

Community Conversation – Plains Jr. High

LGBTQ issues

Dec. 5, 2018

*What's the impact of LGBTQ (IA) on student education? How does that affect education in this district?*

Need to understand that sexuality and gender I.D. are for these students the first and last things they think about every day.

This is really applicable to schools.

My daughter is (also) autistic - maybe she already fits in because she's already different.

The students are a gift to the community.

They're educated in topics – have huge knowledge, can teach community.

If still figuring yourself out, will go along that journey with you.

Outwardness – getting beyond yourself to see others as human.

It's just one big family.

Would encourage board to think about what there is to be afraid of.

Have heard so many people say things like, "We could never talk about homosexuality, or the community will go crazy..."

Why are we so afraid to talk about the curriculum and role models.

The role of public education is to be fact-based.

The kids are trying so hard to fit in.

Don't talk about it because of the stigma.

And because it makes others around them uncomfortable.

It's gender identity as well, not just sexuality.

The staff don't feel comfortable talking about their own lives.

Having role models from early childhood is so important.

Without staff being comfortable, it leads to be more silencing, more conforming.

If we only have a pool of five to ten teachers can go to, it adds to the shame.

The (regular) staff is more educated than subs, though .

Name issues, pronoun issues, are important.

If a student is called by their birth name, it can make them very uncomfortable.

A big problem with some teachers is they refuse to call students by their preferred name and pronoun.

I want to defend teachers a little bit. They don't understand why that's so important to a student.

The one time they misgender someone, it might be the last day they (the student) walks those halls.

Having been a sub, they're through Butler County, not just Lakota. It would mean expanding training.

Training is inconsistent but not required.

Sometimes teachers think this doesn't apply to them.

Opportunities for training are there, in PD or in formats like Communiversity.

Maybe they've never had a student come out to them.

Having that training will let them say, "I have these resources online, maybe I'm not best person (to handle this)."

I have so many trans friends, and it helps when people use the correct names and pronouns.

Would help students be a lot more comfortable if teachers would just ask about it.

If it were more normalized, it wouldn't be such an issue under the microscope.

We have to normalize these conversations – it's ok to have them.

I had one teacher this year who had to fill out a sheet on personal interests. One question was what is your pronoun.

Some people think birth dictates your gender.

We need a conversation about normalizing pronouns, what they are and why they're so important.

Educate everyone that's gender identity is a spectrum, not a either/or.

Need education at different levels for different grade teachers.

Even still in this day and age, we still say, "Boys line up here, girls line up there. We still have black or white gowns at graduation. Why are we always segregating by male/female?" Why do we make them choose?

Why are some things in life always gendered (ships, for example).

Community often won't accept the students' choices.

There are other unnecessary gender things, like dress codes for concerts the kids are in. Boys are told to wear pants, and girls to wear skirts. But girls could wear pants.

Girls were told to wear skirts to a dinner. It's more of a gender stereotype.

In choir I was just about to come out as trans, and I told my teacher I don't really want to wear a skirt, can I wear pants? So they took them away from entire group.

It's about culture, and the culture is that girls wear skirts in choir, and white at graduation.

There's no option on the table.

These are social norms, the constructs society creates.

If teachers introduce themselves with their pronouns at beginning of the year, it takes some of the stigma out.

It's an easy way to start incorporating normalcies.

Let's stop putting "preferred" in front of pronouns. It's not an option.

*What would you request of the school district? What is the school district role?*

House Bill 658 would require teachers, if a child is transgender or if teacher suspects they are, the teacher has to out child to the parents. It's very scary, and maybe dangerous.

Why can't there be student training/seminar on these issues, like ALICE training or fire drills?

I (a student) am working on discussion/training) for faculty. Putting students and faculty together for conversation. To tell them there's no boxes, it is a spectrum. It's to tell both students and faculty, especially the faculty.

This is a friendly crowd here, but in a very conservative district, it's not going to be well received.

We don't want to present it as sensitivity training.

I would incorporate it in bullying training.

Help people understand how students feel – for example when they're called by a different gender.

If presented as cultural sensitivity training, there will be pushback from district.

Even calling a child by a different gender is a form of bullying.

They don't want you to define their gender.

Even something as simple as just cracking down on slurs in hallway.

If someone says the n word they get disciplined, but if someone says faggot the teacher just goes back into classroom.

It's really inclusivity training, not just diversity training.

I work for a (educational) book company. We get calls, "Don't send that book to this district." But as a book company, we represent all students.

It's important for the board not to apologize for it (the training).

It's the right thing to do.

Children with two moms, or a gay uncle, or a trans sibling, it can affect more than you know.

Gay is not adjective, it's an identity. You can't around saying, "I'm so gay....." Just shut up.

A parent to her child to Mason because of the treatment there.

It was a girl in sixth grade, a trans student. People were respectful. A medical professional said you should check out Mason. The counselor in Mason was very aware of pronouns.

They have training, and family meetings with counselor.

Have heard from other parents in Lakota that the buildings are very different.

If the board is going to change the culture, it has to come from the top.

Mr. Card is great, but what if you don't know he's ok?

If parents aren't barracudas how do kids know?

You can ask for certain things, but you have to ask. Not every kid can do that.

Gender and sexuality alliance would provide more opportunities to bring it into lower grades.

In elementary school we had five or six students (gay or trans) and we had a tight small group. We also had groups of safe adults in that building.

If you have students this young who are so passionate about this, they can be the leaders, just like the students in the higher grades.

It starts very young. In my previous district, a tiny district, we had two trans children. The transition can start in the first three grades.

There's a phenomenal transgender clinic at Cincinnati Children's.

We need to go backwards and start talking about this at a very young age. That's the only way we're going to make it normal.

A lot of those kids hadn't even mentioned this yet to their own parents, but they felt very safe in those buildings.

East has gone through a process where the student voice is really incorporated. There's a monumental shift in how we communicate and work together.

Peer-to-peer works.

I still get some pushback from other students. I heard about a prom proposal – "Will you be my snowflake and rainbow at prom?" They don't realize how that impacts another student.

It's still a challenge, even when students say it.

It can be a phase in student education. This is what being gay is. This is what being trans is.

Even for people in the community, there should always be a process for getting involved.

Took me seven years to fully understand who I was.

I am gay student, and I have experienced bullying while being gay. And for the trans community , it's harder than the lesbian or gay experience.