

Detroit area student walkouts declare, “ICE are the criminals, not us”

Lawrence Porter
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Detroit area students are continuing to stage walkouts protesting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Meanwhile, federal agents are stepping up attacks on immigrants across the state, including the recent seizure of two Amazon Flex workers at a Hazel Park warehouse.

The national student walkouts that took place on January 30 have continued into February, with many schools in Southeast Michigan participating. On February 4, over 1,000 students walked out in Plymouth-Canton. They were joined by hundreds of others in Ypsilanti and at Ann Arbor’s Community High Schools, including Pioneer, Skyline, and Huron. On February 9, more than 200 students protested at Dexter High School, along with 50 Royal Oak students.

On Tuesday, hundreds of Cass Technical High School in Detroit’s Midtown neighborhood students held their second major protest in two weeks. Marching in the cold, they chanted and carried handmade signs—“ICE are the criminals, not us,” “No one is illegal on stolen land,” “Stop saying your racism is patriotism.”

The walkout occurred four days after 23-year-old Alcides Caceres, a Cass Tech graduate being held by ICE, was denied bond. Brought from Honduras to Detroit at the age of four, Caceres grew up in the city, graduated from Cass Tech, attended Wayne State University and runs a small business. Friends and family describe him as a law-abiding young man whose entire life is in Detroit.

Alcides was picked up by ICE on or around January 8, 2026, reportedly after being stopped during a traffic encounter in Michigan. His friends and supporters say ICE checked his record and found no criminal history, and that he has cooperated with immigration authorities, but he has remained in ICE custody for

weeks in degrading conditions with the constant threat of being expelled to a country he does not remember. A federal court has already ruled that his detention is unlawful, but ICE simply ignores the ruling.

Caceres’s friend explained: “He’s been here since he was a child... this is his home.” Another supporter stressed that he tried to navigate the immigration system, but “it’s not as straightforward as it appears,” an understatement that hints at the maze of fees, paperwork, and arbitrary denials that have turned legal status into a privilege of the wealthy.

On February 2, at an Amazon delivery facility in Hazel Park, ICE agents chased two Venezuelan Amazon Flex drivers—Edwin Vladimir Romero Gutierrez and Ángel Junior Rincón Pérez—into the warehouse and arrested them with the cooperation of Amazon security. Both men are asylum seekers with Temporary Protected Status, that is, they have been acknowledged by the government itself as fleeing dangerous conditions.

These arrests are part of a nationwide escalation of immigration raids designed to divide the working class along national and racial lines and to create a climate of fear in which all democratic rights can be trampled. At Amazon, ICE’s operation had an additional purpose: to remind tens of thousands of warehouse and delivery workers that the state stands behind the company’s brutal regime of speed-up and surveillance, and that any attempt to resist can be met with deportation.

Many of the Cass students come from immigrant families themselves or have friends and classmates whose parents are undocumented. One student said the students marched in defense of “people in our class who were affected by ICE.” Jackson, protesting with two friends, said, “I’m here because I think what ICE is doing is very wrong and they are murdering US

citizens... I'm here to support the people and all my classmates that are walking out just as I am."

His friend Asad added, "I'm here to make a difference. Some difference is better than no difference at all." Madison declared, "I really don't like what ICE is doing to our country and what Trump is supporting, so we decided to unify against it." Another student linked ICE's actions directly to her own life: "They are separating families, and to me that is very personal because my mother is an immigrant." At the end of the protest, she held up her boots and told the crowd that they belonged to her late mother from Colombia: "She was an immigrant, just like a lot of us. She passed away five years ago, and I'm walking in her shoes. I'm here today, and I know she is proud."

"I believe that no one should be mistreated for just wanting a better life," another student said, denouncing ICE for "killing people, innocent people, for just wanting a better life." One senior, Nevaeh, read a poem she had written condemning ICE's mistreatment: "Society is not in our favor because we thought it should be attained. Because the cause of the shame is not us.... Are you getting it?"[9]

The walkouts reveals the growing politicization of youth and their readiness to solidarize themselves with the working class. Cass Tech students consciously tied their protests to the killings in Minneapolis and to the repression of workers at Amazon. "They took our alumni," one student organizer said, referring to Caceres. "They took our peers at Western [International High School]. After seeing all this happen in so many places and watching it happen to people, we know it's important for us to try to make sure they know that we're not satisfied with this."

The courageous actions by students across the US herald the movement of the working class. We urge young people to make the decision to join the International Youth and Students for Socialist Equality today and take up the fight for socialism.



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