



PARENTS DEFENDING EDUCATION

ACTION

**STATEMENT: PDE Action Supports Governor Youngkin's
Model Parental Rights Policies**

July 19, 2023

Making good on his campaign promises, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin released the finalized version of his “Model Policies on Ensuring Privacy, Dignity, and Respect for All Students and Parents in Virginia’s Public Schools” on Tuesday. PDE Action is encouraged by the Youngkin Administration's steadfast support for students, parents, and Virginia schools.

Governor Youngkin’s Model Policies rightly protect parents’ rights to direct the upbringing and care of their children. Unfortunately, this very basic right is under attack in schools across Virginia. Our partner organization, Parents Defending Education, has tracked ten districts in the Commonwealth with policies that explicitly state that schools may not notify parents if and when their child adopts another gender identity at school. With this direction from the Department of Education, we hope these districts revise their policies and make them more inclusive and transparent.

Further, the Model Policies rightly address the threats that anti-harassment policies all too often pose to free speech. In the name of “inclusion,” some school anti-harassment policies threaten students and employees with punishment if they fail to use an individual’s preferred name and pronouns. This flies directly in the face of First Amendment protections against compelled speech.

PDE Action applauds Governor Youngkin’s continued support for parents. Parent advocates also deserve credit for their dedication. In the face of threats, including from public officials, Virginia parents have stood strong. They continue to fight for their kids. These policies are a huge win for those parents, and they should be so proud of their courage and their efforts.