

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: My response
Date: Tuesday, May 2, 2023 8:21:33 AM

Here is what I sent them. I used the response form that Brian sent out. It feels strange to be responding, but I feel like I needed to say a few things and this feels safer than going to the school board meeting and speaking. I've got a bunch of hand-written responses from kids too. I'm going to be scanning those and sending them in an email to the board. I think it's more meaningful if they see that the kids wrote them. Anyway, I felt like I should give you a copy of this...not because it's directed at you in ANY way. I actually thought in case anyone from the board talks to you about it, this way you'd already know everything I said. :)

My name is [REDACTED]. I am the faculty advisor for the Diversity Club at Waterloo High School. This is my formal response to the proposed policy by the school board regarding bathroom usage and gender identity considerations.

I feel the proposed policy was created with the intent of being fair and equitable to all students at Waterloo schools. Unfortunately, I feel as it is written, it creates more problems than it solves by requiring parent involvement when creating a Gender Identity Plan.

I agree with a lot of the policy. I think it's a great idea to have students work with a school social worker/counselor to develop a Gender Identity Plan. I also feel it is important for every student to review safety rules associated with the use of any bathroom. It is great to offer a gender-neutral bathroom to anyone uncomfortable using a single-sex facility. My issue with the proposal is the repeated use of the word "required" with regard to students' parents and their participation in all of these arrangements.

First, I believe there is a typo in the policy proposal. There is a reference to Board Policy 8:50 regarding parental participation in a child's educational planning. In the document uploaded and available on our district website, there is no section 8:50. However, section 8:95 covers "Parental Involvement." If this is the policy that is supposed to be referenced in the proposal, I wholeheartedly disagree that the "parental involvement" in a student's education, as referenced in 8:95, has anything to do with gender identity and bathroom facilities. I believe this to be a blatant misuse of policy 8:95 as a foundation for the creation of the gender identity plan requirements listed in the proposal. Policy 8:95 is intended to give parents/guardians a voice regarding the actual education of their child(ren). It is NOT intended to give the school board the right to REQUIRE parent involvement in bathroom usage outside of the classroom and educational environment

Secondly, as the faculty advisor to the Diversity Club, I am aware of a number of students who do not have supportive parents with regards to their existence as transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming. It is outside our job as educators and administrators, to FORCE these kids to come out to their parents/guardians as a requirement for them to use the restroom they

are most comfortable using. The requirement of parent involvement needs to be removed from the policy because it is in direct violation of the Illinois Human Rights Act. By requiring **ONLY** the transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming students to meet the proposed criteria as listed in the proposed policy, Waterloo Community Unit School District #5 is planning on **imposing special conditions or restrictions on the use of facilities (...) that are not imposed on students whose gender identity conforms to their sex assigned at birth.** ([Illinois Department of Human Rights Website](#))

I do understand that this situation has specific and difficult intricacies. After speaking with many trans and non-binary students, I don't believe that any of them would have an issue speaking with a counselor and working on a Gender Identity Plan regarding names, pronouns, and/or bathroom usage. The problem is with the **requirement** of parent involvement. Many students share gender information with counselors and social workers with the understanding that (outside of mandatory reporting) such information will remain confidential between the student and the counselor. Issues mentioned in the proposal could just as easily be fixed/monitored by requiring a student to sign the gender identity plan themselves. This would be just like the Handbook Acknowledgment Form that we require students to sign at the beginning of each year. In fact, I'd be happy to help distribute information and/or forms to the Diversity Club at the beginning of each year to ensure they all know every requirement.

On a personal note, I am saddened that this exclusive and divisive policy was designed specifically in reaction to a group of people who complained about students using restrooms they have every legal right to use, both at school and in public. The fact is, we do not have "a right" to "be comfortable" with everyone who uses the same restroom as us. Imagine if a group of students complained that black students in the bathroom make them uncomfortable. Imagine if a group of students complained that students with mental or physical disabilities in their bathroom made them uncomfortable. Imagine if this complaint was made about any group of students...Jewish students, Asian students, fat students, etc. I'm positive that the board would react to these complaints in a very different way. Trans and nonbinary students have every legal right to use the bathroom that matches the gender in which they identify as every other student in our buildings. If the existence of these students in single-sex bathrooms makes someone uncomfortable, that comfort level does not supersede the actual legal rights of trans or nonbinary students.

I sincerely hope that the policy is not adopted as it is currently written. I fear that some of our students would be in real danger of self-harm, depression, and further harassment at both school and home should this policy be adopted as is. I have a number of resources available to me as the Diversity Club is registered with the National Genders and Sexualities Alliance. I am also part of the Illinois GSA network of educators and am in communication with them regularly. I would be happy to use those resources to help the board with this difficult situation. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

Thank you,



Teacher, Waterloo High School

Diversity Club Sponsor