



HOW TO HELP IMPROVE SCHOOLS FOR TRANSGENDER YOUTH



In Texas, the governor issued a directive to investigate parents for child abuse if they provide gender-affirming medical care for their transgender children.

Under an Alabama law that took effect in May, it is a felony to prescribe gender-affirming puberty blockers or hormones to people under age 19.

And in the wake of a lawsuit by parents claiming a school had permitted a child to adopt a different gender without parental consent, plus the passage of Florida's newly minted "Don't Say Gay or Trans" law, the Leon County School District updated a manual to state that parents would be alerted if transgender students in their children's gym classes asked to use locker rooms matching their gender identities.

These are just a few examples of the wave of anti-transgender rules, policies, and laws that swept the nation during the 2021-22 school year as legislators in the majority of U.S. states introduced bills targeting transgender and nonbinary youth.

As the new school year gets under way, however, there are still steps that educators and others can take to improve schools for trans and nonbinary youth, families, and school staff. These steps are set forth by NEPC Fellow Elizabeth J. Meyer of the University of Colorado Boulder in a [recent piece](#) in *Psychology Today*. They include the following:

- Contacting the Title IX coordinator and superintendent of school districts to ask what measures are in place to ensure people who are transgender are treated with respect. A [Notice of Interpretation](#) issued last year by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights stated that the agency will enforce Title IX's prohibition on discrimi-

nation on the basis of sex to include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

- Letting school board members know you support a curriculum that provides accurate information about and depictions of people who are transgender and/or nonbinary. Even under [Florida's anti-transgender and gay law](#), teachers are still permitted to address LGBTQ+ issues in Grades 4-12 (in “age appropriate” and “developmentally appropriate” ways).
- Requesting that school principals provide professional development for educators by local trans leaders. A more general resource for educator professional development on GLBTQ+ issues is [A Queer Endeavor](#), an NEPC partner at the University of Colorado Boulder that “supports teachers and school communities to organize safer, more humanizing learning environments for LGBTQ+ youth, families, and staff.” Another resource is the [Trans Youth Equality Foundation](#), which also offers educator PD.
- Reach out to local trans youth organizations to learn about their work and offer support. One place to start is the [GSA Network](#), which provides resources to youth leaders who advocate for LGBTQ+ racial and gender justice.

Professor Meyer, along with Bethy Leonardi of CU Boulder and Harper B. Keenan of the University of British Columbia, are co-authors of the recent NEPC policy brief, *Transgender Students and Policy in K-12 Public Schools: Acknowledging Historical Harms and Taking Steps Toward a Promising Future*.

NEPC Resources on Gender Issues

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