

Monday, August 22, 2022

Wauwatosa School Board and Wauwatosa Community,

We, the undersigned, are committed employees of the Wauwatosa School District. We write the following letter to voice our support for the proposed Human Growth and Development Curriculum. Critically, we write to affirm our unwavering support of all LGBTQIA+ students, staff, parents and caregivers, and community members in light of queerphobic and transphobic statements and disinformation that have been shared publicly and online.

The HGD curriculum addresses multiple necessary updates to ensure that our students are prepared, informed, and empowered to make healthy decisions and to seek the resources they need for their health and wellbeing. We believe that all students have the right to access information and receive an education about their health and sexuality in a safe environment. By addressing human growth and development through a student-focused, intersectional, and trauma-informed lens, students will have the knowledge to make healthy and safe decisions about their bodies and relationships.

Bigoted commentary, expressed both online and at school board meetings, has created an environment where students, families, and staff feel unsafe in our school communities. If anything, these widespread misconceptions and unrestrained hate speech highlight just how essential this HGD curriculum is. We must do our part to build environments of compassion and understanding, and to make sure our students are equipped with empathy and accurate information. We must do our part to prevent adverse health outcomes for all students, including queer, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth. In fact, our District Equity Plan and Mission Statement provide us the mandate to do just that: be a place where **all** are *valued and welcomed* and to *eradicate inequities*.

As educators we ask that the district ensures adequate support and training for teachers in delivering this curriculum. This should include:

- professional development on gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality
- employing a trauma-informed lens
- the ability to co-teach lessons to promote fidelity and safety
- additional support and resources to ensure UDL and accessibility for all learners
- sufficient time for educators to review the new curriculum

It is our responsibility to affirm, value, and empower our students. We ask that the board refuse to let discrimination, queerphobia, transphobia, and disinformation overpower the voices of our students who have stood in front of you and asked for your support through adoption of this curriculum. Do not allow students and families who deserve to have their existence acknowledged, respected, and reflected in the curriculum to be censored or erased. Do not deny our students their right to a comprehensive, responsive, and inclusive education about their physical and mental health, their bodies, and their relationships. We implore you to approve the curriculum and take a firm stand against hate.

Respectfully,

Jasmina Ruano, Underwood STEM Teacher  
Bridget Finnegan Forbes, Teacher of English for Multilingual Learners  
Alexis Johnston, Teacher of English for Multilingual Learners  
Hannah Fuhrman, Eisenhower Teacher  
Carolyn Kaems, Underwood Third Grade Teacher  
Anna Klusmeyer, Eisenhower Teacher  
Melissa Myers, Elementary Academic Specialist  
Courtney Ramczyk, Speech Language Pathologist  
Nicole Dower, Eisenhower First Grade Teacher  
Jon Etter, East High English Teacher and Gender and Sexuality Alliance Advisor  
Bridget Rindfleisch, Underwood STEM teacher  
Chris Benes, West High Social Studies Teacher and Gender and Sexuality Alliance Advisor  
Anna Troy, East High Spanish Teacher  
Mack Jurney, Underwood Elementary SPED Team  
Katie Pettitt, Senior Kindergarten, McKinley Elementary  
Phillip Olsen, East High School Science Teacher  
Courtney Blair, Eisenhower Teacher  
Tracey Beilfuss, Senior Kindergarten, Roosevelt Elementary  
Kendra Kovar, Whitman Science Teacher and Gender and Sexuality Alliance Advisor  
Colleen Jaskulski, East High School Theatre Teacher  
Mary Merg, East High School Counselor  
Lauren Roznowski Hayden, Longfellow Orchestra Teacher  
Mike Hayden, East High School Orchestra Teacher  
Alli Weiss, Eisenhower Teacher  
Nesli Brown, Underwood School Psychologist  
Ashton Kusch, Underwood Elementary Teacher  
Joel Marinan, Underwood Elementary Teacher  
Heidi Hegwood, West High Social Studies Teacher  
Chelsea Drenning, East High School English Teacher  
Katy Pond, Underwood STEM Teacher  
Kelly Caufield, Underwood Art Teacher  
Kari Stankowski, Elementary Social Emotional Specialist  
Sarah Wieck, Underwood STEM Teacher  
Jon Balcerak, East High School English Teacher  
Kristen Rymer, Jefferson Elementary Teacher  
Chad Ohlendorf, Eisenhower teacher  
Katelyn Lasse, District Nurse  
Lynda Peterson, Underwood Librarian  
Courtney League, ELA Instructional Coach  
Abbey Jones, Eisenhower Special Education Aide  
Stacy Van Caster, Special Education Coordinator  
Toni D'Acquisto, Underwood STEM teacher

Jenny Leigh, Elementary Art Teacher McKinley and Lincoln Elementary  
Jessica Schmidt, Teacher of English for Multilingual Learners  
Jean Biebel, East High School English Teacher  
Tracy Smith, McKinley/Jefferson Elementary Libraries  
Tia Mohacsi, Longfellow STEM Teacher and Sixth Grade Dean  
Kari Wall, Roosevelt Elementary Teacher  
Zoey Michlig, McKinley Elementary Teacher  
Amy Jarmuz-Kluth, Underwood STEM Teacher  
Sarah Murray, East High Spanish Teacher  
Jessica Buss, School Psychologist  
Lynn Meehan, Speech Language Pathologist, McKinley