



The Ethical Community Charter School ~ Jersey City



February 1, 2017

Dear TECCS community:

We, the board and administration of The Ethical Community Charter School, are writing to affirm our commitment to protect all students from discrimination and harassment. In the wake of the election, many students and parents around the country expressed fears about the increased reports of harassment and concerns about reporting of immigration status to officials. In response, school districts across the country, in places such as Denver, San Francisco, Portland, and Los Angeles, have reaffirmed their status as safe places for all students.

Our mission is to be a safe and caring place where all can learn. Our community and school has zero tolerance for acts of hate, bullying, or bias against any person. No characteristic of a student, including immigration status, will be a barrier to education.

Last November, the Jersey City Council passed a resolution asserting Jersey City's status as a safe haven or sanctuary for non-citizen residents. That means the city will not use resources to identify, persecute, apprehend, or deport any non-citizen resident, regardless of status. We continue to uphold the city's policy and our own mission in making our school a sanctuary for all students. **Our school will not bar any child's enrollment or school attendance based on immigration status.**

To reiterate and support our mission, we wanted to share some useful information.

Question: Will teachers or administrators at TECCS ask about a child's immigration status?

No, not when s/he enrolls and not when s/he continues to attend the school. Public schools have an obligation to educate all students in the United States, regardless of immigration status. School officials have no need to know anyone's official status.

Question: If the school does come to know our status as documented/undocumented immigrants, will it ever share that with federal officials?

We do not need to ask or know about a student's status. However, if we do come to know a student or family's status, we will not voluntarily share that with anyone else, including United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Question: What should I do if I feel I have or my child has been the victim of harassment or discrimination? Please report immediately to the school leader. (You can also file a report for documentation purposes with the Southern Poverty Law Center, splcenter.org.)

Question: What if I am a DACA recipient? DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) is based on a presidential order, which could be rescinded. If you are a recipient of DACA, consider reaching out to an immigration attorney now.

Question: Who can I reach out to for more help on my rights, particularly for a deportation proceeding? Many attorneys are available pro bono, or free. Contact: Legal Services of New Jersey, lsnj.org, 888-LSNJ-LAW; Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) in Newark, supportkind.org, (862) 926-2080; Rutgers-Newark Immigrant Rights Clinic, 973 353 5292; Volunteer Lawyers of New Jersey, 973 645 1955, <http://www.vlnj.org/get-help>; or Northeast New Jersey Legal Services, 201-792-6363, <https://www.lsnj.org/nnjls/>.

Sincerely,


Marta Bergamini
Principal


Ann E. Wallace, PhD
Chair, Board of Trustees