

Southside ISD Says Wider Range of Government-Issued Photo IDs Now Will Be Accepted for Campus Access

BY: JACKIE WANG OCTOBER 28, 2019

After Southside Independent School District community members [accused school district officials of restricting](#) parents who didn't have Texas driver's licenses from entering school campuses, the superintendent has taken steps to assure parents that a range of identification forms are now acceptable.

Southside ISD Superintendent Mark Eads wrote a letter to parents on Monday informing them that any form of photo identification issued by a governmental entity, including a matrícula consular ID card, would be accepted when verifying parents' identities on school campuses.



Southside Independent School District has informed parents that all forms of government-issued identification will be accepted for access to campuses. Photo by: Scott Ball/RR

Two Southside parents told the *Rivard Report* earlier this month that they had been denied access to two separate Southside ISD campuses when they tried to use their matrícula consular ID, [a form of identification issued by Mexican consulates to citizens living outside of Mexico](#). Both parents had previously used that form of identification without problems at the campus.

During a school board meeting on October 17, **COPS/Metro Alliance** leaders, backed by parents and students, pleaded with the district's board of managers to meet with Eads and Southside leaders to solve the ID requirement issue.

Eads said in his letter Monday that he talked to each campus principal, and that visitors could present any of the following forms of identification when visiting school campuses (although other government-issued IDs also may be accepted):

- State-issued driver's license or identification card
- United States passport or passport card
- United States military identification card
- United States diplomatic license

- Foreign passport
- Foreign driver's license
- Foreign military identification card
- Diplomatic, consulate, or embassy identification card
- Matrícula consular identification card

“In my discussions with each campus principal, I confirmed that any visitor who provides a form of photo identification from a governmental entity will be entered into the Raptor system, whether through scanning or manual entry of information, and will be provided equal treatment regardless of race, national origin, or immigration status,” Eads wrote.

Earlier, Eads said only a state-issued ID or a Texas driver's license could be scanned into the school district's Raptor system, which is used to screen for sex offenders. However, names can be manually entered into the system, North East ISD spokeswoman Aubrey Chancellor said earlier this month. Eads previously said that parents without those forms of identification could visit their children in a different setting, separate from other students.

Parents told the *Rivard Report* they were embarrassed when they were prevented from enjoying the activities in which other parents were participating, including eating lunch with their child in the cafeteria or attending awards ceremonies.

“I met with every principal and they said we are trying to make it a positive experience, so I don't believe [the parents] are humiliated, I don't believe they are mistreated,” Eads said earlier in October. “We are going overboard to make it a pleasant experience. They can't have it their way because we are going to follow the law.”

Vincent Arreguin, a COPS/Metro spokesperson from El Carmen Church, said Monday that the organization and Southside parents appreciate the effort from the school board to resolve the situation.

“We continue to be committed in our interest to build the relationship with the district,” Arreguin said in a statement. “This is not only a win for our parents but our children who are the most important. We are glad that now there's clarification about the policy that has been implemented in other districts.”

The [Texas Association of School Boards](#) says that state law allows school districts to require people entering a campus to show their driver's license or another government-issued photo ID, but that is not a requirement.

A Southside ISD public information officer did not return requests for comment. The *Rivard Report* also left a message with Eads' office on Monday.