

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 29, 2026

RESOLUTION **4917**

FOR ACTION

SUBJECT: **RESOLUTION STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH
IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**

WHEREAS, it is the right of every resident school-aged child, regardless of immigration status, to access a free public education as guaranteed under federal law;

WHEREAS, consistent with *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202 (1982) and guidance issued by the New Jersey Department of Education, the South Orange-Maplewood School District has a responsibility to ensure that all school-aged children who reside within its boundaries, regardless of immigration status, can safely access a free public education;

WHEREAS, federal immigration enforcement activities and recent events in the wider community have created fear and instability that disrupts the educational environment and threatens the emotional safety of our students and families;

WHEREAS, these enforcement actions have impacted not only our nation as a whole but have been seen in the detention and removal of families, including school-age students, from within Essex County and even in this District, instilling fear and instability within our community and hindering the educational work of the District; and

WHEREAS, these actions by federal officers have served to impede the efforts of our District to appropriately serve our student and family population and have had a corrosive effect on their ability to access the education guaranteed to them under federal and state law,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education reaffirms its commitment that all school-aged children residing in South Orange and Maplewood receive a free public education; enjoy all the opportunities and benefits available in our schools, regardless of ethnicity, national origin, race, or immigration status; and do so free from harassment or intimidation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board stands in solidarity with all students and their families — and in particular students and families who are immigrants, people of color, and multilingual learners — in ensuring they may attend school free from harassment, intimidation, or disruption; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board affirms the District's continued strict enforcement of existing laws and policies protecting student privacy and safety, specifically:

- strictly limiting access for non-local law enforcement – including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement – to prevent disruption to the educational setting under Policies 7440, 9150, and 9320 and protecting students during transport to and from school under Policy 8360;
- adhering to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and District Policies 8330 and 8335 to protect student records from unauthorized review; and
- maintaining District protocol that requires immediate reporting of any ICE activity to the Superintendent's Office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board commits to an ongoing review of its policies regarding building access, recordkeeping, and educational access, and to taking any other necessary actions within its power, to secure a free public education for all school-age children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent shall share this Resolution with District families, staff, and vendors that have contact with students and families, using usual means of communication, and that the Resolution be translated into the languages spoken by students and families at home.