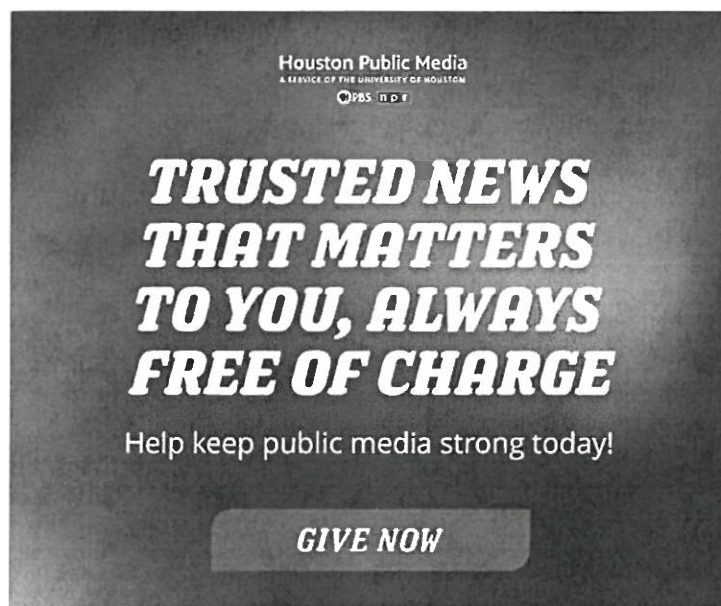




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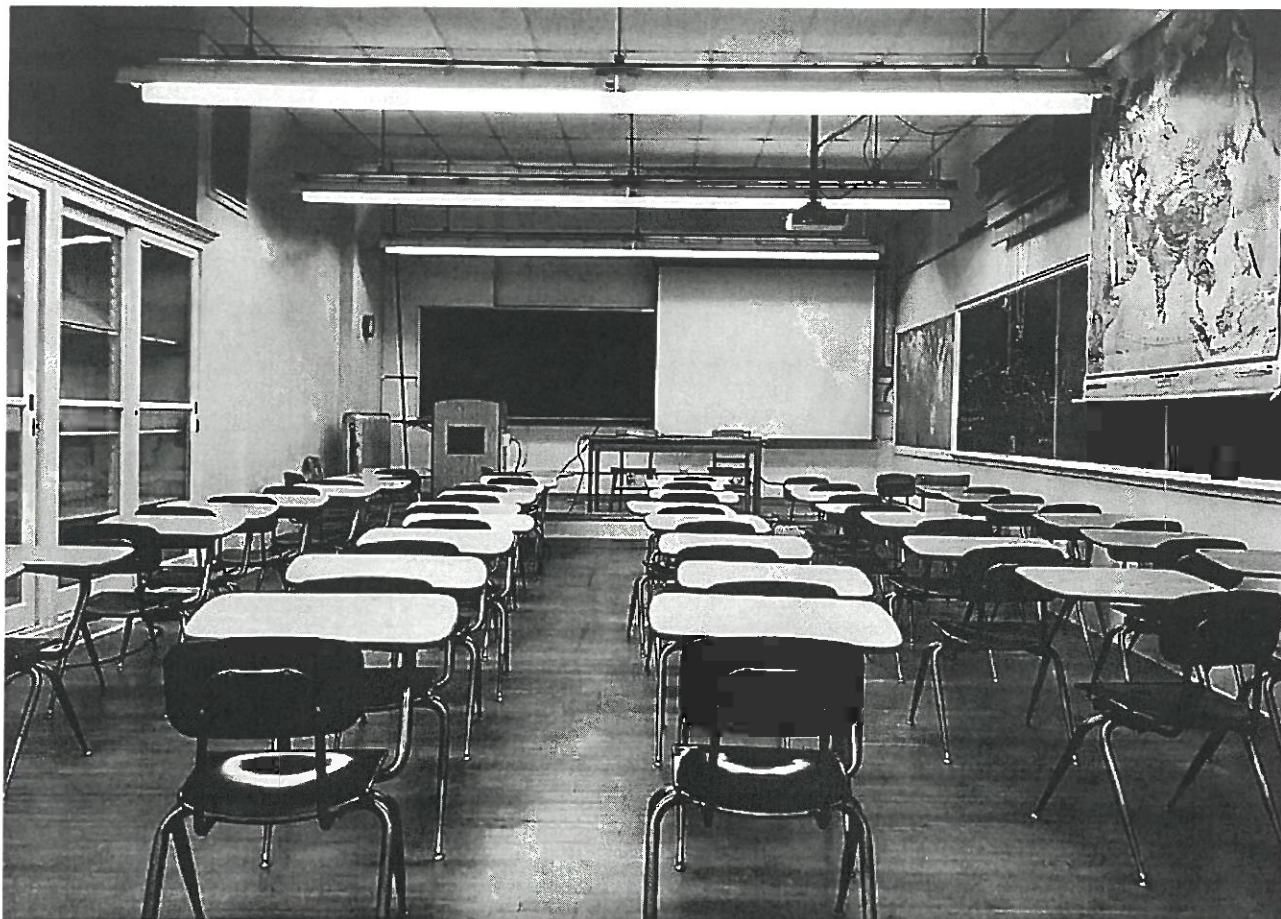
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HISD

## Nearly a quarter of Houston ISD students were absent on nationwide 'Day Without Immigrants'

There were nearly 40,500 students absent on Feb. 3, according to attendance data obtained through an open records request. district's total student body is nearly 176,000.

**Colleen DeGuzman** (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/author/colleen-deguzman/>) | February 19, 2025, 3:49 PM (Last Updated: February 20, 2025, 9:38 PM)



Pictured is an empty classroom.

About 23% of Houston ISD students were absent on Feb. 3, when "A Day Without Immigrants" was observed across the United States.

The demonstration was a protest against President Donald Trump's crackdown on immigration. Latino-owned businesses across the country shut their doors that Monday and Latino parents were asked to keep their kids home from school. It also came a day after [thousands rallied in West H](https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/politics/immigration/2025/02/03/512709/hundreds-march-through-west-houston-in-opposit-immigration-policy-changes/) (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/politics/immigration/2025/02/03/512709/hundreds-march-through-west-houston-in-opposit-immigration-policy-changes/>) to speak out against the new administration's immigration policies.

Nearly 40,500 HISD students were absent Feb. 3 according to attendance data obtained by *Houston Public Media* through an open records request, almost a quarter of the district's total student body of nearly 176,000.

It was a sharp decline in attendance compared to the district's average rate of student absences this school year, which is about 6% — or around 10,000 students absent on most school days.

HISD did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday about the Feb. 3 absences.

Jessica Campos, who has a daughter at HISD's Lanier Middle School and is an organizer with local activist group Community Voices for Public Education, said many HISD parents are setting aside their kids' education.

"What I'm hearing is the fear, the fear of sending their kids to school and being separated," Campos said.

"School is not a priority right now," she added. "Families, especially the ones who are undocumented, are scared to send their kids to school because of the fear of deportations."

The dip in student attendance Feb. 3 came two weeks after Trump was inaugurated for a second stint in the White House, having lost a re-election in 2020 before winning the presidential election in November 2024. He issued a [flurry of executive orders](https://www.propublica.org/article/donald-trump-immigration-executive-orders) (<https://www.propublica.org/article/donald-trump-immigration-executive-orders>) after he was sworn in Jan. 20, many of which beefed up efforts to deport people who are in the U.S. without legal status.

Trump, a day after he was inaugurated, also lifted a policy that kept immigration officers from "sensitive places," such as schools and churches.

Around 62% of HISD students are Latino, according to U.S. News World & Report (<https://www.usnews.com/education/k12/texas/districts/houston-104364#:~:text=The%20student%20body%20at%20the,50%25%20of%20students%20are%20male.>).



"Everyone has the right to an education, an equitable education, and a school where their children feel safe," Campos said. "And they don't feel safe now."

There was a smaller uptick in student absences on Feb. 5, when Community Voices for Public Education [organized a district-wide sick-out](https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2025/02/05/513045/thousands-of-houston-isd-parents-pull-kids-out-of-school-protest-ensue-protest-mike-miles/) (<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/2025/02/05/513045/thousands-of-houston-isd-parents-pull-kids-out-of-school-protest-ensue-protest-mike-miles/>) as a protest against HISD's state-appointed board of managers and Superintendent Mike Miles, who has implemented instructional reforms and made widespread staffing changes since being installed by the Texas Education Agency in June 2023.

On that Wednesday, 8.7% of students district-wide were absent, which is more than 15,300 students.

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**Colleen DeGuzman**  
REPORTER

(tel://+19566059321);guzman@houston