

Immigration Enforcement: Planning Considerations for Schools

Updates made on 1/13/2025 included below in purple.

1. Start now.
2. Form a multidisciplinary district team to assess and plan for potential impacts for your students.
3. Using this document as a starting point:
 - a. Identify potential impacts
 - b. For each impact, determine the:
 - i. Probability: Highly likely, Likely, Possible, Unlikely
 - ii. Scale: District, School, Class/Group, Individual
 - iii. Magnitude: Catastrophic, Critical, Limited, Negligible
 - iv. Warning: Minimal, 6 – 12 hours, 12 - 24 hours, 24+ hours
 - v. Duration: Years, Months, Days, Hours
 - c. Prioritize the impacts based on your assessment.
 - d. Create plans based on the most likely impact scenario.
 - i. Identify operational goals
 - ii. Select strategies
 - iii. Identify necessary resources
 - iv. Identify roles and responsibilities
 - v. Identify methods for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the response
4. Prepare to use your incident command structure (ICS) to support this crisis.
 - a. Designate a district incident commander who will monitor developments, keep leadership updated, activate additional ICS roles as needed, and establish incident response goals.
 - b. Be sure to include a Mental Health Team and leader in your Operations section.
 - c. Include your district Homeless Liaison to ensure identification of families and students who will become eligible for certain rights and services at school under the McKinney Vento Act, as well as ensure quick access to those services.
 - d. Gather your ICS team to review and discuss your action plans. As appropriate based on the scenario(s), consider inviting local law enforcement and partner agency representatives to participate in tabletop drills.
 - i. Identify specific scenarios. Consider situations such as:
 1. During dismissal, a parent of another child reports that the parent of one of your first graders was picked up by immigration today. You are unable to reach the parent. There are no emergency contacts listed for this child.
 - a. Variation: The reporting parent insists that both parents had an agreement to take care of each other's children if either of them is detained, and she wants to take the child home with her.
 2. Variation: Same scenario but it's an hour after the afterschool program has ended and the contracted provider is waiting with the child. All school staff have gone home. Rumors are circulating that students are planning to walk out and block a nearby highway.
 - a. Focus the scenario on school responses (investigation, attempts to offer alternative forms of expression, internal and external communications, etc.) from the time the rumor surfaces through the follow-up activities after the demonstration has ended.
 3. ICE/USBP agents have been reported near the entrance of elementary school just before the end of the school day.
 4. A middle school student who has already missed 10% of the school year to date has been absent for the last three days. Calls to the home have not been answered.

5. Teachers report that a student's attitude and behavior are becoming increasingly volatile. They report that the student has stopped participating in classroom discussions and seems to be completely shut down. The student's discipline record shows that they've been referred to the office three times in the last two weeks for confrontations with peers. The student's attendance history shows that they are frequently late for school, and absent more often than they were last year.
5. Create communication templates and scripts in anticipation of high-impact events.
 - a. Translate all parent letter templates and call scripts.

Supports:

1. Establish systems to identify and support struggling students.
 - a. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, or PBIS, provides a fully developed framework for this work that is proven to improve school climate, reduce disciplinary incidents, and improve learning outcomes.
 - b. Commit to a multi-year plan to train all school employees on the impacts of trauma and the use of [trauma-informed](#) practices.
 - i. Be sure staff who are most likely to interact directly with parents receive this training as soon as possible.
 - ii. Create job-specific scripts that incorporate trauma-sensitive communications.
 - c. Train staff in [Psychological First Aid or Just in Time Crisis Counseling](#).
 - d. Train staff on how to access the [Mobile Crisis Response Team](#) for students experiencing a mental health crisis on campus
 - e. [Train staff on the McKinney Vento Act and the rights of students and families experiencing homelessness](#).
 - i. [CA Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center \(HETAC\) recorded training's by role](#).
 - ii. [CA Department of Education downloadable PowerPoint presentations](#).
2. Identify specific data points and devise systems to monitor them at the district and school level on a weekly basis. Include disaggregation by significant subgroups (ethnicity, home language, English Learner, low income).
 - a. Enrollment
 - b. Absences
 - c. Chronic absenteeism
 - d. Disciplinary incidents (include offence type)
 - e. Suspensions (include offence type)
 - f. Expulsion recommendations (include offence types)
3. Build in checkpoints for district review prior to continued suspension and recommendations for expulsion to determine if the behavioral concern is a manifestation the student's trauma history, and if the student has been appropriately supported given their history.
4. Partner with local organizations that can:
 - a. Help parents develop Family Preparedness Plans that anticipate the need for short- and long-term care for their children in their absence. Sample templates are linked below:
 - i. [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)
 - ii. [Immigrant Services Network of Austin](#)
 - b. Educate students and families about options for authorizing a trusted adult to have authority to make educational and medical decisions for the student.
 - i. [Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit](#): Permits certain people who have familial relationships with the student to authorize school enrollment and medical care for the student but does not provide for legal custody. Schools, doctors, and dentists are required to accept this form.

- ii. [Petition for Appointment of Temporary Guardian of the Person](#): Necessary if the trusted adult does not have a qualifying familial relationship with the student, or if legal custody is required.
 - c. Assist when a loved one is detained:
 - i. Help with access to the [ICE Online Detainee Locator System](#).
 - ii. Provide legal advice. This national [list](#), which is organized by state and county, includes all legal aid organizations who are accredited by Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) to represent immigrants before the DHS and Executive Office of Immigration Review.
 - d. Assist with food, housing, financial, and mental health needs.
 - e. Provide parents with information about their rights.
 - i. Provide parents and educators with easily accessible information on their fundamental rights. See the handout [“What You Need to Know About The Rights of Immigrants and the Threat of Deportation.”](#) Also available in [Spanish](#).
 - ii. Provide For information to support families before and during a raid, see the following handouts in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
 - iii. Provide information on the [Educational Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness](#) as family or student circumstances may change because of immigration involvement.
- 5. Provide mental health and wellness resources to support parents, caregivers and youth:
 - a. Resource Guides
 - i. [Parent Guide \(Spanish\)](#)
 - ii. [Teen Guide \(Spanish\)](#)
 - iii. [Young Person’s Guide \(Spanish\)](#)
 - b. Free Behavioral Health Coaching Apps
 - i. [Brightlife Kids](#) (ages 0-12, available in multiple languages)
 - ii. [Soluna](#) (ages 13-25, available in multiple languages)
- 6. Provide topic-specific resources for parents to support their youth:
 - a. [Dealing with Anxiety \(Spanish\)](#)
 - b. [Managing Depression or Sadness: Tips for Families \(Spanish\)](#)
 - c. [How to Talk to Your Children About Hate Speech \(Spanish\)](#)
 - d. [Trauma \(Spanish\)](#)
 - e. [Supporting your Child’s Social-Emotional Health \(Spanish\)](#)

Policies and Procedures:

1. Review district policies and administrative regulations to ensure that they are consistent with state laws and provide clear guidance for school employees.
 - a. [AB 699](#) required all California public schools to adopt model policies outlined by the California Attorney General (AG), or equivalent, no later than July 1, 2018. The AG provided [updated guidance](#) in December 2024. Policy updates based on this guidance should be made by May 1, 2025:
 - b. Monitor SDCOE’s updates for changes to state and/or federal laws and policies that require mid-year updates to district policies and procedures.
 - c. Provide job-specific training and written aids to ensure all employees follow your district policies and procedures.
2. Evaluate enrollment procedures and forms, and make modifications to ensure all unnecessary barriers to immediate enrollment are removed.
 - a. Ensure that staff members who handle student registration understand the challenges that the children of immigrant parents may face.
 - b. Provide staff with written guides that clearly communicate state requirements and district policies related to immigration and enrollment.

- i. [Include the HETAC Tip Sheet: Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Experiencing Homelessness Without Records](#). Immigration actions may have necessitated housing changes for families or for students left with caregivers.
 - c. Ensure that all student enrollment policies, practices, and forms include and describe all legally acceptable forms of evidence, including written declarations by the parent.
3. Train school staff and produce translated materials (including web- and video-based) for parents that explain:
 - a. How the school will respond if a child is left at school and the parent cannot be reached.
 - b. The district's policy on requests for information on students and their families from immigration authorities.
 - c. The district's policy on immigration authorities seeking access to a school campus.
 - d. The circumstance that would allow a child to continue their education in California schools while living outside of California.
4. For school districts that have School Resource Officers (SRO), review MOUs with law enforcement, and school practices, to ensure that they are consistent with federal laws, state laws, and/or district policies on:
 - a. Access to student information
 - b. The immigration status of students
5. Create written procedures, forms and checklists, and provide training to guide school administrators, security personnel, and front office staff on contact with immigration officers.
 - a. These should be based on [guidance](#) from the California Attorney General.
 - b. Ensure the procedures, tools, and training address responses, documentation, timeframes, when consultation with the district's legal counsel is required, and the process for accessing this consultation.