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August 16, 2010

Dear Parents,

This year's parent education series is entitled *Navigating Gender Identity in Safe Schools*.

A full calendar of events is attached.

Because gender and sexual identity have implications for how children grow and develop, we hope that parents will be able to attend these events during the course of the year.

Three essential questions will guide the yearlong reflection:

What do parents need to know about gender and sexual identity in order to guide the healthy development of children?

How do parents partner effectively with their children's school on the topics of gender and sexual identity?

How does gender and sexual identity influence children's school experience?

Gordon's Ages and Stages program will provide the format for many of the conversations. Dr. Judith Gnys, Gordon's consulting psychologist, participates in these.

Dr. Jennifer Bryan will speak to the entire parent community on Wednesday, October 27th at 6:30pm, and will lead discussions throughout the year with the Board of Trustees, Early Childhood parents, the Diversity Committee, and faculty and staff, as well as moderating a panel discussion in April.

We would like to thank the Diversity Committee, a standing committee of the Board of Trustees, for their guidance in creating this richly informative series.

We look forward to parent participation and furthering strengthening the educational partnership between families and the school—a central feature of Gordon's excellence.

Ralph L. Wales
Head of School

Kim Ridley
Director of Diversity and Multicultural Practice

Eileen Sweeney Craddock
Chair, Diversity Committee



Navigating Gender Identity in Safe Schools

Wednesday, October 27th 6:30 to 8:30pm

Dr. Jennifer Bryan: Navigating Gender and Sexuality Identity Development in School

Dr. Bryan will explore the themes of this year's parent education series in this keynote presentation.

Thursday, January 27th 6:30 to 8:30pm

Eighth Grade Forum

Eighth grade parents and their children will use the documentary "Straightlaced" as a springboard to discuss the gender and sexuality issues that today's adolescents face.

Thursday, April 7th 6:30 to 8:30pm

Gender and Sexual Identity and Schooling from Multiple Perspectives Panel

This concluding presentation will bring in a panel of educators, parents and students from beyond Gordon to share their experience in classrooms and schools. The discussion will be moderated by Dr. Jennifer Bryan.

About Dr. Jennifer Bryan

Dr. Bryan is a psychologist and nationally recognized educational consultant with over twenty-five years of experience working on gender and sexuality identity with administrators, teachers, parents, students and school communities.

She is also the author of *The Different Dragon*, a book about bedtime stories for ages three to eight that shows how the curiosity of a little boy, with some help from his willing moms, can lead to magical and unexpected places.

A copy of Dr. Bryan's recent article in *Independent School Magazine*, "From the Dress-Up Corner to the Senior Prom: Navigating Gender and Sexuality Identity Development in School," is included in this mailing.

At Ages and Stages

Ages and Stages are from 8:30 to 9:30am, except the Early Childhood session which runs until 10:30am.

Readings will be available electronically and at school.

Copies of books will be in the Joukowsky Family Library.

for fifth and sixth grade parents

Monday, October 18th

This discussion will focus on the ways that traditional gender roles affect Middle School students, in the classroom and in the hallways. This will draw on two short readings that will be distributed beforehand.

for seventh and eighth grade parents

Monday, October 25th

This discussion will focus on the ways that traditional gender roles affect Middle School students, in the classroom and in the hallways. This will draw on two short readings that will be distributed beforehand.

for first and second grade parents

Wednesday, January 12th

Building on the video *That's a Family!*, this discussion will center on reaching elementary age children with a message of respect for all family structures.

for third and fourth grade parents

Wednesday, January 19th

Using the video *It's Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues In Schools*, this conversation will cover how parents and teachers can help children treat all people with respect.

for Kindergarten, Preschool and Nursery parents

Wednesday, February 16th

Dr. Jennifer Bryan will lead a conversation about how children's literature can successfully address the topics of gender identity and nontraditional family structures.

Parents can read one or more of the six books below:

Everywhere Babies (ages 2 and up), by Susan Meyers

Ballarino Nate (ages 4 to 8), by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

And Tango Makes Three (ages 3 to 7) by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

Oliver Button Is a Sissy (ages 4 to 8) by Tomie dePaola

Rough, Tough Charley (ages 5 to 9) by Verla Kay

The Different Dragon (ages 3 to 8) by Jennifer Bryan