

Community Impact of the 2022 VDOE Model Policies



Presented by
Narissa Rahaman
and Kyleigh Hynes
of Equality Virginia

Summary of Impacts

The 2022 Model Policies would:

- create a hostile school climate for transgender and non-binary students
- require faculty and staff to forcibly “out” trans and non-binary students to their parents, putting these students at risk
- require transgender and non-binary students to utilize an unnecessary process to be referred to by their affirming name and pronouns
- contribute to reduced feelings of safety and decreased academic performance among transgender and non-binary students

HOSTILE SCHOOL CLIMATES

★ The 2022 Model Policies would contribute to increasingly unsafe and unproductive learning environments for all students, especially trans students

Suicide Risk

43%

of LGBTQ youth in Virginia seriously considered suicide in the past year

including 53% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

13%

of LGBTQ youth in Virginia attempted suicide in the past year

including 17% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

Anxiety & Depression

72%

of LGBTQ youth in Virginia reported experiencing symptoms of anxiety

including 76% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

54%

of LGBTQ youth in Virginia reported experiencing symptoms of depression

including 60% of transgender and nonbinary youth.

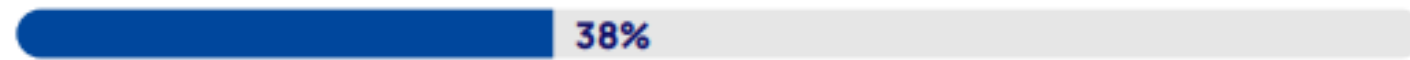
“As a public school employee, I know how important it is to have a welcoming and accepting environment for all students. Children should feel safe in school to explore who they are and who they want to be. These policies would take that away from them. This affects all children. The harm to nonbinary and trans students will indirectly impact their peers. Those children will see adults not protecting their friends. This erosion in trust will affect all schools if these policies are enacted.”



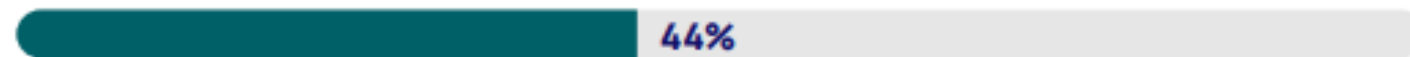
PUBLIC COMMENTS

INCREASED STUDENT SAFETY RISK

LGBTQ youth who identified home as an LGBTQ-affirming space



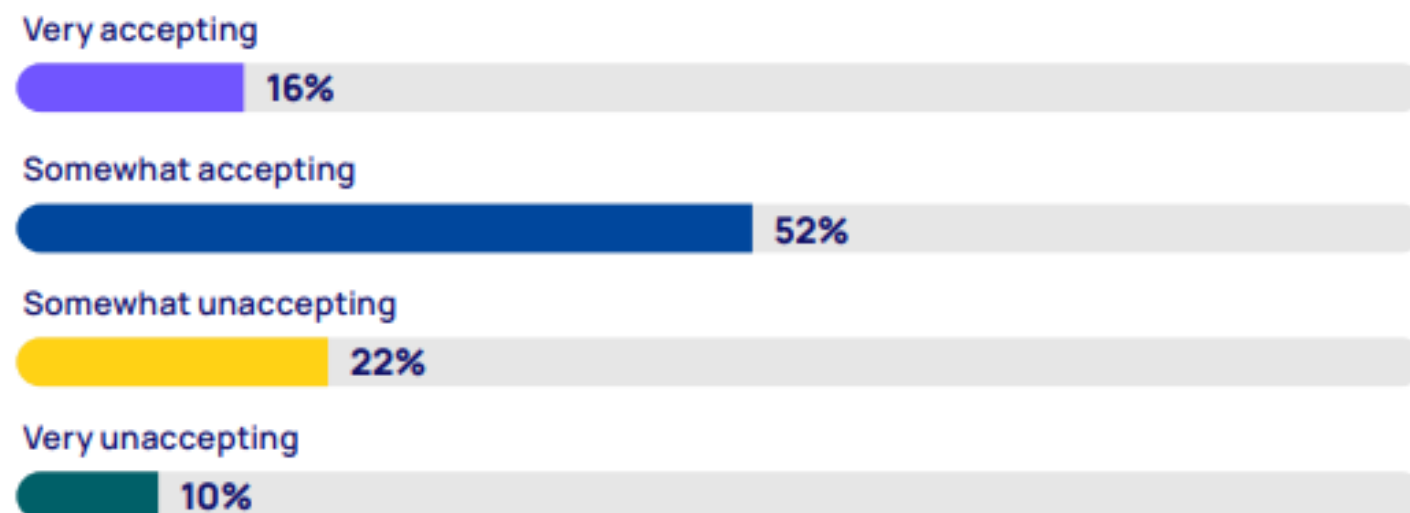
LGBTQ youth who identified school as an LGBTQ-affirming space



Social support among LGBTQ youth



Rates of community acceptance of LGBTQ people among LGBTQ youth



The 2022 Model Policies would require school personnel to disclose a student's real or perceived transgender status to their parents without the student's knowledge or consent, or any consideration for the student's resulting well-being

"I've worked in education for several years, including as an administrative assistant at a very good school in Fairfax County. Throughout my time there, I came to know and help several trans students who would use the bathrooms in the Main Office or come to the nurse's office while I worked in there. They were all able to go about their schooling with the names they chose as well as their preferred pronouns. Without that, school would have been immensely harder. These kids deserve to have their identities respected where they spend the majority of their time. To be denied their names or identity would create a mental health and bullying crisis in our schools."



PUBLIC COMMENTS

UNDUE BURDEN ON STUDENTS AND PARENTS



Requiring parents to submit in writing that their students be called by the appropriate name and pronouns creates an unnecessary burden on families, and puts some students at risk

- Can create harmful circumstances and threaten the health and safety of transgender and non-binary students whose parents are not supportive
- Even for students who succeed in updating their name and pronouns at school, the model policies still allow educators to misgender and deadname these students
- Affirming transgender and nonbinary youth by respecting their pronouns and allowing them to change legal documents is associated with lower rates of attempting suicide
- Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having their pronouns respected by all of the people they lived with attempted suicide at *half the rate* of those who did not have their pronouns respected at all

“I am a parent of a transgender male student. Each day I worry for his safety. As a parent and an educator, I believe it is not the responsibility of the educator to “out” a child because of who they are. Outing a student can lead to being rejected by their parent which in turn can have detrimental effects and may put these children in danger.”



PUBLIC COMMENTS

REDUCTION IN ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



The negative school environments and increased student stress that the 2022 Model Policies would create directly influence transgender and non-binary students' academic success.

- Per GLSEN's 2021 National School Climate Survey:
 - 74.2% of transgender students reported feeling unsafe at school based on their gender
 - 72.9% of transgender students avoided bathrooms at school
 - 58.6% avoided locker rooms
 - 51.2% avoided gym/PE class
 - 38.3% missed school for safety reasons
 - 53.4% of transgender youth reported being prevented from using their chosen name and pronouns
- Transgender students who face this sort of victimization are three times more likely to have missed school in the past month than their peers.
- Of the LGBTQ+ students who indicated that they were considering dropping out of school, half (51.5%) indicated that they were doing so because of a hostile school climate, including issues with harassment, unsupportive peers or educators, and gendered school policies and practices



***ON THIS BASIS, EQUALITY VIRGINIA
VEHEMENTLY OPPOSES THE
PROPOSED "2022 MODEL POLICIES ON
THE PRIVACY, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT
FOR ALL STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN
VIRGINIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS." WE
URGE THE VDOE TO RESCIND THE
POLICIES.***