

Flagstaff Unified School District
Guidelines for Support of Transgender Students

Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) recognizes that the question of how to best provide support for transgender students is both complex and highly personal. Schools must provide a learning environment where all students feel safe, valued, welcome, and free of harassment and discrimination. Balancing the needs of every student, transgender and cisgender students alike, can be a difficult proposition. Often, these needs involve very personal subjects such as privacy and one's sense of identity, which are accompanied by strong emotions and beliefs.

These guidelines are intended to help school principals address each case with empathy and consistency while ensuring compliance with Federal law. It does not provide a set of instructions to solve every case that presents itself, nor does it attempt to anticipate every scenario that may arise. Every situation has its own set of unique circumstances and must be considered on a case-by-case basis. Instead, this document intends to provide a set of factors to consider when school principals are tasked with making individual decisions when considering how to best support transgender students. Because this is an evolving area for school districts, some of this guidance may change over time.

When a school learns that a transgender student will enroll, or when the school becomes aware that an existing student will consistently assert a gender identity that is different from their biological sex assigned at birth, the school principal should offer to meet with the student and parents in order to discuss the student's preferences and how the school can best provide support.

Definitions

1. "Gender Identity" is a person's inner sense of being male, female, or non-binary regardless of their biological sex assigned at birth.
2. "Transgender" is a term that describes people whose gender identity is different from their biological sex assigned at birth.
3. "Cisgender" is a term that describes people whose gender identity corresponds with their biological sex assigned at birth.

What Federal laws apply to supporting transgender students?

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. FUSD does not discriminate on the basis of sex and adheres to all conditions established by Title IX by recognizing the right of every student who attends school in the District and every employee who works in the District to do so without the fear of sexual discrimination or harassment, including harassment based on gender identity.

What should I do if a student claims to have been harassed based on their gender identity?

The student should be instructed to contact the Director of Student Support Services, who can be reached at (928) 527-6178. All complaints alleging harassment, bullying, or discrimination based on a person's gender identity should be handled in accordance with the procedures set forth in [Policy 5-409](#) Prohibition on Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying and [Policy 5-407](#) Discrimination Complaints.

If a student wishes to be addressed by a different name, can that change be made in Synergy or other official school documents?

FUSD must use the student's legal name in all official school records. This includes within the Student Information System (Synergy) as well as on transcripts, diplomas, and in reporting to the Arizona Department of Education. If a student wishes for a different name to be used, they must submit documentation that their legal name has been changed pursuant to applicable law, such as a court order, valid birth certificate, or valid passport demonstrating the student's new legal name.

Any change to a student's name in Synergy should be reviewed with the Student Information System Administrator, as changes to a student's name in Synergy may have an effect on student reporting to the Arizona Department of Education. The legal documentation, as permitted by A.R.S. §15-828, showing the name change should be uploaded into Synergy and a copy placed in the student's cumulative folder. The Student Information System Administrator can be reached at (928) 527-6151 x6151.

How can school administrators support students who wish to be addressed by a different name?

Students should be addressed, to the maximum extent possible, by the name and pronoun that corresponds to the gender identity that is consistently asserted by the student. This includes how they are referred to in class, the name they write on classroom assignments, and other daily informal interactions. There is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that students must meet to have their gender identity recognized and respected.

Students may not have discussed their preferences regarding gender identity with their parents or guardians. When approached by a student regarding a change to their preferred gender identity, school staff should meet privately regarding how the student prefers to be addressed in class and in school communications home. School staff are not required to inform parents of a student's preferences regarding gender identity and name against the wishes of the student.

Can a student change the name on their Student ID?

Student IDs should be issued in the name that reflects the student's gender identity that is consistently asserted at school. The student should follow regular school procedures regarding replacing student IDs if this request occurs in the middle of the school year.

Am I allowed to share information regarding the student's gender identity with other staff members?

All students, including transgender or gender nonconforming students, have the right to decide when, with whom, and to what extent to share their private personal information with others. School staff should not disclose any information that may reveal a student's transgender status to others without the student's permission unless legally required to do so. Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), only those school employees with a legitimate educational need should have access to a student's records or the information contained within those records. Disclosing confidential student information to other employees, students, parents, or other third parties may violate privacy laws, including but not limited to FERPA.

Can a student change their gender designation in Synergy?

If a student wishes to change the gender indicated in FUSD's Student Information System (Synergy), a written statement must be submitted to the principal indicating that the student's gender identity that will be consistently asserted at school is other than what is indicated in the student's informational record, and requesting that a change be made. This statement must be signed by the parent, guardian, or adult student.

A parent or adult transgender student is not required to provide verification that the student is undergoing or has undergone medical treatment for the purpose of gender transition as a condition for changing a student's gender in the District's records.

Any change to a student's gender in Synergy should be reviewed with the Student Information System Administrator, as changes to a student's gender in Synergy may have an effect on student reporting to the Arizona Department of Education. The signed statement requesting the gender change should be uploaded into Synergy and a copy should be placed in the student's cumulative folder. The Student Information System Administrator can be reached at (928) 527-6151 x6151.

Must transgender students participate in physical education and sports activities consistent with their biological sex?

Students wishing to participate in competitive athletic activities in areas governed by the Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) must comply with AIA guidelines. Participation

in competitive athletic activities that are restricted to students of a specific gender may require authorization from the AIA in accordance with [Policy 5-410](#) Interscholastic Athletics.

For physical education and athletic activities that do not fall under AIA governance, students should be permitted to participate in a manner consistent with the gender identity that is consistently asserted at school.

Which Restrooms and Locker Rooms should transgender students use?

Restroom and locker room usage is a complex and highly personal issue, and school principals should carefully consider each situation on an individual, case-by-case basis. FUSD is committed to ensuring the safety, privacy, and dignity of all students, including transgender and cisgender students.

Generally, schools should allow transgender students to use the restroom or locker room aligned with the gender identity the student consistently asserts at school. Transgender students should not be forced to use a restroom or locker room aligned with their biological sex if it conflicts with their gender identity.

The principal, in consultation with the transgender student and their parents, may also determine that alternative arrangements are to be used to support the student. One reasonable alternative arrangement is to convert some campus restrooms into single person, gender neutral restrooms. These restrooms should be open to all students and not be restricted solely for transgender student use. Other reasonable alternatives may be to include a separate changing schedule or the use of a private area.

School principals should account for the rights of all students when making this decision. Factors that should be considered include, but are not limited to,

- The preferences of the transgender student and parents
- Supporting the transgender student's right to attend school without the fear of discrimination, bullying, or harassment based on gender identity
- The safety, dignity, and privacy concerns of all students and staff members involved, keeping in mind whether students will need to disrobe, shower, or attend to personal needs while using the restroom or locker room
- The age and maturity of the students involved
- Ensuring that all students, including transgender and cisgender students, feel socially accepted as part of the school community

What do I do about other situations that may require students to be separated by gender, such as overnight field trips?

Any other situation that arises requiring students to be separated by gender in a school activity that involves student privacy concerns should be handled individually on a case-by-case basis using the rationale set forth in the above section. As a general rule, students should be allowed to participate in a manner aligned with the gender identity that is consistently asserted at school.

Are there any restrictions on student attire and dress codes?

Students should adhere to the guidelines set forth in [Policy 5-302](#) Student Attire. In general, students should be allowed to dress in a manner aligned with their gender identity that is consistently asserted at school, as long as their attire does not violate the adopted dress code.