



Advancing LGBTQ+ Justice and Transgender Advocacy



Participant Handouts

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.

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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?

Day 1 Materials



Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools

Adopted by the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly

I. Our Vision for Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools

The National Education Association’s vision for safe, just, and equitable schools is of thriving spaces that are safe and welcoming for all students, discriminatory toward none, integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student, and equitably and fully-fund the community school model with wraparound services and resources.

NEA’s vision is the recruitment and retention of educators who reflect the community, with relevant professional development and tools for cultural competence and responsiveness, prepared to center students’ needs and lived experiences, value all voices, and ensure voices that have been historically exploited, ignored, or silenced are empowered and heard.

NEA’s vision is to emphasize evidence-based behavioral practices centered in the philosophy of restorative justice over the criminalization and policing of students, and which dismantle and eliminate inequitable policies, practices, and systems that deprive many of our students of their futures and disproportionately harm Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners.

NEA believes all educators—which includes every adult working in our schools—are indispensable both for realizing our vision and for transforming our schools and the broader community so that we may end inequitable policies, practices, and systems to avert a crisis of criminalization of our youth and instead prepare every student to achieve their full potential and succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

This Policy Statement sets forth principles to guide the beliefs, actions, advocacy, partnerships, and other organization-wide efforts to achieve and sustain NEA’s vision for safe, just, and equitable schools for every student, educator, parent/guardian, and community.

II. Guiding Principles to Achieve Our Vision

NEA is committed to changing the policies and practices of the schools in which we work to ensure thriving spaces that are safe, just, and equitable. The Association is committed to beliefs, actions, advocacy, and partnerships for the removal of impediments that are entirely incompatible with our vision, such as institutional racism, white supremacy culture, inadequate and inequitable school funding, and the criminalization and policing of students¹ in our schools—all of which perpetuate the school-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines.²

The Association demands a transformative investment in the physical and mental health of all students, including Native students and Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North

¹ *Criminalization and policing of students* refer to practices and enforcement of school disciplinary policies that criminalize students’ behaviors, subjecting students to potential penalties imposed by law enforcement instead of consequences imposed by educators.

² *School-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines* refer to policies and practices that directly and indirectly push Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including immigrant and undocumented youth, out of school and on a pathway to prison and/or deportation including, but not limited to: harsh school discipline policies that overuse suspension and expulsion, increased policing and surveillance that create prison-like environments in schools, and overreliance by educators on referrals to law enforcement, the juvenile and criminal justice system, detention, and potentially deportation proceedings.

African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander students,³ LGBTQ+ students, and students from all economic backgrounds and abilities. Policymaking that produces a frayed network of public services in our communities is incompatible with our vision. When equitably and fully-funded, this network—which includes public schools, libraries, parks, transportation, food security, access to health care and child care, affordable housing, and public service infrastructure—energizes students, families, and their entire communities. The adoption of racial and social equity principles at all levels of policymaking will encourage systemic solutions to these issues. Racial and social justice in education and throughout the United States will be realized when we ensure fair treatment resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for people of all races and backgrounds.

Our work to achieve our vision for safe, just, and equitable schools is guided by five principles:

Guiding Principle 1:

Adopting a Restorative Justice Philosophy to Create a Thriving School Climate

NEA's vision integrates the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student,⁴ in which students' identities and lived experiences are centered within a thriving and nurturing school climate.

Educators are critical to the development of evidence-based behavioral practices centered in a philosophy of restorative justice that promotes caring, trusting, and positive relationships among students and adults. Without the development of such practices, high quality teaching and learning cannot occur. The Association's vision for a restorative justice philosophy is comprised of practices and processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community. Restorative practices to address conflict and wrongdoing, behavior, rule violations, and school climate can improve relationships between students, between students and educators, and between educators whose behavior often serves as a role model for students. They allow each member of the school community to develop and implement a school's adopted core values. Restorative practices allow individuals who may have committed harm to take full responsibility for their behavior by addressing the individual or individuals affected by the behavior. These practices represent a collective mindset that can help guide youth and adult behavior and relationship management in schools.

Restorative justice practices and processes do not replace but rather complement existing initiatives and evidence-based programs like Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or social and emotional learning models that assist in building a foundation and culture of caring.

Guiding Principle 2:

Relevant Professional Development for Culturally Competent Educators

NEA believes that educators—which includes every adult working in our schools—must be fully supported so they are better prepared to respond to the social and emotional needs of

³ Identities and their usage here acknowledges the *Report and Recommendations of the Racial Equity Language Review Stakeholder Group* adopted by the NEA Board of Directors in May 2020. Native People are named first, distinctly, recognized as the first people of this land with sovereign national and tribal status, and named together with Asian, Black inclusive of African American, Latin(o/a/x) inclusive of Hispanic and Chican(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Multiracial, and Pacific Islander people.

⁴ The *whole student* refers to the Whole Child tenets that call for all available educational resources to maximize the achievement, skills, opportunities, and potential of each student by building upon individual strengths and addressing individual needs. A Whole Child approach prepares students at all educational levels, including higher education, to thrive in a democratic and diverse society and changing world as knowledgeable, creative, engaged citizens, and lifelong learners.

each student to ensure development of the expertise and understanding of what it means to be culturally competent and responsive.⁵ A culturally competent pedagogy connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with the school curriculum. Leveraging a student's knowledge and experiences from their families and communities helps them to access and connect with the curriculum and develop their academic skills.

Support of students who suffer from childhood trauma requires whole school involvement and transformation. To achieve our vision, the Association and its affiliates must actively engage in developing the means for schools and educators to address trauma and its implications for creating safe, just, and equitable schools. Educators must be given ongoing opportunities to develop the expertise to work with students from different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, and to support those students who may be affected by childhood trauma.

The Association must fully engage and authentically partner with stakeholders to develop and implement, with fidelity, training that is relevant, proven, substantial, and ongoing, and professional development tools that are responsive to the needs of students and educators and are designed to build and increase educators' cultural competence over the course of their careers. At a minimum, these programs must address:

- A. Development of communications skills including strategies for peer-to-peer, educator-to-parent, and educator-to-student communication.
- B. Development of cultural competence and responsiveness including awareness of one's own implicit biases⁶ and trauma, understanding culturally competent pedagogy, and becoming culturally responsive in one's approach to education and discipline/behavior.
- C. Training developed for, and delivered to, pre-service, early career, and experienced educators.
- D. Understanding of trauma and its effect on a student's education.
- E. Knowledge and skills required to transform schools into trauma-informed environments.

Guiding Principle 3:

Eliminating Disparities in Disciplinary/Behavioral Practices

NEA is committed to ending harsh school discipline/behavioral policies that directly and indirectly contribute to a crisis of criminalization of our youth, and disproportionately harm Native students and students of color. National research shows that these policies specifically have a disparate impact on Native, Black, and Latin(o/a/x) students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners. Regionally, Asian, Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students experience harm and disparate outcomes as a result of such policies. NEA demands an end to school disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices that overuse suspension and expulsion; employ zero-tolerance⁷ policies that criminalize minor infractions of school rules; increase police presence and surveillance on school campuses that create prison-like environments; and encourage school staff to impose exclusionary discipline or refer students to law enforcement,

⁵ *Cultural competence* means the capacity to interact effectively and respectfully with people from different racial, ethnic, and/or economic backgrounds. Such competence includes understanding that different cultures have different communication codes and styles, being open to learning from others, to shift out of one's own cultural paradigm, and to refrain from judging people before honestly exploring what motivates their behavior.

⁶ *Implicit bias* means the deep-seated attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

⁷ *Zero-tolerance* refers to school disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices that set predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses or rule infractions. Zero-tolerance policies forbid persons in positions of authority from exercising discretion or changing punishments to fit individual circumstances.

juvenile justice authorities, and immigration services. Students who are suspended or expelled not only fall behind academically but are significantly more likely to drop out of school altogether, fail to secure a job, rely on social welfare programs, and end up in prison or face deportation.

The Association will advocate for schools, school districts, and states, in ensuring public accountability to the communities they serve, to take appropriate steps to review their disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices for any disparate impact on the basis of race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics; to take prompt and effective action to eliminate any disparate impact found; and to continue to monitor disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices to ensure that they are fair and nondiscriminatory.

Guiding Principle 4:

Eliminating the Criminalization and Policing of Students in Schools

NEA believes the criminalization and policing of students obstructs a thriving and nurturing school climate. Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners are in greater jeopardy in schools with a presence of police and law enforcement.⁸ Schools with police presence rely more heavily on exclusionary discipline, and exclusionary discipline falls disproportionately on Black students and other students of color.

Ending the policing of students on school campuses is essential to ensure thriving spaces for all stakeholders and to facilitate policies that dismantle inequalities and eliminate the criminalization of youth. The Association strongly opposes the policing of students in all of its forms which perpetuate the school-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines.

NEA recognizes the significance of physical school facilities as a reflection of what educators want our schools to be—welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environments for our students, parents/guardians, and communities.

Therefore, the Association demands an end to:

- A. Participation in federal 1033 programs which deliver unnecessary weapons, vehicles, surveillance technology, and other equipment that unjustifiably militarize the police presence on school campuses.
- B. Overreliance by educators on referrals to law enforcement which increase the likelihood of contact with the juvenile justice system.
- C. Subjective and biased enforcement of disciplinary policies such as hair and dress codes.
- D. Construction of prison-like school environments that employ metal detectors, random searches, and other building and design elements that diminish a thriving and nurturing school climate.

Guiding Principle 5:

Student, Family, Organizational, and Community Engagement

NEA's vision is a safe, just, and equitable school in which all students' needs and lived experiences are centered and voices that have been historically exploited, ignored, or silenced are empowered and heard. The social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student must be strengthened and supported through education, family partnerships, and relationship building. Students, parents/guardians, and other caregivers must be engaged and trained in problem-solving techniques, conflict resolution skills, mental health and wellness, and cultural competence. The development and implementation of a restorative justice philosophy paired with restorative practices is essential for building healthy relationships and

⁸ *Police* or more specifically *law enforcement* refers to any sworn individual with the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, and issue citations.

communities to prevent and address conflict and trauma. Students must be invested in their own success and understand that their actions and voices are critical in shaping and driving the decisions that affect their school communities and help create inclusive, bias-free, and thriving school climates.

The Association must fully engage and authentically partner with a comprehensive range of stakeholders that includes students, parents/guardians and family members, local and state affiliates, school boards, school districts, peer mentoring groups, community-based organizations, alternative schools/juvenile correctional institutions, mental health and wellness organizations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, professional associations and advocacy groups, and social justice stakeholders to identify policies, practices, and activities to achieve a shared vision for safe, just, and equitable schools.

III. Implementing an Association-Wide Plan to Achieve Our Vision

NEA will utilize the Framework for Racial Justice in Education⁹ to achieve our vision for safe, just, and equitable schools through the identification of strategies, activities, stakeholders, and internal and external levers of change required to influence sustainable transformation and learnings across school systems. The framework identifies three strategies: awareness, capacity building, and action encompassed within pre- and post-qualitative and quantitative evaluations. The framework also provides direction to focus the identified strategies, tactics, and activities while determining partnerships needed to leverage systems of change within the Association and institutions.

NEA will utilize the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA)¹⁰ to guide the development and implementation of Association-wide plan activities. The REIA is designed to ensure stakeholders are proactively working to prevent bias and racial inequities from appearing in identified solutions.

The goals of NEA's plan are to:

- A. Identify and support opportunities to engage, activate, and mobilize members and leaders to organize to achieve safe, just, and equitable schools for every student, educator, parent/guardian, and community.
- B. Develop an Association-wide understanding of the issues and impacts of the criminalization and policing of students.
- C. Develop and strengthen NEA's partnerships and coalitions with organizations, movements, and legislators to advocate and organize for safe, just, and equitable schools.
- D. Integrate and align the safe, just, and equitable schools vision and criteria across the NEA enterprise priorities and activities.

⁹ See *Report of the NEA Task Force on Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools*, Appendix C.

¹⁰ See *Report of the NEA Task Force on Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools*, Appendix D.

NEA's Framework for Change



The National Education Association is uniquely positioned to impact racial justice in education by focusing the work on awareness, capacity building, and action. We will build a union of members who, through their organization, are more aware of racial justice, receive and use racial justice tools, and who, together with other educators and key stakeholders, take action to address racial injustice in schools and related institutions:

- If we build **awareness** about institutional racism and work towards creating racial justice in education, the National Education Association can provide shared knowledge and conceptual clarity in racially aware work;
- If we continuously create and disseminate **capacity building** tools, skills, strategies, and resources to our members, leaders, staff, students and partners, a more racially aware National Education Association can be the leader in publicly demanding racial justice in education in more powerful and meaningful ways;
- If we support, lift, connect and take **action** with an intentional focus on movement building, we will create racial equity in our classrooms, worksites, and in our communities.

The Intersection of Our Core Values and Union Values

Core values are the fundamental beliefs of a person or an organization. These guiding principles dictate behavior and can help people understand the difference between right and wrong. These can often be expressed in one or two words. We are taking a moment to consider our core values because they can provide a basis for solidarity in the midst of struggles.

What are some of your core values expressed in one or two words?

<i>Your Personal Core Values</i>

Where do your core values intersect with some of the Union Core Values listed below?

<i>Union Core Values</i>
Fairness, honesty/integrity, responsibility, compassion/empathy, safety, health, generosity, hard work/responsibility, community, freedom, democracy, binding contracts, equality, opportunity, respect, stability/security, unity, quality work, justice, collective action, dignity/respect, charity/community service, and due process. <i>Ideally:</i> Unions advance the welfare of all workers. They are based on the idea of justice, progress, and betterment of self and of society. They embody the universal ideal of human rights and the need to aspire to become more complete human beings. By becoming an active participant in the labor movement, members become part of something larger than themselves.



I Am From...

Familiar foods, especially those associated with family gatherings



I Am From...

Sights, sounds, and smells from your neighborhood



I Am From...

Familiar sayings heard repeatedly growing up



I Am From...

Familiar people, family members, friends, and ancestors

First Impressions of LGBTQ People

Reflective – 101 – Low Trust – 10 mins – szp.guide/firstimpressions

Materials

- Participant sheet

Setup

- N/A

Facilitator Framing

- This activity helps participants ease into thinking about LGBTQ identity, people, and experiences from their own perspective.
- The activity can be effective at contextualizing the importance of the workshop or talking openly about these issues (and how often rare that open conversation can be).

Goals & Learning Outcomes

- Participants will reflect upon their first impressions with LGBTQ people and identity.
- Participants will reflect on how their understanding of LGBTQ people and identity has changed over their lifetime.
- Participants will have an opportunity to hear how diverse the group's experience with LGBTQ people and identity are.

Process Steps

1. Provide directions for the activity and assure participants that this activity primarily reflective and they won't be asked to share anything they don't want to. For example, "We are going to start with a reflective activity called First Impressions. We're going to give you a few minutes to think on and write some answers to the list of questions on this sheet. These questions are for your reflection, we aren't going to collect your sheets or require you to share anything with the group that you don't want to. If there is any question you're struggling with skip it and come back at the end of the activity. We'll give you a few minutes here to answer the questions and then bring it back to the big group."
2. Give participants time to reflect (3-5 minutes).
3. Move into the debrief questions.
4. Wrap-up the activity.

Debrief questions

- What was it like to do that activity?

- Does anyone have something that came up for them while they were answering the questions that they would like to share?
- Does anyone have an experience that was significantly different that they'd be interested in sharing?
- What about question 5, would anyone share how their understanding of these issues have changed over time?

Wrap-up

Highlight for participants that each of them have likely have shifted their understanding of LGBTQ people and identities over the course of their lifetimes and that this workshop may or may not also shift their understanding of LGBTQ people and identities.

Often there is a mention of language or vocabulary that has shifted over the course of someone's exposure to the LGBTQ community and you can call back to this mention in order to create a seamless transition into vocabulary.

Make it your own

These questions can be modified to focus more specifically on particular identities if you are doing a targeted training for example, "What was your first impression or initial conversations around LGBTQ identity within a medical environment?". They can also be modified in a way to focus on a particular subpopulation of the LGBTQ community, "What was your first impression of bisexual people?" or, "What is something that you are still unlearning about transgender identity?"

Unlock the Magic

Be an imperfect role model: this is an activity can be a space where you can share with participants your own development and journey. This can help assure participants that you identify with their stories or change and development and that they aren't alone in having unlearn and reconsider what they know about gender and sexuality.

Notes

While this is a low risk activity, participants sharing about their past (or present) views can expose a lot of prejudice. While some prejudice being named isn't inherently a bad thing, too much is unproductive to the learning outcomes. Try to invite shares from participants from a variety of views and perspectives. Keeping the debrief on the shorter side and moving through the questions quickly does not negatively impact the goals and will help you manage the feelings that may come up for folks.

First Impressions of LGBTQ People

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer?
2. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)
3. When's the first time you can remember learning that some people are transgender?
4. Where did most of the influence of your initial impressions/understanding of transgender people come from? (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, church)
5. How have your impressions/understanding of LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning) people changed or evolved throughout your life?

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.

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 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 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.

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.

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+.”

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.

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 benefitting 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.

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.

PROLOGUE

This is not a coming-out story. It's not a down-low story either. I never could have passed for straight, even if I'd wanted to, and so I never had the dubious luxury of living a lie.

By the time I was five, it was all too clear that something was wrong with me. Everyone knew it, and I knew it too. It was why grown-ups shook their heads and spoke in lowered tones whenever I was in the room. It was why I had to talk to a Nice White Man once a week, in his office in the big building up the street. The man and I played games, and he asked me a lot of questions. Sometimes I knew the answers and sometimes I was confused.

But I wasn't confused about why I was there. The Nice White Man was a doctor. He was working to help fix me. I didn't know the name of my mysterious affliction, but I did know that it had already manifested itself in many unacceptable ways.

For one, I was drawn to all the wrong pastimes. Double Dutch jump rope and hopscotch and jacks were for girls. It was wrong to want an Easy-Bake Oven for Christmas, and therefore Santa was never going to bring me one. I would get a set of drums instead (but the noise would bother Aunt Dorothy and I would seldom be allowed to play them). It was wrong not to care about football, wrong to shun contact sports in general.

I was also taken with all the wrong clothing. I brightened at the sight of all the wrong colors, the deep jewel tones and soft pastels. I loved the wrong fabrics too: taffeta and lace and velvet and lamé, material that rustled and swished and swirled with every step. It was wrong to love all the glorious hats on the ladies at church. And the trimmings on those hats! Veils and feathers and flowers and sequins and beads and rhinestones and ribbons and bows. Paul the Apostle had decreed that women should cover their heads during worship, and Black ladies had turned this directive into an art form.

It was wrong to be mesmerized by Aunt Sharon's shoe closet. To be excited by the rows of slingbacks and stilettos in silver and lilac and violet and mauve. To run my fingertips along their leather and satin and crocodile sides. It was especially wrong to slip on my very favorite pair—the candy-apple red pumps with the highest heels—and sashay back and forth before the full-length mirror, overcome by the splendor of them on my very own feet. It was why I was no longer allowed in her room.

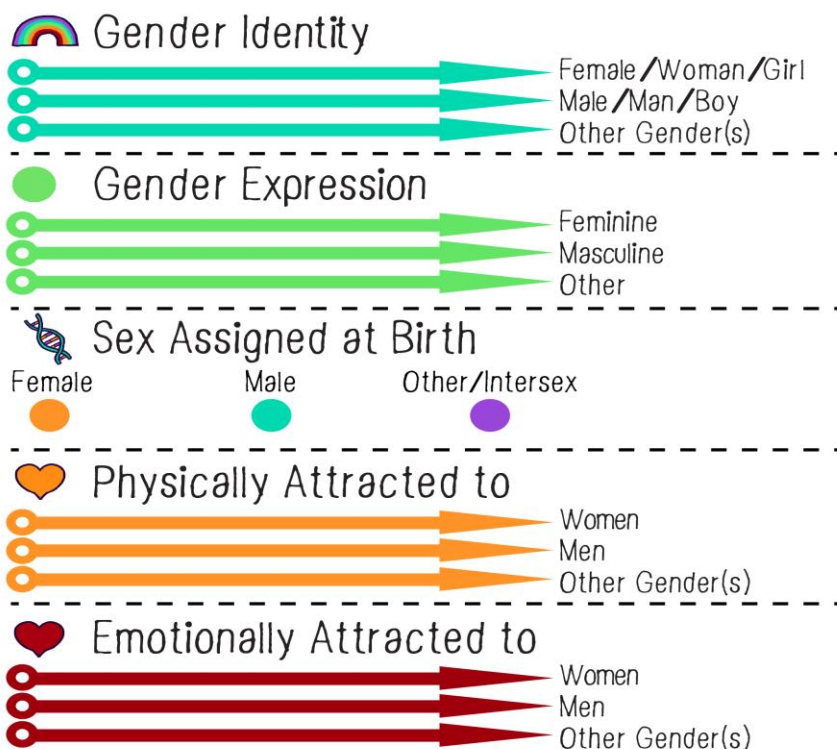
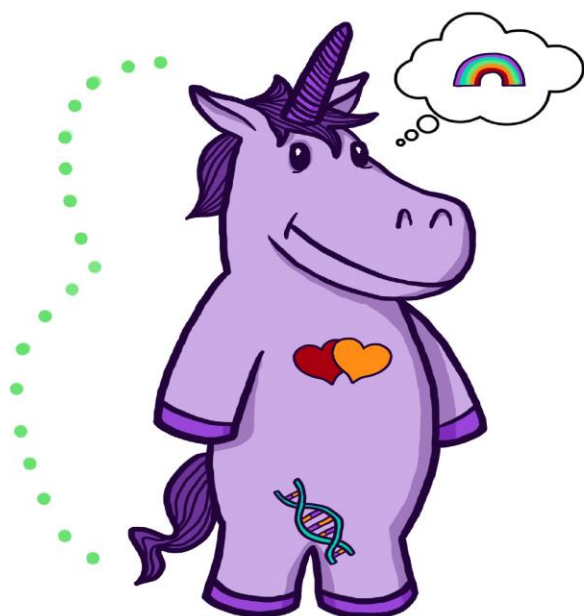
Though I could not have articulated it back then, not even to myself, my fixation on fashion went deeper than mere aesthetics. I sensed that clothing was a potent signifier—that its import went beyond its visual appeal. Later I would come to understand that the finery donned by Black churchgoers was a powerful form of resistance. Many of them were employed during the week as domestic servants, or security guards, or custodians, and were required to wear uniforms meant to reinforce their status as less-than. To dress impeccably and regally on the Lord's day, then, was to insist on their own dignity and worth in a world that sought to systematically strip them of both. It was a way to assert that they were God's children too, and in His house, they would adorn themselves in a manner befitting the glory of the Lord!

I didn't have the words for any of this at the time, just a child's awareness that people carried themselves differently in different clothing, that fashion could effect a profound transformation, on the outside and inside both. The dazzling pageantry of Sunday worship filled me with delight, and I longed to be a part of it—but even in this, my desires were all wrong, for while I adored rockin' a three-piece, reversible Easter or Christmas suit situation, I also longed to dress like the ladies, from spike heel to majestic crown.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. To render a childhood in which I was continually urged to seek the Bible's guidance in all matters, let us do as that Good Book does, and start *in the beginning*.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Gender Unicorn Definitions



Gender Identity: *How I identify.*

One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). For transgender people, their own internal sense of gender identity and their sex assigned at birth are not the same.



Gender Expression/Presentation: *How I look and express myself.*

The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Most transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.



Sex Assigned at Birth: *The sex classification that I was assigned at birth.*

The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. This is usually decided at birth or in utero, and is usually based on genitalia.



Sexually Attracted To: *Whom I am sexually attracted to.*

The group of people or genders to which a person can become sexually attracted to, if at all.



Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To: *Whom I am romantically/emotionally attracted to.*

The group of people or genders to which a person can become romantically, emotionally, or spiritually attracted to, if at all.

Examples of Genders: We included "other genders" to indicate the many genders that other people might identify as, express themselves as, and be attracted to. Examples of these genders include: Agender, Bigender, Genderfluid, Genderqueer, Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-Conforming and Two-Spirit.

Interactive Gender Unicorn

Name: _____

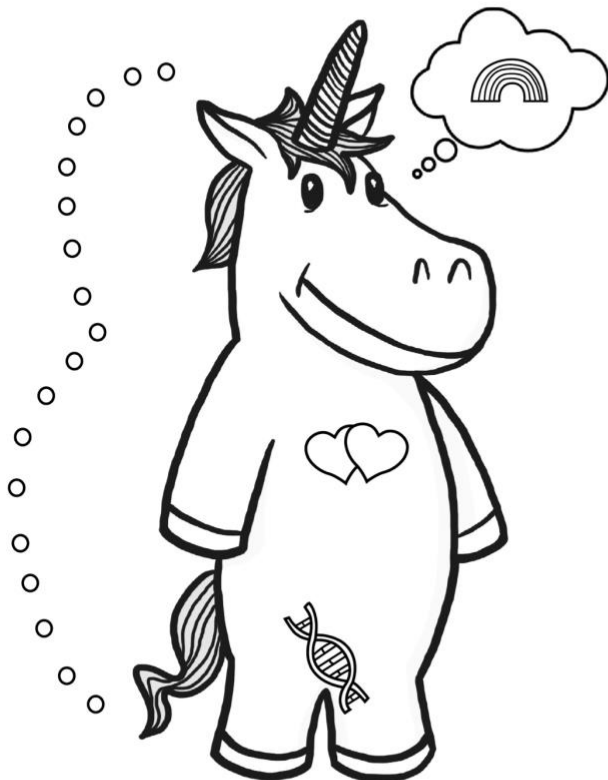
Your pronouns: _____

Use your coloring tools to fill in the meters to where they belong for you in each category. You may wish to color in multiple meters in any category and/or may wish to leave some meters blank.

Feel free to make additions or corrections to the sheet.

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



Gender Identity

_____ Female/Woman/Girl

_____ Male/Man/Boy

_____ Other Gender(s)

Gender Expression

_____ Feminine

_____ Masculine

_____ Other

Sex Assigned at Birth

Female Male Other/Intersex

☐ ☐ ☐

Sexually Attracted To

_____ Women

_____ Men

_____ Other Gender(s)

Emotionally Attracted To

_____ Women

_____ Men

_____ Other Gender(s)

To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan
Illustration by Anna Moore

Intersectionality: A Vital Tool in Advancing LGBTQ+ Rights

November 15, 2021

<https://cloudburstgroup.com/2021/11/15/intersectionality-a-vital-tool-in-advancing-lgbtq-rights/>



“All human beings should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear no matter who they are or whom they love.” —President Joe Biden

In the United States, the LGBTQ+ community and its allies celebrate Pride month in June and LGBTQ+ history month in October. Both months are a time to celebrate historic achievements of progress, to remember those who have been lost, and to remind us all that the struggle for basic rights for the LGBTQ+ community is far from over. In February 2021, President Biden released a [Memorandum](#) reaffirming the

United States’ commitment to protecting the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons around the world. As the end of the year approaches, Cloudburst would also like to reaffirm our commitment to embracing diversity, strengthening community and government capacity to address vulnerability, building resilience, and creating lasting impact when responding to development challenges. This goal requires a commitment to advancing LGBTQ+ rights in order to promote a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse society for all individuals.

Historically, LGBTQ+ communities have been at the forefront of advocating for meaningful social change. While great strides have been made globally, many LGBTQ+ people continue to face extreme levels of discrimination and violence simply based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The struggles of the LGBTQ+ community are often aggregated into a single group or focus, neglecting the complexity of actual lives lived and the diversity of LGBTQ+ communities across the globe. While some rights have been won for the community as a whole, such as marriage equality in 29 countries, several groups within the community continue to struggle against discrimination and marginalization. Basic human rights such as access to proper healthcare, education, employment, housing, and fair justice systems are not guaranteed for many communities, including LGBTQ+ persons of color, transgender persons, and older persons.

- Last year, 8% of transgender adults in the U.S. experienced homelessness (The Williams Institute, 2020).
- Among sexual minority adults, African American respondents had significantly higher rates (6%) of recent housing instability.
- Older LGBTQ couples, especially older lesbian couples, experience higher rates of poverty (9.1%) than older heterosexual couples (4.6%) ([Center for American Progress, 2009](#)).
- A recent study showed that 17.6% of LGBTQ people with disabilities and 12.5% of LGBTQ people of color need and receive public housing assistance, compared to 2.5% of non-LGBTQ people ([Center for American Progress, 2018](#)).
- LBT women are five times more likely than non-LBT women to experience violent victimization.
- LGBTQ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness. (*Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago).
- Despite having similar rates of mental health disparities, Black LGBTQ youth are significantly less likely to receive professional care. (The Trevor Project, 2020).

The struggle for LGBTQ+ people to live a dignified life is often exacerbated by multiple intersectional traits. The data above shows how some identities in the LGBTQ+ community might see better access to equality while

others (especially transgender persons and LGBTQ+ persons of color, disabled persons, and older persons) face additional barriers or hardships that are erased by aggregating the community as a whole.

While there are some federal rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people, data also shows that even when legal equality is achieved, progress is often slow to reach the most vulnerable populations. Through the lens of housing in the U.S., one can examine how race, citizenship, ability, gender identity, and geography can intersect to impact the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people and their ability to fully benefit from legal protection.

For example:

- Only 21 states, including the District of Columbia, have housing nondiscrimination laws that cover sexual orientation and gender identity.
- LGBTQ+ older adults face discrimination in the sale and rental of housing as well as in mortgage lending, which adversely impacts access to housing. One study found that 48% of older same-sex couples applying for senior housing were subjected to discrimination ([The Equal Rights Center, 2014](#)).
- Same-sex couples and transgender people experienced discrimination in rental housing searches, even in areas with antidiscrimination protections.
- According to representative data from 35 states, nearly half (49.8%) of LGBTQ+ adults own their homes, compared to 70.1% of non-LGBTQ+ adults (Conron, 2019).
- Among transgender people, rates of homeownership are even lower: an analysis of the first nationally representative sample of transgender adults found that only one fourth (25%) are homeowners (Meyer et al., 2019).
- Black, White, Asian, and other-race LGBTQ+ people have statistically significant higher poverty rates than their same-race cisgender straight counterparts. For example, 30.8% of Black LGBT people live in poverty, whereas 25.3% of Black cisgender straight people live in poverty (The Williams Institute).
- According to a National Transgender Discrimination report, “of those who have transitioned gender, only one-fifth (21%) have been able to update all of their IDs and records with their new gender” (The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality, 2011).
- There are approximately 1 million LGBTQ+ immigrants in the U.S.—and 30% are undocumented ([lgbtmap.org](#)).
- The few examples above illustrate how different social identities can create overlapping systems of privilege or oppression. The ways in which these identities interact in the real world can impact one’s access to legal protection, healthcare, homeless services, and basic social services and significantly impact one’s ability to achieve upward mobility. Using an intersectional and historical approach to understanding the diverse realities of LGBTQ+ people can help set a foundational framework for creating a more inclusive world where change is not reserved only for select groups of people.

Day 2 Materials



Levels of Expressions of Oppression

I n d i v i d u a l	Internalized Oppression lies within individuals. These are our private beliefs and biases about others, influenced by our culture.	S y s t e m i c	Institutional Oppression occurs within institutions and systems of power. It is the norms, policies and practices that are structured into political, societal and economic institutions that have the net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and denying rights, opportunity, and equality to identifiable groups.
	Interpersonal Oppression occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interactions with others, we are now in the interpersonal realm.		Structural Oppression is bias across institutions and society. It's the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege some and disadvantage others.

Key Points to Remember

Key Point 1 - There are not hard and fast lines between the levels - and changing one can affect another.

Key Point 2 - The way to effect change is by addressing institutional and structural oppression- this is where injustice lives.

Expressions of Oppression Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS: Please review the cases below and as a group, have a discussion on your assigned case to come to a decision about which level of oppression each case belongs to. Please ensure there is consensus in your group in your answers. Be prepared to share in three minutes – a summary of your case, the level you chose, and why you made that decision.

Scenario #1: Oppression in Medicine

Quick Summary of the Case

Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this

<https://www.thetaskforce.org/new-report-reveals-rampant-discrimination-against-transgender-people-by-health-providers-high-hiv-rates-and-widespread-lack-of-access-to-necessary-care-2/>



Transgender and gender non-conforming people face rampant discrimination in health care settings, are regularly denied needed care, and experience a range of health risks because they are transgender or gender non-conforming, according to a report of more than 6,450 transgender and gender non-conforming people. The National Transgender Discrimination Survey: Report on Health and Health Care was released nationally today by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality.

Key findings include:

- Nearly 1 in 5 (19 percent) reported being refused care outright because they were transgender or gender non-conforming.
- Survey participants reported very high levels of postponing medical care when sick or injured due to discrimination and disrespect (28 percent).
- Harassment: 28 percent of respondents were subjected to harassment in medical settings.

Scenario #2: LGBTQ+ Youth and the Juvenile Justice System

Quick Summary of the Case

Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this



For LGBTQ people, criminal justice involvement often starts at a young age. LGBTQ youth are extremely overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. Researchers estimate that 20% of youth in the juvenile justice system are lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, gender nonconforming, or transgender compared with 4-6% of youth in the general population. The same research shows that 40% of girls (who were assigned female at

birth) in the juvenile justice system identify as LBQ and/or gender nonconforming. This overrepresentation is largely due to the obstacles that LGBTQ youth face after fleeing abuse and lack of acceptance at home because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In order to survive, LGBTQ youth are pushed towards criminalized behaviors such as drug sales, theft, or survival sex, which increase their risk of arrest and confinement.

Scenario #3: Financial Services	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/28/30percent-of-lgbtq-adults-experienced-discrimination-in-financial-services.html>



Members of the LGBTQIA+ community are still struggling, in some instances, to access financial services that would help them manage their money.

Some 30% of LGBTQIA+ adults have experienced bias, discrimination or exclusion in the financial services sector, either from individuals or organizations, a survey from the National Endowment for Financial Education found. The online survey of more than 1,000 adults in the LGBTQ+ community took place from May 6 to May 17.

Of those who experienced such barriers to accessing financial services, many noted that age and orientation were the top reasons they felt led to the experience. In addition, transgender respondents face the most discrimination, the survey found.

Scenario #4: Department of Education	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/03/30/transgender-discrimination-title-ix-rule-students/>



Discrimination against transgender students would be a violation of federal civil rights law under proposed regulations the Education Department is expected to finalize in the coming weeks.

Title IX bars discrimination on the basis of sex in education, and the new rules would make clear this includes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, among other things, according to two people familiar with a draft of the proposed regulation who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly comment on the subject.

Regulations carry the power of law. The rules, if finalized, would set up a clash with state laws that bar transgender women from competing in women's sports. Those statutes are already being challenged in the courts.

Scenario #5: Swimming Ban	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

<https://www.nydailynews.com/sports/more-sports/ny-fina-world-swimming-bans-transgender-athletes-elite-women-lia-thomas-20220619-hxjhhrmwaffapibcp3lnogy2hm-story.html>



Transgender women have been effectively banned from competing in women's events, swimming's international governing body ruled Sunday. In voting to restrict the participation of transgender athletes, FINA members announced a new "gender inclusion policy" that permits only swimmers who transitioned before age 12 to compete in women's events.

Transgender rights have been a hotly debated issue in swimming after University of Pennsylvania swimmer Lia Thomas became the first transgender NCAA champion in Division I history. She won the women's 500-yard freestyle in March, leading to some parents and competitors to complain that she had an unfair advantage.

Thomas competed on the men's team at Penn before transitioning. She competed as a woman for the first time in 2021-22 after meeting NCAA standards for competition after undergoing testosterone suppression therapy for more than two years.

Scenario #6: Personal Story	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

<https://www.glaad.org/amp/lgbtq-youth-share-stories-offer-advice-adults-to-end-bullying>



My story: I'm a femme, gay man and since kindergarten I've always felt accepted by my friends. But appreciation of my outward expression didn't reach far past my small friend group. I was bullied for being 'too femme' and to avoid being teased I'd deepen my voice around others. In P.E. I'd always be told that I "played like a girl" or that I was not good enough to play with the other boys because I was "too gay." I was always being labeled as 'too girly' for being around so many women and also shunned from masculine groups because no one wanted to be hit on by a 'gay boy.' To the other boys, my mannerisms were a sort of oddity that they hoped wouldn't catch on. Even my father advised me to "act more like a man" rather than more like myself.

Scenario #7: Spray Paint Graffiti	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

https://www.nvdaily.com/nvdaily/strasburg-residents-home-vandalized-for-second-time-police-investigate-incidents-as-hate-crimes/article_ca7c986f-3770-5de3-91e6-05e8c1d33367.html#:~:text=Statewide%20Notice%20Archive-,Strasburg%20resident's%20home%20vandalized%20for%20second%20time,investigate%20incidents%20as%20hate%20crimes&text=Paul%20Rush%2C%2027%2C%20stands%20outside,in%20the%20last%20two%20months.



For the second time in two months, the home of a transgender Strasburg resident has been vandalized with spray-painted graffiti. Paul Rush, 27, of Branch Street, said that derogatory words and an obscene hand gesture were painted on their house Tuesday night. This comes after a Sept. 26 incident in which anti-LGBTQIA and anti-Black messages were spray painted on Rush's home. On Sept. 23, Rush had displayed a pride flag to openly express being a non-binary transgender person, which means not identifying as a male

or female. "Most of the time people, especially around here, tend to just disagree quietly, even if they put the occasional snarky Facebook post," said Rush, who uses the pronouns they and their. "But that's usually as far as it goes." Rush said they waited until 2017 to come out as transgender to close friends because of the fear of what might happen. "This is the first time I've ever seen something like this," said Rush, a lifelong Strasburg resident. Rush said they were a little worried on Tuesday because there's generally an uptick of hateful actions against minority groups following a close election, regardless of who wins. Rush added that they stayed up "a little bit late" watching election results and if the vandals "came while we were awake, we certainly didn't hear anything." Although Rush said they do not have any proof, they have a gut feeling of the culprit's identity. "Strasburg is a very small community. There's not a lot of openly LGBT people here," Rush said. "I believe it's just the bigotry of just one person or maybe just a small group of people who live on this street or in this neighborhood." Rush and their wife, who live with two cats, looked into purchasing a security camera after the first incident. They held off, however, because money was tight, Rush said.

Strasburg Police Chief Wayne Sager said his department is "absolutely" looking into these incidents as hate crimes and is actively working to gather evidence to find the offender and successfully prosecute them. "This is devastating to all of us," Sager said. "It is not to be tolerated, and we're going to do our best to bring justice to Mr. Rush and his family and friends as well, the victims of this." Although officers have contacted 81 residents and businesses in the area, Sager said the department has not identified a person of interest. "With the vulgar language and the hate things that are being targeted there to Mr. Rush's residence, we want to make sure we do our jobs," Sager said.

Scenario #8: Workplace Gender Change	
Quick Summary of the Case	
Level of Expression of Oppression and Why you chose this	

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/04/30/transgender-woman-wrote-letter-her-boss-it-led-her-firing-trip-supreme-court/>



It took Aimee Stephens several months to write a letter to her boss explaining that she was a transgender woman and planned to start coming to work as her true self.

She had been working as a funeral director and embalmer for RG & GR Harris Funeral Homes in Garden City, Michigan, for almost six years. [She loved her job](#), but didn't want to hide who she was anymore.

She agonized over what to say in the letter, wrote several drafts and sought input from her therapist.

Finally satisfied, she handed the letter to her boss in the summer of 2013.

"He read it, he folded it up and put it in his pocket," Stephens recalled in an interview with CNN. "And basically stood up and walked away."

She was fired two weeks later. Stephens [filed a complaint](#) with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which then sued the funeral home claiming that firing Stephens for being transgender was unlawful sex discrimination based on her employer's sex- or gender-based expectations.

"I was proposing to go from being a man in a suit to a woman in a dress and they couldn't handle that part," Stephens said.

Her boss stated that he fired Stephens because she "was no longer going to represent himself as a man" and "wanted to dress as a woman,"

PRONOUN GUIDE

This is a guide for NEA leaders, members and staff to better understand and use pronouns in a respectful way for all NEA meetings and communications. Please be aware that some of this advice may not be appropriate for your school community, depending on current state law; check with your state or local affiliate regarding questions related to state law or school district policies.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words that function in the place of a name. Instead of saying, “My brother Steve is coming to pick me up in Steve’s car, and we are going to Steve’s favorite restaurant,” a person could instead say, “his car/his favorite restaurant.”

In English, we have two sets of gendered pronouns: “she/her/hers” and “he/him/his” are pronouns that are attached to a particular gender. Men/males have typically been referred to using he/him/his and women/females by using she/her/hers. We likely all grew up assuming we knew someone’s pronouns just by looking at them, or knowing their gender, but that isn’t the case. In an effort to be more affirming of all, it is important to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns.

Plural pronouns are becoming more widely accepted as gender-neutral singular pronouns. It is grammatically correct to use singular ‘they’ to refer a singular person of unknown gender or to a non-binary person who does not feel gendered pronouns work for them.

Here is a list of the most common pronouns used. Always use the pronouns of the individual once they have told you what pronouns they use. You may see more pronouns outside of this list.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive	Pronunciation
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	
He	Him	His	His	Himself	
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves	
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Zay or Zee Zim (rhymes with them) Zir (rhymes with their)

TIPS ON USING GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Chances are that you’ve used ‘they, them, or their’ as neutral pronouns when you weren’t aware of a person’s gender. These pronouns are gender-neutral and are used by some transgender and gender non-conforming people. Recognizing that it’s natural to do this can help when a nonbinary person asks you to use gender-neutral pronouns for them. The following are examples when you might have used gender-neutral pronouns without realizing:

- ▶ You’re at an event, and someone left a key for you, but you can’t find it. You might ask, “Where did they leave the key?”
- ▶ You are awaiting a delivery from a postal worker and wonder, “When are they dropping off the mail?”
- ▶ Someone gives your organization a gift, but you didn’t meet the donor. You might say, “Please tell them I said thank you!”

SHARE YOUR PRONOUNS

If we want to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns, we need to learn and let people introduce their pronouns.

Role model your pronouns before inviting everyone to introduce theirs.

“Hi, my name is Meg and I use she/her/hers pronouns. Could everyone please go around and share their name and pronouns.”

Explain what pronouns are and why you’re asking people to introduce theirs before you do.

“Hey everyone! So during introductions we are going to introduce our name and pronouns. Pronouns are words that we use to replace names, like she/her/hers, he/him/his, or they/them/theirs. I want to make sure that we are referring to each other in the way that feels most accurate, so we are going to be going around and if everyone could share their name and pronouns that’d be great!”

A common question and fear that we may have when getting to know someone who has recently changed pronouns or who uses singular they as their pronoun, is that we will make a mistake and misgender the person.

Apologize briefly and correct yourself. For example, *“And I was saying to someone that he’s a really good – sorry, she – that she was a really good painter.”*

Do not over apologize. Over apologizing could sound like, *“Oh gosh I am SO SO sorry, I really am. I know it’s wrong and this must happen all the time. Gosh pronouns are so difficult!”* You’re doing a few things when you over apologize. Instead of the moment being about them, you’ve made it about your feelings.



IT'S ABOUT RESPECT

Positive experiences of social gender affirmation are critical to the health and well-being of transgender and gender diverse people. Social interactions where a person is addressed by their correct name and pronouns, consistent with their gender identity, are widely recognized as a basic – yet critical – aspect of gender affirmation. Addressing someone by the wrong name or misgendering them through the use of incorrect pronouns can feel disrespectful, harmful, and even unsafe to the person being misgendered. Misgendering results in marginalization and communicates that a person's identity is not being seen or respected. So, practice using the pronouns a transgender or nonbinary person requests... yes, even plural ‘they’. It’s a show of respect.

PRONOUN USE IN POLICY

Over the last few years, the transgender community has asked allies to help normalize offering pronouns during introductions, in education, and the workplace to indicate an understanding of trans identities and show that they are a safe person. As gender identity and gender expression do not always align, offering pronouns is a way to create a space where people do not need to rely on assumptions of others’ gender.

However, not everyone is comfortable sharing their pronouns. Some transgender, nonbinary, or questioning individuals might not be “out” yet or ready to let others know of their trans status. Others might object to sharing for any number of personal reasons. Respect those who offer to share their pronouns and those who do not. No one should be forced to comply, as long as they simply skip the practice and do not mock or belittle it.

Offering your pronouns is the simplest way to put things into practice. When you meet someone new, you can say, “Hi, my name is ____ and my pronouns are ____.” If you wear a nametag or ID badge, you can add your pronouns to it. If you cannot alter your official nametag, it is easy to find pronoun pins in stores and online. When you participate in an online meeting, you can change your name to include your pronouns in parentheses to the side.

For more information on pronouns and additional LGBTQ+ Resources, please visit the following:

NEA LGBTQ+ Resources | NEA EdJustice | Why Share Your Pronouns?

PRONOUN GUIDE

Purpose of this Guide

This guide is created to help anyone learn how to use people's correct pronouns. Everyone in your school community should engage in learning, educating, and advocating for the inclusive use of pronouns for all.



What Are Pronouns?

Pronouns are the words you may like others to use for you in place of your proper name. Some examples include “she/her” or “he/him” or gender-neutral pronouns, such as “ze/hir,” [pronounced: zee/heer] or “they/them”. Some people use specific pronouns, any pronouns, or none at all. Here is an example of using “they/them” in a sentence: *John is substituting for me today and they are an incredible mathematician.*

Using singular “they” pronouns have been used in the English language for centuries. If you are still struggling with using this, remember, it takes practice!

Why Focus on Pronouns?

You may have noticed that people are sharing their pronouns in introductions, on name tags, and at the beginning of meetings. This gives everyone in the room the opportunity to self identify instead of assuming someone’s identity or which pronouns they use. Including pronouns is a first step toward respecting people’s identity and creating a more welcoming space for people of all genders.

How Is This More Inclusive?

Pronouns can sometimes be a signifier for someone’s gender identity but not always. We do not want to assume people’s gender identity based on expression (typically shown through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms etc.).

By providing an opportunity for people to share their pronouns, you’re showing that you’re not assuming that their gender identity is based on their appearance.

What If I Don’t Want to Share My Pronouns?

That’s ok! Providing space and opportunity for people to share their pronouns **does not** mean that everyone feels comfortable or needs to share their pronouns. Some people may choose not to share their pronouns for a variety of reasons, e.g. they are questioning or using different pronouns, they don’t use any pronouns, they don’t feel comfortable sharing them at that moment or in that space, or they fear bullying or harassment after sharing.

**In the case that someone has left pronouns off the nametag or chosen not to share their pronouns, please refrain from using pronouns for that person and refer to the person by what is on the nametag.*

Mistakes and Misgendering

Misgendering refers to the experience of being labeled by others as a gender other than one that a person identifies with. Because many (not all) associate their pronouns with their gender identity, using the wrong pronouns intentionally or unintentionally is a form of misgendering. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun when identifying someone, please apologize or say “thank you,” and immediately use the right pronoun.

continued >

i.e. *This is Alex, she is one of my science students.* (you are corrected because Alex uses they/them/theirs pronouns). *Sorry, they are one of my science students.* Or *Thank you, they are one of my science students.*

Everyone makes mistakes, please take accountability for your mistake and continue using the correct pronoun. The important thing to be mindful of, is to not unload your guilty feelings on transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people or expect forgiveness. They might have a strong reaction to the misuse of their pronouns and need space to recenter themselves.

What About PGP?

There has been a shift away from the term “preferred gender pronoun” or “PGP” to just using “pronoun.” This change was made because a person’s pronouns are not just preferred; they’re the pronouns that must be used. In the same sense as mentioned earlier, gender was removed because pronouns do not always reflect or indicate someone’s gender.

Make Your Support Visible!

- Include “pronoun:” under “name:” in name tags and introductions in groups as an opportunity for participants to make their pronouns visible. At the beginning of the semester, educators can call out students by their last name instead of their first name in case a student has not been able to change their name in the Student Information System or legally. Let students know that after class they can let you know what name they use if it is different than what is on the roster.
- At the beginning of the semester, educators can pass out 3×5 notecards to students and ask them to add their name, pronouns, and whatever information you feel is necessary to know about the student that they might not want to share out loud.
- Have pronouns be added to all email signatures, and link the word “pronouns” to this guide or another reference for people who are new to this practice:
 - Sincerely,
Mx. Marvel
Pronouns: They, Them, Theirs

Tips for Gender-Neutral Language

- Practice, practice, practice! Use gender-neutral pronouns such as “they” and “ze” while visualizing the person who uses them. This is especially useful to do right before you’re about to see the person.
- When addressing groups of people or people whose pronouns you haven’t been told, use gender-neutral language such as, “siblings,” “third graders,” “students,” “friends,” “folks,” “all,” or “y’all,” rather than “brothers and sisters,” or “guys,” “ladies,” “ma’am,” or “sir.”
- Use descriptive language if you do not know a person’s gender, pronouns, or name. e.g. *Can you give this paper to the person across the room with the white t-shirt and short brown hair?*

Share this resource with others and open conversations to make sure you are engaging in respecting people’s identities and pronouns.

GROWING AND LEARNING TAKES TIME! ENCOURAGE, EDUCATE, ENGAGE!

SUPPORTING AN EMPLOYEE IN TRANSITION

DEVELOPING A PLAN TO SUPPORT

When developing an employee support plan, it is important to allow the employee to guide this process. Every transition process is unique and has different steps.

ALLOW THE EMPLOYEE TO GUIDE THIS PROCESS.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS MAY BE USEFUL TO DISCUSS WITH THE TRANSITIONING STAFF MEMBER

1. SUPPORT ✓

What is the best way that I/we can support you in this process?

2. HOW & WHEN ✓

How and when would you like to discuss this transition with your co-workers, managers, and customers?

3. TIME OFF ✓

Would you like to take a couple of days off after this information has been disclosed?

4. WASHROOM ✓

Which washroom are you most comfortable using? How can I/we best support you in feeling comfortable using these facilities?

5. PRONOUNS ✓

When and how would you like to start being addressed by your proper pronouns and name?

6. IF MISTAKES ✓

How would you like to be supported if/when people make a mistake and use the wrong pronoun and name?

7. COVERAGE ✓

Are you aware of the medical coverage that is offered by the organization you work for?

8. MEDICAL LEAVE ✓

If you are planning any medical leave, do you have a timeline in mind?

9. FEEL SUPPORTED ✓

Have we addressed the issues that feel most important to you? Help me understand what else we need to put in place for you to feel supported.

AFTER AN INITIAL TIMELINE HAS BEEN CREATED, REVISIT IT ON OCCASION

Check in to see if anything has changed; perhaps the employee wishes to amend the timeline in some way. Be flexible and open to these changes. Ensure that the employee understands that this timeline is provisional and that they can discuss and modify it as they need.


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FACT SHEET JUN 1, 2022

Fact Sheet: LGBT Workers in the Labor Market

New data from the Census Bureau reveal economic insecurity and labor market gaps experienced by LGBT people compared with non-LGBT populations.

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Building an Economy for All. Economy, Jobs, LGBTQ Communities of Color, LGBTQ Health, LGBTQ Rights, LGBTQ Youth, Wages



Activists rally in support of LGBTQI+ rights at New York City Hall, October 2019. (Getty/Drew Angerer)

The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis resulted in significant hardship for people across the country: Tens of millions of people lost their jobs, unemployment rates increased, and economic activity declined. To mitigate these economic impacts, federal policymakers enacted multiple relief bills, including the American Rescue Plan

Act. These investments shortened the recession in the wake of the pandemic and have helped propel a historic economic recovery resulting in the most jobs ever created in a single year, an unprecedented drop in unemployment, and dramatic reductions in the child poverty rate and food insufficiency. However, while the United States is experiencing a more equitable recovery compared with prior recessions, systemic inequities persist, particularly for LGBTQI+ communities.

Using new data from the Household Pulse Survey (HPS), this fact sheet examines the economic security and labor market experiences of LGBT communities since July 2021, when the U.S. Census Bureau took the historic step of adding questions on sexual orientation and gender identity to the HPS. The data reveal that although some LGBT individuals are more likely or just as likely to be employed compared with non-LGBT individuals, they are also more likely to live in households earning below the poverty line and to struggle to make ends meet.

For decades, compared with the general population, LGBTQI+ people have faced increased risk of experiencing economic insecurities, such as higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and public benefits use. Not only has the pandemic disproportionately affected LGBTQ people, but the recovery has also likely perpetuated existing inequities, leaving many LGBTQ workers stranded in low-quality jobs that offer poverty wages, few benefits, and limited protections.

READ MORE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF LGBTQI+-INCLUSIVE DATA COLLECTION

REPORT

Collecting Data About LGBTQI+ and Other Sexual and Gender-Diverse Communities

May 24, 2022

Caroline Medina, Lindsay Mahowald

While improving data collection on LGBTQI+ communities through labor-market-specific surveys more broadly is necessary to enhance the public's and policymakers' understanding of the proliferation of low-quality jobs among LGBTQI+ workers, the data demonstrate a clear need for the creation of good jobs that target LGBTQI+ people.

Data source: The Household Pulse Survey

In April 2020, the Census Bureau launched the HPS as part of its experimental data collection effort to quickly and efficiently gauge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households across the country. In July 2021, the Census Bureau added questions about sexual orientation and gender identity—a historic step that marked the first time a survey sponsored by the Census Bureau asked these questions. Policymakers and researchers have already used these data to inform federal and state response and recovery planning, as well as to generate research on food insufficiency, housing insecurity, and economic challenges that LGBT people encounter. Importantly, adding these questions on large-scale data collection instruments allows for data disaggregation that enables researchers to analyze outcomes for people living at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities, such as Black LGBT people.

The inclusion of these questions on the HPS represents important progress and illustrates that other federally supported data collection instruments can and should include these questions. Expanding federally supported data

collection on sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics, including intersex traits, is essential to identifying and addressing disparities that LGBTQI+ communities experience across key areas of life.

Impacts of the pandemic on the economic security of LGBTQI+ communities

Compared with the general population, LGBTQI+ people face significant challenges that obstruct pathways to achieving economic security, including discrimination in employment and housing, workforce exclusion, and lack of access to jobs that pay well and offer benefits that meet their needs and those of their families. For LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ communities of color, and transgender people, these barriers to reach economic stability are heightened. In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on and likely exacerbated long-standing economic disparities faced by underserved communities, including people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ people.

Evidence from earlier on in the pandemic reveals that LGBTQ households, especially low-income LGBTQ people and LGBTQ people of color, were more likely than non-LGBTQ households to experience food insecurity, loss of employment, significant financial challenges, and barriers to accessing health care as a result of the pandemic. Losses in employment income come at a time when the unemployment rate is at historic lows and employers are claiming that they are struggling to find workers amid the ongoing good jobs shortage.

New data from the HPS reveal that:

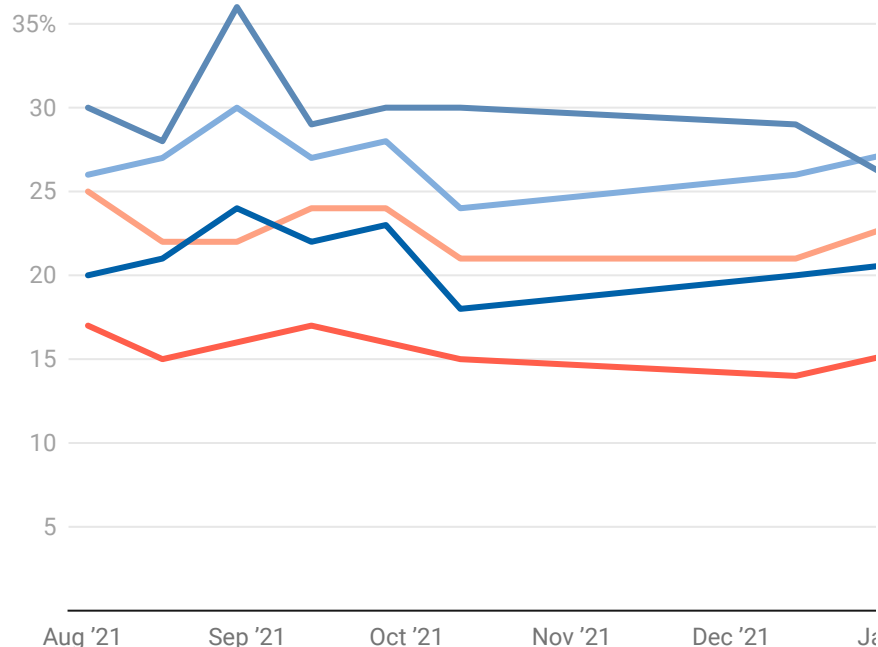
- LGBT households are more likely to live in poverty. LGBT individuals were more likely than non-LGBT individuals to report a household income of less than \$25,000 in 2020, at 20 percent compared with 14 percent. Put another way, many LGBT individuals live in households that are at or near the poverty line. LGBT respondents of color (26 percent) and transgender respondents (28 percent) are even more likely to earn less than \$25,000.
- LGBT households are more likely to report losing a source of employment income. On average, from July 2021 to April 2022, LGBT individuals were also more likely than non-LGBT individuals to report that they or someone in their household had lost a source of employment income in the past four weeks, at 21 percent compared with 15 percent. These disparities are heightened among LGBT respondents of color (26 percent) and transgender respondents (29 percent), which was a consistent trend for the past year. (see Figure 1)
- LGBT households experience more difficulty paying household expenses. On average, from July 2021 to April 2022, LGBT individuals were more likely than non-LGBT individuals to report that it has been somewhat or very difficult for their household to pay for usual household expenses in the past week, at 38 percent compared with 29 percent, with rates consistently highest among LGBT respondents of color (46 percent) and transgender respondents (50 percent). (see Figure 2) Usual household expenses include but are not limited to food, rent or mortgage, car payments, medical expenses, and student loans.

Figure 1

LGBT individuals report greater loss of employment income during the pandemic than non-LGBT individuals overall

Share of individuals who reported that they or someone in their household lost their employment income in the past 4 weeks

— LGBT
 — Non-LGBT
 — LGBT people of color
 — Transgender
 — Non-LG



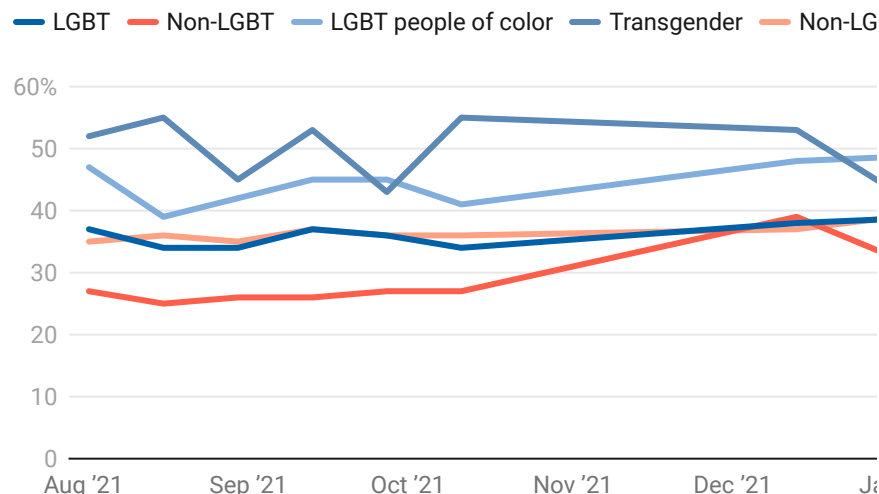
Hover over or click to see values

Note: The U.S. Census Bureau collected these data in intervals from July 21, 2021, to April 11, 2022. The dates included refer to the last day of data collection for each interval. All columns not indicating 'people of color' are not race specific.

Figure 2

LGBT individuals have greater difficulty paying their usual household expenses than non-LGBT individuals overall

Share of individuals who reported that it had been "somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" for their household to pay their usual expenses* in the past 7 days



Hover over or click to see values

* Including basic amenities such as food, rent, mortgage, and medical expenses

Note: The U.S. Census Bureau collected these data in intervals from July 21, 2021, to April 11, 2022. The dates included refer to the last day of data collection for each interval. All columns not indicating 'people of color' are not race-specific.

Chart: Center for American Progress • Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Household Pulse Survey Public Use File (PUF), Weeks 34–41," available at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/datasets.html> (last accessed April 2022).

Labor market experiences of LGBTQI+ workers

LGBTQI+ people experience labor market disparities, as they often struggle to find employment; when they do, they often work in low-wage occupations. While some LGBT workers have higher employment rates than non-LGBT individuals, as explained above, they still struggle to make ends meet. The experience of LGBT individuals in the paid labor market is a reminder that job quality, and not merely job attainment, is critical to economic security.

New data from the HPS reveal that:

- LGBT people work more and at higher rates. LGBT respondents were more likely than non-LGBT respondents to report working in the past seven days, at 65 percent compared with 57 percent. (see Figure 3) Across all age groups, LGBT respondents were either more likely than or just as likely as their non-LGBT counterparts to work over time. While this signals that employment rates are fairly equitable across populations, it also masks the disparities experienced in job quality and economic insecurity. However, transgender respondents experienced

lower employment rates than both other groups within the LGBT community and non-LGBT people, signaling a challenge in attaining employment.

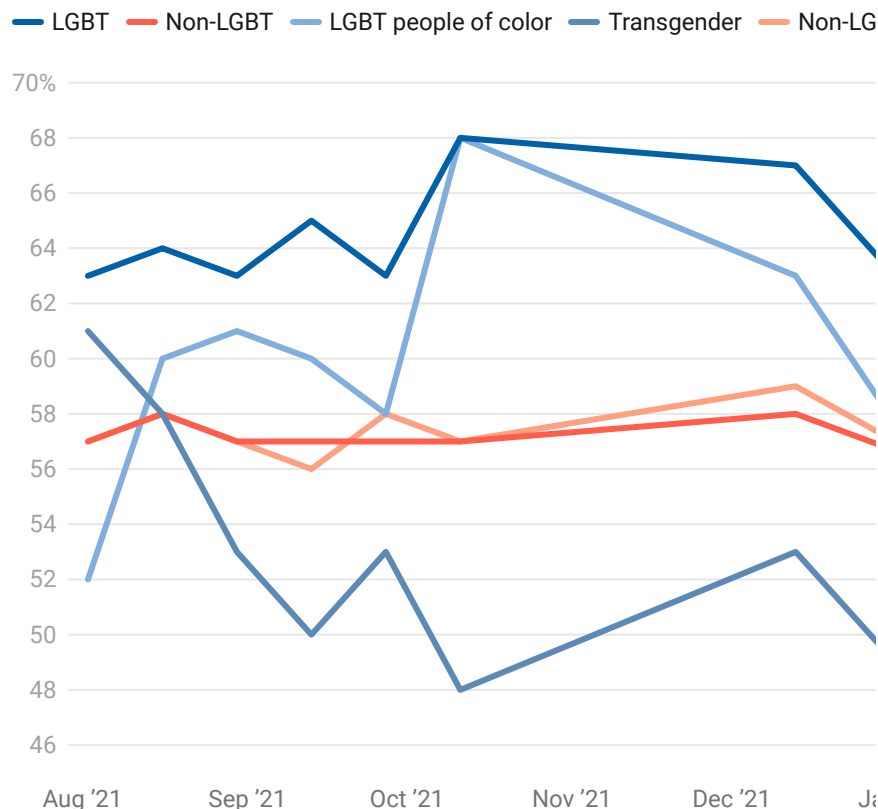
- LGBT people are more likely to work at grocery and convenience stores. LGBT respondents were nearly twice as likely as non-LGBT respondents to report working at food or beverage stores, which include grocery stores and convenience stores, at 11 percent compared with 6 percent. LGBT respondents of color (12 percent) and transgender respondents (14 percent) were also more likely to report working at food or beverage stores.
- LGBT people are more likely to use unemployment insurance. LGBT respondents, particularly transgender respondents, were more likely than non-LGBT respondents to report receiving unemployment insurance since January 2022. This likely underestimates the number of respondents who are both unemployed and eligible for unemployment insurance.

Figure 3



LGBT individuals were more likely to report working during the pandemic than non-LGBT individuals overall

Share of individuals who reported doing any work in the past 7 days for either pay or profit



Hover over or click to see values

Note: The U.S. Census Bureau collected these data in intervals from July 21, 2021,

Recommendations

While the economic recovery has been more equitable than prior recoveries, existing inequities persist among LGBTQI+ communities, particularly in the labor market. The U.S. labor market must foster equitable opportunity for all, including LGBTQI+ workers. Policymakers can help ensure this occurs by expanding and improving LGBTQI+-inclusive data collection and promoting good jobs for LGBTQI+ workers.

Enhance LGBTQI+-inclusive data collection

Enhancing data collection on sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics, including intersex traits, is critical to providing policymakers and researchers with the tools necessary to craft policy solutions that reduce disparities and advance equitable outcomes for LGBTQI+ communities.

CAP recommends that:

- The Biden-Harris administration add measures of sexual orientation, gender identity, and variations in sex characteristics, including intersex traits, to the following priority surveys, which collect indispensable data on the social, economic, housing, public benefit use, and demographic characteristics of households across the country: the American Community Survey, the Current Population Survey, and the Survey of Income and Program Participation.
- Congress pass the LGBTQ Data Inclusion Act to add questions on sexual orientation and gender identity to federally supported surveys and expand the bill to include data collection on people with intersex traits.
- The Biden-Harris administration and Congress allocate funding to support the efforts of agencies to adopt these questions on federally supported data collection instruments and to invest in ongoing research to continue testing and improving question design.

Promote good jobs for LGBTQI+ workers

Good jobs should be available to all workers, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or intersex status. These jobs should not only offer fair wages that allow workers to support themselves and their families but also include the health benefits that LGBTQI+ workers need and support workers' right to come together in unions. For transgender and disabled LGBTQI+ workers in particular, jobs often fall short of offering critical health benefits on top of paying poverty wages that leave workers unable to make ends meet.

CAP offered guidelines and recommendations for policymakers interested in creating good jobs for LGBTQI+ workers and their families in its report from April. In addition to collecting better data on the economic well-being of LGBTQI+ Americans, the report recommends that policymakers:

- Ensure that jobs funded through federal spending are good jobs for LGBTQI+ workers and their families.
- Make existing anti-discrimination protections real by empowering LGBTQI+ workers to stand up for their rights.
- Build pathways to good jobs through apprenticeships and training focused on LGBTQI+ workers and youth.

- Support the right of workers to come together in solidarity and promote collective bargaining as a means of strengthening protections for LGBTQI+ workers.
- Lead through federal example by making sure the federal government is a model employer for its direct public employees.

Conclusion

The experiences of LGBTQI+ workers, including LGBTQI+ workers of color and transgender workers, within the labor market have not been well documented due to a lack of available data. Using new HPS data, this fact sheet reveals that LGBT workers face economic insecurity and are likely overrepresented in low-paid occupations. While limitations in the data point to a broader need for job quality and labor market surveys that ask questions on gender identity, sexual orientation, and variations in sex characteristics, including intersex traits, the HPS data underline the urgent need for policymakers to include LGBTQI+ workers in their efforts to create good jobs.

The authors would like to thank Anona Neal, Lily Roberts, Karla Walter, and Nicole Lee Ndumele for their input and review.

Methodology

As of this publication, 11 iterations of the HPS include questions on sexual orientation and gender identity. Collectively, the data include 51,216 LGBT individuals, 647,603 non-LGBT individuals, 13,694 LGBT people of color, and 3,121 transgender individuals. The data were weighted to account for nonresponse, adults per household, and coverage. All in-text statistics comparing LGBT respondents with non-LGBT respondents are significant at the 0.05 level. Data and a detailed methodology are on file with the authors and available publicly via the Census Bureau.

- Respondents coded as “LGBT” include those who reported that 1) they were “Gay or lesbian,” “Bisexual,” and/or “Transgender”; 2) their gender assigned at birth was “Male” and that their current gender identity is “Female”; and/or 3) their gender assigned at birth was “Female” and that their current gender identity is “Male.” Respondents who met criteria 2) or 3) were coded as transgender.
- Respondents coded as “people of color” include those who reported that they were 1) “of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin”; 2) “Black, alone”; 3) “Asian, alone”; or 4) “Any other race alone, or race in combination.”
- The Census Bureau imputed gender assigned at birth where it was not provided. For the purposes of accurately identifying transgender respondents, those with imputed gender assigned at birth were removed from the sample.

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CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

THE PERCEIVE AND FEEL FRAMEWORK

A welcoming environment feels safe. It is a space where people can find themselves represented and reflected, and where they understand that all people are treated with respect and dignity. This happens when services consider, and are equitable and accessible to all members of the LGBTQ community, including clients, staff, and volunteers.

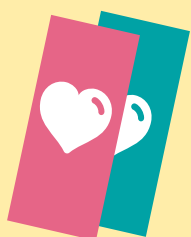
A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN FIND THEMSELVES REPRESENTED AND REFLECTED AND WHERE THEY UNDERSTAND THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AND DIGNITY.

PERCEIVE

physical environment and language



Service users/staff must be able to look around their physical environment and see positive and inclusive symbols, images, and artwork.



Service users/staff must be able to look around and see positive and inclusive brochures and pamphlets that represent their experiences.



Service users/staff must be able to hear positive and inclusive language and be comfortable using inclusive and positive language.

FEEL

overall environment, which imparts a sense of safety



Service users' and employees' gender identities and expressions are acknowledged, affirmed, and respected.

SAFE PLACE

There are visible and verbal reminders that the agency is a safe place.



Accessible/supportive processes are available that allow people to raise issues and concerns, and to feel that they have been acknowledged and that there will be follow-up.



Service users and staff are aware that communication goes two ways.

MATERIALS



Put up inclusive posters and stickers. Think about the reading material in your waiting rooms and the people represented in them.

LANGUAGE



Make sure that inclusive and affirming language is the standard. Educate employees and make sure your policies reflect the changes to Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

FORMS



Make sure forms have a space for legal name and another name (some people don't go by their legal name). Make sure forms reflect only what you need to know.

BEING A SUPPORTIVE PEER OR CO-WORKER

IF IT IS DISCLOSED TO YOU

that a co-worker, or someone you know or interact with through your workplace, is trans-identified or transitioning on the job, it is important to continue to treat that person with respect, care, and dignity.

TREAT THAT PERSON WITH RESPECT, CARE, AND DIGNITY.

THAT INCLUDES

LISTENING

If someone is having a difficult time and requires support, actively listen to their needs. Validate their experiences and show compassion and empathy.



EDUCATING YOURSELF

There are lots of amazing resources available to you online and through different community centres. Take the time to seek them out.



IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION

about someone's body or identity, stop and think about why you might be asking that question.

IF IT IS A QUESTION ABOUT SURGERY OR THEIR BODY, CHANCES ARE YOU DON'T NEED TO ASK IT.

PRONOUNS

Using the name and pronouns by which they wish to be addressed

– e.g., he/him/his, she/her(s), them, they/their(s), ze/hir(s). If you are having difficulty with this change, don't be afraid to practice in your head or with other co-workers.

BEING AN ALLY IS IMPORTANT it lets everyone around you know that you are supportive and attentive to the needs of others. Being an ally demonstrates that you want to help change the world for marginalized communities even if you are not necessarily part of a particular group.



BE KIND

be courteous, patient, and caring with people. Smiling and asking about someone's day can go a long way when someone is used to facing stares or harassment.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Use social media, blogs, websites, and books to educate yourself on the issues facing trans communities.



MAKE ALLY A VERB

Being an ally is about doing something and making change with and for trans communities.

APOLOGIZE WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

Everyone makes mistakes and that is okay! If and when someone points out your mistakes, acknowledge the wrong that has been done, apologize, and move on. It isn't always about your intent, but about the impact.

I'M SORRY.

UNDERSTAND YOUR PRIVILEGE

Recognize the ways that being cisgender allows you to access washrooms, health care, or transcripts with ease. Think about the entitlements you take for granted for which others must fight.



LISTEN

Experiences of transphobia can be dismissed, affirm the experiences of trans people. Listen to how you can provide support and be an ally.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SUPPORT



BESIDE



You may need to stand beside someone to support them. Listen to them and walk with them through an experience.



IN FRONT



You may need to stand in front of someone to help them avoid harm and hurt.



BEHIND



You may need to stand behind someone to support them, recognizing that they are the experts and know what is best for them.

Being an ally isn't just about creating affirming spaces in your work environment; it is also about creating affirming and welcoming social environments. Think holistically about inclusion.

Scenarios for Practice



From our Work—LGBTQIA+ 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 teacher who is also a GSA club advisor that allowed a drag show to be performed during club time, after school, and the fallout once the community found out.

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?

A blue decorative graphic consisting of a solid blue rectangle on the left, which transitions into a light blue gradient that tapers to a point on the right.

Scenario 1

Discrimination

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 judgement" 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.

**ARTICLE 3
ETHICS**

The Board of Education expects that each teacher shall put forth every effort to promote a quality instructional program in the school district. The Board of Education has stated its policies in the online district policy manual. All teachers are expected to be familiar and be in compliance with the contents of these policies. To access District policies, go to the HSD home page, then click on "District Policies" under the "Quick Links" section.

The Board of Education's various policies relating to conflict of interest will be made known to all teachers. It shall be deemed unethical for any teacher to attempt to influence a Board of Education member outside of an official Board of Education Meeting in regard to teaching assignments, purchase of equipment and supplies, selection of textbooks, or like matters which are ultimately decisions delegated to the Superintendent/designee.

An effective educational program requires teachers with integrity, high ideals, empathy, and human understanding. All teachers will be expected to adhere to the general staff ethics policy endorsed by the Board of Education.

The Board of Education expects the teachers to be familiar with the code of ethics that applies to their profession and to adhere to it in their relationships with students, parents, co-workers and officials of the district.

**ARTICLE 8
PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

The Board of Education recognizes that teachers of the district have the same fundamental civic rights and responsibilities as other citizens. Among these are campaigning for elective public office and holding an elective or appointed public office.

No teacher will use school system facilities, equipment, or supplies in connection with campaigning; nor will the teacher use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes. State law prohibits teachers from participating in the management of a campaign for the election or defeat of a member of the Board of Education which employs such teacher.

Any discussions of politics in the classroom are to be handled in such a manner as to give unbiased information. A teacher shall not impose, or attempt to impose, his or her personal, political philosophy upon the students.

**ARTICLE 9
TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONS**

The relationship between all teachers and students in the school district should be one of cooperation, understanding and mutual respect. All teachers have the responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning, which should be accomplished through effective individual and group discipline. All students and teachers will treat each other with respect and have the right to learn and work in a safe environment as defined in the Student Behavior Guide.

Teachers will not be subjected to harassment, abusive language, physical aggression, insults or interference in the performance of the employee's duties. Any such complaints will be handled according to the District's Behavior Guide and/or Policy AC.

Differences and problems that arise between a teacher and student are typically best worked out by conferences between these two (2) persons or between the teacher and the parent of the student. However, teachers and students should immediately report a violation or perceived violation of the district's nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policy (AC), regardless of whether a conference has been held.

No teacher may use his or her status as a teacher to adversely influence a student of the district. No teacher may date, make advances toward, or engage in any sexual relationship with a district student, regardless of the student's age, the perceived consensual nature of the relationship, where the advances are made or whether the teacher directly supervises the student. Further, no teacher may discuss or plan a future romantic or sexual relationship with a student. All teachers possessing evidence of or witnessing such conduct or sexual harassment shall report it to the district's administration immediately. All teachers or school officials who know or have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse shall immediately report the suspected abuse to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services hotline, pursuant to state law and to the principal.

**ARTICLE 12
COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to secure at the lowest possible administrative level and as expediently as possible, equitable solutions to the problems that may from time to time arise affecting the welfare or working conditions of teachers. Both parties agree that these proceedings shall be kept as informal and confidential as may be appropriate at any level of the policy.

B. Definition

1. A grievance is a complaint, misunderstanding, problem or dispute based upon pay, inequitable application of existing published policies, or the conditions or circumstances under which a teacher works. Complaints about non-renewal of a probationary teacher's contract, or about any official Board of Education action, shall be directed to the Board of Education; and a hearing on the same, unless required by state laws, shall be discretionary with the Board of Education. Complaints concerning evaluations, except those that lead to loss of pay, will be excluded. Complaints relating to discrimination on the basis of sex or disability will be resolved in accordance with Policy AC.
2. In this policy, a "teacher" is any certificated teacher of the school district with a teacher contract and one who does not have an administrative contract.
3. "Provide a written answer" shall be the deliverance of the appropriate grievance form or letter, containing the answers and reasons thereof to the grievant, unless notification is by other responsible method such as registered mail.
4. The grievance procedure shall not apply to summer school.

C. Time Limits

1. All time limits herein shall consist of teaching days when a grievance is submitted between the opening day of school as described by the school calendar and on or before June 1st.. Time limits pertaining to a grievance submitted after June 1st and before the last day of school as prescribed by the school calendar shall consist of all week days, Monday through Friday. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter before the close of the school term, or as soon as possible thereafter.
2. The grievance procedure must be initiated within seven (7) days of the action or knowledge of the action. Knowledge of the action is indicated when the

grievant informs the immediate supervisor of the complaint, misunderstanding, dispute or circumstances.

3. The time limits specified in any step of this procedure may be extended, in any specific instance, by the written consent of both parties. In the absence of a written reply within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be resolved in favor of the grievant.

D. Forms

Forms for the filing of a grievance will be available on the Human Resource's Page of the District's website or through the association representative.

E. Personnel Files

1. All documents, communications and records dealing with the proceedings of a grievance shall be filed separately from the personnel files of the grievant and participants.
2. Access to the grievance files is restricted to the grievant, the administration and the Board of Education, or to other person(s) designated by grievant by means of written authorization.
3. The grievant shall agree in writing to the distribution of written responses to a grievant's representative, if any. Failure to do so shall restrict the distribution of written responses to the grievant alone.

F. Reprisals

No reprisals of any kind shall be attempted against any grievant, grievant's representative, member of the association, administrator, association director, or any teacher of the Hazelwood School District because of the filing of a grievance.

G. Procedure

Informal

1. The parties acknowledge that it is usually most desirable for a teacher and his or her assigned supervisor (elementary principal, and/or secondary assistant principal) to resolve grievances through free and informal communications. When requested by either party, the grievant's representative(s) may assist in this resolution.

Step 1

1. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved at the informal level, the grievant must present the grievance in writing on the designated form within seven (7) days to the principal's office or the grievance will be considered waived.
2. The principal will arrange a meeting within seven (7) days of the time the written grievance is received. The principal, the grievant and the grievant's representative(s) shall be present for the meeting. For the secondary buildings, the assigned supervisor, if involved in Step 1, will be present at the meeting unless unusual circumstances prevent his or her participation.

The building principal shall provide the grievant and the grievant's representative(s) with a written answer within seven (7) days after the meeting. In the absence of a written reply within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be resolved in favor of the grievant.

Step 2

1. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in Step 1, the grievant must present the grievance in writing on the designated form within seven (7) days to the office of the appropriate assistant superintendent or the grievance will be considered waived.
2. The assistant superintendent or his/her designee will arrange a meeting within seven (7) days. The assistant superintendent or his/her designee, the grievant and the grievant's representative, unless the grievant chooses otherwise, shall be present at the meeting.
3. The assistant superintendent or his/her designee shall provide the grievant and the grievant's representative with a written response within seven (7) days after the meeting. In the absence of a written reply within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be resolved in favor of the grievant.

Step 3

1. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in Step 2, the grievant has seven (7) days to submit the grievance to the superintendent or his/her designee or the grievance will be considered waived.
2. The superintendent or his/her designee shall within seven (7) days hold a meeting with the grievant and the grievant's representative(s).

3. The superintendent or his/her designee shall provide the grievant and the grievant's representative(s) with a written response within seven (7) days after the meeting. In the absence of a written reply within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be resolved in favor of the grievant.

Step 4

1. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in Step 3, the grievant has the option in seven (7) days to request the superintendent or his/her designee to provide a meeting with the Board of Education, or the grievance will be considered waived.
2. A meeting involving the Board of Education, the grievant and/or grievant's representative(s) shall be held within ten (10) days of the receipt of the request if possible.
3. Following said meeting a written response to the grievant and the grievant's representative(s) shall be provided within ten (10) days. In the absence of a written reply within the specified time limits, the grievance shall be resolved in favor of the grievant. The Board of Education shall be the final determining body concerning any grievance.

H. Released Time

In Steps 2 and 3 of the grievance procedure, the immediate and appropriate administrator at such step shall have full authority to grant release time to the participants. Time allotted to lunch, parent conferences, or planning shall not be used for resolving grievances unless the participants agree.

I. General Provisions

1. Nothing herein contained shall deprive any teacher of any legal rights, nor of his or her professional rights as a member of any organization with which the association is affiliated.
2. A grievance arising from the action of an administrator above the rank of principal may be processed in accordance with Step 3 (superintendent).
3. The president of the association may file a grievance on behalf of the association initiating with Step 3 (superintendent).
4. All participants shall be given at least a day of notice of a meeting for each seven (7) days allotted to arrange the meeting.

Policy GBCB: STAFF CONDUCT

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 01/24/2017 | **Last Revised Date:** 09/19/2017

District employees are to serve the public and aspire to a high degree of integrity to maintain the public's trust, support and cooperation. It is important that all employees exhibit exemplary judgment and conduct both on and off duty. This judgment and conduct will maintain a culture of trust and safety among students, parents/guardians, the community and employees. Violations of this trust could lead to discipline and/or action under state or local statutes.

The Board of Education expects that each professional and support staff member shall put forth every effort to promote a quality instructional program in the school district. In building a quality program, employees must meet certain expectations that include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Become familiar with, enforce and follow all Board policies, regulations, administrative procedures, handbooks, other directions given by district administrators and state and federal laws as they affect the performance of job duties.
2. Maintain courteous and professional relationships with pupils, parents/guardians, other employees of the district and all patrons of the district.
3. Conduct oneself with honesty and integrity in all relationships and interactions, and always act in an ethical manner.
4. Refrain from adverse criticism or gossip about employees of the district.
5. Keep current on developments affecting the employee's area of expertise or position, and participate and engage in professional development activities, teams, etc., provided, mandated or suggested by the district.
6. Transact all official business with the appropriate designated authority in the district in a timely manner.
7. Maintain appropriate, acceptable use of district electronic and communication devices.
8. Care for, properly use and protect school property.
9. Remain faithful and prompt in attendance at work.
10. Attend all required staff meetings called by district administration, unless excused.
11. Keep all student records, medical information and other sensitive information confidential as directed by law, Board policy, district procedures and the employee's supervisor.

12. Immediately report all dangerous building conditions or situations to the building supervisor and take action to rectify the situation and protect the safety of students and others if necessary.
13. Properly supervise all students. The Board expects all students to be under assigned adult supervision at all times during school and during any school activity. Except in an emergency, no employee will leave an assigned group unsupervised. Any employee shall assume responsibility for any unsupervised students and assist in any way possible to prevent injury to person or property.
14. Obey all safety rules, including rules protecting the safety and welfare of students.
15. Adhere to Board policy and law, and use exemplary judgment in all communications and interactions with students.
16. Submit all required reports or paperwork at the time requested. Employees will not falsify records maintained by the school district. Falsification of records or paperwork will result in discipline, up to and including termination.
17. Refrain from using profanity or profane gestures.
18. Refrain from conduct that creates a disruptive and/or offensive learning or working environment.
19. Dress professionally and in a manner that will not interfere with the educational environment.
20. Come to work and leave work at the time specified by the employee handbook or by the employee's supervisor. Employees who are late to work, stop working before the scheduled time or work beyond the scheduled time without permission may be subject to discipline, including termination.
21. Refrain from leaving the designated work site during working hours, whether on district business or not, unless approved by the supervisor.
22. Employees are permitted to engage in outside employment as long as it does not interfere with the employee's work duties or responsibilities or in any way lessen the effectiveness of the employee in his or her district job.
23. School employees, other than commissioned law enforcement officers, shall not strip search students, as defined in state law, except in situations where an employee reasonably believes that the student possesses a weapon, explosive or substance that poses an imminent threat of physical harm to the student or others and a commissioned law enforcement officer is not immediately available.
23. School employees shall not direct a student to remove an emblem, insignia or garment, including a religious emblem, insignia or garment, as long as such emblem, insignia or garment is worn in a manner that does not

promote disruptive behavior.

24. State law prohibits teachers from participating in the management of a campaign for the election or defeat of a member of the Board of Education that employs such teacher.
25. Employees will not use district funds or resources to advocate, support or oppose any ballot measure or candidate for public office. Employees will also refrain from using school contacts and privileges to promote partisan politics, sectarian religious views or self-serving propaganda of any kind.
26. Employees will not use any time during the working day for campaigning purposes, unless allowed by law.
27. Refrain from making disparaging or derogatory remarks about colleagues or other district staff since that is a violation of professional ethics. Transmit constructive criticism of other staff members or of any department of the school district to the particular school administrator who has the administrative responsibility for improving the situation.
28. Personal relationships with students or other staff members that decrease in any way the individual's ability to carry out his or her professional responsibilities are prohibited.

* * * * *

Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

**School District Guidelines for
LGBTQ students-Follow Best Practices**

State Law	Best Practices
Bullying/Harassment The Federal Law Title IX and F.S. 1006.147 prohibits bullying and harassment of all students.	Bullying/Harassment Schools will follow the district policy prohibiting bullying and harassment, addressing any incident against an LGBTQ student the same way they would address an incident against any other student, unless the bullying/harassment is based on a student's LGBTQ status, in which case the matter may need to be addressed through the District's anti-discriminatory policy. (contact Student Services or HR)
Official Documents Documentation from a State court is required to reflect a change in name and/or gender in a student's official school records.	Official Documents Schools will only modify student records to reflect a change in name or gender upon receipt of such documentation from a State court. While official student records must contain the student's legal name, schools should permit the use of " " in unofficial student records to assist staff in calling the student by the preferred name.
Names and Pronouns There is no federal or State state law that requires schools to call a student by a requested name or use gender pronouns consistent with their gender identity. F.S. 1014.04 does reserve the right to the parent to direct the education and care as well as to direct the upbringing and the moral or religious training of his or her minor child.	Names and Pronouns Schools will use the name and gender pronoun corresponding to his/her consistently asserted gender identity upon request of the student with knowledge of the parent.
GSA Clubs at School Under the Federal Equal Access Act , a public school permitting any non-curricular club must also allow students to form a GSA. The school must also treat the GSA the same as it does any other non-curricular club in terms of access to facilities, resources, and opportunities to advertise.	GSA Clubs at School Schools will permit students to form GSA clubs. The clubs will comply with S.B. Rule 4.06 "Student Clubs and Organizations". Personnel who support these clubs may not design agendas, lead discussion, or provide resources that directly support the discussion of LGBTQ issues.
Coming Out Federal courts have found students have a constitutional right to be "out" at school if they want to be. Although students have the First Amendment right to free speech , a school can restrict a student's free speech when it causes significant disruption in the classroom.	Coming Out Schools will not try to silence students who are open about their sexual orientation or transgender identity, or who question their orientation or gender identity. Restricting a student's free speech may occur if it: (1) causes, substantial disruption with the school's work or material interference with school activities including classroom instruction; (2) impinges upon the rights of other students to be secure and let alone including but limited to discourse in the classroom setting; or (3) the school reasonably forecasts it will cause a substantial disruption with the school's work or material interference with school activities.
Privacy The U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the federal constitutional right to privacy , which extends to students in a school setting.	Privacy School personnel will not unnecessarily disclose any information about a students' sexual orientation, transgender identity or questions they may have about their sexual orientation or gender identity to third parties.

State Law	Best Practices
Restrooms There is specific case law that requires schools to allow a transgender student access to the restroom corresponding to their consistently asserted transgender identity.	Restrooms On a case by case basis, school social workers will work with school and family to evaluate the use of restrooms corresponding to the student's consistently asserted gender identity. If approved, student will be allowed to use the restrooms corresponding to the student's gender identity or at the student's option gender-neutral restrooms and will not be allowed access to the restroom corresponding to the student's birth sex.
Athletics The Federal law Title IX ensures the safety and inclusion of transgender students in all school-sponsored activities (Department of Education, 2014). No federal law requires schools to allow a transgender student to play on a team consistent with their gender identity and expression. State Statute 1006.205 delineates participation by gender.	Athletics As a result of Senate Bill 1028/State Statute 1006.205, athletic teams or sports designated for females, women, or girls may not be open to students of the male sex. A statement of a student's biological sex on the student's official birth certificate is considered to have correctly stated the student's biological sex if the statement was filed at or near the time of the student's birth.
Locker Rooms There is no specific federal or State state law that requires schools to allow a transgender student access to the locker room corresponding to their consistently asserted transgender identity.	Locker Rooms On a case by case basis, school social workers will work with school and family to evaluate and provide a transgender student with available accommodations that best meets the needs and privacy concerns of all students. Transgender students will not be forced to use the locker room corresponding to their birth sex.
Dress Gender expression is protected by the U.S. Constitution and Title IX . This right to free expression includes choice of clothes. As long as what is worn would be appropriate if worn by other students, then a student should be able to wear that clothing even if it isn't stereotypically associated with their biological gender.	Dress Schools will allow transgender students to wear clothing in accordance with their consistently asserted gender identity as long as what is worn is in accordance with dress code policy and gender standards.
Prom/Dances The Federal law Title IX and First Amendment Federal court cases prohibits excluding same-sex couples from school-sponsored proms and dances.	Prom/Dances Schools will allow same-sex couples to attend school sponsored proms and dances. Schools will not dictate that only biological males may wear tuxedos, and only biological females may wear dresses. Schools will review the request for transgender students running for Prom King/Queen, taking into consideration the safety of the student.
Gender Segregation There is no Federal or State state law on the issue of gender segregation for school activities (i.e. classroom activities, field trips, PE class, etc.)	Gender Segregation It is recommended that teachers separate students alphabetically rather than by sex for school activities. Note: This does not include gender specific curriculum such as puberty.
Overnight Field Trips There is no Federal or State state law requiring school personnel to adhere to the requests of an LGBTQ student.	Overnight Field Study Because of the complexity of field study issues, they will be handled on a case by case basis.

State Code Education 1001 Section 42 Parental rights in education.

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.—The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(42) Parental Rights

1. Local school board must, in accordance with the rights of parents enumerated 1002.20 and 1014.04, adopt procedures for notifying a student's parent if there is a change in the student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student. The procedures must reinforce the fundamental right of parents to know as much about school personnel, curriculum choices, and supplemental materials and activities to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of their children by requiring school district personnel to encourage a student to discuss issues relating to his or her well-being with his or her parent or to seek permission to discuss or facilitate discussion of the issue with the parent.

2. A school district may not adopt procedures or student support forms that require school district personnel to withhold from a parent information about his or her student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being, or a change in related services or monitoring, or that encourage or have the effect of encouraging a student to withhold from a parent such information, unless a reasonably prudent person would believe that such disclosure would result in abuse, abandonment, or neglect, as those terms are defined in s. 39.01. School district personnel may not discourage or prohibit parental notification of and involvement in critical decisions affecting a student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being.

3. A school district may not encourage classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in primary grade levels or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students.

4. A parent of a student may bring an action against a school district to obtain a declaratory judgment that a school district procedure or practice violates this paragraph and seek injunctive relief. A court may award damages and shall award reasonable attorney fees and court costs to a parent who receives declaratory or injunctive relief.

A blue decorative graphic consisting of a solid blue rectangle on the left, which transitions into a light blue gradient that tapers to a point on the right.

Scenario 2

Gendered Locker Rooms

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.

One day 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 a 14-year-old 8th grader, was a student. The 3 PE teachers quickly conferred after realizing that their lockdown procedures did not take this student into account. The lockdown procedures call for boys to shelter in place in the boys' locker room and girls to shelter in place in the girls' locker room. This student, however, 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 one male PE teacher take the boys into the boys' locker room, while one female PE teacher took the rest of the girls into the girls' locker room and the second female PE teacher 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 hall way, 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?

The Washington Post
Democracy Dies in Darkness

Va. transgender student separated from other youths in safety drill, mom says

By [Debbie Truong](#)

October 9, 2018 at 5:10 p.m. EDT

The superintendent of a Virginia school system has requested a review of safety procedures amid allegations that a transgender student was forbidden from entering a locker room during a middle school safety drill.

Students in the 14-year-old girl's physical education class in the Stafford County Public Schools were shepherded into the girls' or boys' locker room during the Sept. 28 drill. But the student was prevented from sheltering in either, according to the girl's mother and Equality Stafford, a group that advocates for LGBTQ rights in the county's schools. The drill was designed to simulate a lockdown that might happen if the school were threatened.

"It doesn't make me confident she'll feel very safe, should there be an actual emergency," said the girl's mother, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of safety concerns.

Teachers debated where to direct the student before having her sit in a hallway leading to the locker room, separate from her peers, the mother said. The girl, who changes for physical education class in a single-stall restroom, found the encounter "mortifying and embarrassing," her mother said.

The mother said she discussed the incident with Stafford Superintendent Scott Kizner, whom she described as concerned and receptive. The Stafford school system, about 45 miles outside the District, issued a statement saying it does not comment on individual incidents involving students but noted that Kizner requested a review of all protocols and procedures.

"We take such matters very seriously and they will be addressed," the statement read. "The welfare of all students is of the utmost importance."

On its Facebook page, Equality Stafford called the incident unacceptable, and the group protested the girl's treatment at a Tuesday night school board meeting.

"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," read the post, which amassed hundreds of comments and was shared more than 1,200 times.

The mother said the school system reviews transgender students' requests to use restrooms or bathrooms that align with their gender identity on a case-by-case basis. Her 14-year-old, she said, isn't allowed to use gender-specific facilities in her middle school.

The woman emphasized that she doesn't blame her daughter's P.E. teachers.

"This isn't on the teachers, and they are not the bad guys," the mother said. "The issue is the lack of policies and training."

[Menu](#)



STAFFORD COUNTRY SCHOOL BOARD RESPONDS TO TRANSGENDER STUDENT SINGLED OUT DURING ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL

RVA STAFF | OCTOBER 10, 2018

[Menu](#)

TOPICS: [ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL](#), [EQUAL RIGHTS](#), [STAFFORD COUNTY](#), [STAFFORD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD](#), [STUDENT](#), [TRANS](#), [TRANSGENDER](#), [VIRGINIA](#)

A Stafford County Middle School has come under fire for isolating a transgender girl during active shooter training last week. According to a Facebook post by Equality Stafford on October 3, the incident occurred during a lock down drill.

"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," it read.

The post goes on to say that she was made to sit in the gym with a teacher until the drill was over, while "away from her peers and identified as different."

The post also poses a larger issue: "After some additional debate, she was made to sit in the locker room hallway, by the door away from her peers. This happened because the child, in addition to being a model student, also happens to be transgender."

[Menu](#)**Equality Stafford**

October 3 at 9:20 PM · 📍

...

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 gym with a teacher 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 hall way, by the door 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.

****ETA:** It is important to highlight that the child's PE teachers are not the bad guys. They are teachers without guidance in a county without guidance for these issues. They were following that they were told to do.

Equality Stafford was also clear about how the drill was conducted, and where the school believes the major risk during an active shooter scenario would be.

"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," they said.

In a later post, the LGBTQ group pointed out that the teachers who led the lock down drills are not the "bad guys" and that they are teachers without "guidance," scared of potential "retribution" from parents and the administration.

"These teachers need education and support, and we need you to accomplish that," the post went on to say.

Indeed, Virginia schools have grappled with trans issues for the past few years: trans teen Gavin Grimm sued the Gloucester County School Board (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/22/us/gavin-grimm-transgender-bathrooms.html>) to use the boys' bathroom in a case that went all the way to the Supreme Court. Grimm won his case in May of this year, but not without a three-year struggle, which included the school board contesting the ruling.

At a school board meeting last night, Superintendent Scott Kizner said he personally apologized to the teen and called for a change in the school's policy. [According to Fredericksburg.com \(https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/stafford/stafford-superintendent-apologizes-to-transgender-student-amid-national-outcry/article_8d0f967a-2092-57c0-9328-33a68a084c15.html\)](https://www.fredericksburg.com/news/local/stafford/stafford-superintendent-apologizes-to-transgender-student-amid-national-outcry/article_8d0f967a-2092-57c0-9328-33a68a084c15.html), Kizner was quoted during the meeting:

"We did not live up to my unwavering expectation that every child and adult — regardless of race, religion, color, disability, gender and sexual orientation — is treated with respect and dignity, and for that I apologize to the student, the family and the Stafford community."

Kizner was asked whether he thinks the trans student should have been allowed to shelter-in-place in the girl's locker room during a potential incident. He replied by saying that students should head to the most secure location regardless of their gender.



RVA Staff



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HOMEPAGE NEWS

Stafford schools superintendent a to trans student

Middle schooler separated from classmates during lockdown drill

Published 4 years ago on October 10, 2018

By **Michael K. Lavers**



The superintendent of the Stafford County School District on Oct. 9, 2018, said he has personally apologized to a transgender middle school student who was separated from her classmates during a

lockdown drill.

The superintendent of the Stafford County School District has apologized to a transgender student who was unable to enter the girls' or boys' locker room during a lockdown drill.

The Free Lance-Star newspaper reported Scott Kizner spoke at the Stafford County School Board's meeting on Tuesday.

Kizner said he personally apologized to the trans middle school student for the incident that took place on Sept. 28.

"We did not live up to my unwavering expectation that every child and adult — regardless of race, religion, color, disability, gender and sexual orientation — is treated with respect and dignity and for that I apologize to the student, the family and the Stafford community," Kizner, according to the Free Lance-Star.

The incident received national attention after Equality Stafford, a local LGBT advocacy group, wrote about it on Facebook on Oct. 3.

"The student was forced to watch the adults charged with her care, debate the safest place for her (among the other students) to have her shelter," read the Facebook post. "During this debate, the student was instructed to sit in the gym with a teacher 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 hall way, by the door away from her peers. This happened because the child, in addition to being a model student, also happens to be transgender."



Equality Stafford

about 4 years ago



Equality Stafford Community,

This past week, an incident occurred during a middle school lockdown 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 student) to be. ... [See more](#)

306

567

1.3K

Local LGBT activists attended Tuesday's meeting. The Free Lance-Star reported a number of trans people spoke.

The Stafford County School District does not include gender identity and sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy. The Free Lance-Star reported both Kizner and members of the Stafford County School Board said during Tuesday's meeting they are open to potential changes.

The mother of a Stafford County Public Schools student who asked the Washington Blade to identify them by name said Kizner's apology "is very much appreciated."

"Words are powerful, but it's action that is meaningful and long lasting," she said. "We look forward working with Dr. Kizner and the board to implement the inclusive policies and trainings that were promised."

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EXCLUSIVE: Mother of transgender daughter kept out of locker rooms during lockdown drill speaks out

She hasn't been permitted in a gendered restroom for four years, her mother explained.

ZACK FORD 

OCT 11, 2018, 4:35 PM

CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES

Over the past week, a story has [gone viral nationally](#) about a Virginia transgender student who was forbidden from sheltering in a locker room with her classmates during a lockdown drill. But, as the student's mother explained in an exclusive interview with ThinkProgress, that incident follows years of discrimination she's experienced at the school.

Amy, who asked only to be identified by her first name for her family's privacy in their small town, told ThinkProgress that her daughter "Paige" (a pseudonym) has been prohibited from using any gendered facility at the school for nearly four years. That's why, according to Amy, "there was a tremendous amount of confusion about where exactly my daughter should shelter" during the drill. Paige is literally forbidden from entering either the boys' or girls' locker rooms, so when the drill took place, her teachers honestly weren't sure whether an exception could be made.

"This is exhausting work," Amy explained. "I shouldn't have to fight so hard for one child to just be able to go to school and be safe with her peers." Yet despite the national attention and uproar that erupted after the incident, the school board at its meeting this week announced no immediate policy proposals to prevent it from happening again. The superintendent, who is new to the district, [did apologize to the family](#), but nothing has

otherwise changed. In the meantime, Paige is still not permitted to use the girls' facilities.

"It's the responsibility of not just our schools, but our school boards and all the people involved in our school system to make sure that every single child feels taken care of," Amy said. "And my child has not felt taken care of by her school board."

Years of discrimination

When Paige first came out as transgender at age 10 back in 2015, she was the first transgender student the Stafford County School District administration had ever been asked to accommodate. And at first, Amy recalls, they were actually very supportive, allowing Paige to use the girls' bathroom at her elementary school. "They asked a lot of questions, they asked *her* a lot of questions about what she needed, and they did the best they could to accommodate that."

That lasted all of two weeks — until a group of angry parents wearing "Save Our Schools" stickers confronted the school board about their accommodations. Amy described them as speaking "very disgustingly against my child" and "saying very, very awful things," such as calling her a "predator." The Stafford County School Board unanimously agreed to reverse the school's decision to let Paige use the girls' restroom.

Elsewhere in Virginia, the Gloucester County School Board had made the same decision to restrict Gavin Grimm's bathroom access just three months prior. Grimm, a transgender boy, was mounting a legal fight against his school, making it a "hot topic" at the time. (Grimm's case is actually still ongoing over a year after he graduated.) Amy feels that Paige, as the only out trans student in Stafford, was similarly made an example of.

Justice for Gavin Grimm: Federal court rules school engaged in illegal transgender discrimination

Unlike in Gloucester, however, Stafford didn't pass any written policy governing how the district would treat transgender students. They only made a decision about Paige specifically, leaving it to the individual schools across the district to make their own decisions about how to respond in other cases. "That obviously hasn't worked very well for us," Amy said, pointing out that Paige is now in her second school in the district and neither has accommodated her. She's also heard from parents across the district whose trans kids are facing similar restrictions.

Since that 2015 school board decision, Amy has had to meet with school officials every summer to talk about how to protect Paige's safety and ensure she receives the best education possible, but that has never resulted in allowing Paige to use the restrooms. It has resulted, however, in ongoing humiliation and ostracization for Paige.

In elementary school, classes would be taken to the bathroom as a group, with the students divided by gender on either side of the hallway. They'd then go into the restrooms two at a time. "It was humiliating for her," Amy explained, "because she would have to walk down a completely separate hallway to go use the bathroom."

Likewise, in her middle school, Paige is forced to use a bathroom located in a main hallway heavily trafficked by all students — and nowhere near her classroom. She is not permitted to use the gym's locker rooms, which means she is denied access to a gym locker. She alone must carry her gym clothes with her in a bag and change in a separate

restroom. When she stays after school to hang with her girlfriends, Paige can't go to the bathroom with them. One time she tried, and a teacher actually pulled her out.

These are experiences that transgender students have reported across the country, and studies have shown such isolation can have a negative impact on their mental health, how safe they feel at school, and their academic performance. Some even avoid using the restrooms entirely, which can have serious repercussions for their physical health.

"It's embarrassing," Amy explained, "and something that makes me the most sad about that is that I don't think it makes her that upset anymore. She's used to it and doesn't know anything different. She's known two weeks of freedom."

She's known two weeks of freedom.

But despite her brave, resilient demeanor, recent events have shown that Paige is still very much affected by this daily discrimination.

Anti-LGBTQ legal group quietly encourages community members to reject trans kids

The drill

On Friday, September 28, Paige was in PE, her fourth block class, when a lockdown drill began. While the students and staff retreated into the locker rooms, the teachers at first had Paige remain in the gym sitting in a chair with a teacher. After the teachers openly debated what should be done, they decided to move Paige to just inside the locker

room door, but she was kept isolated in the entry hallway away from the rest of the students, who were in the locker room proper.

The humiliation of the whole experience caused Paige to have a panic attack. According to Amy, some of the teachers thought she was just upset because the drill was scary. "One teacher recognized what was really going on and why she was upset," Amy said. After the drill, "she told [Paige] alone privately that she didn't understand why they were doing it that way, that it wasn't right, and that if she ever needed anything or support or someone to talk to, she was always there for her."

Amy doesn't entirely blame the other teachers, because she recognizes that the policy may have put them in a difficult situation. "They've been told she's not allowed to go into the girls' locker room," she explained. "So when you're told that by those above you, whether that's administration or the school board, that this is the rule... they were probably afraid if they let her in there that their jobs were at risk."

"Part of me would like to think we can just use some common sense and say, 'This is a lockdown drill... This is a situation where we're practicing for something that could happen and we need to make sure we do it right,'" Amy said.

But as Paige explained in a note to the school board this week, she felt like "an afterthought."

The school board meeting

News of Paige's experience first started circulating because of a [note posted on Facebook](#) last week by Equality Stafford, a group that promotes LGBTQ inclusion in Stafford County schools. The note encouraged the community to show up to this week's school board meeting and show their support, which they did.

Paige wanted to speak for herself at the meeting, but the board's rules require that any public speaker share their name and address, and Amy wasn't comfortable that it would be safe for her. In fact, Amy wasn't even sure she was comfortable letting Paige *attend* the meeting, but Paige was insistent. As tough as the drill itself was, Paige seemed to "bounce back pretty quickly" and wasn't bothered by the attention the story was receiving.

Michigan mom defends her trans kid against a hostile town

They agreed to let Paige craft a statement about her experience that didn't include any identifying details, and at the meeting, Amy asked her aunt to read it to leave room for some anonymity. "When my aunt started reading, by the end of the first sentence... Paige started bawling. She let out a gasp and she just started bawling." This cascaded to other people, as family friends and strangers alike began crying upon hearing Paige's story. "I think she had been holding that in for a little while," Amy said. "And I think hearing her words read out loud by a family member who also got choked up while she was reading it — I think it just hit her in that moment."

In her statement, Paige described four years of suffering, "being treated like an outcast." She recounted the events of the drill and how it made her feel to be treated differently from the other students in a crisis situation. "If we were practicing our safety, why was I first made to sit in the hallway of the locker room facing a wall, alone, by the door?" she wrote. "The door in which, if there was someone armed in my school, I would have been the first one gone. I felt like an afterthought."

"Blame is pointless now," she insisted. "I want to stop being treated like an afterthought. I want you to stop treating me like I am a predator. It's time for you to fix this."

"She was surprised she got so upset hearing it," Amy added. She's always admired her daughter's resilience, but she also worries about the cumulative effect of all this rejection. "That's a lot for any *adult* to deal with," she said, noting that Paige's story is by

no means anonymous among her friends and community. "She cried and cried and cried, and then she was okay."

Superintendent Scott Kizner, who's only been serving the district for about a month, publicly apologized at Tuesday's meeting. Amy acknowledged that he has apologized to her and to Paige privately as well, which they appreciate. "It's the only apology we've ever gotten through all the years we've been in the school system... for the way she's been treated." She believes the apology was important to see for LGBTQ students and staff throughout the county who can't be out and open and she hopes it sets a tone for moving forward.

"At the same time, words are cheap," she countered. "I want to see change. It's appreciated, but it doesn't change anything. Until something changes, I'm going to keep working to make sure it does. The fact is: When my daughter went to school today, she still had to use a separate bathroom and she still had to change in a staff bathroom. The apology didn't change anything for her because she still has to go to school the next day and deal with the fallout."

The fact is: When my daughter went to school today, she still had to use a separate bathroom and she still had to change in a staff bathroom.

Amy is optimistic about change, but she doesn't want to force that change through legal channels. She wants the school to recognize that it's the right thing to do. Tuesday's school board meeting, she said, "was the first time that I have felt optimistic they were willing to implement policy and trainings because it was necessary and meaningful."

Along the way, there have also been "amazing" teachers who have treated Paige as if she were their own daughter. "If it wasn't for those teachers, I don't think I would have

A blue decorative graphic consisting of a solid blue rectangle on the left, which transitions into a light blue gradient shape that tapers to a point on the right.

Scenario 3

Drag Show Fallout

Scenario #3

A UniServ Director receives a call from her local president. One of his members has been put on leave because they allegedly hosted a drag show on campus. Pictures and videos from the show have been posted on social media, including by the teacher now on leave. In these posts, it is clear that at least one of the performers is wearing apparel that allows their buttocks to be fully visible. Additionally, the teacher reminded their students to bring small bills to tip the performers, if they wish, and posted the social media handles of the performers on their Schoology site.

After speaking with the member, the UniServ Director learns that the member, who is also the Gay-Straight Alliance Advisor, obtained permission from the HS administrator for the GSA to host the event which included a drag show component and an anti-bullying Q&A session. This is the third year that the show has been held, with both components. The five performers signed in at the office. The apparel of one of the dancers was more revealing than it had been in the past; however, it was visible to the office staff and principals upon check-in. The only significant difference between this show and the two prior are that the timing of the show was closer to dismissal; as such, the performers were seen by more parents and non-GSA students. The member also feels it is important to know that they are not paid for their advisory work and that the club always meets after hours.

A local government official picks up the story and runs it on his social media as “appalling” and “wildly inappropriate.” The District, large and suburban, becomes the target of anti-LGBTQ hate, from the community, parents, and even teachers.

For what issues presented can/should the union expect reasonable discipline for the teacher, if any?

What messaging should be used with the community?

How can this become an issue that unifies versus divides?

From: Communications Office <communications@hempfieldsd.org>

Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 2:51 PM

To: District Staff <district@hempfieldsd.org>

Subject: District Message to Parents/Guardians

Good afternoon,

As an FYI, the message below is being sent to all district parents/guardians this afternoon in an email and will be posted on all school blogs and the website.

The Hempfield School District administration was made aware of a serious situation that took place at the high school on Monday, April 25, after school hours. Administration was notified of a concerning social media post and photo, and later videos, of a performance that occurred during an after-school event for GSA (Gay Sexuality Alliance) Club students. Immediately following the notification, an investigation into the incident began.

First and foremost, the administration team apologizes to students, parents, and the community on behalf of those involved in this event. We are appalled at what took place and in no way condone this type of activity in our schools. Neither the dress of the invited guests nor the performance was appropriate in our school setting.

We are taking the incident seriously in our ongoing investigation and follow-up actions. It is important to district administrators that the district has the trust and confidence of the community, and we realize that an incident such as this completely undermines that trust. We commit to completing a thorough investigation and holding those involved accountable, up to and including disciplinary action that is commensurate with any findings. Currently, an individual has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Since this is a personnel issue, there will be certain information the district is unable to share with the public.

We respectfully request that while the appropriate district personnel investigate and address this serious matter, individuals refrain from speculation and furthering currently circulating misinformation that can get in the way of a thorough and accurate investigation.

Communications Department
(717) 898-5539





https://lanasteronline.com/news/local/gay-sexuality-alliance-club-event-at-hempfield-high-school-draws-backlash-investigation/article_93f7dd8c-c7fe-11ec-a55d-57efdd80e58e.html

Gay Sexuality Alliance Club event at Hempfield High School draws backlash, investigation



CARTER WALKER | Staff Writer

Apr 29, 2022



HEMPFIELDSD.ORG

A Hempfield High School club hosted a dance show at an after-school event for students earlier this week, prompting a strong rebuke and an investigation from the district.

Hempfield School District said in a statement Friday that it had been made aware of a "serious situation" at the district during an after-school event for the Gay Sexuality Alliance Club.

"First and foremost, the administration team apologizes to students, parents, and the community on behalf of those involved in this event," the statement said. "We are appalled at what took place and in no way condone this type of activity in our schools. Neither the dress of the invited guests nor the performance was appropriate in our school setting."

The event, first reported by Harrisburg 100, an online-only news site, featured dancers in tight-fitting and revealing clothing with exposed buttocks. Parents reported that the event was advertised as a drag show.

LNP | LancasterOnline was not immediately able to authenticate photos and videos posted online as being from the Monday after school event.

The club's adviser, French teacher Kelly Tyson, did not immediately return a call or email seeking comment. Another adviser to the club, English teacher Carla Vicidomini also did not return a call seeking comment.

"We commit to completing a thorough investigation and holding those involved accountable, up to and including disciplinary action that is commensurate with any findings," the school district's statement said.

"Currently, an individual has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Since this is a personnel issue, there will be certain information the district is unable to share with the public."

State senator Ryan Aument, R-West Hempfield, also weighed in on the event on Facebook, saying he had spoken with Hempfield School District Superintendent Mike Bromirski twice via phone.

Aument currently has a bill in the state legislature seeking to identify and notify parents of what he has described as sexually explicit books in public schools.

Meridith Hilt, whose post about the event in a community Facebook group first drew attention to the event, said her frustration with the event has nothing to do with the sexual orientation or identity of the performers, but rather the performance itself.

"It has nothing to do with them as an LGBT community," Hilt, who has two children in the district, said. "It wouldn't make a difference to me if it was a woman doing this. It's irrelevant that they are drag queens, it's the type of the performance at the school."

Hilt says the exposed buttocks, form fitting clothing and type of dance is what she considers age inappropriate. She hopes that at an upcoming school board meeting, there will be more transparency about how the event came together and how the schools dress code is implemented for visitors.

Melissa Taylor, another parent of students in the district, said she feels some parents in the district are asserting themselves into an issue that does not involve them to the detriment of the community which it affects.

"All they are doing is hurting the kids in that club and the teacher," she said. "if you kids aren't involved in and you're not giving your permission, why are you getting involved? ... They are hyper focused on this teacher now when this teacher was just trying to provide a safe environment for these kids."

Hilt and Taylor, who both do not have kids in the club, said they had heard differing things about if permission slips were required for the event. Bromirski did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Taylor said she hopes that the board will reinstate Tyson and allow her to continue leading the club.

Hempfield School District holds its next meeting May 10 at 7 p.m. in Landisville.

This story will be updated as more information become available.

https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/the-latest-heres-what-we-know-about-hempfield-high-drag-show-fallout/article_3e552d1a-d156-11ec-8199-3f166cd14c92.html

The latest: Here's what we know about Hempfield High drag show fallout

LANCASTERONLINE | Staff

May 11, 2022



Community members rally before the Hempfield School District board meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. Connor Hollinger | LNP Correspondent

Residents of Hempfield School District had their first opportunity Tuesday to speak to the school board since a controversy erupted over an April 25 after-school event during which professional drag queens performed at Hempfield High School.

Upset about the Gay Sexuality Alliance Club event arose on social media days after it took place.

The school district's administration issued a statement April 29 indicating that it had launched an investigation and that one person had been put on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

Here's what we know and don't know about the fallout.

What new came up at the school board meeting?

Two new developments came to light during the meeting, which was attended by a total of more than 400 in person and online.

1 — School board President Grant Keener said that two more individuals have now been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of an investigation being led by Superintendent Mike Bromirski and Karen Hall, executive director of human resources and business operations. That means a total of three people are on administrative leave. Keener declined to identify the individuals.

"We understand that in the absence of being able to provide additional information during an accurate investigation, sometimes people rush to judgment or draw their own conclusions without facts, speculate and/or share misinformation," Bromirski said during the school board meeting. "We will not respond to these claims as it could hamper the investigation."

2 — There was confirmation during the meeting that similar events have been held at the high school in the past. Student and Gay Sexuality Alliance Club Vice President Miguel Angel Rosado spoke during the school board meeting. Rosado attended the event and said it has been held for three years without complaint. Rosado said the event was educational and hopes the drag shows will continue at the school in the future.

What happened at Hempfield High School to spark this controversy?

A performance by drag queens took place after school at Hempfield High School on April 25. The performance occurred at an event for Gay Sexuality Alliance Club students.

Drag queens associated with entertainment company Depiro's Divas were at the performance, according to company owner Michael Depiro. Although a report published April 29 by Harrisburg 100 included a link to the Depiro's Divas website when it mentioned the event "featured professional dancers," Depiro said his company wasn't involved in the event, the dancers participated on their own and they had agreed to appear for free.

Performers contacted by LNP | LancasterOnline did not immediately respond to request for comment.

What's next?

In the district's statement, it said it will complete a "thorough investigation" and hold those involved accountable with disciplinary action equivalent to the findings of the investigation.

How long that will take and what, if anything, the district will report back to the community is not clear.

What permissions were sought, if any, to host this event and have students in attendance?

The district has not confirmed if permission was sought by the club to host the event and have students in attendance.

A student who attended the event and a parent of a student who attended the event have told LNP | LancasterOnline that filled out parental permission slips were not required to attend.

At least two district policies might apply to organizing the event.

Policy 907 indicates those wishing to visit a school should make arrangements with the school principal no less than 48 hours in advance. Visitors are required to state, in writing, the nature and purpose of their visit.

The policy also states that only entrances "monitored and capable of controlling visitor entry" should be used by visitors while all other entrances should be locked. Visitors must register at the office when they arrive.

It is unclear if this policy applies to after-school events.

Under Policy 122, "extracurricular activities shall not be organized or instituted without the approval of the administration."

What is the purpose of the club that hosted the event?

The Gay Sexuality Alliance club "brings together LGBTQIA+ and straight students to support each other, provide a safe place to socialize, and work together to improve school climate for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender or identity expression," according to a description of the club on the district's website.

Kelly Tyson, a French teacher at Centerville Middle School and Hempfield High School, and Carla Vicidomini, an English teacher at Hempfield High School, are advisors for the club, according to the district website.

There's a video circulating on social media that supposedly shows the event. Has that video been verified?

District officials have not verified that any posts circulating on social media are connected to the event.

However, the district's statement does note that it "was notified of a concerning social media post and photo, and later videos, of a performance that occurred during an after-school event."

https://lancasteronline.com/news/local/hempfield-high-school-student-sheds-light-on-april-25-drag-show-event/article_d8ca0204-d263-11ec-9bbc-0394161264c1.html

Hempfield High School student sheds light on April 25 drag show event



ASHLEY STALNECKER | Staff Writer

May 12, 2022



Community members rally before the Hempfield School District board meeting on Tuesday, May 10, 2022.

Connor Hollinger | LNP Correspondent

What happened, exactly, at the afterschool drag show event at Hempfield High School that has raised questions and spurred controversy?

Several weeks later, that answer is still not clear.

However, through one eyewitness account and photographs and videos reviewed by LNP | LancasterOnline, some details have surfaced.

A student member of Hempfield High School's Gay Sexuality Alliance club has stepped forward to defend the April 25 after-school drag show that sparked an uproar and led to an ongoing investigation.

Hempfield junior and GSA Vice President Miguel Angel Rosado spoke to the school board during the public comment portion of Tuesday's board meeting, which drew hundreds of people online and in person.

"Please listen to what I have to say, as I was physically present at this event," Rosado said during the public comment portion of the meeting. "First and foremost, I feel as if a lot of retaliation has come from a lack of education and context."

At first glance, Rosado said, the event seems like something the school shouldn't allow, but Rosado contends that drag shows hold value, particularly for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Drag shows are an integral part of the LGBTQ+ community and its history, Rosado said.

He regrets that the event, through the lens of social media, has turned into something different and, in his public comment, said "I wish things hadn't turned out the way they did."

So far, the district has placed three individuals, who it has not named, on administrative leave. At Tuesday's meeting, board President Grant Keener said an investigation is still ongoing and that the district couldn't share any further details at the time.

Superintendent Mike Bromirski urged residents to refrain from speculating about the nature of the event in the absence of information released by the district. However, photos and videos allegedly taken at the show, as well as speculation and commentary, have already circulated on social media platforms like Facebook.

LNP | LancasterOnline viewed a few photos and brief portions of videos confirmed to be of the April 25 performance. The viewing was permitted for a short time, and all of the images showed the same drag queen. A drag queen is a man who dresses in women's clothes, typically for entertainment purposes.

The videos viewed by LNP | LancasterOnline did not show the queen dancing in a manner that simulated sexual activity, as has been the case in some videos alleged to be from the event and posted online.

The queen was wearing a short blue dress that fell to mid-thigh and an orange-colored wig. In a Live Photo, the queen was shown dropping down in a semi-squat from a standing position. Live Photos are a feature of iPhones that record what happens 1.5 seconds before and after taking a picture.

One of the concerns voiced about the drag show is the attire of the performers. In a statement issued by the district on April 29 announcing that it was investigating what happened, it wrote that "Neither the dress of the invited guests nor the performance was appropriate in our school setting."

The dress, Rosado told the school board on Tuesday, wasn't different from that of many other extracurriculars, though.

"Yes, some of the outfits showed a little more skin," Rosado said during the public comment period of the board meeting, noting that the performers were not nude. "But, the performers were all wearing bathing suits, leotards, jumpers, skirts or dresses." The photos and videos viewed by LNP | LancasterOnline matched these descriptions.

"Heteronormative" activities, such as wrestling, cheerleading, swimming, homecoming and prom allow similar outfits, Rosado said. Things that are described as heteronormative are considered to denote a world view that promotes a female to male relationship as the preferred sexual orientation.

And, in some fashion design classes taught in the high school, Rosado claimed, students can design and make the outfits a drag queen performers would normally wear.

Aside from dress, another point of contention has been the nature of the performance, which some parents have described as “sexual.”

“I feel like we’re promoting sexually explicit behavior,” parent William Crawford said during the public comment portion of Tuesday’s board meeting.

Rosado sees it differently.

Drag shows, Rosado said, showcase dancing – a form of art – not stripping or a “sex show.”

“It doesn’t seem fair to condemn this medium of art, deeming it inappropriate and sexualizing when the school allows students to submit actual (depictions of) nudity for art assignments in art classes,” Rosado said to the board.

And those pieces, Rosado said, can sometimes be found in art shows with students below the high school level.

Additionally, Rosado said that a dance or performance like the drag show is not much different from those of school-related extracurricular activities like gymnastics and musicals.

Students in attendance at the event were not brought onto the stage to dance with the performers, either, Rosado told the board.

An event three years running

The dress and dance moves at the April drag performance for the club were no different than they had been in the past three years that the event has been held, Rosado said. In previous years, no complaints or problems had arisen from the performance, either, he told the board.

“I don’t understand how the school said they were appalled at what took place when it’s been hosted for this long with videos and pictures being shared from previous events on the Schoology page, which is monitored by advisors and administrators,” Rosado said during public comment.

Schoology is a learning management system that Hempfield School District uses to create, manage and share assignments and resources in its schools. Students are only able to see posts by groups they belong to like the Gay Sexuality Alliance club or a specific class. Membership in groups is by invitation by an advisor, teacher or employee only.

One of the Gay Sexuality Alliance advisors, French teacher Kelly Tyson, shared a post on Schoology following the April 25 event thanking students for attending. And, a high school student involved with the club shared reminders about the upcoming event with members.

Several parents at Tuesday's school board meeting called for more accountability from the district and questioned how the event could have gone unnoticed or unapproved. In its initial statement, the district said it does not condone "this type of activity" in its schools.

"The school has a reputation to uphold and a moral high ground to set," parent Angela Hess said at Tuesday's meeting. "By allowing this to happen, it sets the tone that this type of thing is OK in school."

In an effort to "debunk some misconceptions about the event," for people who weren't there. Rosado explained at the meeting that the drag queens all wore visitor passes on their clothing.

And, Rosado continued, drag queens volunteered their time and didn't receive payment on the taxpayer's dime.

A form of gender expression

The event wasn't merely for entertainment purposes, according to Rosado.

To the LGBTQ+ community, Rosado said drag performance has historical value.

"Drag is a very big part of the community itself, but also its history," Rosado said in public comment, adding that, though the event was open to all students, it was mainly for students in the Gay Sexuality Alliance club or who belong to the LGBTQ+ community.

Drag dates back to the late 1800s, when anti-cross-dressing laws were used to enforce dress normative to one's gender at the time. And, drag had a start – out of necessity – in Shakespearean theater. Men had to dress as women to play female roles in the late 16th and 17th centuries, when women were barred from performing.

“Drag is a form of gender expression that can be expressed through performances,” Rosado said in public comment. “It is focused on blending, blurring or even erasing the boundaries of gender. And by condemning this event, we’re denying queer students of their own history.”



Hempfield School District places three individuals on administrative leave in drag show investigation

Like
 Comment
 Share

hello everyone! tomorrow, **MONDAY, APRIL 25TH from 3:00 to 4:30 in Hackman auditorium** will be our annual **drag show** meeting!!! feel free to bring some cash with you to tip the queens, who are coming all the way from pittsburgh! (NOT REQUIRED!) can't wait to see you there!!!

Apr 24 at 3:10 PM • Like 😊 5

Like
 Comment
 Share

thank you all for attending the show today! the Queens' interactions with you and their support of our GSA makes me emotional. what special humans! Here are the social media handles for our Queens. Go follow and support them!!! :)

Hexxa: @h[redacted]

Majestee: @th[redacted]

Enigma: @th[redacted]

Nebula: @n[redacted]

Apr 25 at 5:07 PM • Like 😊 3

Like
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1



Book	Policy Manual
Section	100 Programs
Title	Extracurricular Activities
Code	122
Status	Active
Adopted	October 11, 2005
Last Revised	November 10, 2020

Purpose

The Board believes that the district's goals and objectives are best achieved by a diversity of learning experiences, some of which are more appropriately conducted outside the regular curricular program of the schools.

All learning experiences offered by the schools, curricular and extracurricular, shall be planned and integrated toward attainment of the district's educational objectives.

Definition

Extracurricular Activities - Those activities that are sponsored by the Board, but are not offered for credit toward graduation; voluntary participation in an activity where students serve as leaders and representatives of the district, both within the school and in the community, and for which participation is not required as a condition of passing a graded course. Extracurricular activities are considered a privilege and not a right.

Authority

Any activity shall be considered sponsored by the Board when it has been approved by the Superintendent or designee and reported to the Board for its information. A list of extracurricular activities is included in the Student Handbook and may be supplemented during the year, as approved by the Superintendent or designee and reported to the Board.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

The Board shall maintain the programs of extracurricular activities in a fiscally responsive manner for participating students. Where applicable, a fee structure for supplies, participation, and/or necessary staffing shall carry the same exemptions as listed in the Board's policy on regular school activities.[\[5\]](#)

Students may assume all or part of the costs for travel and attendance at extracurricular events and trips.

Where eligibility requirements are necessary or desirable, the Board shall be informed and must approve the establishment of eligibility standards before they are operable.

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would violate the Code of Student Conduct if: [6]

1. There is a nexus between the proximity or timing of the conduct in relation to the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.
2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.
3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.
4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, such as an agreement to complete a transaction outside of school that would violate the Code of Student Conduct.
5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and disseminate procedures to implement the extracurricular activities program.

Extracurricular activities shall not be organized or instituted without the approval of the administration.

Announcements made by students, placed on public display, made as part of the daily news show, or sent via electronic media, must be approved by the building principal. [7]

Guidelines

Guidelines shall ensure that the program of extracurricular activities:

1. Assesses the needs and interests of and is responsive to district students.
2. Involves students in developing and planning extracurricular activities.
3. Ensures provision of competent guidance and supervision by staff who maintain appropriate clearances.
4. Guards against the exploitation of students.
5. Provides a variety of experiences and diversity of organizational models.
6. Provides for continuing evaluation of the program and its components.
7. Ensures that all extracurricular activities are open to all students and that all students are fully informed of the opportunities available to them. [8][9]

Students in the school buildings and on the school grounds must at all times be under the general supervision of the appropriate credentialed staff during the school day.

Students are expected to conform to the policies, rules, and regulations of the administration and the Board; obey instructions of staff; maintain proper conduct in school buildings and grounds; and refrain from use of improper language. Upon dismissal at the end of the day each student shall immediately leave school property unless they are waiting for transportation, are under the supervision of a teacher, or are attending a regularly scheduled event.

Students who go on school-sponsored trips must be accompanied by a sponsor teacher(s). Each student shall submit to the building principal's office written permission from his/her parent/guardian to be absent from school and to attend the school-sponsored activity where applicable.

Eligibility

Because participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, the school administration, together with the advisors, shall determine requirements for eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.

A student who violates Board policy or school rules and regulations jeopardizes his/her opportunity to continue participation in an extracurricular activity.[6][10][11]

A student who has been prosecuted under Act 29 shall not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for the following marking period.

Academic Eligibility

A student must meet basic academic requirements to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

The school administration shall determine the academic requirements for participation.

Attendance Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity substantial attendance is required on the day of the activity. A student who is absent from school on Friday may participate in Saturday or Sunday activities only with a note from his/her doctor explaining the student's absence.

A student who has received a failing grade in any course as a direct result of the attendance policy shall not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activity for the following marking period.

Equal Access Act

The district shall provide secondary students the opportunity for non-curriculum related student groups to meet on the school premises during non-instructional time for the purpose of conducting a meeting within the limited open forum on the basis of religious, political, philosophical, or other content of the speech at such meetings. Such meetings must be voluntary and student-initiated and not sponsored in any way by the school, its agents, or employees. Non-instructional time is the time set aside by the school before actual classroom instruction begins or after actual classroom instruction ends.[2]

The meetings cannot materially and substantially interfere with the orderly conduct of the educational activities in the school.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish the necessary parameters of feasible operation.

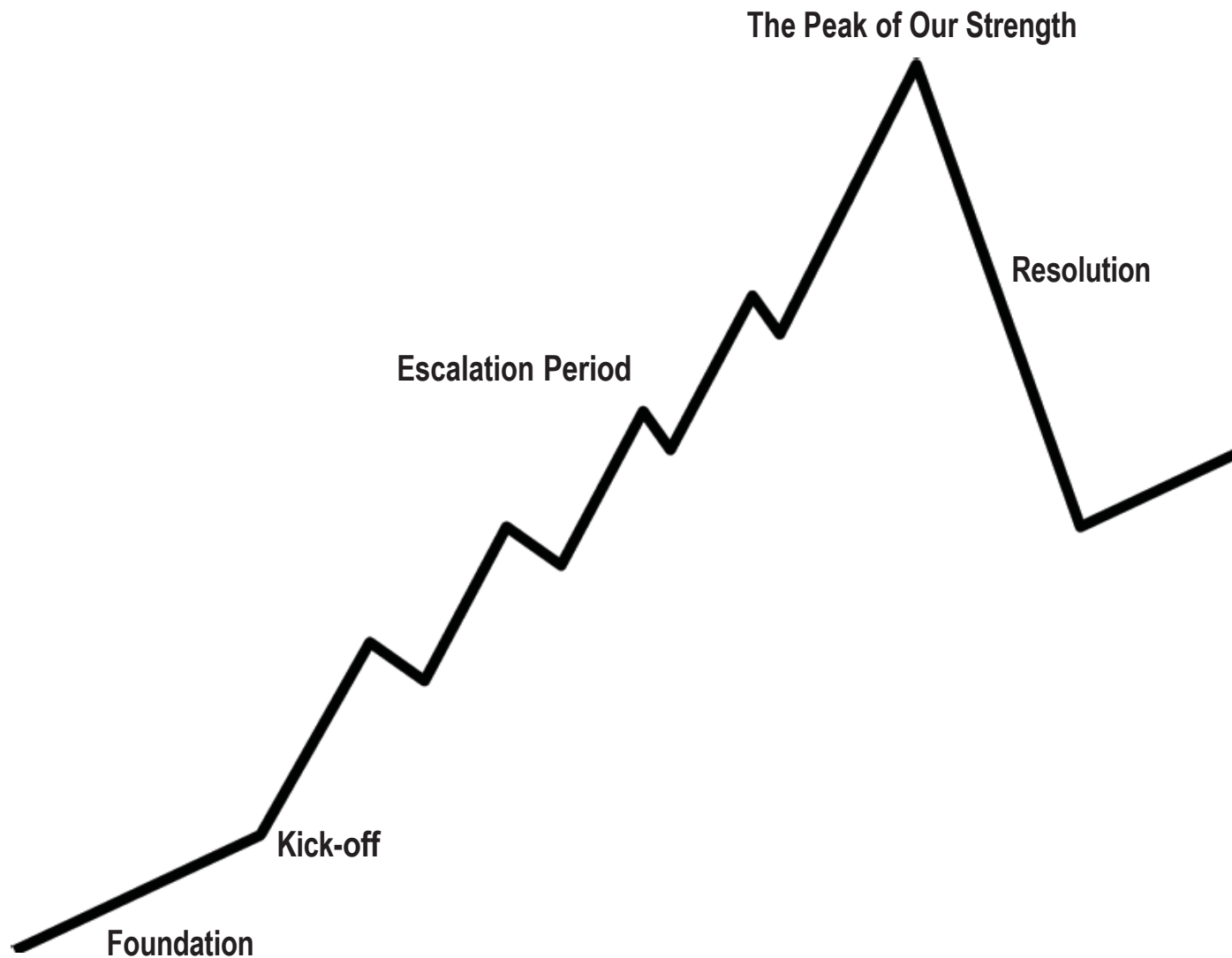
The district retains the authority to maintain order and discipline on school premises in order to protect the well-being of students and employees and to ensure that student attendance at such meetings is voluntary.

Campaign Planning Materials



CAMPAIGN MOUNTAIN

Phases of a Campaign





A GOOD ORGANIZING ISSUE

- **Is widely felt.** How common is the problem? How many workers face this situation? Many people must feel that this is a real problem and agree with the solution you're pursuing.
- **Is deeply felt.** Is this an issue that people feel strongly enough about to actually do something? It's not enough that many people agree, if none are really hot under the collar.
- **Is winnable.** It's hard to know for sure whether you *will* win, but it's possible to have a good idea whether you *can*. Your group should match your demand to the power you've already got.

To win, you'll need to make it harder for the decision-maker to keep saying no than to say yes. The more pressure you can bring to bear, the more issues will become winnable.

- **Builds the union and builds leaders.** Consider how this fight will build your capacity for future fights. Will the issue attract leaders or groups who haven't been very involved? Will it build solidarity between groups? Will it give you the chance to try an action that's one step beyond what you've done before? Will the solution lay the groundwork for future improvements?

Each fight should build off the last. It often happens that we don't win the concrete gain wanted, but we do come out smarter and better organized—which makes it more likely we can win next time.

- **Has a connection to students and the public.** If the issue affects students, parents and community, it grows your potential group of activists and the potential support.



Problems vs. Issues:

Problems are statements of the world as it is. “Our school isn’t a safe space for members of the LGBTQ+ community.”

Issues are a diagnosis of the problem that almost indicates what the solution is. “Our curriculum does not include LGBTQ+ histories or heroes.”

Take some time to first brainstorm the pain and/or problems our people are feeling. Then work to identify the issues within that problem that are causing the pain. Asking, “why do you think this is the way it is?” can move you into an analysis of issues that make up the problem.

Problem/Pain		
Issue	Issue	Issue

Issue Criteria Check List:

Score each Issue from 1 to 3 (1 = No, 2 = Unsure, 3 = Yes) on the specific criteria then total your scores and compare with your team.

Will the Issue...	Issue #1	Issue #2	Issue #3
1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?			
2. Give people a sense of their own power?			
3. Alter the relations of power?			
4. Be worthwhile?			
5. Be winnable?			
6. Be widely felt?			
7. Be deeply felt?			
8. Be easy to understand?			
9. Have a clear target?			
10. Have a clear timeframe that works for you?			
11. Be non-divisive?			
12. Build leadership?			
13. Set your organization up for the next campaign?			
14. Increase membership?			
15. Be consistent with your values and vision?			
16.			
TOTALS			

Draft your Demand - What is the win that we want?

What is our demand? How will we know if we've won or not (it needs to be something we can see or touch that makes our lives better)? Remember – it's concrete. The win of this demand will result in visible, significant change in your constituent's daily lives.

1. Is it concrete (measurable)?
2. Does it make a visible impact in people's lives (meaningful)?
3. Does it leverage YOUR resources creatively and make for a good story (motivational)?
4. Must you organize and distribute leadership in order to accomplish?

Ex. LEA wants to secure a fully funded budget by demanding a 1-penny increase in the property tax formula by April 1st 2018.

Our Demand – Our Win is...

Identify the Target – Who can give you what you want?

Who is the target of your campaign efforts? A target has a name, a face, and an address. Who has the power to prevent you from getting your demand?

Our Target – Has the power to give us...



CHECKLIST: CHOOSE TACTICS THAT FIT

Your escalating campaign is made up of many tactics. A tactic could be mild, like a survey, or militant, like a work slowdown. It could be traditional, like a picket, or it could be a creative stunt a member just dreamed up. When your group is weighing what tactic to try next, here are some factors to consider:

- Does the action relate to your issue?
- Will it increase the pressure on the decision-maker?
- Is it simple?
- Is it visible?
- Is it timed for effect?
- Is it new and different—or tried and true?
- Are enough people ready to do it?
- How will others react?
- Will it unify people?
- How will management react?
- Could it backfire?
- Does it violate the law or the contract?
- If so, are you prepared for the consequences?
- Will it be fun?





TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

Don't bring out your big guns right away. Start with an easy activity and get lots of people to participate. If that doesn't succeed, gradually increase the intensity of your actions, but make sure you don't leave people behind by escalating too quickly.

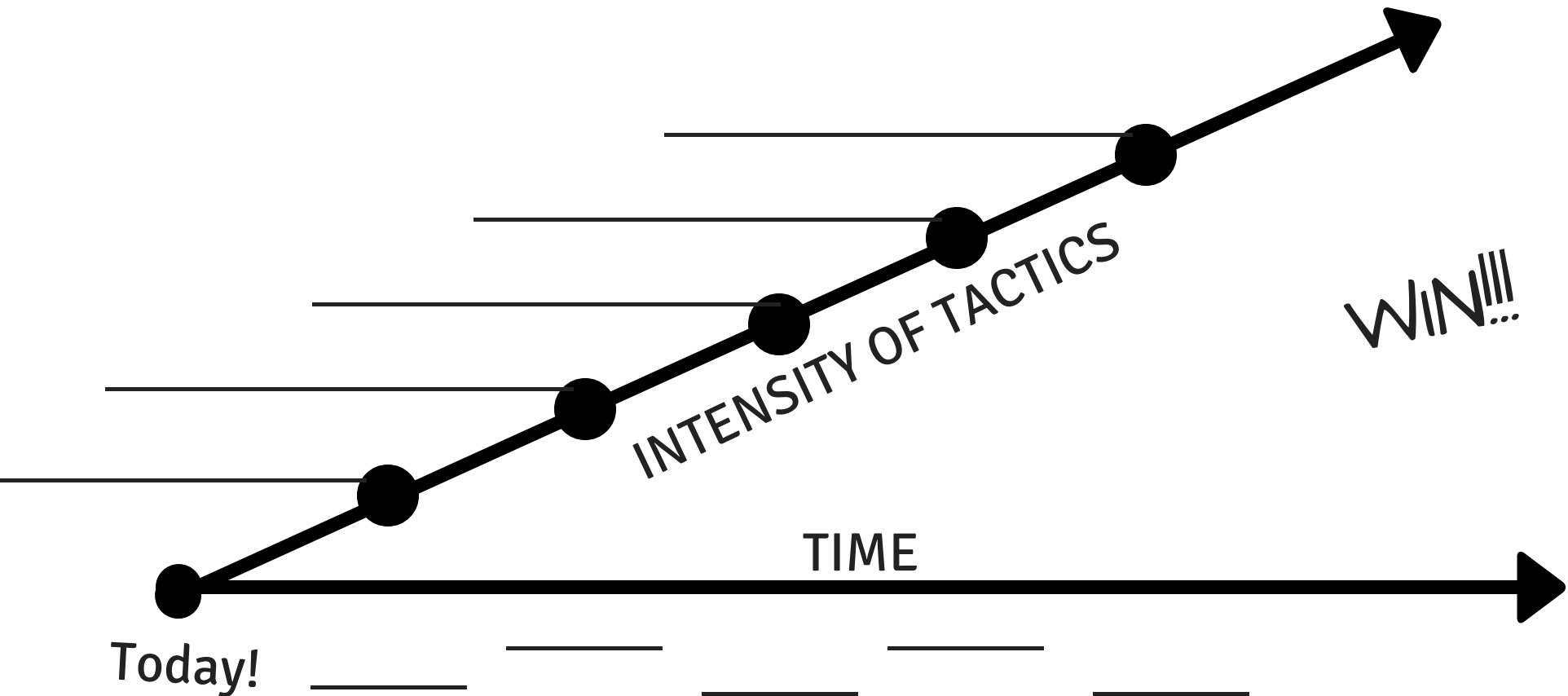
One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action "hotter" than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:



14. Walked out of a meeting en masse
13. Spoke to the media
12. Pulled a publicity stunt
11. Called a meeting of supporters
10. Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
9. Filed an information request
8. Reached out to parents
7. Published a newsletter
6. Formed a grievance committee
5. Developed a communication network
4. Conducted a health survey
3. Gathered signatures on a grievance
2. Defined their issue: air quality
1. Met as a small group



Short			
Mid			
Long			



Other Resources



LGBTQ+ in Education:

Building An Inclusive Public Education through our Unions



COLORADO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Colorado Education Association is the voice of 39,000 educators, working together in a strong union to ensure all students get the exceptional public schools they deserve in every neighborhood across the state. CEA is a state affiliate of the National Education Association (NEA), America's oldest and largest organization dedicated to advancing the cause of public education.

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Thank you to the following people who contributed to the surveying of our membership and the drafting of this report:

Sarah Siegel, CEA Director of Strategic Research and Data Analysis
Joshua Quick, CEA Director of Professional Practice and State Education Policy
Lena Knechtel, CEA Intern
Sarah Knighten, CEA Intern
Sharyn Dryer, CEA Legal Counsel



"We know anti-LGBTQ+ oppression is real – and we're proud that our union is a safe place for us to fight together for our values. This report is an important first step to identify the ways CEA can support and advance the rights of queer educators, students and families. We are united in our commitment to explicitly work to advance LGBTQ+ liberation."

—AMIE BACA-OEHLERT, PRESIDENT

Introduction

The following report is a compilation of the work done in response to two Colorado Education Association (CEA) Board initiatives passed in April 2020. These initiatives read as follows:

The Colorado Education Association will conduct at least one listening post or forum per region for the purpose of conducting a state-wide needs assessment of LGBTQ+ education employees and students. In addition, other non-geographic listening posts as may be needed to include the full scope of our membership.

CEA will gather and distribute existing contract language concerning the protection of transgender education employees and students in addition to crafting said contract language if it needs to be strengthened.

We worked to centralize the voices of LGBTQ+ educators in assessing the problems experienced and in crafting solutions to those problems. We began by sending a survey to all CEA members. We then reached out to the LGBTQ+ respondents who volunteered for further conversation and invited them to small group round table discussions to further analyze the issues impacting our LGBTQ+ educators and to identify proposed solutions. In the first half of this report, you will find a synopsis of the data collected through that process.

1,566 members took the survey, 293 of which identified as LGBTQ+. This response rate far exceeded our expectations and emphasized the importance of this work. Many of the survey respondents commented that this was the first time they saw the union engaging on issues impacting the LGBTQ+ community. We hope this report will be the start of ongoing work to build the schools, districts, and unions our communities deserve where everyone is celebrated as their full selves no matter their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Throughout the survey, the round tables, and in this report, we have striven to use the most inclusive language possible and researched the "best" practices for terminology. We will be using "LGBTQ+" to represent anyone who identifies as "LGBTQ+" including, but in no way, limited to folks who are transgender, gay, lesbian, bisexual, identify with a gender beyond the gender binary, queer, pansexual, asexual, and/or two-spirit. We recognize that this is a loose grouping of identities, many of which vary greatly and have very different lived experiences. We are continuing forward with using "LGBTQ+" for consistency throughout, recognizing that it is an imperfect categorization and an incomplete label.

Finally, the 2020 Supreme Court Bostock decision has expanded LGBTQ+ protections from discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity on a national level. This case opens up an opportunity for us to codify these protections in our contracts and build on this recent expansion of rights.¹

The model language throughout this report can be bargained to begin addressing many of the issues raised through this report. Locals who are considering introducing this language are encouraged to reach out to the CEA Director of Bargaining to tailor this language to the local's contract and to craft rationale. Additionally, locals should seek the guidance of their CEA zone organizer to ensure that the language in this document is being introduced along with authentic member engagement and input from members of the local.

In Solidarity,

Sara Fitouri, CEA Director of Bargaining and Organizing

¹ See Bostock v. Clayton Cty., 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020) (available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/19pdf/17-1618_hfci.pdf)

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Survey and Roundtable Results

In the first few months of 2021, the Colorado Education Association set out to gather information about the experiences of LGBTQ+ member educators in Colorado via survey. This work stemmed from two board resolutions passed in April 2020 by the CEA board of directors. In addition to asking about demographic information and information about their lived experiences, the survey asked if these educators were available for further conversations about LGBTQ+ issues. We then conducted several focus groups, consisting of members who identified as LGBTQ+ and provided their contact information through the survey.

The survey included seven demographic focused questions, where respondents were asked if they were part of the LGBTQ+ community, their sexual orientation, if they were transgender, their gender identity, their age, if they are a person of color, and their racial/ethnic background. Additionally, they were asked four job related questions- their job category, the type of school they're employed at, how many years they've worked in education, and what school district they work in. The survey was then composed of questions about LGBTQ+ related topics in the school environments that were different based on the self-selected identity of the respondents. Some questions were given to all respondents, and some questions were only given to respondents based on their identity as transgender, or based on whether or not they identified as LGBTQ+.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The survey gathered a total of 1,566 responses, of which, roughly 22% of respondents (293) were LGBTQ+ and .8% of respondents (13) were transgender. Although the number of transgender respondents was low, the percentage of transgender respondents was actually higher than the estimated 0.53% of adults who are transgender adults in Colorado² and as such was a higher than expected response. Five percent of respondents identified as gay, 6% as lesbian, and 7% as bisexual – other identities represented included people who identified as asexual, pansexual, and queer. The majority of respondents were women (77%) and identified as white (82%). There was a large degree of representation across age ranges, with the majority of respondents ranging from 30 to 59 years of age. The vast majority of respondents were licensed teaching professionals (95%) with the remaining 5% being education support professionals (classified employees). The respondents were spread fairly evenly across the types of schools at which they worked. Most respondents worked at an elementary school (36%), although nearly one third of respondents worked in a high school (30%). Roughly one third of respondents had worked in education for 20+ years (33%), and most respondents had worked in education for at least five years.

EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF ALL RESPONDENTS

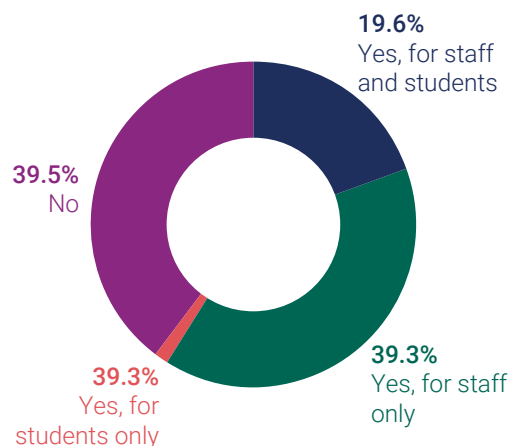
All respondents, including non-LGBTQ+ respondents, were asked a series of questions about their school environment and their own experiences and views.

Access to Gender Inclusive Bathrooms:

The vast majority of educators reported working in schools where gender neutral bathrooms were not available to both students and staff. (40% reported no access to gender inclusive bathrooms. Another 39% reported access to gender inclusive bathrooms for only adults and not for students.)

Only 20% of educators reported working in a school where both students and staff had access to gender inclusive restrooms.

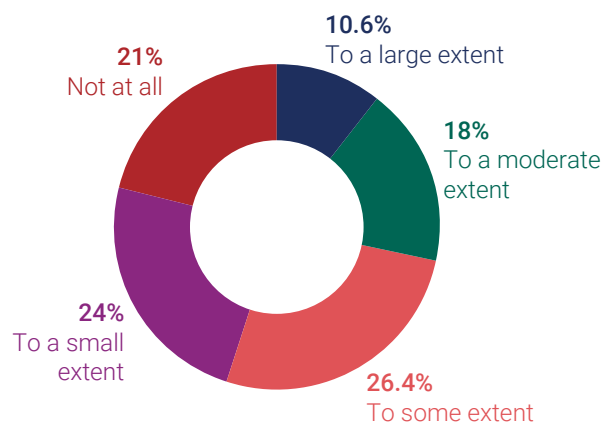
Does your school have openly accessible gender neutral bathrooms?



Equity Work in Schools:

While more than half of the respondents indicated that their school engages in equity work, 45% of respondents reported that the equity work done by the school does not include, or only minimally includes, LGBTQ+ voices and issues.

To what extent does your school include LGBTQ+ voices and issues in their equity work?



Witnessing Student Bullying/Discrimination:

40% of all respondents had witnessed or heard about students being discriminated against due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. More concerning, is that when asked about the school's response to such discrimination, many respondents expressed concern that the incidents were not handled appropriately. Respondents noted that practices such as restorative practices, having gender inclusive bathrooms, and a school Gay/Straight alliance were helpful in addressing instances of discrimination. Many educators reported abusive behavior towards transgender students including intentional dead naming of trans students and refusing to use correct pronouns. While many educators reflected that their school had improved in its support for LGBTQ+ students, the responses, both qualitative and anecdotal, reveal that we still have significant work to do to create a safe school environment for our LGBTQ+ students.

40%

of respondents had witnessed or heard about students being discriminated against due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

² The Williams Institute, available at <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Adults-US-Aug-2016.pdf>

EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF LGBTQ+ RESPONDENTS AT SCHOOL³

Being “Out” at School:

The majority of LGBTQ+ respondents are out to some or all of their colleagues at work. However, more than 80% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported they are not out to their supervisor, and nearly 85% reported they are not out to their greater school community. 17% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported they are not out at all at school.



Experiences of being out range from being very positive and affirming to very negative. Many respondents indicate that it's been a fairly neutral experience, although for many of those people, their feelings of safety and comfort are predicated upon only being out to a small number of people. One person said about their experiences:

"[They've been] mixed. Most people are fine, others are clearly not. Their negative treatment, for the most part, is subtle and microaggressions. Unfortunately the people who claim to be OK and understanding are the same who say inappropriate things or laugh when others do. The majority of my administrative team laughed when I relayed an offensive situation that had happened to me. They thought I was joking or trying to tell a humorous story."

Even individuals who are out at their workplace and have not experienced discrimination from their administration or their colleagues report concern around being out to families and students. There is a strong fear that if the wrong families or students find out that they're LGBTQ+, there will be backlash and their administrators either will be unable to or unwilling to protect them. One person outlined their experiences and those fears in this way:

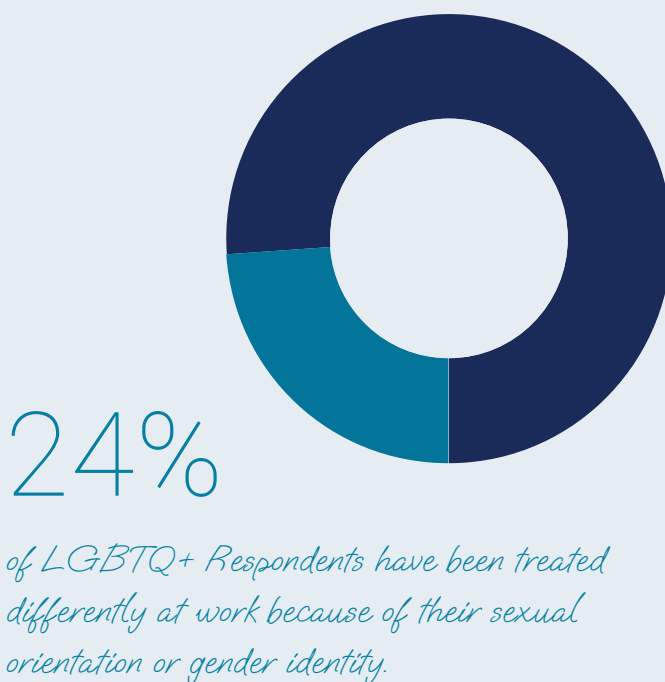
*"My colleagues and admin have been perfectly accepting ... **The people I'm most afraid of are parents.** Most people can make mistakes and no one will notice because it's overlooked. I'm afraid to make a mistake at all because I'm afraid a parent won't like my orientation and will look at me with a more scrutinizing eye. What if I forgot to document one day and the parent figures that out? **I'm worried parents are looking for any way to sue and if I make a mistake, then the district won't have my back.**"*

Experiencing Discrimination:

Nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) had been treated differently at work because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and nearly one third of respondents (35%) had witnessed or heard about colleagues being treated differently at work because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

For individuals who have been discriminated against in their work environment, experiences include microaggressions, like the ones noted above, erasure, misgendering, and blatantly discriminatory acts and statements. Respondents reported being passed over for promotions, excluded from workplace activities, and unfairly criticized for the same level of work that their non-LGBTQ+ colleagues provide. Some respondents indicate that they have faced retribution, even going so far as to be placed on unpaid leave, for their identity.

Supportive administration at both the district level and at the school level play a crucial role in ensuring that the school environment is a welcoming and safe one. Additionally, having visible representation of LGBTQ+ people at the administrative level is noted by respondents as being an extremely affirming, positive experience.



EXPERIENCES OF LGBTQ+ EDUCATORS IN OUR UNION(S)

The vast majority of LGBTQ+ respondents identified as very active or active members of their union (70%). But concerningly, a full 72% of respondents did not feel that their needs as an LGBTQ+ person are a priority of their union. Based on survey responses, this comes down to one large issue: visibility or representation. Respondents indicate that there is a pervasive lack of visibility on the topic from their union – there have been no surveys about LGBTQ+ issues, there is no visible representation, and nobody speaks about the topic. Respondents noted that even when they have seen their union engaging in issues of equity and anti-oppression, it has not included the voices or experiences of LGBTQ+ people and it is not focused on issues that they face.

The minority of respondents who indicated that their needs are a priority of their union focused on the fact that there are LGBTQ+ leaders in their local, that LGBTQ+ issues and rights are discussed, and that there are committees, events, or LGBTQ+ focused caucuses in their local.

EXPERIENCES OF TRANSGENDER⁴ RESPONDENTS AT SCHOOL

Approximately 19% of transgender respondents had sought or received gender affirming care through their district's healthcare provider, and their individual experiences of that varied significantly. In some cases, it was a mostly positive experience, with staff and administration at the school being supportive. In other cases, it has been an extremely negative experience – one respondent detailed their challenges of trying to receive gender affirming care through their healthcare provider. The process has taken two years, so far, and no surgery date has been set. This is a significant issue, as gender affirming care can be quite literally live-saving for transgender individuals. One third of transgender respondents (33%) indicated that they had changed their name or the pronouns that they use while they have been employed in education. For the most part, respondents found this process to be generally positive – coworkers were respectful, the workplace was generally affirming, and administration and supervisors were helpful in navigating the process. For some individuals, misgendering continues.⁵

"This is the first time in my 21 year career anyone has asked these questions! We are pretty invisible."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT



⁴ Respondents were asked if they identified as transgender after being provided the following explanatory clause- "Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more."

⁵ It is important to note that the number of transgender respondents in this survey, while proportionally aligned with the number of transgender people in the general population, was relatively small. While these responses are important to consider, continued surveying of our transgender members is needed to get a fully representative understanding of their experiences and needs.



FOCUS GROUPS & KEY ISSUES

Through a combination of short-answer questions in the survey itself, and focus groups conducted after the survey with individuals who responded to the survey, some key issues were identified.

One of these key issues is non-discrimination and representation. As noted by the survey results, a large proportion of LGBTQ+ educators experience discrimination in their workplace. This can take the form of harassment from students, microaggressions from staff, and work-related aggressions and exclusionary behavior. The participants in the focus groups expanded on this, with educators emphasizing how damaging a lack of visibility and representation is for them when coupled with discrimination – this is, in fact, a theme that underpinned many of the key issues that educators identified. An LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace looks like one where there is visibility of LGBTQ+ identities, communicated through affirming curriculum, literature, hiring practices, and décor.

There are a number of key issues that are directly related to the issue of representation. LGBTQ+ affirming facilities are a necessity – this would include universal access to gender neutral bathrooms and access to pumping and nursing spaces for all genders of nursing parents. To create an LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace, hiring practices must include active recruitment of LGBTQ+ applicants and must include inclusive policies. Professional development

should be focused on not only creating an LGBTQ+ inclusive classroom and school culture but focused on empowering allies and colleagues of LGBTQ+ educators to have challenging conversations and speak up when discrimination or harassment is taking place. This training must explicitly include education about transgender identities, because much of the discrimination that transgender educators report experiencing is coming directly from staff. Additionally, curriculum for students must be inclusive and help students to learn about identities that may differ from their own. School climate and school culture will naturally change and grow more affirming as these practices are adopted, but it was identified as a separate issue that deserves its own focus through active policy changes, as well.

As noted in the survey results, inclusive benefits are also a hugely important issue to LGBTQ+ educators. Benefits must be supportive of all families and all types of relationships, and they must be inclusive of all identities. Furthermore, it is crucial that the union is more inclusive, as well. Active advocacy for LGBTQ+ individuals, active inclusion of LGBTQ+ voices and issues, and active visibility and representation at the union level are necessary steps so that the union will be representative of all members.

Issues Identified and Next Steps

In this section, we have categorized the main issues identified through the survey and recommended solutions to address many of these issues. The solutions recommended are only a starting point to building an inclusive and welcoming school, district, and union community. We have also included model language that can be bargained into a contract or adopted as school board policy.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

As an immediate next step to addressing issues of inequity in public education, changes are needed on multiple levels, including at the state level through K-12 policy and the Colorado Department of Education, at the district level through bargaining and adoption of board policy, and within our union. We can best ensure that these rights are upheld if they are codified in a collective bargaining agreement. However, if a local does not bargain, the included model contract provisions can be easily modified into board policies, which a local can push to have adopted by their school board.

We have focused our next steps on school district level changes, but have included changes that could be enacted within the union or at the state level, as well. In identifying the main issues, we found they fit broadly into the following categories:

1. Non-Discrimination and "Right to be Out"
2. Inclusive and Accessible Facilities
3. Inclusive Employment Benefits
4. Intentional Hiring Practices and Representation in the Workplace
5. High Quality Professional Development around LGBTQ+ Identities
6. Intentionally Building Inclusive School Culture

Non-Discrimination and “Right to be Out” Policies

OVERVIEW

Despite current laws at the federal and state level, which provide substantive protections for employees experiencing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, many LGBTQ+, educators were generally unaware of these protections and did not feel protected in the work place. Other educators shared that, even with these legal protections, expressed non-discrimination policies or provisions would make them feel more safe at work.

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

1. Adopt affirmative policy statements that assert their support for LGBTQ+ faculty, staff and students.

LGBTQ+ educators repeatedly stated that an affirmative policy in support of LGBTQ+ people by the school district would go a long way in easing many of their concerns. Being “out” at work, reporting discrimination, supporting LGBTQ+ students, and teaching students about LGBTQ+ identities are among the issues concerning to LGBTQ+ educators. A policy, like the sample resolution below, would empower educators to help create a more inclusive school community.

While implementing the full attached resolution would be ideal, a local can also strategically propose only portions of the resolution to the Board of Education, that would fit their needs.

Sample School Board Resolution⁶

_____ School Board Resolution on Affirming and Inclusion for Our LGBTQ+ Employees, Students, and Community Members AND Condemning Hate Crimes Targeting LGBTQ+ Employees, Students, and Community Members

(Month, 20__)

WHEREAS, it is the right of every child, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, to access a free public K-12 education and the district welcomes and supports all students;

WHEREAS, the district has a responsibility to ensure that all students who reside within its boundaries, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, can safely access a free public K-12 education;

WHEREAS, the district recognizes that there are employees and educators of the highest caliber who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, and that all employees are valued members of the school community regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, the district recognizes that there are families in our community of every stripe and the district values all our families, regardless of the family members' gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, [state or local law _____] prohibits discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, U.S. Department of Education has failed to protect LGBTQ students, by rescinding guidance interpreting Title IX to protect students from discrimination on the basis of their gender identity; WHEREAS, the United States Congress has twice failed to pass the Student NonDiscrimination Act, which would prohibit discrimination against public school students on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or that of their associates;

WHEREAS, in a landmark opinion *Bostock v. Clayton County* decided on June 15, 2020, the United States Supreme Court recognized that discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity is always a form of sex discrimination, and federal law prohibits sex discrimination in employment and education;

WHEREAS, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning ("LGBTQ") students experience high rates of bullying, victimization, and harassment at school on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or that of their associates;

WHEREAS, this bullying, victimization, and harassment has led to negative educational outcomes for LGBTQ students, including higher rates of dropping out, higher rates of absenteeism, and lower postsecondary school aspirations; WHEREAS, LGBTQ students also report higher rates of anxiety and depression;

WHEREAS, school-age years are a critical time for LGBTQ youth as they often "come out" or disclose their LGBTQ identities to others during that time;

WHEREAS, creating a welcoming and safe school environment for our LGBTQ students, staff, and families makes our school community more welcoming and safe to all;

AND WHEREAS, educational personnel are often the primary sources of support, resources, and information to assist and support students and student learning, which includes their emotional health;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the district prohibits discrimination against all persons, whether student, family of a student, or district employee, on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or the actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of their associates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the district prohibits bullying and harassment against all persons, whether student or district employee, on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or the actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of their associates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the board declares the district to be a Safe Space for its students, meaning that the district is a place for students to learn, to thrive and to seek assistance, information, and support free from discrimination and bullying;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that every school within the district shall, within 30 days of the date of this Resolution, take steps to create a safe climate for LGBTQ students, including designating an LGBTQ liaison and providing support for any LGBTQ student groups including Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances ("GSAs");

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall, within 30 days of the date of this Resolution, create procedures to address anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment which will include procedures for how students may report bullying and harassment, prohibit retaliation against any student for reporting bullying and harassment, and require schools to track and report data on incidents of anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall, within 30 days of the date of this Resolution, review and modify its anti-discrimination policies to ensure that those policies prohibit LGBTQ discrimination;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall within 30 days of the date of this resolution, work with the relevant exclusive bargaining representatives to determine how LGBTQ anti-discrimination policies can best be incorporated in existing or future collective bargaining agreements;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall within 30 days of the date of this Resolution, create a plan for Professional Development related to anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment, so that all District employees are trained to recognize and respond to anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District shall allow students and staff to use requested names and pronouns without requiring a legal name change or medical diagnosis; provide equal access to all programs and facilities, including access to bathroom and locker room facilities as needed for all students and staff that align with the students' and staff members' gender expression, and provide at least one gender-neutral bathroom; respect the privacy of all staff and students who are in transition;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any dress code for District employees or students should be gender neutral;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District and schools shall incorporate LGBTQ people and issues in school curricula, including in health and sex education; school libraries shall include materials in school libraries that portray LGBTQ figures in a positive light; Districts and schools shall ensure that the curricula include diverse perspectives, especially LGBTQ people of color and issues specific to communities of color;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Schools shall provide students with access to LGBTQ resources;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall designate October as LGBTQ history month, May 22 as Harvey Milk Day, and November 20 as Transgender Day of Remembrance, in honor of Rita Hester and other victims of transphobic violence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District shall post this Resolution at every school site and distribute it to District staff, students, and parents using usual means of communication, and that the Resolution will be translated into all languages spoken by students at home;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Superintendent shall report back on compliance with this Resolution to the Board at its next meeting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board affirms that certificated District employees have the academic freedom to discuss this Resolution during class time provided it is age-appropriate; and students are to be made aware that District counselors are available to discuss the subjects contained in this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, after-school providers and other vendors and service providers who contract with the District shall be notified of this Resolution within 30 days and required to abide by it.

Affirmed this _____ day of _____ 20____.

School Board President

School Board Secretary

Superintendent

2. Adopt expansive non-discrimination language.⁷

Most of our union contracts already include a standard non-discrimination clause, however, many of these fall short in fully protecting our LGBTQ+ educators. More expansive non-discrimination provisions should be adopted to ensure our LGBTQ+ educators are fully protected.

Model Non-Discrimination Contract Language

Agreements that do not yet contain a non-discrimination clause, or agreements without a substantive, well-written non-discrimination clause, should seek to adopt a comprehensive clause such as:

"The district shall not discharge, demote, nonrenew the contract of, discipline, deny a promotion opportunity to, harass, or discriminate in regard to any term or condition of employment against any employee on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, immigration status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, gender characteristics, gender non-conformity, genetic information, familial status, status as transgender or transitioning, or participation in any professional educational organization or union.

Further, the district shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local non-discrimination laws."

Agreements that do have a non-discrimination clause should be edited to cover all of the categories listed above.

"The wording of my school's discrimination policy when I first started didn't explicitly include sexuality as a protected identity. It had sex and gender, but without sexuality, it didn't feel safe until I had tenure to tell people."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT



The following definitions should be added to your agreement in the definitions section in order to be very clear on what is protected under these new terms.

Model Definitions to Accompany Non-Discrimination Language⁸

X. "Gender Characteristics" means the physical attributes of a person, as they relate to the traditional stereotypes of "man" or "woman" and "male" or "female", and include, but are not limited to, height, body shape, deepness of voice, body hair and biological sex differentiation, hormonal metabolism and genitals."

X. "Gender Expression" means the external presentation or appearance usually expressed through behavior, mannerisms, speech patterns, clothing, hairstyle, or voice, that may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with the traditional stereotypes of "woman" and "man".

X. "Gender Identity" means the gender a person considers themselves to be, including but not limited to, being a man, a woman, any other gender, genders, or no gender."

X. "Sexual Orientation" means an emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people, which can include an attraction to people of the same gender, people of a different gender, people of multiple or all genders, as well as having no emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

⁷ Recently the Supreme Court ruled that LGBTQ+ workers are protected from discrimination at work on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. See NEA's guide on the Bostock decision available at: https://neajustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/27379-Bostock-and-Educator-Rights-Doc_Final.pdf?_ga=2.98371295.1326294253.1625681667-1257659018.1593099430

⁸ These definitions were adapted from Transgender At Work. For more definitions please see <http://www.tgender.net/taw/defn.html#gender-characteristics>

"I'm self-guarded at work because I am the only black teacher on an all-white teaching staff. I am not openly gay at work because of how I have been treated as a black male teacher in my workplace by my administration and one parent in particular. Only a few trusted colleagues and parents know that I am gay."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

3. Establish right to be out at school.

Beyond a traditional non-discrimination clause, districts should adopt an affirmative right for educators to be out at school and to support out students at school. Even though the law already protects educators who choose to be out at work, many educators expressed that they were unaware of this protection and that it would be helpful to have that right more specifically included in our contracts. By including these rights explicitly in the contract, we create the ability to grieve any violations, which can often be a more expedited and otherwise preferred process to the legal alternative.

In addition to the language provided below, districts should adopt and have easily accessible a comprehensive and easy process through which employees can change their name, pronouns, and personal titles on file with the district.

Model "Right to be out" Contract Language:

"Right to Be Out: The District shall not subject any employee to discharge, demotion, contract nonrenewal, discipline, denial of a promotion opportunity, harassment, discrimination in regard to any term or condition of employment, or any other adverse employment action because of the employee's disclosure of or communication about the employee's gender expression, gender identity, status as transgender or transitioning, gender non-conformity, or sexual orientation."⁹

"Right to Be Out About Family: The District shall not subject any employee to discharge, demotion, contract nonrenewal, discipline, denial of a promotion opportunity, harassment, discrimination in regard to any term or condition of employment, or any other adverse employment action because of the employee's disclosure of or communication about the educator's family, household, or family or household composition."

"Right to Self Identification: All employees have the right to determine what names, pronouns and personal titles (ex. Mr.,

Ms., Mx.) are used to refer to them in their employment with the District. Employees have the right to change their names, pronouns, and/or personal titles at any time. Upon notice from an employee of such a change, the School District shall make every effort, without unnecessary delay, to ensure that the name, pronouns and/or personal titles designated by the employee are used to refer to the employee in the employee's employment with the School District."

"Right to Support Students Out at School: The District shall not subject any employee to discharge, demotion, contract nonrenewal, discipline, denial of a promotion opportunity, harassment, discrimination in regard to any term or condition of employment, or any other adverse employment action in retaliation for the employee having provided support, assistance or advocacy in the exercise of a student's right to non-discrimination, including but not limited to referring to a student by the student's designated name, pronouns and/or personal title (ex. Mr., Ms., Mx.)."¹⁰

4. Address exclusive and discriminatory dress codes.

Policies around professional dress and attire must be gender neutral and not limit or prescribe specific dress based on the individual's gender identity, gender expression, or gender characteristics. In general, dress codes can often be particularly targeting to people who are low income, non-white, women, and/or LGBTQ+.¹¹ We do not encourage anyone to adopt a dress code where one does not already exist for staff or for students. If a dress code is already in place, we want to ensure that it is not used discriminately against transgender and gender non-conforming members of the school community.

Model Gender Inclusive Dress Code Contract Language

"Gender Inclusive Dress Code: If a school and/or the district maintains a dress code for students and/or employees, such dress code shall be gender neutral and shall not have different requirements based on the gender identity, gender expression, gender characteristics, or gender non-conformity of the student and/or employee."

⁹ This is already the law under the Colorado Antidiscrimination Act. 24-34-301, C.R.S. See Sexual Orientation Harassment, Civil Rights Commission, 3 C.C.R 708-86.1 available at <https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=8834>

¹⁰ Many educators identify that they do not feel supported when they honor their students' LGBTQ+ identities at school. This provision is intended to allow educators to honor the gender identity of their transgender and gender non-conforming students, even if the parent or guardian objects to the use of the student's name, pronouns or personal title.

¹¹ See this NEAToday article for more information available at <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/when-school-dress-codes-discriminate>

Inclusive and Accessible Facilities

OVERVIEW

Most schools do not have gender inclusive bathrooms easily accessible to staff, students, and visitors. Additionally, many schools do not have nursing/pumping stations that can be accessed by birthing parents of all genders.



PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

1. Establish accessible gender inclusive bathrooms for staff and students.

Many schools have attempted to address this issue by allowing transgender students special permission to use the faculty bathroom or the nurses bathroom. This is an insufficient solution that requires transgender students to affirmatively advocate for an accommodation in order to be accommodated, and also isolates them from their peers by creating an alternative inequitable restroom.

In order to address the issues around bathroom access, districts are encouraged to create at least one "All Gender" restroom at each school/worksites that is openly accessible to students and staff without special permission or without entering an office. Additionally, contractual language should be negotiated that guarantees all staff and students the right to use the bathroom (either, "Boys/Men", "Girls/Women", or "All Gender") that aligns with their gender identity, regardless of how they are perceived.

Model Gender Inclusive Bathroom Language¹²

"All-Gender Bathroom Access: By X date, every district building shall have at least one, all-gender bathroom that is accessible at all times to all staff, students, and building visitors. This all-gender bathroom must be ADA compliant, clearly marked, and accessible without extra permission in the same manner as gendered bathrooms.

- "All-gender bathroom" shall mean a bathroom that any person is permitted to use, regardless of such person's gender identity, gender characteristics, or gender expression.
- A bathroom inside the office of a nurse or other staff member does not meet the requirements for an all-gender bathroom.

"Gender Bathroom Access: All staff, students, and visitors shall be permitted to use any gendered bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity."

"It was great to be able to ask my supervisor to change my name plate to read Mx."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

2. Equal access to nursing/pumping stations for birthing parents of all genders.

While people of all genders are able to give birth, we often center our facilities, when they are available, towards women/mothers. The following contract language should be adopted in order to assure parents of all genders have the space they need to pump, feed, or change the diapers of their children.

Model Nursing/Pumping Time and Location Contract Language

"Access to Private Pumping Locations: The district shall provide all nursing parents, including students and employees, regardless of the parent's gender identity, expression or characteristics, with a private location (other than a bathroom) in close proximity to their work or class area to express breast milk for their nursing child for up to 2 years after the child's birth."

"Reasonable Time for Pumping Breast Milk: The district shall provide all nursing parents, including students and employees, regardless of the parent's gender identity, expression or characteristics, reasonable time during the school day to express breast milk for their nursing child for up to 2 years after the child's birth."

"Access to baby changing tables for all gender parents: If the district provides one or more baby changing tables, access to baby changing tables shall be provided equally to all parents regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, or gender characteristics."

3. Access to updated name plates/name tags to indicate names, titles/pronouns and non-binary titles/pronouns.

Honoring pronouns, names, and personal titles extends to the physical space of the school. All students and staff should have their classroom labels, school IDs, name placards, etc. reflect their identities and be able to modify those placards to reflect any changed titles.

The "Right to Self Identification" and "Right to be Out" model language in the "Non-Discrimination and "Right to be Out" policies" section of this report broadly cover the rights of individuals to be correctly identified in their schools. Once bargained, these contractual sections can be enforced to ensure pronouns, names, and personal titles are being honored.

¹²This model language utilizes terms that were defined in the non-discrimination section of this report. If this provision is introduced, make sure to accompany it with the definitions of "gender identity", "gender expression" and "gender characteristics" found in the non-discrimination section.

Inclusive Employment Benefits

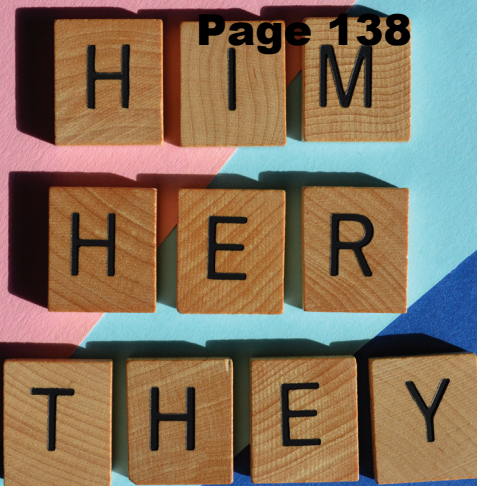
OVERVIEW

Benefits provided to LGBTQ+ educators are not comprehensive enough. LGBTQ+ respondents indicated insufficient benefits or barriers to accessing family leave, family planning support, and health insurance. Benefits around family leave are not often accessible to all parents (including spouses and partners) for both birth and adoption. Often, definitions of family result in bereavement leaves and sick leaves that do not cover all types of families. Family planning benefits rarely include benefits around adoption - particularly financial support - or fertility treatments (even for individuals who are not living with infertility). Finally, healthcare benefits are not always as affirming and supportive of trans people as they need to be, and healthcare coverage generally is not comprehensive enough or tailored to LGBTQ+ experiences.

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

Educators proposed solutions in a number of areas. LGBTQ+ educators would like to see parental leave for all individuals, including spouses and partners, for both birth and adoption. They would like to see increased family leave time, and bereavement leave for all types of family. Additionally, adoption benefits and coverage of fertility treatments - regardless of whether infertility is the issue - are crucial. Furthermore, healthcare benefits must cover gender affirming surgeries and hormone treatments for trans individuals. Trans individuals must be able to receive leave time for these surgeries, and not have their life-changing and live-saving medical procedures considered elective (and therefore ineligible for medical leave). Healthcare plans should cover things such as PrEP medications, and there should be blanket coverage for mental health screenings and counseling, even in absence of a formal diagnosis.

"It is frustrating to have such specific requirements in order to get my partner on my insurance. We are committed to one another, live together and unless we are married she can't get on my insurance through work. Whereas heterosexual couples can under common law."



1. Degendering benefits language.

Several of the concerns identified by educators can be addressed by degendering our contractual benefits. Many of our contractual language has gender specifications that are not inclusive to folks with non-binary genders or with non- "traditional" family structures. Replacing the terms below throughout your contract will help assure that no one is inadvertently excluded from definitions and benefits.

Chart to "Degender" Benefit Contract Language

Use this chart to audit and propose changes to current leave and insurance contractual provisions.

INSTEAD OF....	USE THIS!	BECAUSE...
Husband/Wife	Spouse	Spouses can be many genders. This also creates more inclusive language for same-gender married couples.
Maternity/Mother	Parental/Birthing Parent	People of many gender identities can birth children!
Paternal/Paternity	Parental/non-Birthing parent	The spouse of the person who gives birth can be many genders. This is more inclusive language for same-gender couples and non cis-gender spouses.
Aunt/Uncle	Parents' Siblings	Your parents' siblings can be many genders!
Mother/Father	Parents and/or legal guardian	Parents can identify as many genders. This is more inclusive language for same-gender couples and non cis-gender spouses. Also, sometimes people have a person other than their parents as their legal guardian.
Son/Daughter	Child -or- Minor and/or Adult Child(ren)	Children can be many genders! Because "child" can sometimes be interpreted to only include minor children, it can be helpful to specify "and/or adult children" when you use this term!
Grandmother/Grandfather	Grandparent	People can be many genders at all ages! This is one we may miss because many of us don't know elders who are not cis-gender. This is also more inclusive of same-gender grandparents, too!
Brother/Sister	Sibling	Siblings can be many genders!
Niece/Nephew	Siblings' Child/Children	While "Nibling" has become a colloquial gender neutral term for the children of our siblings, "Nibling" may not be common or as easy to understand to folks unfamiliar. We recommend "Sibling's Child" which will be more clear.
He/She, Him/Her, His/Hers	They/Them/Their -or- the name or title of the subject	It used to be best practice to put "he/she" or "he or she" in legal writing like contracts, but this excludes folks who don't identify on the gender binary. This change makes sure we are being inclusive throughout with our pronouns. You can also just repeat the subject's title (i.e. "Employee" or the "Principal") and avoid pronouns altogether. This will make your contract language even more clear.

2. Support for transitioning employees.

In order to assure that transgender employees are supported during their transitions while working for a school district, we encourage the introduction of a provision that allows an employee to request the creation of a transition plan. This plan is intended to support the employee and avoid tensions and uncertainties that could arise without an intentional preemptive conversation.¹³

Model Transition Plan Contract Language

Section X. Optional Transition Plans for Transitioning Employees:

If a transgender or transitioning employee makes a request to the district to collaborate on the creation of a written transition plan, the district shall, with no unnecessary delay, enter into good faith discussions with the employee and the employee's designated representative, if any, to develop such a plan.

- a. The discussions and written transition plan shall address the matters and aspects of transitioning and employment that the employee chooses to raise, and the employee shall not be required to discuss or address any other matters or aspects of transitioning and employment raised by the district or anyone else.
- b. The written transition plan shall only address matters and aspects of transitioning and employment that the employee and the district agree to address, including but not limited to: the communications, if any, that will be made by the district to other employees, students and/or students' parents regarding the employee's transition; any absences needed by the employee in connection with the employee's transition; the name, title and pronouns that the employee designates and how the district will insure that such name, title and pronouns are used to refer to the employee in the district; and any training on transgender/transitioning experiences or issues that should be provided to the employee's co-workers and/or students.
- c. The process for the creation of a transition plan may only be initiated at the request of the transitioning employee.
- d. The transitioning employee may at any time, and for any reason, discontinue participating in the discussions and/or discontinue negotiating a transition plan.

3. Leave time for gender affirming processes.

It is important to ensure that Employees who are transitioning are able to use their leave time for such processes. The accompanying model language ensures that leave time can be used for the legal name change process as well as for any medical procedures or treatments.

Model Leave Time Contract Language

"Leave Time for Name Change Process: An employee seeking a name change through a legal process shall be permitted to use any sick or personal leave available to such employee in order to meet with an attorney, appear in court, and/or visit court or governmental agencies in order to effectuate such name change. The district shall not deny a request to use available leave for this purpose."¹⁴

"Gender Affirming Medical Procedures and Treatment: An employee shall be permitted to use any sick or personal leave available to such employee for the purpose of gender affirming medical procedures and treatment, including travel to and from and recovery from such procedures and treatment."

4. Health insurance for gender affirming processes.

We should fight to make sure the healthcare plans we are selecting cover gender affirming processes for our members. Health Insurance plans that cover gender affirming processes are becoming more commonplace and should, in most circumstances, be attainable. It is possible that communities with fewer medical options, such as our rural communities, may not have many insurance options that are practical for their membership. In the event that the primary coverage does not provide for gender affirming processes, the district should provide supplemental coverage to their employees who are seeking gender affirming care.

Model Inclusive Health Insurance Benefits Contract Language¹⁵

"Inclusive Health Insurance Benefits: The health insurance offered to employees by the district shall include coverage for all transgender medical needs and treatments, including but not limited to hormone treatment, gender affirming surgeries, preventative care, and other medical treatment and procedures as directed by the employee's medical provider. The district shall not contract with a health care provider or insurer that does not provide the full coverage required by this provision."

*****THE FOLLOWING SUB CLAUSE CAN BE PROPOSED IF THE DISTRICT EXPRESSES CONCERN WITH MEETING THE OBLIGATION IN THE SECTION ABOVE!*****

- a. "If the district is not reasonably able to contract with a provider or insurer to provide both the coverage required by this provision and all other needed types of coverage in one plan, the district shall offer to employees upon request, and at no additional charge, a supplemental insurance plan which provides the full coverage required by this provision."

¹³ For more information on this, see <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/model-workplace-employment-policy-Updated.pdf>

¹⁴ We recognize that this language is giving special privileges for a name change that are not offered for other legal matters. This is because there is often a medical necessity for transgender folks to change their documents in order to avoid physical harm or mental health repercussions from having mixed identification or identification with their dead name.

¹⁵ DORA has issued guidance which should require insurance plans to meet the inclusive requirements of this language.

For more information, we encourage you to look here!

5. Definition of family.

Oftentimes, our contractual definitions of family- the definition used for, among other things, sick leave and bereavement leave- conforms to a very limited and “traditional” notion of a family. Expanding our definitions of “family” makes sure that LGBTQ+ educators, and all educators, are able to access their leave time to care for the people in their lives that they are closest with!

Model Family Definition Contract Language¹⁶

“Family member” means and includes:

- a. an employee’s immediate family member, which is defined as a person who is related to the employee by blood, marriage, civil union, or adoption,
- b. the employee’s romantic or intimate partner,
- c. a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis or a person who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a minor,
- d. a person for whom the employee is responsible for providing or arranging health or safety related care,
- e. a person residing in the employee’s household,
- f. a person whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.”

6. Family formation benefits.

Many LGBTQ+ educators emphasized the unique and costly barriers many LGBTQ+ families experience when trying to grow their families. In order to address this, we should fight to include expansive Family Formation benefits that help alleviate the out of pocket costs of in vitro fertilization (IVF), adoption, surrogacy, and intrauterine insemination. Many insurance companies cover some of these services but few plans offer comprehensive coverage. Additionally, supplemental insurance companies have been created to help extend these benefits to workers. While including family formation benefits meets a need of our LGBTQ+ educators, all educators can benefit from this expanded coverage.¹⁷

“My wife and I are currently undergoing fertility treatments to have a child which is EXTREMELY expensive. This should be covered in health insurance and I should not need to “prove” infertility in order to have this covered.”

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT



¹⁶ Recently, Colorado enacted the Colorado Healthy Families and Workplace Act (Available at https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2020a_205_signed.pdf) which requires employers to provide sick leave to workers in order to care for the health needs of themselves or their family members. This act includes a definition of family that goes beyond many of our current contractual definitions. The above definition meets and goes beyond the definition of family required by this act.

¹⁷ Oddly, many resources online about this type of expansive coverage are from management-side and human resource organizations that recognize that covering family planning helps build a more stable and diverse workforce. Check out this article for more information (but note, this is from an Human Resources perspective) available at: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/family-forming-benefits-serve-a-diverse-workforce.aspx>

Intentional Hiring Practices and Representation in the Workplace

OVERVIEW

Many LGBTQ+ respondents reported having a more positive work environment when there were multiple LGBTQ+ educators at the worksite, however they felt that hiring practices were often exclusionary and lead to fewer LGBTQ+ applicants and fewer LGBTQ+ hires.

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

Districts should review hiring practices to ensure that all application materials include pronoun options and honorifics that affirm all gender identities and should train hiring committees to ensure that correct pronouns and honorifics are used. Additionally, districts could audit their hiring practices with a specific lens on hiring and retaining diverse applicants to ensure that the process is not excluding applicants from certain backgrounds.

"I am one of the very few LGBTQ+ staff members in my district. I would feel extremely uncomfortable if I mentioned [my] male partner in my classroom."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

"It has been lonely. I am the only openly queer person at my workplace. For that reason, my school does not see the need for more dialogue to support LGBTQ+ culture."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

High Quality Professional Development around LGBTQ+ Identities

OVERVIEW

Oftentimes, our LGBTQ+ educators felt that they were treated as the “experts” on LGBTQ+ identities and became the sole support in a school for the LGBTQ+ students. Others felt that their colleagues’ negative or inappropriate reactions often came from a place of inexperience and lack of education on LGBTQ+ issues. We can use the bargaining process to mandate such trainings in order to improve the work experience of our LGBTQ+ educators, and in doing so, also create a school better prepared to support our LGBTQ+ students.



"I am misgendered ALL the time. I don't think my admin is well-equipped to be allies."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

1. Professional development on creating an LGBTQ+ inclusive workplace.

Respondents proposed that district-led training on supporting LGBTQ+ educators and students would lead to a more affirming work environment. The below language can be bargained in order to implement such training.

Model LGBTQ+ Professional Development Contract Language

"Section X. In an effort to create and maintain a culture of inclusivity in our schools, The district shall:

1. Offer a training of at least __ hours in length on the best practices for creating an inclusive classroom and school environment for LGBTQ+ students and employees. The district shall offer this training at least annually on dates and times that are convenient for most employees to attend, shall make this training available to all employees who want to attend, and shall provide employees with time off from their regular duties if necessary to enable their attendance.
2. Require all newly hired administrators to attend a training on the best practices for creating an inclusive classroom and school environment for LGBTQ+ students and employees within one (1) year of the administrators' hiring by the district and require all currently employed administrators to attend such training within one (1) year of the adoption of this provision.
3. Collect and maintain in a location accessible to all employees a list of LGBTQ+ resources that employees can offer to, or use to support, LGBTQ+ students."



Intentionally Building Inclusive School Culture

OVERVIEW

School climate and culture around the state is heavily influenced by a number of factors including geographical location, co-worker and administration attitudes towards LGBTQ+ communities. While many LGBTQ+ respondents have found school communities where they feel safe and supported, many are working or have worked at schools where they do not. Many schools do not have a Gay-Straight Alliance, or similar student club where LGBTQ+ students can find community. This impacts our LGBTQ+ educators as many of them end up providing that support but without designated resources or compensation. Often the mandated or provided curriculum is heteronormative and cisnormative and largely leave out LGBTQ+ experiences and individuals all together.

"Homophobic coded language and microaggressions are common. It feels like LGBTQ issues are only ever discussed at a surface level, there's no attempt to really make it a part of the curriculum."

LGBTQ+ SURVEY RESPONDENT

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

1. Dedicate funding for LGBTQ+ student groups.

Educators identified the need for dedicated funding for clubs such as Gay-Straight Alliance at all schools in order to assure that students, and the educators supporting those students, have sufficient resources to hold a space for LGBTQ+ students. Often this work is falling on the backs of our LGBTQ+ educators who are informally creating this space. Further, a dedicated student club would increase LGBTQ+ visibility in the school and create space for LGBTQ+ students to have a role in shaping their own school culture. Assigning designated funds makes it clear that this is a priority for the district/school and makes educators and students feel more comfortable engaging.

2. Adopt LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum.

Curricula around the state make heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions. For example, math word problems will assume gender along a binary, splitting groups into boys and girls. Our curriculum includes few to no pieces of literature written about or by LGBTQ+ individuals. These heteronormative curricular choices both make it difficult for LGBTQ+ youth to see themselves reflected in their educational materials and make it harder for non-LGBTQ+ students to learn about issues of gender and sexuality. It further isolates our educators who are responsible for delivering content that erases their own experiences and histories. Often our LGBTQ+ educators work to subsidize their own curriculum to become more inclusive, without support or compensation for the extra work they are doing. Districts should review current curriculum through an LGBTQ+ inclusive lens and work to modify or change curriculum to better serve our students in this area.

3. Create an LGBTQ+ working group.

While this report addresses many of the main issues raised by LGBTQ+ respondents, we recognize that some of the solutions in this report may not be the right fit for your district or may not address the primary concerns of our LGBTQ+ members in your local. By establishing a working group, the union and district can collaborate to identify the needs of our LGBTQ+ educators and collaboratively address those needs. **We STRONGLY encourage that the Association appoint all LGBTQ+ educators to this committee** in order to ensure that LGBTQ+ educators are central in identifying and solving such issues. While this report is focused on issues impacting LGBTQ+ students and educators, this working group model can be used to address issues impacting other groups of marginalized people within our schools.



Model LGBTQ+ Professional Development Contract Language

"Section X. Creation of LGBTQ+ Working Group"

The district and the association shall establish a working group to collaborate, review and propose policies, programs, activities, curriculums, and professional development designed to identify and address issues of inequity impacting LGBTQ+ employees and students. This working group shall be composed of up to five (5) association members appointed by the president of the association and an equal number of members appointed by the superintendent. The working group shall be empowered to seek and obtain outside input to aid in their work, including but not limited to input from students, other members of the district community, and LGBTQ+ advocacy and support organizations."



4. District response to discriminatory incidents.

Many educators expressed concern that they may not be supported by their administration if they experience discrimination or retaliation from other members of the school community. The following language should be adopted to create a clear process for administrative response to discriminatory behavior.

Model Response to Discriminatory Incidents Contract Language

"Section X. Creation of LGBTQ+ Working Group"

Section X: District Response to Discriminatory Incidents.

If an employee reports to a district administrator that a student, a student's parent or guardian, another employee or a visitor to the district has made one or more comments, whether oral or written, expressing negativity or prejudice based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, gender characteristics or status as transgender or transitioning, the district shall promptly respond by:

1. conducting a prompt and appropriate investigation into the allegations.
2. at the conclusion of the investigation, if there is reason to believe that a comment of the nature described above was made, contacting the person who made the comment, informing the person that such a

comment is unacceptable and contrary to the district's nondiscrimination requirements, and warning the person that any future comment of a similar nature will not be tolerated,

3. documenting the report of the comment received by the district and the actions taken by the district in response thereto, and
4. providing documentation to the employee who reported the comment confirming that the district has taken the above-required actions."

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to limit the application of other disciplinary processes or procedures set out herein enter citation to discipline article in CBA, or in student discipline policies and procedures."

Changes Within Our Union

OVERVIEW

In addition to fighting for the above district changes, we also must continue to grow our union and make internal changes that create a more inclusive union community. Roundtable participants were very clear that in addition to the survey and this report, they want to see action by their union. While most LGBTQ+ respondents indicated that they were either active or very active members of the Union, the majority (74%) also feel that the Union does not prioritize the needs of LGBTQ+ educators. In many cases, respondents felt that the Union was silent or absent from conversations around LGBTQ+ educator needs.

During the roundtables, members suggested that they would like to have a way to connect with other LGBTQ+ educators through the union. Through the roundtables, members also emphasized that they want this group to rally members, build community, and take action on issues relevant to LGBTQ+ educators.

PROPOSED SOLUTION(S)

1. Clear Union Support for LGBTQ+ Educators.

We need to ensure that our LGBTQ+ union siblings know their union, including union staff and co-workers, will support them in any issues that arise, such as when teachers are asked to remove PRIDE flags, when pictures of same-gender spouses are displayed, when transitioning, etc. We should include LGBTQ+ rights information in any rights trainings we run or any information we send out. Association Representatives should be trained on LGBTQ+ educator rights, such as the right to be out and the right to support LGBTQ+ students, in their training.

2. Create an LGBTQ+ educator group.

Many educators expressed wanting space to connect with other LGBTQ+ educators, both in their district and around the state. During the roundtable discussions, many LGBTQ+ educators expressed that they rarely have the opportunity to speak with other LGBTQ+ educators and that they really valued the experience. This would also help begin addressing the perception that the union is silent on issues that impact LGBTQ+ educators.

3. Include issues Relevant to LGBTQ+ Educators at any union events including conferences, training, etc.

Creating opportunities for our LGBTQ+ and Non-LGBTQ+ educators to be trained on these issues will help us all become the best union advocates back in our home district.

"I feel that my union is supportive of LGBTQ+ members, but there isn't much proactive affirmation or work to increase visibility. We say we value LGBTQ+ identities and voices, but there isn't really much attention."

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Messaging Guide

Transgender Youth and the Freedom to Be Ourselves

Building Our Choir with a Race Class Gender Narrative



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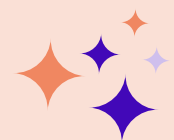
INTRODUCTION

Organizers know that advancing justice and safety for transgender people in the U.S. will require building a strong, vocal, and durable multiracial coalition championing a trans-inclusive, progressive vision for the country. Yet there has been little to no public opinion research or targeted narrative development focused on building that base by contextualizing trans issues within the broader fight for racial, gender, and economic justice. Instead, colorblind messaging dominates LGBT advocacy. Where race is mentioned, it is usually to name disparities — a simple acknowledgment of the increased violence and discrimination trans people of color face. Frequently, talking points on LGBT policies have been formulated to calm audiences' discomfort with transgender people, tacitly reinforcing a conservative worldview around race and class and further siloing trans issues from related progressive causes.

The right has exploited ignorance about transgender people and our lack of an affirmative, race-forward message to advance anti-trans attacks, further splinter and impugn the left, and sabotage progressives on a broad range of issues. Over the last ten years, Republicans in state legislatures have increasingly turned to anti-transgender rhetoric and legislation as a powerful complement to their arsenal of racist dog whistles used to whip up fear and consolidate power. In 2021, they have refined this strategy in the form of a moral panic over transgender youth, introducing over 100 bills across the country to criminalize medical care for trans youth and bar trans young people from participating in school sports. Recently, they have paired these attacks with fear-mongering about Critical Race Theory, mobilizing their base with a potent mix of racist and transphobic tropes. Progressives cannot ignore these attacks hoping that simply sticking to economic issues alone will save us. Our appeals on any topic will always be filtered through the noise of this unrelenting fear-mongering and scapegoating on the right.

New research by ASO Communications, Transgender Law Center, and Lake Research Partners finds that we can cultivate resistance to these attacks, build cross-racial solidarity, and advance a shared vision for the future by weaving together our shared values, experiences, and demands across races and genders. This new approach builds on the [Race Class Narrative](#) to tell a convincing story of how our opposition uses strategic racism and transphobia to harm us all; and how, by coming together, we can ensure we all have the freedom to be ourselves and support one another. Using a Race Class Gender Narrative, we can mobilize our progressive base (particularly Black, AAPI, and Gen Z audiences), marginalize our opposition, and move persuadables across race.

¹Online nationwide survey conducted July 29 – August 5, 2021 among 1000 adults, with additional oversamples of 100 Black adults, 100 Latinx adults, 100 AAPI adults, and 100 Indigenous adults, as well as a separate sample of 95 activists collected August 13 – September 24, 2021. Quantitative research was preceded and informed by eight focus groups with base and persuadable Black, AAPI, and Latinx cisgender men and women and two mixed race and gender groups, one with parents and one with Gen Z adults.



FULL NARRATIVES

The following narratives proved compelling to our base and persuadables, increasing support for our policies and enthusiasm to join together with people across races and genders to create positive change. Campaigners and organizers across movements should use these narratives for creative and social media content, visuals, public messages, calls to action, spokesperson materials, and more.

FREEDOM FROM BOXES

Most effective message at moving voters away from opposition sports policies and towards supporting transgender student athletes, as well as driving enthusiasm to join together with others to create change. This was particularly strong with Black and Latinx respondents.

Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not, we want the freedom to be ourselves. But some people try to get and hold onto power by putting us in boxes based on what we look like, where we're from, or our genders. We see this in how schools tell Black kids how to keep their hair or send girls home for the clothes they wear. And in how certain politicians exploit lack of familiarity with transgender people, excluding trans kids from healthcare, school, or sports. They stoke fear so we turn against some group instead of demanding what our families need. By joining together, we can make this a place where we are all free to thrive and support each other for who we are.

AUTHENTIC SELVES

Our top message for persuadables and the highest or second highest rated narrative for respondents of every racial group. This message also increased people's excitement to join together with others to create change.

Across our races, backgrounds and genders, we want to be treated with dignity and respect. But today, certain politicians are pushing laws that restrict our freedoms because of the color of our skin, what's in our wallets, or because we are transgender. They exploit divisions and fears among us so they can get and hold onto power, denying us the basic rights, resources, and respect all people deserve. By [rejecting this division/passing protections against discrimination], we can ensure each one of us has the freedom to be ourselves, pursue our dreams, and have a good life — no exceptions.

YOUTH POWER

Strongest message for our base and Gen Z respondents.

Young people across time, race, and movements for equality have always helped lead the way. But now as before, certain politicians are trying to get and hold onto power by silencing young people – stoking fear against Black and brown kids leading protests for racial justice, and taking advantage of unfamiliarity with transgender people to punish students for being their authentic selves. Whenever a powerful few have tried to pick and choose who counts, there have always been those of us who showed up for each other and built welcoming communities. Now it's our time to show up, reject division, and chart a better future for all of us, no matter our ages, races, or genders.

²Narratives adjusted slightly from messages originally tested based on findings from dial test.



ARCHITECTURE OF A RACE CLASS GENDER NARRATIVE

1. Open with a shared value, explicitly naming or evoking race, gender and class. Effective opening values include the following: freedom to be ourselves, treating each other with dignity and respect, and the golden rule/treating others as we'd want to be treated.
"Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not, we want the freedom to be ourselves."
2. Name the villains who violate our values, expose their motivation of getting back into or holding onto power, and position them as a barrier to what our families need.
"But some people try to get and hold onto power by putting us in boxes based on what we look like, where we're from, or our genders. They stoke fear so we turn against some group instead of demanding what our families need."
3. Call out how the villains:
 - exploit divisions across races
"We see this in how schools tell Black kids how to keep their hair or send girls home for the clothes they wear."
 - and exploit the lack of familiarity with transgender people
"And in how certain politicians exploit lack of familiarity with transgender people, excluding trans kids from healthcare, school, or sports."
4. Deliver a unifying call to action with which the audience can bring about a positive vision or outcome, aligned with the initial shared value.
"By joining together, we can make this a place where we are all free to thrive and support each other for who we are."

THE OPPORTUNITY: CREATING A BROADER "WE"

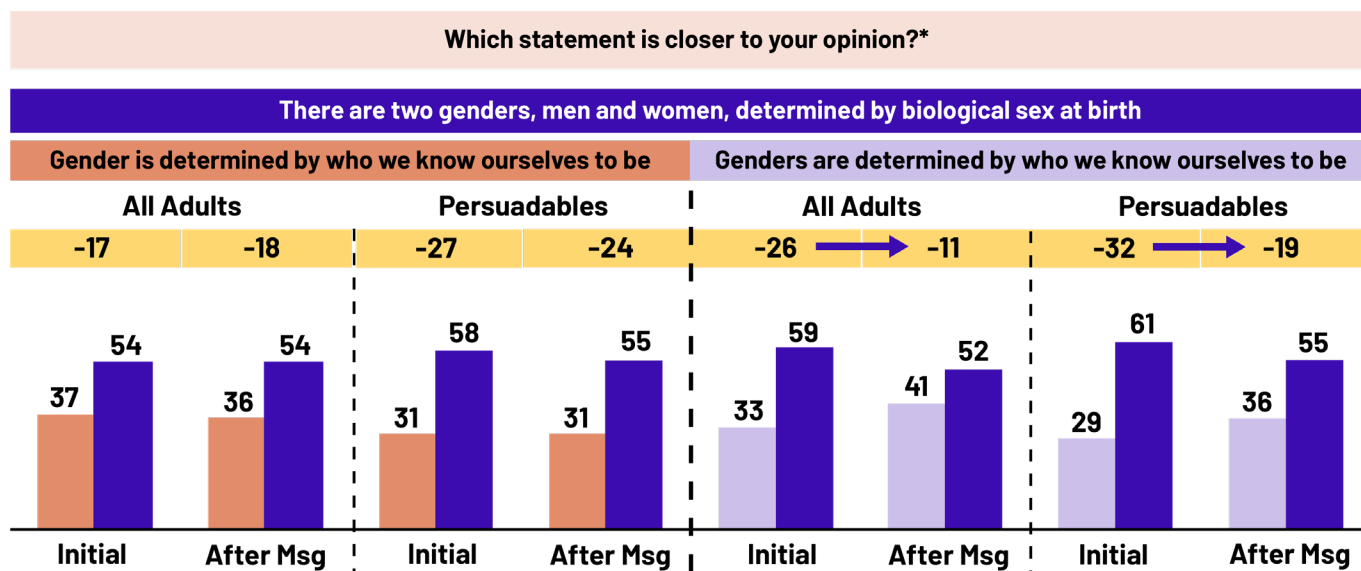
Evoking a sense of personal connection to an issue is critical to driving engagement and action. Without that, we can at best elicit sympathy, a passive and often patronizing attitude that alienates our base and fails to generate sustained interest from persuadable audiences. Moving people towards empathy – an ability to identify with another person's experience – is therefore key in activating cisgender audiences around trans issues.

Unfortunately, our focus groups echoed past research in finding concerning low connection to, understanding of, and familiarity with transgender people in the U.S., including among our traditional progressive base. Even where people expressed support, it was for a category of people they clearly perceived as wholly separate from and unrelated to their own lives. The implicit and occasionally explicit line people drew between their own communities and transgender people frequently had a racial dimension, with comments indicating many participants largely associated being transgender with being white, or associated acceptance of transgender people with whiteness.

We found several effective paths towards interrupting this othering framework and increasing empathy and a sense of shared fate and community with transgender people, especially among Black, Latinx, AAPI and Indigenous audiences.

First, rather than separating out and exceptionalizing trans people's experience of gender, we should present and discuss our genders as a spectrum on which both cis and trans people exist. A freedom from boxes metaphor is particularly effective at moving people towards this more encompassing understanding. People of all races and genders want to be free to fully express ourselves and connect authentically with others, and can identify with the feeling of being boxed in and told what to do based on what we look like or where we come from. Most of us chafe against the stereotypes and narrow expectations others project on us. Positioning this limitation in contrast to the core value of freedom to be ourselves helps energize base respondents. By anchoring our discussion of gender in this relatable experience, we make our audience part of the story and position cis and trans people on one shared continuum of experience. For instance, we found that base respondents agree strongly when we say "people should be respected, trusted, and empowered to make decisions about our own lives and bodies, whether...transgender or not" – a helpful insight for aligning and developing joint messaging on transgender and reproductive justice. Our research also suggests that pluralizing and personalizing genders – making statements about "genders" or "our genders" instead of "gender" as a singular and abstract concept – subtly helps orient people towards our worldview.

The increased agreement with the "genders" statement after messaging suggests that pluralizing genders helpfully shifts people towards our worldview.



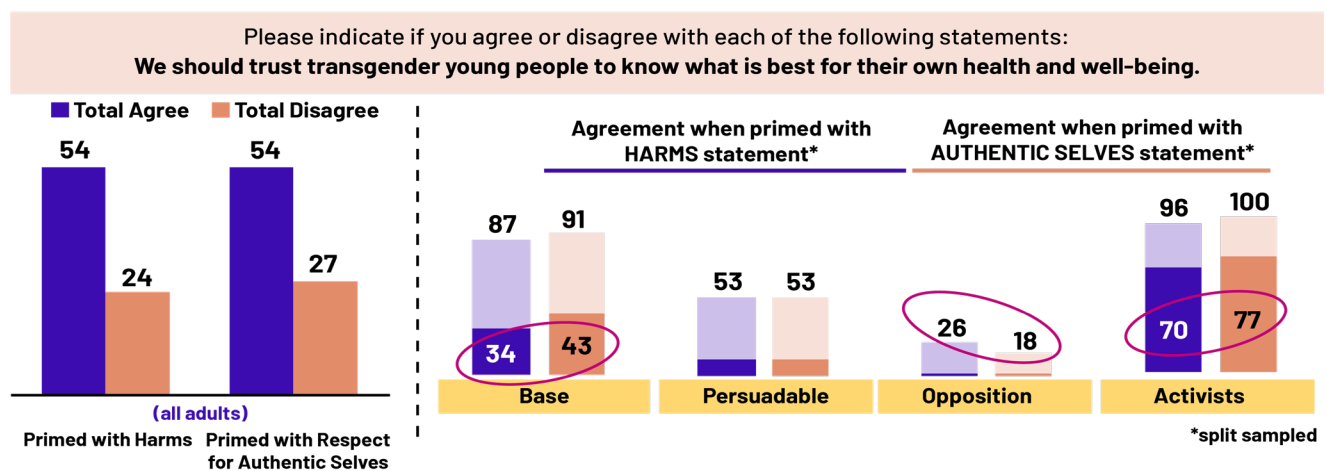
These statements were split-sampled. This data does **not** represent shifts in individual opinion.



Second, we can successfully adapt the Race Class Narrative to reframe attacks on trans youth as part of a broader offensive opposition strategy, and highlight our shared values and interests across races and genders. The resonance of a Race Class Gender Narrative with communities of color suggests that the perception of transgender issues as a ‘white person problem’ is at least partly a function of dominant (colorblind) advocate messaging. In our survey, white people were the only racial group to rate the opposition message we tested above all of our side’s messages; Black and AAPI respondents rated all of our messages as far more convincing than the opposition, while Latinx and Indigenous people rated some but not all of our messages above the opposition. We can and should connect justice for transgender people to issues of racial and economic justice, and by doing so we move our base and persuadable audiences on key metrics of support. In short, a Race Class Gender Narrative can successfully make the case for a broader ‘we’ and solidarity across races, backgrounds, and genders.

Finally, to shift people from ignorance or indifference to empathy and advocacy, we must ground our messaging in the values, visions, and desires we share across genders rather than in the unique harms, horrors, and discrimination trans people suffer. While it’s important to acknowledge discrimination in order to combat it, we should not lead with or primarily define trans people by the harms inflicted upon us. When we primed people with a statement about the “crushing weight of discrimination” trans youth face, for example, our base and even activists were less likely to trust trans young people to know what’s best for their own health and well-being than when, in contrast, they were primed with a statement about how we should all be free to express our authentic selves.

Priming Experiment: Base adults and activists are more likely to agree with strong intensity that we should trust transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well-being when they are primed with the authentic selves statement, which also better alienates opposition adults.



*We asked all adults their agreement with the phrase “we should trust transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well being” immediately after asking their agreement on EITHER a statement focused on harms (“We need to protect vulnerable transgender kids, who already face bullying and crushing discrimination in schools, public spaces, and health care, which threatens their physical and mental health”) or a statement focused on authentic selves (“We need to respect each other for who we are, transgender or not, and support all young people to be their authentic selves and pursue their dreams”)

THE CHALLENGE: ENGAGING THE SPORTS DEBATE

Right now, our opposition wins the debate on trans youth in sports against any and all arguments we have tried for our side. There is a huge gap in awareness and concern, with most base and persuadable respondents unaware of proposals regarding transgender girls' participation in sports, while a strong majority of our opposition has heard some or a lot about it. When pressed, our audiences hold contradictory views, with a third supporting both a policy to ensure transgender student-athletes can play on the team that matches their gender identity and a policy to require that student-athletes play on the team matching their "biological sex." Our base and persuadables want to support transgender student-athletes, but are extremely susceptible to our opposition's argument that excluding trans youth is necessary to protect the fairness of women's sports.

We suspect there are two key factors differentiating views on sports from other issues. First, people primarily understand sports through the individualistic lens of competition, where if one person wins then another, by definition, loses. Entrenched in this zero-sum framework, people resist and dismiss our calls for sports policies that benefit our collective good, the core of a Race Class Gender Narrative. Second, opposition rhetoric on sports is more directly transphobic and dehumanizing than their discourse on other issues. With bathrooms or schools broadly, for example, our opposition often tries to claim some degree of sympathy for transgender people and win over persuadables with coded language, "slippery slope" arguments, and dog whistles about bad actors pretending to be trans in order to "take advantage" of nondiscrimination policies. There is far less buffer in their attacks around sports, where they use the physicality of the issue to directly spout dehumanizing stereotypes about transgender women and girls.

Since the Race Class Narrative was designed to inoculate against dog whistles and make the case for collective action for our collective good, it makes sense that this approach falls short on sports, specifically. That said, a Race Class Gender Narrative does help us call into question the motives of people introducing these bills and even cast doubt on their necessity as a matter of state legislation (as opposed to sports association/local school policy). At present, no arguments we tested bested the opposition in a direct debate on sports policy.

In addition to using the Race Class Gender Narrative to build long-term solidarity and resistance to anti-trans attacks, we recommend two complementary paths to counteracting the sports-specific challenges we identified:

1. As much as possible, shift conversation around sports from a competitive to a collective frame.

Our best-testing way to accomplish this was through a message that positioned supporting transgender women athletes as part of the broader fight for equality in girls' and women's sports. By connecting attacks on trans women athletes to

the long legacy of discrimination against all women athletes, this message both shifted our audiences from an individual to a collective mindset and disrupted transphobic conceptions of transgender girls and women as actually male:

Women's sports have never existed on an equal playing field. For too long, we have devalued women's sports, and we see this in the way that professional women athletes are underpaid compared to men and how transgender women athletes are targeted, attacked, and forced out of their sport. And instead of striving for equality in sports, certain politicians are distracting us from the real issue by blaming transgender women, instead of helping make sports a better place for all women.

This argument outperformed the opposition's claims with AAPI adults, lost by only 6 points with persuadables (and by 8 points overall), and garnered a notably high "unsure" response across the board, suggesting it helpfully caused people to question their understanding of the issue. A version of this message that named how elite competitions question and disqualify Black women athletes yielded even greater support from our base, but considerably increased the margin by which we lost persuadables and all racial groups, including Black adults.

[Current messaging recommended by the Movement Advancement Project](#) offers another approach to rendering this issue more collective by highlighting teamwork and other values young people learn through sports. While this framing loses to the opposition by 10 or more points both overall and with persuadables, it puts us slightly above water with Latinx and Indigenous adults and draws in overwhelming support from AAPI adults.

2. Reduce the potency of opposition attacks through race-forward, deep, story-based, and culturally specific public education on who transgender people are.

While we can counteract transphobic dog whistles and coded attacks using a Race Class Gender Narrative, the best antidote to the barrage of direct transphobia and dehumanization our opposition employs around sports is for our audiences to get to know a transgender person. Past research has consistently demonstrated the power of personal storytelling in shifting attitudes towards transgender people. There is simply no substitute for that deep and long-term work. While there have been and are many powerful trans public education efforts, our research suggests that they have not broken through on a dominant scale – or, to the extent they have, they have reinforced the association between transgender people and whiteness in communities of color, including among our progressive base. We hope the Race Class Gender Narrative can serve as an opening to deeper multiracial public education efforts within progressive movement spaces, including community-based storytelling conducted effectively, responsibly, and at scale.

EMBRACE/REPLACE

Say this...	Instead of...	Because...
Our genders Genders	Gender	Pluralizing genders enables greater agreement with our worldview and helps activate more expansive attitudes towards our genders and transgender people.
Respect each other for who we are, transgender or not Support all young people to be their authentic selves and pursue their dreams Each one of us should have the freedom to be ourselves, no matter the color of our skin, how we worship, or our genders	Protect vulnerable transgender kids	Promoting the creation of a positive good (the freedom of self expression) is more effective than appeals to ameliorate harm (protecting transgender young people from violence and discrimination). It generates support and trust from our base for transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well-being.
Some people in power try to put us in boxes based on what we look like, where we're from, or our genders. Certain politicians push laws that restrict our freedoms based on the color of our skin, what's in our wallets, or because we are transgender.	Transgender kids face crushing bullying and discrimination, which threatens their physical and mental health.	The container/box metaphor is extremely effective across racial and ethnic groups for explaining what the villains are doing and how it harms all of us. It resonates with persuadables, builds empathy, and galvanizes our base to oppose those in power who seek to limit us based on who we are and control what transgender people can or cannot do.



		Focusing on the unique harms that transgender people face, on the other hand, further distances our audiences from the discussion, othering transgender people and at best eliciting pity. It also decreases our base and even progressive activists' trust in transgender young people to know what is best for their own health and well-being.
Whether we are Black, white or brown, Native or newcomer, transgender or not People of all races, backgrounds, and genders No matter what we look like, where we come from, or how we express our genders	All of us / Everyone/ We all	For a Race Class Gender Narrative to be effective, it's important to build connection by naming what we share across our differences. Explicitly naming specific races and genders can be more helpful than broader references to "races and genders," but both approaches perform well.
Certain politicians exploit divisions among us to try to get back into power. Some people in power fuel divisions based on race and exploit our lack of familiarity with transgender people so they can deny our communities the resources, jobs, and healthcare we all need. A handful of politicians stoke fear, trying to get us to turn against some group instead of joining together to demand what all of our families need.	Our opposition is racist/transphobic. Politicians divide us.	Framing the strategic racism of our opponents as fueling or exploiting existing divisions between us generates stronger agreement than directly blaming them for those divisions. This is an especially important distinction when talking about how our opposition stokes fear of transgender people. Our target audiences know that transphobia is widespread – and often themselves feel unsure about transgender people – so they do not buy statements attributing fear and division to certain politicians.

		By acknowledging our audience's own questions, concerns, and lack of familiarity with what it means to be transgender, though, we can remind them of their better values and intentions, and help them recognize how certain politicians take advantage of and manipulate their unease. It is helpful to echo and link how they "exploit" division across races and lack of familiarity with transgender people.
Certain politicians... Some people in power... A powerful few...	Politicians The wealthy/powerful	To credibly name a villain, it's critical to make clear that you're implicating specific individuals (e.g., <i>certain</i> or <i>some</i> politicians) as opposed to vilifying whole categories of people.
[Certain politicians]... trying to get back into power/ get and hold onto power. who want to block us from joining together to demand what we all deserve. ... who want to pick and choose who counts.	Transphobes/racists	In addition to naming our villains, we must expose the motivations behind their actions. "Getting back into power," "getting and holding onto power," exclusion and control broadly, and blocking us from demanding the resources we need all currently resonate with base and persuadable audiences in explaining why the opposition introduces these attacks on transgender people.

