

## Background

As a result of the 2016 presidential election, there has been much concern among the immigrant communities served by the Council of the Great City Schools' member districts. Council member districts serve millions of immigrant families, some with mixed immigration status, and have educated hundreds of thousands of young adults who are now Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, allowing them to study and work legally in the U.S. The fears and concerns are in response to President-elect Trump's stated positions on the future of DACA and that of undocumented immigrants.

Upholding the Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, member districts have continued to enroll students arriving at their doors, regardless of immigration status. Schools have made efforts to make schools a welcoming place and to increase family engagement, especially of immigrant and refugee families. Finally, school districts have established comprehensive and robust anti-bullying efforts to ensure that schools are safe learning environments for all students.

## School Districts' Commitment to Educate All Students

To alleviate the immigrant and school community concerns, many school districts have fulfilled their legal obligation to educate all students, regardless of their immigration status.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, superintendents have sent a letter to the school community and families, and in other cases, school boards have adopted specific resolutions condemning the adverse impacts of increased immigration enforcement on students and learning environments. The range of messages included in the school district letters and resolutions collected by the Council include:

- Re-affirmation of the district's commitment to *Plyler v. Doe* and that schools have an interest in promoting safe learning environments;
- Clarification of school staff roles regarding requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for information about students and families or any assistance to immigration enforcement;
- Establishment of protocols for responding to ICE requests for access to school campuses; and
- Clarification that information about immigration status is not collected, and thus not reported.

Some districts have not formally declared themselves 'sanctuary school districts,' focusing instead on calling themselves 'safe zones, havens, etc.' Some districts have also issued and disseminated frequently asked questions (FAQs) and resources to assist immigrant communities.

Below are examples of documents and resources we compiled for your reference when considering actions that your school districts can take to ensure that schools are safe and positive learning environments for ALL students.

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<sup>1</sup> 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

**(a) General guidance documents**

1. Help for Immigrant Families Post-Election - Guidance for Schools  
[https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/schools\\_post-election-v4.pdf](https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/schools_post-election-v4.pdf)
2. Legal Issues for School Districts Related to the Education of Undocumented Children  
<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/09undocumentedchildren.pdf>
3. Immigrant and Refugee Children: A Guide for Educators and School Support Staff  
[http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im\\_uac-educators-guide\\_2016.pdf](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/im_uac-educators-guide_2016.pdf)
4. Know Your Rights: Post-Election Resources for Immigrant Families  
<http://www.emersoncollective.com/articles/2016/11/22/post-election-resources>
5. Immigration Resources from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
<http://www.aft.org/our-community/immigration>

**(b) School district actions and documents**

6. Los Angeles Unified School District Resolution. This resolution was presented in February of 2016; during immigration raids that were not being covered by local or national news.  
<http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/4350>
7. Albuquerque Public School District Policies regarding their position on Immigration and Safe Schools.
  - a. "Immigrant Students Regardless of Documented Status"  
<http://www.aps.edu/about-us/policies-and-procedural-directives/procedural-directives/j.-students/immigrant-students-regardless-of-documented-status>
  - b. "Safe Schools and Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities"  
<http://www.aps.edu/about-us/policies-and-procedural-directives/procedural-directives/j.-students/safe-schools>
8. Denver Public Schools' FAQ page on immigration concerns.  
[https://www.dpsk12.org/responding-to-immigration-concerns/?utm\\_source=ColorinColorado.org&utm\\_medium=Twitter](https://www.dpsk12.org/responding-to-immigration-concerns/?utm_source=ColorinColorado.org&utm_medium=Twitter)

**Compilation of Resources**

The Council has compiled various resources and documents to assist you in case your school district is contemplating whether to issue a letter or statement, adopt a resolution, or disseminate information and resources to the community. The compilation of resources features documents with additional background on sanctuary cities, resolutions and statements from school districts, and guides to address frequently asked questions.

- **School board resolutions and policies.** Resolutions and policies from school boards concerning commitments to educating all students and promoting safe schools.
- **School district letters and/or statements, and guides.** Statements from school districts to community stakeholders reaffirming obligations to students, reassuring immigrant families and answering questions.
- **Immigration advocacy organization resource guides.** Informational guides about immigration and related legal issues for families and school personnel.
- **Frequently asked questions.** Responses to commonly asked questions about immigration, legal protections, and DACA status concerns.
- **Additional background articles.** Recent news articles on sanctuary cities and policies impacting families and students.

**EdWires FileShare.** We have created a password-protected site from which you can browse these various documents and download what you find helpful. We have also provided permission for you to upload documents from your district or resources you deem would be helpful to the Council membership. Visit <https://fileshare.edwires.org/public/immigration> to access the site; the password is *immigration2017*.

### Cities React to Anti-immigrant Messages

Around 47 cities across the nation have declared themselves ‘Sanctuary Cities’<sup>2</sup> or have reaffirmed in resolutions or released statements their existing practices and stances with regard to immigration, despite the repeated threats from the President-elect to withhold federal funds to sanctuary cities.<sup>3</sup> It is too early to tell whether and how such funding could be withheld, and whether school districts that are dependent on cities, would be impacted. While no definitive list of U.S. sanctuary cities exists due to varying definitions,<sup>4</sup> these cities refuse to report immigration statuses of individuals to federal authorities.<sup>5</sup>

**For any questions, feel free to contact Gabriela Uro ([guro@cgcs.org](mailto:guro@cgcs.org)) or David Lai ([dlai@cgcs.org](mailto:dlai@cgcs.org)).**

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<sup>2</sup> Arrieta-Kenna, R. (2016, December 12). Sanctuary cities stand firm against Trump. Retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/sanctuary-cities-trump-immigration-232449>

<sup>3</sup> Rathod, S. (2016, December 2). Here Are the Sanctuary Cities Ready to Resist Trump's Deportation Threats. Retrieved from <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/11/sanctuary-city-immigration-federal-deportation-trump-threats-budget>

<sup>4</sup> Arrieta-Kenna, R. (2016, December 12). Sanctuary cities stand firm against Trump. Retrieved from <http://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/sanctuary-cities-trump-immigration-232449>

<sup>5</sup> Congressional Research Service (2006) Enforcing immigration law: the role of state and local law enforcement. The Library of Congress, Washington, DC