



January 24, 2025

Dear School Families,

I am reaching out today with an important message. In light of emergent concerns, this is a critical time to clarify our work regarding immigrant and refugee students in the Lawrence Public Schools.

In the Lawrence Public Schools, we remain deeply committed to supporting ALL our students and their families, regardless of national origin, religion or immigration status; we stand in strong support of our students and their families.

It is important to note, despite recent announcements, that the law and our practice in Lawrence Public Schools have not changed. The Kansas State Department of Education statement, shared yesterday, clarifies, "...We remind school personnel that their ultimate responsibility is the education and protection of all students. All students have a constitutionally protected right to receive an education."

Our school and district teams work every day to ensure that ALL children are welcomed, embraced, and valued as important members of our USD 497 learning community in each of our classrooms and schools; this fundamental core value and practice remains firm today.

We will continue to abide by all state and federal laws and board policies in ensuring student safety and protecting student information. Further, in keeping with the law, we will not share any student data without a warrant, subpoena, or other lawfully issued court order. Our team will continue to follow the law and abide by board policies regarding investigations and/or arrests on school grounds.

In the Lawrence Public Schools, we view diversity as our strength, and we respect and value each of our students and their families. We are honored to work and live in a diverse, international school environment and we value this as a gift that enriches and strengthens our community.

We understand that many of our children and families are experiencing concern as a result of recent national developments, and we will continue to reassure all within our community of our ongoing engagement and support. As is true every day, our school teams, teachers and principals remain ready to support our children and families who are experiencing concerns.

Our beautiful children are valued in our USD 497 classrooms and we remain committed that all our children will continue to experience the safe haven of a warm, welcoming, and supportive classroom environment on each and every day at school.

Sincerely,

Jeanice Kerr Swift
Interim Superintendent of Schools