

Superintendent, Charter Leaders, Collaborative Leaders, & Executive Directors - Winter Webinar

**Acting Commissioner Russell D. Johnston
Thursday, February 6, 2025**

Agenda

1. Introduction

- Educational Vision: Maintaining Our Commitment During Current Times

2. Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports

- Resources in Partnership with Attorney General's Office & Office for Refugees and Immigrants

3. Strategic Objective 2: Deeper Learning

- Competency Determination

4. Strategic Objective 3: Diverse and Effective Workforce

- Proposed Amendments to Licensure Regulations

5. DESE's Core Functions

- Staff Attendance
- Problem Resolution System
- Student Opportunity Act

6. Additional Announcements | Q&A

Educational Vision

Maintaining Our Commitment
During Current Times

Educational Vision



All students

- Are known and valued

Learning experiences

- Are relevant, real-world and interactive


Individualized supports

- Enable students to excel at grade level and beyond

Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports

Resources in Partnership with the
Attorney General's Office & the
Office for Immigrants and Refugees

Posted Guidance



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

MAURA HEALEY
ATTORNEY GENERAL

(617) 727-2200
www.mass.gov/ago




Attorney General Advisory:
Equal Access to Public Education for All Students Irrespective of Immigration Status
Updated April 2022

What the Supreme Court of the United States recognized in Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954), is as true today as it was then:

[E]ducation is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. . . [I]t is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

This updated advisory¹ is intended as a reminder that state and federal law require state educational agencies and local school districts to provide all elementary and secondary students with equal access to public education—irrespective of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, *or immigration status*. Our schools play a critically important role in supporting vulnerable populations, including newcomer and refugee school-aged children. As school districts across Massachusetts have recently seen increases of newly arrived students resettling throughout the state as a result of various global circumstances, effectively fulfilling obligations to newly arrived students remains crucial.

[Advisory Regarding Equal Access to Public Education for All Students](#)




EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
AND OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Guidance for School Committees and Districts
Upholding the Rights of Immigrant Students to Enroll in School

In recent months, our offices have received questions about immigrant families and school district enrollment policies. The Office of the Attorney General, the Executive Office of Education, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are jointly issuing this guidance to clarify for school committees, superintendents, and administrators the rights of immigrant families and the information that school districts may and may not require in their enrollment policies.

State and federal law require that school districts enroll all school-aged children who are residents without regard to immigration status. Districts should ensure that their enrollment policies do not prevent immigrant families from enrolling their children in school. This includes avoiding requirements that *explicitly bar* the enrollment of immigrant children, as well as avoiding requirements that have the *effect of discouraging* immigrant children from enrolling.

[Upholding the Rights of Immigrant Students to Enroll in School](#)



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www.mass.gov/ago

ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

GUIDANCE REGARDING K-12 SCHOOLS' OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT STUDENTS AND THEIR INFORMATION

The Office of the Attorney General has heard concerns from school administrators and others about how potential changes to federal immigration policies might affect their students, communities, and classrooms. This guidance describes some of the issues that might impact immigrant students in K-12 schools, and describes some of schools' legal obligations as well as steps they can take to support students and families and maintain an environment conducive to learning for all. It includes information about the rights of all children to access a free public education regardless of immigration or citizenship status and the ongoing legal obligations of schools¹ to ensure that appropriate steps are taken when responding to requests for access to students or their information by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

This advisory is not legal advice or a formal legal opinion of the Attorney General. A school district or parent should consult with legal counsel about specific concerns.

All Students are Entitled to Equal Access to Free Public Education

Schools must provide equal access to education to all students regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or immigration status. Schools must meet this fundamental obligation and avoid policies that discourage or deny access to school on the basis of immigration or citizenship status.

[Guidance Regarding K-12 Schools' Obligations to Protect Students and Their Information](#)

Know Your Students' Rights Webinars



[ORI & AG Slide Presentation for K-12 Public Schools: Know Your Students' Rights Webinar](#)

K-12 Schools are Obligated to Protect All Students and Their Information.



Office of the Attorney General
Civil Rights Division &
Children's Justice Unit

01

All Children are Entitled to a Free Public Education. Avoid School Policies that Discourage or Deny Access to School on the Basis of Immigration and Citizenship Status.

1. Schools **must** enroll students and provide equal access to education regardless of immigration status.
2. Schools should **revise** enrollment policies to collect only the information necessary to verify a child's age and residence. For example, as a general matter, districts should **not** collect documents containing passport, visa, or Social Security information.
3. Districts should **accept** a range of documents, not limited to government issued ID. For example, districts may accept an affidavit indicating the child's date of birth from a parent.

02

Steps to take if ICE Requests Access to Students or Their Information:

1. Refer the ICE agent to the district's central office to ensure proper protocol is followed.
2. Superintendent or designee: Contact the district's legal counsel.
3. Inform the student's parent or guardian.
4. If presented with a warrant or other order, review the document in consultation with legal counsel.
 - a. Check whether it is a **judicial warrant** or order (signed by a federal or state judge or magistrate), or an administrative arrest or removal warrant (issued by ICE or DHS). An administrative warrant does **not** authorize entry into non-public spaces, including schools.
 - b. If it is a judicial warrant, or court order or subpoena, determine the scope of the search or arrest authority that the judicial warrant or order provides.

03

Protection of Student Information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations.

- Schools **cannot** disclose to ICE agents, either orally or in writing, a student's personally identifiable information (PII) without the parent or guardian's specific, informed consent, or pursuant to a judicial warrant, court order or subpoena, or a health and safety emergency.
- PII includes a student's name, the name of the student's parents or other family members, address, student's social security number, student number, date of birth, place of birth.

Note: If ICE visits or contacts a school asking for student information, school personnel should either direct the ICE official to the district central office, or immediately contact the superintendent or designee and wait for their instructions before making any disclosure. Superintendents and their designees should consult legal counsel to ensure they are adhering to student privacy laws.

Student Directories

Schools **may** disclose directory information to third parties, but may also **limit** the scope and disclosure of directory information to specific parties, purposes, or both. For example, schools may:

1. **Limit** disclosure to only members of school community, not other third parties.
2. **Limit** the information included in the directory (to, for e.g., student name, phone number, grade level, dates of attendance, participation in activities and sports, or honors and awards received).

Schools must inform students and families what information is included in the directory at least annually and **allow parents to opt-out** of the directory entirely or opt to include only specific categories of information. These notice opportunities should be interpreted or translated into languages students and families can understand.

04

Share Plan-ahead Resources with Students and Families.

- **Provide** regular opportunities to update emergency contacts, alternative caretaker contacts, and authorized pick-up contacts.
- **Review** school policies to ensure they include steps if a student cannot return home due to a parent's ICE detention or arrest.
- **Support** needs of students and families who are experiencing increased anxiety and/or have been directly affected by changes to federal immigration policy.

FLYER

[Flyer for K-12 Schools on Protecting Students and Their Information](#)

Rights of All Students to Education Regardless of Immigration or Citizenship Status

- Schools must provide equal access to education to all students regardless of immigration or citizenship status.
- Schools must avoid policies that discourage or deny access to school on the basis of immigration status.

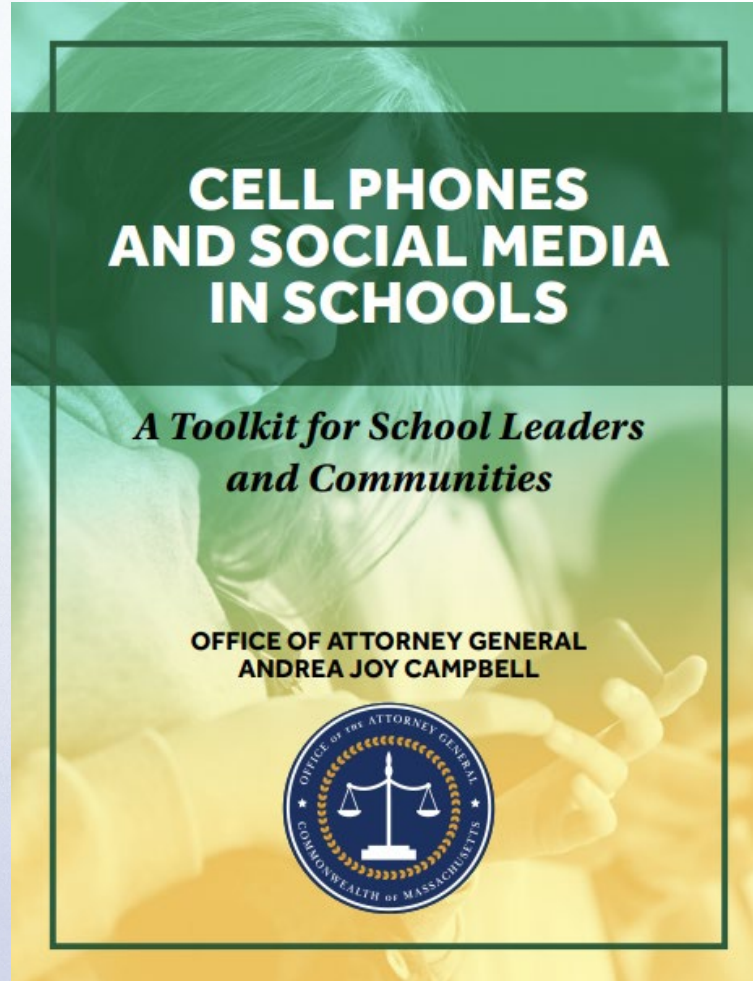
- *ORI/AGO webinar slides*

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) & MA Student Records Regulations

- Schools cannot disclose, either orally or in writing, a student's **personally identifiable information** (e.g. student's name, address, social security number, student number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.) to third parties (including ICE agents) without the student's parent or guardian's specific informed consent, unless there is a specific exception permitting disclosure.

- ORI/AGO webinar slides

Cell Phones and Social Media Toolkit



[Cell Phones and Social Media in Schools: A Toolkit for School Leaders and Communities](#)

Strategic Objective 2: Deeper Learning

Competency Determination

Competency Determination: Next Steps

- Possible areas of change in CD regulations:
 - Deletion of existing regulations referencing state role in awarding CD
 - Additional terms to be defined
 - DESE oversight role
 - Additional subject areas



Mass.gov

Search Mass.gov

SE

 OFFERED BY [Governor Maura Healey and Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll](#)

PRESS RELEASE

Governor Healey Establishes a Massachusetts K-12 Statewide Graduation Council

Council will recommend new vision for setting high school graduates up for success



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Strategic Objective 3: Diverse and Effective Workforce

Proposed Amendments to Licensure Regulations

Proposed Licensure Regulation Amendments for the February BESE Meeting

- **Permanently approve alternative assessments for educator licensure**, following the successful pilot program that the Board authorized in 2020
- **Create a new Media Arts Endorsement** to allow teachers to demonstrate a body of knowledge that aligns to the MA Arts Curriculum Framework
- Create additional **flexibilities for professional teacher licensure**
- **Change the name of the Health/Family and Consumer Sciences license to Comprehensive Health** in alignment with the MA Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework, and **shift from All Levels to PK-8 and 5-12**
- **Allow the Bilingual Endorsement as an alternative to the SEI Endorsement** for initial licenses in core academic areas
- **Specify that Emergency licenses may not be extended beyond June 30, 2027**

Core Functions: Staff Attendance

Staff Attendance

- Reported by districts via EPIMS for all staff submitted in the staff roster (not just teachers and administrators)
- Calculated using the **number of days attended** and the **number of days expected**
- Data include staff with 20 or more days in attendance
- Data provided to districts via the end-of-year EPIMS summary reports (school and district-level data)
 - Staff count
 - Attendance rate
 - Percentage of staff who have 10 or more absences
 - Average number of absences

Staff Attendance: Sharing and Reporting

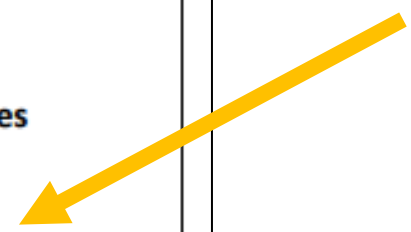
This spring, DESE intends to:

- Share SY2023-24 district and school-level staff attendance data with districts via Security Portal Dropboxes
 - These same data were previously made available via the EPIMS data collection summary reports in summer 2024
- Work with districts as needed to clarify staff attendance reporting expectations for the end-of-year EPIMS collection
- Publish staff attendance data from SY2024-25 in late fall 2025

(See DESE's [Staff Attendance FAQ](#) for more information)

Classroom Teacher Rubric – At-a-Glance

Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment	Standard II: Teaching All Students	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
<p>A. Curriculum and Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Subject Matter Knowledge Knowledge of Students Curriculum Literacy <p>B. Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Purposeful Assessment Accessible Assessment <p>C. Analysis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and Conclusions Adjustments to Practice Sharing Progress with Students and Families Sharing Progress with Colleagues 	<p>A. Instruction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> High Expectations and Support Engaging Instruction Inclusive Instruction <p>B. Learning Environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Relationships Safe Learning Environment Collaborative Learning Environment Student Ownership of Learning Critical Thinking <p>C. Student Learning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Student Outcomes Non-Academic Student Outcomes 	<p>A. Communication</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Communication with Families <p>B. Engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family Engagement <p>C. Collaboration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-being 	<p>A. Reflective Practice and Professional Growth</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective Practice Goal-Setting Professional Learning and Growth <p>B. Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, and Decision-Making</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Responsibility Professional Collaboration Decision-Making <p>C. Professional Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Judgment Professional Responsibilities



Core Functions: Problem Resolution System

PRS: Continued Improvement Efforts

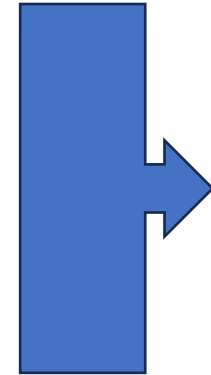
- Roll out of new PRS Letter Templates
 - Launched July 1, 2024
- Investigations enhanced by more efficient investigatory techniques
 - Launched July 1, 2024
- Development of a PRS General Education Procedures Guide
 - In development, with a release goal of summer 2025
- Continued training for PRS Investigation Staff
- Updating the PRS website to include resources for families, including explanations of other dispute resolution options
 - In development, with a release goal of summer/fall 2025

Core Functions: Student Opportunity Act

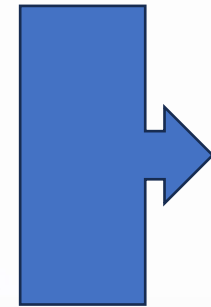
SOA Plan: Submission Cycle

- **January 2021:** Districts submitted an initial three-year SOA plan
- **April 2022:** Districts submitted a comprehensive amendment to their original plan
- **April 2023:** Districts submitted a progress report

- **April 2024:** Districts submitted a new three-year SOA plan
- **April 2025:** Districts will submit a progress report
- **April 2026:** Districts will submit a progress report



The first submission cycle was modified due to COVID



This is a return to the regular submission cycle as required by law

SOA Progress Report: Key Information

- Progress reports are **due April 1** for public school districts and **August 1** for charter school districts
- Progress reports will cover **three key topics**:
 - A summary of progress in implementing the SOA plan to date
 - Key changes to your plan and next steps in implementation
 - Ongoing activities to engage families/caregivers and other stakeholders
- The primary audience for SOA progress reports are your local stakeholders

SOA Progress Report: Next Steps

- **February 7:** An email with details will go out to superintendents and district staff designated as SOA plan writers in GEM\$
 - This email will contain information about **2 webinars**
 - Webinars will be held the **weeks of February 10 and February 24**
 - Choose the webinar time that works best for you and your team
- **Ongoing Support:** SOA consultations are available upon request, email Karen Johnston at SOAPlans@mass.gov with any questions

Additional Announcements

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

- [Interagency Review Team for Complex Cases](#)
- Email questions to: irt-complexcases@mass.gov

Department of Public Health

- Out of State Field Trip
- GI Illnesses
 - [GI Illnesses Online Reporting Form](#)

Coming Soon: On The Desktop (OTD)

On the Desktop

*A message from Acting Commissioner Russell D. Johnston and the
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

- Look for a follow-up “OTD” which will include:
 - These webinar slides
 - A call for mentors: Influence 100

Reminder:
Webinars are recorded and posted on the Commissioner's webpage.



Office of the Commissioner

- About the Commissioner
- Commissioner's Update
- Superintendents' Checklist
- Superintendent Meetings**
- Back-to-School
- Special Advisories
- Educational Vision
- Strategic Plan

Superintendent Meetings

Information from Superintendent Webinars

November 12, 2024	Presentation Recording Transcript The focus of this meeting was: Strategic Objective 1 Whole Student Supports?: Chronic Absenteeism & Student Attendance, Power of Presence Campaign, Student Learning Time Guidance, and Attendance Recovery. Strategic Objective 2 Deeper Learning: Election Results, Core Functions, 2024 VOCAL Updates, Time-Out Rooms, Budget (Circuit Breaker Claim System Updates), and Licensure Updates.
August 1, 2024	Presentation Recording Transcript The focus of this meeting was: Educational Vision, Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports, Strategic Objective 2: Deeper Learning, and, DESE's Core Functions.
May 29, 2024	Presentation Recording The focus of this meeting was: Chronic Absenteeism, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/supt-meetings/default.html>

End Recording

Questions

If you have additional questions that we did not answer during this webinar, please email the Commissioner's Office at:
commissioner0@MassMail.State.MA.US

Thank you!