



POST-INAUGURATION SCHOOLS TOOLKIT

Who we are:

OutFront Minnesota is our state's largest LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.

Grounding:

Minnesotans, along with many in this country are navigating a changing landscape as a new White House shapes its agenda through executive action and work.

We recognize that for public schools and educators, it can be challenging to navigate discussions around what are often highly polarized cultural issues in diverse communities.

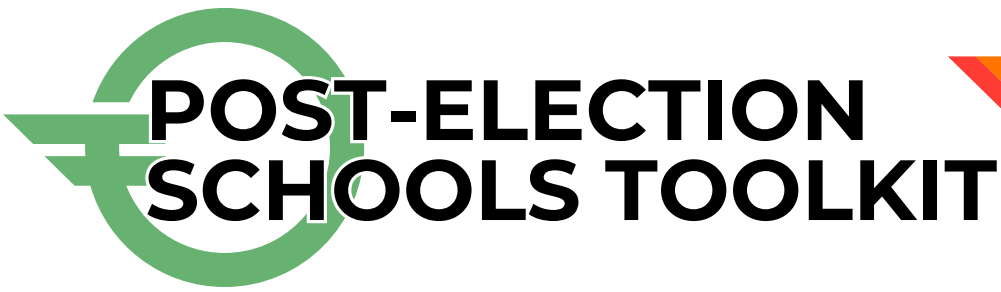
As an organization, we want to remind schools, educators, and families that while many issues - including those affecting our LGBTQ+ communities - are front and center in the current political landscape; our lives, our experiences, and our needs should not be seen as partisan. We are part of every demographic category and community in this state; we are students, staff, and families who are not issues but people first.

We encourage leaning into these hard conversations, in non-partisan, age-appropriate, and supportive ways - and to provide support and create space for community and care to those who may need it.

A Reminder About Executive Orders: Executive action is the fastest way for a president to message and act on a topic of interest. Executive orders may be issued quickly, but their implementation is almost always more complex. Executive orders are still constrained by current law and the constitution, and may be challenged (in part or fully) in courts. Moreover, unlike laws, executive actions are less permanent and can be reversed immediately when an administration leaves office.

What we know about impacts on youth:

LGBTQ+ youth were already reporting significantly elevated levels of anxiety around the impacts of rhetoric and policies in America - with the Trevor Project's annual youth survey showing that "90% of LGBTQ+ young people said their well-being was negatively impacted due to recent politics." The election cycle and political activity since the inauguration have amplified those concerns, with persistent, dehumanizing, and harmful policies and messaging around a broad range of diverse communities - including immigrants and members of the LGBTQ+ community. These raise concerns for the mental health of students and their families.



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We know that there are real concerns about policy changes that have been voiced by youth and adults in our communities. These include proposed changes that may curtail access to health care, limit civil rights protections, curtail federal funding, and reduce efforts to engage in work to support diverse communities. Moreover, this climate is not only causing harm - it is emboldening local level bullies who are targeting individuals in our communities throughout the state.

What schools and educators should know:

LGBTQ+ youth and their families may have a wide-range of questions around the potential impacts of executive actions and policy proposals from this new administration. These include a number of already signed executive orders that target federal recognition of gender identity, military service standards, gender affirming care, and school inclusion.


It is important that educators, families, and youth understand that while executive orders are serious tools, they cannot change the law federally or here in the state of Minnesota.

Organizations like OutFront Minnesota, Gender Justice, Advocates for Trans Equality, the Transgender Law Center, the Human Rights Campaign, GLSEN, and others will continue to be resources on up to date information and ways individuals can navigate this shifting landscape.


We also know that shifting policy landscape is raising concerns for educators and school administrators.

It is important to remember that changes in federal policy do not change the protections under the Minnesota's Human Rights Act and Safe and Supportive Schools Act here in our state. These laws provide clear and well-established expectations for inclusion that should be the basis of school policies, training, and practices in our state.

We urge educators and administrators to approach any federal orders with caution - many of these actions will be litigated and decisions to implement practices that are not yet law may put students and schools at risk.



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What actions we need schools to take:

We encourage schools to take the following five actions:

- Review relevant state law and local policies to ensure that current practices reflect the legal expectations of the state of Minnesota.
- Make clear statements to all stakeholders reiterating that bullying and harassment are not tolerated and outlining procedures for students, staff, and families who may be impacted.
- Ensure that diverse student populations have space and support to address concerns; and access to relevant materials and resources for their needs.
- Continue to support inclusive practices, investments, and curricular choices that align with best educational practices.

Resource List:

- OutFront Minnesota | outfront.org
- Gender Justice | genderjustice.us
- Welcoming Schools | welcomingschools.org
- Gender Inclusive Schools | genderinclusiveschools.org
- The Trevor Project | trevorproject.org
- GLSEN | glsen.org