



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education
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Dear Colleagues,

On May 13, 2016, the U.S. Departments of Education (USDE) and Justice (USDOJ) Offices of Civil Rights issued [joint guidance](#) to school districts providing educators information required to ensure that all students, including transgender students, can attend school in an environment free of discrimination. This federal guidance prohibits discrimination based on a student's gender identity, including discrimination based on a student's transgender status. You may also recall that in July of 2015, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued a press release and a notification to school districts sharing our new guidance document—*Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students* that complemented the guidance document entitled, *New York State Dignity for All Students Act: A Resource and Promising Practices Guide for School Administrators & Faculty (revised 2013)*¹. Please click on this link [NYSED Dignity Act Home](#) to review the Promising Practices guidance document.

In addition, we are pleased to report that the USDE's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education released a document entitled [Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students](#), a collection of policies and practices that educational sectors across the country have in place supporting transgender students, and have highlighted NYSED's guidance on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students. The USDOE and the USDOJ have also provided resources on Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 with additional supporting government resources specific for transgender and gender nonconforming students - <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-departments-education-and-justice-release-joint-guidance-help-schools-ensure-civil-rights-transgender-students>

District administrators and school staff should continue to take proactive steps to create a positive school culture and climate in which transgender and gender non-conforming students feel safe, supported, and fully included. The Department looks forward to working with schools to help foster an environment where all students learn in a safe and supportive school environment. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the Department's Office of Student Support Services at 518-486-6090.

Sincerely,

MaryEllen Elia
Commissioner

¹ http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf