

What you need to know:

The Border Crisis in K-12 Education

How does the border crisis affect our schools?

U.S. Customs and Border Control documented more than [2.4 million encounters](#) with migrants crossing the border in 2023. Federal law requires school districts to provide education for migrant students, create English learning programs, and track students' English progress. Schools are strained as a result. As of January 2024, Denver Public Schools accommodated 1,600 additional migrant students after the October deadline to submit student enrollment numbers to the state for funding—leaving the district with a \$17.5 million budget shortfall.

What's the issue?

Federal pandemic relief dollars for schools run dry at the end of 2024. These federal dollars, intended in part to boost student performance as schools shut their doors for months on end, inflated schools' bottom lines. Georgetown University researcher Marguerite Roza says schools will face a [funding cliff](#) "unlike any we've seen before." This could cause schools to cut staff and services—just as districts are welcoming hundreds of migrant students and attempt to provide resources for them and their families.

Questions...	...and answers
How does the influx of migrant students strain schools?	<p>Financially: Schools must report the number of students they teach every year for state funding. Drastic increases to the number of students entering school during the middle of the year means fewer dollars for more students.</p> <p>Personnel: The migrant crisis overwhelms teachers and staff, as classrooms in some districts are overflowing. Schools also need additional English as a Second Language teachers.</p> <p>Space: Schools are being used to house migrant students and their families.</p>
What federal laws require public school districts to provide education for migrant students?	Title I, Part C of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) establishes and funds the Migrant Education Program. Title III of ESSA requires schools to establish a program for English language learners and track their progress. Passed in 2015, ESSA amended the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. These federal programs are funded with federal dollars. States may have additional requirements for teaching migrant children.
Shouldn't we welcome these students with compassion? They deserve an education so they, too, can thrive.	These children did not make the choice to cross the border and they do deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, and compassion. The federal government's failure to address the migrant crisis, however, adds a massive strain to our school system and puts the lives of migrant children at risk. Parents Defending Education uncovered emails from a teacher in Denver Public Schools who was looking for housing for some of her students and their families, as she feared that they were sleeping on the streets at night over the winter. The Biden Administration's failure to address the crisis at the border only incentives and creates these inhumane conditions.

Examples:

- **Migrants housed in New York high school gym, forcing students to learn remotely.**
- **Denver Public Schools employees lack resources, direction to accommodate migrant students**
- **Rhode Island assistant principal solicits donations to pay coyote who brought student over the boarder, claims coyotes "help people."**