

Published December 13, 2006

## **Raid was 9/11 moment, say Marshalltown's Mexican teens**

LISA ROSSI  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Marshalltown, Ia. --- The mood was somber and agitated among Mexican students who streamed into Marshalltown High School this morning.

They remembered Tuesday as clusters of students cried in the halls and in class, hearing that family and friends had been arrested.

They more acutely noticed police cars roaming school grounds today. And some wondered aloud if authorities could show up and arrest them.

Watching busloads of family and friends being arrested will be a watershed moment in their lives.

"When 9/11 came along, everyone remembered it," said Isis Diaz, 14, and a freshman. "I think everyone will remember this."

School started at 8:30 a.m. for most Marshalltown High School students, many who made it to school shortly before that time, lugging backpacks, talking quietly with friends, and some simply keeping their hands stuffed in pockets and heads down.

Diaz said many students left school early yesterday to gather documentation for parents who were detained.

Diaz said many people she knows have already left the state, on their way back to Mexico.

"A whole bunch of kids didn't come to school today," she said.

Aaron Murillo, 15, said he knows more than 20 people affected by the arrests Tuesday. His uncle was hiding from federal authorities at Swift yesterday, and wasn't caught, he said.

Rafael Ramirez, 17, said he was most worried about young children, with both parents arrested.

He said he hoped they could stay in the United States, where the quality of education was better, and going to school is required.

"I don't know what they are going to do in Mexico," he said. "They don't have the same chances."

Paranoia swept through families as well, Diaz said.

"My mom wouldn't let us go outside, because she thinks something is going to happen to us," she said, shortly before leaving the school parking lot and walking into the school.