

**From:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 07, 2021 11:09 AM CDT

**To:** [REDACTED]@wustl.edu; [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>

**Subject:** Question

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope you've been well! I wondered if I can ask you a quick question about a situation we're experiencing at one of our elementary schools.

The short story is that one of the students in the 5th-grade class is coming out as Trans. She has told several of her friends and now several of them are also saying they are Trans. We do not want to discourage them if this is the case, but we're also suspecting there could be other reasons they are doing this than that this is actually the case. Is this common? Are there resources for handling this type of situation? Again we do not want to discourage kids if this is actually the case, but we also do not want to diminish the actual experience of trans folks. (I hope this makes sense!)

Any resources you can point me toward would be greatly appreciated! (Also, I copied the counselor for the 5th grade students at this school!)

Thanks!

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[REDACTED]

### **Parkway Core Values**

\* Integrity \* Kindness \* Perseverance \* Respect \* Responsibility \*

**From:** [REDACTED]@wustl.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 07, 2021 3:53 PM CDT  
**To:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**CC:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**Subject:** RE: Question

I'm glad it was helpful.

I spoke to Dr. Garwood, our Adolescent Medicine specialist, and she wanted me to add just one thing, that I will expand upon a little further:

In general, kids explore parts of their identities in different ways: dress, hair, likes, interests, sexuality, and gender. For some, this is a temporary state, for some it is a longer path to something else. That's okay. The best we can do is affirm, validate and allow for the exploration, if in a few weeks or months, a student wants to go by their legal name and pronouns that match their sex assigned at birth, no harm was really done in affirming them before.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 7, 2021 12:31 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@wustl.edu>  
**CC:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**Subject:** Re: Question

\* External Email - Caution  
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Thank you very much. This is very helpful information in that just listening and being supportive can be my role for these students. Any additional resources that you may offer would be welcomed.

On Thu, Oct 7, 2021 at 12:19 PM [REDACTED]@wustl.edu> wrote:

Hi [REDACTED]

I'm glad you reached out and I am happy to provide some guidance.

I may get a little long winded in this email, so I apologize for that, as this particular topic has become very "conversation-generating" to be diplomatic.

Depending on who you ask, this is common, but also in varied ways. There are schools of thought that have "documented" this as an issue of significance, in that a student coming out as transgender, becomes a "contagion." This language isn't affirming and the few studies on phenomenon are, in my personal and professional opinion, invalid.

The other end of the spectrum is that this is normal in that when one person realizes who they are and shares it, others realize they are similar.

I believe there is a middle ground where we allow for some nuance. For younger folks, and some adults too, it is easy to latch on to a new concept or idea and make it yours. This happens in some areas as adults: fad diets, workout types, multi-level marketing plans, product loyalty, etc. So, it is not abnormal for a young person either. I have seen this happen with mental health diagnoses as well ("You have ADHD? Me too!"). However, it may still be a valid experience, and for some, it may be genuine exploration of gender.

I will try to find some resources for you, after filtering through resources that may invalidate transgender folks.

In general, I'd recommend as much support and discussion as possible around their gender exploration.

That was a little wordy, let me know what follow-up questions you may have.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 7, 2021 11:09 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]@wustl.edu>; [REDACTED]@parkwayschools.net>  
**Subject:** Question

\* External Email - Caution  
\*

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope you've been well! I wondered if I can ask you a quick question about a situation we're experiencing at one of our elementary

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schools.

The short story is that one of the students in the 5th-grade class is coming out as Trans. She has told several of her friends and now several of them are also saying they are Trans. We do not want to discourage them if this is the case, but we're also suspecting there could be other reasons they are doing this than that this is actually the case. Is this common? Are there resources for handling this type of situation? Again we do not want to discourage kids if this is actually the case, but we also do not want to diminish the actual experience of trans folks. (I hope this makes sense!)

Any resources you can point me toward would be greatly appreciated! (Also, I copied the counselor for the 5th grade students at this school!)

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

**School Counselor**

[Redacted]

**National School of Character**

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]