



Written by [James Murphy](#) on December 12, 2023

## North Carolina County Passes Pro-family Policies, Meets Resistance From LGBT Groups

On December 7 the Buncombe County Board of Education passed several new policies to bring the district more in line with North Carolina’s new “Parents’ Bill of Rights.” LGBT advocates were on hand to voice their displeasure with the new measures and with the Tarheel State’s new law.

Passed in August of this year, the [“Parents Bill of Rights”](#) survived a veto from Governor Roy Cooper (D). Cooper had referred to the bill, as well as the “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act” and the “Gender Transition/Minors,” which he also vetoed, as “a triple threat of political culture wars using government to invade the rights and responsibilities of parents and doctors.”

In reality, the law is meant to “enumerate the rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, health care and mental health of their children.” Opponents quickly labeled the legislation as North Carolina’s version of the so-called Don’t Say Gay law in Florida.

Among the law’s provisions are bans on curriculum regarding gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality in kindergarten through fourth grade. It also requires schools to report school information about a child’s physical and mental health (including transgenderim) to parents and of any student requests to be referred to by alternate pronouns.

The Buncombe County Board of Education voted unanimously to enact several new policies to bring the district more in line with the new law. Implementation of the law is set for September of 2024.

“There is a lot of fear and concern from our community on different sides of the spectrum. How do we balance that? We did our very best to do that,” said Board member Rob Elliot. “We know no one’s going to leave here tonight perfectly satisfied, but I do feel very confident and appreciative of our staff and community that helped us navigate this in a way that allows us to provide an educational experience that is safe and allows each and every child that comes into our school to reach their full potential.”

Naturally, LGBT activists, while not angry with the school board specifically, were angry that the new law was being implemented. Craig White of the Campaign for Southern Equality, an LGBT advocacy group, called out speakers who were supportive of the law.

“Every edit that you put in there to try to keep LGBTQ students just a little bit safer — they have called those out tonight. That’s what we live with — that scrutiny. That constant scrutiny, that constant fear of



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attack, that somebody is going to see us being ourselves and say, ‘That’s not OK. That needs to be stopped,’” White said.

In an email blast to supporters, White promised to file a civil rights complaint against the new law.

“It’s beyond disheartening to see school boards like Buncombe County Schools feeling forced into the passage of discriminatory policies that attack, exclude, and stigmatize LGBTQ+ students and families,” White claimed. “We look forward to joining in solidarity with students and teachers in NC by filing a formal civil rights complaint that demands investigation into the dangers of S.B. 49.”

Others at the meeting argued that the new policies did not go far enough in keeping to the spirit of the Parent’s Bill of Rights law.

“Parents may agree or disagree with their child’s choice, and that is their right. Parents — not school personnel — are directors of their children’s care and their moral training. To fulfill their legal and moral responsibility, parents need to know what’s going on with their child so that they can help their child appropriately,” said community member Staci Metcalf, who argued that the district’s [new policy](#) on parental involvement violated the Parent’s Bill of Rights.

“Nothing good comes out of lies, and nothing good comes from secrets. Evil lies in that darkness. This noncompliant verbiage to parents conveys that Buncombe County Public Schools have the right to withhold information from parents, and in effect, lie to them.” Metcalf added.



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