

ACAAA-R Transgender and Gender Expansive Students Administrative Procedure

SECTION A: FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS

Administrative Procedure

Addressing the Needs of Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

The below outline is intended as a starting point for discussion about how best to respond to the needs of transgender/gender expansive students in RSU 21. Administrators should inform the Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent of requests made by students and their families so that RSU 21 can develop the appropriate plan for social transitioning given the situation of the student and family.

Procedure

1. Addressing the Needs of Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

A student will be considered transgender or gender expansive if, at school, they assert a gender identity or expression different from the sex assigned at birth. This involves more than a casual declaration of gender identity or expression, but it does not necessarily require a medical diagnosis.

If a student and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) want the school to recognize the student's identity as transgender or gender expansive, the following procedure will be used.

1. A transgender or gender expansive student alone or with their parent(s)/guardian(s) should contact the building administrator or the student's guidance counselor. In the case of a student who has not yet enrolled in school, the appropriate building administrator should be contacted.
2. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the student's particular circumstances and needs. In addition to the student, and building administrator and school counselor/social worker other participants may include the parent(s)/guardian(s) school nurse, teachers and/or

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other school staff, and possibly outside providers who can assist in developing a plan for that student. In the case of a student who has not yet informed their parent/guardian, the administrator and school counselor/school counselor should first discuss parental involvement with the student to avoid inadvertently putting the student at risk of harm by contacting the student's parents/guardians. It is incumbent upon the principals, counseling and social work staff to make that determination and to follow state laws, district policy, mandatory reporting statutes, and their own professions' ethical practice guidelines in these circumstances.

3. If necessary to meet the needs of the student, a plan will be developed by the school, in consultation with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and others as appropriate. If the student has an IEP and/or a 504 Plan, the provisions of these plans should be taken into consideration in developing a plan for addressing transgender and gender expansive issues.
4. The school may request documentation from medical or other service providers if necessary to assist staff in developing a plan appropriate for the student.
5. If the parties cannot reach an agreement about the elements of the student's plan, the building administrator and/or Superintendent shall be consulted as appropriate. In the event that a student and their parent or legal guardian do not agree regarding the student's gender identity or gender expression, the school shall whenever possible abide by the wishes of the student with regard to their gender identity and gender expression while at school.

Support Plan

B. Areas to Cover in the Development of a Student Support Plan

1. Privacy: All students have a right to privacy. This includes the right to keep private one's transgender status or gender nonconforming presentation at school. In some cases, a student may want school staff and students to know that they are transgender or gender expansive, and in other cases the student may not want this information to be widely known. Accordingly:
2. The student's plan shall be kept confidential and shared only with individuals attending the meeting, the Superintendent, others with a bona fide need to know, and, if necessary, the District's legal counsel.
3. As part of the development of the student's plan, the discussion should include what information may be shared, to whom the information may be shared, and how the information should be shared.

4. School staff should take care to follow the student's plan and not to inadvertently disclose information that is intended to be kept private or that is protected from disclosure (such as confidential medical information, the student's transgender status, their legal name, or sex assigned at birth).

School staff should keep in mind that under FERPA, student records may only be accessed and disclosed to parents / guardians and to staff with a legitimate educational interest in the information. Disclosures to others should only be made with appropriate authorization from the administration and/or parents/guardians.

2. School Records: Schools are required to maintain a large number of records for students. If a student makes a legal change in their name and/or gender, appropriate documentation should be provided to the building administrator and records will be changed.

A student who has not legally changed their name and/or gender may still request that the school unit utilize their preferred name and/or gender on school records, and this request will be honored to the extent that the school unit is not legally required to use a student's legal name or gender on particular records. Students should be informed that parents / guardians have a right to access all education records of their child and therefore that the school cannot keep the change confidential. This information should be discussed as part of the development of the student's plan.

3. Names/Pronouns: The student should be addressed by school staff, substitutes, volunteers and other students by the name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity that is consistently asserted at school.
4. Restrooms: The student is permitted to use the restrooms that most closely match their gender identity. If the student expresses a need for privacy, they will be provided with reasonable alternative facilities or accommodations such as a single-occupancy toilet facility or a staff facility. However, the student shall not be required to use a separate non-communal facility over their objection.
5. Locker Rooms: The student is permitted to use the locker room that most closely matches their gender identity. If the student expresses a need for privacy, they will be provided with reasonable alternative facilities or accommodations, such as using a separate stall, a staff facility, or an alternative schedule.
6. Other Gender-Segregated Facilities or Activities: As a general rule, in any other facilities or activities when students may be separated by gender, the student may participate in accordance with their gender identity. Interscholastic athletic activities will be addressed

in accordance with current Maine Principals Association guidelines.

7. Clothing at School Code: The student is expected to comply with Board policies and school rules regardless of gender identity.
8. Safety and Support for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students:
9. As part of the support plan development, the concerned parties should discuss safe zones (ex. main office, counselor's office) the student can access at any time the student feels unsafe or uncomfortable. A support person (and possibly a back-up person) should also be identified for each student.
10. School staff are expected to comply with any plan developed for a transgender or gender expansive student regardless of personal belief or objection.
11. School staff should notify the building administrator or other designated support person for the student if there are concerns about the plan, or about the student's safety or welfare.
12. School staff should be sensitive to the fact that transgender and gender expansive students can be at higher risk for being bullied or harassed, and should immediately notify the appropriate administrator if they become aware of a problem.

C. Other RSU 21 Supports for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

1. Grade Spans Differences in the Development of Plans

1. Parents are important partners in the education and support of our students.
 2. Unless there is a clearly identified risk for the student's well-being relative to parent/guardian involvement, parents and guardians will be involved in conversations about the development of plans to address transgender/gender expansive identity plans for students in Grades PK-8.
 3. While plans for students in grades 9-12 can be developed without the inclusion/involvement of parent(s)/guardian(s), every reasonable effort will be made to involve the parent(s)/guardian(s) in the conversation.
 4. Evidence or suspicion of abuse or neglect (that prompts mandated reporting) or suspicion of self-harm or suicide constitutes a clearly identified safety risk.
2. Diplomas and Course Records: Graduates may, upon request, have a diploma and transcript reissued to reflect a legal name change that occurs after graduation.
 3. Gender on RSU 21 Documents: Students' gender identity should not be listed on RSU 21 school ID cards, permission forms, or program application forms except where necessary due to state or federal law, regulation, or other requirements.

4. Maine Principals Association Process: RSU 21 staff will support students navigating athletic eligibility to enable a respectful and supportive process for students related to the process used by the Maine Principals Association to determine eligibility.
5. Student Handbooks: RSU 21 will include the Transgender and Gender Expansive policy and procedure in RSU 21 Student Handbooks.
6. Student Pronouns: Staff will (are expected to) refer to students by the pronouns listed in the school records unless the student personally requests staff to call them by a different pronoun other than that assigned to them or unless the student has a plan that identifies that the student be addressed by pronouns different from their school record. Staff will not require students to “out” themselves in a classroom setting by asking that they identify their pronouns in front of other students or mandating the completion of classroom forms related to gender identity. To create a safe space for adolescent students, staff at the middle or high school may offer students the option of informing them of alternative pronouns privately by email or in written form.
7. Training of RSU 21 Staff: RSU 21 will require all staff to annually review the Transgender and Gender Expansive Policy and Procedure as part of the mandatory training. RSU 21 will provide district-wide professional development for staff including supports the district can provide to students.
8. Trusted Adults: When a student expresses gender identity issues or the wish to be called something different in a teacher’s classroom or in an afterschool activity the teacher and /or staff shall:
 1. Thank the student for their trust
 2. Alert the student that the district has support that can be provided to them and offer to assist the student to set up a meeting with the school counseling office and Principal to discuss the student’s needs and create a plan to meet these needs relative to transgender or gender expansive identity.
 3. With student consent, alert the Principal/Counselor/Social Worker/Athletic Director/Nurse about the student’s needs unless the student discloses the information in a therapeutic or medical setting and there is a request for confidentiality (Social Worker/Guidance Counselor).
9. Communication
 1. RSU 21 will provide a symbol at the top of the PowerSchool student page to indicate details related to student plans, including but not limited to, name and pronoun preferences. Principals would be responsible for updating this information.

2. RSU 21 will provide a template email communication for building administrators to use when communicating with involved staff and teachers about the details related to student plans.

10. Conversations in Therapeutic Setting (Social Worker, Counselor, School Psychologist)

1. RSU 21 will honor, as required, the confidentiality of conversations that take place in a therapeutic setting between students and social workers, counselors, and school psychologists.

Plan Outline

TRANSGENDER OR GENDER EXPANSIVE STUDENT PLAN:

The School Administrator with the student and/or family should develop a plan that includes details related to each area listed below.

Student Name:

Names of Individuals Participating in the Development of the Plan:

Start Date the Plan:

1. Privacy and School Records
2. Names/Pronouns
3. Restrooms
4. Locker Rooms
5. Other Gender-Segregated Facilities or Activities
6. PowerSchool Information
7. Safety and Support for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students
8. Name Change /Gender Change information

1. Current student name (first, middle, last)
2. DOB
3. SSID
4. Grade / School
5. Identified name (first, middle, last)
6. Identified gender
7. Is this a court-ordered change (yes/no); if yes, a statement indicating that supporting records are attached.

8. Disclosure Notices

English

By signing this plan, I am requesting that RSU 21 change the name and/or gender of the student listed above.

- These change(s) are being requested because the student identifies as the name/gender listed above.
- I understand that this form does not constitute a legal name and/or gender change; rather it only changes the name and/or gender of the student as reflected in the RSU 21 student information system.
- I understand that the student’s original name/gender/pronoun will be retained in the history of the student records system.
- I authorize the release of the student’s original and updated name/gender to the following district personnel in order to implement this request and to ensure all current and future internal systems have been updated with the information: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Building Principal, Director of IT, Director of Nutrition Services, Director of Transportation, Nurses, Director of Special Services, other (specify):_____

Student signature and date: _____

Parent/Guardian signature and date:_____

Section A

English