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## Hispanic baby boom has Texas ramifications

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Call it the Hispanic baby boom.

Fertility has surpassed immigration as the primary factor in the United States' Latino population growth, according to a Pew Hispanic Center report released on Thursday.

The Hispanic population has increased by 10.2 million since 2000, with 6 million the result of births in the United States and 4.2 million due to immigration.

"We are now seeing secondary repercussions," said Richard Fry, a senior research associate at the Pew Hispanic Center. "A large group of second-generation kids are having a big impact on the school system, and as they mature, it will affect voting and the labor market."

This is especially true in Texas, said Mr. Fry, since large immigration fluxes in the 1980s and 1990s have led to more U.S.-born children. The state has the second-largest Hispanic population in the country with more than 2.7 million native-born Hispanic children. Nine percent of Hispanic children were recorded as foreign-born in 2007, compared with 12 percent seven years before.

"This has profound implications for schools and other public services in terms of ensuring that the system has adequate recourses to provide for the needs of this population," said Jeanne Batalova, a policy analyst at the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute.

Already, the Dallas Independent School District is 66 percent Hispanic. Irving's school system has a Latino population of 67 percent.

Bexar, Dallas and Harris counties continue to have some of the highest Hispanic populations in the country, but populations are also dispersing to other less-concentrated areas such as Fort Bend, Hays and Comal counties, according to the report. Dallas County's Latino population has increased by about 240,000 in the past decade.

Texas schools are revealing these shifts most dramatically, said Yvonne Rodriguez, who has worked in the state's public schools for the past 30 years and now serves as an associate professor of reading at Texas Woman's University in Denton.

"These kids have a lot of talent, but if we don't focus it the right way we have a potential of creating big problems in terms of third-class citizens," she said. "It's something our country can't afford, economically or culturally."

Mr. Fry predicted the birth of a third wave by 2020.

The next spurt gives even more reason to establish a sustainable strategy now, said Annette Torres Elias, a spokeswoman for the Texas Association for Bilingual Education.

"This means retooling 'English only' to begin to understand the cultural and linguistic differences as well as needing to train more bilingual teachers," she said.

Latinos now make up more than half of the country's population growth, according to the report. And even with new migration tilted toward the West and Northeast, Hispanics remain more geographically concentrated than blacks.

Mr. Fry said that the surge of Hispanic-American babies is already having an impact beyond language.

"On average Hispanics that are U.S.-born are better educated and contribute to the labor market more than their counterparts educated outside of the U.S.," he said. "With this change in Hispanic composition, we can expect favorable outcomes."