



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

Administration Building

Dr. MaryJo Yannacone
Superintendent

February 18, 2025

Good afternoon,

Over the weekend multiple news agencies have reported on a notice provided to schools on February 14th by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. This notice followed several Executive Orders from President Trump since his inauguration on January 20, 2025, that may impact K-12 educational programs. I am writing to staff and families today to clarify the current position of the SDST administration regarding these orders and notices.

The School District of Springfield Township is governed by the residents of our community, who have elected nine representatives to serve on the Board of School Directors. We believe firmly in our mission to "educate our students as learners and citizens who are high-achieving, resilient and responsible in a changing global community." Aligned with our mission is an equity vision that we are "committed to and accountable for advancing equity and excellence for all of our students." Today and every day, we remain focused on our shared mission and vision.

Over the weekend, the United States Department of Education (Office of Civil Rights) released a [*Dear Colleague letter*](#) notifying school systems that they will be enforcing [Title VI](#) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They have indicated that further legal guidance is forthcoming, and that federal funds may be withheld from school communities that do not comply with federal law.

While some may legitimately debate whether the USDOE's interpretation of Title VI is correct, Pennsylvania school districts are subject to the [Pennsylvania Human Relations Act](#) and the Third Circuit Court of Appeals precedent that requires school districts to protect student rights and foster equity in the school environment. We believe that our policies and practices are aligned to federal and state laws and the standards of the PA Department of Education. Thus, we intend to continue to operate as we have in all regards, given our understanding of existing federal and state laws.

The potential loss of federal funding is certainly a concern, as our federal funds support Title I reading services in our elementary schools, special education services, school safety grants, and breakfast and lunch programs for our families in need of financial assistance. Fortunately, however, discretionary and non-discretionary federal funding comprises less than 2% of our district budget. Our community financially supports our school programs, facilities, transportation, and staff salaries and benefits at 79% of our budget, and the state of PA funds us at 19% of the district budget.

I am proud of our school community and our commitment to creating and sustaining a strong sense of belonging for everyone. We believe deeply in our mission and vision, and intend to continue to serve our community as we always have, with students at the center of all decision-making, and a strong belief in the dignity and worth of every member of our community to feel supported, included, and empowered to reach their potential.

Sincerely,

MaryJo Yannacone, Ed.D.
Superintendent