



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education *Dianna R. Wentzell*

DATE: January 30, 2017

SUBJECT: Guidance for Districts Regarding Refugee Students

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to supporting your efforts to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality education in a safe, supportive and welcoming school environment. To that end, I am reaching out to you today with guidance for districts about fair and equitable enrollment practices and about supporting the needs of students and families who might be affected by the presidential executive order on immigration.

As you know, all children in the United States have a right to public education regardless of race, color, national origin, citizenship, immigration status, or the status of their parents/guardians. In Connecticut, we take that responsibility very seriously and have made a steadfast commitment to welcoming all children and families – including immigrants and refugees and populations that in other states and other places have not been met with the same open doors, nurturing environment, and commitment to high expectations for *all* that we pride ourselves on in Connecticut.

The attached document is a joint letter from the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice that provides guidance to school districts about ensuring we have fair enrollment processes that make all families, including immigrant and refugee families, feel welcome when they register their children for school. The letter is from 2014, but its relevance is just as pertinent today as it was three years ago. We must continue to provide all children equal access to public education regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

Additionally, I urge you to consider making counselors and mental health support services available to any students who are experiencing stress or anxiety stemming from the repercussions of the executive order.

I thank you for your attention and urgency in making sure all Connecticut children and families feel welcome, respected and valued in our schools.

Attachment