



TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-EXPANSIVE STUDENTS

A. Purpose and Scope

The Regional School Unit (RSU) No. 24 will strive to 1) foster a learning environment that is safe, affirming, and free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying for all students; and 2) assist in the educational and social integration and development of transgender and gender-expansive students in our schools. This policy is intended to be interpreted in conjunction with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, as well as RSU Board (RSUB) policies, procedures, and school rules.

This policy is not intended to anticipate every possible situation that may occur, since the needs of particular students differ. In addition, the programs, facilities, and resources of each school differ. Administrators and school staff are expected to utilize this policy within the context of the individual needs of the student.

This policy applies to all conduct and communications identified in RSUB Policy JICK – Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention in Schools.

B. Definitions

The following definitions are not intended to provide rigid labels for students, but to assist in discussing and addressing the needs of students. Administrators, school staff, volunteers, students, and others who interact with students are expected to be sensitive to the ways in which particular transgender and gender expansive students may wish to be identified.

1. Transgender – An umbrella term for people who identify as a different gender than the biological sex they were assigned at birth.
2. Sexual orientation – A person's sexual identity in relation to the gender to which they are attracted.
3. Gender identity – The gender one identifies with, regardless of the biological sex they were assigned at birth.
4. Gender-Expansive – An adjective used to describe people that identify or express themselves in ways that broaden the culturally-defined behavior or expression associated with one gender.
5. Gender expression – How a person expresses their gender to others through outward presentation and behavior.

C. Addressing the Needs of Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students

RSU is committed to addressing the needs of transgender and gender-expansive students. As with all students, if a transgender or gender-expansive student needs additional support, the student and/or the parent or guardian may contact school personnel in order to make an individual plan for the student. An individual support plan aims to engage the student, and possibly the parent or guardian, in creating a supportive plan that reflects and responds to the individual needs of the student in the school community. The administration will develop procedures for staff to follow to provide support for transgender students.

School staff shall comply with any plan developed for a transgender student and shall notify the building administrator or other designated support person for the student if there are concerns about the student's safety or welfare.

1. RSU Schools shall accept a student's assertion of their gender identity when there is consistent assertion of gender identity or any other evidence that the student's gender identity is sincerely held as a part of their core identity. An educational institution in no case should require medical or mental health records as proof of a student's gender identity.
2. In the event that a student and their parent or legal guardian do not agree with regard to the student's gender identity or gender expression, the school shall abide by the wishes of the student with regard to their gender identity and gender expression while at school.

D. Policy on Specific Issues

1. **Privacy and Confidentiality:** The RSU shall ensure that student records shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local, and federal privacy laws. School staff shall comply with the student's wishes regarding disclosure of their transgender status to others, including but not limited to parents or guardians, students, volunteers, or other school staff, unless legally required to do otherwise.
2. **School Records:** Schools are required to maintain a permanent record for each student which includes legal name and sex. This information is also required for standardized tests and official school district reports.

A student's official record shall bear their legal name, which may be changed only upon proof that it has been changed pursuant to a court order. At the request of a student, and consistent with the student's gender identity, the district shall use the student's preferred name and pronouns consistent with their gender identity on all other documents including but not limited to school identification, classroom rosters, certificates, diplomas, and yearbook.

3. **Names/Pronouns:** Students shall be addressed by school staff and other students by the name and pronoun corresponding to their gender identity as asserted at school.
4. **Restrooms, Locker Rooms, and Other Gender-Segregated Facilities:** Students shall be permitted to use restrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities corresponding to the gender identity which the student asserts at school. The district will provide reasonable alternative facilities such as a separate stall or a staff facility in accordance with a student preference for greater privacy. A student shall not be required to use a separate, non-communal facility over their objection.
5. **Gender-Segregated Facilities or Activities:** As a general matter, RSU schools should try to avoid gender-based activities, policies, and practices except where they serve an important educational purpose. In other facilities, activities, policies, or practices when students may be separated by gender, students shall be able to participate in accordance with the gender identity asserted at school. Interscholastic athletic activities should be addressed through the Maine Principals Association Transgender Participation Policy, and district staff will support students navigating the eligibility process to try to ensure a respectful and supportive process for the students.
6. **Dress Code:** If schools have a dress code, the dress code shall be gender neutral. Students must dress consistently with any applicable requirements in the dress code or school rules.
7. **Discrimination, harassment, and bullying** are prohibited within the district. School staff should be sensitive to the fact that transgender students are at higher risk for discrimination, harassment, and bullying, and should immediately notify the appropriate administrator if they become aware of a problem. The administration will address all such concerns in accordance with applicable policies and complaint procedures, including Policies AC, ACAA, and JICK.

E. Training and Dissemination of Informational Materials

1. The Superintendent and/or Building Administrator shall institute in-service training on this policy and distribute educational materials about transgender and gender-expansive issues to school staff on an annual basis.
2. Teachers and other staff who have responsibilities for a transgender or gender-expansive student will receive training and support in implementing this policy and, if applicable, in implementing a plan for an individual student.
3. This policy shall be shared annually with employees, volunteers, students, and parents/guardians, and the policy shall be included in student and parent handbooks as well as posted on the district and school websites.
4. The district is committed to providing high quality training for students and parents on this policy and on issues of cultural competency relating to transgender people.

Legal Reference: Maine Human Rights Act, 20-A M.R.S. § 4601

Cross Reference: AC - Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination
 ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students
 ACAA-R - Student Discrimination and Harassment
 KIA - Dress Code
 JICK - Bullying and Cyberbullying Prevention in Schools
 JRA - Student Education Records and Information
 JRA-E - Annual Notice of Student Education Records and Information Rights
 JRA-R - Student Education Records and Information - Administrative Procedure

First Read: July 30, 2019

Adopted: September 3, 2019

Revised: October 1, 2024