

# Memorandum of SUPPORT

## Support Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

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The New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) supports the passage of proposed legislation that would protect the legal status of individuals who currently participate in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and ensure that they are on a path to citizenship.

School districts have a clear obligation to all students to provide them with access to a free, appropriate public education. When a child presents him or herself for enrollment, we enroll and educate that child. Questions about district residency are addressed later. Questions about citizenship and immigration status are not asked at all.

The announcement that the Administration would phase out the DACA program led to a growing sense of anxiety and uncertainty in our schools. How can our students pay attention in class when their minds are consumed with thoughts and images of being deported and sent to a country that they do not consider their home? Or when they are grappling with fear that the same will happen to someone in their family?

Since its establishment in 2012, DACA has provided a framework for families, communities and districts to uniformly understand the rights and responsibilities of the students protected by this program. However, as this program was not enacted by legislation, but rather administrative action, its reversal could be, and in fact has been, made with little or no public input.

Congress must act now, and alleviate the anxiety and potential disruption that this uncertainty will cause. Please take formal legislative action now to enact the DREAM Act and make it crystal clear to families, communities and school districts nationwide that the more than 800,000 children and young adults covered by this program are safe and on a path to citizenship.

Of the 800,000 individuals covered by DACA, one-third (more than 200,000) are in high school. Additionally, more than 20,000 are actually serving as teachers in schools around the country.

Uncertainty and sudden change are not conducive to a well operating school system or to student outcomes. Our members want to serve their students - all of their students - and give them the best chance for success. Please support our students and teachers by taking legislative action now to protect these children and young adults.

For these reasons, NYSSBA strongly supports legislation to protect the legal status of individuals who currently participate in the DACA program, and ensure that they are on a path to citizenship.