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Dropouts concern Marshalltown school officials

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Marshalltown School district leaders are trying to track down potential school drop outs after 90 alleged illegal immigrants were arrested at a meat packing plant Tuesday.

Marshalltown Associate Superintendent Patrick Kremer said school staff have been trying to find out the status of students who haven't showed up to school after the arrests. He said he is concerned some students will drop out after what happened.

"There's a lot of concerns about this," Kremer said. "We know there is a possibility some students who left yesterday who may never be back. We're invested in these children."

High school students interviewed this morning said they knew of many Hispanic students who were leaving with their families to go back to Mexico.

The district has relied on Hispanic students as the base for their increases in enrollment. Hispanic students have increased by 100 to 150 a year, while Caucasian students have seen similar declines. The district has a total of about 5,000 students.

By the end of the day Tuesday, signs began to show of a dwindling student population. By the end of the day, 25 percent of the 1572 students who attend the high school were reported absent, district officials said.

"It's quite possible this action could have a long-term effect on enrollment," Kremer said. "Our Hispanic population is important not only to the life of the schools, but the life of the community."