

# REFERENCE COPY

FILE: ACAE-AP1

**EXPLANATION: TRANSGENDER STUDENTS – *(Supporting Our Transgender Student Population)***

**The district requested this custom procedure. The district has not adopted MSBA’s supplemental policy ACAE (Transgender Students), and MSBA does not create procedures that are not associated with a current adopted policy.**

**MSBA strongly advises the district to: have its legal counsel review this drafted procedure; have the MSBA legal staff provide a legal review; and consider either adopting policy ACAE or associating the procedure with another policy, such as policy AC (Prohibition Against Illegal Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation).**

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## **TRANSGENDER STUDENTS** *(Supporting Our Transgender Student Population)*

When a student and/or parent(s) disclose the student is transgender or in the process of transitioning, the school and district response should be consistent to the extent possible while accounting for the individual circumstances of the student, and be centered on respecting the dignity of all students. Support will be provided from the district level to ensure compliance with BOE policy and that proper supports are in place.

### **Responding to Request for Support**

When a student or parent discloses to a staff member they are seeking advice or support (such as a change of records in SISK12 or access to restrooms, locker rooms, or athletics not based upon biological gender) as a transgender student or for social transition during the school day, the staff member should consider the following as appropriate based on the circumstances:

- Notify the school counselor of the conversation and/or request in a timely manner, typically the same day it is made.
- The counselor should assess the student for any concerns regarding mental health status (ex: depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts or ideation, etc.) if appropriate based on the circumstances.
- The counselor should notify the building principal, Director of Student Support Services and the Assistant Director of Family Support Services and Assessment for support from the district level.
- The counselor will serve as the MSHSAA (Missouri State High School Activities Association) liaison if the student is in an MSHSAA-sponsored activity or wishes to be in an MSHSAA activity. The MSHSAA liaison will then work with the building Activities Director to be sure that the student properly follows MSHSAA guidelines for participation in an activity.

District support will provide guidance based on the circumstances with regard to initiating parent contact in a timely manner, preferably that day, to discuss the request and invite the parent/guardian in for a conference scheduled with district support to discuss the following, as appropriate:

- Plan for partnering with the student, parent and school.
- Identify specific needs and supports regarding restroom and changing access as needed based on communication with the student's guardian.

- ▶ The district has gender neutral facilities that are easily accessible and available to all students.
- Discuss with the parent and student their preference regarding information sharing.
  - ▶ If appropriate, identify the "need to know" staff and communicate plan.
- Schedule follow-up contact with district support as needed.

### **Additional Considerations**

#### ***Sharing of Information***

- A student's gender identity is considered confidential information and therefore should not be shared without the consent of the student and parent. If consent is granted, the student's transgender status should only be shared with essential 'need-to-know' staff.
- Staff members who receive the information should not share and/or discuss with other staff that are not part of the essential 'need-to-know' staff unless there is an educational, health or safety reason to do so.

#### ***Addressing the Student***

- Depending upon the individual circumstance, some transgender students have a preferred gender neutral or opposite gender name they wish to be called.
- Unless the student's name is legally changed, SISK12 must reflect the student's given legal name. However, the student's 'preferred' name can be listed in SISK12.
- Teachers should indicate on a sub roster all students' preferred names such as; 'Johnathan' goes by 'John', 'Jennifer' goes by 'Zack', as well as the student's preferred pronouns, such as 'he/him/they/ze'.

#### ***Restroom and Dressing Area***

- Transgender students will be provided with access to gender neutral restrooms that are easily accessible and available to all students. They may use the gender neutral facilities or the facilities consistent with their sex assigned at birth as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- If the student is enrolled in Physical Education courses, the student may be provided with an alternate location to dress for class.

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FILE: ACAE-API

## *Transgender Students in Activities*

- The district will assist transgender students with their compliance with MSHSAA requirements for eligibility as outlined in the then current MSHSAA handbook.
- Transgender students wishing to compete should be directed to the district's MSHSAA liaison for further information.

## *Supporting the Social/Emotional Component*

- Consider communicating with the student's parent(s) regularly to determine if the family is seeking outside therapy/support for the student and/or family. If outside therapy is occurring, consider requesting a release of information be signed by the parent in order to obtain information to assist in the student's success at school.
- The counselor should meet/touch base with the student as appropriate based on the circumstances to ensure the student continues to feel safe and supported at school.
- Teachers and staff working with the student should be reminded to politely and respectfully encourage the student to speak to the counselor should the student approach them and want to engage in discussions about being transgender. They should also notify the counselor, as appropriate, if the student does initiate these types of conversation.
- Being transgender does not in itself represent a disability, but there may be a diagnosis such as depression and/or anxiety which would precipitate the need for a 504 referral.

## *Responding to Bullying/Harassment*

- All complaints of bullying and/or harassment will be handled pursuant to appropriate Board policies. A student's transgender status will not change the district's response to such complaints. Refer to BOE policies AC, ACA and/or JFCF.
- The student and parent(s) should be encouraged to report any/all concerns with bullying and/or harassment to either the counselor or administrator.
- The student's teachers should be reminded to immediately report to administration any verbal, nonverbal, or physical bullying/harassment in accordance with BOE policy.
- Each incident will be referred to the compliance officer, fully investigated, intervention taken, and complete documentation recorded as provided for in BOE policy.

**Key Vocabulary**

- Cisgender -- describes a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- Gender dysphoria -- clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.
- Gender expressions -- refers to the way a person shows gender, such as through clothing, hairstyles, or mannerisms.
- Gender fluid -- a person who does not identify with a single fixed gender or has a fluid or unfixed gender identity.
- Gender identity -- a person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of being a particular gender or being neither gender, regardless of the sex assigned to them at birth.
- Gender nonconforming -- describes people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations, such as "feminine" boys, "masculine" girls, and those who are perceived as androgynous. Other terms for this are "gender variant" or "gender queer."
- Non-binary -- an adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender fluid.
- Transgender -- describes people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth, but it can also be used to describe a broad range of identities and experiences that fall outside of traditional notions of gender.
- Transition -- describes the long, often complex process of changing one's birth-assigned sex to match his or her gender identity.

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***Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or forms for related information in this administrative area.***

Implemented:

Raytown C-2 School District, Raytown, Missouri