

Iowa City Community School District

LGBTQ Guidelines

District policies to affirm and support LGBTQ students and staff

This document is intended to guide the implementation of the Iowa City Community School District Statement of LGBTQ Inclusion, adopted April 24, 2018 (below). These guidelines set expectations for ICCSD staff and students, and serves as a resource to facilitate consistent implementation of the following LGBTQ specific polices.

Statement of LGBTQ+ Inclusion

The Iowa City Community School District is committed to creating a safe and inclusive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation.

School climate is an important predictor of student success for all students, however, schools can be especially unwelcoming for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth. Research shows that LGBTQ+ students, nationally, and in Iowa, experience discrimination, harassment, and violence more frequently than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Data from the District's 2017 School Climate Report reveals that students who identify as LGBTQ+ are significantly less likely to report that they feel they belong in school, that school staff is supportive of them, and that they feel that their contributions are valued in the classroom.

The District is devoted to addressing the needs and inequities that LGBTQ+ youth face in our schools. This commitment to inclusion of our LGBTQ+ students builds on existing Iowa law and current District policies. Incorporating an inclusive atmosphere free from discrimination is identified in Title IX, the Iowa Code, the District's non-discrimination policy, and the District's mission statement. It is our shared responsibility to ensure every member of our school community is valued and respected regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. We are actively working to create more inclusive policies and practices that support and affirm the identities of LGBTQ+ students. We believe that learning about the diversity of humankind is an essential part of education in a democratic society. We encourage our students, staff, and members of the community to celebrate the inclusiveness and diversity that contributes to growth, success, safety, and quality of life for everyone at the Iowa City Community School District.

Bruch, Sarah K, Tessa Heeren, Qianyi Shi, Rachel Maller, Meredith McCaffrey, Nicole Nucaro, and Irvin Rodriguez. 2017. "Student Experiences Of School Climate In The Iowa City Community School District 2017". Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Public Policy Center.
Bruch, Sarah K, Austin JD Adams, Sean M Finn, and Tessa Heeren. 2017. "LGBTQ Student Experiences In The Iowa City Community School District". Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Public Policy Center.
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C § 1681 (2015). Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html
Iowa Code §216.9 (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/216.9.pdf>
Iowa Code § 280.28 (2016). Retrieved from <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/2015/280.28.pdf>
Iowa City Community School District Non Discrimination Policy (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.iowacityschools.org/Page/41>
Iowa Association of School Boards statement Retrieved from https://www.ia-sb.org//Main/Downloads/news/TransgenderStudentsJuly_2016.pdf

Definitions and Terminology²

Bullying: Written, verbal, or physical conduct, including via electronic communication, that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student’s ability to participate in, or benefit from, a program or activity of a public school or local educational agency; or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment, adversely affecting a student’s education, including acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression or intimidation. This includes bullying that is based on a student’s actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, or another distinguishing characteristic. This also includes conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates. Bullying is frequently referred to as harassment when it pertains to a characteristic protected by non-discrimination laws.

Coming Out: The ongoing process that an LGBT person goes through, to recognize their own identities pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity and gender expression, and to be open about them with others.³

Outing: Intentionally or accidentally revealing or forcing someone to reveal their sexual orientation, birth-assigned sex, or gender.

Gender Expression: The manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, in ways that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice, or mannerisms.

Gender Identity: A person’s deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, which can include being female, male, another gender, or no gender. Gender identity is an innate and largely inflexible part of a person’s identity. One’s gender identity can be the same or different than the gender assigned at birth. The responsibility for determining an individual’s gender identity rests with the individual. Children typically begin to understand their own gender identity by age four, although the age at which individuals come to understand and express their gender identity may vary based on each person’s social and familial development.

Gender Inclusive Restroom: Public toilets that are not separated by any gender. May also be called “Gender Neutral Restroom” or “All Gender Restroom”

Gender Nonconforming: A term for people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as “feminine” boys, “masculine” girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. This includes people who identify outside traditional gender categories or identify as multiple genders. Other terms that can have similar meanings include gender diverse or gender expansive.

Non-binary/GenderQueer/Gender-Fluid: Terms used by those who identify with neither, both, or a combination of genders.

Sex Assigned At Birth: The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping.⁴

² Transgender Model District Policy, GLSEN 2016

³ [GLSEN - Key Concepts and Terms](#)

⁴ [Transstudent.org](#)

Sexual Orientation: A person's sexual orientation is the individual's enduring pattern of physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic or other attraction to another person. Sexual orientation can be towards persons of the opposite sex or gender, the same sex or gender, to both sexes and more than one gender, or a person may not have sexual orientation towards any gender. Sexual orientation is not the same as gender identity. Transgender and gender nonconforming people may have any sexual orientation. Examples include Homosexual, Heterosexual, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Aromantic, and Demisexual.

Transgender: An adjective describing a person whose gender identity or expression is different from that traditionally associated with an assigned gender at birth.

Intersex: A term used for individuals born with variations in sex characteristics – reproductive or sexual anatomy or chromosome pattern- that do not fit the typical binary notions of male or female bodies.

Cisgender: An adjective describing a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth.

Gender dysphoria: Clinically defined as significant and durational distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.

Gender Transition: Refers to the process in which transgender individuals begin asserting the sex that corresponds to their gender identity instead of the sex they were assigned at birth. During gender transition, individuals may begin to live and identify as the sex consistent with their gender identity and may dress differently, adopt a new name, and use pronouns consistent with their gender identity. Transgender individuals may undergo gender transition at any stage of their lives, and gender transition can happen swiftly or over a long period of time. Gender transition is a process that is different for everyone, and it may or may not involve social, legal, or physical changes. There is no one step or set of steps that an individual must undergo in order to have their gender identity affirmed and respected.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

ICCSO student perceptions of their school's responsiveness to bullying varied substantially by gender and sexual orientation. Of all student subgroups (disaggregated by race, FRL, school level) gender had the greatest disparity, with non-binary students agreeing that their school was responsive to bullying 17 percentage points below the District average (82% district average, 72% for LGB (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual) students)⁵ Each time an LGBTQ person is a victim of physical or verbal harassment or abuse, they become 2.5x more likely to hurt themselves.⁶ In response, guidelines specific to gender and orientation-related discrimination are outlined below.

Discrimination, bullying, and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression is prohibited within the District.⁷ This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the above mentioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived. 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. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a student's actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression are to be taken seriously and handled in the same manner as other discrimination, bullying, or harassment complaints.

Examples of prohibited harassment that gender and sexuality diverse students sometimes experience, include misusing an individual's preferred name or pronouns on purpose, asking personal questions about a person's body or gender transition, and disclosing private information (e.g. outing).

To report an incident of bullying or harassment, students and staff can access the [ICCSO Online Bullying Complaint form](#). Staff who are informed about bullying from students should direct students to this resource and assist them with the submission of the form, if the student or staff desires to file a complaint. Examples of classroom practices to establish an inclusive environment can be found [here](#).

To ensure student privacy, parental/ guardian notification or involvement regarding discrimination, bullying, and harassment on the basis of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression must have the student's consent before contact is made.

⁵ Equity Implemented ICCSO Interactive School Climate Data <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/equity-implemented-data/index>

⁶ <https://save.org/about-suicide/suicide-facts/>

⁷ Anti-Bullying/Anti-Harassment, Student Code No. 502, Iowa City Community School District (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.iowacityschools.org/cms/lib/IA01903939/Centricity/Domain/80/500%20Series%20Students%208.17.pdf>

Privacy/Confidentiality

The District must ensure that all personally identifiable and medical information relating to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression of students must be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local, and federal privacy laws.^{8,9}

- School staff will 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 the rare instance that a school is legally required to disclose a student's transgender status, the school will provide the student an opportunity to make that disclosure themselves, where practicable. This will 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 decide when to share information, with whom, and how much to share.
- When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender or gender-nonconforming student, school staff will 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.

Detailed information about procedures to follow and access to a Gender Support toolkit can be found here <https://sites.google.com/view/lgbtqineducation/gender-support-toolkit?authuser=0>



2_Steps_Responsibilities_GenderSupport.pdf



1_Gender Support Toolkit Index.pdf

Names, Pronouns and School Records

As delineated in [Iowa Code section 216.9](#), every student has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the student's gender identity.¹⁰ Regardless of whether a transgender or gender nonconforming student has legally changed their name or gender, schools will allow such students to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity.

- The District strongly recommends that school staff privately ask transgender or gender nonconforming students how they want to be addressed in class and in the school's communication with the student's parents or guardians.

⁸ The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99 (2018). Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

⁹ Notification of Rights under FERPA, Iowa City Community School District. Retrieved from <https://www.iowacityschools.org/Page/34>

¹⁰ Iowa Code section 216.9 Communications and Publications: Pronouns and Name Changes - The preference for the use of masculine or gender-neutral pronouns should be the choice of the student. A legal name change is not required for a student to use the preferred name for class lists, student activities, yearbook publications, etc. However, a student's legal name must be indicated in the student's official records. The district may list the student's preferred name in the official records by listing it next to the student's legal name with asterisks next to it until a legal name change is made.

- Students will be addressed by their chosen name and pronouns asserted at school without obtaining a court order, changing their official records or obtaining parent/legal guardian permission.
- The District or Building level administrators are responsible for inputting the student’s name and pronouns of preference in the appropriate fields of the District’s electronic data system to indicate how the student’s name and gender will appear on unofficial records.
- If customized electronic documentation and record keeping is not an immediate option (or in addition to electronic documentation), a new file with the student’s chosen name will be created, previous academic records will be entered under the student’s chosen name, and a separate, confidential folder that contained the student’s past information and birth name will be created and stored appropriately.
- If the student has previously been known at school by a different name, the school administration will direct school personnel to use the student’s authentic name and pronouns. Reference Gender Communication Plan within Gender support Toolkit & formation of Advocacy Team for support (embedded below).
- To ensure consistency among administrators and staff, every effort will be made to immediately update and regularly maintain student education records (such as attendance reports, class rosters for substitutes, school IDs, transcripts, electronic records, etc.) with the student’s name and appropriate gender markers, following the protocol outlined in the Gender Support Toolkit embedded below.



Gender Support Plan.pdf

Access to Facilities

With respect to all restrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities, students must have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity.¹¹

- Schools may maintain separate restroom, locker room or changing facilities for male and female students, provided that they allow all students equal access to facilities that are consistent with their gender identity. Students, including non-binary students, should determine which facilities are consistent with their gender identity.
- Any student who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, will, upon the student’s request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include, for example, addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule. However, requiring a transgender or gender nonconforming student to use a separate space threatens to publicly identify and stigmatize the student as transgender and should not be done unless requested by a student. Under no circumstances may students be required to use gender segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

¹¹ Iowa Code section 216.9 Restroom and Locker facilities – All students should have access to locker room, bathroom, and shower facilities that are safe, comfortable, and convenient. Absent a concern for safety schools should permit a student to use the restrooms or locker rooms for which they identify with. If private or separate facilities are requested by any transgendered or non-transgender student, the student should be provided with those facilities. Remember a student cannot be forced to use a restroom for which they do not identify.

- Schools must designate at least one single stall facility as accessible to all students and staff regardless of gender. However, under no circumstances may a student be required to use separate facilities because they are transgender or gender nonconforming.
- The District Facilities Master Plan should be amended to include designated single user restrooms or gender inclusive restrooms in newly built schools and/or plans to renovate existing schools. Schools are encouraged to assess ways to increase privacy for all students in existing facilities.

Interscholastic Activities

All students must be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics, co-curricular and extracurricular activities (e.g. Interscholastic and intramural athletic programs, Service and school government clubs, Music, art, speech and drama organizations, Academic and vocational clubs) in a manner consistent with their gender identity, under the guidelines established by the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, which includes detailed policies regarding communications and publications, locker and bathroom access, overnight accommodations, apparel and dress codes, and confidentiality.^{12,13} While these guidelines are from secondary school organizations, they will be applied to all ICCSD students (elementary included).

Rather than consulting school records for student gender identity, eligibility determination should be based on the documentation of the student’s consistent gender identification (e.g., affirmed written statements from student, parent/guardian, or health care provider), and any other pertinent information.

Intra school Events, Ceremonies, and Activities

Participation in school events is an important aspect of establishing a sense of belonging in school. Of reported barriers to extracurricular participation, "not fitting in with other students" was most inequitable. While the district average for not participating due to “not fitting in” was 20%, for LBG students it was 31% and 46% for Non-Binary students. In response, school sponsored events and activities will be made more inclusive through the guidelines below to mitigate this barrier to school participation for LGBTQ+ students.

All students must be permitted to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports, and all school sponsored events and activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

As a general matter, schools will evaluate all gender-based activities, rules, policies, and practices (uniform/attire)— including classroom activities, school ceremonies and events (e.g. graduation, homecoming, prom) and school photos¹⁴. Students must be permitted to participate in any such activities or conform to any such rule, policy, or practice consistent with their gender identity.

¹² <http://www.iahsaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Transgender-Guidelines.pdf>

¹³ <https://ighsau.org/news/transgender-statement/>

¹⁴ Iowa Code section 216.9 Unfair or discriminatory practices — education: 1. It is an unfair or discriminatory practice for any educational institution to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability in any program or activity. Such discriminatory practices shall include but not be limited to the following practices: a. Exclusion of a person or persons from participation in, denial of the benefits of, or subjection to discrimination in any academic, extracurricular, research, occupational

The transfer of academic transcripts must use the legal name of students. However, transcripts must be reissued if a student legally changes their name after graduation. Diplomas will be issued with the preferred names of students. In addition, the preferred name of each student will be listed in graduation programs and read aloud at the ceremony.

For guidance of assessing the inclusiveness of school environments, see checklists embedded below.



District and School MAEC Equity Audit
Transgender and Gender-Criteria-for-an-Equit

Inclusive Curriculum

The District will encourage and engage in gender fair approaches to the educational program.¹⁵ Every student has the right to LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum and comprehensive sexual health education.

- The District must purchase recently developed materials that reflect advances in knowledge and societal awareness related to LGBTQ+ issues.
- The District must ensure that the curriculum review process involves including materials and content that are LGBTQ+ inclusive and distributing updated curriculum to educators across the District.
- Health class curriculum (i.e. Family Life) will not be segregated by gender or provided exclusively to binary-identifying students. All students in all grades will have access to health information for all genders (including non-binary identities).
- The District must ensure that health curriculum includes information about diverse sexualities and genders, emphasizing that LGBTQ+ issues and needs should be included in safe sex and self-care practices. The District must support staff responsible for teaching health with appropriate training and inclusive curriculum materials. Health educators should consistently use language and class materials that are inclusive (i.e. avoid heteronormative and binary assumptions) and validate diverse families, identities, and relationships. Along with information about STI protection and contraception, health curricula will include information about consent and healthy relationships.

Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs)

In accordance with the Equal Access Act, the ICCSD will support the formation of extra-curricular student-led clubs, such as GSAs in all ICCSD schools (including elementary). GSAs have the same rights and privileges as other extra-curricular activities and clubs, including the appointment of advisors, publicity for events, and inclusions on school websites. Every student has the right to form and organize Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSA) clubs, or similar LGBTQ-related student clubs in their schools.

training, or other program or activity except athletic programs; b. Denial of comparable opportunity in intramural and interscholastic athletic programs;

¹⁵ Equal Educational Opportunity Policy and Multicultural and Gender Approaches to the Educational Program, Administrative Code No. 104, Iowa City Community School District (2017).

- The District must include information about GSAs in student handbooks, school orientation materials, and school and District websites.
- The District must promote and recognize LGBTQ+ students and GSA members for their achievements.

Adult Advocates

Each ICCSD school will designate building level staff who are conversant in issues (completion of a Safe Zone or similar training) related to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. LGBTQ students report lower rates of having a trusted adult in school¹⁶, so an adult advocate will be made available to LGBTQ students for information and support.

Any staff person is eligible for the role of adult advocate (staff, teachers, librarians, nurses, etc.), and students may seek an advocate who is not formally designated as a building advocate, and this adult will work with a building advocate. This person may assume a leadership role in:

- Working with LGBTQ students and families to maintain a supportive school environment,
- Serving as an educational resource for the school community and colleagues on LGBTQ topics, and
- Being a liaison to the ICCSD administration and Equity Department, which includes relaying student or staff initiated reports of noncompliance with this policy to the building and/or district administration.

Documentation of each school’s adult advocates will be maintained by the equity department and contact information will be available to staff and students in each school through health offices and GSAs.



Gender Support Plan.pdf

Access to Supportive Resources

School mental health professionals, adult advocates, student support teams, staff, teachers, and community partners must inform ICCSD families and students about District policies and assist them in navigating District processes. In addition, the school is responsible for helping students and families to locate information, affirming counseling, and appropriate community and school resources. All ICCSD counselors will adhere to the conduct and practices outlined in the American School Counselor association statements specific to LGBTQ students.^{17,18}

¹⁶ Bruch, Sarah K, Tessa Heeren, Qianyi Shi, Rachel Maller, Meredith McCaffrey, Nicole Nucaro, and Irvin Rodriguez. 2017. “Student Experiences Of School Climate In The Iowa City Community School District 2017”. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Public Policy Center.

¹⁷ The School Counselor and LGBTQ Youth
https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_LGBTQ.pdf

¹⁸ The School Counselor and Transgender/Gender-nonconforming Youth
https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/PositionStatements/PS_Transgender.pdf

Dress Code

In accordance with Iowa Code 216.9, students have the right to dress in accordance with their gender identity and expression, including maintaining a gender-neutral appearance within the constraints of the dress code.¹⁹ School staff will not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.

Student Transitions

In accordance with Iowa Civil Rights Act (Iowa code section 216.9), Iowa Safe Schools Law²⁰ ([Iowa Code Chapter 280](#))²¹ and the Iowa Department of Education guidance, the school will accept the gender identity that each student asserts. There is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that students must meet in order to have their gender identity recognized and respected. The assertion may be evidenced by an expressed desire to be recognized as the sex consistent with their gender identity. Students ready to socially transition may initiate a process to change their name, pronoun, attire, and access to preferred programs, activities, and facilities consistent with their gender identity. Each student has a unique process for transitioning. The school must customize support to optimize each student's equal access to the District's educational programs and activities.



Gender Support
Plan.pdf

- If a current student desires a change in one or more aspects of their gender a [Gender Communication/Transition](#)²² plan will be created using the [Gender Support Toolkit](#) that focuses specifically on the process a student will use to undergo a gender transition at school. Various steps will be identified that will be taken as the student explicitly declares a shift in the manner in which they wish others to understand and recognize their gender.
- When registering a new student who is transgender or gender-fluid a [Gender Support Plan](#)²³ will be created using the [Gender Support Toolkit](#) to identify the student's individual needs. This plan will address student safety concerns, name and pronouns within student records and district systems handled, use of facilities and after-school activities and/ or sports needs identified, and follow-up dates and procedures scheduled.

In alignment with the National Association of school nurse's [Position Statement regarding LGBTQ youth](#), school nurses are ethically obligated to provide care for students consistent with their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Resources for meeting the unique health needs of LGBTQ students can be found on the [Institute for Pediatric Nursing](#) website.

Training and Professional Development

The District must provide professional development opportunities for staff members on their responsibilities under applicable laws and this policy, including but not limited to teachers,

¹⁹ Iowa Code 216.9 Dress – Allow the student to in accordance with the student's identified gender for school or other extracurricular activities including prom, graduation, yearbook, or other activities.

²⁰ [Anti-Bullying & Anti-Harassment Act of 2007 \(Iowa Safe Schools Law\), Iowa Code 280.28](#)

²¹ [Iowa Code 280.28 - Harassment and bullying prohibited — policy — immunity.](#)

²² [GenderSpectrum - Gender Communication/Transition Plan](#)

²³ [GenderSpectrum - Gender Support Plan](#)

administrators, counselors, social workers, board members, health staff, coaches, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, secretaries and administrative support staff. The District will implement ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members to ensure District staff are continuously working towards cultural competency, including LGBTQ+ specific terminology and issues. District and building leadership will encourage and support staff attendance in these professional development opportunities. The content of such professional development will include, but not be limited to:

- Terms, concepts, and current developmental understandings of gender identity, gender expression, and gender diversity in children and adolescents;
- Developmentally appropriate strategies for communication with students and parents about issues related to gender identity and gender expression that protect student privacy;
- Developmentally appropriate strategies for preventing and intervening in bullying incidents, including cyberbullying;
- Classroom-management practices, curriculum, and resources that educators can integrate into their classrooms to help foster a more gender-inclusive environment for all students;
- School and District policies regarding bullying, harassment, discrimination, and suicide prevention and responsibilities of staff.

Accountability

Failure of students, staff, and administrators to comply with the policies delineated in this document is under the purview of the ICCSD Equity Department. Any reports of non-compliance should be sent to Equity department staff and they will be responsible for addressing and resolving issues.