

CREATING A SAFE SCHOOL FOR ALL: MEETING THE NEEDS OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING STUDENTS

VESTAL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
2015-2016

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CREATING A SAFE SCHOOL FOR ALL: MEETING THE NEEDS OF TRANSGENDER AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING STUDENTS

Program

- I. DASA and the support of transgender and gender non-conforming students.
- II. What is the difference between gender identity and gender expression?
- IV. What are the experiences of youth who identify as transgender?
- V. Why must we act? What are our responsibilities?

July 2015

Guidance To School Districts for Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment for Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students

"All students need a safe and supportive school setting to progress academically and developmentally," Commissioner Elia said. "The Education Department is committed to providing all students, including transgender and gender nonconforming students, with an environment free from discrimination and harassment. We have a moral responsibility to foster civility in our schools, and to ensure that every student has equal access to educational programs and activities..."

<http://www.nysed.gov/Press/Transgender-and-Gender-Nonconforming-Students-Guidance-Document>

Who Are These Children?

Malisa's Story

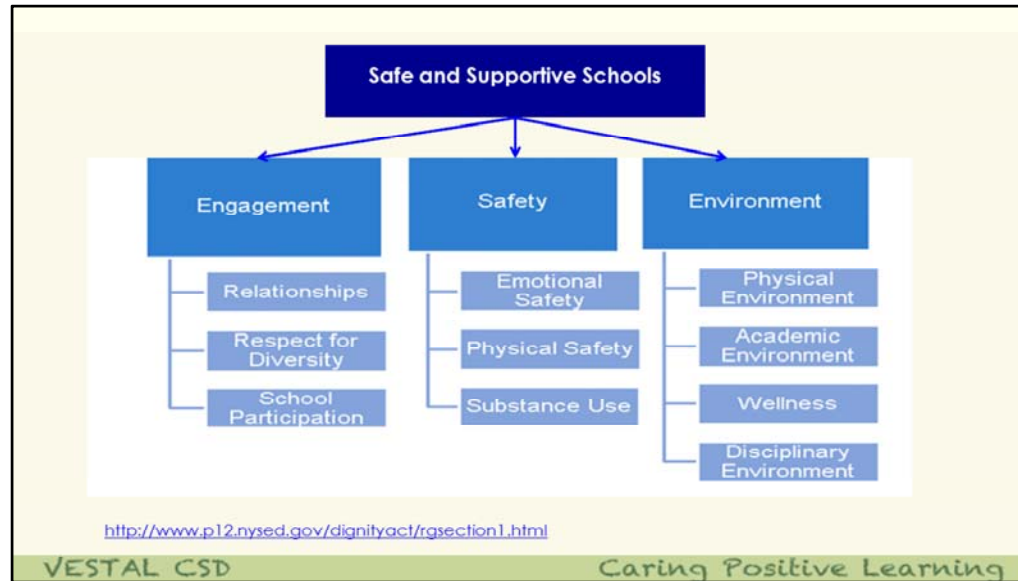
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGPRNbxON8g>



Growing Up Transgender: Malisa's Story | NBC Nightly News

Our Mission Statement

The Vestal Central School District believes **each student is unique and can learn.** The District's mission is to provide instruction, programs, strategies and challenges in **a caring, positive learning environment.** Each student will become a critical thinker, a lifelong learner and a responsible, contributing citizen in a changing global society. The Board of Education, staff, parents, students and community share a commitment to this mission.



What Makes An Inclusive School?

An inclusive school actively attends to giving each student a **feeling of belonging** to create a sense of **emotional safety**.



Inclusive Community- A Matter of Law

DASA (Dignity for all Students Act) (NY Educ. Law Art 2 July 2012) prohibits discrimination based on a person's "actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex."

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Gender identity describes how people perceive their own internal sense of maleness, femaleness, or an identity outside of established genders. The gender an individual identifies with psychologically, regardless of what sex they were assigned at birth. Everyone has a gender identity.

Sex assigned at birth is the designation (i.e. male, female) assigned to a person when they are born based on their biological characteristics.

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Gender Identity

"One's gender identity is an innate, largely inflexible characteristic of each individual's personality that is generally established by age four, although the age at which individuals come to understand and express their gender identity may vary based on each person's social and familial development."*

*http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf

*http://itgl.lu/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/mallon_transgender_adolesents.pdf

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Gender Identity

"She wanted princess gowns and princess heels and the princess tiaras and she had them all."



WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Transgender describes people whose internal sense of their gender (their gender identity) does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. There are many different transgender identities.

assigned sex \neq gender identity

Cisgender describes people who, for the most part, identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. Sometimes cisgender is used as a way of saying 'not transgender.'

assigned sex = gender identity

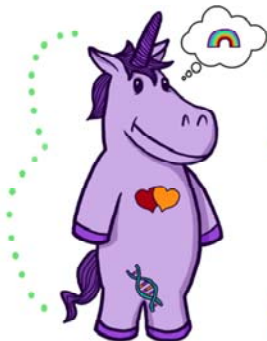
WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Gender expression in the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others. This includes appearance, behavior, clothing, hairstyles, and mannerisms.

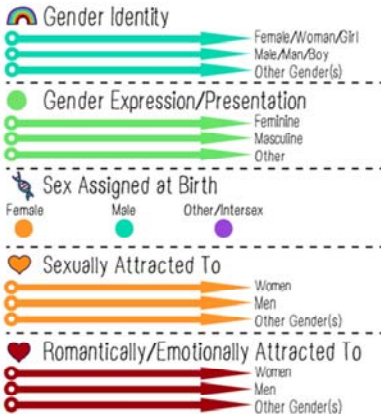
Gender non-conforming (GNC) refers to people who do not follow other people's ideas or stereotypes about how they should look or act (their gender expression) based on the sex they were assigned at birth. It can also refer to someone whose gender identity is not one of the binary genders (male or female).

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Equality Resources



To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender
Design by Landyn Pan



The Gender Unicorn

Don't be
TSER
Transgender Stigma Eraser



Gender Identity

Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)



Gender Expression/Presentation

Feminine
Masculine
Other



Sex Assigned at Birth

Female Male Other/Intersex

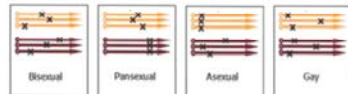


Sexually Attracted To

Women
Men
Other Gender(s)

Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To

Women
Men
Other Gender(s)



Remember, there are infinite possible ways someone can plot themselves and identify!

These are just a few examples. 😊

Their Voice...

PBS NewsHour: "The Quiet Revolution Behind the Word Transgender" – Alex Myer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWZYFVmquM>



Identity Characteristics

race

ethnicity

gender roles

gender identification

social class

sexual orientation

faith

political ideology

**FIXED:
"Either-Or"**

Identity Characteristics

race ethnicity gender roles
gender identification age
social class sexual orientation
faith political ideology

**FLUID:
Continuum or
"Spectrum"**

Why must we act? Because...

- 41% of transgender people will attempt suicide
- 75% have been verbally harassed at school in the past year
- 1 in 3 have been physically assaulted
- 50% have avoided going to school due to harassment
- 1 in 6 have left school due to harassment
- 60% experience family rejection

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- 75% have been verbally harassed at school in the past year
- 1 in 3 have been physically harmed
- 50% have avoided school due to harassment
- 1 in 4 have left school due to harassment
- 60% experience family rejection

**We all benefit from
a safe, inclusive environment...**

Why must we act? Because...

Stereotypes....

<https://storify.com/palomaalatorre/6-celebrities-that-break-the-stereotypes-they-fall>



The moment someone else defines who you are, they take away your power, story, and identity..

What are our responsibilities in supporting transgender and gender non-conforming youth?

- Communication
- Confidentiality
- FERPA
- Planning
- Our Role

What are our responsibilities? Communication....

Once a student or parent/guardian comes forward to District administration, faculty or staff identifying a student as transgender:

- Administration will work closely with the student and family in putting together an appropriate plan regarding how to proceed.
- Faculty and staff will be professionally supporting and be vigilant for signs of discrimination or bullying at school and home.
- Counselors should work closely with a student's teachers and family to communicate needs and ensure a student's feeling of safety.

What are our responsibilities?

Confidentiality...

- Students under the age of 18 are the responsibility of their parents. Health and safety issues must be brought to the attention of the parents.
- With students struggling with gender identity and expression issues, those issues should be handled through administration.
- There is no teacher/student, counselor/student, nurse/student confidentiality for students under 18 years.

What are our responsibilities?

FERPA...

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows district employees, including teachers, to have relevant information about a student on a need to know basis.
- Need to know means that you need to have the information to do your job.
- The determination about who to notify of a student's transgender status must be made on an individual basis based on the need to know.

What are our responsibilities?

Planning Support...

Issues which administration will address with the student and family when supporting a transgender or gender non-conforming student when developing a plan include:

- Confidentiality of status
- Student records
- How to refer to the student including name
- Which physical facilities will the student use
- State forms and gender reporting
- Athletics
- Any other gender based activities, rules, policies or practices

What are our responsibilities?

Our Role...

Teachers and staff are responsible for:

- Being vigilant for bullying or discriminatory behavior by staff, parents or other students either on campus or off campus.
- Being professional with all students despite personal belief.
- Implementing the plan the administration has created for the student.
- Actively seeking clarification as needed.

Thank you...

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