# Impact of immigration policy on schools and families in the US



In the United States, the ongoing shifts in immigration policy under the Trump administration are exerting significant stress on schools and their communities, particularly affecting immigrant families. This situation is compounded by rising concerns and misinformation about immigration enforcement activity in educational institutions.

In Fresno, California, unfounded social media rumours of impending immigration raids at schools contributed to widespread anxiety among parents, leading to a wave of panic, although these reports were later confirmed as hoaxes. Meanwhile, in Denver, Colorado, an actual immigration raid at an apartment complex resulted in a marked decline in school attendance, with many students choosing to stay home out of fear. Legal actions have been initiated against the federal government, as Denver Public Schools filed a lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security, claiming that federal immigration enforcement impacts the educational experience of students, particularly those who are migrants.

The lawsuit highlighted that over 43,000 migrants were accepted into Denver city schools the previous year. Since the raid, attendance levels at schools with a concentration of migrant students have decreased, indicating a tangible effect of immigration enforcement on education. The Denver Public Schools' legal team noted that such enforcement actions divert resources and efforts away from the district's core educational mission.

Amid fears regarding immigration checks, the Alice Independent School District in Texas mistakenly informed parents that Border Patrol agents could stop students on school buses to investigate their citizenship status—information that turned out to be incorrect. The misinformation has led families such as Angelib Hernandez's, who has asylum pending, to refrain from sending their children to school altogether, as they fear potential detention or separation if agents were to appear.

Nationwide, families increasingly face challenges in distinguishing between facts and the pervasive rumours circulating about immigration enforcement. There have been notable policy proposals from Republican lawmakers in states like Oklahoma and Tennessee aimed at restricting the rights of undocumented children to access public education. Oklahoma’s Republican State Superintendent, Ryan Walters, proposed a rule that would have required parents to present proof of citizenship for school enrolment, though this measure was vetoed by the state's Republican Governor, Kevin Stitt. On the other hand, a bill in Tennessee aimed at allowing school districts to decide whether to admit students without papers could invite legal challenges that may reshape long-standing educational rights.

Research indicates that immigration raids can negatively impact academic performance, even among non-immigrant students. Studies conducted in North Carolina and California have observed declines in attendance and enrolment among Hispanic students when local police collaborated with immigration enforcement. In Fresno, attendance plummeted by 700 to 1,000 students daily following the inauguration of President Trump, highlighting the intense effects of immigration-related fears on school populations.

Carlos Castillo, the Chief of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the Fresno Unified School District, addressed the broader implications of these fears, saying, "It goes beyond just the students who... have citizenship status or legal status." He reported instances where entire families refrained from activities like grocery shopping due to concern over potential immigration enforcement. Efforts are underway within the district to inform families about their rights and how to prepare for possible immigration issues, enlightening them about legal resources and providing emotional support.

The current state of anxiety surrounding schools and the evolving landscape of immigration policy underscores a complex relationship between educational institutions and the wider socio-political climate, raising questions regarding the impact on future generations and the educational system as a whole.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2025/01/21/trump-policy-clears-way-for-immigration-arrests-at-schools/> - This article supports the claim that the Trump administration has ended a decades-old policy treating schools as 'sensitive locations' for immigration enforcement, allowing for potential arrests at or near schools.
* <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/trump-admin-lifts-ban-on-immigration-arrests-at-schools/2025/01> - This article corroborates the information about the Trump administration lifting the ban on immigration arrests at schools, which previously were considered 'sensitive locations'.
* <https://www.fisherphillips.com/en/news-insights/immigration-enforcement-faqs-for-k-12-schools-in-new-trump-era.html> - This resource provides insights into how the new Trump administration's immigration policies could impact K-12 schools, including the revocation of sensitive location protections.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides background information on the ongoing shifts in immigration policy and their impact on schools and communities, although it does not specifically address the policy changes.
* <https://www.acf.gov/orr/policy-guidance/unaccompanied-children-program-policy-guide-section-2> - While not directly addressing the current policy changes, this guide provides context on the broader immigration policies affecting children and families, including those related to unaccompanied minors.