

Good afternoon,

In recent weeks a number of immigration-related questions have been asked, especially around the role of public schools. We wanted to get information and a common message out to each of you to ensure that everyone is on the same page in terms of rules and expectations.

It is longstanding practice that public school districts educate every student in their jurisdiction--without regard to immigration status. The United States Supreme Court upheld this in *Plyer v. Doe*, where the Court held that the obligation to provide a public education extended to those in the country without documentation.

Because our obligation to educate does not consider immigration status, **we do not ask for, nor do we want to know, a student's or family member's immigration status.** If a student or family member self-discloses their status it should not be put into a student's file, nor should a record be kept of the disclosure. This is why we recently put out a reminder that if you are working with a partner organization to host an immigration workshop, to not collect names or other information of people who attend the workshop. It is best to not have this information retained anywhere in a school.

A frequent question has been whether the district would release information about a student's status. Because we do not ask for or retain immigration status details, the short answer is that we have no information to release. The longer answer is that **we don't release any information about students (beyond directory information) to anyone without consent from the parent, or unless we have a subpoena from a judge ordering us to release the information.**

Another question is around what to do if Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) or another organization comes to your school and requests information about students, or asks to speak with a student.

- **If ICE or any other person comes to school and requests student files or information about students, you should tell them no, and refer them to Holly Ferguson, Chief Policy & Strategy Officer or Lita O'Donnell, Executive Assistant.**
- **If ICE or any other person comes to school and says that they have an order requiring that you release information, take a copy of the order and email it to Holly and Lita. Let the person know that you will not be able to release information until you receive authorization.**

- o “Any other person” really means that—occasionally police officers, parole officers, or others will come to a campus and say “I’m working with Student X, can you make me a copy of the file?” —the answer still is “no”, unless you have a consent from a parent or a subpoena. You should always feel free to send these people our way so that we can sort out what is appropriate.

The one exception to the above is VERY RARE and involves law enforcement wanting to come on campus to execute an arrest warrant on a student. If this happens you may not be able to stop it, but contact Safety & Security immediately for support.

Last, I want to stress that Highline Public Schools does not tolerate bullying, harassment, or intimidation of any kind. It is our responsibility to ensure that each of our students feels safe at school. If you see something--be it name calling, signs, or physical intimidation you have an obligation to report it and take action. You can find more details on this in Board Policy and Procedure 3207, which you can find online here--just type 3207 in the search box: <http://highlineschools.org/domain/1147>

I recognize that this cannot answer every question about this sensitive topic, and that the upcoming months may raise additional questions. Please know that Cabinet members are monitoring both what is happening in schools as well as local and national news, and that if additional questions arise we can put out more information. And if you have additional questions please continue to reach out so that we can get information out to everyone.

Thank you for keeping our students’ and families’ interests and safety at heart while continuing to hold high expectations for student success. Each of us plays an important role in ensuring we know our students by name, strength and need, and that they graduate ready for the next steps in their lives.