

TO: School Principals
FROM: Maureen Binienda, Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools
DATE: September 7, 2017
RE: Appropriate School Response to Immigration Enforcement Activities

The Worcester Public School District is committed to serving all children who reside in the District and to maintaining a safe and productive learning environment for all students. In order to provide a public education, **regardless of child or family immigration status**, absent any applicable federal, state, or local law, regulation, ordinance or court decision, and in absence of proof of criminal proceedings as determined by a law enforcement agency, the District shall abide by the following practices and procedures:

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

In accordance with the District's Nondiscrimination and Bullying Prevention Policies:

1. Any allegations of bullying or harassment of students based on their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or immigration status shall be promptly investigated and handled in accordance with District policy.
2. Student residency determinations will not be based, in whole or in part, on the student's immigration or undocumented status.
3. District personnel will not inquire about a student's immigration status, or require documentation of a student's legal status, such as asking for a green card or citizenship papers, at initial registration or at any other time.
4. District personnel will not make unreasonable inquiries of a student or his/her parents for the purpose of exposing the immigration status of the child or his/her family.
5. District personnel shall be attentive to school curricula to ensure that it is inclusive and nondiscriminatory. All District curricula shall encourage respect for the civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.
6. District personnel will not require students to apply for Social Security numbers.
7. District personnel shall promptly report any potential or alleged hate crime to the local law enforcement agency.

Access to Records

In accordance with Worcester Public Schools Student Record Policy and state laws and regulations (*603 CMR 23.00 et seq.*):

1. Unless directed by the Superintendent, District personnel shall not share student record information, including immigration status, with any immigration law enforcement official or agent.

2. All requests for student records or student record information documents by ICE or INS should be forwarded to the Superintendent, who may consult with the District's legal counsel to determine if the documents can be released.
3. Principals may remind families of their right to opt out of disclosure of student directory information, which shall include student name, address and date and place of birth.

Access to School Premises

Because an ICE or INS visit may severely disrupt the educational setting, any request by ICE/INS to visit a school site should be forwarded immediately to the Superintendent's Office for review **before** a decision is made to allow access to the site.

If immigration law enforcement agents arrive at your school building, Principals shall take the following steps:

1. Do not allow the agents into the school building until instructed to do so;
2. Request identification from the agents and a copy of any judicial warrant;
3. Immediately contact the Superintendent's office for further instructions.

Dismissal of Students

1. Students may **only** be dismissed to persons specified by parents and/or guardians in writing. Principals may remind families to update student emergency contact information to include a robust network of persons who may be called in case of an emergency.
2. Parents may be provided with a Caregiver Affidavit to designate someone to make educational and/or medical decisions for a child if the child is temporarily living with someone who is not the parents/guardians.

Handling of Students Whose Parents Have Been Detained or Taken Into Custody

If you receive notification that parents/guardians of a student have been detained or taken into custody by immigration law enforcement officials or agents, the school should take the following steps:

1. Contact the person(s) listed on the student's emergency card to inform the person(s) of the situation and ask if they can retrieve the student;
2. Make arrangements for school counselors to be available to support the student;
3. Contact DCF if there is no responsible adult authorized by parents to receive the student.
4. Consult with the District's homeless liaison if the student becomes homeless as a result of their parent/guardian's detention.