Supporting Immigrant Families Today: What Can Schools Do?

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Far-reaching Impact

- Students
- Parent(s)
- Extended family
- Friends
- Teachers
- Entire school community
What impact on students and families do you see in your school or district?
Federal Laws and Policies

- Under federal law, all children, regardless of citizenship or residency status, entitled to K-12 education
- ICE agents cannot take enforcement action on school grounds, including adult ed sites
- Schools cannot release personal info about a student without consent of parent or self (over 18)
State and District Policies

• Support for families is *not political*
  – Relates to engagement and well-being of student
  – Engagement of families critical to ed success

• Official positions on support vary
  – “Safe haven” schools
  – Welcoming policies
  – No official policy
Support Families in Crisis

- Draw on your knowledge of supporting families dealing with trauma
  - Source of stability
  - Consistent routines
  - Listening ear
Build Relationships

- Remind families school is safe place
- Visit families at home – not just for problems
- Provide opportunities for honest discussions
- Be a supportive listener – Do not offer legal advice
Help Prepare for *What If?*

- Parents must gather legal documents
  - Birth certificates
  - Health records
- Make Family Plan
  - Plans for child
  - Guardian
- Teachers can provide emotional support
Organize School Support

- ID staff as key point of contact on immigration
- ID bilingual parent who can provide support
- Create Immigrant student support team
  - ELL teacher
  - Counselor
  - Administrator
Join Community-wide Coalition

- Collaborate with organizations focused on
  - Cultural or religious communities
  - Immigrant advocacy
  - legal services
- Be part of "Rapid Response Team"
Continue with Efforts to Engage Families in Education

- Value parents as first teachers
- Communicate with notes, texts, phone calls
- Listen to family’s insights
- Class and school-wide social events
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September issue of Educational Leadership,
Supporting Families in a Time of Fear