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Greetings!

Enclosed is a LGBTQ toolkit to be used as a resource guide to help our members to advocate for inclusion for students and school employees.

At the 2016 VEA Delegate Assembly, VEA passed a New Business Item (NBI) 24 which states *that the VEA goes beyond its resolution E-5, which proclaims that “the Association opposes discrimination on the basis of (...) gender, or sexual orientation or gender identification,” by having the Office of Field Support, Organizing, and Minority Engagement (OFSOME) develop a detailed action plan for educating and empowering locals to urge school boards and localities to adopt anti-discrimination policies inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students and school employees. This action plan would provide for an additional track at the Reggie Smith Organizing School that would train local leaders to develop, advocate for, and institute inclusive local policies for LGBTQ students and school employees.*

A work group of members and staff from across the Commonwealth developed the toolkit and created training modules to address the challenges of LGBTQ students and school employees.

The work group will continue to train “Promoting Inclusion for LGBTQ Students and School Employees” as well as serve as an action team available to assist locals to implement plans and develop sample policy language to propose to the local school division.

If you are interested in requesting the training or organizing a local team, please contact me directly at 800-648-5801 ext. 324 or email me at [nholmes@veanea.org](mailto:nholmes@veanea.org).

In Unity,

*Naila*

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## Promoting Inclusion for LGBTQ Students and School Employees

### INSIDE THIS TOOLKIT

Materials in this toolkit are designed to educate all those involved in public education about LGBTQ issues. Use as appropriate to help foster understanding and help make our schools a safer and more welcoming place.

- Terms and Definitions**  
A primer on terms and definitions surrounding LGBTQ issues
- Pronouns**  
An introduction to when and how to use gendered and non-gendered pronouns
- Student Information Systems**  
An overview to how divisions record and keep information and how to make it inclusive
- Sex-Segregated Spaces**  
An overview of the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission and the Virginia High School League concerning sex-segregated spaces
- Inclusive School Practices**  
An overview of relevant Family Life Curriculum SOLs, questions to ask about your school system, and resources to help make schools more inclusive
- Whom to Contact**  
A listing of sources for resources



## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Ally:** A term that describes a person who speaks out or takes actions on behalf of someone else or for a group that they are not a part of.

**Androgynous:** Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine.

**Asexual:** A term that describes a person who lacks sexual attraction or desire for other people.

**Bi:** Bisexual.

**Bisexual:** A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one sex, gender or gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

**Butch:** Commonly used to refer to masculinity displayed by a female, but can also refer to masculinity by a male.

**Cisgender:** A term that describes a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

**Coming Out:** The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others.

**Cultural Competence:** The ability to know one's culture and to interact effectively with people of different cultures. In a school this includes behaviors, attitudes, policies and structures that enable educators to work effectively cross-culturally.

## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Drag Queen/Drag King:** A man who dresses as a woman, typically as a performance. A woman who dresses as a man, typically as a performance. This is different from transgender (see definition below).

**FTM:** A term referring to a person, assigned female at birth, who identifies and lives as a male. See transgender boy or man.

**Gay:** A term that describes a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to some members of the same gender.

**Gender:** A person's internal sense of self as male, female, both or neither (gender identity), as well as one's outward presentation and behaviors (gender expression). Gender norms vary among cultures and over time.

**Gender Binary:** The idea that there are two distinct and opposite genders—male and female. This model is limiting and doesn't account for the full spectrum of gender identities and gender expressions.

**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.

**Gender Expression:** How a person expresses their gender through outward presentation and behavior. This includes, for example, a person's name, clothing, hairstyle, body language and mannerisms.

**Gender Identity:** An internal, deeply felt sense of being male, female, a blend of both or neither—how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same as or different from their sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Role:** A set of social and cultural beliefs or expectations about appropriate behavior for men/boys or women/girls. Gender roles can vary from culture to culture. Strict gender roles can limit a person's development.

**Gender Role Stereotyping:** Stereotypes based on social and cultural beliefs or expectations about appropriate behavior for men/boys or women/girls. This can limit children's aspirations, achievements and well-being.

**Gender Spectrum:** The broad range along which people identify and express themselves as gendered beings or not.

**Genderqueer:** People that typically reject the binary categories of gender, embracing a fluidity of gender identity. People who identify as "genderqueer" may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories.



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## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Gender Transition:** The process by which some people strive to more closely align their outward identity with the gender they know themselves to be. To affirm their gender identity, people may go through different types of transitions.

**Social transition:** This can include a name change, change in pronouns and change in appearance, clothes or hairstyle.

**Legal transition:** The process of updating identity documents, such as birth certificates and drivers' licenses, to reflect a person's authentic gender and name. Different states and localities have different rules, often making this process very challenging.

**Medical transition:** For children, this may include the use of hormone blockers to delay the onset of puberty. It may also include cross-sex hormones to induce a puberty that is more consistent with the child's gender identity, or for adults, to promote physical changes. It can also include gender affirmation surgery.

**Heteronormative:** The assumption of heterosexuality as the given or default sexual orientation instead of one of many possibilities, and that the preferred or default relationship is between two people of "opposite" genders.

**Heterosexism:** The attitude that heterosexuality is the only valid or "normal" sexual orientation. This can take the form of overt negative comments or actions towards LGBTQ people or subtle actions or assumptions that marginalize LGBTQ people.

**Heterosexual:** A term describing a person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people of a different gender. Also known as straight.

**Homophobia:** The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex or gender.

**Homosexual:** A term describing a person who is attracted to members of the same sex or gender. It is usually used in medical or scientific references.

**Intersex:** The term used for 2% of babies who are born with naturally occurring variations in chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and other sex characteristics.

**Lesbian:** A term describing a woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to some other women.

**LGBTQ:** An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning. Additions to this acronym can include A, for "asexual" or "ally," and I, for "intersex."



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## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**MTF:** A term referring to a person, assigned male at birth who identifies and lives as female. See transgender girl or woman.

**Non-binary:** An umbrella term for people who transcend commonly held concepts of gender through their own expression and identities. Other terms for this might include gender expansive, gender creative, or genderqueer. Some non-binary people also identify as Transgender.

**Outing:** Exposing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission.

**Pansexual:** A person who can be attracted to any sex, gender or gender identity.

**Queer:** A term some people use to identify themselves with a flexible and inclusive view of gender and/or sexuality. Also used interchangeably with LGBTQ to describe a group of people such as "queer youth." It is also seen in academic fields, such as queer studies or queer theory. Historically it has been used as a negative term for LGBTQ people. Some people still find the term offensive while some embrace the term as an identity.

**Sex:** One's biological and physical attributes—external genitalia, sex chromosomes and internal reproductive structures—that are used to assign someone as male or female at birth.

**Sex Assigned at Birth:** This is generally determined by external genitalia at birth—female, male or intersex.

**Sexual Orientation:** Describes a person's emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. Some examples of sexual orientations are gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual or pansexual.

**Sexuality:** Describes how one experiences and expresses one's self as a sexual being. It begins to develop in early childhood and continues over the course of one's lifetime.

**Straight:** A slang term for heterosexual.

**Trans:** Short for transgender.

**Transgender or Trans:** An umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth: A term used to describe people who identify as a different gender from the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation; transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.

**Transphobia:** The fear or hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people.

— Adapted from *Welcoming Schools: A Project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation*

<http://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/definitions/definitions-for-adults>



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## PRONOUNS

More and more of our students and colleagues are realizing that our traditional gender pronouns (he/him, she/her) aren't reflective of their gender identities. Sometimes, transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming and other gender-variant people use different pronouns for themselves. It is important that we do our best to use pronouns respectfully in our teaching and learning communities as part of how we provide a safe and secure learning environment for all.

### **How do I know which pronouns to use?**

When there is a reason to know, it is best to ask. If it is someone you interact with in passing, it is OK to avoid any reference to gender when speaking to or about them. For students, parents and colleagues you have on-going relationships with, it is appropriate to ask. Try:

- "What pronouns do you use?"
- "How would you like me to refer to you?"
- "My name is Bill and my pronouns are he and him. What about you?"

### **What if I make a mistake?**

A quick apology and correction when you make a mistake is appropriate, and models to everyone how to be respectful. Try: "Her lab station is—I'm sorry-- hir lab station is over there." If you realize the mistake after the fact, it is appropriate to apologize later. Try: "I'm really sorry I used the wrong pronoun. I'm going to be more careful from now on."

### **When should I correct others?**

Sometimes people appreciate when someone stands up for them, while other people don't want the attention drawn to them. When the person isn't there, a matter of fact correction is usually appropriate. Try: "I think Taylor uses he/him. But, yes, I am his English teacher!"

# PRONOUNS

## Gender Neutral Pronouns

Traditional/masculine	He	Him	His	Himself
Traditional/feminine	She	Her	Hers	Herself
Gender Neutral (they)	They	Them	Theirs	Themselves
Gender Neutral (ze)	Ze	Hir	Hirs	Hirself



## STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

### What is a Student Information System?

A Student Information System (SIS) is any computer program that collects and stores data about students, including data about student names, addresses, phone contact numbers, date of birth, place of birth, height, weight, parents or guardians, gender/sex, grades, assessments, attendance, IEP information, transcripts, athletic participation, and course registration. According to the Code of Virginia § 22.1-287, this information “may be publicly released in accordance with federal law and regulations and the regulations of the Board of Education.”

### Why do Student Information Systems matter?

Since Student Information Systems must have a legal name and gender. This is data collected from a student’s birth certificate. In order to change “sex” on a birth certificate, a person must have a “verified medical procedure.” There is no provision for gender on a birth certificate. According to FERPA-34 Code of Regulations Section 99.7 (A)(2)(ii), Parents or eligible students (those who are over 18 years of age) have the right to “...seek amendment of student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation to the student’s privacy rights.” In order to make changes, SISs need a way to make changes in the system; most SISs do not have this capability. In addition to issues of a student’s name and gender, most SISs do not have ways to include two fathers or two mothers in their systems; therefore, the person or people who enter data into these systems do not have a way to input legal family information for all students.

## STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

### **What are some questions that one should ask school systems about Student Information Systems?**

Does the SIS software for the school system allow for changes in students' names or the pronouns used when referring to the student?

Can the SIS list parents and guardians so that all "non-traditional" family members can be included in the SIS?

Does the SIS make whom to contact in what order clear? Does it include information relating to divorced parents, families with step-parents who are directly involved with the student, and any important custody issues that are important when contacting parents or guardians?

If the SIS for the school system has the capabilities to make changes or to include all family members, does the school system employ this capability when creating student records?

Does the school system inform students that they can change their records after they turn eighteen according to FERPA?



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## SEX-SEGREGATED SPACES

### Bathrooms and Locker Rooms

There is no clear legal guidance related to student access to restroom and locker rooms. However, there are rulings from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3795.pdf>), related to staff access to rest rooms.

In *Macy v. Dep't of Justice*, the EEOC ruled in a federal sector appellate case that discrimination based on transgender status is sex discrimination in violation of Title VII.

In *Lusardi v. Dep't of the Army*, also a federal sector appeal, the EEOC held that:

1. a federal agency that denied an employee equal access to a common bathroom/facility corresponding to the employee's gender identity discriminated on the basis of sex;
2. the agency could not condition this right on the employee undergoing or providing proof of surgery or any other medical procedure; and
3. the agency could not avoid the requirement to provide equal access to a common bathroom/facility by restricting a transgender employee to a single-user restroom instead (though the employer can make a single-user restroom available to all employees who might choose to use it).

## SEX-SEGREGATED SPACES

### Sports Teams

VHSL policy (<http://www.vhsl.org/doc/upload/eligibility-transgender-rule-criteria.pdf>) allows transgender students to participate on sports teams consistent with their gender identity when at least one of the following criteria is met:

- A. For a student-athlete who has undergone sex reassignment before puberty. –
- B. For any student who is verified by appropriate medical documentation as having a consistent identity different than the gender listed on the student’s official birth certificate or school registration records.
- C. For any student where hormonal therapy appropriate for the assigned sex has been administered in a verifiable manner and for a sufficient length of time to minimize gender-related advantages in sports competition.



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## INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

### Virginia SOLs

#### 22.1-207.1 Family Life Education

1. The Virginia Standards of Learning for Family Life includes references stating that the range of human sexuality and that “human sexuality,” “dating, violence, the characteristics of abusive relationships” are to be taught at least once in middle school and twice in high school, and that the curriculum should include information about preventing and responding to sexual assault, preventing and responding to sexual harassment and sexual violence, accepting others’ points of view, and identifying effects of discrimination (esp. on families).

From the Introduction to the Family Life SOLs (edited to delete information not applicable to LGBT issues):

The following guidelines shall be followed in the implementation of the Family Life Education program developed locally.

A. The Family Life Education program developed locally shall be comprehensive and sequential and include the following content areas and may include others at the discretion of the local school board:

3. Human sexuality;
5. The etiology, prevention, and effects of sexually transmitted infections;
6. Stress management and resistance to peer pressure;
7. Development of positive self-concepts and respect for others;
12. Dating violence and the characteristics of abusive relationships including using electronic devices to convey inappropriate images and behaviors

The Family Life SOLs have no mention of curriculum supportive of LGBTQ students, however.

Many school systems have adopted policies that outline the inclusion of LGBTQ students and their rights in schools. Some of these are included in the resources section.

## INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

### Questions

- Do school climate inventories ask students demographic information, and does that info include LGBTQ identity?
- Are trainings offered/made available that empower teachers/administrators/support staff to support LGBTQ students?
- Is there a visible ally network for LGBTQ students? What are the requirements for belonging to that network?
- Is there a person or set of people who help LGBTQ students navigate the bureaucracy of student info systems, sex-segregated spaces, etc.?
- Can school climate inventories ask students demographic information, and does that information include LGBTQ identity?
- Since the Family Life SOLs do not define this, can school boards clarify what it means to talk about the range of human sexuality?
- Can we clarify all the ways that sexual harassment manifests?
- What does it mean when we teach students to be accepting of others' points of view/ways of life?
- How is Family Life implemented, and do localities have language addressing the support of LGBTQ students and family structures in curriculum?

### Resources

#### Virginia SOLs for the Family Life Curriculum

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/family\\_life/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/family_life/index.shtml)

#### NEA

"National Training Program on Safety, Bias, and GLBT Issues"

A document that explains the training offered by the NEA.

<http://www.nea.org/home/Training-Program-GLBT-Issues.html>

#### LGBTQ students' rights in California

<https://www.aclunc.org/our-work/know-your-rights/lgbtq-students>

#### Teaching Tolerance Resources

##### LGBT Best Practices

A document that outlines the best practices for a LGBTQ inclusive school environment that includes links for additional resources including the following:

<http://www.tolerance.org/lgbt-best-practices>



## INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES

### Responding to Hate and Bias at School

A Teaching Tolerance guide that shows educators how to respond to a hate related incident in their school or community and guides them through crisis management and post-crisis efforts at improvement.

<http://www.tolerance.org/publication/responding-hate-and-bias-school>

### Speak Up at School

A Teaching Tolerance guide that gives educators the tools to help students and themselves turn from bystanders to upstanders and explains how to respond to biased remarks from peers, parents or even administrators.

<http://www.tolerance.org/publication/speak-school>

### Examining Your School's Climate

A questionnaire to begin the process of assessing your school climate.

<http://www.tolerance.org/map-it-out>

### Glossary of Terms

A quick-guide to improve your LGBT vocabulary.

<http://www.tolerance.org/LGBT-best-practices-terms>

### Ten Tips for Starting a GSA

These 10 simple steps can help make a GSA's launch successful.

<http://www.tolerance.org/10-tips-GSA>

### Common Roadblocks

Learn how to constructively respond to common objections to LGBT-inclusive policies.

[http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/tt\\_common\\_roadblocks\\_o.pdf](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/tt_common_roadblocks_o.pdf)

### **New York City's School Board Policy on Transitioning Students**

A document that outlines ways NYC schools can implement the NYC policy on transitioning students.

[http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg\\_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact/documents/Transg_GNCGuidanceFINAL.pdf)



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## WHOM TO CONTACT

### **Equality Virginia**

530 E. Main St., Suite 600  
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Email: [info@equalityvirginia.org](mailto:info@equalityvirginia.org)  
<http://www.equalityvirginia.org/>

### **GLSEN Richmond**

P.O. Box 25478  
Richmond, VA. 23260  
Email: [richmond@chapters.glsen.org](mailto:richmond@chapters.glsen.org)  
<https://www.glsen.org/chapters/richmond>

### **GLSEN Northern Virginia**

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<https://www.glsen.org/chapters/nova>

### **Hampton Roads Pride**

P.O. Box 41082  
Norfolk, VA 23541-1082  
Email: [info@hamptonroadspride.org](mailto:info@hamptonroadspride.org)  
<http://www.hamptonroadspride.org/>

### **NOVA Pride**

7918 Jones Branch Dr., Suite 300  
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<https://www.novapride.org/>

### **Side by Side**

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