



Immigration enforcement in California: Impact on Schools

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What motivated the study?

- A lot of attention of immigrant enforcement's impact on families and kids but lack of attention to the impact on schools
- Immigrant students most likely to be in Title I schools
- Title I schools are the most stressed schools
- Desire to understand if/ how these policies affect ALL kids in the school: **Not just immigrant kids/ families are affected**

“Immigrant students”

- The study is about the effects on schools with US citizen students AKA “immigrant students”; likely less than 10% are unauthorized (1st & 2nd generation are often grouped together)
- 750,000 “immigrant students” have at least one undocumented family member; 1 in 8 California students
- Plyler v Doe, 1982: All children under age 18 are guaranteed the right to a free education regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents
- Additionally about 20% of DACA recipients are in high school and have a right to education and a right to not be discriminated against

The Study

- Conducted between October 2017 and January 2018
- Online, anonymous
- Approx 3500 respondents (teachers, counselors, principals, other); 750 schools
- National in scope (W, Midwest, South, NE)
- 14 questions, including one open-ended

California Sample

- All sectors of US were sampled, California provided the greatest number of respondents: almost 1500
- Approx 1/3 of all survey respondents
- 7 Districts participated – very large to small (promised anonymity)
- 92% of respondents were in Title I schools (vs 82% in the nation)

Respondents' role in the School

○ Teachers	1,063	76%
○ Principals	105	7.6%
○ Other cert	73	5.3%
○ Other	157	11%

○ Principals tended to see more issues than other categories of individuals

Percent of students with behavioral issues

- 79% of all respondents noted behavioral or emotional problems with their students related to immigration enforcement
- Almost 1/4 (23%) said these were “extensive”
- Includes crying in school, acting out, putting head on desk, tuning out

After a raid, a teacher:

- “I noticed those students behaving so differently. They do not sit or stand tall. They do not want to participate in presentations. They do not want to be called. They seem disconnected or uninterested now. . . . It has been almost too sad to describe the change in countenance of these students. I serve in an academically advanced setting where students are selected and good performers.”

Increased absenteeism

- About 54% say absenteeism has increased due to immigration enforcement
- About 10% say it's extensive
- For some students this means missing the only meals they may get that day.
- Absenteeism was higher in other parts of the country
- Absenteeism hurts everyone and reduces funding for schools

An administrator:

- “The kids are scared and sometimes they hide for days when there are immigration raids in the area. Some of the kids have no food or place to live because the parents do not have a job and they go day by day”
- A teacher: “. . . There have been several students having to get jobs or stay at home and take care of younger siblings.”

Students **expressing** fears about immigration enforcement

- 85% of respondents reported students expressing fear of ICE and things that could happen to them.
- 1/3 (33%) of respondents said this was extensive
- MANY high school teachers reported their “best” students giving up on school because the future was so uncertain.

A high school teacher:

- “ I have students who were college-bound now questioning if it’s worth it because they don’t believe that they could get a job in their field after graduating. They are worried about financial aid. This is most heartbreaking for students who want to go into public service, and now are just thinking about working to protect their families.”

Declining academic performance

- More than half (59%) of respondents reported a decline in academic performance as a result of immigration enforcement; but administrators were much more likely to report this.
- A little more than 1 in 10 respondents reported that this was extensive.

A counselor:

- “I have been meeting with various students who feel there is no hope for them and letting their grades slip because they are under so much stress and unsure about the future. I struggle with encouraging them to have faith when I am unsure myself. . . . They are unsure if government will assist them and feel like they are second class citizens. It just breaks my heart!”

Indirect Impact

- This issue is critically important- is the enforcement affecting students whose families are not targets?
- 2/3 (67%) of respondents reported that they have seen the impact on other students
- More than one in ten said this was significant

Teachers:

- “Students are very concerned with their classmates’ future circumstances. What’s going to happen to so-and-so?”
- “One of my students . . . was picked up . . . This understandably had an immense impact on the rest of my students, as well as his empty seat in the classroom confirmed the reality of their fears every day.”

Decline in Parent Involvement

- Only about 41% of respondents noted a decline in parent involvement, a little less than in other regions.
- This may be because these parents are not normally able to be very involved
- It may also be because parents are more trusting in California because of the resistance stance here; if so, this would be important to know

Parents expressing concerns

- Half (51%) of educators reported parents coming to them with concerns, including one teacher who reported that a parents asked her to take her children.
- 14% of respondents said parent concerns were “extensive”
- Respondents overall did not say much about parents; their focus was really on the kids

How is this affecting teachers?

- Teachers are overworked, stressed, and don't know whom to trust.
 - **Spending more time** dealing with socio-emotional issues in the classroom and researching information about immigration
 - Teachers care about their students and some report **depression, feeling helpless**, they don't know what to do.
 - Community is breaking down in these schools as teachers **don't know whom to trust** with information about immigrant students; teachers also report getting negative calls from parents who don't want the issue discussed at school.

What do educators think should be done?

- 87% of educators think that there need to be school-community forums to discuss the immigration situation
- But 58% say their schools have not done this
- Though 40% say they have personally had these discussions with students and/or parents
- Most educators are unsure of what to do!

Take Aways

- We need to think of our ELs as immigrant students—immigration policy is a bigger problem than language
- This is happening to OUR citizen kids
- Food insecurity, homelessness and deprivation are increasing; 1st grader asking, “How will we eat?”
- Putting enormous stress on Title I schools & educators
- The education community needs to have a response to this because it’s affecting all the kids and the educators

Resources

- Californians Together Support for Immigrant and Refugee Students:
<https://www.californianstogether.org/support-immigrant-refugee-students/>
- Civil Rights Project: Working paper on the Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Nation's Schools,
<https://tinyurl/ybolj4q2>
- Promoting a Safe and Secure Learning Environment for All: Office of CA Attorney General:
<https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/bcj/school-guidance-model-k12.pdf>

What do YOU think needs to be done?

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