



Advancing LGBTQ+ Justice and Transgender Advocacy



Pre-Attendance Package

UniServ Directors will gain a deeper understanding of the LGBTQ+ community and the issues critical to providing support and guidance that is not only inclusive but liberating.

Lead Contact:

Ellen Holmes

NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support

eholmes@nea.org

Partner Contact:

Anthony Brisson

NEA Center for Racial and Social Justice

abrisson@nea.org

Director:

Tom Israel

NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support

tisrael@nea.org

Why Pre-Attendance Assignments?

The resources compiled here are short, relevant and intended to help you shift from the day-to-day cognitive load of work to the thinking you will use as a learner at the academy. We rely on a number of popular education strategies that involve the use of texts and scenarios for group work. Many participants find it difficult to do a “first read” in the classroom so we have provided those items here in case you would like to review them.

Please Do Before Arriving

1. Read and Reflect (pages 2-3):

Please take the time before arriving to read our community agreements. We will engage you in a discussion at the very start of our time together around these agreements and your commitment to them.

2. Key Terms (pages 4-9):

In order to have thoughtful and frank discussions on these issues, we need to be able to communicate. Recognizing that language around LGBTQ+ issues shift and change every two years, staff members at NEA compile and actively revise a list of key terms that we will be using during this academy. Please familiarize yourself with these terms so that vocabulary isn't a barrier to your participation.

3. Resources for Scenario Work (pages 17-20):

The scenarios are for group work. They will require some attention to the details. You should set aside some time to read and review these prior to coming especially if you are not comfortable doing a “first read” amongst others. It is not imperative that you memorize them, just become familiar with them.

Optional Food for Thought

“Library Book Bans...” Article (pages 10-16):

This resource has been provided to help frame one of the practical reasons we are offering this academy. We may reference it in our work together, and it may cause you to generate questions that you will want to explore while we are together.

Community Agreements for Our Time

Awareness and Self-Knowledge

This requires self-knowledge and self-awareness. Self-knowledge allows you to see what causes you pain and conflict and enables you to embrace your contradictions and inconsistencies. It allows the space to work on things about yourself that you are not happy with. In turn, self-knowledge helps to prevent you from projecting your negative aspects onto other people. Bringing your best self also requires that you have a positive attitude, are willing to deeply explore your perspectives and remain open to the perspectives and experiences of others.

Listening for Understanding

Be an active listener. Active listening involves paying full and careful attention to the other person, looking him or her in the eye, avoiding interruptions, reflecting your understanding, clarifying information, summarizing the other person's perspectives and sharing your own. Remember that most people need time to open up and might not be willing to immediately share their personal stories, hopes, fears and/or concerns.

Being Gracious

Being kind is a vital way of bringing meaning to our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Kindness is about caring genuinely for others around you, wanting the best for them and recognizing in them the same wants, needs, aspirations and even fears that you may have. Being kind and generous allows us to communicate better with others, to be more self-compassionate and to be a positive force in other people's lives. We are gracious when we accept and genuinely work to use the pronouns that others ask us to use. Being gracious includes following the COVID protocols that are in place to protect the health of this learning community.

Staying Engaged

Staying engaged requires you to be morally, emotionally, intellectually and socially involved in the conversation. Staying engaged means that you are listening with curiosity and willing to deepen your understanding. Staying engaged might also require you to sustain the conversation even when it gets uncomfortable or diverted. This means a commitment to keeping your electronic communications to a minimum with folks not present in this learning community. This also means being present for all portions of the learning agenda.

Being Open and Suspending Judgment

Listening with an open mind includes being receptive to the influence of others. You can suspend judgment by becoming aware of preconceived notions and listening to everything someone has to say before jumping to conclusions. Most importantly, suspending judgment also means listening to what the speaker has to say for understanding, not just to determine whether the speaker is right or wrong. This means that we recognize each of us will make mistakes and that we have the capacity to grow. We should expect imperfections.

Saying "I" - tell your truth

Speaking your truth in authentic and courageous conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours requires a willingness to take risks. It means that you will be absolutely honest and candid about your own thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Speaking your truth will require you to speak from the "first person" and use "I" statements.

Seeking Discomfort

Leaning in to discomfort will require you to let go of understandings and stereotypes that you may be holding onto in order to move forward. Leaning in means that you will avoid pre-judgment and be open to the kernel of wisdom in each individual's experiences. Leaning in to discomfort will require you to sit through moments of embarrassment, confusion, anxiety, and/or fear.

Reaching Empathy

Empathy and compassion allow you to understand the other person's point of view. When you are empathetic, you are more understanding, patient and kind. Expanding your capacity to feel empathy will also allow others to enter your circle of human concern. Sharing, using, and respecting pronouns is a very simple form of empathy.

Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

Expect and accept that there may not be closure. It is not likely that you will resolve your personal understanding about race or another person's racial experience in a single conversation. The more you talk about race or other issues with another person, the more you learn and the more they will learn. Authentic and productive conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours are continuous and always evolving. This means that sometimes we will have unfinished, unexplored, and shortened conversations about some concepts.

**Adapted from "Embracing equity and inclusion", Annie E. Casey Foundation*

What questions do you want to ask about any of the ideas in these agreements?

What additional agreements do you need in order to be a fully participating member of our learning community?

Can you commit to these agreements? IF not, what would it take for you to be able to commit?

KEY TERMS

Many of the following definitions are provided by the Human Rights Campaign, a non-profit committed to equity for the LGBTQ+ community, to describe current language related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This is a limited list. For additional terms related to the LGBTQ+ community, please visit <https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>.

AGENDER:

Describes a person who does not have a gender.

ALLY:

A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender allies and those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other (e.g., a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community).

ANTI-BIAS ANTI-RACIST (ABAR):

A teaching methodology focused on identity, diversity, justice, and action. ABAR pedagogy helps students develop a strong sense of self-worth, empathize with others, learn the impact of unfairness, and take action when they observe, or experience injustice.

ASEXUAL:

Often called “ace” for short, asexual refers to a complete or partial lack of sexual attraction or lack of interest in sexual activity with others. Asexuality exists on a spectrum, and asexual people may experience no, little or conditional sexual attraction.

BIPOC:

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. The term is meant to unite all People of Color while acknowledging that Black and Indigenous people face different and often more severe forms of racial oppression and cultural erasure due to systemic White supremacy and colonialism. It is a noun, and since it includes the word “people,” it would be redundant to say “BIPOC people.” It is pronounced “buy-pock” as opposed to saying each letter individually.

BISEXUAL/BI+:

A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender, sex, or gender identity.

CISGENDER:

A term that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

ETHNICITY:

A grouping of people who share a common set of traditions, ancestry, language, history, society, culture, nation, religion, or social treatment that is different from other groups of people.

GAY:

A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to some members of the same gender.

GENDER DYSPHORIA:

A term that describes the clinically significant distress a person experiences when their assigned birth gender does not match their gender identity. According to the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), the term—which replaces Gender Identity Disorder—"is intended to better characterize the experiences of affected children, adolescents, and adults."

GENDER EXPANSIVE:

A person with a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system. Often used as an umbrella term when referring to young people still exploring the possibilities of their gender expression and/or gender identity.

GENDER EXPRESSION:

The external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice, that may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either feminine or masculine.

GENDER FLUID:

A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.

GENDER QUEER:

Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.

GENDER IDENTITY:

An internal, deeply felt sense of being female, male, a blend of both, or neither. Refers to how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. Can be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth.

GENDER NON-CONFORMING:

A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category.

INTERSEX:

Intersex people are born with a variety of differences in their sex traits and reproductive anatomy. There is a wide variety of difference among intersex variations, including differences in genitalia, chromosomes, gonads, internal sex organs, hormone production, hormone response, and/or secondary sex traits.

LGBTQ+:

An acronym for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer." The "+" represents additional gender identities and sexual orientations that include intersex, agender, and asexual, among many others.

LATINX:

A person of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina).

LESBIAN:

A woman who is emotionally, romantically, and/or sexually attracted to women. This includes cis, trans, and other people who are women.

NON-BINARY:

An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a woman or a man. They may identify as both, somewhere in between, or outside the categories of a woman and a man.

PANSEXUAL:

Describes someone who has the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree. Sometimes used interchangeably with bisexual.

PRONOUNS:

The words used to refer to a person other than their name. Common pronouns are they/ them, he/him, and she/her. Pronouns are sometimes called Personal Gender Pronouns, or PGPs. For those who use pronouns—and not all people do—they are not preferred, they are essential. For this reason, asking for a person's "preferred pronouns" is considered offensive. Instead, simply ask, "What are your pronouns?"

QUEER:

A term people often use to express fluid identities and orientations. This term is often used interchangeably with "LGBTQ+."

QUESTIONING:

A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

RACE:

The grouping of humans based on shared physical qualities and/or culture into categories generally viewed as distinct by society; this also comprises one's racial identity. While often assumed to be a biological classification, racial categories do not have a scientific basis. However, the consequences of racial categorization are real, as the ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and racial profiling. How one is racialized is a major determinant of one's socioeconomic status and life opportunities.

RACISM:

(1) The belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race; (2) a system of advantages and disadvantages based on one's physical and/or social qualities; and (3) having personal prejudice and bias against others based solely on their physical and/or social qualities. Racism is a historically rooted system of power hierarchies based on race. It is infused in our institutions, policies, and culture, and benefits white people, and hurts people of color.

SEX ASSIGNED AT BIRTH:

The sex, male, female or intersex, that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

SYSTEMIC RACISM:

Institutional, legalized racial discrimination; rules, practices, and customs that negatively impact some races while benefiting others.

TRANSGENDER/TRANS:

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

TRANSITIONING:

A series of processes that some transgender people may undergo in order to live more fully as their true gender. This typically includes social transition, such as changing name and pronouns, medical transition, which may include hormone therapy or gender affirming surgeries, and legal transition, which may include changing legal name and sex on government identity documents. Transgender people may choose to undergo some, all or none of these processes.

TWO-SPIRIT:

A modern umbrella term used across the U.S. Native American and Canadian First Nations communities to describe Native people who fulfill a traditional third-gender or gender-variant ceremonial and social role in their cultures. Because being Two-Spirit also denotes one's spirituality, not all transgender or non-binary Indigenous people consider themselves to be Two-Spirit. It is not a term appropriate for a non-Native person to use for their own identity. It's an Indigenous term, thereby open solely to Indigenous community members.

Library book ban attempts are at an all-time high. These librarians are fighting back

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<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/attempts-to-ban-books-are-at-an-all-time-high-these-librarians-are-fighting-back>

Americans last year challenged more book titles than ever before, according to a new report by the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom.

More than 4,000 unique titles were challenged in public libraries and school libraries in 2023, the most the group has recorded since it began tracking censorship efforts.

Much of that increase came from groups or individuals trying to censor dozens or hundreds of titles at a time, the organization said. It's part of a conservative push across the country to ban certain books based on the claim that they are inappropriate for children. Many of the books were about or written by LGBTQ+ people and people of color.

"The rhetoric about book banning right now is built around this falsehood that books touching on sex or gender identity, sexual orientation, or deal with what's called critical race theory are legally harmful to minors," said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of the ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom.

WATCH MORE: Judy Blume describes latest wave of book bans and censorship as 'disgusting' and 'fascist'

Librarians are often caught in the middle of these campaigns and state legislative attempts to censor library materials. They've faced criminalization and harassment and in some cases have been fired after refusing to move or remove books.

"I'm not going to let them do this to our library"

Suzette Baker lost her job as a librarian in Llano County, Texas, after refusing to put a third edition of *Critical Race Theory* behind the counter where patrons couldn't find it unless they asked for it.

"Libraries are neutral space. And they should be protected as that neutral space. There's no protections for them," she said. "We need a free library, a library of everything, a library that reflects the good, the bad and the ugly."

She is among the librarians across the country fighting censorship and trying to engage their communities.

The PBS NewsHour spoke to six librarians about what they've experienced: Lawsuits

Baker said when she was asked to put the critical race theory book behind the counter, “I spoke out and said, this is censorship, we can’t do this, this is not right. And I was subsequently fired.”

Baker is now suing Llano County, county commissioners and community activists appointed to the library board. Her lawsuit claims that she was fired in order for the defendants to discriminate against protected groups, like those who identify as LGBTQ+, as well as suppressed her First Amendment rights.



Suzette Baker was given a list of books to take off the shelves of Kingsland Library in Llano County. Baker refused, and she was fired. Photo by Lauren Witte/The Texas Tribune

“This was never about the books. This was never about protecting people,” Baker said. “The books that they gave me to get rid of were books on racism. They were books on transgender and sexual orientation and questioning for teens.”

She joins several other librarians who have sued their former employers after being fired following book challenges and concerted efforts from the community to remove or move books they find offensive.

Brooky Parks in Colorado won a \$250,000 settlement with her former employer, High Plains Library District, following a civil rights dispute she filed after being fired in 2021. Her firing came after she organized anti-racist and LGBTQ+ programs for teens.

“Teens need those programs,” she told the NewsHour through tears. “If it costs me losing my job or even losing my house, it’s worth standing up for and fighting for. And I know at the end of the day, I will be able to lay my head down and sleep at night.”



Brooky Parks poses for a portrait at office of Rathod Mohamedbhai LLC in Denver, Colorado on Thursday, February 3, 2022. Photo by Hyoung Chang/MediaNews Group/The Denver Post via Getty Images

[READ MORE: Book ban attempts soared in 2022. Here are the 13 most targeted titles](#)

Terri Lesley, a library director in Wyoming with more than 20 years of experience, said she endured attacks on her professional judgment from her community in the two years of book challenges that

preceded her firing. Lesley filed a charge of discrimination against the county commissioners who voted to remove her. Her filing says she was “relentlessly harassed...for opposing discriminatory practices” in her association with LGBTQ+ minorities.

In public meetings, she pointed to the widely-used collection development policy that helps guide libraries on how to select and evaluate books. Lesley said she “invited people who did not like the books that we had to go through our challenge process.”

In just a few months, more than 50 challenges flooded in.

“I never had a challenge hit my desk until this [conservative movement] started,” Lesley said. “And then when they came, they came fast.”

The books challenged generally covered sex education and LGBTQ+ identity issues, she said.

Caldwell-Stone with the ALA says there are exceptions for legally obscene material, but most books being challenged are not considered legally obscene and are “protected speech.”

READ MORE: [How many book bans were attempted in your state? Use this map to find out](#)



Taking to politics

Patty Hector was fired from the Saline County library in Arkansas after speaking out against a push from a local conservative group to remove books. That same group organized a billboard campaign against Hector.

Now, she’s running for justice of the peace on the Saline County Quorum Court, which controls library funding. “I’m not going to let them do this to our library,” Hector said. “And we will fight them tooth and nail if they try to take their funding away.”

(Photo courtesy Patty Hector) Caldwell-Stone said political offices and voters can have an “enormous” impact on how libraries operate. In some states, governing boards or voters themselves have withheld funding over debates about book bans and library policies. Politicians, in some cases, can also appoint people to library boards with specific agendas around library materials instead of interest in “operating the library as a community resource,” Caldwell-Stone added.

Community outreach

Librarians typically view their role as politically neutral, Baker said.

“A librarian is like Switzerland,” Baker in Texas said. “They can’t show their favoritism.”

In her lawsuit, Baker said the library system director told her and other librarians they were “prohibited” from attending public meetings. Caldwell-Stone said arguments made by people seeking these bans in public forums often lack context, which is crucial when legally determining if a published work is obscene and therefore should be removed from library shelves.

“People would show up at board meetings, read spicy excerpts from books, and there would be no countervailing voice to point out that that was one paragraph in a 300 page, you know, award-winning novel,” she said.

“The entire community is going to have to come together with the librarians in order to stop this”

Many librarians interviewed by the NewsHour said they knew other librarians who were scared to speak out publicly for fear of retribution.

“The mental damage is done, the trauma is there,” said Becky Calzada, a library coordinator for a large central Texas school district. “I truly believe that’s what keeps many librarians from speaking up.”

Calzada dealt with book challenges to her school libraries in early 2021 when a parent’s speech at a school board meeting asking to remove a book that included a sex toy went viral.

Calzada said there was “a lot of push from the community” on getting books they felt were inappropriate out “with a quick urgency,” rather than going through official channels.

Calzada co-founded FReadom Fighters, a group of librarians that advocate in support of intellectual freedom. Her aim is to educate lawmakers about how librarians curate a collection.



Karla Hernandez-Mats, president of United Teachers of Dade, center, leads in chanting slogans against book banning as marchers arrive at Books and Books in hope of bringing awareness to Florida’s book banning, on Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023. (Carl Juste/Miami Herald/Tribune News Service via Getty Images)

“Much of the work that I’ve been doing is really behind the scenes,” she said.

Lisa Varga, Virginia Library Association director, is active in public meetings in her community of Virginia Beach.

“I just feel as though I’ve been doing my job, which is to speak up and speak out against this injustice,” she said.

She presented an invoice of \$7 million to the Virginia Beach School Board, saying the cost of reconsidering hundreds of books, via challenges filed by community members, would amount to that much staff time.

“Instead of simply saying, let’s have a conversation with the librarian about this book, you’re immediately jumping over their head and going into this process,” Varga said.

She also speaks at conferences to help other librarians prepare for and defend libraries against similar attempts to ban books.

Brooky Parks, who was fired, said groups who support their libraries should stand together.

“Librarians need to stand up, but if our community doesn’t stand up behind us, one person can’t make this change,” Parks said. “The entire community is going to have to come together with the librarians in order to stop this.”

From our Work—LGBTQ+ Scenarios

For this activity, you are going to be asked to pick one of three scenarios. In order to be prepared for the scenarios, you should spend some time reading through the following supporting documents for what you selected.

Scenario 1 deals with a teacher who was disciplined after they presented 7th grade students' "About Me" projects around the room. One of the projects has LGBTQIA+ flags in it. The teacher was directed to remove only that project.

Scenario 2 involves a school board policy that directed teachers to shelter students in locker rooms based on gender, and the aftermath of keeping a non-binary student sitting on the gym bleachers during an active shooter drill.

Scenario 3 involves a local community group that identifies the librarian and library paraeducator as groomers and is proposing school board policy that looks to limit LGBTQ+ affirming books available to students in the library.

You will receive more specifics about each of the scenarios during class. For now, please review the information and begin brainstorming how you might support your member and local, should this happen in your own work.

Specific things to think about:

How would you handle this from a service model perspective?

How would you handle this from an organizing perspective?

What documents would you need to help your work?

How would you work with the press?

Scenario #1

You, the union staff, get a call from a building rep and a president. A well-respected teacher and union member, Mrs. J, was given an unfair disciplinary write up.

This is the situation: A parent complained that a 7th grade girl's "about me" project showed 4 LGBTQ+ pride flags. The parent did not come speak to the teacher—she went straight to the school board. On the write up, the principal wrote that Mrs. J didn't show "good judgment" and "clear classroom expectations of appropriateness." In his disciplinary meeting with the member, the principal told Mrs. J that he's a conservative Christian, "we can't promote this here" and asked her if she would allow a Confederate flag or swastika on the wall of her classroom. He also announced that he needs to talk to the students about talking about their sexual orientation at school.

He directed her to turn in lesson plans weekly for his review. He ordered Mrs. J to take down ONLY the project with LGBTQ+ flags and leave every other student project up on the classroom walls. Mrs. J didn't want any student to feel targeted, so she took down every project. Mrs. J and her building rep both tried to talk to the principal and assistant superintendent about this unfair treatment of both students and staff. Neither administrator corrected the issue, and just keep telling Mrs. J that she needs to "understand that parents have opinions too."

The local president and building rep are horrified. There's a history of homophobia in the district, including several union members who fear retaliation from their supervisors. The local officers know their superintendent and school board members well. They believe that the district leadership will back the principal's actions. The president, building rep, and Mrs. J are game to try anything and believe that many of their colleagues would also be horrified. The local isn't familiar with grievances, and doesn't have a grievance chair

Scenario 2:

You are the UniServ director for a rapidly changing county. The northern portion of the county is quickly becoming a bedroom community for Washington DC while the southern portion of the county is fighting hard to remain true to its rural southern roots. This has led to many clashes regarding local policy, both at the school board and board of supervisor level. Four years ago, you and your teachers sat through a series of increasingly contentious school board meetings regarding the bathroom policy for a young transgender girl in the fourth grade-the only openly transgender student in the county. During that spring, parents became increasingly hostile and threatening to the board and indicated that they would personally go after the jobs of any employee who allowed this young girl to use the girl's bathroom. That summer, the school board passed a policy that required the student to use only single stall bathrooms and barred her from using both the boys' and girls' bathrooms or locker rooms.

In the first month of a new school year, you receive a call from a PE teacher at one of your schools. She tells you that earlier that week, the school held one of the state-required lockdown drills during a PE class where that girl, now an 8th grader, is a student. The three PE teachers quickly conferred after realizing that their lockdown procedures, which call for boys to shelter in the boys' locker room and girls to shelter in the girls' locker room, did not take this student into account. This student uses the single stall accessible restroom in the gym when she needs to change or use the restroom during PE class. Without clear guidance-and with the wrath of the parents still echoing in their minds- the teachers had decided to have the PE teacher that is a man take the boys into the boys' locker room, while the PE teacher that is a woman took the rest of the girls into the girls' locker room and the second PE teacher that is a woman remained in the gym with the transgender student.

The PE teacher proceeds to tell you that the mother of the child runs a group called Equality Stafford and has posted on Facebook about the incident. That post has quickly gone viral and has already been shared a couple hundred times:

Equality Stafford Community,

This past week, an incident occurred during a middle school lock down drill in Stafford County. When the drill began, a particular class of children took shelter in the bathroom/locker room nearest them as they were in PE. One student was prevented from entering either the boys or girls locker room while the teachers discussed where she should go. The student was forced to watch the adults charged with her care, debate the safest place (for the other students) to have her shelter. During this debate, she was instructed to sit in the bleachers until the drill was complete, away from her peers and identified as different. After some additional debate, she was made to sit in the locker room hallway, by the door alone and away from her peers. This happened because the child, in addition to being a model student, also happens to be transgender.

Let me be clear. During an event that prepares children to survive an attack by actual assailants, she was treated as if she was so much of a danger to peers that she was left exposed and vulnerable. These events occur across our country right now, but this one happened here.

We need you. We need all of you to come out on October 9th at 6:30 pm to the Stafford County School Board Meeting at 31 Stafford Avenue. We need you to come and lend your voice to the growing cry. This is unacceptable, this cannot happen to one more child. Not one more in this county. Not ever again.

Please bring yourselves, your friends, your colleagues and your voice to this school board meeting. We need you.

How do you support and educate other union members to understand the needs of transgender students and staff? What might you advocate for in a new policy?

How do you use this issue as an organizing issue?

Scenario #3

You are the UniServ Director in a relatively conservative area. A number of parents have attended the School Board meeting and have complained about the inclusion of material in the curriculum and in the library that is indoctrinating their children. Parents say that the materials are hurtful and confusing to their children and are divisive to a democratic society. They also claim that some of the images are pornographic and want the School Board to remove the books from the school Library. The parents have formed a Protect our Children Group (PCG) who have been emailing the school Librarian and Paraeducator accusing them of grooming children.

They have put forth the following resolution to the school board and are asking for adoption: *The Citizens of Raymond hereby declare, from this point forward, that the elementary children's library in the Dudley School will be free of any books with content containing nudity, gender identity, gender expression, sex or sexual references in writing or illustrations.* The Board has taken it under consideration and will have to take a formal vote on it by the last meeting of the Fiscal year (June).

The school board offers a half hour of public comment at every meeting which is held every month. The PCG has a speaker at every meeting. They focus on protecting children and how pornography traumatizes children and makes them criminals and delinquents.

The local president has tried to address the situation and has spoken to the principal at the elementary school about the emails from the parents. The president has been told that parents have a right to email staff at the school and that there is no policy to stop the communication. The local president does not know what to do and needs help.

The librarian is new and is afraid of being terminated. The paraeducator has been employed for over 20 years and is well respected in town. She is also a part-time employee at the Community Library and a member of the Historical Society.

What might you advocate for in a library policy?

How would you frame communication be used for the staff? for the community?

How can this issue be one that unifies versus dividing the school/parents/community?