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Education Law Center-PA Releases 2026-27 Back to School Guide

New and updated know-your-rights materials address changes in federal and state law affecting students across Pennsylvania

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PHILADELPHIA — As Pennsylvania students return to classrooms for the 2026–27 school year, the Education Law Center-PA (ELC-PA) has released its [2026-27 Back to School Guide for Pennsylvania Students, Families, and Advocates](#) featuring 39 new and updated resources — approximately 100 in total — to help communities understand and protect students’ education rights.

The annual guide brings together accessible fact sheets, analyses, and self-advocacy tools covering some of the most pressing issues facing students and families in Pennsylvania public schools. This year, ELC-PA published **12 new and 27 updated resources** to reflect significant changes in federal and state laws and regulations.

“Families should not need to be lawyers to understand their children’s rights at school,” said Deborah Gordon Klehr, ELC-PA’s executive director. “Our Back to School Guide makes complex and rapidly changing laws and policies easier to understand. It gives families, students, and child-serving professionals practical tools they can use to advocate for children and ensure they receive the education and supports to which they are entitled.”

New and updated resources in the 2026-27 guide address issues including:

- [Recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings affecting the rights of LGBTQ+ students](#);
- New resources to help families of students with disabilities [navigate IEP meetings](#) and [secure required services and supports](#);
- [Students’ Rights & K-12 Schools’ Obligations Under Title IX](#);
- [New requirements for students attending virtual and cyber charter schools](#); and
- Pennsylvania’s new [CROWN Act protections against racial discrimination](#) based on natural hair textures, protective hairstyles, and head coverings.

The 2026 guide also includes free, fillable self-advocacy tools that families and education decision-makers can use to make requests to schools, document concerns, and file administrative complaints when students’ rights are not being upheld.

Ensuring that all of Pennsylvania’s children have equal access to a quality public education.

ELC-PA develops and updates its Back to School Guide each year as part of its work to ensure that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. The organization focuses particularly on students who have historically been underserved and works to challenge policies and practices that perpetuate racial inequity and other systemic barriers to educational opportunity.

Explore the 2026 Back to School Guide: <https://www.elc-pa.org/2026-27-back-to-school-guide-for-students-and-families/>

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*The **Education Law Center-PA (ELC-PA)** is a nonprofit, legal advocacy organization with offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. Through legal representation, impact litigation, community engagement, and policy advocacy, ELC-PA advances the rights of underserved children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQ+ youth, children experiencing homelessness, and children at the intersection of multiple underserved identities. For more information, visit [elc-pa.org](https://www.elc-pa.org) or [@edlawcenterpa.bsky.social](https://www.edlawcenterpa.bsky.social) on Bluesky, [@edlawcenterpa](https://www.instagram.com/edlawcenterpa) on Instagram, [Education Law Center-PA](https://www.linkedin.com/company/educationlawcenter) on LinkedIn, and [facebook.com/educationlawcenter](https://www.facebook.com/educationlawcenter) on Facebook.*