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Middletown BOE Approves Controversial Transgender Student Policy

The Middletown school district is now required to notify parents if their child seeks to go by a different name or gender pronoun:



Carly Baldwin, Patch Staff

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From the Middletown school board meeting Tuesday night, which was attended by many people protesting the new policy. (Middletown BOE)

MIDDLETOWN, NJ — On Tuesday night, the Middletown school board nearly unanimously passed [an extremely controversial policy](#) that opponents say will effectively "out" transgender students to their parents.

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The policy passed on its second reading Tuesday night. Because of that, effective immediately, Middletown teachers are now required to notify parents if their child wants to publicly be known by a different name or pronoun; if a child seeks to use a different bathroom or locker room than their gender at birth, or if a child seeks to play on a different sports team.

Eight out of the nine Middletown BOE members voted in favor of the policy last night.

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The only Middletown school board member to vote against it was Deborah Wright. Her vote against the policy was met with claps and cheering from the

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Dozens of parents, members of the public and also Middletown students stood up and asked the board not to pass the policy.

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Said one Middletown mom of two:

"Let it go on the record that each of you are aware that LGBTQ youth are at the highest risk of suicide. Joan Minnuies, Leonora Caminiti, Barry Heffernan, Joe Fitzgerald, Frank Capone, Jacqueline Tobacco, Kate Farley and Gary Tulp: You will have blood on your hands should a trans student taken their life because of the repercussions. We've had (teen) suicides in Middletown. Do you want to make it another one?"

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"What you are trying to do is harm innocent children just because the children identify as the opposite gender," said one Middletown teen.

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"Don't put Middletown students back in the spotlight for such a hateful and disgusting policy," said one woman from Atlantic Highlands. "You will be known as the school district who violated our students' civil rights ... If this policy passes tonight, the Middletown Board of Education will be in for a fight."

"I will never give up on making sure this policy never harms on our children," she vowed, and received resounding claps from the audience as she sat down.

However, there were some parents who stood up and defended Middletown's new transgender rules.

"As the mother of a rising fifth-grade son and first-grade daughter, it is my right as a parent of minor children to be notified if they were to request a change of their gender identity at school," said one Middletown mother, to claps from the crowd.

You can read the exact wording of the policy here:

<https://www.middletownk12.org/...>

Dozens of LGBTQ+ activists were also not allowed inside the High School North library, due to what the district said was space constrictions.

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"Let us in!" the protesters could be heard chanting from outside. "Say it loud, trans and proud!"

"There's a lot of people here and everyone wants to say something. But this meeting has to remain orderly," warned Middletown school board lawyer Bruce Padula, the attorney who helped write the transgender policy.

Middletown school district policy is set by the board members who sit on the policy committee. and they are: Assistant superintendent of schools Matt

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president Capone, and Board members Farley and Tulp, who both work as lawyers.

They proposed and wrote this policy and introduced it to the rest of the board for a vote.

By passing the policy, Middletown appears to be the second school district to directly challenge Gov. Phil Murphy's rules regarding transgender students. The NJ Dept. of Education specifically says that NJ school districts must accept a student's preferred gender identity and pronouns without notifying their parents.

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Earlier this spring, Hanover Twp. school district in Morris County [tried to require](#) teachers disclose to parents the gender identity and sexual orientation of students. The district was immediately sued by NJ Attorney General Matt Platkin, and a Superior Court judge asked the district to revise its policy.

It remains to be seen whether the Middletown school district will be similarly be sued by the state of New Jersey.

Also, Middletown is not alone: School districts in Marlboro, Manalapan and Colts Neck are currently considering similar policies that will notify parents about their transgender children. The Colts Neck BOE is scheduled to take up a similar proposal at their next meeting on June 28, according to the League of Women Voters of Monmouth County, which released a statement against it:

"Despite arguments otherwise, numerous studies and data show that forced outing to parents is harmful, not helpful to LGBTQ+ youth," said the League of Women Voters of Monmouth County. "It is important to note that this is not a stand-alone policy, but part of a concentrated effort to undermine public education. In addition to attacks on LGBTQ+ student rights, the campaign

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American history by prohibiting accurate and necessary conversations about race and equity. The League of Women Voters cannot stand by while a small minority uses our classrooms as political battlegrounds at the expense of our students and our country's future."

Original Patch report Friday on Middletown's new transgender student policy: [Middletown Mulls Parent Notification Policy For Transgender Students](#) (June 16)

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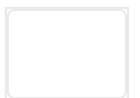
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