



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



March 29, 2017

Dear Superintendents,

Many of you – and the dedicated, hard-working educators in your districts – know from your daily work on behalf of children, that immigrant families and families who have non-citizen or undocumented members, are experiencing anxiety resulting from recent changes in the federal government's policies concerning immigration. These national developments have created an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear for many affected families in Connecticut who must contend with both real and perceived threats to their ability to remain in the country – and the especially wrenching issue of what their removal would mean for their children.

In this unsettled environment, state government has the critical responsibility of providing Connecticut school districts with reliable information, guidance and support. As you may recall, last month the Governor and I issued a guidance letter reiterating that under the U.S. Constitution any child, regardless of immigration status or the status of their parents/guardians, has the same right to a free public education as any other child. The guidance letter also discussed key issues for districts to consider in planning for the possibility of immigration enforcement activities at schools or information requests from federal immigration officials. A copy of that letter is attached for your convenience.

In our continuing efforts to assist school districts with their vitally important work to support children and families who are dealing with immigration-related concerns, I am pleased to announce the release of a new and comprehensive resource: the *Family Preparedness Plan: Preparing Your Family for Immigration Enforcement*. The *Plan* consists of materials compiled by the Governor's Office with input from various state agencies including the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families, legal services organizations, and key stakeholders. It is intended to serve as a one-stop guide for parents to use in planning for the possibility of detention or deportation. Attached you will find a copy of the *Plan* in both English and Spanish.

I ask that you give thoughtful consideration to how to appropriately inform parents about this important resource. To comply with applicable law and to avoid causing families further unnecessary anxiety, relevant district and school personnel should be sure to provide the *Plan* to parents who have immigration concerns but, in their efforts to assist parents, should be careful not to inquire about a parent's immigration status or otherwise intrude on family privacy. I am confident that under your leadership our districts and schools will find an effective way to strike this balance.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of the children and families in our State. If you have any questions, please call Peter Haberlandt, Director of Legal Affairs, at (860) 713-6520.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dianna R. Wentzell".

Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell  
Commissioner of Education