



LEWISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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RE: CONCERNS BEING RAISED

Hello Lewiston Community:

Over the last 24 hours, I have had numerous inquiries from various members of our community who have shared and generated many questions and hypotheticals about the potential for an increase in immigration enforcement presence in our community. Please note we do have procedures in place, and they have been reviewed at our schools. [A document sharing procedures can be found here.](#)

Should someone have questions outside of the scope of school, there are many resources and organizations to reach out to.

This communication intends to share existing policy and procedures that we, as Lewiston Public Schools, have followed. Below you will see that we took excerpts from policy, attempted to explain & share some additional information, and some relevant sample events. The risk in sharing this is that there are differing viewpoints, anything we share is subject to interpretation, and we are just trying to explain things simply; some will think we should say more, some will think we should say less, and some will think we should say nothing at all. Saying nothing is not an option.

Excerpt From Policy KLGA: *The School Committee recognizes that a cooperative relationship with law enforcement authorities is desirable for the protection of students and staff and in maintaining a safe school environment.*

Explanation with additional information: LPS cooperates with law enforcement, but within the constraints of other protections of the law. For example, we do not allow access to or dismiss students to anyone who is not identified as a parent or guardian, with parental or guardian consent, or by a verified court order.

Sample: After a recent tragedy, Lewiston Public Schools was asked to provide the immigration status of some students by other agencies. We were not able to provide that information as it was part of a record maintained by the school and thus protected by the Family Educational Rights and Protections Act or FERPA.

Excerpt From Policy KLGA: *School administrators and staff have the primary responsibility for maintaining proper order in the schools...*

Explanation: We lean on our school and district leaders to carry out the procedures for maintaining our schools.

Sample: When things arise, if they are unfamiliar or lack the predictability of a typical daily interaction, administration should be contacted. If there is something suspicious just outside of school grounds, for example, please notify the administration. They can assist with next steps and escalate as appropriate.

Excerpt From Policy KLGA: *In general, the School Committee discourages SROs and other law enforcement authorities from using the schools as a venue to arrest and/or question students for activities not related to or affecting the schools. The Superintendent and administrators retain the authority to deny access to students for non-school-related investigations.*

Explanation: We openly discourage and work to prevent schools and school grounds from being used as a place to carry out law enforcement that has nothing to do with school or school safety. In addition, according to policy, we have the authority to deny access to students at school unless conditions as mentioned above have been met and verified.

Sample: We have been approached in the past about law enforcement meeting with a student for events that have occurred outside of school, and do not present a danger to the school. We have denied access or sought out other strategies in communication with law enforcement and families to mitigate these requests. We believe these non-school-related law enforcement activities to be

disruptive to learning and the peace and usefulness of school as a whole. We have administrative procedures in place to verify documentation that any agency or guest may provide.

Excerpt From Policy KLGA: *The School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to develop administrative procedures, in consultation with the Lewiston Police Department, to guide interactions between the schools.*

Explanation: Lewiston Public Schools consults regularly with the Lewiston Police Department (LPD). LPD is not immigration enforcement. Together, we have worked to establish procedures that are aligned with FERPA and other family protections of records and restrictive access for others on school grounds. We maintain our ability to carry out these procedures.

Sample: LPD and our LPD School Resource Officers will not be carrying out immigration enforcement on school grounds. We will be using our policies and procedures should we have any guests seeking to do so on school grounds.

Excerpts taken from LPS policy, which can be found in full at

<https://sites.google.com/lewistonpublicschools.org/lewistonpublicschoolspolicyman/k-school-community-home-relations/klga-relations-with-school-resource-officers-and-law-enforcement-authoriti>

There are many hypothetical scenarios. Too many to try to capture them all. We have been building some frequently asked questions, and we thought it best to share some of our responses.

1. What happens at bus stops?
 - a. Our obligation as a school is to pick up and drop off at bus stops. We do not allow guests on our buses unless it is specific to school safety and should be approved by the Superintendent and Hudson Management. Our responsibility does not extend beyond.
2. Should we video if concerns arise?
 - a. LPS has and maintains many cameras and their related footage. It is not our procedure to record or disseminate interactions as part of our work. In addition, when footage captured is requested at the school or transportation level, it must be approved by the Superintendent for access or dissemination. These are vetted for compliance, procedure, and legal rights of those involved. We ask that staff and students not record or take any action outside of their scope of responsibility.

3. Should we or can we do something after hours to support students and families?
 - a. Use of school facilities for non-school use or after hours has specific protocols. If you have questions about facility use, please reach out to your immediate supervisor.
4. What can we do if students are absent?
 - a. We have already seen student absences, and we anticipate more if there is a greater presence of immigration enforcement in our community. While these are family decisions, we cannot provide alternative education at this time. Per statute, we are unable to excuse students for these absences, but we will continue to assess how we can hold students harmless while families make these tough decisions. We are hopeful everyone will encourage families to communicate absences daily and have their students return as soon as possible. But again, these are family decisions.
5. What about Temporary Protective Status with the changes in protections from Federal directives?
 - a. We have inquired with others to see who might be on the list of those with temporary protective status. There are some assumptions but we are not certain how many (if any) in our community will be directly impacted by this change in criteria.
6. What about staffing?
 - a. We do have some staff who are concerned. We will continue to keep a pulse on staffing levels and the ways in which we can work with those who may have disruptions.
7. After-school and off-school grounds activities...
 - a. We will continue to monitor situations locally and will assess as information becomes available.

These are just a handful of questions that have come up. The hypotheticals and potential scenarios can and will create additional stress on our students, families, staff, structures, and community as a whole.

It is essential in these times that we remind ourselves of the value of the pilot staying calm. In these cases, every staff member is a “pilot” to others. Administrators pilot staff, areas, and buildings. Teachers and support staff pilot classrooms, transitions, and other spaces. Facilities, Nutrition, IT, HR, the Business Office, and other staff pilot different areas of district operations.

It takes all of us to stay calm and provide stability in times of uncertainty. If we do not stay calm, those around us will not. We must continue to operate with civility toward all, stick to policy, procedures, and, of course, be supportive of each other.

Sincerely,

KJLanglais

K. Jake Langlais
Superintendent of Schools

Note - These documents are being translated and will be made available on our announcements page when they are complete.

لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، يرجى الاتصال 1-855-938-0657

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