



Amherst Massachusetts

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

Town Hall Mezzanine
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

Phone: (413) 259-3002
Fax: (413) 259-2405
townmanager@amherstma.gov

Statement by Town of Amherst

Town Manager, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Schools
January 30, 2017

The Town of Amherst is a welcoming community.

We uphold the integral and foundational American principles that the United States is a nation of the indigenous and the immigrant, and we should continue to welcome new immigrants to our great nation and to our community.

We – the Town Manager, Chief of Police and Superintendent of Schools - are appointed officials and leaders of the Town entrusted with the responsibility to uphold both its laws and its values. Our first and primary mission is the protection and education of the people of every age who live, work, visit, or study in the Town of Amherst.

We work under the policies and guidance provided by our elected leaders – the Select Board, School Committee and Town Meeting.

As public officials, it is our duty to use our legal and moral authority to protect all members of our community no matter their race or color, gender, physical or mental ability, religion, socio-economic status, ethnic or national origin, affectional or sexual preference, gender identity or expression, genetic information, lifestyle, age, or indeed their immigration status and to foster a community that is free of fear, intimidation and violence.

In our diverse community, we strive to maintain partnerships and positive relationships with all members. We believe these positive relationships lead to a safer community, a better educated citizenry and improved quality of life for all members of our Amherst community.

A town or school with people who will not call the police when they are victims or witnesses to crimes for fear that they will be deported, or children who are afraid to pursue their education, or residents who don't seek proper healthcare services is a weaker, less safe community that harms all of us.

We also value the strong relationships we have built over the years with our Federal and state colleagues who support our efforts with funding for important activities including subsidized school lunch; initiatives to improve reading, special education and teacher education; domestic violence prevention programs; and Community Development Block Grants for both services and infrastructure.

It is clear that it is not within the primary mission of any Town department to enforce immigration laws. In December 2016, the Select Board, at the request of the Human Rights Commission and in recognition

of the Town Meeting action of 2012, proclaimed that, to the extent permissible by law, the Town and its officials and employees shall not participate in Federal enforcement programs relating to immigration enforcement.

In accordance with established department policy, the Amherst Police Department shall not inquire about the immigration status of any crime victim, witness, or suspect unless such information is directly relevant to the investigation, nor shall they refer such information to Federal immigration enforcement authorities unless the information developed is directly relevant.

Our preK-12 schools will continue to enroll and serve every child living in our district who chooses to attend our schools without regard to her or his immigration status. This is in accordance with rulings of the Supreme Court and with guidance from the Federal Department of Justice and Department of Education that students cannot be denied a free public education on account of their immigration status. Furthermore, a significant strength of our schools is the diversity of our student body, which is enhanced by students coming from different nations and speaking a wide array of languages.

These policies and procedures are in compliance with the overall policies articulated by the elected officials of the Town of Amherst.

Paul Bockelman
Town Manager

Scott Livingstone
Chief of Police

Dr. Michael Morris
Superintendent of Schools