

SMYTH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

DR. DENNIS G. CARTER, DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT
121 BAGLEY CIRCLE, SUITE 300
MARION, VIRGINIA 24354-3140
PHONE: 276-783-3791
FAX: 276-783-3291

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July 23, 2021

Families of Smyth County Schools,

As you are likely aware, all public school boards in Virginia are required by state law to adopt policies concerning the treatment of transgender students and common issues regarding transgender students no later than the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. This requirement is consistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution and Title IX, both of which have been legally interpreted to protect transgender students from discrimination and harassment in public schools. The Virginia Department of Education published model policy language intended to serve as a starting point for public schools to meet the statutory requirement. The model policy language is designed to ensure a positive, safe, and nurturing learning environment for all students, based on the key philosophy that all children have a right to learn, free from discrimination and harassment.

The Smyth County School Board met during their regularly scheduled meeting on June 14th to consider a first reading of the policies and how our current policies meet the state requirement.

Through conversation with our legal counsel, Smyth County Public Schools policy manual regarding discrimination and harassment meets the requirements of state and federal law without the need for any additional language. The policy change adopted during the June 26th Smyth County School Board meeting merely adds a citation referencing the new Virginia statute and affirms our compliance with the law.

In addition, all school boards and their employees are required by law to implement, observe, and enforce applicable school laws and regulations, which include both the state code requiring policies and the relevant components of federal law (Equal Protection and Title IX). Smyth County Public Schools practice over the last twenty or more years has been consistent with those legal requirements.

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to call your school or the Smyth County School Board office.

Sincerely,

Dennis Carter, Ed.D.
Division Superintendent
Smyth County Public Schools

