NASP Condemns State and Local Efforts to Undermine Transgender Youth Rights and Well-Being

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) condemns recent legislative efforts and executive actions in states across the country that seek to discourage, criminalize, and endanger transgender and gender diverse students, as well as those threatening parents and educators who attempt to support and protect those students’ privacy and safety.

NASP affirms our long-standing position on necessary policies and practices to support the safety and well-being of all students, including those who are transgender and gender diverse. We maintain that the civil rights of transgender students are protected as part of U.S. public schools’ obligations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This includes respecting a person’s right to express gender identity, the right to modify gender expression when necessary, and the right to have their gender identity affirmed and acknowledged. Our position is consistent with all major medical, mental health, and education organizations.

NASP’s Professional Standards, which were revised and adopted in 2020, emphasize the necessary protection of students’ privacy as it relates to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sensitive health information. Our standards additionally outline the problem-solving steps that must be taken when school psychologists’ ethics conflict with the law, as they would if recent anti-LGBTQ+ policies were to go forward. School psychologists are called to advocate for changes to laws, policies, and practices that go against our ethical standards. NASP will continue to support efforts that align with ethical practices that support and affirm all youth.

Furthermore, dozens of courts over the last two decades have affirmed the full rights and identities of transgender people, and NASP will continue to advocate for the equal rights of transgender and gender diverse youth. While the legality and enforceability of recent executive orders, proposed legislation, and state and local school board policy is not yet fully known, even the possibility of punitive action puts LGBTQ+ children and youth at risk. The threat of losing legal protections, increased incidents of verbal or physical attacks, and the psychological toll of being invalidated as a person all undermine the health, safety, and learning for some of our most vulnerable students.

“Any and all policies that seek to ‘out’ LGBTQ+ students violate their privacy rights and endanger their well-being, as well as their that of families and supportive school staff. Without supportive and affirming education environments, students cannot learn and grow to the best of their ability,” states NASP President Laurie Klose. “We stand in solidarity with transgender and gender diverse students and will not stop fighting for your rights to both privacy and self-expression in and out of the classroom.”

NASP will continue to support school psychologists, other school leaders, and public officials in developing and implementing policies and practices that respect the rights of transgender and gender diverse students. Resources to help in this effort are available at http://www.nasponline.org/resources/transgender-youth.
For additional information, contact NASP Director of Communications Kathy Cowan at kcowan@naspweb.org or NASP Director of Policy and Advocacy Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach at kvaillancourt@naspweb.org.

NASP empowers school psychologists to promote the learning, behavior, and mental health of all children and youth. Further information is available at www.nasponline.org.

###