

Leading Through the Blitz

School-Level Immigration Crisis Management in Chicago

Year in Review Presentation



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The Legal Shield & Policies

Review of the legal guidelines and protective frameworks empowering school leaders



Timeline of Policy & Legal Shifts

August 2025

Illinois "Safe Schools for All" Law (HB 3247) codified state-level protections for public education campuses.

November 2025

Operation Midway Blitz calms down, and tactics shift to more covert (but still present), trauma lingers

January 2025

Rescission of traditional federal ICE "Sensitive Locations" policy, triggering a local enforcement crisis.

September 2025

Official CPS SY26 Immigration Guidance issued to all school leaders with strict operational legal limits.

Shenanigans throughout!!

Core Legal Safeguards of Public Schools



Constitutional Shield

Plyler v. Doe (1982)

remains the ultimate baseline, legally guaranteeing public school access and enrollment rights for all K-12 students, regardless of immigration status.



Privacy Protections

Strict adherence to **FERPA** standards prevents the release of student files, addresses, or personally identifiable database information without a judicial warrant.



Warrant Verification

School leaders must legally distinguish between federal **administrative warrants** (ICE Forms I-200/I-205) and true, judge-signed **judicial warrants**.

Frontline Reflections of the Blitz

Three Chicago principals, three distinct neighborhood dynamics. The raw realities of implementing policy and exercising authority in the face of federal enforcement.




| Due Process Takes Time

How we operationalized bureaucracy as a protective shield:

- ▶ **Invoking Legal Counsel:** "I need to consult with school board legal counsel" protocol when federal agents request entrance or student information.

- ▶ **Buying Critical Time:** Restricting immediate physical entry to vestibules while verifying warrant authority, effectively halting overreach in real-time.

- ▶ **Sovereignty of Local Policy:** Actively leveraging

- ▶  District General Counsel guidelines to override the pressure of administrative ICE demands.



Operations & Community Sanctuary Example Actions

Internal School Safety

Technical: Mobilizing *Whole School Safety Committee* and Professional Personnel Committees (PPC) to train staff on strict protocols (ex. front-door warrant verification).

Reality: Utilizing standardized *Federal Agency Encounter Worksheets* and deploying internal clinical staff to address widespread student trauma.

Ground-Level Defense

Neighborhood Boundaries: Dealing with federal immigration sweeps occurring just outside school walls. Coordinating parent defense networks and physical safe routes to school.

Resource Networks: Operating localized "Walking School Buses" and routing families immediately to the safety coordinates of the ICIRR Family Support Hotline.

Phase 3: Key Takeaways & Moving Forward

Staff Preparedness is Everything:

Policy is only as strong as our security protocols. Ongoing, practical staff drills on warrant verification are essential.

From Reactive to Proactive: Absorb our immigration enforcement response into year-round safety protocols, rather than waiting for enforcement spikes or thinking of this as an isolated concern..

What Leaders Need From Lawyers:

Explicit backing from district general counsel, clear operational checklists, and rapid-response emergency legal support hotlines.

We exist at the crossroads of policy and implementation, as school leaders charged with managing our individual communities