

March 5, 2025

Commissioner Manny Diaz
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

RE: Ensure All of Florida's Children are Safe at School

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Commissioner Diaz:

We, the undersigned, call on you to protect all of Florida's students from harsh immigration enforcement actions that will traumatize youth and school staff, cause profound disruption to school activities, and put the safety and well-being of our children at risk. Article IX of the Florida Constitution states, "Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education."¹ Per the Florida Constitution, schools are designated safe places. School-based immigration actions threaten all students' sense of safety and learning. As such, we urge you to provide guidance to school districts that:

- Affirms the right —protected by federal law — of all students to a free public education, regardless of immigration status.
- Prohibits federal immigration officials (or state and local authorities acting on their behalf) from entering school grounds unless they have received prior review and approval by district legal counsel.
- Ensures school staff, students, and parents know their rights.
- Prohibits collection of student immigration status and ensures that all requests for information align with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and are referred to the district superintendent's office before any information is released.
- Blocks school administration, staff, and faculty from becoming de facto immigration officials (e.g., detaining or searching students, inquiring about status).

¹ Art. IX, §1(a), Fla. Const.

- Requires the policies outlined above to be published and posted prominently on all school sites and shared with parents/guardians in the languages spoken in the students' homes.

School-based immigration enforcement actions would create a climate of fear, confusion, and division in Florida classrooms, which are supposed to be places where students can feel protected. Taking the recommended steps above would send a powerful message that the state is standing up for all Florida children and prioritizing students' well-being.

Sincerely,

Florida Policy Institute
Florida Immigrant Coalition
4 The Kids Entertainment
ACLU of Florida
All About the Ballots
Asian American Federation of Florida
Catalyst Miami
Central Florida Jobs with Justice
College Democrats of FIU
Democratic Public Education Caucus Florida
Families for Strong Public Schools
FL National Organization for Women (FL NOW)
Florida Asian Services
Florida Asian Women Alliance
Florida Black Women's Roundtable
Florida Council of Churches
Florida Education Association
Florida Freedom to Read Project
Florida Head Start Association
Florida Impact
FoodRecovery.org
Friends of Gables High
Guiding Hope
Hispanic Services Council
Hope CommUnity Center
League of Women Voters Jacksonville First Coast
League of Women Voters Lee County
League of Women Voters of Alachua County
League of Women Voters of Citrus County
League of Women Voters of Collier County
League of Women Voters of Florida

League of Women Voters of Lee County, Inc.
League of Women Voters of Polk County
League of Women Voters of Sanibel
League of Women Voters of Sarasota County
League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area
League of Women Voters-Space Coast
Lee County Chapter National Organization for Women (NOW)
Lee County League of Women Voters
LFK Immigration PA
LWV of Hillsborough & Pasco Counties
LWV Seminole County
LWV Tallahassee
Miami Dade Democratic Hispanic Caucus
Miami-Dade College Democrats Club
Muslim Women's Organization
NAACP Florida State Conference
National Association of Social Workers-Florida Chapter
OCA South Florida Chapter
P.S. 305
Palm Beach County Democratic Party DEC
Palm Beach County Senior Caucus
Pastors For Florida Children, Inc
People Power United
Poder Latinx
Public Education Network Sarasota
Rural Women's Health Project
SEIU Florida
Sprout Up
The Purple Group Lee County, Florida
Together for Hope
UnidosUS

cc: Florida School Superintendents