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To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Schools
Administrators of Public, Charter, and Nonpublic Schools

From: Angelique Johnson-Dingle 

Subject: Enrolling students who are refugees or asylum seekers

This memo provides important information regarding the obligation of schools and districts to enroll students, including refugees or asylum seekers, pending receipt of their health records and to assist them in obtaining all necessary immunizations within the applicable time frame. Lack of proof regarding immunization is not grounds to deny students the ability to attend school while they work towards obtaining immunizations or proof thereof within the timeframes set forth in law and regulation. While enrollment of international refugees and asylum seekers is required, as long as they meet the age and other requirements, please contact the Office of Instructional Support for more information. **Refugees and**

asylum seekers come from diverse regions of the world and bring with them varying immunization histories. Unlike most other immigrant populations, refugees and asylum seekers are not required to have any vaccinations before arrival in the U.S. In addition, vaccines may not be readily available in their countries of origin. While refugees undergo immunization assessment and administration as part of the federal intake process, asylum seekers are only recommended to receive vaccinations once they have been granted asylum status and may therefore require additional guidance and support to understand the requirements and how to comply with them.

Furthermore, as federally funded entities, local education agencies (LEAs) are required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide translations of all documents necessary for school program access, including those pertaining to immunization requirements. For further information on translation of vital documents, please see [Information for Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them.](#)

In accordance with Public Health Law (PHL) §2164(7)(a), schools may allow students who are from out of state or out of country to attend school for up to 30 calendar days if the student does not have immunization documentation but there is evidence of a good faith effort to obtain immunizations or other evidence of immunization. See

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