

Immigration Policies and their effect in the classroom

Authors: Valerie Estrella, Kelsey Morales, Gretchen Mcallister, Kyra Bennett

Problem Context and Problem

Context

Mauricio Flores is a senior at Chaparral High School in Yuma, Arizona. His family immigrated from El Salvador when he was five years old to escape the gang violence prevalent within the country. Mauricio maintains a 3.6 GPA and is an active member of his school's cross-country team. He also co-chairs the school's newly established social justice club. Mauricio regularly volunteers at a local men's shelter; helping to prepare meals; arrange sleeping accommodations; and even teaches some of the men how to read. It is the spring semester of Mauricio's senior year and he has been offered full ride scholarships to attend two out of state universities, where he anticipates joining their cross-country and track teams.

Mauricio is rather quiet and keeps to himself most of the time. He is currently taking an AP Literature class, which he is fascinated by, but has been consistently bullied in throughout the course of the year by two of his female peers. These girls regularly call him derogatory slurs whenever the teacher turns his attention elsewhere. One day, after recent news was released about tear gassing asylum seekers at the U.S./Mexico border, the two girls paced behind Mauricio after class, stepping on the back of his shoes so that his feet kept coming out of his shoes. Behind him he could hear the girls taunting him with questions like, "was that your cousin I saw crying and running away from border patrol?," "I hope they don't let any more of you filthy beaners into the country," "You would have been better off dead than coming here." The comments went on and on until finally one of the girls tripped Mauricio from behind sending him flying across the linoleum floor. Mauricio gathered his belongings and rose to his feet. With tears in his eyes he pushed one of the girls to the floor and said, "you have no idea what I've gone through to get to this point in my life," and swiftly walked past her down the hall.

A crowd of people gathered around the girl who remained on the floor in sheer astonishment. Before Mauricio knew it, the school resource officers (SRO) had him pinned face down on the ground, placing handcuffs around his wrists. Within moments Mauricio went from a high achieving student, with a bright future, to a criminal of the U.S. Justice Department. By the end of that day, Mauricio was transferred from the school's resource office and detained in a juvenile detention center.

Problem

Mauricio's entire family immigrated together from El Salvador, meaning his whole family is living in Arizona undocumented. This includes a sister, mother and father. His sister is a fifth

grade student. As undocumented immigrants, Mauricio's parents are unable to bail him out of the detention center, in fear of having to present their identification, which would unveil their undocumented status. Therefore, Mauricio will remain detained in the juvenile center since he has no one to bail him out or even speak on his behalf. Being detained in the juvenile detention center jeopardizes Mauricio's scholarship opportunity and his chance to go to college.

Since the SRO released Mauricio to the detention center, the detention officers have contacted Chaparral High School administration for more information about Mauricio and his family. The school has been proactive in supporting the rights of undocumented families, and is hesitant to release any information about Mauricio to the detention center. Legally the school cannot and should not release any information about Mauricio. Given the situation and dynamics of the context in the city, there is fear of repercussions for other family members.

Solution Parameters

You are a team of educators and community workers advocating for the rights of undocumented immigrants. You are to decide on the best ways to support the family which includes the sister's situation in the elementary school, and the parents. Below are the roles.

- Administrator at the high school
- Sister's Teacher in the elementary school
- 2 members of the volunteer advocacy group called Repeal Coalition, who provide support for immigration families.

As a team of advocates, you are to:

1. Identify possible issues and concerns for the family members.
2. Identify their rights by law.
3. Come up with a list of suggestions for Mauricio's family to avoid this school to deportation pipeline scenario?

Resources:

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/toolkit-for-this-is-not-a-drill>

Resources on Teaching Tolerance. This includes many resources for teachers and families on supporting both DACA and Immigrant families.

Informed immigrant resources <https://www.informedimmigrant.com/service-provider-guides-home/>

<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/supporting-undocumented-students/>

ACLU Minnesota <https://www.aclu-mn.org/en/support-daca-students-k-12-and-higher-education>

<https://www.ilrc.org> Immigration Legal Resource Center provides legal support to immigrants.