



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Civil Rights and Youth Organizations Send Letters to Texas School Districts Urging Them to Ensure Dress Codes Are Not Discriminatory**

Today, seventeen civil rights groups and youth organizations sent [letters](#) to every Texas school superintendent urging them to ensure their district's dress codes and related policies are not fostering unlawful discrimination that unfairly denies students an equal opportunity to get an education based on their race, gender, or religion.

The state and national organizations, including the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) and ACLU of Texas, note in the letters that in recent years, certain dress code rules – such as requiring boys to wear short hair – have harmed students across Texas, particularly Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ youth. The letters ask superintendents to update student handbooks this summer to remove any gender-based or discriminatory rules from dress codes.

Some Texas school districts still have dress codes that treat boys and girls differently or are applied in a manner that targets students of color who wear their hair in ways that pay homage to their racial or cultural heritage. After LDF and co-counsel Akin Gump won a preliminary injunction barring the Barbers Hill Independent School District from enforcing such a dress code against its client in 2020, many school districts changed their policies to eliminate discriminatory provisions.

“We have repeatedly seen how outdated dress code rules harm Texas students,” the letters note. “Mathis Independent School District (ISD), near Corpus Christi, punished two Catholic students for growing out their hair as a promise to God. In Troy ISD, near Temple, Texas, an 11-year-old student was suspended for 10 days for wearing long hair to honor his Black and Indigenous heritage. And Clyde CISD, near Abilene, Texas, made national news after suspending a gay student for decorating his nails. Troy ISD, Clyde CISD, and dozens of school districts across the state have now updated their dress code policies to remove gender-based language, and all districts should do the same.”

The letters continue: “No school district should put its federal funding or taxpayer dollars at risk by engaging in unlawful discrimination. Instead, school districts should ensure that every student can thrive and succeed at school.”

Read a full copy of the letters [here](#). They are signed by:

The Legal Defense Fund (LDF)  
The ACLU of Texas  
Texas Appleseed  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
Children's Defense Fund – Texas  
Juvenile and Children's Advocacy Project

Texas Freedom Network (TFN)  
Lambda Legal  
Equality Texas  
Transgender Education Network of Texas (TENT)  
National Women's Law Center (NWLC)  
Antidefamation League  
Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)  
NAACP Texas State Conference  
Native American Rights Fund (NARF)  
Organizing Network for Education (ONE) Houston  
Young Leaders Strong City

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*Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) (LDF) is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*