



Frequently Asked Questions: SCHOOLS & IMMIGRATION

Recently, Superintendent Bates called on all Granite School District employees to remember: “There is no such thing as ‘our kids’ and ‘their kids’ or ‘those kids,’ all kids are ‘our kids.’ [All district employees] are to ensure that no students feel that they are somehow second class or at risk of losing something because of a status.” (See Superintendent’s Blog, November 10, 2016).

One distinctive strength of our district is that our students come from diverse families and backgrounds. The district’s number one priority is to ensure that every student has a safe and welcoming place to attend school regardless of current social conditions or changing political perspectives. Some patrons have recently expressed concerns about matters related to citizenship and immigration status. The district has prepared the following answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) to provide patrons clear and useful information.

Q-1: What impact does undocumented immigration status have on my student’s education?

A: None. Children have a constitutional right to education regardless of their citizenship or immigration status or their parents’ status. The United States Supreme Court has made it very clear that states must provide a free public education to all children regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or political views. That right is protected by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Q-2: Does the district ask families for proof of citizenship or immigration status?

A: No. Citizenship or immigration status is not relevant for establishing residency in the district or for any other reason. Schools do not inquire about citizenship or immigration status.

Q-3: Would my student’s school or the district ever share my student’s citizenship or immigration status?

A: No. As mentioned above, schools do not ask for or maintain information related to citizenship or immigration status. Utah law requires families to provide a birth certificate or some other reliable proof to establish a student’s identity and age. However, those records provide no proof of citizenship or information about immigration status. Student information will be kept private even if a school inadvertently obtains some information about a student’s citizenship or immigration status.

Q-4: What if student records are subpoenaed or demanded by other government agencies?

A: Schools are governed by a federal law titled the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). This law states that schools cannot release student records to third parties without express written permission from parents/guardians. While there are some exceptions to this rule, schools would not disclose student information or records for an improper purpose. The district will always fight to keep a student’s information private.

Q-5: Would there ever be immigration enforcement actions on school grounds?

A: As of today, the federal government agencies are following guidance that designates schools as sensitive locations where immigration enforcement actions do not occur.

Q-6: If I am a parent or guardian and I am worried about being detained while my child is at school, what should I do?

A: In the event that any parents/guardians are detained during school hours, the district will engage its crisis and emergency response team to support students. **Please take this opportunity to update emergency contact information for your students either at your school or in the Parent Portal.**

Q-7: What if I still have questions about citizenship, immigration status, or my legal rights?

A: It would be inappropriate for the district to offer any legal advice on such matters. An immigration attorney is usually the best source for advice and accurate information about citizenship and immigration status and how to pursue legal rights.

Q-8: What does the district do to ensure that no students are discriminated against or harassed because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin?

A: The district is deeply committed to upholding anti-discrimination laws. The district has policies in place that prohibit discrimination or harassment for any students or employees on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, and other protected classes. If your student experiences any form of discrimination or harassment, please report it immediately to your school principal. You can also make reports to the Educational Equity Department at the district (385-646-4205).

Q-9: What assistance does the district provide for families who have limited proficiency in English or who may have recently arrived from another country?

A: The Educational Equity Department provides many resources to families that have limited language proficiency or that are resettling in the district boundaries from another country. Please do not hesitate to call the Educational Equity Department (385-646-4205).

For additional questions about laws regulating schools or district policies and procedures, please feel free to call Policy and Legal Services at the district (385-646-4009).

