

# Inclusive, Enumerated Policies

Enumerated policies are policies that list characteristics or traits of students that may be the basis of bullying or discrimination at school. Inclusive, enumerated policies are a basic step towards creating safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ and all youth.<sup>1,2</sup> These policies usually call for protection for all students from bullying and discrimination, and the additional steps necessary to promote safety for specific groups of students that experience more bullying and discrimination.

## HOW COMMON ARE ENUMERATED POLICIES?

Although there is no current legislation for the nation or the state of Texas, a number of other states have enacted legislation to protect students from bullying and discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity or expression through enumerated policies.

**FOR STATE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION  
REGARDING ENUMERATED ANTI-BULLYING  
LAWS, VISIT:**

 [lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/safe\\_school\\_laws](https://lgbtmap.org/equality-maps/safe_school_laws)



## WHY IS ENUMERATION IMPORTANT?

Multiple studies at the state,<sup>3,4</sup> national,<sup>5-9</sup> and international levels<sup>10,11</sup> find that enumerated school policies are associated with improved school experiences and health for LGBTQ and all students.<sup>12</sup> Specifically, when enumerated policies are present, LGBT students feel safer at school, hear fewer homophobic remarks, experience less victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression,<sup>5,9</sup> report less absenteeism at school,<sup>12</sup> show more self-esteem,<sup>6</sup> and are less at risk for suicide<sup>3,4,7,13</sup> and substance use.<sup>10</sup>

This last point is particularly important. Studies show that in the presence of enumerated policies, teachers show more supportive behaviors toward LGBT students<sup>17</sup> and intervene more often in instances of harassment.<sup>9</sup> Further, students in schools with enumerated policies are less likely to report homophobic attitudes toward LGBT peers.<sup>18</sup>

Of course, school communities must be aware of these policies in order for them to be most effective. In some cases, students, parents, and school personnel are unaware of safe schools policies and believe that there are not procedures to deal with explicit protection for students who are (or who are perceived to be) LGBTQ.<sup>8,19</sup> In these situations, LGBT students may feel less assured that they can be supported.<sup>14-17</sup> A key strategy for promoting school safety, then, is to disseminate information about school policies so that students know about and understand state and local policies that affect them.<sup>20,21</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Texas policy-makers at the state and school district levels should enact inclusive and enumerated educational laws and policies.
- ✓ School personnel should establish local policies in school districts, schools, and classrooms.
- ✓ School personnel, parents, and students should learn about policies in their local school and school district.
- ✓ Using research evidence combined with personal stories about why it is important, school personnel, parents, and students should:
  - Raise awareness of the need for inclusive and enumerated policies.
  - Advocate for local and state policy change in Texas.

## DOWNLOAD THE FULL POLICY BRIEF, INCLUDING END NOTES THAT PERTAIN TO THIS SECTION

 [storiesandnumbers.org/stories-and-numbers-policy-brief-full-report.pdf](https://storiesandnumbers.org/stories-and-numbers-policy-brief-full-report.pdf)

## Enumerated policies can be protective for students in a number of ways:

- 1 They provide students with a clear understanding of their rights to safety at school.
- 2 They provide school personnel with the policy guidance to implement anti-bullying policies and practices.<sup>14-17</sup>
- 3 They signal to school personnel and students that LGBTQ-based discrimination should not be tolerated.