



## ALAS STATEMENT RE: DACA decision Sept. 5, 2017

WASHINGTON – At public schools across our nation, students have returned to classrooms, filled with excitement and expectations of a safe, nurturing, and secure environment in which to learn. Now however, a new and profound threat looms for thousands of these young people, which immediately impacts their capacity to learn, the stability of their families, and their ability to live peaceably and productively within their communities.

With the announcement regarding abolishment of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, the U.S. Justice Department and administration have created a chasm within our public school system that will ultimately weaken America, create apprehension and fear among students and staff, and may spell disaster for a significant portion of our student population.

The Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) is fundamentally opposed to this action, and we condemn it in the strongest possible terms. As education leaders within the communities we serve, ALAS members are acutely aware of the challenges faced by DACA students. In addition to the expectation of meeting learning objectives required by often inconsistent state and federal achievement mandates, DACA students frequently face additional hurdles such as language barriers, cultural isolation, and economic deprivation.

Through this administrative action, DACA students now must confront perhaps the most powerful and debilitating issue of all – the prospect, and accompanying stresses, of long-term uncertainty. At best, these students and their families must rely on a divisive Congress to dictate their future over a protracted timeframe, or worse, being permanently - and perhaps forcibly - severed from their families and sponsors within the U.S.

As an organization committed to equal opportunities for school administrators and students of color, we at ALAS believe the DACA directive is based on misplaced fear, protectionism and exclusivity, and that these fabricated tenets represent the exact opposite proposition upon which our nation was founded. Further, within the context of the current administration's policies and priorities, the DACA announcement can also be interpreted as yet another precedent intended to attack, weaken, and disrupt the public school system upon which generations of Americans – and immigrants - have relied upon to educate their children.

We encourage all Americans to stand up for these young people, and, in a larger sense, the fundamental equality of our public school system, by advising their legislative representatives of their desire for a swift, civil, and positive outcome for the inclusion of DACA students as permanent residents, endowed with the same bright prospects as all students entering classrooms across the United States; free from oppression and legal limbo, and able to participate equally within the national treasure we know as our public school system.

Nancy Lewin

Executive Director, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents