

Durham Public Schools Board of Education Proclamation Recognizing June as LGBTQIA+ Pride Month in Durham Public Schools

WHEREAS, Durham Public Schools Board of Education's governing principles state "an excellent school system provides an environment that is culturally responsive, free from bias and discrimination, and commits to ensuring that all stakeholders uphold educational equity as an essential principle of our school system that is integrated into all policies, practices, operations and processes in order to yield equitable educational outcomes for all students;" and

WHEREAS, Durham Public Schools District and Durham County have a diverse Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual+ (LGBTQIA+) community; and WHEREAS, many residents, students, family members, and school personnel are part of the LGBTQIA+ community and they contribute greatly to the enrichment of our schools and community; and

WHEREAS, although advancements have been made with respect to equitable treatment of LGBTQIA+ persons; LGBTQIA+ adults, youth, children and families still face discrimination simply for being who they are, thus making it important for all districts and all communities to stand up and show support for our LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2022 the Durham Public Schools Board of Education unanimously passed the LGBTQIA+ and Gender Supports Policy and that policy states that "Schools must be proactive in creating a school culture that respects and values all students and fosters understanding of gender identity and expression within the school community"; and

WHEREAS, many cities and school districts across the United States recognize and celebrate June as LGBTQIA+ Pride Month; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQIA+ Pride Month is typically recognized in June by many cities and school districts across the United States to commemorate the Stonewall Riots - a series of demonstrations led by Black and Brown members of the LGBTQIA+ community in response to a police raid that began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan in New York City; and

WHEREAS, defining moments in LGBTQIA+ history that sparked activism and progress toward equity were only made possible by Black and Brown LGBTQIA+ activists fighting for their liberation. As Black and Brown people, their marginalization was furthered by their sexual orientation, causing violence, discrimination, and oppression toward them with respect to income, employment, housing, education, political representation, access to health care, and other services; and

WHEREAS, June has become a symbolic month in the United States in which LGBTQIA+ persons and allies come together in various celebrations of pride and protest to support the community's right to live their lives out loud, be who they are, and love who they love; and

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2023 the Human Rights Campaign declared a state of emergency for LGBTQIA+ people in the United States following a spike in anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation. This escalation includes more than 500 anti-LGBTQIA bills that were introduced in state legislatures in 2023 and more than half of those targeted trans youth. This legislation attempts to limit

representation of gender diverse and LGBTQIA+ people in curriculum in schools, access to medical care, and participation in sports; and

WHEREAS, several anti-LGBTQIA+ laws were passed in North Carolina in 2023, including SB49 and HB574, which further stigmatize LGBTQIA+ families and youth and limit representation of LGBTQIA+ identities from schools and sports teams.

WHEREAS, The Trevor Project found that “86% of transgender and nonbinary youth say that recent debates around anti-trans bills have negatively impacted their mental health;” and

WHEREAS, Durham Public Schools, Durham Public Schools Foundation, and Duke University have launched the WHOLE (Wellness | Healing | Opportunity | Learning | Equity) Schools Campaign to focus on urgent mental health needs of public school communities by creating new ways for the school environment to be a holistic, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive support system for everyone;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Durham Public Schools Board of Education does hereby declare the month of June as LGBTQIA+ Pride Month in our schools and invites all schools to implement developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and representative lessons and special activities with all students on LGBTQIA+ families, gender diversity, and LGBTQIA+ history; and

FURTHERMORE, Durham Public Schools Board of Education commits to working with LGBTQIA+ students, families, and community members to build safe and equitable schools where all students and families are valued for who they are and where diversity - race, orientation, gender, culture and ability - is celebrated; and,

Be it further resolved that the DPS Board of Education encourages administrators to support educators across grade levels and content areas to acknowledge LGBTQIA+ Pride Month; and

Be it further resolved that the DPS Board of Education calls on all students, educators, and community members to observe LGBTQIA+ Pride Month and advance efforts to support and advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth, families, educators, and community members.