



River Trails

SCHOOL DISTRICT 26

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Jodi Megerle
Date: February 10, 2026
Subject: School Property Signage

Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to provide the Board of Education with the pros and cons of posting signs on school district property that restrict immigration enforcement. This analysis was prepared in consultation with the district attorney and the Mount Prospect Police Chief.

Recommendation

The Board is requested to review the following analysis to determine if this item should be moved to a formal recommendation for a future meeting via discussion and a straw poll.

Background

At our December 2025 board meeting, the board agreed to add this as a future topic for consideration.

Analysis of Options

The following pros and cons are presented for the Board's consideration:

- **Pros:**
 - **Trust and Safety:** Clearly identifying the school as a "safe zone" sends a visible message that the school is a safe zone, which can reduce student anxiety and encourage families to access services without fear.
 - **Establishes a Clear Boundary:** It formally asserts the school board's jurisdictional control over its property and sets a clear policy that the primary function of school space is education and safety, not federal enforcement activities.
 - **Consistency with Policy:** Reinforces existing district protocols that require all law enforcement to check in at the main office before accessing grounds.
- **Cons and Risks:**
 - **Political Confrontation and Federal Retaliation:** The federal Administration has demonstrated a willingness to be politically vengeful toward public and private entities that combat its policies.
 - There is a risk, though perhaps small, that moving forward would make District 26 a "target" for the Department of Education or other federal agencies.
 - Explicitly "forbidding" federal agents could lead to legal scrutiny regarding local interference with federal law enforcement.
 - **"Safe Zone" Misinterpretation and Disruption:** The Board should consider if the signage might unintentionally attract disruption by creating a perception that District 26 is a "sanctuary" where ICE cannot operate. If an enforcement action occurred in the neighborhood, the target might flee to District property under this misinterpretation, inadvertently inviting high-stakes federal activity onto school grounds.

- **Public Perception:** The installation may be perceived as a political statement or publicity outside the district's educational mission, potentially creating division or vocal dissent within the broader community or media.
- **Not Legally Binding:** Federal law enforcement is generally not bound by local prohibitions on the use of local property by federal agencies. The sign serves as a statement, but it does not **prevent** or **prohibit** an agent from conducting official business or using the lot if no other legal or operational reason prevents them.
- **Lack of Alignment with Local Government:** Because Mount Prospect has not passed a resolution, the school district is acting in isolation. This could potentially create political friction between the school district and the Village government, making future cooperation more difficult.
- **Limited Legal Authority:** Signage cannot legally stop an agent who possesses a valid judicial warrant signed by a judge; it may only deter those with "administrative warrants" which do not grant access to non-public areas.
- **Misleading Sense of Security:** While boosting trust, the sign may create a false sense of absolute protection. If an agent still conducts enforcement activities nearby, the community's trust in the school could be damaged for having suggested a level of legal protection that the school cannot actually guarantee.
- **Difficult to Enforce:** School staff (principals, staff) are not federal law enforcement and lack the authority to physically prevent a federal agent from entering or using the lot for official duties. Enforcement relies entirely on passive deterrence.

Financial Impact

- Potential costs for design, procurement and installation of signs.
- Legal costs for language development.
- Any potential legal action that may arise.

Timeline and Next Steps

If the Board wishes to proceed, next steps would include:

1. Legal review to ensure the specific wording of the signage does not inadvertently conflict with state or federal laws.
2. Policy review and formally update the district's policies to include these new guidelines.(e.g. Visitors)
3. Determine logistics, such as sign count, locations, detailed costs and installation window.
4. Connect with our insurance company to see what legal coverage might look like.

Attachments

- None