



ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION ON SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes local concerns raised by potential changes in how federal immigration laws and policies are enforced and the impact this may have on public schools and students, and hereby intends to address these concerns; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) ruled that no public school district can deny children access to free public education based on their immigration status, or the immigration status of their parents, recognizing the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment and citing the harm it would inflict on the child and society itself to deny them access to public education; and

WHEREAS, every child in the State of North Carolina is furthermore ensured a free public K-12 education through rights enshrined in the North Carolina State Constitution in Articles 1 and 9; and

WHEREAS, Orange County Schools is a compassionate and caring school district that is committed to creating a welcoming atmosphere that celebrates all families' cultures and values equality and social justice; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that our schools are safe and inviting for all students and their families helps secure the physical safety and emotional well-being of all students in the District, and is essential in order for students to achieve and grow; and

WHEREAS, any potential increase in federal immigration law enforcement activities in or around schools or transportation routes would disrupt the learning environment to which all students are entitled and would significantly interfere with the ability of all students to access a free public K-12 education, such that students who are themselves undocumented, and students who are documented but whose schoolmates, friends, or family members might not be, are all affected and at risk; and

WHEREAS, the research shows that across infancy, childhood, and adolescence, child-family separations, including immigration-related separations, can be related to negative outcomes across the lifespan, and the scientific evidence is conclusive that parent-child separation leads to a host of long-term psychological, social, and health problems that are not necessarily resolved upon reunification; and

WHEREAS, threats of separation and deportation for students and their families can create

severe and lasting emotional, psychological, and physical barriers to learning, including mental health issues and trauma such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and that these should be addressed and allayed or reduced through support systems;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Orange County Schools Board of Education hereby:

- Welcomes and supports all OCS students, and values the involvement and full participation of all Orange County Schools students, staff, and families in their school communities, without regard to immigration status.
- Affirms that all children have the right to attend school in the county in which they reside, without regard to their immigration status, in accordance with Board Policy 4125.
- Affirms that Orange County Schools shall honor its commitments under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and will disclose information contained in student records only as required by law or when the school system determines that such disclosures are necessary under specific FERPA provisions (for example, to prevent imminent harm to others in a health and safety emergency).
- Recognizes a responsibility to minimize disruptions to the learning environment, and therefore reserves the right to deny entry to school system property unless there is a legal right of entry or exigent circumstances indicating a threat to public safety. To ensure that any such requests by immigration officials are handled appropriately and lawfully, such requests should be directed to the principal, who will follow district procedures including validating the individual’s authorization, consulting with the superintendent or designee, who may consult with legal counsel to ensure compliance with applicable laws, and taking reasonable steps to notify a parent or legal guardian if the request involves a student.
- Encourages the Superintendent to continue to collaborate with community-based organizations who provide support and resources for undocumented/mixed status students and families, to better understand and address whole-child concerns which may be inhibiting students’ ability to thrive in school and to connect families to resources, and update the Board on these collaborative efforts.
- Requests that the Superintendent continue to monitor relevant data (such as student attendance, dropout rates, student well-being metrics, and engagement in family outreach activities) and provide regular updates to the Board, so that the Board can understand the impact of this climate on students and support the district’s response.

Adopted this the 10th day of February 2025

Mrs. Anne Purcell, Chair
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mr. André Richmond, Vice Chair
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mr. Will Atherton, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mrs. Carrie Doyle, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Ms. Bonnie Hauser, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Ms. Wendy Padilla, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Mrs. Sarah Smylie, Board Member
Orange County Board of Education

Date

Cc:
Dr. Danielle Jones
Superintendent
Orange County Schools