



Family and Community Resource Guide & Frequently Asked Questions

Why should students learn about gender and orientation in school?

All students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. Learning about gender and the gender spectrum is an important part of creating and sustaining this environment for all students.

Why is the district making a big deal about this?

Schools play a critical role in supporting transgender and gender nonconforming students. Refer to the PPS Administrative Directive on Transgender, Nonbinary and Gender Diverse Students for more information on the importance of this support.

Aren't elementary school students too young for this topic? Won't students feel confused in having more than two gender options?

Research about gender suggests that young people have a strong sense of their own gender identity by 3–6 years old, meaning transgender and/or gender nonconforming children may express gender diversity as young as preschool. This dispels the myth that children and youth are “too young” to know these things about themselves. Furthermore, students may have transgender family members. By introducing these topics in a simple, age appropriate manner, gender diversity is an easy concept for children to understand.

Won't discussing this topic encourage students to be gay or transgender?

Information and discussion about trans, gay and lesbian people will not make anyone gay or straight. Education about LGBTQ issues can help combat fear and discrimination, enabling all students to feel and be safe in school.

What prevents a boy from coming to school one day and claiming he is transgender just to go into the girl's locker room?

The PPS Administrative Directive on Transgender, Nonbinary and Gender Diverse Students does not allow students to simply enter into a restroom or locker room that they do not identify with. A transgender student is very different from a young person who is claiming to be a different gender for an inappropriate purpose. School staff will respond in accordance with the PPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook regarding any student who enters the wrong facility as a result of inappropriate behavior.



Won't allowing students to express a non-traditional gender cause them to be teased or harassed?

All PPS students have the right to express their gender identity in a safe school environment. To minimize potential teasing and harassment, all students should be taught about gender variance, respecting differences, family diversity, and bullying. Lessons on these topics are included in the PPS sexual health education curriculum and are aligned with State standards. Additionally, every PPS employee is responsible for ensuring that transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse, and questioning students have a safe and welcoming school environment. This includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or violence is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action in alignment with the PPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, and providing students, community, and staff with pertinent resources.

What does the law say?




The Oregon Equality Act of 2007 amended many statutes to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. ORS 174.100 Sexual orientation means an individual's actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or gender identity, regardless of whether the individual's gender identity, appearance, expression or behavior differs from that traditionally associated with the individual's sex at birth. This Act forbids discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations, public meetings, public services, public education and foster homes.

Additionally, ORS 659.850 provides that "[a] person may not be subjected to discrimination in any public elementary, secondary or community college education program or service, school or inter-school activity or in any higher education program or service, school or inter-school activity where the program, service, school or activity is financed in whole or in part by moneys appropriated by the Legislative Assembly." Discrimination means any act that unreasonably differentiates treatment, intended or unintended, or any act that is fair in form but discriminatory in operation, either of which is based on age, disability, national origin, race, color, marital status, religion, sex, or sexual orientation."

Finally, Title IX states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Where can I get support as a parent?

If you are a parent of a child who is transgender, nonbinary, gender diverse, or questioning, it is important to seek out support for yourself so you can process your feelings and experiences separate from your child. There is also a wealth of resources online that offer information about supporting transgender, nonbinary and gender diverse children. Below is a list of local and national resources you can reach out to for support and/or information.

-  [TransActive Gender Center at Lewis and Clark College](#)
-  [Portland PFLAG](#)
-  [Gender Spectrum Parenting Resources](#)
-  [Family Acceptance Project](#)
-  [PPS LGBTQ Resources for Parents](#)

This FAQ was adapted from the Chicago Public Schools Supporting Gender Diversity Toolkit

