

**Subject: Resolution No. 136-25A4**

**In Support of Comprehensive Immigration Reform that Prioritizes the Needs of Children and Families**

- Commissioner Matt Haney

**WHEREAS:** San Francisco is a city founded by immigrants, where over a third of the current population is immigrant, and nearly half speak one of over 112 different languages other than English; and

**WHEREAS:** The Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District has repeatedly expressed our support for all students, and their ability to learn, grow and thrive in every available facet of our school district, regardless of their country of origin and/or documentation status; and

**WHEREAS:** The Board of Education has previously passed resolutions in support of the Federal DREAM Act, and policies to support our students and former students in applying for “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals;” and

**WHEREAS:** San Francisco is a sanctuary city, which prohibits city employees from helping Immigration and Customs Enforcement with immigration investigations or arrests unless such help is required by federal or state law or a warrant; and

**WHEREAS:** The 113<sup>th</sup> Congress and the President of the United States have made comprehensive immigration reform to fix our broken immigration system a top legislative priority; and

**WHEREAS:** Immigrant children and the children of immigrants represent a major part of our shared social and economic future in San Francisco and across the country, and deserve the same opportunities as their peers; and

**WHEREAS:** The Supreme Court of the United States recognized in *Plyler v. Doe*, that our Constitution guarantees access to public elementary and secondary school for all students, regardless of immigration status; and

**WHEREAS:** Undocumented San Francisco Unified School District students face significant hardships and barriers in obtaining a full and equitable educational experience; and

**WHEREAS:** Failed federal immigration policies create major challenges for the San Francisco Unified School District in providing “access and equity” for all students, and ensuring that each and every student has an equal opportunity to succeed, as defined in the District’s Strategic Plan; and

**WHEREAS:** Non-citizen parents and families are unable to vote in San Francisco Board of Education elections, and face other barriers and fear of deportation that can prevent them participating fully and equally in the education of their children; and

**WHEREAS:** Children of immigrant families, regardless of their own immigrant status, face a variety of challenges to their health and well being that can impact their educational attainment, including poverty, lack of access to health insurance, and substandard housing; and

**WHEREAS:** Record increases of deportations in recent years have broken apart families, which can have a profound impact on a child's social, mental, emotional and physical well being; and

**WHEREAS:** The daily fear of being deported or having a family member deported can have significant consequences on a student's ability to be successful in school and to plan for their future; and

**WHEREAS:** The current apprehension, detention and removal policies, which criminalize immigrants and their families, are often traumatizing to students and can lead to depression, grief, and anxiety that affect their ability to pursue their education; and

**WHEREAS:** Comprehensive immigration reform must prioritize the health, well-being and safety of children, including preventing the separation of a children from his or her family wherever possible, and expediting family reunification by reducing unreasonable wait times and arbitrary rules; and

**WHEREAS:** A child should not be expected or required to represent himself or herself in an immigration proceeding; and

**WHEREAS:** Comprehensive immigration reform should include a streamlined process for young people who have grown up in this country to become citizens, and this process should be available equally to those who are pursuing GEDs, vocational training, and alternative education in addition to those completing a high school diploma and higher education; and

**WHEREAS:** Comprehensive immigration reform must ensure that the significant financial barriers to higher education, including the lack of access to federal aid and loans, are removed for undocumented students and formerly undocumented students; and

**WHEREAS:** Comprehensive immigration reform should include a realistic, fair, and equitable pathway for all aspiring citizens that meet reasonable requirements and should ensure humane treatment and due process rights for all; and

**WHEREAS:** New proposed requirements for aspiring citizens, including English language proficiency, should not be overly onerous by presenting significant economic burdens on newcomers;

**WHEREAS:** Comprehensive immigration reform should extend the same rights to same-sex couples as those afforded to all other families, including the right of American citizens to sponsor same-sex partners for legal residency; and

**WHEREAS:** Immigration judges should be able to look closely at a number of factors, especially children and family ties in the United States, when considering whether to cancel deportation; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District urges the President and the Congress of the United States to prioritize the needs and rights of children and families in their approach to fixing our nation's broken immigration system; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the San Francisco Unified School District will provide a copy of this resolution to our Congressional delegation and United States Senators; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED:** That the San Francisco Unified School District will advocate by any means available, including supporting amendments to proposed legislation, for comprehensive immigration reform that addresses the issues outlined in this resolution.

6/25/13