



Denver Public Schools LGBTQ+ Toolkit

The Denver Public Schools LGBTQ+ Toolkit is a one-stop resource for supporting LGBTQ+ students, families, and team members in our district.

District Contact: Levi Arithson (he/his/him), LGBTQ+ Equity Program Manager, Culture, Equity, and Leadership Team, levi_arithson@dpsk12.org

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Denver Public Schools Policies:

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

[Policy AC: DPS Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity](#)

Denver Public Schools Board Resolutions

[November 15, 2018: Won't Be Erased Resolution](#)

[January 23, 2020 Resolution on Inclusion for Our LGBTQIA+ Employees, Students, and Community Members](#)

Colorado Anti-Discrimination Law

[Colorado Anti-Discrimination Statutes](#)

[Information on Rights of Transgender People in Colorado](#)

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Authored by the Culture, Equity, and Leadership Team

Approved by the Office of General Counsel

Common Vocabulary:

LGBTQ+	Acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning. The plus sign acknowledges any other identity that is not cisgender and heterosexual. For example: intersex, asexual, pansexual, agender, etc....
Cisgender	Describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth. The opposite of Transgender.
Gender	Not the same as sex or sexual orientation. Gender is a socially constructed concept of what it means to be a particular gender in a particular time and place.
Gender Binary	A system that constructs gender according to two discrete and opposite categories: boy/man and girl/woman. It is important to recognize that both cisgender and transgender people can have a gender identity that is binary.
Gender Expression	Refers to the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyle, activities, voice or mannerisms.
Gender Fluid	Refers to people who have a gender or genders that change. Gender fluid people move between genders, experiencing their gender as something dynamic and changing, rather than static.
Gender Identity	A person's deeply held and internal experience of their gender
Gender Socialization	The process through which individuals learn how to socially behave in accordance with their assigned gender at birth. Gender socialization comes through many channels such as family, media, religion, culture, etc...
Gender Non-conforming/ Gender Expansive	Describes people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations. The terms gender variant or gender atypical are also used. Gender nonconforming individuals may identify as male, female, some combination of both, or neither.
Genderqueer	Refers to a person who does not subscribe to conventional gender distinctions but identifies with neither, both, or a combination of male and female genders

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Non-Binary	An umbrella term for gender identities that are not exclusively either boy/man, or girl/woman.
Sexual Orientation	Refers to a person's emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on the gender of the other person. Common terms used to describe sexual orientation include, but are not limited to, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual. Sexual orientation and gender identity are different.
Transgender	Describes a person whose gender identity does not correspond to their assigned sex at birth. The opposite of Cisgender.

Guidance for Students in Transition

How Can I Best Support a Student in Transition?

- Affirm the students gender identity.
- Work with the student to setup a [Gender Support Plan](#).
- Do not out the student to anyone!
- In general, it is best practice to remove gender from everyday classroom routines (for example, do not have students line up in boy/girl lines, or do not say “Boys and girls” or “Ladies and gentleman” instead, say “scholars,” “students,” or another non-gendered phrase).
- Do not share information about a students transition without their express, documented consent--this is a violation of the students FERPA rights, and has the potential to put the student in danger.
- Seek appropriate support for staff by requesting an LGBTQ+ training through the Culture, Equity, and Leadership Department: [Culture and Equity Support Request](#).

Changing Names and Pronouns in Infinite Campus

- Transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students DO NOT need parent permission to change their name or pronoun in Infinite Campus.
- Transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students DO NOT need any legal documentation to change their name or pronoun in Infinite Campus.
- However, students should be made aware that changing their name/pronouns in Infinite Campus will change their name and pronoun in all DPS communications, including those that go to their parents/guardians. This is important for students to know because some students will not have supportive parents/guardians. In this case, the safety of the student needs to be considered. This is also true of any change in the “nickname” field.
- If parents/guardians are aware of the students gender identity and are not supportive, contact the LGBTQ+ Equity Program Manager for further support, levi_arithson@dpsk12.org.

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- To change a student's name/pronoun in Infinite Campus:
 - If you are changing a student's existing name/pronoun, make sure this is done in the 'Identities' tab by creating a new identity. This will ensure that there is record of this change in IC. Also, you must contact your Data Quality Management Team (DQMT) partner when making these changes. DQMT will enter the student's legal name and gender in the Protected Identity Information section found in the Identities tab. DQMT is the only group in the district with access to populate or edit these fields. It is important to note that the legal name and gender fields in the Protected Identity Information Section will not read into any rosters, reports, or external applications in order to ensure the student's privacy is intact. DQMT will also ensure the appropriate changes are made at the state level. Click [here](#) for a quick reference guide on how to make the change in IC.
 - Currently, Infinite Campus only allows for binary gender choices (M/F). Due to Federal Reporting and the Department of Education, this cannot yet be changed in Infinite Campus. A student's preferred pronouns can be added to the "notes" section of IC.
 - For further questions, email Autum Brown, Autum_Brown@dpsk12.org

Access to Restrooms and Locker Rooms

- Transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming students have the right to use facilities such as restrooms and locker rooms that match the gender identity they consistently identify with at school.
- All students (including cisgender students) may request and have access to a more private changing area or restroom, but no student may be forced to use these facilities regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

All-Gender, Single-Stall Restroom Mandate

- Per the [January 23, 2020 Board Resolution on LGBTQ+ Inclusion](#), all DPS facilities must provide at least 1 all-gender, single-stall restroom. Most DPS facilities currently have at least 1 single-stall restroom. This mandate calls for a change in signage, but does not change the use of a 1-in, 1-out restroom facility.
- The restroom mandate noted in the Board resolution above does not give a timeline or other details for the process of changing signage and/or lock hardware in a currently existing facility. Several departments are working through these details. More information about this process can be found [here](#).
- A 1-pager about this change can be found [here](#).

Sports

- Even in states whose athletic associations do not have a written policy or rule on this topic, schools and districts should allow transgender students to compete on athletic teams based on gender identity.
- Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) recognizes the right of transgender student-athletes to participate in interscholastic activities free from unlawful discrimination based on sexual orientation. For more details on CHSAA policy, please click on the link provided. *source - CHSAA Transgender Inclusion Bylaw & Policy

Dress Code

- You may continue to enforce the dress code, but students are permitted to dress according to the gender with which they identify. Therefore, if skirts are acceptable in the dress code, a student who identifies as female must be allowed to wear a skirt. The same would be true if ties and dress shirts are required for a student who identifies as male.
- In general, it is best practice to make school dress codes all-gender. For example, rules about the length of a skirt should apply to all students, or rules about tank tops should apply to all students rather than creating dress codes by traditional gender binary.

FAQ's

Does the District offer any kind of training around LGBTQ+ issues?

- Yes! The Culture, Equity, and Leadership team offers a 3-hour SKILLS training about LGBTQ+ issues, you can request a SKILLS training [here](#), or you may sign-up for an already scheduled SKILLS training [here](#).
- There is also an upcoming program piloting LGBTQ+ equity ambassadors throughout the district, if you are interested in finding out more about being an ambassador, fill out this [form](#).
- The district also recently hired an LGBTQ+ Equity Program Manager who can support your learning. Email Levi_Arithson@dpsk12.org to connect.

How do I best support a transgender student whose parent/guardian does not support, or know, about their transition?

- Schools can play a critical role in alleviating the psychological distress caused by family rejection. The school environment may be the only place a transgender student feels safe enough to be themselves. Having a safe place to learn is just as important, if not more so, for transgender students who do not have supportive parents as it is for those who do. Please contact Levi Arithson (Levi_Arithson@dpsk12.org) in Culture, Equity, and Leadership if you have concerns about parental support of a transgender student. He can assist you in how to handle the situation.

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In these situations, the transgender student will often seek out an administrator or educator for support. Whenever a transgender student initiates this process, the educator or administrator should ask whether the student's family is accepting in order to avoid inadvertently putting the student at risk of greater harm by discussing with the student's family. Based on that information, the school and student should determine how to proceed through the collaborative process of figuring out how the school can support the student and balance the student's need to be affirmed at school with the reality that the student does not have that support at home. This process should address the following basic topics and situations, all of which are addressed in the [Gender Support Plan](#):

- The modifications or accommodations the student is seeking (e.g., use of different name, pronouns and sex-separated facilities).
- How to refer to the student when communicating with the student's parents or caregivers, both in writing and verbally.
- How to refer to the student when communicating with the student's siblings.
- What information to share with the student's teachers and other adults on campus.
- How to address questions from peers (if student's transgender status is not private).
- Services the school can provide to assist the student in coping with the lack of support at home.
- Addressing the student's needs at school provides a great short-term solution; but where possible, the goal should be to support the student's family in accepting their child's gender identity and seek opportunities to foster a better relationship between the student and their family. A parent's initial negative reaction to indications that their child might be transgender is likely based on inaccurate or incomplete information about gender identity or out of fear for what this will mean for their child's future.

*source - Schools-in-Transition; ACLU, Gender Spectrum, Human Rights Campaign, NCLR, National Education Association

*For questions/consult, please reach out to levi_arithson@dpsk12.org

Who at school can know about a student's gender identity or sexual orientation status?

- All personally identifiable and medical information relating to transgender and gender nonconforming students shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local, and federal privacy laws. Per DPS district board policy JRA/JRC & JRCB. Per the policy "The Board is committed to protecting the confidentiality of student information obtained, created and/or maintained by the district. Student privacy and the district's use of confidential student information is protected by federal and state law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Data Transparency and Security Act (the Act). The Board directs district staff to manage its student data privacy, protection and security obligations in accordance

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with this policy and applicable law. “ - JRCB and “In recognition of the confidential nature of student education records, no person or agency may access student education records without prior written consent from the student's parent/guardian or eligible student, except as set forth in law and this policy.” -JRA/JRC

- School staff shall not disclose any information that may reveal a student's transgender status to others, including parents or guardians and other school staff, unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure. In rare instance that a school is legally required to disclose a student's transgender status, the school should provide the student an opportunity to make that disclosure themselves, where practicable. This would include providing the student with any support services the student would need to make the disclosure in a safe and supportive environment. Transgender and gender nonconforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that a student chooses to use a different name, to transition at school, or to disclose their transgender status to staff or other students does not authorize school staff to disclose a student's personally identifiable or medical information. When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender or gender nonconforming student, school staff should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise. Disclosing this information to other students or parents or other third parties may violate privacy laws, such as the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as well as constitutional privacy protections. -*Source GLSEN Trans Model Policy 2016

Are there other places I need to change the name and gender to protect the student's identity? (Yearbook, student badges, learning applications, etc.)

- All district approved applications will update the student name based on the source data from IC meaning the name fields will update in the application. School selected vendors or technology applications will need to be updated through the vendor by the school. Be sure to check with the vendor to ensure the correct name is being used. Remember that if a student has expressed that their parent/guardian does not approve or is unaware the name should not be changed as this can be potentially seen by the parent/guardian and put the student at risk.

What pronouns should be used when speaking about a transgender student?

- Under the DPS policy, students should be addressed using their preferred pronouns. Referring to a student who formerly identified as male but now identifies as female as anything but “she” or “her” is inappropriate and is viewed as harassment which is unlawful. Ask the student which terms they prefer and work to ensure that everyone honors their request. Should an accidental

use of the wrong gender pronoun happen, it should be corrected immediately and a restorative conversation with the student should occur so the student does not feel it was intentional and likely to be repeated.

How are LGBTQ+ students protected from bullying and harassment?

- LGBTQ+ students are protected from discrimination, bullying, and harassment under federal and state laws including Title IX, the federal law that bans discrimination in public schools on the basis of sex. District Policies JB and AC also prohibit discrimination, bullying, and harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. It is the responsibility of each school and all staff to ensure that all students, including transgender and gender nonconforming students, have safe school environments. The scope of this responsibility includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or bullying is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking age and developmentally appropriate action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources and supports. Enforcement of anti-bullying policies should focus on education and prevention rather than exclusionary discipline. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a student's actual or perceived gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as other discrimination, bullying, or harassment complaints. For further information, visit the Discrimination Prevention and Response Process Commons [page](#)

How should the school handle a complaint of bullying or harassment by an LGBTQ+ student?

- The complaint should be handled in the same way as a complaint made by a non-transgender student. It is also important that the school effectively address any discrimination, harassment, or bullying that may be occurring in a timely fashion so a transgender student does not feel unsafe at school and is unable to access education. Traditional restorative practices may not be appropriate in these cases so schools should contact the Student Safety Department

Responses to common questions

Gender and sexual diversity are new topics for many people. These topics sometimes touch deeply held beliefs and values. It is not the intention of the District to change anyone's beliefs or values. It is the responsibility of the District to provide a culturally-responsive, inclusive, and welcoming learning and working environment for all. These may be topics people do not fully understand, however, it does not mean they cannot gain empathy and knowledge. These topics can bring up a range of emotions and responses. Below are some resources to refer to when responding to concerns or questions from your community.

- [Appendix C \(pgs 45-50\)](#) of the Schools in Transition Guide provides talking points to some common questions/concerns.

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- The Bay-Area organization [Gender Spectrum](#) has a [guide](#) specifically addressing concerns about transgender students and restrooms.
- This is a [document](#) of general scenarios and responses co-created by Wes Ogburn, Levi Arithson, and school teams.
- For additional support, please contact LGBTQ+ Equity Program Manager, Levi Arithson, levi_arithson@dpsk12.org.

Additional Resources

Local Resources:

- <http://aqueerendeavor.org/>
- <https://lgbtqcolorado.org/>
- <https://youthseen.org/>
- <https://one-colorado.org/>
- <https://www.urbanpeak.org/>
- <https://tyes-colorado.org/>
- <https://www.matthewshepard.org/> (National organization, housed locally)
- [LGBTQ Commission of Denver](#)

National Resources:

- <https://www.glsen.org/>
- <https://www.hrc.org/>
- <https://www.thetaskforce.org/>
- <https://www.genderspectrum.org/>
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Online Resources:

- [Schools in Transition Guide](#)
- [Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Students](#)