



Federal judge to hear arguments over whether to block immigration arrests in US schools

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DENVER (AP) — A federal judge is set to hear arguments Friday over whether he should block immigration agents from conducting arrests at schools under a Trump administration policy that has yet to be acted upon.

Denver Public Schools is asking U.S. District Judge Daniel Domenico to block immigration enforcement in schools across the country while [its lawsuit challenging the new policy](#) plays out in court.

The suit says the possibility of routine immigration arrests in its schools has led to a drop in attendance. It also says the district has had to divert resources to respond to fear among students and families over the lifting of longtime rules restricting immigration enforcement [near schools, churches and other sensitive locations](#).

“This includes providing mental health support to students, diverting administrator attention from academics to immigration issues, and assisting students who miss school to catch up,” lawyers for the school district said in their request to block the new policy.

Under the previous “sensitive locations” guidance, officers were generally required to get approval for any enforcement operations at those locations, although exceptions were allowed for matters like national security. The policy change announced in January by the acting leader of the Department of Homeland Security, which includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement, emphasized that field agents should use “common sense” and “discretion” to conduct immigration enforcement operations without a supervisor’s approval.

The head of ICE later issued a directive that immigration arrests at sensitive places like schools had to be approved by supervisors, lawyers for Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in a court filing.

Such arrests have been rare. According to data from ICE cited by lawyers for Denver schools, there were only two immigration arrests made in schools between 2018 and 2020 along with 18 arrests near schools.

There have not been any arrests at schools under the new policy as of last week, according to a filing submitted **by the Council of the Great City Schools** in support of Denver's lawsuit last week.

The federal government says Denver schools haven't proved they've been directly harmed by the policy change and do not have legal standing to pursue a lawsuit.

Last month, a federal judge in Maryland [blocked immigration agents](#) from conducting enforcement operations in houses of worship for [Quakers](#) and a handful of other religious groups after they filed a lawsuit challenging the directive. The order does not apply to any religious groups beyond the ones who brought the lawsuit.

It's not known how soon Domenico, a Trump appointee and Colorado's former solicitor general, could rule.