



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Supporting the Mental Well-Being of LGBTQIA+ Youth in Schools

## Supporting Youth at Tier 1

Jabari Lyles



MUNROE-MEYER  
INSTITUTE



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At the time of this presentation, Tom Coderre served as Acting Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.

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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED/  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

# Supporting the Mental Well-being of LGBTQIA+ Youth in Schools

## Tier 1: Policy and Practices

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center  
September 8, 2023

Presented by Jabari Lyles *(they/them)*

# About Me

I am:

- Black
- Queer
- Trans / Nonbinary
- Fat / Person of Size
- “Liberal” / “Progressive”
- Upper-Middle Class
- Educator, community leader, organizer, consultant



I believe:

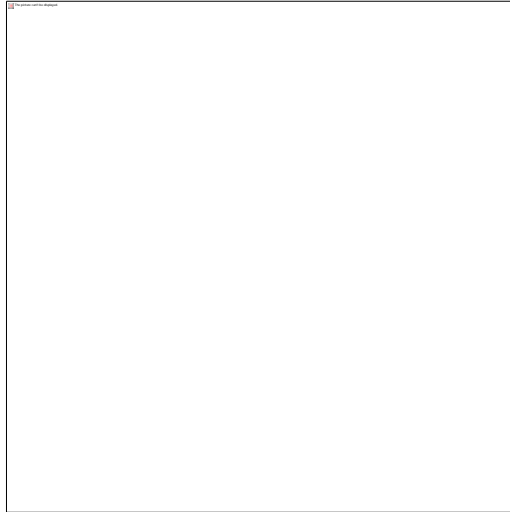
- “If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.”

*-Combahee River Collective Statement*

# About Me

## My work:

- Former teaching roles :
  - Pre-K - 8<sup>th</sup> Health
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Math / Algebra
  - 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Math Coach
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Lead Teacher
  - 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> LGBTQ Studies



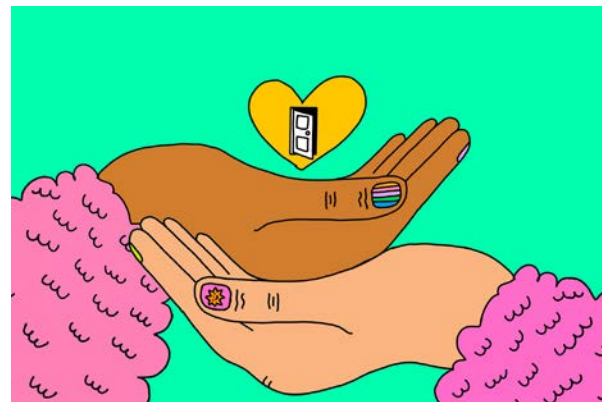
## My work:

- Former Sr. Advisor and Director of LGBTQ Affairs for the Office of the Mayor in Baltimore City
- Former Executive Director of The Pride Center of Maryland and GLSEN Maryland
- Governor's Appointee to MD LGBTQ Affairs Commission



# Community Agreements

- Respect trust and confidentiality
- **Inspire bravery and vulnerability**
- Lean into your discomfort & stay curious
- **Share the power**
- Speak for yourself, from your own perspective
- **Have constructive intentions, own your impact**
- Take space, make space
- **Keep the goal in mind**
- Center on the joy and safety of LGBTQ youth



# Our Goal

- ❖ Become better prepared to develop and implement **personal and institutional** strategies to support LGBTQIA+ youth in school.






# Key Takeaways from 10 1

- Gender is an ever-changing culmination of socially constructed ideas about roles, behaviors and appearances.
- Everyone has their own understanding of their gender, which may differ from one's assigned sex and may expand dominant ideas about gender.
- There are more than two options for gender. Gender expansive identities are valid and not new.
- Gender is different from sexual or romantic orientation.



# Key Takeaways from 10 1

- We should believe and support youth who explore the diversity and fluidity of gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.
  - Certain language choices can demonstrate support and affirmation, other language can demonstrate insensitivity or harm.
  - Schools are one of many places that are often hostile and unsafe for LGBTQ youth. Transgender, nonbinary and gender-expansive youth are being targeted specifically.
  - Solutions exist—for schools, teachers, parents, caregivers and friends.
- 

# Inclusive Policies Make Schools Safer and More Effective

Most LGBTQ+ students (58.9%) had experienced LGBTQ+-related discriminatory policies or practices at school.

*2021 GLSEN National School Climate Survey*



# Inclusive Policies Make Schools Safer and More Effective

LGBTQ+ students who experienced LGBTQ+-related discrimination at school were:

- Nearly three times as likely to have missed school in the past month as those who had not (43.3% vs. 16.4%);
- Had lower GPAs than their peers who experienced no antiLGBTQ+ discrimination (2.92 vs. 3.20);
- Had lower self-esteem and school belonging and higher levels of depression.
- Were more likely to have been disciplined at school (51.2% vs. 26.2%);

*2021 GLSEN National School Climate Survey*



# Inclusive Policies Make Schools Safer and More Effective

According to the 2021 GLSEN National School Climate Survey, only 8.2% of LGBTQ+ students reported that their school or district had official policies or guidelines to support transgender or nonbinary students.

In schools where such a policy exists, transgender and nonbinary students reported that they were (compared to their peers who attend a school without such a policy):

- **less likely** to be prevented from using their name or pronoun of choice in school,
- **less likely** to be prevented from using bathrooms aligned with their gender,
- **less likely** to be prevented from using locker rooms aligned with their gender,
- **less likely** to be prevented from wearing clothes thought to be “inappropriate” based on gender,
- **less likely** to be prevented from playing on the school sports team that is consistent with their gender,
- **less likely** to miss school because of feeling unsafe, and
- **more likely** to feel a part of their school community.

# Title IX



“ No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Does sex-based  
discrimination include  
*gender identity and  
expression?*\*

*\*(and sexual orientation?)*



**ARCHIVED INFORMATION**

## U.S. Department of Education Confirms Title IX Protects Students from Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

JUNE 16, 2021

**Contact:** Press Office, (202) 401-1576, [press@ed.gov](mailto:press@ed.gov)

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights today issued a [Notice of Interpretation](#) explaining that it will enforce Title IX's prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sex to include: (1) discrimination based on sexual orientation; and (2) discrimination based on gender identity. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity offered by a recipient of federal financial assistance.

The Department's interpretation stems from the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, issued one year ago this week, in which the Supreme Court recognized that it is impossible to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity without discriminating against that person based on sex.

"The Supreme Court has upheld the right for LGBTQ+ people to live and work without fear of harassment, exclusion, and discrimination – and our LGBTQ+ students have the same rights and deserve the same protections. I'm proud to have directed the Office for Civil Rights to enforce Title IX to protect all students from all forms of sex discrimination," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "Today, the Department makes clear that all students—including LGBTQ+ students—deserve the opportunity to learn and thrive in schools that are free from discrimination."



# NYC Department of Education

## Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

1. Introduction
2. Terminology
3. Supporting Students
4. Names and Pronouns
5. Student Records
6. Privacy
7. Harassment and Discrimination
8. Medical Records
9. Sports and Physical Education
10. Restrooms and Locker Rooms
11. Gender Inclusion in Other Areas
12. Curriculum
13. Notification to Staff and Students
14. Questions

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## NYC Department of Education Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 3. Supporting Students

- We value the safety and wellbeing of TGE students
- We value teaching the entire school community about gender
- There are valid reasons why a student may not want to disclose information about their gender to their families
- Schools must balance their responsibility to keep students safe and to keep families informed, on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration age, maturity and perceived health and safety of the student.
- Schools may meet with students to discuss their transition and the school's role. Parents may also join this conversation, except when there is a safety concern.

## NYC Department of Education Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 4. Names and Pronouns

- All school staff members and students must refer to students by their chosen names and pronouns.
- Students are not required to obtain parental consent or a court-ordered name and/or gender change before being addressed by the name and pronoun that they choose.
- Schools should create opportunities to confirm the correct information with all their students in a manner that respects student privacy.
- Schools should use gender-neutral language in letters/notices and emails, lessons, websites, and other written materials to the class or school community.
- Intentionally misgendering or deadnaming a student is considered misconduct.

# Chosen Name Use is Linked to Reduced Depressive Symptoms, Suicidal Ideation and Behavior among Transgender Youth

[Stephen T. Russell](#), Ph.D., [Amanda M. Pollitt](#), Ph.D., [Gu Li](#), Ph.D., and [Arnold H. Grossman](#), Ph.D.

When trans students' names and pronouns are respected at school and other contexts, **they report 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts.**



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## For transgender kids, gender-affirming names can be lifesaving

JUN 4, 2021 • 4 MIN READ By [Tanya Albert Henry](#), Contributing News Writer



**ACLU**  
IN  
Source: University of Texas, "Using Chosen Names Reduces O...

## NYC Department of Education Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 5. Student Records

- **No documentation is required for a student or parent/guardian to make changes to a student's unofficial record (e.g. middle school diplomas, guidance logs, graduation programs, sporting rosters, and yearbooks). This includes school IDs, which must reflect a student's chosen name.**
- **There is a separate process for making changes to a student's permanent record (high school diplomas, transcripts, report cards, attendance records, IEPs).**
- **Parents/guardians may self-report their student's chosen name and/or gender marker when registering a student. No documentation is needed for this.**

# NYC Department of Education

## Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 6. Privacy

- **Students decide how, when and to whom they discuss their identity.**
- **Schools may not share information about a student's gender identity, except in very limited circumstances, which include:**
  - **A parent's informed written consent**
  - **A health or safety emergency**
  - **A court order or subpoena**
  - **Otherwise permitted according to FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)**

# NYC Department of Education

## Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 7. Harassment and Intimidation

- All staff members are required to report incidents of harassment, intimidation, discrimination and/or bullying, including student-on-student and staff-on-student.

### 9. Sports and Physical Education

- All students are permitted to participate in sports and PE programs, including PE classes and school teams, in accordance with their gender identity. There are special circumstances for wrestling and mixed competition.



NYC Department of Education  
Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

## 10. Restroom and Locker Rooms

- Students are permitted to utilize gender-segregated facilities (restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms) consistent with their gender identity.
- TGE students must not be required to use alternate facilities.
- Genderfluid students should work with school staff to determine a plan that affirms their identity.
- Any student who expresses a desire for increased privacy shall be provided a reasonable, non-stigmatizing alternative, which may include a single occupancy restroom, use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule. This must not be forced.

# NYC Department of Education

## Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 11. Gender Inclusion in Other Areas

- Schools should avoid gendered practices. For example, gender-based graduation gowns, lines, and attire for yearbook pictures.
- Students must be permitted to participate in all school activities (for example, overnight field trips) in accordance with their gender identity asserted at school. Requests for arrangements to address privacy concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Students are eligible for admission to single-gender schools based on gender identity asserted at school.


# NYC Department of Education

## Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

### 12. Curriculum

- Schools should ensure students have opportunities to learn about diverse identities, including LGBTQ people, identity and history.
- Schools should provide instruction that promotes an environment free of bullying, harassment and intimidation.
- For example, the Grades K-8 Social Studies Scope and Sequence include curricula pertaining to “[k]ey groups (African Americans, women, Native Americans, individuals with disabilities, farmworkers, LGBT [(lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender)] community)” when talking about civil rights.

# Institutional Policies & Practices

- Provide live, ongoing professional development on the needs and experiences of LGBTQ youth and their families, led by a paid facilitator with lived experience.
  - Develop and implement specific policy protections for LGBTQ students, particularly transgender, nonbinary and gender-expansive students.
  - Support the implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum in all content areas at all grade levels.
  - Establish gender and sexuality alliances (GSAs) for students in all grade levels.
  - Provide culturally-relevant education and support for families and caregivers of LGBTQ students.
  - Establish protocols for handling situations related to LGBTQ student identity.
  - Educate the entire school community about LGBTQ topics.
- 

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**What do I do when a  
student “comes out” to me?**

# If a student shares their LGBTQ identity with you:

- Appreciate and Affirm:

- *“Thank you so much for sharing that with me and trusting me with this info, I want you to know that I’m here to support you.”*
- *“It takes strength and courage to share about ourselves, so congratulations, I’m proud of you.”*

- Inquire about safety and supports:

- *“Who else knows this information?” “Are your parents/caregivers aware?”*
- *“What name and pronoun would you like me to use for you?”*
- *“Is it okay to use your name and pronoun with other teachers? With parents? Peers?”*
- *“What do you think would happen if your parents learned about your name and pronouns?”*
- *“What support do you need right now?”*
- *“If you can’t think of anything right now, let me know when you do.”*

## *Support Protocol for LGBTQ+ Students*

Consistent with Board Policy JBB, this support protocol is a tool designed to facilitate discussions with LGBTQ+ students to help ensure they are safe and supported at school and in school-based activities in Baltimore City Public Schools. Additional resources are available on the City Schools website at this link: <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/student-fair-practices>. If you have any questions or concerns at any point in the process, please reach out to City Schools' Equal Educational/Employment Opportunity and Title IX Compliance Unit at [eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:eeo-titleixcompliance@bcps.k12.md.us) or 410-396-8542. This protocol is available at: [Support Protocol for LGBTQ+ Students - August 2021.docx](#)

### **STUDENT INFORMATION**

Student Legal Name (Last, First, MI): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

What is the student's preferred or chosen name?

\_\_\_\_\_

Gender Identity?  Male  Female  X (unspecified/non-binary) .

What pronouns does the student use in school? \_\_\_\_\_

### **FAMILY SUPPORT**


Is the student's parent/guardian aware of the student's gender identity/gender expression/sexual orientation?  
 Yes  No

Support Level: None  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 (High)

If support for the student low, what considerations must be addressed in implementing this plan?

What will be the process for supporting the student in their interactions with family members?

# Personal Best Practices

- Educate yourself about gender, sexuality and identity, especially among LGBTQ youth.
  - Familiarize yourself with LGBTQ resources in your region.
  - Defend against misinformation. Learn about the common stereotypes and misconceptions and how to defend against them.
  - Learn about LGBTQ history and culture, particularly the patterns of organizing and movement building, as well as the rich creativity and brilliance within the community.
  - Respect chosen names and pronouns. Know how to ask and/or repair.
  - Use gender neutral language.
  - Avoid making assumptions.
  - Speak up against bias-based language and actions, among students, friends, family and peers.
  - Tune into yourself. What are your fears and triggers? What are the earliest messages you learned about LGBTQ people?
  - Listen.
- 



# Additional Resources

- [Schools in Transition](#) - Gender Spectrum, HRC, ACLU, NCLR, NEA
- [Model District Policy](#) - GLSEN, NCTE
- Sample District Policies
  - [New York City](#)
  - [Baltimore City](#)
  - [Frederick County](#) (MD)
  - [Los Angeles](#)
- [Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students](#) , US DOE
- [Family Acceptance Project](#)

FREE Google Folder [bit.ly/jlcschoolresources](https://bit.ly/jlcschoolresources)



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**Questions?**  
**Comments?**

# Thank You!

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🔗 [www.linktr.ee.com/jabariyles](http://www.linktr.ee.com/jabariyles)

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