

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT
RESOLUTION CONCERNING
Gender Identity/Gender Expression/Sexual Orientation**

WHEREAS, it is the right of every child, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, to access a free public K-12 education and the District welcomes and supports all students;

WHEREAS, the District has a responsibility to ensure that all students who reside within its boundaries, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, can safely access a free public K-12 education;

WHEREAS, the District recognizes that there are employees and educators of the highest caliber who are gay, lesbian, and transgender, and that all employees are valued members of the school community regardless of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, the District recognizes that the families in our community come in many different forms and the District values all our families and students' caregivers, regardless of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, The State of Connecticut prohibits discrimination, including discrimination based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, in a landmark opinion *Bostock v. Clayton County* decided on June 15, 2020, the United States Supreme Court recognized that discriminating on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity is always a form of sex discrimination, and federal law prohibits sex discrimination in employment and education;

WHEREAS, U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice have recognized that the Supreme Court's reasoning in the *Bostock* decision applies to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and that Title IX prohibits discrimination against and harassment of students and school employees based on their gender identity and sexual orientation;

WHEREAS, Title IX and other federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation preempt local and state laws that conflict, and failure to comply with the requirements of Title IX may jeopardize the District's federal funding;

WHEREAS, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning ("LGBTQ") students experience high rates of bullying, victimization, and harassment at school on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or that of their associates;

WHEREAS, this bullying, victimization, and harassment has led to negative educational outcomes for LGBTQ students, including higher rates of dropping out, higher rates of absenteeism, and lower postsecondary school aspirations;

WHEREAS, LGBTQ students also report higher rates of anxiety and depression; WHEREAS, school-age years are a critical time for LGBTQ youth as they often "come out" or to disclose their LGBTQ identities to others during that time;

WHEREAS, creating a welcoming and safe school environment for our LGBTQ students, staff, families, and caregivers makes our school community more welcoming and safe to all; WHEREAS, the District supports education that celebrates our different identities; integrity in how we treat others; and courage to do what's right by listening to, learning from, and respecting diverse viewpoints; AND

WHEREAS, educational personnel are often the primary sources of support, resources, and information to assist and support students and student learning, which includes their social and emotional health;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the District prohibits discrimination against all persons, whether student, family/caregiver of a student, or District employee, on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or the actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of their associates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District prohibits bullying and harassment against all persons, whether student or District employee, on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or the actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression of their associates;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board declares the District to be a Safe Space for its students, meaning that the District is a place for students to learn, to thrive, and to seek assistance, information, and support free from discrimination and bullying; and as such Teachers and Employees of the District are permitted to display LGBTQ+ Rainbow Flag as a sign of diversity, equity, and inclusion to Stonington students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall, within 30 days of the date of this Resolution, review and modify its antidiscrimination policies to ensure that those policies prohibit LGBTQ discrimination;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District shall, shall within 30 days of the date of this resolution, work with the relevant exclusive bargaining representatives to determine how LGBTQ anti-discrimination policies can best be incorporated in existing or future collective bargaining agreements;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District shall post this Resolution at every school site and distribute it to District staff, students, and parents using usual means of communication, and that the Resolution will be translated into all languages spoken by students at home;

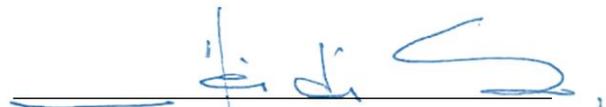
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Superintendent shall report back on compliance with this Resolution to the Board at its next meeting;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, students are to be made aware that District counselors are available to discuss the subjects contained in this Resolution.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF THE EDUCATION ON OCTOBER 25, 2022



Farouk Rajab, Board of Education Chairman



Heidi Simmons, Board of Education Secretary