

12 July 2024

To Whom it Concerns:

My name is [REDACTED] and I am an LGBTQ+ parent of a non-binary child (they/them) going into the third grade this year at C K Burns elementary school. I am reaching out, firstly, to express gratitude at the clear desire to support diversity that teachers and staff in the Saco School system have already expressed. It can feel quite scary for LGBTQ+ families to standby as over 600 anti-trans youth bills make their way across this country (TLT, 2023). Such campaigns spread fear and anxiety on all sides of the issue and Saco's social justice-aligned educational system is a powerful force in cultivating community safety.

Active allyship for trans-youth matters and is evidenced to prevent bullying, trauma and death. The harrowing statistic that 41% of all trans people attempt suicide in their lifetime can absolutely be addressed through training and education on trans identity and inclusion (Herman & O'Neill, 2021). Additionally, educational tools that help interrupt bias and promote inclusion show evidence in uplifting all marginalized groups and benefit the success of *all* students (Sallee, 2015).

This past year, staff and educators at Governor Fairfield School shared that they believe there is real opportunity for more training on trans youth issues at a district level. Luckily, there are accessible, local resources that provide the kind of training that would create this confidence among school professionals and strengthen Saco school district's important mission of inclusion.

Maine Transnet offers an in-person trans allyship training that is 90 minutes long and costs only \$300. Because the facilitator and I have connected, she is also willing to waive the mileage fee for traveling to the location of the training. If in-person space or scheduling is an issue, the organization **Out Maine** provides a wider reaching training on LGBTQ+ youth that is deliverable over zoom and can reach everyone in the district. The cost of this is only \$695 for two hours (preferred) or \$595 for 90 minutes. I am attaching the contact information for these two organizations and the facilitators. I am also happy to help assist in any way to benefit this cause.

In closing, I stand with the Saco Schools' belief in "the positive development of the whole child" through "providing a safe and nurturing environment that promotes intellectual, social, and emotional achievement" (Saco Schools, 2024). The success of all students is truly possible when we collaborate in uplifting *all* students to their utmost uniqueness and potential.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I look forward hearing about the opportunities you decide to bring into our schools to support Saco youth and families.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Resources for LGBTQ+ and Trans Youth Allyship Training:

Maine Transnet

Contact: Bre Danvers-Kidman

Email: bre@mainetransnet.org

Website: www.mainetrans.net

Training Webpage: <https://www.mainetrans.net/trainings>

About the training (from their website):

Our Transgender Allies Training

During this 90 minute training, you will learn basic terminology and theories about gender identity, do's and don'ts when interacting with trans people, an overview of frequently asked questions, best practices when asking pronouns, the pillars of allyship, and a discussion of the current status of trans people in this world and why we need allies. \$300/waived fee for mileage to travel

Out Maine

Contact: Tara Barker

Email: tara@outmaine.org

Website: www.outmaine.org

Training Webpage: <https://www.outmaine.org/programs/professional-development/live-trainings/>

About the training (from their website):

Building Welcoming and Affirming Elementary School Environments for LGBTQ+ Youth

This training is designed for all elementary school staff. It will provide a foundational understanding for those who are new to working with LGBTQ+ youth, as well as updated and in-depth information for those who are looking for a refresher. This training focuses on the unique needs of elementary-aged students, particularly regarding gender identity and expression. During this training, participants will review terminology and pronoun usage, supporting transgender and gender-expansive youth, student rights, intervening in harmful behavior, and creating an inclusive classroom. (2-hour in-person training is \$1,295.00; 2-hour Zoom training is \$695.00; 90-minute Zoom training is \$595.00.)

Additional Resource: An online guide to being an ally to transgender and non-binary youth from the Trevor Project. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/a-guide-to-being-an-ally-to-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth/>

References:

Herman, Jody; O'Neill, Kathryn. (2021, Sept). Suicide Risk and Prevention for Transgender People: Summary of Research Findings. Williams Institute. Retrieved 18 June 2024 from: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-suicide-risk-prevent-summary/>

Saco Schools. (2024). About our school Retrieved 20 June 2024 from: https://fairfield.sacoschools.org/about_our_school/index.php

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Trevor Project. (n.d.) A Guide to being an ally to transgender and non-binary youth. Retrieved 20 June 2024 from: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/a-guide-to-being-an-ally-to-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth/>