

Federal Transgender Guidelines

On Friday, May 13, the federal government announced new guidelines that directed public schools to treat transgender students consistent with their gender identity in a “supportive and nondiscriminatory school environment.” The New Hope-Solebury School District, like in communities all across our nation, will be educating itself in the directive to ensure compliance while at the same time keeping with one of our primary tenants and that is to provide an environment that is safe and conducive for learning for all students.

While the topic of transgender and transgender rights in schools and the workplace may be new to many communities across our region and great country, it certainly is not new to the New Hope-Solebury School District. We have had students identify themselves as transgender. We have handled these situations on a case-by-case basis dealing with specific concerns, requests, or cares. Collaboratively we have worked to meet the needs of the student, family, and district. We have consulted our district solicitor, attended workshops and seminars to gain additional insights to make sure that we are considering all aspects of our decision making. Our approach has been very successful.

The new guidelines do not change the fundamental purpose of our school system, which is student learning and helping our community’s youth achieve their maximum potential to be productive, responsible, and contributing members of their community. We are confident that the new guidelines do not interfere with this principle and that we are completely capable of being responsive to the guidelines in a manner where all students feel safe in our school system.

Over the next several months, the district will be review the following matters associated with the new guidelines:

- **Policies:** Review our discrimination and anti-violence policies to make sure they are consistent with the recently released federal guidelines.
- **Restroom and Locker Rooms:** Re-examine our district procedures to make certain we are in a position to honor employee and student preference when applicable as it relates to bathroom and locker room usage.
- **Dress Code:** Eliminate gender specific dress rules when applicable.