

NEWS

Two California School Districts Are Banning Pride Flags on Campus

It's the latest in an uptick of anti-LGBTQ+ activism in California this year.



BY SAMANTHA RIEDEL

September 15, 2023



Los Angeles, CA – June 02:Armenian parents and their supporters protesting a Pride assembly are met by LGBTQ+ advocates at Saticoy Elementary School in North Hollywood on Friday, June 2, 2023. Tensions were heightened last week when a Pride flag was burned at the school. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz/MediaNews Group/Los Angeles Daily News via Getty Images) [MediaNews Group/Los Angeles Daily News via Getty Images](#)

Two California school boards banned Pride flags from buildings in their districts during separate meetings on Tuesday, the latest development in a conservative campaign against such flags in the Golden State.

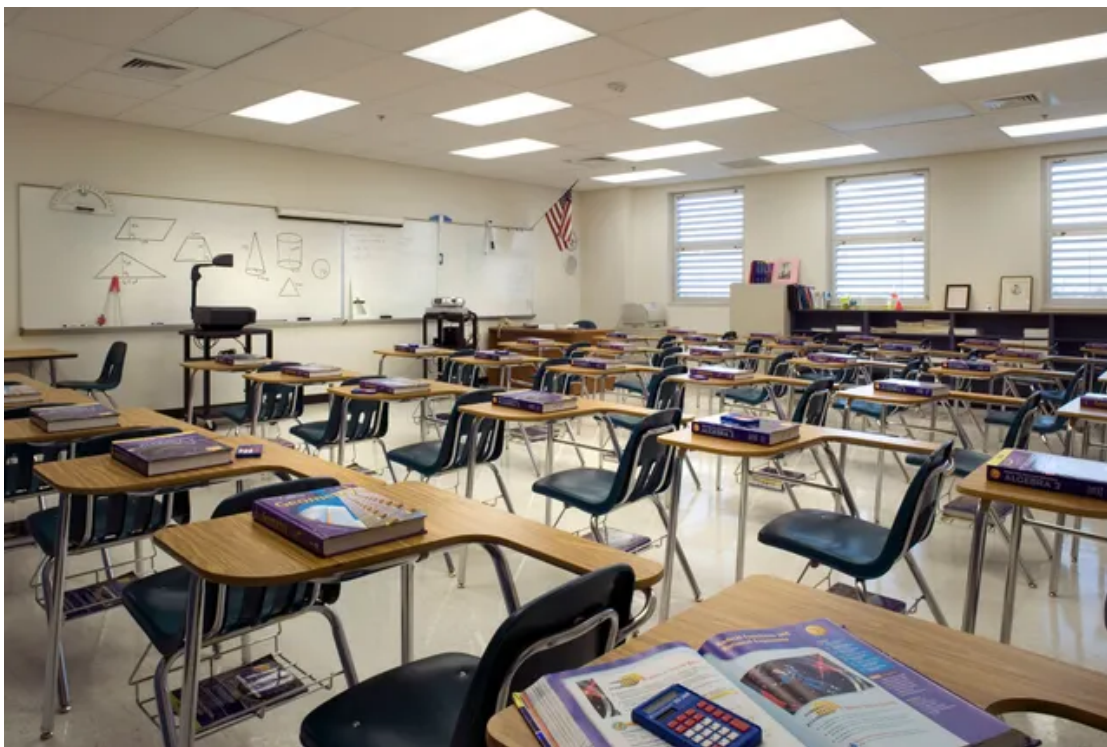
The Temecula Valley Unified School District board voted on Tuesday to ban the display of any non-government or military flags on school campuses. Although Pride flags are not singled out in the the new rules, they were a major focus of public comment, according to KABC; some conservative parents said that seeing a rainbow flag in their child's school made them "so upset" and alleged that seeing Pride iconography would make children "get curious" and "want to try it out," insinuating that such symbols would groom kids into gay sex.

The Temecula board rejected another resolution that would have affirmed the district prohibits bullying and harassment based on sexual or gender identity. Conservatives prevailed 3-2 in voting down the resolution, with board member Jen Wiersma objecting that she was "not here to be socially justice warrior-ed all the time."

Meanwhile, in the small Bay Area school district of Sunol Glen Unified, Tuesday's meeting descended into chaos as the board voted 2-1 to allow only the U.S. and California flags to fly in its single school. Members of the public repeatedly got into shouting matches, and board president Ryan Jergensen argued openly with school superintendent Molleen Barnes, who called the vote "disheartening" and said she and the rest of the school's staff felt "very disrespected."

Sunol board member Linda Hurley, who voted for the resolution, told [KUTV](#) that she voted to ban Pride flags because flying them could open the district to a lawsuit, which “could bring this school down.”

But parent and activist Diana Rohini LaVigne told the station that residents had hung Pride flags on school fences during June for years without issue, and that the controversy only arose after this summer’s flags were stolen. “So the staff put it up on the pole, as code permits,” she said, which “suddenly started the conservative board members to drum up a resolution to prevent that. We were willing to restrict Pride flags to off the flagpole but even that compromise wasn't acceptable.”



Two California School Districts Will Now Require Teachers to Out Trans Kids

The state's Attorney General has said that such policies could infringe on California law.

Although conservative groups have been [lobbying against Pride flags](#) for several years, California has experienced an uptick in such anti-LGBTQ+ activism this year, as right-wingers across the state rally against affirming policies in schools and local government. This week’s Temecula and Sunol resolutions follow a similar vote in June by the [Chino Valley Unified](#) school district, which voted 4-1 to ban Pride flags. Chino Valley now also [requires teachers to](#)

out transgender students to their families, as does the Murrieta Valley Unified district.

Conservative groups have protested other school board meetings, including in Los Angeles, sometimes with violent results. And it's not limited to schools; the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted to ban Pride flags from being flown on government flagpoles this past June as well.

Amid the furor, California Gov. Gavin Newsom is expected to sign new legislation into law that blocks state schools from banning LGBTQ+ books. Newsom's administration fined the Temecula school district \$1.5 million earlier this year for rejecting a history textbook that mentioned gay rights activist Harvey Milk.

"All students deserve the freedom to read and learn about the truth, the world, and themselves," Newsom said in a press release this week.

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