Borough of Freehold Public Schools

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Asia Michael
Superintendent

Joseph Santonacita
Board President

January 24, 2025

Dear Freehold Borough School Families,

I hope this message finds you well. Our primary goal is to ensure that every student feels safe, supported, and valued in our schools. We are committed to providing an environment where each child can learn and thrive, regardless of background.

Recently, the new presidential administration issued a memo rescinding the 2021 Department of Homeland Security directive that had designated schools as safe zones from immigration enforcement actions. We recognize that this may raise concerns for some of our families, and we want to offer clarity about our role in supporting all students.

Our Commitment to All Students

Our focus remains on providing every child with a high-quality education. As a public school district, we are bound by federal laws that guarantee every child's right to a free public education, including protections set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), which prohibits denying access to education based on immigration status.

Protecting Privacy

We are also committed to safeguarding the privacy of our students and their families. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that student records, including immigration status, are kept confidential. FERPA restricts the sharing of personal information without parental consent, and federal law takes precedence over any state-level policies that would require disclosure. This means that schools cannot release student records to immigration or law enforcement agencies without consent or a judicial order.

Adhering to Legal Guidelines

It is important to note that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials must present a judicial warrant to enter school property. If a warrant is provided, parental consent is required before ICE officials can interview any student. To ensure proper procedures are followed, we are updating our teachers and staff on how to respond if ICE visits a school. The safety and well-being of our students will always be our top priority.

Our district follows all local, state, and federal laws. Immigration enforcement is the responsibility of federal agencies, not our schools. Our priority is to focus on education and ensure a safe, inclusive environment for all students.

We invite you to join us for this month's Coffee & Conversation with the Superintendent on **January 29th at 6:30 p.m.** The topic will be "Keeping Families Safe." We are partnering with Casa Freehold and attorney Ana Raquel Reis to provide helpful information for families during this challenging time. This will be a **virtual session**, and we will send the formal announcement and link in a separate email. Please mark your calendar!

Together, our teachers, administrators, and staff, are dedicated to maintaining a welcoming space for every student. During these uncertain times, we want our families to know that we are here to support you. Below, you will find resources to help guide you. For additional assistance, please contact your child's school office. Our staff is available to offer support and connect you with community resources.

Thank you for your continued partnership as we work to provide the best possible education for all of our children.

Warm regards,

Asia Michael

Asia Michael, Superintendent

RESOURCES

Delegation of Parental Authority Packet (Spanish & English)

Know Your Rights (English) (Spanish)

Know Your Rights Toolkit (English & Spanish)

Family Preparedness Plan (English) (Spanish)

Step-by-step Family Preparedness Plan (English & Spanish)

National Immigration Legal Services Directory

Local Organizations

LATINO COALITION

Latino Family Connections, LLC

CASA FREEHOLD

LAN FOUNDATION