

# The Impact of District Variations in High School Graduation Requirements on Latino Newcomers

---

**Mary Martinez-Wenzl**

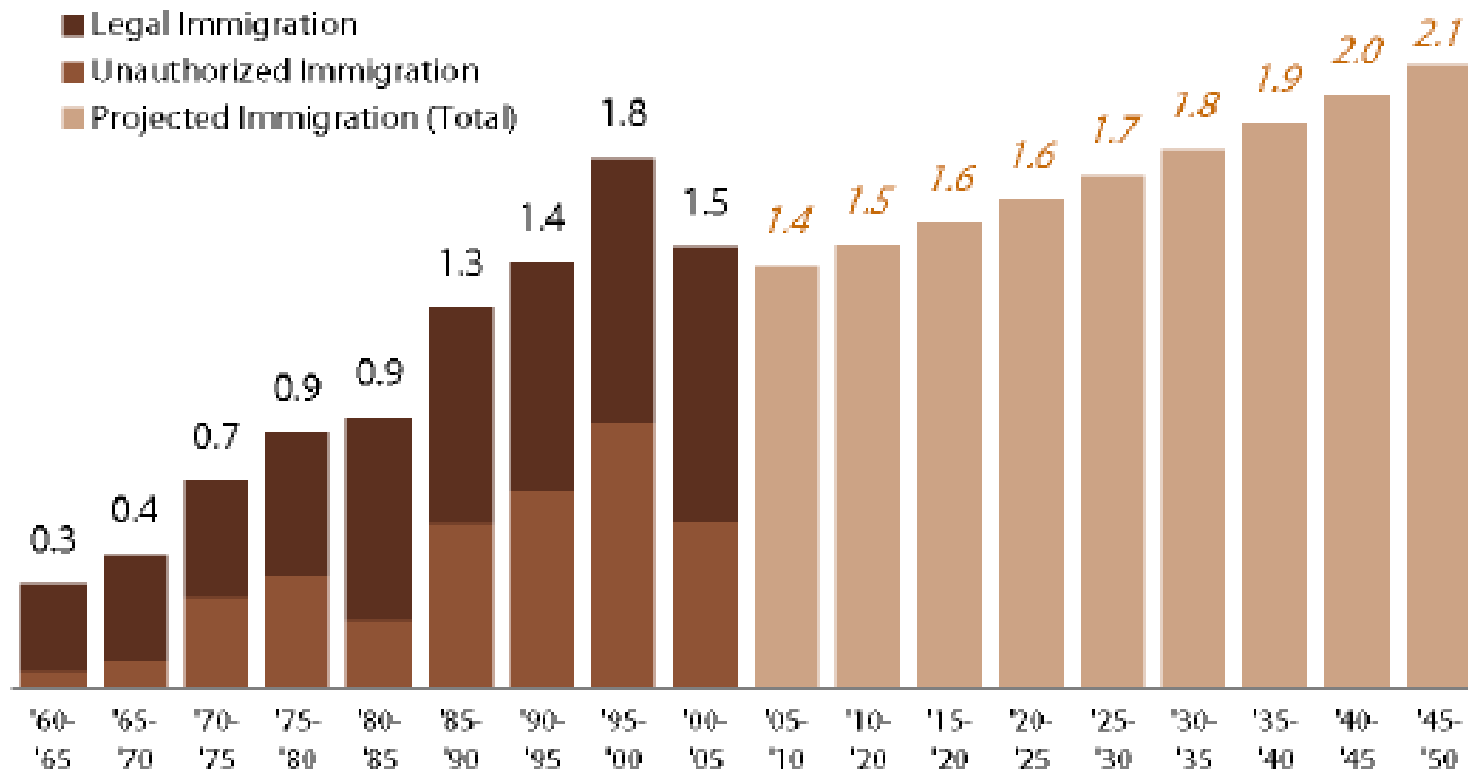
**AERA 2015**

# Presentation Outline

- Immigrant Newcomers in the U.S.
  - Data and Methods
  - Findings
  - Discussion
- 
- A decorative border at the bottom of the slide, consisting of a repeating pattern of small, stylized geometric shapes in shades of yellow and green, arranged in a slightly wavy line.

# The U.S. Immigrant Population Is Growing and Is Largely Latino

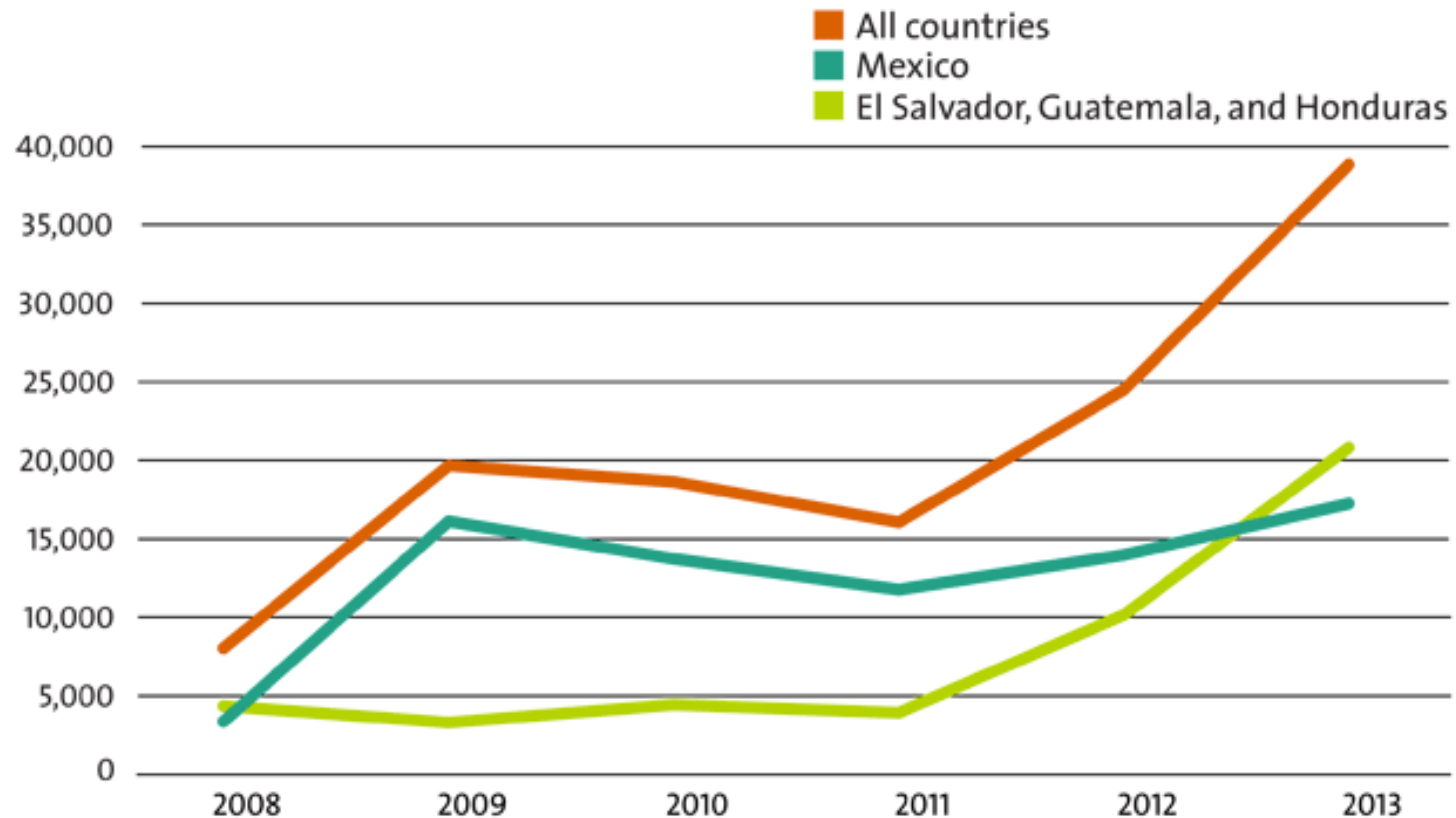
Actual and Projected Immigration: 1960–1965 through 2045–2050  
*(average annual immigrants in millions)*



# 74,000 Unaccompanied Minors Entered the U.S. in FY 2014

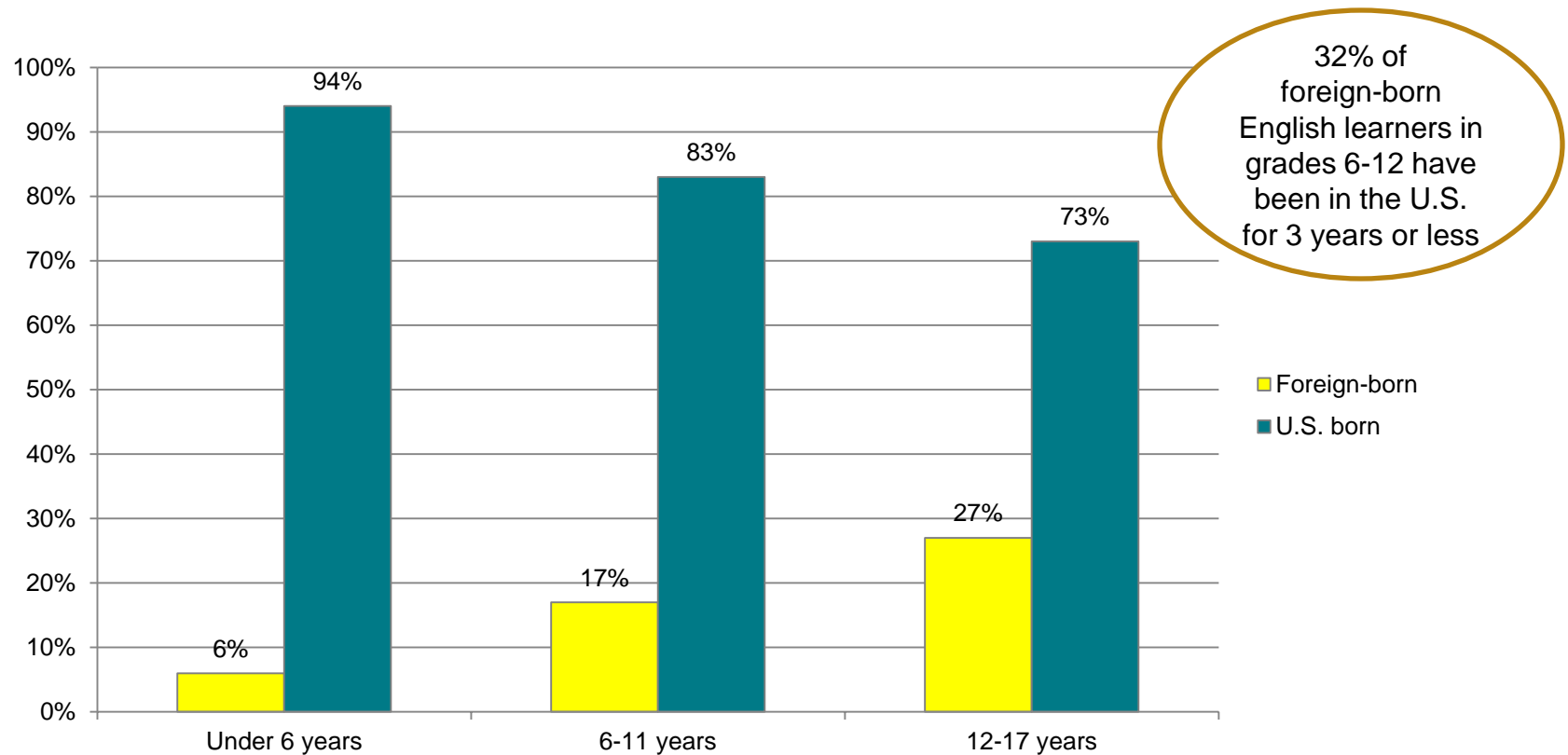
## The Child Migrant Surge

Unaccompanied children caught at the US border, 2008-13



Source: US Customs and Border Patrol

# Immigrant Youth Are More Likely To Be Older and Recent Arrivals





# Newcomers Encounter Many Challenges in U.S. High Schools

- Structural issues:
  - Immigration policy
  - Language policy
  - Poverty
  - Segregation
- Educational challenges:
  - Valid and reliable assessments
  - Teachers prepared to teach immigrants
  - College preparatory courses
  - Counseling



# Attention to Newcomers at the Secondary Level Is Critical

- High school staff members need to know more about how to meet the needs of these students
- More research is needed on immigrants and English learners in the secondary grades
- Efforts to increase college readiness and college completion should focus on immigrant students





# Presentation Outline

- Immigrant Newcomers in the U.S.
- Data and Methods
- Findings
- Discussion





# Tracing the Pathways of Newcomers

- Participants in a pilot demonstration project
  - Bilingual college preparatory math and science courses
  - Counseling interventions
  - Parent training courses
- Implemented in 2008-2012 in four Southern California high schools
- 451 total students served
- **This study sampled from the 169 students in the 2011 and 2012 graduation year cohorts—it is *not* a representative sample of all newcomers**





## Primary Data

- Postsecondary student survey (n = 56)
- Postsecondary student interviews (n = 21)

## Secondary Data

- Project SOL
  - High school observations (n = 270)
  - High school interviews (n = 47)
  - Student surveys (n = 206)
  - Student records
- District documents (policies)



# Postsecondary Survey Respondents

- Students
  - Majority of their K-8 schooling took place outside of the U.S.
  - Schooling experiences varied
  - Average age at migration was 13
  - 66% graduated high school
  - Time in U.S. ~ 6 years as of fall 2013
- Households
  - < 1 in 4 parents had graduated high school
  - 96.6% reported household income below \$35,000





# Presentation Outline

- Immigrant Newcomers in the U.S.
- Data and Methods
- Findings
- Discussion



# Enrollment and Graduation Outcomes, Classes of 2011 and 2012

Last Known Status	% (n)
Graduated	37.1% (68)
Withdrawn/Unknown	26.2 (48)
Transferred	24.6 (45)
Moved	12.0 (22)
Total	100.0 (183)





# Navigating High School: English Credits Required To Graduate

Variations in how much ESL/ELD courses counted toward graduation requirements

- California Department of Education requires three years of ELA, but does not specify how these credits can be fulfilled
- CA universities/colleges permit one year of ELD to count toward the required four years of English





# Districts Exercise Autonomy Over ELA Credit Requirement

- Many districts are moving toward a default “college preparatory” curriculum
  - Los Angeles
  - San Diego
  - San Francisco
  - Oakland
  - Sweetwater
  - East Side Union
- Other districts allow 3-4 years of ELD/ESL to count toward ELA requirement
  - Border districts counted up to three years of ESL/ELD toward English graduation requirement



# High School English Credit Requirements and ESL Credit Policies

District	Required Mainstream English Courses	Years of ESL Fulfilling English Graduation Requirement	2011-12 English Learner Cohort Graduation Rate
Desierto Regal	English 1 required (Freshman English)	3	81.8
Fresno	English 1 (may be SDAIE)	3	66.5
Long Beach	None	4	59.1
Los Angeles	3 years, including 12th grade composition and English	1	46.7%
San Diego	One year	3	59.5
Santa Ana	None	4	73.9
Punta del Mar	English 12	1	71.8







# Some Students Had To Fulfill All ELA Requirements Senior Year

Alfonso: Fueron muchas clases ESL, como el básico, ESL 1, ESL 2, ESL 3, el 4 y así, hasta el 10, 11 y 12.

Entrevistadora: Las clases de inglés fuera de ESL ¿y cómo lo hiciste? ¿Tomaste 10, 11 y 12 todo en el último año?

Alfonso: Si, todo . . . Sí, el último año estaba tomando puras clases de inglés porque eran las que faltaban, entonces casi todos mis periodos eran prácticamente de inglés.





# The Burden of English Requirements

“A lot of time it’s like it doesn’t matter to them, like, ‘Why do I need to graduate?’ Many will say, ‘I still need a lot of English classes, why make the effort if I still have to stay for another two years to finish my English classes?’”





# Presentation Outline

- Immigrant Newcomers in the U.S.
- Data and Methods
- Findings
- Discussion



# Discussion

## Should ELA and ELD courses be integrated?

- ELA and ELD standards have been aligned, but credits have not followed
- Some schools and districts are experimenting with integrated ELD/ELA course sequences
- Another approach is a hybrid, such as New York, where:
  - 3 units of beginning ESL = 1 ELA core credit, 2 elective credits
  - 2 credits intermediate ESL = 1 ELA credit, 1 elective credit
  - 2 units advanced ESL = 2 core ELA credits
- Research on relationship between ELD and ELA assessments is limited.
- CCSS are requiring more attention to language across content areas



# For more information

Mary Martinez-Wenzl, Ph.D.

Mary.Martinez-Wenzl@educationnorthwest.org  
educationnorthwest.org

celebrating  
**50**  
YEARS  
1966–2016

**Visit:**  
**[educationnorthwest.org/AERA2015](http://educationnorthwest.org/AERA2015)**  
**to download presentations**

*We are hiring!*  
*[educationnorthwest.org/careers](http://educationnorthwest.org/careers)*