
What is Ohio House Bill 8 (HB 8) and when does it take effect?

Ohio House Bill 8, also known as the "Parents' Bill of Rights," is legislation signed by Governor DeWine in effect April 9, 2025. It mandates the adoption of [Board of Education \(BOE\) policies](#) and procedures that emphasize parents' fundamental right to make decisions regarding their children's upbringing, education, and care. Its primary intent is to empower parents with more control over their child's education and foster increased parental involvement in schools.

Who is affected by HB 8?

HB 8 impacts several groups. School boards are tasked with creating new district policies, such as the Westlake BOE Policy adopted in April 2025. All school personnel are responsible for implementing and adhering to these new policies. Students will have their information subject to disclosure under the policy, and parents will be required to be notified and provide consent for specific services.

What are the key policy requirements introduced by HB 8 regarding sexuality content?

HB 8 requires that any sexuality content taught in schools must be age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for the student's age or grade level. The content and curriculum for Westlake City Schools have been thoroughly reviewed by Academic Services and related teachers and have been found to be age and developmentally appropriate and compliant with state standards. Parents are given the opportunity to review any instructional material that includes sexuality content and can request that their child be excused from such instruction, with an alternative assignment provided instead. "Sexuality content" is defined as any oral or written instruction, presentation, image, or description of sexual concepts or gender ideology provided in a classroom setting, excluding certain mandated education like STI prevention or incidental references.

How does HB 8 address student privacy and communication with parents regarding a student's well-being?

HB 8 prohibits school district personnel from directly or indirectly encouraging a student to withhold information from a parent concerning the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or any changes in related services or monitoring. School districts must adopt a procedure for notifying parents of healthcare services provided or facilitated at the school and the parents' option to withhold consent or decline services before providing any type of healthcare service (physical, mental, or behavioral) to a student, unless it's an emergency. They must also promptly notify parents of any

substantial changes in a student's services, including counseling or monitoring related to their well-being, ensuring these notices reinforce parents' fundamental rights.

What does "student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being" encompass under HB 8?

The definition of "student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being" is broad and includes several aspects. At a minimum, it covers a student's academic performance; any significant sickness, physical injury, or psychological trauma; harassment, intimidation, or bullying; any request by a student to identify as a gender that does not align with their biological sex; and the exhibition of suicidal ideation, persistent symptoms of depression, severe anxiety, or other mental health issues.

When does a student's request to identify as a gender that does not align with their biological sex require parental notification?

HB 8 mandates reporting when a student makes a "request to identify as a gender that does not align with the student's biological sex." It does not require educators to report a student's sexual preference, gender expression (how they dress), or anything other than gender identity based on biological sex. For students who have already disclosed a gender identity different from their assigned gender at birth prior to HB 8's effective date, HB 8 does not require parental notification. However, students are encouraged to share this information with their parents, and school counselors can assist in facilitating these conversations.

What are some examples of "significant changes" in a student's well-being that would trigger parental notification?

The sources provide several scenarios that qualify as "significant changes" and require parental notification:

- ❖ A student who typically earns an A+ average in class suddenly stops submitting assignments and fails a quiz, bringing their average grade down to a D.
- ❖ A student who normally presents as engaged in class has recently become withdrawn, their grades have dropped, and they are evasive and tearful when approached about these changes.
- ❖ Monitoring related to a student exhibiting suicidal ideation, persistent symptoms of depression or severe anxiety, or other mental health issues.
- ❖ A request by a student to identify as a gender that does not align with the gender assigned at birth.

How are different levels of "healthcare" services categorized and what are the notification/authorization plans?

- ❖ Tier One (General Information/Routine): Examples Includes nurses' healthcare screenings, counselors' classroom lessons, general school year counseling services, and teachers/counselors addressing academic concerns.
 - Parental notification for these services typically include annual notices in Registration Gateway, Student Handbooks, Principal and/or Counselor newsletters, and direct communication with teachers for academic/classroom concerns.
 - Parents receive an [annual notification of healthcare services](#) and whether these services are mandatory or optional.
 - Parents have opt-out options for mandatory screenings performed by school nurses and may choose private/community providers instead.
 - ❖ Tier Two (More Specific/Sensitive Concerns): Encompasses nurses dealing with sickness or injury, administration addressing harassment, intimidation, or bullying, and staff receiving student requests to go by a different name or pronoun. This would also encompass counselors recommendation for on-going individual student check-ins or referral for small group counseling lessons.
 - This tier requires more formal and consistent methods for notification and authorization.
 - Parents can **expect direct phone call** from school nurses/administrators and/or direct email or phone call from counselors.
 - ❖ Tier Three (Intensive/Sensitive): Involves social workers and/or counselors for suicidal ideation (SID) notifications, recommendations for 1-on-1 counseling sessions, and situations where a student confides in staff about identifying as a gender other than their biological sex assigned at birth.
 - This tier requires **immediate and direct parental notification via phone call**, followed by emails providing overviews of any assessments, recommendations, resources, and active consent forms for any counseling sessions with the school social worker.
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