



**Subject:** Resolution from a School Board Member **Item Number:** 12D

**Section:** Information **Date:** May 9, 2023

**Senior Staff:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Jessica Owens, School Board Member

**Presenter(s):** Jessica Owens, School Board Member

**Recommendation:**

That the School Board adopt the Resolution Nondiscrimination Against LGBTQ+ Youth in Education regarding the School Board's commitment to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination in the educational environment.

**Background Summary:**

The School Board has received many public comments and communications concerning its intent to protect the rights of students and families in light of proposed model policy changes by the Virginia Department of Education. During the 2022-23 school year, the School Board has not had a policy presented for consideration regarding changing its policies or regulations related to transgender students. Therefore members of the public are uncertain as to the School Board's position regarding protecting the rights of students and families. The proposed Resolution is submitted for consideration by the School Board and to create the opportunity for the School Board to have a public dialogue regarding its commitment to protecting the rights of students and families.

**Source:**

**Budget Impact:**

**RESOLUTION**  
**Nondiscrimination Against LGBTQ+ Youth in Education**

**WHEREAS**, VBCPS believes that every student is entitled to an education that is responsive to one's unique needs to reach their full potential and that all individuals have the right to a safe physical, emotional, and social environment where responsibility and respect are demonstrated daily and where students are engaged in learning and are active participants in the school community because they feel accepted and valued; and

**WHEREAS**, VBCPS, in accordance with its strategic plan, will continue to foster and build positive relationships between staff, parents, and students; and

**WHEREAS**, VBCPS encourages staff, parents, and students to respect differences, value the diversity of our school community and express themselves in a manner that is reflective of our core values and beliefs and promotes equitable education for all students of varying needs; and

**WHEREAS**, VBCPS is committed to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination in the educational environment. Accordingly, no student shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any VBCPS education program or activity based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, or on any other characteristic protected by state or federal law; and

**WHEREAS**, existing state and federal statutory and case law affirms the rights of both parents/guardians and students on issues of privacy and the right to freedom from discrimination under Title IX, Title VII and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Trevor Project, suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020), with LGBTQ+ youth being four times more likely to seriously consider suicide, to make a plan for suicide, and to attempt suicide than their peers; and

**WHEREAS**, LGBTQ+ youth who found their school to be LGBTQ+ affirming reported lower rates of attempting suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, LGBTQ+ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ+ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not; and

**WHEREAS**, existing policies in VBCPS create welcoming learning environments and align with division core values and beliefs and state and federal statutory and case law; and

**WHEREAS**, VBCPS is committed to engendering respect for the abilities and accomplishments of all people and to provide governance free from any practices or policies which, if enacted, would violate state and federal law and go against the school division's core values.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT**

**RESOLVED:** That the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach affirms, supports, and values each of our students and will continue to further our efforts to create a welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning environment providing protections for all students regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression or on any other characteristic protected by state or federal law; and be it

**FUTHER RESOLVED:** That the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach will adopt no policies in violation of state or federal law that would impede our ability to provide these guaranteed protections to our students; and be it

**FUTHER RESOLVED:** That a copy of this resolution be spread across the official minutes of this Board.

Adopted by the School Board of the City of Virginia Beach this 9<sup>th</sup> Day of May 2023

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Trenace B. Riggs, School Board Chair

SEAL

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Aaron C. Spence, Superintendent

Attest:

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Regina M. Toneatto, Clerk of the Board