

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2026

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, representing 10,000 public school district leaders across the country, we urge you to include policy provisions that reinstate protections for sensitive locations and prohibit immigration enforcement on or near school grounds as part of the FY2026 Department of Homeland Security legislation.

For more than thirty years, during both Republican and Democratic administrations, the federal government has recognized the importance of schools and, through various policies, insulated them from the threat of immigration enforcement actions. One year ago, the Trump Administration rescinded a policy that restricted immigration enforcement activities on “sensitive locations” and created the possibility that these enforcement actions could take place on school grounds. This was a drastic policy reversal from a longstanding, bipartisan agreement that schools should be safe spaces for all students.

Since this policy reversal, there have been nine documented encounters with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on school grounds—three of which took place just last month.<sup>1</sup> Many more districts report ICE presence near school grounds, by bus stops, playgrounds and crosswalks. While the number of official encounters may be small in scale, the possibility of potential ICE actions on campus is having a profound impact. Many children and families no longer feel safe in school buildings, and the students who are in attendance are distracted by the prolonged absence of their friends and classmates.

AASA is deeply concerned by the disruptive and traumatic effects of immigration enforcement activities on and around school campuses. Such actions undermine student safety, interfere with the student learning and can negatively impact school attendance and funding. Emerging data shows that student attendance, academic achievement and graduation rates are declining because of potential ICE actions at schools.<sup>ii</sup> Meanwhile, educators and students report increased levels stress and anxiety.<sup>iii</sup> District leaders work tirelessly to provide children with the academic and emotional support they need to succeed, yet current conditions are causing unnecessary and preventable harm to our nation's students.

Providing every child in every community a high-quality education benefits the country by ensuring that the next generation is prepared to succeed in whichever path they choose and to contribute to society in meaningful ways. Children and their families need reassurance that they are safe in schools. Reinstating protections for sensitive locations is the first critical step to getting students back on track and rebuilding trust in our school communities. We urge Congress to reestablish schools as a safe place and support any provision that prohibits immigration activities on or near school grounds.

Sincerely,

*Tara Thomas*

Tara Thomas  
Senior Government Affairs Manager  
AASA, The School Superintendents Association

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security and the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security

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<sup>i</sup> Modan, Naaz. "ICE Activity on K-12 School Grounds." *K-12 Dive*, Feb. 2, 2026, <https://www.k12dive.com/news/ice-activity-on-k-12-school-grounds/810648/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Ordway, Denise-Marie. "How School Kids Are Affected by Immigration Crackdowns." *Education Writers Association*, Jan. 22, 2026, <https://ewa.org/data-research-tips/how-school-kids-are-affected-by-immigration-crackdowns>.

<sup>iii</sup> Sawchuk, Stephen. "The Widespread Effects of Immigration Enforcement on Schools, in Charts." *Education Week*, Nov. 12, 2025, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-widespread-effects-of-immigration-enforcement-on-schools-in-charts/2025/11>.