

# **Fostering Safety and Belonging for Immigrant-Origin Youth: Domains of Educator Practice**

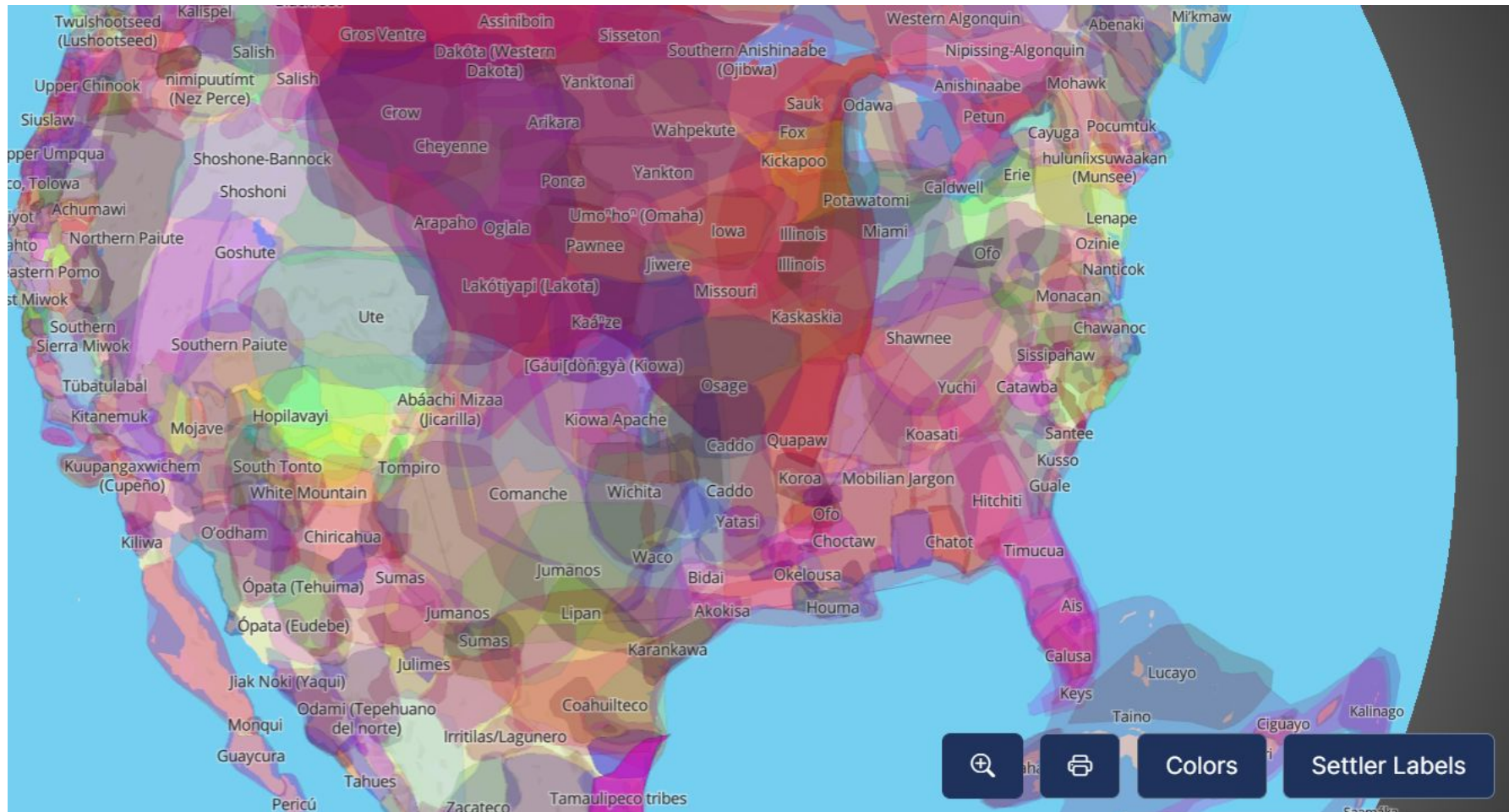
Dr. Dafney Blanca Dabach, University of Washington

Dr. Rebecca Lowenhaupt, Boston College

Paulette Andrade Gonzalez, Boston College

Jennifer Queenan, CUNY Graduate Center

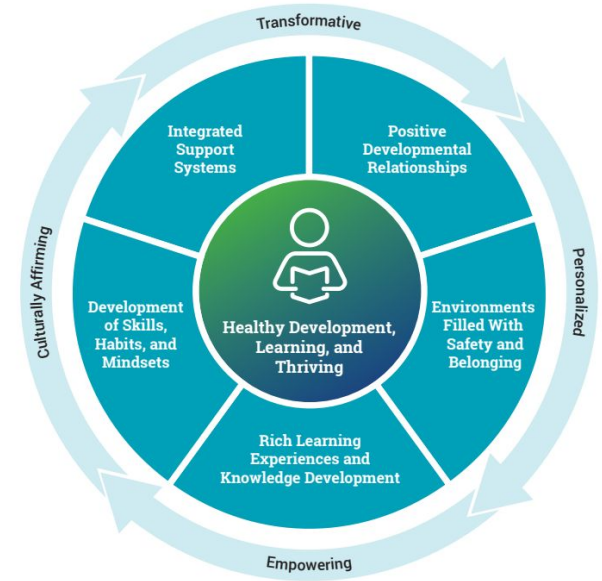
Edom Tesfa, Harvard University





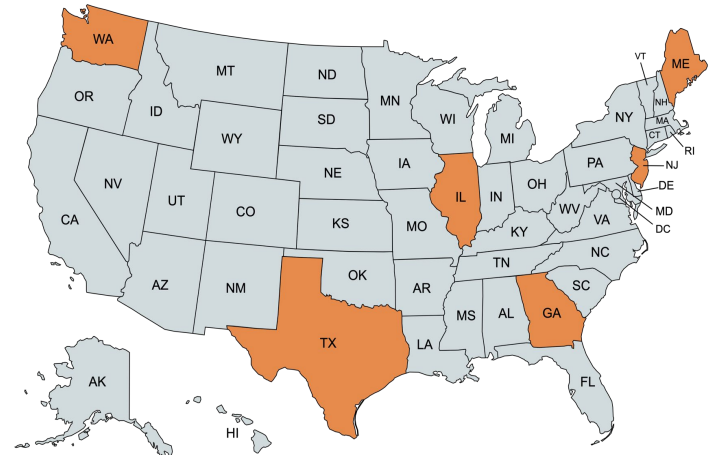
# Agenda

1. Introduction to the PIECE Project
2. Safety & Belonging
3. Domains of Educator Practice
4. Small Group Discussion
5. Final Reflections



# PIECE: Putting Immigration & Education in Conversation Everyday

- Research Collaborative
- Partnership with 6 districts in the US
- Mixed-methods, longitudinal study
- Spring 2018-Spring 2023



With co-PIs Ariana Mangual Figueroa, CUNY and Roberto Gonzales, University of Pennsylvania  
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# PIECE Aims

1

To better understand & describe the broader national-, state-, and district-level **contexts** shaping immigrant-origin youth's education.

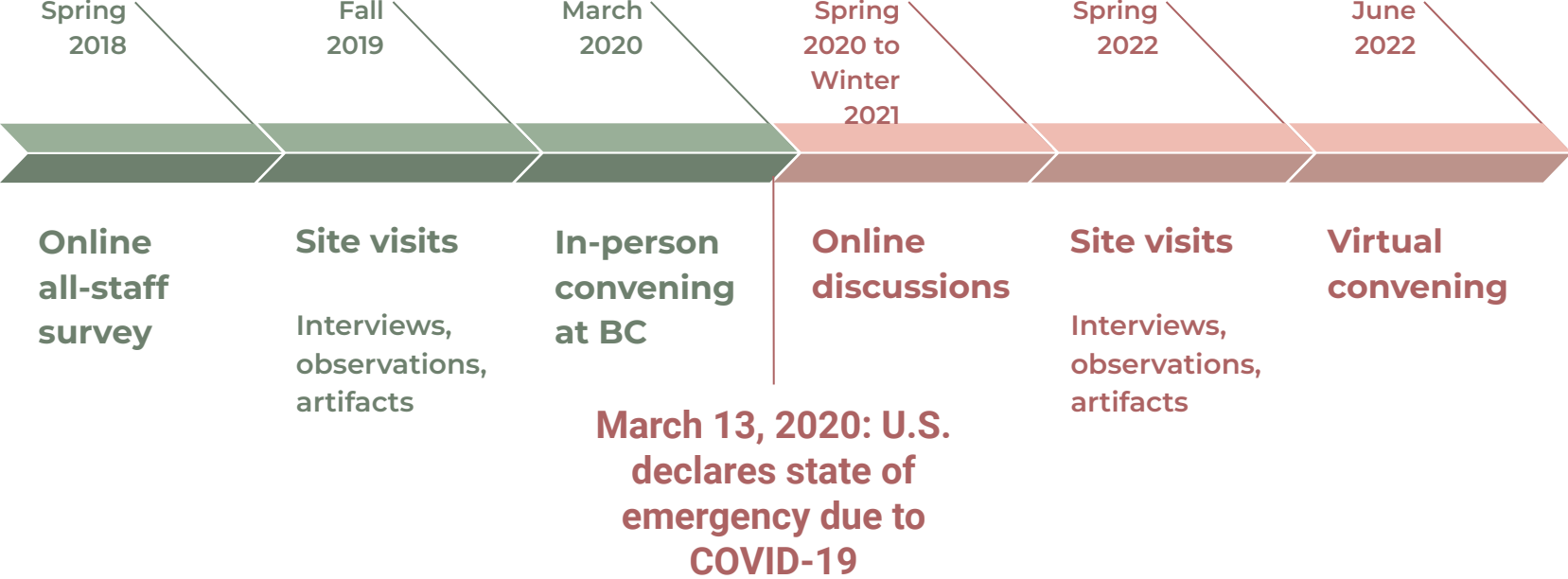
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To document the **practices** educators use to interpret and respond to policies regarding immigrant-origin students in their particular contexts.

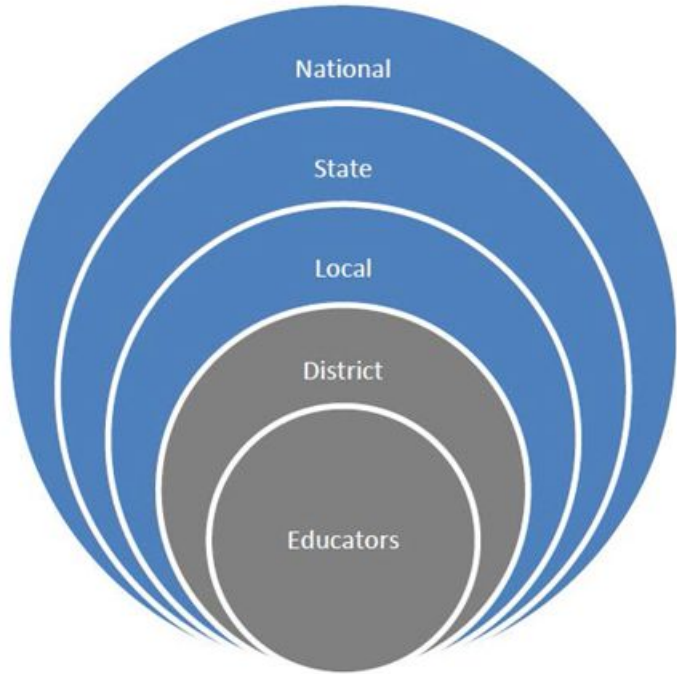
3

To create a **network** of six school districts nationwide that will share promising practices and adapt them for implementation across districts

# Project Timeline



# Motivating Our Work



Adapted from Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018

“Some children have expressed fear and concern about their or their parents’ immigration status, and worry about whether their parents will be there when they get home.”

– *Educator, IL*

“The current climate keeps me awake at night. We work so hard to keep our students safe and immigration looms with uncertainty.”

– *Elementary Principal, IL*



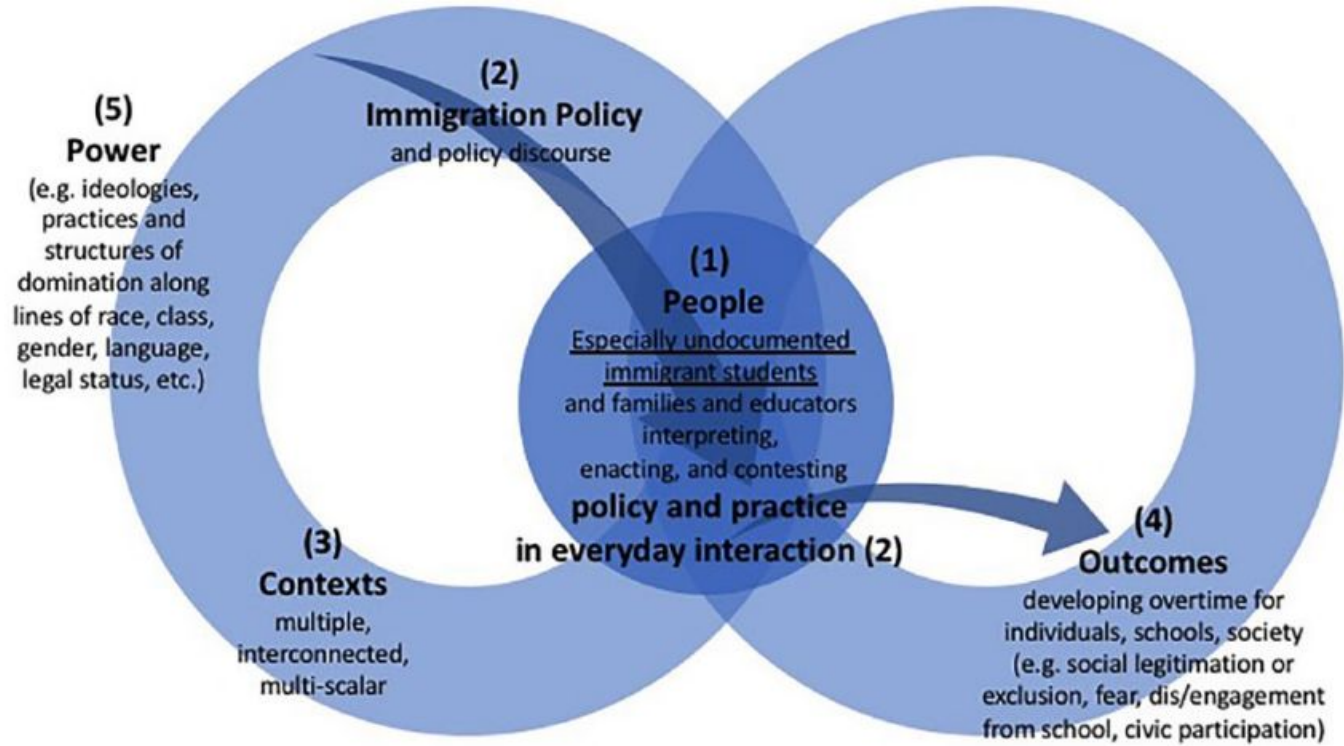


FIGURE 1. *The immigration policy and education in lived reality framework.*

Turner, E. O., & Mangual Figueroa, A. (2019). Immigration policy and education in lived reality: A framework for researchers and educators. *Educational Researcher*, 48(8), 549-557.

# **Safety & Belonging**

*Sense of safety (and actual safety)* of immigrant-origin youth can be threatened by external immigration policies and anti-immigrant discourses.

*Sense of belonging*, defined as the emotions of comfort and welcome, has been identified as a key factor in immigrant-origin youth educational trajectories

# **Safety & Belonging**

What does it feel like?

What could it look like?

How can it be individually and collectively cultivated in practice?

# Domains of Educator Practice

## Signalling Affirmation



## Building Shared Knowledge and Capacity



## Finding and Mobilizing Resources



## Creating Space for Conversation



# Development Process

1

Intensive Case Study Fieldwork (Dabach et al., 2018)  
→ Generating propositions about safety & immigrant youth grounded in teachers' practice

2

PIECE Cross-District Staff Survey,  $n=2,661$  (2018)

3

Testing framework onto larger sample of open-ended survey responses; dialogue with partner districts

# Signaling Affirmation



- Can be conveyed visually, in speech (formal/informal communication), in public, semi-public or private settings
- Public displays are most easily visible, but are not always feasible across contexts



# Building Shared Knowledge and Capacity

“When the end of TPS [Temporary Protected Status] for Salvadorans was announced, the district held a workshop for parents. **“Immigration Policies for Educators”** was a **workshop offered for staff.**” - Educator in Maine

“We held a series of **professional development sessions** so school **staff could learn** about where our students and families are coming from. As a result, **families learned of their rights...students felt empowered to speak out** and the **community felt supported**”  
-Educator in Maine

# Finding and Mobilizing Resources

- Navigational resources & support: Legal Aid (connections to pro bono lawyers, community-based organizations)
  - especially important during sudden policy shifts
- Material resources: Food, housing assistance, household essentials
- Social-emotional supports (agencies, education initiatives, & direct supports)

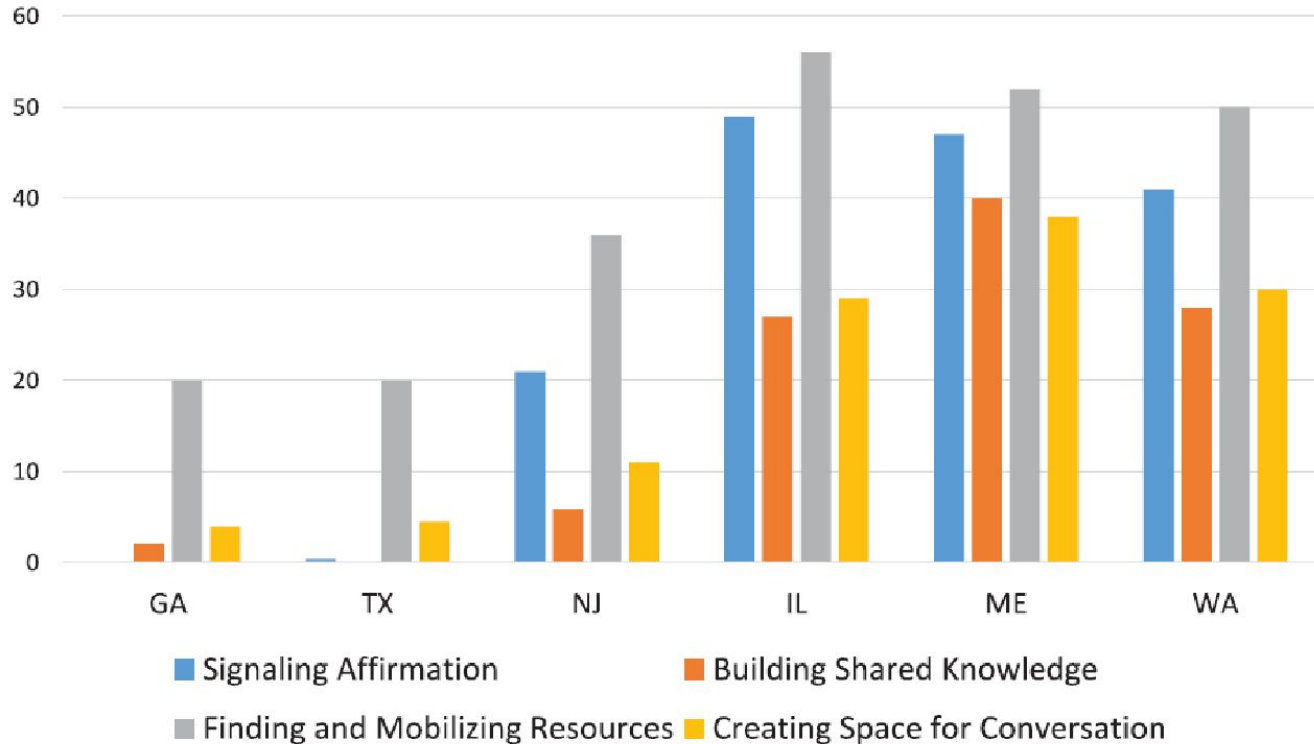


# Creating Space for Conversation

“Students worked with staff members to create a club called the ‘Student Union’ where students have a weekly opportunity to **meet and talk about issues of concern** for students related to both school and the world outside of school. Many of these conversations recently have focused on **school safety and race.**” – Educator in ME

“In my classes and with colleagues, **I openly support** the rights of immigrants to come to the US, and support undocumented immigrants' rights to stay and find a path to citizenship. I think my students feel safe in my classroom to speak up and to participate. Over the years, a number of **my students have shared stories** of their crossings, a parent's arrest & deportation.” – Educator in WA

# Domains by Context



# Reflection on Your own Experiences

- In your setting, which domain do you think is most common?
- In your setting, which domain would benefit the most from support?

**SHARE YOUR RESPONSES:**  
**Mentimeter**

# **Break-out Group Discussion**

- 1) How are these practices showing up in the contexts you work in?
- 2) What are common dilemmas/barriers in implementing these practices effectively?
- 3) How do/should teacher prep programs support novice teachers in developing these practices?

# Final Reflections

Share-out from small groups:

- 1) How are these practices showing up in the contexts you work in?
- 2) What are common dilemmas/barriers in implementing these practices effectively?
- 3) How do/should teacher prep programs support novice teachers in developing these practices?

[Jamboard](#)

**Thank you! ¡Gracias! Obrigado!**  
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**Waad mahadsantahay!**  
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Special thanks to co-PIs Dr. Ariana Mangual Figueroa (CUNY Graduate Center) and Dr. Roberto Gonzales (University of Pennsylvania), as well as research assistants Dr. Julie Kim Yammine, Brian Tauzel, and Kelly Nguyen and our district partners!



# Selected References

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# **Appendix & Additional Materials**

# 4 Domains of Educator Practice

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Code	Definition
Signaling affirmation	Practices to demonstrate support for immigrant-origin students and communities explicitly. They communicate that students know they are welcome and safe in schools. Sometimes the format is visual, as public displays of affirmation—signage or posters, sometimes it is in written form, such as emails of support from administration, and it is also spoken by educators in classrooms directly to students as verbal affirmation.
Building shared knowledge and capacity	Practices to exchange information within and between schools to increase staff knowledge and capacity to serve immigrant-origin students and families. This can include professional development, explicit sharing of resources gathered by one educator and shared with other staff in the district.
Finding and mobilizing resources	Practices to identify and leverage resources to address students’ needs holistically both inside and outside of the district. This happens in three ways: (1) within the school or district, identifying staff; (2) reaching out to external resource providers, such as counseling support, legal services, or community organizations; and (3) self-educating via curricular resources, news, and other media.
Creating space for conversation	Practices that establish space for connection about issues of immigration. These practices aim to personalize or humanize the issue of immigration by fostering openness, conversation, and connection around immigration experiences. This can occur as educators (1) share their own culture, language, and memories; (2) provide purposeful opportunities for students to talk about immigration-related issues; and (3) create ways for families to discuss issues related to immigration and share their concerns.

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# Global Flow of People



[http://download.gsb.bund.de/  
BIB/global\\_flow/](http://download.gsb.bund.de/BIB/global_flow/)  
by [Nikola Sander](#), [Guy J. Abel](#) & [Ramon Bauer](#)