



District Planning Supports:

Children of Migrant & Immigrant Families



Objectives



- This presentation will provide:
 - Best practices in preparing for challenges caused by an Immigration Enforcement action, and dealing with the aftermath
 - Effective strategies for schools
 - Helpful tips and resources


*** “Migrant” and “Immigrant” are used interchangeably throughout.**

***Important Note: The information in this presentation should not be interpreted as legal advice.** Any individual or organization seeking legal advice related to immigration issues should consult with the appropriate attorneys, local government officials, or non-profit organizations specializing in immigration law. We also remind educators not to provide legal advice.



Emergency Contact Information

- Update student's contact information regularly
- Adult caregiver affidavit
- Consulate information



Migrant & Immigrant Students' Legal Rights

- Ensure that all staff understand students' rights
- Review and update enrollment policies/forms
- Protect student privacy
- In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision affecting immigrant children and their right to public education in *Plyer v. Doe*. The decision held that immigrant children have just as much right to a free public education as U.S. citizen's children.
- During the case of *Lau v. Nichols*, the Court determined that school systems must provide English language instruction, and the failure to do so prohibits children from effectively participating in public education, which violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Become Familiar with Relevant Immigration Policies

- In addition to their right to receive free public education, students and their families have additional legal rights;
- Inform and distribute “Know Your Rights” cards to students at risk in their native language
 - Printable Know Your Rights cards:
<https://www.informedimmigrant.com/resources/ilrc-red-cards/>
- Districts could invite a pro bono attorney, legal aid organization, or immigrant rights organization to schedule a “Know Your Rights” workshop



Assess Student's Basic Needs

- Keep in mind that immigrant families' economic situations may change
- Ensure that students experiencing homelessness have appropriate services and support
- Students may face new or existing challenges in having their basic needs met; for immigrant families, there is a range of economic and other factors that can impact a family's situation.
- Students' housing or caregiving arrangements may also be unstable.
- Staying attuned to clues can help educators identify challenges students are facing.
- Community organizations can play a valuable role in helping to meet the basic needs of immigrant students and families.




Help Them Feel Welcome

- Issue a statement, in English and their native language, articulating that the school supports immigrant students, affirming that it is a welcoming site.
- Ensure there is a bilingual person available at your school to interpret and translate.
- Communicate in their preferred language.
- Reach out to the community.
- Stress the importance of taking proactive steps to ensure the safety and well-being of children and entire communities.



Help Them Feel Welcome

- Let all families know that they are welcome
- Create a welcoming school environment
- Get to know students and families
- Learn more about special populations of EL/immigrant students
- Identify student and family strengths
- Ensure all signs displaying important information within schools are posted in different languages



Build Partnerships with Immigrant Families

- Create channels for communication in families' languages
- Encourage family leadership
- Reach out to community organizations that represent and serve your families
- Become familiar with "sensitive locations"
- Review any current district policies regarding immigration enforcement
- Consider partnerships with safety personnel such as fire/police departments
- Stay informed of current events and changes in policy



Ensure Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support

- Help students maintain their routines
- Encourage teachers and staff to build relationships with students
- Provide ideas for age-appropriate ways to express emotions
- Take a closer look when you notice changes in a student's behavior
- Look for ways to make connections to the curriculum
- Teach empathy and appreciation
- Pay attention to what students do – and don't say – about immigration
- Use books in the classroom and beyond
- Learn about how your families approach social-emotional health



Ensure Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support

- Provide counseling for students who have had a family member detained by ICE
- Look for ways to build relationships with families
- Learn more about the impacts of trauma and PTSD
- Look for ways to offer social-emotional support to children throughout the day
- Provide training on the impacts of trauma and anxiety on young children



Ensure Mental Health and Social-Emotional Support

- Learn how stress, anxiety, and trauma impact students of all ages. The impacts of these stressors will vary by age.
 - Identify resources to address student anxiety/depression
- Become familiar with age-appropriate forms of self-expression and social-emotional support; and take steps to prevent and address bullying



Address Immigrant Families' Questions and Concerns

- Listen to immigrant families' questions and concerns
- Be honest and discuss the kinds of support you can provide
- Share information through outreach and events



Have a Plan

- Work with staff and parents to develop a family immigration raid emergency plan.
- Provide a safe place for students to wait if a parent or sibling has been detained.
- Have the plan on hand available to all school staff in the event of a raid
 - The plan can be shared during a staff meeting



District Plan Example

Procedures in the Event of Stranded Children

Following an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raid and arrests in a school district's attendance area, numerous children may become stranded at school, or otherwise be separated from guardians. Our current procedures support handling such an event in a safe, orderly, and organized manner; however, it will be more critical than ever to follow procedures closely.

What Schools May Encounter:

- Mass early check-outs of children
- Attempted check-outs by persons not on emergency contact list
- Increased absences for multiple days before rumored events or following actual events
- Lack of adults or high school age students at home for bus drop-off
- Lack of persons KNOWN TO STUDENT at bus drop-off
- Changes in student residency and/or custody

What Schools Should Do PRIOR to possible Events:

- Insist on multiple emergency contacts on registration documents. You may say or have translated: "While we cannot and our school district employees will not ever ask for your immigration status, we do request, for safety purposes, that you include at least one emergency contact for whom immigration status is secure."
- At bus drop-off, observe presence of high school students or adults to have a visual comparison in the event of later stranding
- Form strong relationships with students so every child will have a constant adult relationship following stranding



District Plan Example (Cont.)

What Schools Will Do DURING Event:

- At first knowledge of an event or possibility of event, notify the EL Director, Communications Director, or Superintendent immediately. If texting or e-mailing, please include all three. Direct all calls from immigration officials and/or attorneys to one of the persons listed above. Information will be distributed from the Central Office by one of these persons.
- Do not communicate any knowledge of event to community or school personnel who do not need the information (FERPA)
- Follow check-out procedures for all students (do not differentiate or make exceptions)
- Use the emergency contacts provided during registration to notify someone to pick up any children who are normally car riders and who remain after pick-up or who are returned to the school after bus drop-off.
- As a LAST resort, we will notify Department of Human Services of stranded children.
- District personnel will assign bilingual staff, if possible, to affected buses.
- Bus drivers will be instructed to wait for students to enter home and confirm an adult or high school student is present. If no known adult or high school student is present at drop-off or if persons at home at drop-off are not the usual persons or appear unknown to child, the bus driver should return the child to a designated location where administrators will assist in placing them with a known adult.



District Plan Example (Cont.)


What Schools Will Do FOLLOWING Event:

- School staff will call contacts for absent students following an event resulting, or potentially resulting, in mass stranding.
- Principals or designated staff will notify EL Director of students who are absent the day following an event and for whom no contact can be made to determine student's location or safety.
- Direct all calls from immigration officials and/or attorneys to Communications Director or Superintendent.
- Do not communicate any knowledge of event to community or school personnel who do not need the information (FERPA)
- Send a reminder to parents to update contact information, if needed.
- Follow check-out procedures closely.
- Respect that decisions and official statements in such situations must come from the district level.




Have Key Contacts Easily Accessible

- Maintain a list of resources such as names of mental health providers, social workers, pro bono attorneys and local immigration advocates and organizations that can be shared with affected families.
 - The list should be in English and in any other languages spoken at the school
- Connect Immigrant families with legal advice and support
- Consider creating a policy about “letters of support”
- Take time to listen to families who wish to discuss a possible return to their home country
- Helpful Organizations:
 - MIRA-Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance
 - Consulates



Learn More About How Immigration Issues Impact Students

- Immigration policies affect students in complex ways that students may not discuss openly.
- Learning more about immigration issues can enhance staff members' ability to offer instruction and support to their students and families. Educators can work with colleagues, families, and community partners to identify priority topics.
- Take necessary steps to create a respectful setting for professional development about topics related to immigration.



Provide Social-Emotional Supports for Staff

- Keep in mind that immigration issues may also impact staff personally
- Take steps to prevent burn-out
- Strengthen professional networks
- Share success early and often
- Provide opportunities for staff to collaborate, debrief, and recharge.



Questions

Sources

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