



Office of Deputy Mayor Jennifer C. Niles

John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 307 | Washington, DC 20004

February 24, 2017

Allyson Criner Brown
Associate Director/Tellin' Stories Project Manager
Teaching For Change
PO Box 73038
Washington, DC 20056

RE: Your proposal to make DC Public Schools and LEAs Sanctuary Schools

Dear Ms. Brown,

Thank you for your email dated February 14, 2017, regarding the proposal to make DC public schools sanctuary schools (safe zones).

Since November, this Administration has been working hard to remind residents, as well as the rest of the nation, that our DC values did not change on Election Day. In Washington, DC, we value our diversity and inclusivity, and Mayor Bowser has made it her top priority to uphold and defend our values. In November, Mayor Bowser hosted a community conversation with more than 5,000 DC residents, to hear their concerns and anxieties and to reaffirm Washington, DC's status as a sanctuary city.

Earlier this year, Mayor Bowser announced the establishment of the Immigrant Justice Legal Services grant program, through which DC Government will provide \$500,000 to community-based organizations and others that provide legal services to DC residents. This includes services that directly impact students, including support for the renewal of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) applications and work permits; protection of financial assets and custody for DC children in the face of potential deportation of parents or guardians; and legal help for family reunification efforts for families with at least one DC resident.

My office has also supported DC Public Schools (DCPS) and the District's public charter schools, as they work to create welcoming and safe environments for all our students. In recent months, DCPS and the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB) have communicated their policies and commitment to creating schools where students, particularly undocumented and immigrant students, are protected. For your reference:

- The Public Charter School Board released a guide regarding sanctuary schools in January 2017, shared with all charter local education agencies (LEAs), available here: <http://www.dcpcsb.org/sanctuary-schools-undocumented-students-guide>.





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- DC Public Schools published a letter in December 2016, sent to all members of its school and family community, available here: <http://www.dcpsb.org/sanctuary-schools-undocumented-students-guide> <https://t.e2ma.net/message/pafjo/527g1m>.

Additionally, on January 31, 2017, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education distributed a letter to all LEAs from Mayor Bowser that provided educators and schools with information about how they can support and protect all students in the District. The letter referenced local and federal resources, including a [statement](#) released by the U.S. Department of Education, and contact information for the DC Office of Human Rights, where educators, families, and students can report incidents of discrimination and bullying: 202-727-0455 or bullyingprevention@dc.gov.

We affirm our commitment to ensuring our schools are safe zones, and will support each LEA in determining how best to protect and support their students, staff and school communities—particularly supporting students without legal documentation and other immigrant youth.

We appreciate the important work that Teaching For Change and its partner organizations does each day. Thank you for supporting DC values and for all that you do to ensure the safety and security of DC students, families, educators and residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JNiles', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jennifer Niles
Deputy Mayor for Education

cc: Antwan Wilson, Chancellor, District of Columbia Public Schools
Scott Pearson, Executive Director, DC Public Charter School Board

