

January 30, 2017

Dear Excel Family,

On Friday afternoon, President Trump signed an Executive Order that suspended entry of all refugees into the United States. When refugee entry into the United States resumes, the order gave priority to refugees who are a religious minority in their country. Mr. Trump has explained in interviews prior to this week that he intended this aspect of the order to give priority to Christian refugees from majority-Muslim nations. Additionally, Mr. Trump blocked entry into the United States of citizens of seven predominantly Muslim nations.

Many people – religious, political, and other leaders, and many citizens – have protested this order over the weekend. Religious leaders of many faiths have voiced concern that by giving preference to Christians over Muslims to enter our country, the order pits one faith against the other. Many people have also expressed the belief that as much as we can help people, we should do so, without regard to the recipients' faith.

There has been much confusion about the implementation of this order, and already some aspects of it have been blocked or overturned by courts. It remains to be seen what will happen and to what extent the order will be implemented.

In the meantime, I want to reaffirm that at Excel Academy we honor and welcome people of all faiths. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Atheist, or identify in any other way, you are welcome here. I also want to reaffirm that we welcome students and families regardless of immigration status, and that we are proud to operate in the communities of Chelsea and Boston – both of which have stated strongly they will remain “sanctuary cities” for all of their citizens. Our doors are open and we will continue to serve all members of our community.

As you may know, Excel Academy has also been hosting information sessions to help families know their rights under the law and get support with immigration-related questions. We will host more events in the coming month, and will send out information about them via flyers, text messages, and phone calls. We hope that you will join us.

Please see the below FAQs for more specifics on what that means practically in our schools. Please don't hesitate to reach out to either your Head of School or to me personally if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Owen Stearns, CEO





FAQ:

Q: Does Excel turn away immigrant students who lack documentation?

A: No. Any child who is admitted to Excel through our blind lottery is welcome in our schools. Excel does not ask or record the immigration status of any student or their families.

Q: Will Excel release information about the immigration status of a student?

A: Pursuant to Federal law, State law and our own policy, Excel does not track and does not disclose the immigration status of any students to anyone without the consent of the parents and/or a court-ordered warrant. The confidentiality of student records is protected by law.

Q: What would school administrators do if immigration agents came to their school to ask about the immigration status of students or their families.

A: They would deny this request and bring it to the attention of the CEO's office. Any staff member who receives a request for any personally identifiable information should report this request to their manager and the Head of School. Only school administrators can direct the release of information, and would not do so without the written consent of the student's parents or a court-ordered subpoena.

