

Resolution 1920R-015

By Director Phillips

WHEREAS, The State of Wisconsin has a proud history of welcoming immigrants of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, races, and creeds; and

WHEREAS Wisconsin is home to almost 50,000 Hmong people, who comprise one-fifth of the entire Hmong population of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Many of the Hmong people living in the United States and in Wisconsin came here as refugees fleeing genocide and retribution for supporting our troops during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee is proud to be able to boast of a large Hmong population among our neighbors, family members, friends, co-workers, business owners, students, and veterans; and

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court held in *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) that no public school district has a basis to deny children access to education based on their immigration status, citing the harm it would inflict on the children and society itself and the equal protection rights of the Fourteenth Amendment; and

WHEREAS, The Milwaukee Public Schools, its administrators, its educators, and its staff proudly stand by all of our students, staff, and families, regardless of their race, ethnicity, faith, national origin, immigration status, political viewpoint, abilities, sexual orientation, or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, In March of 2017, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, by a unanimous vote, took action to declare MPS “a welcoming and safe school environment for students and families threatened by immigration enforcement or discrimination, and [that] such enforcement shall be opposed to the fullest extent permitted by the law”; and

WHEREAS, In that same action, the Board resolved to “...do everything in its power to afford equal protection to all students and staff”; and

WHEREAS, The Milwaukee Public Schools is proud to have among its many outstanding schools the Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA), which was established as a MPS non-instrumentality charter school in 2004; and

WHEREAS, HAPA, as the first Hmong charter school in Wisconsin, provides students with rigorous academics, character development, and Hmong cultural values and prepares them to excel in higher learning and careers by “...building cultural pride, instilling high expectations for achievement, and empowering students as peace builders”; and

WHEREAS, It has been reported that the Trump administration is in talks with the government of Laos to allow for the deportation from the United States of Lao and Hmong immigrants who are not U.S. citizens and who have standing orders of deportation issued against them; and

WHEREAS, These reports have sown fear among Hmong communities across Wisconsin, including those in Milwaukee, leading community leaders and local and national elected officials to call upon the President to reconsider this proposal and to express their opposition to any agreement that would result in the deportation of Hmong people living in Wisconsin and the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors hereby emphatically and unequivocally states its steadfast and unanimous support of the Hmong community living here in the United States, in Wisconsin, and in Milwaukee, especially of those among our students, among our staff, and among the families in our district; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors demands that our federal government reject any proposal that would result in the deportation of any members of our Hmong community, local or national; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors hereby directs the Board Clerk to have an engrossed copy of this Resolution, suitably signed and sealed, prepared and transmitted to the President of the United States, to the Wisconsin delegation of the United States Congress, to the Milwaukee delegation of the Wisconsin State Legislature, and to Governor Tony Evers as a declaration of its vehement opposition to any attempt to deport any Hmong refugees living in the United States.

February 27, 2020