immigrant issues. On other campuses, cross-departmental and cross-campus planning committees were established to work at integrating LEP immigrant issues with the ongoing work of traditional departments. One middle school in California incorporated PRIME project goals into the work of teacher planning cadres associated with the Accelerated Schools Model<sup>3</sup> of organization implemented at that school.

The demonstration sites shared two goals: (1) to include language development teachers in the mainstream academic departments' planning routines, and (2) to encourage monolingual subject teachers to learn new techniques for working with English language

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of PRIME demonstration project responses during the early phases of project implementation see Adger and Peyton, 1999. Also see Crandall et al., in press, and Christian, in press.

<sup>2</sup> Adger and Peyton, 1999, p. 209, and authorities cited therein.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of how the Accelerated Schools Model can be implemented in schools with at-risk students, see Levin, 1991.

learners.<sup>4</sup> University faculty and reform partners like California Tomorrow functioned as initial change catalysts, but the primary focus was on fostering leadership among teachers working to reform their schools. In each successive year of project implementation, reform teams reported a widening circle of teachers and administrators actively involved in LEP/immigrant education and professional development to that end.

**Reforms Designed to Increase Student and Teacher Time.** As we have noted, one imperative for LEP immigrants who may have only four to six years to simultaneously master a new language and academic subjects is to increase the intensity and duration of direct instruction. Every project made special efforts to increase student time on essential subject and language-learning tasks. This meant extending direct instruction time during the day and year, as well as reorganizing existing use of time for greater effectiveness.

*Extended Day and Year Initiatives.* All sites sought to extend the time LEP immigrant students spent on English language learning. The most common approach was to engage students in after-school programs staffed by teachers or adult volunteers. Some schools operated special summer school programs for LEP students in both English language development and subject areas. Language development teachers observed that summer school was especially important for students in the early stages of second-language learning. Most projects also sought to increase the intensity of direct instruction during the typical day, by establishing peer or cross-age tutoring during in-school hours that might otherwise have been spent on unstructured study activities.

*All sites sought to extend the time LEP immigrant students spent on English language learning.*

*Block Scheduling.* Demonstration schools in Maryland, and in Hayward and Salinas, California, moved to a block schedule format. Under block scheduling, the typical seven-period day is reorganized into fewer and larger blocks of time (usually four or five periods of 80 to 90 minutes).

Block scheduling offered four principal benefits. First, teachers could reduce the number of classes they prepared for each day, allowing them to focus on fewer students and, thus, to better understand their students' strengths and weaknesses. Second, longer class periods allowed teachers greater flexibility to move beyond the lecture format and experiment with cooperative/small-group strategies or engage in team teaching with colleagues. Block scheduling also reduced the number of courses students take in a given day, giving them more individualized instruction from fewer teachers. Third, because each individual class period is significantly longer, courses could be offered on alternate days or over shorter periods—trimesters rather than semesters. In some schools, the flexibility of shorter, more intense courses arranged in trimesters actually increased opportunities for LEP immigrants to take more of the credit-bearing courses needed for graduation. As noted, these opportunities for accelerated credit accumulation are particularly important to older or advanced LEP immigrant students, who may have been forced to take a reduced course load while working to master basic English. Finally, teachers in some schools reported that longer class periods made for a less frenetic schedule, contributed to better discipline, and improved relationships between students and faculty.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For in-depth accounts of how site-based planning and action teams worked at Mellon demonstration sites, see Adger and Peyton, *supra*; Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, and White (1999), *Igniting Change for Immigrant Students: Portraits of Three High Schools* (Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow); Olsen and Jaramillo (1999), *Turning the Tides of Exclusion: A Guide for Educators and Advocates for Immigrant Students* (Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow).

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of how block scheduling was implemented at one school, see Olsen et al., 1999, pp. 57–73.

*Newcomer Program.* Demonstration project leaders in Hayward, California, expanded the curricular offerings in the district's existing newcomer center. The major goal of the newcomer center is to increase English language instruction time for newcomers who are not ready to benefit from full-time instruction in English. The newcomer center also supports the adjustment of recent immigrants to American culture and schooling through an orientation program staffed by teachers knowledgeable about newcomers' needs and experiences.<sup>6</sup> Established in 1981, Hayward's newcomer English Language Center is a half-day intensive program for middle and high school students in the first three levels of English as a second language (ESL). These students spend half their school day at the newcomer center and the other half at one of the district's comprehensive middle schools or high schools. Spanish speakers also receive some native language instruction in U.S. and world history. LEP immigrants in higher ESL levels are served in regular schools all day.

*Expanding Time for Teachers to Plan and Work Together.* Teachers emphasized that working with students who have special literacy needs or are struggling with basic English comprehension entails more planning and cross-departmental collaboration than working with English-proficient youths. At most campuses, project leaders responded to time constraints by incorporating a common teacher planning period into the school schedule. Although many teachers were already collaborating with other faculty on LEP immigrant issues, they reported that a common planning time allowed them to formalize these activities. Teachers found that increased collaboration, in turn, helped them to maintain a focus on schoolwide improvement goals over the long term. One school district reduced one master teacher's course load at each school so that he or she could coordinate activities involving LEP immigrant students. These activities included analyzing student data, organizing teacher study materials, team teaching, and conducting master demonstrations for new colleagues.

**Reforms Designed to Promote the Social Integration of Students.** American schools are organized in ways that encourage student-led extracurricular activities—self-governing clubs, sports, music, and other voluntary special interest activities—some of which offer teenagers their first direct experience of participatory democracy. College admissions officers and potential employers often review students' extracurricular participation (or lack thereof) for evidence that a graduate possesses initiative, leadership, and other nonacademic qualities that predict success in college or work settings. In examining the secondary school experience of immigrant students, project leaders found it essential to promote greater participation among immigrants in their school's extracurricular life.

*Involving Students in Extracurricular Activities.* Staff at Alisal High School in Salinas, California, found that recent immigrants often gravitated toward one another and tended to be socially isolated from their native peers. Recent immigrants reported that lack of English skills made them feel insecure around natives and expressed doubts that they would be welcomed in extracurricular activities.<sup>7</sup> In response, project leaders at Alisal convened a panel of newcomer and native-born students to discuss intergroup relations on campus. Based on student input, faculty and student leaders jointly created the Alisal Ambassadors Program. Volunteer student ambassadors received training from faculty in cross-cultural

<sup>6</sup> For information on the newcomer program in Hayward, California, see Olsen et al., 1999, p. 147. More generally, see Walqui, 2000, and Lucas, 1997, p. 152. Also see Short and Boyson, 1999; Short, 1998; and Chang, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> Olsen et al., 1999, p. 56.

communication and were paired with newcomer students to help smooth their transition to the school. Ultimately, the program functioned as an orientation program for newcomers, promoting their participation in school clubs, sports, and other student-led activities.

### **Reforms Aimed at Improving Transitions to Postsecondary Opportunities.**

*Promoting Student Initiative in Postsecondary Planning.* Teachers in project schools found that recent immigrants were often unfamiliar with the course requirements and achievement testing required for college admissions and with the financial aid options available to them. As a result, immigrant students with strong English skills and academic records often reached their senior year without having consulted counselors or teachers about postsecondary options. As a result, they sometimes missed opportunities to take the SAT or TOEFL and lacked required course credits.

To remedy these gaps in the school guidance system, project leaders in Prince George's County schools established an elective course designed specifically for immigrant students that addressed college preparation issues. This included entrance exams (SAT and TOEFL), credit requirements, postsecondary school applications, and financial aid. Student-led Honors Councils for LEP immigrant students were also established at participating high schools. These councils focused on resume writing, developing personal statements, identifying potential colleges and scholarship sources, and learning how to fill out college application forms. The councils served two related purposes: to promote smoother transitions to postsecondary education and to provide a channel for immigrant student initiative.

**Efforts to Promote Parental Advocacy.** Immigrant parents are at a distinct disadvantage in monitoring their children's schooling when they do not speak English or are unfamiliar with the advocacy roles American schools expect parents to play. Demonstration schools experimented with several initiatives to promote greater participation among immigrant parents.

Demonstration schools in Paramount, California, for example, established parent centers where parents could help teachers with classroom activities and serve as after-school student tutors. The Paramount model involved hiring a parent involvement specialist, who organized the centers and trained parents to participate in school-site councils, PTAs, and school board committees. The most active parents were coached to serve as liaisons between school staff and other parents and to translate school newsletters and notices. Teachers in the schools found that the parents' presence contributed to a calmer, more disciplined school environment and helped the teachers understand their immigrant students.<sup>8</sup>

Prince George's County's demonstration schools promoted parental participation by sponsoring a monthly speakers series aimed at Latino newcomers. Community participants selected guest speakers and discussion topics focusing on understanding school policies and procedures. The series also created the opportunity for parents to get to know the teachers and administrators at participating high schools.

<sup>8</sup> A fuller discussion of the efforts in Paramount in partnership with the Center for Language Minority Education and Research at California State University, Long Beach, can be found in Adger and Peyton, 1999, pp. 217-18, and in Nguyen-Lam, KimOanh, Marguerite Lukes, and Gloria Inzunza-Franco, 1998, "A Partnership Model for Immigrant Family-Community-Schools," available at [www.cal.org/public/prime/lb.htm](http://www.cal.org/public/prime/lb.htm).

## Standards and Accountability

Recent research on performance-based school reforms suggests that the academic performance of low-achieving students can be improved when educators are given incentives to focus on low performers and are held accountable for student outcomes.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, PRIME demonstration projects focused on four initiatives to make schools more responsive to LEP immigrants' needs: (1) establishing clear content standards for language and literacy development programs that define what teachers should teach; (2) clarifying what students are expected to know and be able to do at any given point in their language learning programs; (3) establishing procedures for identifying students with special needs and placing them in appropriate programs; and (4) encouraging schools to evaluate their own effectiveness. These responses are consonant with the basic themes of the standards-based school reform movement. Nevertheless, as noted, while almost all states have written content standards for the core subjects, few states have developed content standards for language development programs (ESL/bilingual/English immersion). Texas and, more recently, California are notable exceptions.<sup>10</sup>

**Using Standards to Guide Teaching and Learning.** Three elements are particularly important to an effective standards-based accountability system. The first is a set of curriculum content standards. The second is curriculum coherence across levels or grades in a program. The third is clear student understanding of the performance standards they are expected to meet.

*Developing District-Level Content Standards for Language Development Programs.* Middle school and high school language development teachers must make an important set of judgments as they prepare their lessons for LEP students: How will these curricular choices prepare students for mainstream instruction in English? What specific language and literacy skills do I need to teach this course? What teaching techniques should I employ? As noted, these judgments are difficult to make without accepted curriculum content standards for language development programs. In the absence of state-imposed standards, project leaders worked with school and district staff to develop content standards to guide instruction in language development programs.

In Paramount, California, the demonstration project took on the major initiative of writing a districtwide English language development (ELD) curriculum. Project leaders brought academic experts and teachers together to develop content standards for ELD programs in all participating schools. Project teams determined the specific skills that would be taught at each grade and ELD program level and developed related teaching materials. The project director in the Paramount effort subsequently served on the advisory committee that produced the California State Board of Education's language development standards in July 1999. Notably, these new state standards are designed for LEP students literate in their primary languages and so provide little guidance regarding instruction for LEP students with unmet literacy needs.

*Curriculum Coherence across Levels and Grades.* In addition to clear curricular standards for language development programs, each course should be part of a logically coherent series that

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Grissmer and Flanagan, 1998, and, generally, Ladd, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> See chapter 6, footnote 8.

ensures accumulation of specific skills from level to level,<sup>11</sup> making possible a smooth transition to mainstream education. In Prince George's County, project leaders brought together a team of district staff and academic experts to design two course series for immigrant students—one for LEP students literate in their native languages and another for recent immigrants with low literacy skills. The curriculum team developed an approach for identifying students with literacy needs and selecting the appropriate developmental path for acquiring academic English proficiency. This work allowed teachers to intensify language instruction for students with the greatest literacy needs.

California Tomorrow undertook a similar effort in the Hayward schools, where curriculum teams standardized the district's ESL curricula and specified an expected sequence of language acquisition skills for middle school and high school students. This standardization made it easier for teachers to plan and teach together.

*Performance Standards for Students.* To ensure that students have clear information about what they are expected to know and be able to do when they complete a course, project leaders in the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) and California Tomorrow demonstration schools formed committees to develop explicit exit criteria for each ESL or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) program level.<sup>12</sup> In Maryland, project leaders helped ESOL teachers develop a system of student portfolio assessments<sup>13</sup> aligned with the student performance standards.

**Improving Identification, Placement, and Student Guidance.** Demonstration project leaders worked to raise awareness about the needs of LEP immigrant youth among counselors, registrars, and administrators by recruiting them to participate in project planning. Project staff provided these gatekeepers with information on best practices and, in some cases, kept principals abreast of state procedural requirements designed to ensure that LEP students were identified and placed in appropriate services. In Maryland, demonstration project staff helped schools examine the way they monitored the progress of high-achieving immigrants so they could participate in the advanced placement courses that would put them on track for college admission.

School counselors are critically important in guiding student progress. Project leaders in Hayward observed that their focus on school counselors "was an important recognition of the powerful gatekeeping role that counselors play and the futility of making isolated decisions within the secondary [school] setting."<sup>14</sup> Demonstration sites in Hayward and Prince George's County educated counselors about the needs of LEP immigrant students and helped improve counselors' assessment and placement methods. Classroom teachers in Hayward invited counselors to observe different levels of ESL classes to learn what students could be expected to know and do as their language skills develop. Language development staff in Paramount and Prince George's County also worked with counselors

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<sup>11</sup> Many educators refer to this process as curriculum articulation.

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed discussion of California Tomorrow's efforts to improve curriculum content and student performance standards at project schools, see Olsen et al., 1999.

<sup>13</sup> Portfolio assessment requires students to keep a record or collect examples of their work. Often students are also required to offer a self-assessment of their work or otherwise reflect on their progress and the teaching and learning process. Portfolio assessments thus provide a tool for evaluation by teachers, as well as an instructional exercise for students.

<sup>14</sup> Olsen et al., 1999, p. 159.

to develop a team approach to LEP student placement. Language development teachers at these schools worked with counselors to match students with appropriate services and identify college-bound immigrants.

**Program Monitoring and Evaluation.** School improvement is a continuous process that requires regular monitoring and evaluation. To this end, every school district collects information on student outcomes and teacher performance. Project leaders worked with school administrators and teachers to ensure that this routine monitoring process captured the particular needs of LEP immigrant youth.

California Tomorrow worked intensively with district staff in Hayward. The district routinely collected school-level data on attendance, retention and dropout rates, grades, and standardized test results. But it had never developed a system for reporting data on LEP students to schools and teachers. Project staff worked to get data into the hands of teachers, principals, and counselors on LEP student status, timing of immigration, previous education in the home country, and time in special language development services. Project leaders also sought to maintain student-specific data over time, so that individual student histories could be traced from the 1st through the 12th grade.

In many instances, school districts already gather a great deal of performance data on special needs students. But they do not make good use of this information to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. A key strategy in both the California Tomorrow and University of Maryland projects was to put data in teachers' hands and convene teacher-led groups to analyze and interpret them. Thus, teachers were able to relate aggregate data to their classroom experiences and practices.

This kind of analysis by the Hayward and Salinas schools revealed that underschooled immigrants in those schools—many of whom had only recently arrived—were poorly served in standard ESL programs that assumed native language literacy.<sup>15</sup> Student data in the Hayward and Salinas sites also revealed large groups of long-term LEPs who had been in U.S. schools for six or more years, had completed ESL courses, were orally fluent in English, but could not read or write at the high school level. School-level analysis of these data spurred teachers in Hayward and Salinas to develop special courses of instruction for underschooled and long-term LEPs.

Similar data-driven project work in the Prince George's County schools led to focused study on the special language and literacy needs of world-English speakers from African and Caribbean nations. Staff in these schools also used data on college-bound, high-achieving immigrants to reflect on how well they were served by the existing counseling and student guidance system.

Data were collected not just on students but also on teacher performance. In Long Beach, California, for example, demonstration project staff developed peer observation protocols to assess individual teachers' classroom teaching styles and course content. The results from the observation process were then used by teachers to inform ongoing programs in peer coaching.

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<sup>15</sup> Salient factors included recency of immigration, amount of schooling or level of literacy in the native language, level of linguistic isolation in home setting, and parent's education.

## Improving Instruction

**New Curricula for Late-Entering and Underschooled Immigrants.** ESL and bilingual language development programs in secondary schools, as noted, often assume a level of native language literacy that late-entering and underschooled youths do not possess. Project teachers developed completely new courses and teaching strategies for these students.

Project leaders at the University of Maryland, for example, worked with staff in the Prince George's County Schools to develop two courses for underschooled LEP youth. Alternative Instructional Methods (AIM) 1 and AIM 2 were designed for teens to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. This course sequence also focused on helping students develop map reading, measurement, predicting, sequencing, graphing, and other foundational academic skills. A third course, Cognitive Academic Basic Language Experience (CABLE), was built on the AIM sequence and focuses on development of study skills (e.g., homework routines, notetaking) and higher-order thinking skills essential to academic achievement in the mainstream classroom. Higher-order skills include identifying main points, drawing inferences from texts, and learning written and oral summarization techniques. A distinguishing feature of the AIM and CABLE sequence is that neither language development nor subject matter learning are central. Instead, the emphasis is on the basic learning strategies, which are usually acquired in elementary school and which underschooled teens will need if they are to understand language and subject courses.<sup>16</sup>

*A common project focus was to integrate language and literacy development with subject teaching.*

Similar experimental curricula were developed in Salinas and Hayward, California. Spanish language literacy and math courses were developed to accelerate content learning while basic English literacy is developed. Hayward schools, for example, developed an intensive Summer Bridge program for underschooled Spanish-speaking youths that focused on basic reading and writing skills in preparation for the regular ESL program. This approach for teen LEP students with limited literacy skills is sometimes referred to as a "dual literacy" approach because subject matter and basic literacy are taught in the language most familiar to the student, while English language skills are taught simultaneously.<sup>17</sup>

**Sheltered Content Instruction in the Core Subjects.** As we have noted, a common project focus was to integrate language and literacy development with subject teaching. The principal strategy was to promote a modified English or sheltered instruction method for content subjects. These classes cover the same material covered in regular classes but in ways that bridge the language barrier. In a sheltered history class, for example, direct instruction in history is integrated with language acquisition techniques (e.g., vocabulary building) and literacy learning strategies (e.g., explicit attention in class to finding the main point in a text or making lecture summaries in notebooks).<sup>18</sup> Teachers gear the lesson modifications to their students' English language proficiency. A history teacher working with advanced LEP students, for example, might begin a unit by introducing new vocabulary or concepts that students will encounter in the unit but that may not yet be familiar to LEP learners. Subject teachers working with less advanced LEP students might make greater

<sup>16</sup> Further information on these courses is available at [www.cal.org/public/prime/md.htm](http://www.cal.org/public/prime/md.htm).

<sup>17</sup> See Garcia, 1999. A more extensive discussion of program initiatives for underschooled youths at Hayward can be found in Olsen et al., 1999, p. 174.

<sup>18</sup> See Echevarria and Graves, 1998.

modifications in sequence and style, approaching the same subject with more visual aids (maps, charts, timelines) and employing more group learning arrangements.

Demonstration project teachers and researchers reported two important advantages of the sheltered instruction strategy for LEP students. First, it accelerates academic subject learning for students not ready for full-time instruction in English. Second, sheltered instruction promotes language and literacy development throughout the students' secondary school experience as well as understanding of the basic core curricula.

Credit accumulation in the core subjects required for graduation is a major challenge for students simultaneously struggling to learn English. Sheltered instruction also helps students meet the challenge of accumulating the credits needed to graduate by creating credit-bearing courses in math, social studies, and the sciences. Language learning is also accelerated because teachers in sheltered content classes deemphasize the lecture format and make more prominent use of question-answer sessions, oral presentations by students, and short in-class writing assignments. Project teachers say these strategies create greater opportunities for English language learners to practice speaking and writing the new language in a nurturing environment.

## Professional Development

The integrated approach to language and subject-matter learning is familiar to elementary school teachers but is foreign to middle school and high school teachers who have no preparation in language development techniques. The collaboration between the University of Maryland's teacher training program and the Prince George's County Schools included arrangements for students in the university teacher training program to work with mentor classroom teachers in project schools. The focus of this initiative was to give aspiring secondary school teachers concrete experience in working with students in the sheltered instruction environment.

Nevertheless, project schools, like many schools nationwide,<sup>19</sup> faced long-term shortages of staff trained to work with English language learners. Project leaders found math, social studies, sciences, and language arts teachers needed special training to make their subjects comprehensible to English language learners. Professional development for the veteran staff thus became a central reform thrust. Each demonstration project responded by implementing a similar staff development model.<sup>20</sup> Subject area teachers were involved in study groups focused on the specific language needs of LEP students in their classes. The goal here was to help content area teachers understand how language is learned and how to gauge each LEP student's language development level. Subject teachers in all sites were encouraged to pursue training on how to provide sheltered instruction in their subjects. The teachers worked with experienced sheltered content instructors to learn techniques that make lessons more comprehensible to LEP students. In California and Maryland, projects emphasized cross-departmental teacher collaboration and classroom peer observation or coaching to embed training in concrete teaching tasks. In California, project participants were also encouraged to pursue special state certification for sheltered instruction.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See U.S. Department of Education, *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1993-94* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics).

<sup>20</sup> A more elaborate discussion of the school-based training model can be found in Adger and Peyton, 1999, pp. 209-10. More generally, see Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Since 1993, California has offered the CLAD (Cross-Cultural, Language and Academic Development) certificate, which certifies teachers to teach a form of sheltered-English instruction called Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) for LEP students in the core academic subjects.

## Summary

PRIME demonstration projects generated a variety of initiatives across sites. These reforms shared several common elements: the development of more productive working arrangements among professional staff, the involvement of all teaching and nonteaching school staff in reform, the expansion of time devoted to language and content learning, the promotion of stronger accountability mechanisms for LEP immigrant education programs, and the implementation of long-term professional development for all school professionals. Overarching institutional goals were to promote language and literacy learning throughout the curricula and to raise awareness among all school professionals about how to create supportive learning environments for LEP immigrant youth. In some ways, many of the reforms discussed in this report are commonsense interventions. But school reform experts in the PRIME project emphasized that even secondary schools with large LEP immigrant populations will rarely implement them unless school leaders create opportunities for teachers to reexamine the ways they organize work and use time.

The experience of teachers and school leaders in the Program for Immigrant Education (PRIME) suggests a number of ways that education policymakers and advocates can support school improvement for limited English proficient (LEP) immigrants. Here we identify important lessons for educators/school reformers, foundations and researchers, and federal and state policymakers. We note that while the challenges presented by LEP immigrant youth may be particular to that group, most of the reforms involve universal strategies that would improve schools for all students.

### Lessons for School Leaders and Reformers

Successfully institutionalized program reforms have three common elements.

- They focus on restructuring existing school-based resources—human, capital, and time.
- They are linked to broader school reforms benefiting all students in the school.
- They are supported by a wide coalition of stakeholders, including parents and district-level leaders.

#### **Restructuring the Secondary School to Meet the Needs of All Students.**

The organization of work in most secondary schools tends to isolate LEP immigrants and their language development teachers from the mainstream school program. As a result, teaching strategies in mainstream classrooms often fail to keep pace with important changes in student demographics. One reform in project schools was a move to block scheduling. Block scheduling, in turn, created opportunities for teachers to reorganize the way they use classroom time. PRIME teachers focused on expanding direct instruction time for students and increasing cross-departmental collaboration. Indeed, the very process of redesigning the school schedule was often a catalyst for a top-to-bottom reexamination of the way school staff use time and structure their work. The inclusion of students in discussions about school restructuring and the move to block scheduling spurred the creation of peer and cross-age tutoring programs and student-run clubs for immigrant students. Although we cannot say that the move to block scheduling was inherently good for schools, a clear message at every school we examined was that a concerted, schoolwide reexamination of how teachers and students use their time was the first and most essential step in promoting reforms that responded to the needs of LEP immigrant students.

**Linking Immigrant Education to Schoolwide Reform.** Efforts to improve schooling for LEP immigrants and other educationally at-risk students benefit from being linked to schoolwide reforms aimed at all students. As a practical matter, the quality of instruction that any individual student receives in a secondary school is linked to the quality of instruction at the school as a whole. We were reminded at each site we visited that public schools

must respond to multiple constituencies; so where resources are scarce, they will be devoted to efforts with the broadest impact. Professional development, curriculum improvement, and school reorganization efforts central to PRIME initiatives were attractive to school leaders precisely because they tended to improve services to all students in the building, not just immigrants or others with special needs. Core subject-matter teachers involved in immigrant-focused professional development often reported that the new skills they were acquiring transferred well to their work with all students in mainstream classes. Conversely, immigrant students benefited from concerted efforts to incorporate them into mainstream reforms such as state-led and district-led standards-based accountability measures, and data-driven program evaluation. An important challenge for education reformers is to expand the development of strong curricular and student performance standards to English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual programs. These programs serve as critical gateways to the secondary schools' mainstream curriculum.

### **Involving a Wide Coalition of Stakeholders in Defining and Implementing**

**Reform.** In each school we visited, reorganization emerged from a collaborative process that brought teachers, administrators, students, and outside experts together. This process owed to a simple but powerful reality: School-level reform often requires a reexamination of the roles and working relationships of every professional and student in the school building. It follows that the success of reform hinges on whether educators, students, and parents can agree about what changes need to happen and how each stakeholder will participate in those changes. School reforms and professional development programs too often conceive of school-level educators as objects rather than agents of change. Yet those who work directly with students are naturally concerned with the practical outcomes of change. Involving them in defining problems and planning solutions contributes both to the depth and long-term institutionalization of reform.

Some reforms clearly hinged on financial support and cooperation from actors outside the school. Summer school programs for underschooled newcomers, for example, required including district administrators in reform planning and convincing them of the benefits that reforms requiring the commitment of district dollars might bring.

Finally, most teachers and principals who were interviewed described parental involvement in school activities as important to successful reform. We note, however, that with one notable exception, few parental involvement initiatives survived the end of foundation support.<sup>1</sup> Still, even where centers survived, parents and school leaders continue to struggle to define the day-to-day function of parental involvement in the secondary school. This suggests that the role of parental involvement in secondary schools remains poorly defined and understood.

## **Lessons for Foundations and the Education Research Community**

The extremely limited knowledge base available to educators regarding how to best educate LEP immigrant secondary students suggests the need for more research and demonstration projects that explore promising curricular models. The most critical research needs that follow from PRIME fall into four broad areas:

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<sup>1</sup> The parent involvement centers in Paramount were distinguished from the others in two respects: (1) they provided a dedicated space within the school that in some cases included a phone, computer, and other materials for parent use, and (2) they included, at least initially, some formal training for parents in leadership and advocacy skills.

1. Addressing the needs of under-studied subpopulations:
  - Literacy learning for underschooled adolescents.
  - Academic English learning for long-term LEP students.
2. Developing optimal methods of teaching core subject material to LEP students at different stages of second language acquisition.
3. Exploring the educational and social effects of linguistic isolation on LEP students.
4. Developing assessment tools that can be used to
  - Evaluate second language learners in the core subjects.
  - Assess the literacy development of underschooled adolescents.
  - Determine when second language learners are ready to be included in the same assessments given to English-proficient peers. This is an especially important problem facing schools with LEP students as states and districts adopt high-stakes tests for high school graduation and grade promotion.

Deficiencies in each of these assessment areas are especially acute for students whose primary language is other than English or Spanish.

Funding research and demonstration projects in areas of identified need is a necessary first step. Demonstration projects will yield measurable results only if sponsor agencies support projects long enough to ensure that the results of programs can be meaningfully evaluated and disseminated to the field. Stakeholders in government agencies and foundations should consider expanding on the approach taken by the Mellon Foundation here: funding a multiyear, coordinated research and demonstration program that builds in quantitative evaluation from the outset.

## Lessons about How National/State Policy Can Support Reform

The secondary school experiences documented in this report bear important lessons for how state and federal actors can support reform in a range of areas addressed below.

These include

- Promoting secondary school reform.
- Improving the targeting of scarce resources.
- Supporting the professional development of veteran teachers and administrators who now work with LEP immigrants.
- Including LEP immigrant students in school accountability systems.
- Funding research to improve the literacy development and content learning of underschooled newcomers and long-term LEP students.
- Discouraging restrictions on the instructional approaches available to meet LEP immigrant students' needs.

**Increased Grants for Secondary School Reform.** As previously noted, implementation costs attributable to most PRIME activities were low. Marginal costs at all sites were substantially less per student than the average dollar amount schools currently receive annually for each recent immigrant under the Emergency Immigrant Education Program

(EIEP).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it appears that initial external support for school restructuring projects incorporating LEP immigrant students might be critical for financing start-up costs such as professional consulting and planning.

A grants program specifically targeted to secondary schools would support innovative reforms and encourage schools and districts to use existing capital flows more creatively. Such a program might include

- Restructuring grants targeted to high schools. (This might support many of the organizational reforms discussed in this report.)
- Demonstration grants targeted to schools with large numbers of LEP immigrant students with special needs. Such grants might support development of alternative programs for underschooled/low-literacy newcomers and long-term LEPs.

### **Impact of Targeting of State and Federal Dollars to High-Poverty Areas.**

Some reforms, such as extended-year and special summer literacy programs for underschooled students, will apparently require substantial ongoing commitments of new nonlocal dollars. Although never fully implemented, current Title I legislation already provides for greater targeting of federal dollars to low-performing, high-poverty schools where the vast majority of LEP immigrant students are found.<sup>3</sup> The experience of project schools provides the rationale for fully implementing the targeting provisions that were approved in 1994.

*All indications are that the supply of new teachers specially trained to work with English language learners will not keep pace with the enrollment of LEP immigrants in the nation's schools.*

**Professional Development.** As noted, all indications are that the supply of new teachers specially trained to work with English language learners will not keep pace with the enrollment of LEP immigrants in the nation's schools. These trends underscore the importance of supporting the professional development of veteran teachers and other educators who now work with English language learners. Mainstream subject teachers, in particular, will need professional development programs that help them mold content instruction to promote English language learning.

**Accountability and Standards-Based Reform.** PRIME introduced accountability reforms at its sites prior to full implementation of state standards-based reforms in Maryland and California. The projects' experiences underscore the importance of including LEP students in efforts to ensure that all students have a fair opportunity to meet new standards.

Unfortunately, most states do not include language development programs within their accountability systems. States should be encouraged to adopt content standards for ESL/bilingual programs to ensure that LEP students meet the graduation and promotion standards that will ultimately be applied to all students.<sup>4</sup> Such measures might require that newcomer LEP students be tested for subject-matter knowledge/achievement in the language of instruction until they can be tested validly in English.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The average per-student grant under the EIEP is about \$180 at FY 2000 funding levels.

<sup>3</sup> See Hill and McDonnell, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> California and Texas are among the states that have taken the lead in adopting content standards for language development programs. See also National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> This is in line with the long-standing recommendation of the Stanford Working Group on Federal Education Programs for Limited-English-Proficient Students. See August 1994.

**Research.** Ultimately, many teachers understood that the policy and curricular instability they experienced was rooted in basic research gaps about newcomer education at the secondary school level. The experience of project schools provides a rationale for the following research priorities.

- Research on understudied subpopulations, including underschooled newcomers and long-term LEPs.

Much previous quantitative research has drawn attention to the poor educational outcomes of particular groups, usually identified by ethnicity or national origin. However, our study, which was embedded in the experience of students and teachers in classrooms, indicates that conclusions based on ethnicity and national origin may be misleading. In fact, the most salient predictors of educational outcomes for LEP students in project schools, regardless of national origin, were English language fluency at arrival and native language literacy.

The experience of project teachers suggests the need for data collection on the size, distribution, and needs of the underschooled teen newcomers and long-term LEP student populations. It also strongly suggests the need for a program of research on promising strategies for working with these subpopulations.

- Research on new curricula.

The foregoing suggests the need to conduct research on developing high-quality language development curricula for LEP students, and curricula and teaching strategies that promote content knowledge acquisition (in social studies, science, and math) of students learning in a second language.<sup>6</sup>

- Research to improve assessments for English language learners.

School improvement initiatives on behalf of LEP immigrants were hampered by the absence of reliable assessment tools for measuring the language and literacy acquisition of LEP students. Schools also struggled without assessments that would help teachers gauge newcomers' subject knowledge (social studies, science, and math) in their primary languages. The projects' experiences underscore the need for research dedicated to developing and field testing assessment tools in these areas.

**Maximizing Local Pedagogical Options.** In the absence of a single empirically validated method for improving the educational outcomes of students who are at different English language and literacy levels, classroom teachers need discretion to experiment with multiple instructional approaches. Indeed, given current levels of empirical uncertainty, states and federal policymakers can best support reform by allowing local school leaders the discretion to adjust curriculum and instruction to student needs while continuing to hold schools accountable for results.

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<sup>6</sup> This recommendation is supported by a recent report of the National Academy of Sciences. August and Hakuta, 1997. The report maintains that too little is currently known about how early in the process of second-language learning teen newcomers can profit from challenging mainstream instruction. Little is known, as well, about what curricular and teaching modifications might speed that process for different subpopulations of LEP youth.

## TERMS

**Bilingual Program.** In the United States, bilingual education involves the use of English and another language in instruction. In transitional bilingual programs, a student's primary language is used to support instruction while English language skills are acquired. Every federally funded bilingual education program, by law, must emphasize English language acquisition.

**Block Scheduling.** The practice of restructuring the school schedule to expand class-periods from the traditional 50-minute to 90- to 120-minute time blocks. The strategy is designed to reduce the number of classes for which students and teachers must prepare in a single day, and to allow for more intensive teaching and learning activities on courses taken.

**Content-Based ESL.** ESL instruction that integrates content materials (i.e., history lessons, geography, math concepts) into language classes. In bridging the gap between language and content classes, these two approaches make subject-matter instruction more comprehensible to the English language learner and help LEPs acquire academic knowledge and English proficiency simultaneously.

**ESL (English as a Second Language)/ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).** Instruction in the English language for nonnative speakers. ESL/ESOL instructors use a variety of approaches to teaching English, including focusing on grammar rules, sentence structure, or language functions (e.g., a focus on the specific uses of language phrases in context). At the secondary level, the goal of ESL/ESOL is to develop oral English fluency as well as reading comprehension and writing skills.

**LEP.** For the purposes of this study, a student is defined as limited English proficient (LEP) if there is a reported difficulty in understanding oral English or in speaking, reading, or writing the English language that may impair the student's success in classrooms where the language of instruction is English. To be eligible for federal LEP services, a student must meet additional legal requirements, including that they come from a home where a language other than English is the primary language. States and local school districts often develop more specific criteria for LEP status that determine the types of services the students are required or allowed to receive.

**LEP/Immigrants.** This is an overarching term used to refer to both immigrant students who are limited English proficient and the limited English proficient children of immigrants.

**Long-Term LEPs.** A term coined by teachers in some PRIME demonstration sites to describe a growing number of first- (and sometimes second-) generation teenage children of immigrants, who have been educated in U.S. elementary schools, are usually orally fluent in English, but continue to perform several years below grade level in English reading comprehension and writing skills.

**Newcomer.** A recently arrived immigrant student—usually in U.S. schools for less than three academic years.

**Newcomer Schools/Programs.** These are short-term, transitional programs designed to meet the needs of recently arrived immigrant students with a comprehensive set of services that may include orientation to the United States and its school system, and special curricula provided by bilingual teachers and counselors. Newcomer programs vary in design from half-day programs to free-standing newcomer schools. They may be collocated with a regular school campus or in a freestanding facility. The curriculum generally emphasizes language acquisition as well as academic skills. The goal of the newcomer program is generally to assist immigrant students in making a successful transition to mainstream schools and classes as soon as they are ready.

**Portfolio Assessment.** In portfolio assessment, students are required to keep a record or to collect examples of their work. Often students are also required to offer a self-assessment of their work or to otherwise reflect on their progress. Portfolio assessments thus function as an evaluation tool for teachers, as well as an instructional exercise for students.

**Sheltered English Instruction in Content Classes.** This is an approach often used by monolingual English-speaking teachers working in schools with many language groups. As in content-based ESL, both subject-matter instruction and language acquisition strategies are combined. The focus of sheltered English instruction is to gear subject-matter instruction so that it reflects and advances the level of English that students possess. There is often a focus on special learning strategies to help students understand and remember important concepts as they learn subjects in a new language.

**Structured English Immersion.** Students in structured immersion classes receive language development and subject-matter instruction in English. Typically, teachers in a structured immersion class will attempt to adjust the level of English so that lessons are comprehensible to students.

**Underschooled Newcomer Students.** Students who typically have been in U.S. schools for four years or less, and arrived with little or no English language fluency and limited literacy skills in their native languages. Typically, these students have experienced interrupted schooling in their home languages. They also tend to have entered U.S. schools performing three or more years below the age-appropriate grade level in math and other core subject areas.

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