Demographic Change & Educating Immigrant Youth in New York City

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SUGGESTED CITATION
We are born with dreams in our hearts, looking for better days ahead. 
At the gates we are given new papers, our old clothes are taken 
and we are given overalls like mechanics wear. 
We are given shots and doctors ask questions. 
Then we gather in another room where counselors orient us to the new land we will now live in. We take tests. 
Some of us were craftsmen in the old world, good with our hands and proud of our work. 
Others were good with their heads. 
They used common sense like scholars use glasses and books to reach the world. But most of us didn’t finish high school.

... 
But in the end, some will just sit around talking about how good the old world was. 
Some of the younger ones will become gangsters. 
Some will die and others will go on living without a soul, a future, or a reason to live. 
Some will make it out of here with hate in their eyes, but so very few make it out of here as human as they came in, they leave wondering what good they are now as they look at their hands so long away from their tools, as they look at themselves, so long gone from their families, so long gone from life itself, so many things have changed.

—Excerpted from the poem titled “Immigrants in Our Own Land” by Jimmy Santiago Baca
Born with dreams in their hearts yet finding themselves so long gone from life itself, many U.S. immigrants write stories in education that embody narratives of intrepid complexity--of dreams deferred born in hearts, resurrected in minds, yet too often left to die in classrooms across the country.

It was only 50 years ago that the US congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The legislation was based firmly on a Dream, a hard-fought-for promise that we as a country might progress past our laws, which at the time placed harsh quotas on who could immigrate onto our shores and traverse freely the expanse of our contested borders.

National immigration policies of the past, as have been well documented, worked to exclude Asians and Africans while preferring northern and western European immigrants over southern and eastern ones. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, however, marked a stark departure from a past rooted in xenophobia and extreme nationalism. Yet, even with the passing of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the national policy on immigration was far from perfect. Like prior immigration laws it held firmly to provisions that discriminated against gay people. Despite its flaw, however, it set in motion a conversation on immigration tied to equity, a conversation from which we should never retreat.

Fast forward 50 years. Today the immigration conversation is as polarizing as it is contention and dated. With politicians on the political left affirming deportation as a chief aspect of their national immigration policy, even U.S. liberals are complicit in reifying deficit restrictions on human mobility that shape immigration as a moral problem as opposed to a national promise. The rhetoric from the left is sadly yet remarkably familiar. The refrain, “Go to the back of the line,” feels far too reminiscent of a by gone era, “Go to the back of the bus.” The hyper insistences on “English only,” too, often feels peculiarly redolent of “For Whites only.”

On the political right the conversation doesn’t get much better, does it? It focuses on fences and walls, the will to break people and kick them out of a country instead of welcoming them in. The ironies are striking and sad: a nation of strangers condemning strangers, a band of refugees banning would be refugees, those who might find safety within our borders. We educators must respond.

Those of us who work with children understand all too well the visceral consequences of closing off our society, particularly to children. It’s only been a few months since we’ve witnessed the lifeless body of a solitary child washed up on a foreign shore. Searching for life, that child found doors closed. In the open wilderness of flight, death (not mercy) found that child. How many more children will we have to lose before we begin to modify the conversations, before we amend our immigration policies and laws? How many more children will have to wash up on foreign shores before we understand that immigration is not solely the responsibility of the immigrant but should also be seen as the obligation of each of us who might receive her--teachers and schools who are obliged to educate all students documented and undocumented who arrive from places beyond our visible borders?

On December 5, 2015, NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools convened a conference to take up these incredibly important questions, to necessarily make them our own. The event was well attended, with educators and concerned intellectuals, immigrant students and their immigrant parents and bevy of others participants concerned with immigration and education. Some of the attendees were authorized; others were not. Regardless of their documentation status, each attendee came understanding that something needed to happen to interrupt the cycles of miseducation plaguing the most vulnerable immigrant youth and the glaring dismissal of immigrant populations in the contexts of U.S. schools.

Indeed, a low-income foreign-born student whose primary language is not English is more likely to be remediated, placed into special education, forced out of school, and so on than their domestically born peers. Research has shown that while systems of disparity shape the educational narratives of low-income immigrant students, disparities in employment, health, housing, incarceration, and so on persist beyond schools and classrooms.
In spite of the success of the NYU Metro Center immigration conference, we in education would do well to acknowledge that the extent to which we can be responsive to students who come to us from expanded borders will be measured by how well we understand their shifting realities.

The conference left attendees more with questions than solutions: In the many contexts of New York City immigration, we raised a series of pertinent questions: How well do we understand immigration in relation to demographic shifts in New York City schools? How might new knowledge about such shifts empower new solutions for radically responding to the unique needs of those children who come to us not just as guests or neighbors but as relatives?

In raising these questions, we in education must reject the notion that immigration is just an immigrant issue, that the educational solutions to disproportionality in immigrant education are more about immigrants assimilating to us than we in education learning vastly how to respond to and accommodate them. We must do our parts! We must understand, asking how might we support other human beings who live profoundly among us and in the faint, shrill shadow of an ageless statue that welcomed them in.

Immigration in education must be about understanding, and from the basis of understanding it must be about engaging more possible solutions that might transform schools and communities in ways that restore the human soul, our collective futures, and give the many people lost without life or lands reason to live.

As we move now from research to resolution, it will become important for each of us to carve out that slice of the planet that looks most fertile for the demographic shifts and historical realities that the stories of immigration and education in NYC will newly narrate. In terms of resolution, it might mean abandoning certain movements in education such as the common core and other policies that treat all students the same. It might mean that we tailor curriculum and coursework to each student’s unique needs and skill levels, a version of what is known as “competency-based education”—a form of personalized learning. This type of education, according to the U.S. government, is geared toward enabling all students to master skills at their own pace and according to the unique realities and contingent circumstances that could define education with more porous, more available opportunities.

In this resolution, we do not treat immigrant youth as monolithic, understanding that there is no one immigrant story and, therefore, can be no one immigrant pedagogy or curriculum, policy or program for the matter. Rather, the conversation on demographic change and immigration in New York City and our nation is complex. Thus the conversation on educating U.S. immigrant youth must also be complex . . . and more, it must become courageous.

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INTRODUCTION

As the traditional immigrant “Gateway City”, New York City has long been the home to some of America’s newest residents. It should come as no surprise then that a prominent goal of public education in the city has been to help immigrant youth adapt to their new home. However, it may be easy to imagine New York City’s foreign-born populations as ever-present, but also static and unchanging. As neighborhoods continue to experience drastic change in populations, schools may be left unprepared.

In this report, we argue that educational policymakers and stakeholders can try and become more responsive to shifts in student demographics – and in particular, increases in the number of immigrant youth - to better serve students. We begin by examining a body of research that highlights the unique and important role of schools in the lives of immigrant youth. Next, we provide a series of maps that identify the specific neighborhoods where there have been significant increases in the Chinese, Dominican, or Mexican populations in the past 13 years.
IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Since the late 19th century, when the United States experienced a large influx of new immigrants, public schools have been the institution charged with integrating and “Americanizing” the newcomers and providing them with the skills needed to participate in the American society, as workers, and ultimately, citizens. Positioned at the front lines to respond to the demographic changes that have transformed America in the past and continue to do so to this day, schools have been the indispensable institution, absorbing new populations, and producing and maintaining the ties that bind the social fabric (Fass, 1989; Takaki, 1989; Tyack, 2003).

Since 1990, the United States has experienced the greatest influx of immigrants in its history, surpassing even the unparalleled increase in immigration that occurred during the years 1900 – 1910 (Grieco et al., 2012). With a steady increase in the number of immigrants over the last decade and a recent crisis triggered by a sudden rise in the number of unaccompanied minors arriving at the border from Central America (Park, 2014), the nation finds itself in the throes of a tumultuous conflict over how it will respond to the current influx. The nation’s total immigrant population reached a record 40 million or 12.9 percent of the US population in 2010 (Grieco et al., 2012). It is estimated that as much as 30 percent of the total immigrant population is comprised of undocumented immigrants (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013).

Additionally, whereas in the past immigration was a phenomenon most closely associated with large cities such as New York, Boston, Miami and Los Angeles, today the arrival of new immigrants is transforming communities throughout the United States, in rural and suburban areas, as well as metropolitan centers (Zuniga & Hernandez-Leon, 2005).

New York City has seen a dramatic shift in demographics since 2000. According to an analysis conducted by New York City’s Department of City Planning (2013), more than a third of the city’s foreign-born residents arrived in the United States after 2000, and nearly half of those recent immigrants speak languages other than English. Moreover, in 2011, more than half of all children born in New York City were born to immigrant families, one-third of whom immigrated from China, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

1 For an in-depth discussion of the term Americanization and how it was used to describe the approach schools should take in absorbing new immigrants see Graham, P. A. (2005). Schooling America: How the public schools meet the nation’s changing needs. New York: Oxford University Press.

IMMIGRATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public schools in communities experiencing dramatic increases in immigrant populations are once again confronted with the enormous challenge of determining how best to respond to the needs of newcomers. As was true in the past, schools have received relatively little guidance in how to handle the task of integrating and educating immigrant children. Reports from schools and data collected on the performance of immigrant children indicate that many schools lack the expertise and resources needed to address their learning needs. In many school districts recent immigrant students have the highest dropout rates and lowest rates of high school graduation and college attendance (Rodriguez, 2014). They are also frequently overrepresented in special education, often due to a tendency in many districts to misdiagnose challenges in language acquisition as a form of disability (Figueroa, 2005).

Some schools and districts are struggling to meet the needs of immigrant students simply because there is an absence of personnel who possess the language and cultural skills to communicate effectively with students or their parents. Miscommunication and cultural conflict are more likely when school personnel lack the linguistic and cultural expertise to communicate with parents. Choices that might seem nonsensical and even negligent to American educators, such as the decision to send children to their native countries for extended periods during the school year, may seem perfectly normal to an immigrant family. However, there is some evidence that when district leaders embrace the challenge of educating immigrant youth the entire system is more likely to find ways to help reduce the strains caused by social adjustment and to treat their educational needs as central rather than peripheral concerns for schools. In many schools that serve recent immigrants, a student’s inability to speak English with fluency, or more precisely to display a command over academic literacy, is used as a justification for placing the student in courses designated for English Language Learners (ELLs). While such
placements are frequently rationalized as a way to ensure that recent immigrant students learn English in a “sheltered” environment, often in classes designated for students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL), in many schools large numbers of immigrant children fail to acquire proficiency in English, and in many cases, lose proficiency in their native language as well (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; García, 2009). Once a student is enrolled in ESL courses they frequently are unable to access the courses needed to fulfill the requirements for college (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Noguera & Wing, 2006; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Moreover, teachers assigned to teach ELLs frequently lack the training, expertise and resources needed to meet their students’ needs (García, 2009). As a result, courses that are designated to help ELLs often serve as a means through which immigrant students are tracked and marginalized (Kao et al., 2013; Noguera & Wing, 2006). Tracking on the basis of language difference is one of the factors that has been cited by researchers as contributing to the high dropout rates common among recent immigrant students (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009). Moreover, as schools across the country prepare to implement the common core curriculum or some similar version of it, pressures related to high-stakes testing may disadvantage particularly recent immigrants (Bartlett and García, 2011; Menken, 2008). For example, recent results obtained from states such as New York, Florida, Louisiana and California suggest that English language learners, many of whom are new immigrants, are more likely than other groups to fare poorly on the new assessments (Hernandez & Gebeloff, 2013; Smiley & Vasquez, 2014; Williams, 2014).

“(...) immigrant children fail to acquire proficiency in English, and in many cases, lose proficiency in their native language as well.”

3. It is important to note that not all recent immigrants are English language learners and not all ELLs are recent immigrants.

4. As political opposition to the common core has grown, several states that adopted it have now abandoned it. In many cases they have adopted a curriculum that closely resembles the common core but simply changed the name (Associated Press, 2014).
Immigrant youth face a number of challenges that are directly related to their adjustment to life in the US that place them at greater risk of experiencing negative life outcomes. The challenges are particularly acute for Mexican and Central American youth whose families are typically poor, have low levels of education, work in low wage (and often dangerous) jobs, and are more likely to be undocumented (Smith, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Some of these include: stress related to acculturation and social adjustment (Gonzalez & Chavez, 2012; Suarez-Orozco, et.al. 2008), and instability caused by difficulty in maintaining ties with family members abroad (Bartlett & García, 2011; Suarez-Orozco, et.al. 2008). Existing research suggests that when these risks are not addressed, immigrant students often experience a heightened degree of vulnerability to negative social, psychological and educational outcomes. For example, in many communities immigrant youth have higher rates of teen pregnancy (Thom, 1997), depression (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002), suicide attempts (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011), gang involvement (Conchas & Vigil, 2010) and are more likely than others to drop out of school (Rodriguez, 2014)⁵. Without effective supports immigrant youth are more likely to experience poor educational and life outcomes.

⁵ In New York City between 2007 and 2011, 16 percent of foreign-born young adults ages 17-24 dropped out of high school (i.e., do not have a high school diploma and are not currently enrolled in school). At the same time an estimated 46 percent of young adult Mexican immigrants dropped out of high school. Comparatively, an estimated 11 percent of all young adults citywide are high school dropouts (New York City Department of City Planning, 2013)

“Immigrant parents (…) are often unaware of how to effectively advocate for their children in the US public school setting.”
Immigrant parents, especially those without documentation, are often unaware of how to effectively advocate for their children in the US public school setting. Often accustomed to “trusting” educators and schools more than native-born parents and lacking the language skills and social capital to navigate schools and advocate for the needs of their children, they are frequently at a significant disadvantage (García Coll et al., 2002; Kasinitz, 2008; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). Moreover, immigrant children often acculturate more quickly than parents, and frequently acquire skills in English and become familiar with the rules and customs of their new society at a pace that exceeds that of their parents. When this happens an imbalance in the relationship between parent and child may occur as the child assumes the responsibility of translator and negotiator with landlords, service providers and the school system (Orellana, 2009). Several studies have shown that such imbalances can contribute to strains within families and exacerbate the estrangement that immigrant children may exhibit toward their parents (Giguère et al., 2010; Olsen, 2008).

In some communities, the political backlash against the growing presence of immigrants has negatively influenced how local schools have responded to the needs of immigrant children (Olsen, 2008; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). As has been true in the past (Roediger, 1991), resistance to the influx of new immigrants has occurred in many communities across the US and led to the enactment of local and state ordinances aimed at making it more difficult for undocumented immigrants to work, drive a car, obtain health services or even rent a home (Massey & Sanchez, 2012; Yoshikawa, 2011). Immigrant children and families lack representation in local government, civil service, and education professionals, which contributes to the scarcity and inadequacy of services for this group.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WHITE PAPER

This white paper will begin to address the needs of immigrant youth in New York City by first identifying areas of marked increase in foreign-born populations (Garcia, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999). We have chosen to concentrate this initial inquiry on the recent settlement and immigration patterns of Chinese, Dominicans, and Mexicans in New York City. Collectively, these three groups represented over 900,000 New Yorkers in 2013 and comprised 30 percent of New York City's total foreign-born population. We will analyze the areas of the city that have experienced notable immigrant growth in recent years and discuss how schools in the city - and especially those in neighborhoods with large numbers of recent immigrants - can anticipate, prepare for, and serve immigrant youth and their families.
SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

Between 2000 and 2013, the foreign-born population in New York City increased by nearly seven percent. The three largest immigrant groups in the city - Dominicans, Chinese, and Mexicans - all experienced disparate rates of change during this time period. The largest immigrant group, Dominicans, grew by about four percent. Meanwhile, Chinese-born residents increased by 35 percent and Mexican-born residents increased by 49 percent during the same time period, far exceeding the city-wide increase.

There are neighborhoods across New York City that, in the last 13 years, have experienced exceptional growth in the foreign-born population. The recent settlement patterns of the three largest groups shared only minimal overlap in terms of the boroughs and neighborhoods in which they choose to live. Since 2000, the Chinese-born population increased significantly in Queens and the southeast area of Brooklyn. Growth in the Dominican-born population occurred almost exclusively in the Bronx - especially the far northern areas of the borough. Growth in the Mexican-born population was more widespread than growth in the other two groups, with all five boroughs experiencing at least some increase in the Mexican population. The Mexican population grew most dramatically in the southern and central areas of the Bronx, with several neighborhoods in the area experiencing growth of 200 percent or more since 2000. Mexican residents also tended to settle in the northern shore of Staten Island and the East Elmhurst area of Queens.

7 In this report, Chinese immigrants include residents born on the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

“Between 2000 and 2013, the foreign-born population in New York City increased by nearly seven percent.”
FIGURE 1.
MAP OF NEIGHBORHOODS WITH DRAMATIC INCREASES IN CHINESE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION BETWEEN 2000-2013

2000-2013 CHANGE IN CHINESE POPULATION BY NEIGHBORHOOD

- 200% OR MORE
- 100% - 200%
- 50% - 100%

As can be seen in Figure 1, notable growth in the Chinese-born population in New York City occurred in every borough except the Bronx. Most of the population growth occurred in Brooklyn and Queens; the Queens neighborhoods of Maspeth, College Point, Murray Hill, and Ft. Totten-Bay Terrace-Clearview and the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Dyker Heights and Seagate-Coney Island all experienced growth of 100 percent or greater. Some growth occurred in the central and southern neighborhoods of Manhattan, and in two Staten Island neighborhoods.

It should be noted that the foreign-born Chinese population in New York City is a very socioeconomically diverse community. For example, New York City’s largest Chinatown, Sunset Park, is composed of census tracts with poverty rates between 30 and 40 percent, which is well above the city average of 20.3 percent (US Census 2015). In some census tracts, the majority of residents reside in poor households. Moreover, approximately a quarter of Asian Americans in New York City do not have a high school degree, which is three times the rate for Whites. In contrast, a quarter also have a Bachelor’s degree, which is similar to the rates of college degrees among Whites.

Data source: 2000 Decennial Census and 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Map source: New York City Department of City Planning

8 This statistic was not available for Chinese Americans in New York City.
Figure 2 shows growth in the foreign-born Dominican population occurred almost exclusively in the Bronx. Two Bronx neighborhoods, Woodlawn-Wakefield and Co-op City, experienced an increase in the Dominican population of over 200 percent. Several neighborhoods in Queens and Brooklyn saw modest increases, though in general the Dominican-born population did not grow significantly during this time period. While Dominicans are prevalent in the northernmost neighborhoods of Manhattan, only one Manhattan neighborhood experienced notable growth.
As can be seen in Figure 3, the Mexican-born population in New York City grew significantly in all boroughs of the city between 2000 and 2013. For the Mexican population, the threshold for total residents in each neighborhood was lowered from 400 to 200 to better capture the explosive growth of this population throughout the city. In Staten Island, most of the growth occurred along the northern shore of the island. In the Stapleton-Rosebank neighborhood, the Mexican population increased by 204 percent. In Queens, the East Elmhurst neighborhood experienced an increase of 215 percent.

However, neighborhoods in the Bronx experienced the greatest increase in the Mexican-born population. The Mexican-born population Westchester-Unionport increased 409 percent and in East Tremont, the population increased 224 percent.
While the total foreign-born population of New York City increased by seven percent between 2000 and 2013, the Chinese-born and Mexican-born populations in the city grew at a much faster rate; foreign-born Chinese increased by 35 percent and foreign-born Mexicans increased 49 percent. Dominicans, the city’s largest immigrant group, increased four percent in this time period.

How might these demographic shifts impact schools in areas with large influxes of recent immigrants? Schools with growing immigrant populations must be adequately prepared to work with students who do not speak fluent English and provide support for students and parents in their native language. According to a 2014 brief from the New York City Independent Budget Office, 59 percent of New York City teachers in 2011-12 were White, 20 percent were Black, 14 percent were Hispanic, and 6 percent were Asian. In the same year, according to the New York City Department of Education (2015), 15 percent of New York City students were White, 29 percent were Black, 40 percent were Hispanic, and 15 percent were Asian. Clearly, the demographics of New York City teachers do not match that of the existing student population, and new waves of immigrants will likely increase this disproportionate representation. To prepare teachers to work with newcomers, schools can offer teachers professional development opportunities that focus on culturally responsive education and teaching methods for immigrants and English
Language Learners. The goal of this type of professional development is to help teachers support students as they transition to a new life in the United States and learn a new language and cultural norms. Schools can also be more intentional about hiring teachers and support staff who speak the language of the dominant immigrant group in their community. Furthermore, administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and other school staff should be aware of the unique challenges faced by recent immigrants and be in a position to address these needs through direct service, referrals to outside agencies, or other supports. Whether it be mental health services, housing assistance, or legal help, schools should consider appropriate and effective ways to provide this support to students and their families.

Future research and analysis should make the explicit link between large demographic shifts in student populations and academic achievement. In future versions of this paper, we will explore the historic academic achievement of schools in the identified neighborhoods to determine the link, if any, demographic changes have had on school performance.
On December 5, 2015, the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools hosted a conference entitled ‘Immigration and New York City Schools’. Scholars, educators, service providers, and students were invited to sit on panels to discuss how immigration and education intersect and how those involved in the field of education can be responsive to the needs of immigrant children and families.

Throughout this well-attended event, panelists focused on three primary topics: demographic change, undocumented youth, and language and adaptation. Many of the challenges discussed at the conference were challenges also identified in this paper – learning a new language while maintaining good grades, cultural differences, family economic circumstances, accessing support services, and many more. Clearly, immigrant children face tremendous obstacles when they enter the American education system. These challenges are only exacerbated for undocumented children, as they must navigate their way through a system not designed for them (e.g., needing a Social Security number to complete a FAFSA) and work with school staff who may not know or understand what supports, services, or opportunities to which an undocumented student is entitled. One panelist, an undocumented student at New York University, summed up her conference experience this way:

“Prior to attending this conference, I never encountered a space where I felt safe enough to share my experiences as an undocumented immigrant until my senior year in high school. My teacher encouraged me to share my experience and “come out” during my graduation speech because I would likely find it be liberating for myself and eye-opening for everyone in attendance. Her encouragement allowed me to feel empowered enough to share my experiences in order to catalyze change at any level, and that’s exactly what I saw at the conference. I saw a room full of administrators, teachers, and organizers that are eager to create safe and encouraging spaces for their students and that is so inspiring to me to continue my own work as an advocate for my community.”

-Pia Iribarren, Student at New York University and Panelist at Immigration and New York City Schools conference
The conference not only identified some of the common challenges faced by immigrant youth and families, but provided an opportunity for panelists to speak about how academics, educators, and service providers might address some of these unique needs. One panelist recommended that teachers intentionally observe and interact with their school’s neighborhood, especially since many teachers in New York City do not live in the neighborhood where they teach. Educators can look for restaurants or small businesses to get a sense of which immigrant groups reside in the community and how the demographics of a neighborhood are changing and the impacts these shifts might have on their school. Several panelists discussed the difficulties of teaching a student English while also requiring them to learn other subjects, such as science, in English. Panelists suggested that some policy shifts - especially around state-mandated testing - must address this particular challenge. Services such as the New York City Translation and Interpretation Unit, which provides phone interpretation in over 200 languages, can help bridge the communication barrier between schools and families, although panelists acknowledged that incredible effort is needed just to know of community resources for immigrant families.

“One panelist recommended that teachers intentionally observe and interact with their school’s neighborhood (…)”
Finally, the conference helped attendees reflect on their own connections to immigration. Whether we are immigrants ourselves, are the children or grandchildren of immigrants, or live in a neighborhood with a large immigrant community – immigration impacts each one of us, especially in a city so racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse. Jael Ferguson, a second-generation immigrant and the event’s keynote speaker, explained that prior to speaking at the conference she did not identify as coming from an immigrant background but that being a part of the event caused her to reflect on her family’s history:

“Prior to attending this conference, I did not know of the various problems occurring with immigrants in schools. The conference was informative on the demographic changes in immigration and how schools work with immigrant students. I enjoyed sharing my story about being a second generation immigrant and the problems I witnessed in my school environment. I was inspired by the student who shared her story about being an undocumented immigrant. Being able to hear the panelists and audiences thoughts on the problems occurring within schools in New York brought about a new perspective. I began to see immigration as a whole rather than a small part of my life.”

–Jael Ferguson, Student at Westbury High School and Panelist at Immigration and New York City Schools conference

This paper and the conference mark the Metro Center’s dedication to serving New York City’s immigrant families. As we continue this research, we will provide new briefs that identify demographic changes and issue policy recommendations that continue to address how to accommodate immigrant children and families in their transition to the United States.
WORKS CITED


