

Despite Rhetoric, School Leaders Stand with Undocumented Community Members, Guest MINDSETTERS™

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Guest MINDSETTERS™ Capellan, Chiappetta, Garcia, Nora, Sheehan, Carpenter, Shepherd



What is it that makes a small part of the world a community? For us, it is collective experiences, shared lessons learned, and diverse perspectives. These things force us to question the status quo and to raise the bar. They pique curiosities and provide inspiration. As educators, we seek every opportunity to learn and so it would seem that to us a strong community is one that challenges us to grow.

Our community is this and so much more. The families we serve are wonderfully diverse. It's part of what makes our small part of the world so strong. The vast array of perspectives our students and their families bring is what we believe will make tomorrow better than today. Although, recently many of those perspectives have become harder to hear.

Among calls about bus schedules and school vacation dates are calls about immigration. Current events have shaken many in the communities we serve to their core. Every day, we worry about the fear our students have for their loved ones, friends, neighbors, and themselves. From our experience, we know, that regardless of difference, whether it be economic status, race, or anything else that makes a child unique, that every student deserves a high-quality education. Every child - even if the thing that makes them unique is their immigration status.

Our schools are home to the workforce of tomorrow. One with a legacy rich with cultural diversity. DACA (the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy) has given new meaning to the American Dream. Right now, DREAMers have come under attack. Our young people, many of whom came here as infants or small children and have only ever known America as their home, could face immediate deportation. Our students - future doctors, scientists, teachers, leaders, and innovators - are facing a future where they could be separated from their parents, not knowing whether they will ever be reunited. A future where they could be forced to leave their college and career dreams behind. A future of complete uncertainty.

We believe that every member of our community deserves to grow to their full potential and right now, the future contributors to our society who are destined to usher in tomorrow's discoveries are sitting in our classrooms, frightened about what is to come. When times are difficult, communities band together and so, as leaders in our community we say: We stand with you. We are committed to standing in solidarity with every member of our community because a strong community is one that challenges us to grow.

Victor Capellan, Superintendent, Central Falls, Jeremy Chiappetta, Executive Director, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, Angelo Garcia, Founder/Head of School, Segue Institute for Learning, Julie Nora, Director, International Charter School, Carolyn Sheehan & Kyleen Carpenter, Executive Director and Head of School, Blackstone Academy Charter School, Toby Shepherd, Executive Director, Nowell Leadership Academy