



# Statement: New Brunswick's Planned Review of School 2SLGBTQI Inclusion Policy Harms Children and Youth

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This month, the government of New Brunswick under Premier Blaine Higgs announced its intention to “review” New Brunswick’s policy on the inclusion of 2SLGBTQI students, families, and staff in school districts and public schools. As Canada’s national organization for 2SLGBTQI people and issues, Egale Canada is deeply concerned by what appears to be an attempt to undo progress made to ensure equitable and inclusive education for all.

The policy, known as Policy 713, was passed in the summer of 2020 and guarantees minimum standards for the protection of 2SLGBTQI students’ rights at school. Now, Premier Higgs and his government are considering rolling back those protections even as our communities face a [rising tide of hate](#).

Using the rhetoric of “parental rights,” the government of New Brunswick is considering rolling back young people’s rights to use a chosen name and pronouns at school without parental consent. Furthermore, using the arguments that fuel [anti-trans laws in the US](#), the government has announced its intention to review trans youths’ right to participate in sport events that are consistent with their gender identities – something that is not even explicitly contained in Policy 713. Premier Higgs has brought up his opposition to drag storytime events in conjunction with this policy review, although there is no connection between the two at all. Similarly, New Brunswick Education Minister Bill Hogan [mentioned](#) concerns about “the age appropriateness of what is taught in the classroom when it comes to sexual education” in his statement on the review: Policy 713 does not set a sex education curriculum.

To be clear: The government of New Brunswick is responding to a series of homophobic and transphobic moral panics at the expense of youths' safety. Homophobic and transphobic hate, not inclusive education, are a danger to children and youth.

Egale's report on homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in Canadian schools, [\*Still in Every Class in Every School\*](#), found that 2SLGBTQ students – especially those who are trans, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming – are far more likely to experience bullying and harassment at schools than their heterosexual and cisgender peers. They are less likely to feel safe at school or included in their school communities. The study confirmed that 2SLGBTQ students see institutional factors, including supportive staff, anti-homophobia/biphobia/transphobia policies, and inclusive curricula, as crucial to their well-being at school. 2SLGBTQI children and youth in New Brunswick will see the planned policy review as what it is: Their government failing to protect them from hate movements.

Outing 2SLGBTQI students to their families, denying them education on sexual orientations and gender identities, and preventing their equitable participation in extracurricular activities is unconscionable. The government of New Brunswick is allowing anti-2SLGBTQI hate to threaten the safety of students. With anti-2SLGBTQI movements and [\*violence\*](#) rising across Canada, all levels of government must take proactive steps to combat hate and ensure the safety and inclusion of all 2SLGBTQI people.