

PGCPS Guidance

Immigration Status





Background

PGCPS has been proactively preparing for the anticipated changes to national immigration policies. Through an executive order that took effect on January 20, new national immigration policies and procedures were put in place. This included a requirement to remove the “sensitive areas” designation for schools, churches, and hospitals. In response, our district has implemented enhanced, comprehensive guidelines to ensure our schools are prepared in the event of a visit from ICE, an agency working on behalf of ICE, or other non-local law enforcement agencies.





Precedent for Safe Learning Environments

Plyler v. Doe (1982)

- Landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court
- Under *Plyler*, states cannot deny access to public education based on the immigration status of students or their parents
- The Court ruled that it was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution for a state to discriminate against undocumented children by denying public education.





Communication Goals & Approach

Provide timely and accurate information to all PGCPS stakeholders to ensure understanding of the impacts of the policy changes and what we will do to support families and staff throughout policy change implementation.

Communications tools will include the following:

- **Direct emails and SMS text messaging, as appropriate**
- **PGCPS' website**
- **Internal and external newsletters**
- **Printed and digital publications**
- **Social media**



Key Messages

PGCPS' support of our immigration population is unwavering.

Our schools are safe spaces where all children can learn, grow, and thrive.

We are here to support you – not just today, but in the weeks, months and years ahead.

We will continue to share information and resources to ensure every family in our community feels informed and empowered.



Communicating With Stakeholders: Key Dates

Dec

Jan

Feb

17

22

23

28

Superintendent's
Task Force
Established

Immigration
Resources listed in
Superintendent's
Letter

Superintendent's Safe
& Supportive Schools
Video Message with
immigration resources
section

PGCPS
Immigration
Resources Site
Launched
(pgcps.org/
immigration)

Guidance issued to
Principals from
Division of School
Support & Leadership
Principal Guidance for
ICE Visits to School
from Office of General
Counsel &
Communications

Superintendent's
Safe Schools, Safe
Learning
Environments
Video Message
(Web, YouTube,
eblast to families
& staff)



Family & Community Engagement Virtual Events



<https://pgcps-org.zoom.us/j/84975331212>

Multiple PGCPS departments and offices have partnered to create virtual sessions to highlight how PGCPS is diligently working to ensure safe and healthy learning environments and provide support and resources for school administrators and families in response to changes to immigration policy.

Session Dates

- February 20 | 6-8 p.m. | North County
- February 24 | 6-8 p.m. | Central County
- February 26 | 6-8 p.m. | South County





PEA Engagement at Schools

- Parent Engagement Assistants (PEAs) will manage distribution of the Red “Know Your Rights” Cards
- Virtual sessions for clusters of PEA schools will be scheduled pending identification of PEA leaders and principal permissions (TBD by February 4)



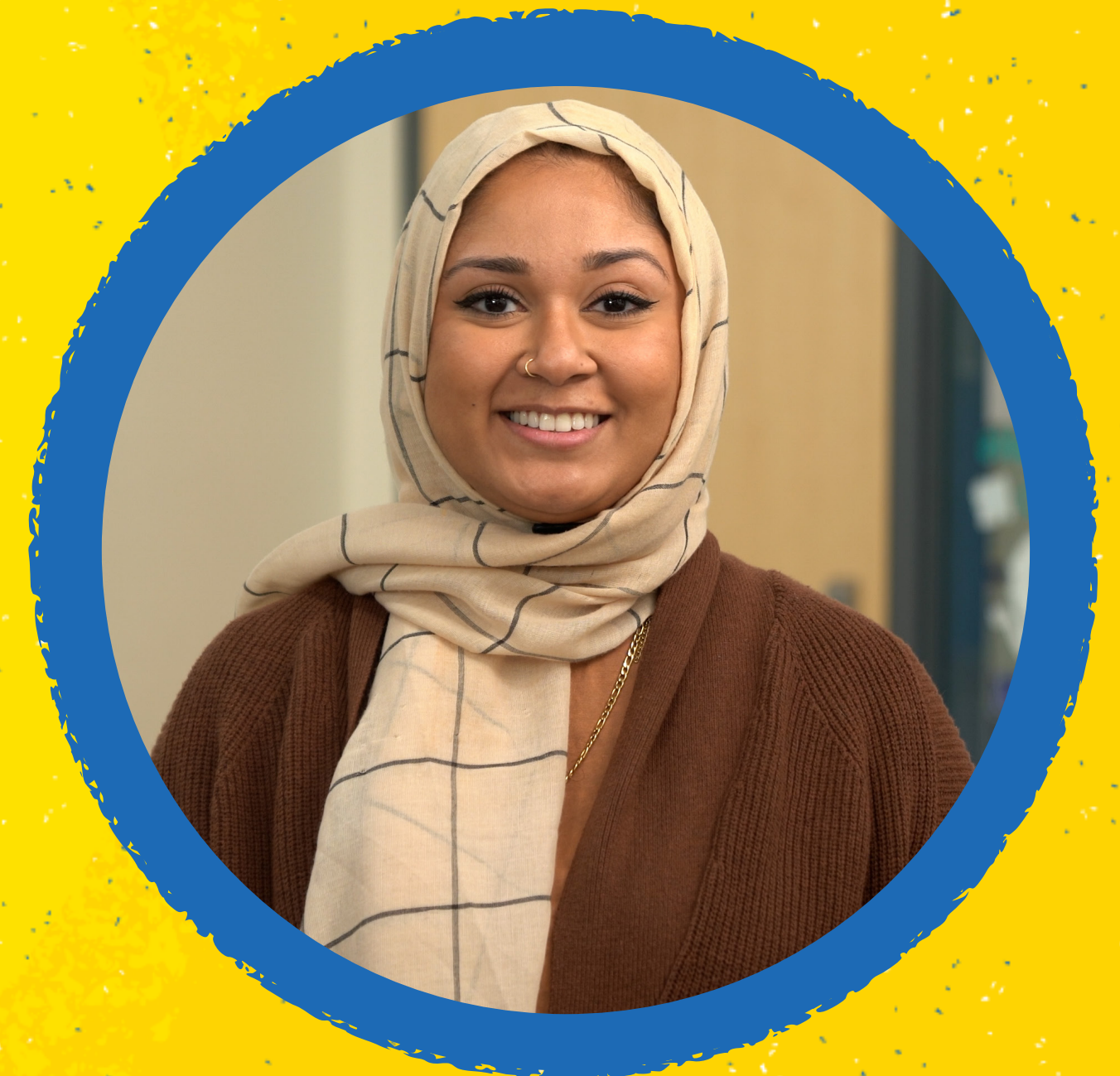
Continued Updates to Students, Family & Staff

WEEKLY

Superintendent's Task Force Meetings
(Rapid Response)

AS NEEDED

Immigration Website Updates
Superintendent Messages
Issued Guidance



Supports & Resources for Families



Immigration Resources Webpage (Communications)

Launched on January 22, the website is a one-stop platform for families to learn more about how we are responding to the policy change and where they can find resources including:

- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **“Know Your Rights” partner events**
- **Guidance Issued to District Personnel**





Guidelines from the State

- **January 27, 2025**

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown – Press Release: New Immigration Enforcement Guidance for Law Enforcement

- **January 28, 2025**

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Student Support & Federal Programs – Immigration Enforcement Actions at Maryland Schools: A Guide for Students, Families, and Local Education Agencies





Superintendent's Federal Transition Task Force

The task force is a multi-disciplinary body tracking ongoing changes to policy, legislation and administrative procedures to best support families. The body is represented by a variety of departments within PGCPS including

- **Superintendent**
- **Chief of Staff**
- **Schools Support & Leadership**
- **Office of General Counsel**
- **Research & Accountability**
- **English Learner's Department**
- **Communications & Community Engagement**
- **Office of Equity, Diversity, and Belonging**



Supports & Resources for Staff



- **Internal dashboards for principals and staff**
 - Containing guidelines and one-pagers for principals, front office staff and security personnel to prevent unauthorized visits
- **In-Person and Virtual Presentations on Immigration Resources**
- **Central Office supports for curriculum and instruction**
- **Safety & Security Presentations on Entry Protocols for Front Office Staff & Leadership**
- **English Language Development (ELD) presentations to staff on immigration trends, service provision and resources**
- **Mental Health supports through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and PGCPS Employee Wellness 360**





Supports & Resources for Students

- Mental health & medical supports available through Hazel Health
- Counselors and knowledgeable staff to allow continued, safe instruction and school environments





Language Access Resources

Language access is a parental right, and PGCPS has resources in place to ensure families have equitable access to information and services within the school system, regardless of their primary language.

PGCPS Office of Interpreting and Translation



Know Your Rights & Resources

All people, regardless of immigration status, have certain rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution. Our students have a right to a safe and secure educational environment. Their continued presence in the classroom is vital to their growth, development and mental health.

- **For the most updated information visit www.pgcps.org/immigration**
- **Connect with your school Parent Engagement Assistants**
- **Sign up for text messages at www.pgcps.org (scroll to the bottom of the page)**
- **Ensure emergency contact information is up to date in ParentVue**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Are schools required to report immigration status to government agencies?

No, PGCPS does not track the immigration status of students or their families. We protect all of our students' constitutional and legal rights to keep their information private.



Are federal agencies allowed to conduct enforcement activities at school?

On January 20, 2025, Acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Benjamin Huffman issued two directives affecting long-standing federal policy that schools are “sensitive areas.” This means that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal agencies may now conduct arrests, interviews, searches, surveillance, or other immigration enforcement activities at or near schools, although DHS “trusts them to use common sense.”

At this time, we have no indication that ICE agents are stationed at our schools nor have any ICE agents been allowed on our campuses. However, we want to be prepared. There are strict protocols that aim to prevent any unauthorized individual from accessing any PGCPS campus, and our Federal Transition Task Force continues to issue rapid response guidance to principals and staff as the situation evolves.



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

In the event that a parent or guardian is detained during school hours, the school staff will keep students safe until an authorized adult can pick up the child. We recommend taking this opportunity to update your child's emergency contact information at the school or in ParentVUE. All parents, regardless of their immigration status, should list emergency contacts who can pick up their children in case of an emergency.



What should I do if I want to understand my immigration rights?

Only immigration attorneys can provide you with accurate advice about immigration rights and how you can protect the legal rights that you may have. Resources for legal assistance are listed here:

- **National Immigration Law Center**
- **Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland**
- **American Immigration Lawyers Association**
- **Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)**

