

## **Immigration Enforcement: Potential Impacts**

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

Any combination of proposed changes to immigration enforcement are likely to create prolonged, successive, and overlapping crises for school communities. Based on previous administration policies and their impacts, with these proposed changes we can predict:

- Individual families may be impacted within days of the president taking office.
- Broader impacts are likely to be felt within most communities and schools within the first year.
- Reductions in federal funding and/or altered requirements for funding are possible within 12 – 24 months.
- Full implementation of the administration’s plans is likely to unfold over several years.
- Full implementation of these proposals has the potential to significantly reshape school district resources, structures, programs, and priorities.

### **Living in an Increasingly Hostile Environment**

1. The cumulative emotional weight of the proposed tactics is likely to create intense chronic fear and uncertainty that will undermine the fundamental well-being of many families. Media reports, social media accounts, experiences shared by friends and family members, and rumors will serve to heighten and maintain these fears. The impact to families with undocumented members will be greatest, but many immigrants who have legal status will also suffer.
2. Maintaining employment is likely to become increasingly difficult among this population, adding financial strain on families.
  - a. Poverty rates are likely to increase.
  - b. Food insecurity is likely to increase.
  - c. Homelessness is likely to increase. More families are likely to be forced to:
    - i. Share living accommodations that are not designed to house them.
    - ii. Utilize garages and storage spaces for housing.
    - iii. Live in makeshift settings like vehicles, tents, and campsites.
  - d. More children are likely to be housed with relatives or family friends.
  - e. The inability to maintain meaningful employment may cause some to turn to criminal activity.
3. Immigrant families will be more likely to avoid seeking help from entities that could be subject to immigration enforcement sweeps and are likely to become increasingly isolated from community supports.
  - a. Local Police Agencies
    - i. Fear of contact with law enforcement is likely to make immigrant families and their children more vulnerable to crime.
    - ii. Crimes targeting immigrants may increase. Many will not be reported.
  - b. Government Agencies
    - i. The number of people who do not have an identification card may increase.
    - ii. The number of people driving without a license, insurance, and/or vehicle registration may increase.
    - iii. People who are eligible for food assistance may not register for it.
    - iv. Immigrant families and children may avoid using parks, public spaces, and recreation programs.
  - c. Social Service Providers
    - i. The specter of sweeps may cause many to avoid visiting social service providers that are known to assist immigrants, especially if there may be a group of people waiting or the wait may be long.
    - ii. Many will be uncomfortable/unwilling to provide personally identifying information.
  - d. Healthcare Providers

- i. Mistrust of the healthcare and health insurance systems may reduce access to preventative care and delay medical treatment until it becomes urgent or emergent.
- e. Schools
  - i. Immigrant parents may be less likely to attend events at school (open house, parent teacher conferences, in-person registration, student activities) that could be subject to a sweep.
  - ii. Some families may choose not to enroll their children in school.
  - iii. The presence of police officers in or near school campuses may cause children and parents to be fearful.
  - iv. Fear of enforcement actions is likely to increase school absences for many children.
  - v. Immigrant parents may be less likely to fill out the LEA required housing questionnaire for fear that the information will be shared with immigration or law enforcement officials.
- f. Churches
  - i. Many immigrants are members of congregations comprised of fellow immigrants and U.S. citizens who share a common language and heritage. Many will avoid participating in church services and gatherings out of fear of sweeps.
- 4. Race-related tension, confrontations, harassment, threats and violence targeting people of color is likely to increase.
- 5. The cumulative emotional toll may overwhelm the coping skills of many people and increase rates of:
  - a. Mental illness
  - b. Substance use and addiction
  - c. Suicide attempts and completions
  - d. Domestic violence
  - e. Child abuse and neglect

### **Immigration Stops, Sweeps, Detention, and Deportation**

1. Immigration enforcement contacts and sweeps will increase dramatically.
2. Many people questioned by immigration authorities will be documented immigrants and U.S. citizens.
  - a. People of color will be disproportionately selected for immigration enforcement contacts.
  - b. Being questioned and the likelihood of repeated future contacts will be a source of trauma for many people and their families.
3. Many people questioned by immigration authorities will be released, but questioning/processing will delay people and disrupt the normal course of their lives (missed child pick-ups, being unreachable, missed appointments, late to or missed work, etc.).
4. Some people will be detained for longer periods of time before being released. The impacts for these people and their families will become significantly more severe as time passes. These could include:
  - a. Greater disruptions to family and child routines while they struggle to cover the functions that would normally have been provided by the person who is detained.
  - b. Financial impacts due to lost wages for the detained person, loved ones working for their release, increased childcare costs and legal fees.
  - c. The need for emergency childcare.
  - d. Trauma impacts for family members and children that extend beyond the detained person's return.
5. Many of the people who are detained will be deported.
6. Many children will lose daily access to one or more primary caregivers due to deportation.
  - a. Some children who are U.S. citizens will leave the U.S. to live with parents who are deported.
    - i. These children may not speak the language or be familiar with the culture and customs of their parents' country of origin.
    - ii. Adapting to the educational system in the country of origin will create significant challenges for many children.

- iii. Some parents will choose to have their children return to the U.S. if arrangements can be made for them to be cared for there.
  - b. Some children will remain in the U.S. with extended family or friends acting as caregivers. **These children may meet eligibility requirements as an unaccompanied youth under the McKinney Vento Act.**
7. Impacts for children whose primary care giver(s) will be/have been deported include:
- a. Change residence.
  - b. Change school.
  - c. Increased financial strain on the new or remaining caregiver.
    - i. Food and housing insecurity.
  - d. Living with a caregiver who does not have legal custody.
  - e. An increased likelihood of mental health issues and behavior problems.
  - f. An increased likelihood of child abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation of children.
  - g. An increased likelihood of entering the foster care system.
  - h. An increased likelihood of homelessness.
  - i. An increased likelihood of school dropout.
8. Many children who are undocumented will be detained and deported.
- a. Children may be separated from their parents while going through the deportation process.
  - b. Significant developmental and educational lapses are likely to occur as a result.

### **Division Within School Communities**

Expressions of support/opposition on immigration enforcement tactics are likely to result in increased tension and conflicts that must be managed.

1. **Students:** Students will form and express opinions that are influenced by their personal experiences, the opinions of their parents and/or friends, and the media they and their families consume.
- a. In many schools, students who are members of immigrant communities (or who are perceived to be) are likely to experience hostility and maltreatment from fellow students. This will include students who:
    - i. Are undocumented immigrants
    - ii. Are documented immigrants who have family members who are undocumented.
    - iii. Are U.S. citizens whose parents and/or family members who are undocumented.
    - iv. Have parents or family members who have been deported or are facing deportation.
    - v. Are thought to be immigrants.
  - b. These students are likely to experience ongoing trauma, making them more vulnerable to depression, anxiety, social withdrawal, and acting out.
    - i. Increased absence from school is likely.
    - ii. Increased disciplinary actions against these students are likely, including suspensions and expulsions.
  - c. Students are likely to wear apparel that expresses political affiliations associated with varying stances on immigration, or messages specific to immigration, to school and school activities. These messages have the potential to create a hostile educational environment and may lead to confrontations between students.
  - d. Students may display flags near schools, at schools, and at school events. These displays are likely to lead to increased tension and conflicts. Some will:
    - i. Display flags as a means of expressing pride in nationality, nation of origin, or family lineage.
    - ii. Display flags as an expression of solidarity with a group or ideology.
    - iii. Destroy flags to express anger or dissatisfaction.
  - e. Student demonstrations in response to immigration enforcement actions are likely to occur.
    - i. Significant local or nationally reported events could trigger demonstrations.
    - ii. Student demonstrations could include walkouts, sit-ins, and road and highway closures.

- f. Disciplinary incidents involving bullying, harassment, intimidation, threats, hate, acts of violence, and the possession and use of weapons at school are likely to see increases.
    - i. Suspension and expulsion rates are likely to increase.
    - ii. Students of color are likely to be subjected to school discipline more often, with more severe consequences than white peers who have engaged in the same behaviors.
2. **Parents:** Many parents will express their political affiliations and messages specific to immigration through their speech, apparel, the use of bumper stickers, and flags flown from vehicles. These messages will be visible to the greater school community when parents are delivering their children to school and picking them up, and during school activities. This is likely to contribute to tensions in the educational environment and may lead to confrontations (parent to parent, parent to staff, parent to student, and student to student) at school and during school activities.
  3. **Employees:** Some school employees will express their opinions on immigration through means that will be visible to the school community.
    - a. Employees will talk about their political affiliations or express opinions on immigration while at work.
      - i. This may create tension and could lead to conflict with other employees.
      - ii. Some conversations between employees will be witnessed by students.
      - iii. Some staff will express their opinions directly to students.
    - b. Employees will express opinions on immigration when they are away from work, in community settings, and on social media.
      - i. Parents and students will hear/see some of these messages.
    - c. Employees will express opinions on the district/school's directions to staff related to immigration enforcement efforts.
      - i. Some will feel the district/school has an obligation to do more to assist/resist immigration enforcement actions.
    - d. Some employees will experience traumatic impacts.
      - i. Some are immigrants or have family members or friends who are immigrants.
      - ii. Some are U.S. citizens or documented immigrants who will be questioned by immigration authorities.
      - iii. Some will encounter hostility in the community or while at work, based on the perception that they are a member of an immigrant community.
    - e. Some employees may refuse to follow district/school policies related to immigration enforcement efforts.
  4. **School Boards:** Elected school board members will represent the views of their constituents. In some cases, this will result in boards with 3/2 majorities that are split along partisan lines.
    - a. School board meetings may become more contentious as the federal government pushes for local governments to play a greater role in immigration enforcement.
      - i. Local groups on both sides of the issue may organize activities to publicize opposition.
      - ii. Activists may be drawn from outside the district to attend public meetings.
    - b. Some attendees may create disruptions that make it difficult for the board to conduct necessary business.
    - c. Debate on changes to district policies and procedures related to immigration enforcement may escalate tensions on school campuses, and increase the potential for conflicts with community members, parents, students, and employees.
    - d. Some districts may direct staff to enact policies in opposition to laws that they find controversial. In these cases, staff may be directed to assist/resist immigration enforcement actions.
      - i. This may draw attention that could escalate tensions within the community and/or in school districts within the region.
  5. **School Safety:** Growing tensions may increase the likelihood of:

- a. Threats of violence toward school board members, superintendents, principals, and school employees.
- b. Threats involving serious injuries and deaths.
  - i. Active shooter and bomb threats
    - 1. More students may be suspended and expelled for making threats involving serious injury or death.
    - 2. Many of these threats will be expressed in anger, or as jokes, and not represent an actual desire, intention, or ability to act on the threat.
  - ii. Threats made by adults
  - iii. Online threats by
    - 1. Students and former students
    - 2. State actors and terrorist groups intent creating division and unrest
- c. Demonstrations in advance of and during board meetings
- d. Demonstrations near schools
- e. The use of hate speech
- f. Vandalism and graffiti
- g. Early dismissals and temporary school closures
- h. Costs related to security concerns
  - i. Adding police and/or guards to events/meetings
  - ii. Contracts for investigation/assessment of threats
  - iii. Cleaning and repair of facilities
  - iv. Temporary school closures
  - v. Reduced student attendance resulting from fear of security concerns

### **Education**

- 1. Greater numbers of children are likely to experience:
  - a. Frequent and/or prolonged absences.
  - b. Chronic absenteeism (absent 10% or more of the school year to date).
  - c. Disruptions in school attendance/enrollment due to:
    - i. Changes in residence
    - ii. Family separations
    - iii. Deportation
- 2. School-provided meals missed due to absence will exacerbate food insecurity and contribute to the financial strain of many families.
- 3. Many students will experience significant gaps/delays in academic learning, and social and emotional development.
  - a. Students with special needs, students in primary grades, and students who are English learners will suffer lasting impacts due to these losses.
  - b. These students will also be more vulnerable to serious health and safety threats which may otherwise have been detected and countered by school staff.
- 4. The number of students living in chronically traumatizing circumstances will increase dramatically.
  - a. This will further impede their ability to think, learn, self-regulate, and grow.
  - b. More students will need mental health support and assistance from school staff specifically trained to recognize trauma impacts and respond appropriately.

### **Funding:**

- 1. Schools/districts that serve immigrant communities are likely to experience declining enrollment.

2. Student absences, rates of chronic absenteeism and school dropout are likely to increase, further decreasing funding derived from apportionment.
3. Some students whose parents are forced leave the U.S. will choose to enroll in California school districts under the provisions of [California Education Code 48204.4](#), which authorizes enrollment if “the pupil moved outside of California as a result of his or her parent or guardian departing California against his or her will... and the pupil lived in California immediately before moving outside of California.”
  - a. School districts near the U.S. border could see an increase requests for enrollment from students who reside in Mexico to access in-person instruction, however the crossing the border daily will be difficult, making it likely that these students will frequently be late or absent.
  - b. School districts and charter schools across the state could also enroll students who were former California residents in distance learning/independent study programs, although ensuring that these students have access to the resources and support needed for success will be difficult and expensive.
4. Income derived from the Local Control Funding Formula that is based on the percentage of high-need students in the district will decline over time as the number of students who are English learners and students identified as low-income is reduced.
5. Federal funding intended to support students who are low-income, English learners, and migrant is also likely to be reduced due to enrollment loss. These funds could also be reduced or eliminated by the new administration.
6. Decreased funding will make spending cuts more likely, complicating relationships with employee unions and parent groups.