SCHOOLING FOR US-CITIZEN STUDENTS IN MEXICO
Bryant Jensen, Brigham Young University (bryant_jensen@byu.edu)
Mónica Jacobo, Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (monica.jacobo@cide.edu)

We summarize what we know from research about schooling for US-citizen students in Mexico and offer three recommendations to collaborate with Mexican institutions for improvement.

Demographics
- Since 2009, more Mexican immigrants are leaving than coming to the United States, including voluntary returns and deportations
- This has led to a rapid increase in the number of US-born-citizen children in Mexico
- Between 2010 and 2015, the number of US citizens in Mexican schools grew by 29%
- Projecting from the 2015 Mexican Census, there are currently about 600,000 US-citizen students from preschool to high school in Mexico
- Though concentrated in municipalities in Northern and Central states in Mexico, US-citizen students are dispersed throughout the country
- The portions of US-citizen children are higher in elementary than high school

School Access
- School attainment in Mexico has increased steadily in recent decades
- Schooling is compulsory for children ages 3 to 17 years, yet only half of youth in Mexico complete high school
- Historic bureaucratic requirements make it difficult for foreign-born students to enroll
- 2015 legislation (i.e., Acuerdo Secretarial 286) establishes open enrollment for all, yet many schools still ask for authorization (i.e., la apostilla) on foreign birth certificates

School Quality
- The quality of schooling in Mexico is stratified by social class, language, race, and region
- US-citizen students in Mexico are more likely than their peers to attend a rural school
- Rural schools have shorter days, fewer resources, and teachers with less preparation
- On average, students in rural schools perform substantially lower on academic tests (more than a full standard deviation) than those in urban or private schools
- Teachers report a lack of preparation and resources to meet the language, cultural, and curricular needs of US-citizen students in Mexico

Policy Recommendations
1) Revive bi-national partnership programs in education to improve schooling for US-citizen students in Mexico. The US-Mexico Binational Commission, established through the US State Department in 1981, provides a precedent and framework for this.
2) Foster partnerships between US and Mexican local educational agencies to improve school access and quality for US-citizen students in Mexico. Local education agencies between countries should work together to communicate student information, share curricular resources in English and Spanish, and prepare teachers to facilitate transitions.
3) Enhance research investments in collaboration with Mexican institutions to understand and improve schooling for US-citizen students in Mexico. US and Mexican agencies should work together to address timely questions—e.g., achievement disparities between US-citizen students and their Mexican peers; curricular alignment between countries; aspirations of US-citizen students in Mexico to return to the US; how to prepare teachers in Mexico to meet the educational needs of US-citizen students.