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ABSTRACT

This report provides information on immigrant education in the United States in the areas of funding, participation, population, services, and allocation method. Additionally, it explores reauthorization issues confronting the Emergency Immigrant Education Act for fiscal year 1994. The report shows that: (1) there has been a steady decrease in funding for immigrant education over the past 6 years; (2) the number of children served by the program in the 1989-90 school year was 464,938, with approximately three-fourths of these children living in the States of California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida; (3) the number of immigrant children entering the United States is increasing; (4) local school districts are using immigrant education funds for supplementary educational services; and (5) states are granted funds based on their count of eligible immigrant children, which is calculated from schools having at least either 500 students or 3 percent of total public and nonpublic school enrollment. Issues concerning reauthorization involve reducing the duplication of services, simplifying the funding formula through amendments, and improving the targeting of funds. (GLR)

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IMMIGRANT EDUCATION: A FACT SHEET

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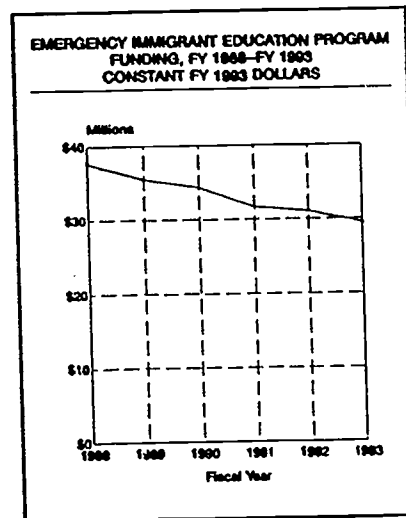
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The Emergency Immigrant Education Act of 1984, title IV, part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), authorizes the Emergency Immigrant Education program. The program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), aids local educational agencies (LEAs) to meet the educational needs of immigrant children. Authority for most ESEA programs, including immigrant education, expires in FY 1994; reauthorization is anticipated during the 103d Congress.¹ Reauthorization issues may include improving the targeting of funds to localities in most need and reducing the potential for duplicative services provided by other Federal education programs.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Funding. The FY 1993 appropriation for immigrant education is \$29,462,000. This is an estimated 22 percent decrease, adjusting for inflation, from FY 1988. The chart shows the 6-year funding trend for immigrant education in FY 1993 dollars.

Participation. Immigrant children eligible for services are those children who were not born in the United States, and who have been attending school in the United States for less than 3 complete academic years. The number of children served by the program in the 1989-1990 school year was 464,938. About three-fourths of these children lived in five States: California, New York, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Approximately 49 percent of the children served--227,368--were in California. According to a 1991 General Accounting Office (GAO) report on the



¹For the status of reauthorization, see: U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Redefining the Federal Role in Elementary and Secondary Education: Reauthorization of the ESEA*. CRS Issue Brief No. IB92130, by the Education Section, Dec. 3, 1992 (updated). Washington, 1992.



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immigrant education program, there were about 136,000 eligible immigrant students in the 1989-1990 school year that were not served by the program.²

Population. The number of immigrant children entering the United States is generally thought to be increasing. One indication of the growth of the immigrant population is the increase in the foreign-born population in the United States. According to census data, the foreign-born population in the United States increased about 40 percent from 1980 to 1990.

Services. Local school districts use immigrant education funds for supplementary educational services, including bilingual and other English language instruction, materials and supplies, and inservice teacher training.

Allocation Method. The program provides grants to States based on their count of eligible immigrant children. States count only those eligible immigrant children in LEAs in which the number of such children is at least either 500 or 3 percent of total public and nonpublic school enrollment. State educational agencies, after reserving up to 1.5 percent for program administration, allocate the remainder of the grant among LEAs with enough qualifying students based on their proportional share of the State immigrant children population.

REAUTHORIZATION ISSUES

There are a variety of issues that Congress may consider in the reauthorization of the Emergency Immigrant Education Act. Improving the targeting of funds to localities in most need may be an issue because of concern that immigrant education resources may be dispersed too widely to be effective. According to the GAO report, 529 LEAs in 31 States received immigrant education grants in the 1989-1990 school year, with the average per child share equaling \$62. Given the amount of resources available, Congress may wish to direct immigrant education funds to fewer schools in order to have a greater impact on the education of these children. One possible means to accomplish this would be to alter the program's definition of immigrant children to include only those foreign-born children who have been attending school in the U.S. for less than two complete academic years (instead of three academic years).

Another issue may be reducing the potential for duplicative services provided by other Federal education programs. For instance, immigrant children with limited English proficiency may also be served in projects funded through the Bilingual Education Act (title VII, ESEA). The Congress may wish to stipulate that immigrant education funds be utilized only for those services not available from other Federal programs.

Finally, Congress may consider a number of amendments to the program that ED suggested in 1991 that are intended to simplify the funding formula, strengthen fiscal accountability, and improve program administration.

²U.S. General Accounting Office. *Immigrant Education: Information on the Emergency Immigrant Education Act Program*. Washington, 1991.