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## Highland Park passes school transgender rights policy

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shares**By Myles Ma**, [mma@njadvancemedia.com](mailto:mma@njadvancemedia.com)

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HIGHLAND PARK -- The Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to allow transgender students to use restrooms and locker rooms based on their gender identity, News 12 New Jersey reported.



Congressman Frank Pallone Jr. expressed support for Highland Park's proposed policy at a press conference on May 23, 2016.

The policy also allows transgender students to participate in any school program based on their gender identity.

In addition, it will create a district program to support transgender students, prohibit discrimination, protect transgender school employees in "promoting an LGBT-affirming school environment." The policy received the support of Republican

"With divisive and discriminatory laws being passed throughout the country and Congress attempting to take away rights from LGBT Americans, it is inspiring that Highland Park is fighting for equality in such a profound way," he said. The policy will serve as an example of how schools in New Jersey can be fair, compassionate and inclusive of all their students.

The school board crafted the policy after creating a committee comprising board members, mental health expert Superintendent Scott Taylor. Stephanie Sasso, a clinical psychologist based in Highland Park who was part of the policy offered stronger protections to transgender students than possibly any other district.

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The committee was already working on the policy when the Obama administration issued a directive May 13 in schools to allow transgender students to use bathrooms and other school facilities based on their gender identity.

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