

Study finds more Hispanic immigrants graduating from high school

San Jose Mercury News (California)

December 4, 2002 Wednesday

Copyright 2002 San Jose Mercury News All Rights Reserved

Length: 414 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON (AP)

Body

The percentage of **Hispanic immigrants** with a **high school** diploma **more** than doubled over the last three decades, though that group still tends to be less educated than Americans overall, a Latino research group said Wednesday.

Immigrants from Mexico and Central American countries like El Salvador and Honduras were less likely to have finished **high school** than new arrivals from South America and the Caribbean, according to the Pew **Hispanic** Center.

"In the coming decades, the educational composition of the Latino foreign-born population will begin to look **more** like that of the American native-born population," authors B. Lindsay Lowell and Roberto Suro wrote in the report, which covered people 25 and older.

The analysis of Census Bureau data between 1970 and 2000 **found** the share of **Hispanic immigrants** who had **graduated from high school** increased from 28 percent to 59 percent, while for all Americans it increased from 55 percent to 84 percent.

That gap is likely to narrow, the report said, as younger foreign-born residents who tend to have **more** education displace in the population older residents who are less educated. In addition, **more immigrant** families are getting their education in the United States, where **schools** tend to be better than in Latin American countries.

Data from the 2000 census showed the **Hispanic** population **more** than doubled during the 1990s to 35.3 million, rivaling blacks as the nation's largest minority group. Many Latinos from Mexico and, to a lesser extent, Central America, arrived in the past decade to take plentiful, low-skilled, low-paying jobs in factories, meatpacking plants and on farms.

The influx has strained many urban and rural **schools** struggling to teach new **immigrants** with little or no grasp of English. Some critics have called for **more** limits on immigration to ease the burden on **schools** and to reduce the number of **Hispanic** dropouts in the work force.

Government estimates place the illegal **immigrant** population between 8 million and 9 million, with nearly half from Mexico.

About two-thirds of all undocumented **immigrants** have not finished **high school**, the report said.

Still, Lowell and Suro said that closing the education gap is no longer insurmountable.

"For the immediate and foreseeable future, substantial benefits can be reaped from programs that aim to bolster the education of **immigrant** youth and provide adults with language and skills training," the report said.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: HISPANIC AMERICANS (91%); IMMIGRATION (90%); HIGH SCHOOLS (90%); EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION GRADUATION (89%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (78%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); RURAL SCHOOLS (78%); MINORITY GROUPS (78%); LABOR FORCE (78%); RESEARCH REPORTS (72%); WRITERS (70%); RURAL COMMUNITIES (63%); MANUFACTURING FACILITIES (63%)

Organization: US CENSUS BUREAU (56%); US CENSUS BUREAU (56%)

Industry: HIGH SCHOOLS (90%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (78%); WRITERS (70%); ANIMAL SLAUGHTERING & PROCESSING (63%); MANUFACTURING FACILITIES (63%)

Geographic: UNITED STATES (94%); MEXICO (93%); CENTRAL AMERICA (88%); HONDURAS (79%); EL SALVADOR (79%); SOUTH AMERICA (79%); CARIBBEAN ISLANDS (79%); LATIN AMERICA (73%)

Load-Date: December 5, 2002