

WCPTA Position Statement on Immigrant Children, Youth, and Families

The Wake County PTA Council recognizes that the United States began as a country of immigrants and that the resulting blend of cultures enriches our nation. We also believe that all children residing in the United States, regardless of their immigration status, have the right of access to a quality public education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health care services. Ensuring that our schools are safe and supportive for all students and their families will facilitate the physical safety and emotional well-being of all children in the District and is essential to students' ability to achieve.

Wake County PTA Council advocates for our schools to be a safe place for its students and their families to seek help, assistance, and information if faced with fear and anxiety about immigration enforcement efforts; that law enforcement honor the policy not to involve schools and other sensitive locations, and that principals and school staff are encouraged to work with and support families and students who express concern about immigration enforcement actions at school, including students who may not be attending school because of such concerns.

The Wake PTA Council supports the following statements:

- Immigration enforcement activities around schools create hardships and barriers to health and educational attainment, and create a pervasive climate of fear, conflict, and stress that affects all students in our District regardless of their background or status. Children who have a status but whose family members, friends, or schoolmates do not, and students who are themselves undocumented, are all affected and at risk.
- The Supreme Court of the United States concluded in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) that undocumented school-aged children are entitled to have access to a high quality and free public K-12 education.
- Undocumented school-age children may also not be constructively denied a free education through coercion, illegal data collection, profiling or interference via threats of deportation. To allow such would be a foreclosure upon their future contributions to our society.
- The protection and preservation of public-school attendance, student learning and well-being is of paramount import to the future and success of our country.
- It is in the national interest to ensure that all children, including undocumented children, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity and should not be denied to any child.
- Undocumented school-age children may also not be constructively denied a free education through coercion, illegal data collection, profiling or interference via threats of deportation. To allow such would be a foreclosure upon their future contributions to our society.
- Public schools are institutions of learning and are not collection points therefore, public schools should not be placed in the position of determining the legal status of immigrant children nor be required to enforce immigration laws. Furthermore, school districts should not voluntarily report undocumented students to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other immigration authorities because such actions may constitute a denial of access to education under *Plyler v. Doe*.
- Schools should be defined in statute as “sensitive locations” and Immigration and ICE officers and agents are to refrain from enforcement actions against students in schools including: preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other institutions of learning, such as vocational and trade schools.
- Wake County PTA Council supports the confidentiality of school records, including records that pertain to the immigration status of children. Unrestrained access to school records to determine such status can pose a threat of unintended consequences due to any materials in a student's file that may be inaccurate.