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Title	EQUITY-CENTERED SEXUAL IDENTITY AND GENDER INCLUSIVE POLICY
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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Equity-Centered Sexual Identity and Gender Inclusive policy is to ensure that all members of the school community, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, feel safe, respected, and supported in their educational environment. This policy aims to foster a culture of inclusivity, equity, and diversity within the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) by addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and expanding identity (LGBTQIA+) faculty and staff.

Educational Equity, as defined by Fraser (2008) and the Great Lakes Equity Center (2018), serves as the guiding principle of this policy. Educational Equity emphasizes the creation of an educational environment where policies, practices, interactions, and resources are accessible, representative, and responsive to all individuals. It seeks to empower every staff member towards self-determination and reduce disparities in outcomes, irrespective of individual characteristics and cultural identities.

MCCSC recognizes the importance of protecting the rights of LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff as part of its commitment to Educational Equity. Ensuring a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff not only aligns with the district's values of respect and diversity but also enhances the overall well-being and academic success of all students. By implementing comprehensive policies and practices that affirm the identities and experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals, MCCSC aims to create a school community where every member can thrive and reach their full potential.

Core Beliefs and Commitments

Every MCCSC faculty and staff member deserves a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment in which their identity is valued and contributes to successful educational experiences and outcomes. It is imperative that we identify and eliminate organizational barriers that create disadvantages for students and families while advantaging others. The Board of School Trustees and educators of MCCSC commit to providing a high-quality education and responsive learning environment for every student regardless of their race, zip code, sexual orientation, gender identity, first language, ability, or country of origin.

We believe that MCCSC can achieve Educational Equity by adhering to the following beliefs and by aligning our MCCSC policies and practices with these beliefs:

- We believe that it is our responsibility and moral obligation to recognize and challenge biases, discrimination, and racism in our schools and community.
- We believe that our cultural identity, attitudes, perceptions, and cultural competence significantly influence our teaching and our own practices.
- We believe that our diversity is our strength and our schools are stronger when educators recognize, value and represent the voice and perspectives of our historically marginalized and underrepresented students and staff of color and other diverse groups.
- We believe that all students will succeed in our schools and pursue their aspirations when they have full access to opportunities and the on-going systemic support they need.
- We believe in supporting high achievement by building upon cultural strengths and assets that are inherent within each student.
- We believe that positive outcomes are possible when systemic barriers are deliberately removed and the efforts are sustained.

Definitions

Understanding definitions related to equity-centered sexual identity and gender inclusiveness is crucial, as these terms are ever-changing, personal, and subjective. Here are a few examples of terms that highlight the diverse experiences and identities within the LGBTQIA+ community.

- **Assigned Female/Male At Birth (AFAB/AMAB):** Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB) and Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB) describe the gender given to a person at birth based on physical anatomy. These terms acknowledge that this assigned gender may not match a person's true gender identity.
- **Cisgender:** A term used to describe individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Deadnaming:** The act of calling a transgender person by an incorrect name; often the name they were given at birth and no longer use.
- **Gender-Affirming Care:** Medical, psychological, or social support provided to transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals to affirm their gender identity.
- **Gender Dysphoria:** Distress or discomfort that may occur when an individual's gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Gender Expression:** The way in which an individual expresses their gender identity to others, often through clothing, behavior, hairstyle, voice, or body characteristics, which may not always align with their actual gender identity.
- **Gender Inclusive:** An approach that respects and supports all gender identities and expressions, ensuring everyone feels welcome and represented.
- **Gender Identity:** This refers to an individual's deeply held sense of their own gender, which may be male, female, a blend of both, neither, or another gender entirely. It is a personal and internal experience that may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. Gender identity can influence how individuals perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others. It is distinct from sexual orientation, which pertains to an individual's romantic or sexual attraction to others.
- **Gender Nonconforming:** Describes a behavior or gender expression that does not conform to societal expectations or norms associated with one's assigned sex at birth. A person of any gender identity can be gender nonconforming if they do not adhere to traditional gender roles or stereotypes in their appearance, behavior, or interests.
- **Intersectionality:** Intersectionality is a way of understanding how different aspects of a person's identity, like race, gender, and class, intersect to shape their experiences of discrimination and privilege.
- **Romantic Orientation:** Romantic orientation refers to the gender(s) that a person is romantically attracted to, involving emotional connections and the desire for romantic relationships. Similar to sexual orientation, it includes heteroromantic (attraction to a different gender), homoromantic (same gender), biromantic (both the same and different genders), aromantic (little or no romantic attraction), and panromantic (regardless of gender).
- **Sexual Orientation:** A person's romantic or sexual attraction to others. This can include but is not limited to heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, pansexuality, and asexuality.
- **Transgender:** A term used to describe individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- **Use of Pronouns:** The practice of using pronouns that correspond to an individual's gender identity, such as he/him, she/her, or they/them, to show respect and acknowledgment of their identity. This practice promotes inclusivity and affirms the person's gender expression.

Source: These definitions are created from a composite of resources such as The Trevor Project, GLSEN, The Human Rights Commission, and Learning for Justice. These organizations contribute to a collective understanding by providing insights, research, and advocacy within the LGBTQIA+ community, helping to shape and refine definitions over time.

Objectives

The equity-centered sexual identity and gender inclusive policy aims to create a framework that promotes fairness, inclusivity, and respect for individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities. This policy is designed to address systemic inequalities and discrimination faced by marginalized communities, ensuring equal access to opportunities, services, and protections regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Through proactive measures and comprehensive guidelines, this policy seeks to foster a culture of acceptance, dignity, and support for diverse identities within institutions and society at large. Our policy strives to accomplish the following:

1. To ensure **representation** regarding sexual identity and gender inclusiveness through accurately depicting individuals across the spectrum of orientations and identities; fostering inclusion, validating experiences, and promoting understanding and equity.
2. To ensure **access** for all faculty and staff through providing fair opportunities and resources to all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, that involves removing barriers to healthcare, education, and other essential services, so every individual can fully participate in school and society.
3. To foster **meaningful participation** in schools so that every individual's voice is actively engaged while creating inclusive environments where diverse perspectives are valued and respected.
4. To achieve **positive outcomes** for all faculty and staff, regardless of sexual identity or gender orientation by providing equitable opportunities and support systems that when implemented, foster success and well-being.

Implementation

Implementation of this policy ensures an inclusive and safe school environment requiring a multifaceted approach centered on access, inclusivity, representation, and ongoing professional learning for teachers, with a specific focus on supporting faculty and staff in the LGBTQIA+ community. By prioritizing these elements, schools can create an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and supported in their educational journey. The subsequent sections outline the key focus areas involved in implementing these measures.

A. Inclusive and Safe School Environment

1. **Discrimination, bullying, harassment, and bias** - These are strictly prohibited at MCCSC, encompassing all forms of mistreatment toward faculty and staff based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This commitment is reinforced through robust reporting mechanisms, comprehensive faculty and staff support, and measures aimed at safeguarding faculty and staff within the school community.
2. **Reporting** - MCCSC will continue to provide a simple, transparent, anonymous, and accessible safe reporting system to make it clear that any discrimination, bias, bullying and harassment of faculty and staff on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression will not be tolerated. MCCSC will implement guidelines that include education as well as clear and timely procedures for responding to reports.
3. **Protection of Faculty and Staff** - MCCSC will prioritize the protection and support of faculty and staff by providing resources, training, and guidelines to ensure their ability to facilitate inclusive discussions and navigate potentially sensitive topics with confidence and respect.

B. Access

Ensuring access for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff is essential for fostering an inclusive and equitable work environment. This involves more than just physical spaces; it includes access to resources, support, and opportunities without fear of discrimination. Providing gender-neutral restrooms, inclusive policies, and support services tailored to the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ adults is crucial. By actively removing barriers and promoting inclusivity, we can create a workplace culture where all LGBTQIA+ employees feel safe, valued, and empowered to succeed both professionally and personally.

C. Inclusivity and Representation

1. **Curriculum** - MCCSC will commit to adopting curricular resources that are inclusive and representative of our student body and community. This will allow for discussion that is inclusive of all individuals.
2. **Learning Environment** - MCCSC will cultivate a learning environment that celebrates diversity and fosters respect for all individuals, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Schools will ensure that the environment fosters a sense of belonging, an opportunity for student voice, and is safe and affirming by creating opportunities and removing barriers for faculty and staff who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community.
3. **Diversity of staff** - MCCSC is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse staff that reflects the student population, including individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+.
4. **Protection of pronouns/name changes** - MCCSC will respect and honor an individuals' chosen names and pronouns. The protection of name changes and pronouns will be recognized and followed within the guidelines of current federal and state laws. Future guidelines related to this policy will outline procedures for responding to current laws.

D. Professional Learning for Teachers and Staff

MCCSC will provide ongoing professional development opportunities from both students and experts in the field for teachers and staff to enhance their understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities, cultivate inclusive classrooms, and effectively address issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. MCCSC will include professional learning that is inclusive of LGBTQIA+ individuals with multiple intersecting identities, for example, LGBTQIA+ individuals of color or LGBTQIA+ individuals with disabilities, as these individuals often endure additional forms of discrimination and stigma.

Accountability and Monitoring

Accountability and monitoring of MCCSC's LGBTQIA+ policy is essential to ensure effective implementation and continued impact. Regular assessments, feedback mechanisms, and transparent reporting help track progress, identify areas for improvement, and hold stakeholders accountable for upholding the principles of inclusion and equity. MCCSC will develop and implement guidelines to ensure the effective implementation of this policy and monitor compliance.

To ensure effective implementation and sustainability, the Superintendent or designee will develop a plan that specifies the problem being addressed, the district's current status, professional development, and success targets for each area.

The Board of School Trustees of MCCSC recognizes the imperative to address negative behaviors toward members of the LGBTQIA+ community in order to consistently and decisively uphold the purpose and objectives of its policies. In alignment with Policy 3122, 3362, 4122, and 4362, MCCSC is committed to vigorously enforcing prohibitions against discrimination and harassment based on sexual

orientation, gender identity, or expression, with zero tolerance for staff engaging in such conduct. Disciplinary actions, including termination, may be taken upon violation of this policy, ensuring due process and considering circumstances and maturity levels involved. Additionally, where such harassment is not proven, MCCSC may still consider disciplinary actions in line with other policies. All disciplinary measures will adhere to state law, corporation policy, and relevant collective bargaining agreements. In cases where prior remedial actions have been taken, subsequent sanctions by the School Board and/or Superintendent aim to effectively deter such behavior in the future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Equity-Centered Sexual Identity and Gender Inclusive policy of MCCSC is designed to uphold the principles of Educational Equity by fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all faculty and staff. By actively addressing and removing barriers that create disadvantages for individuals of the LGBTQIA+ community, the policy not only aligns with the district's core values of respect and diversity but also enhances the educational experiences and outcomes for everyone. MCCSC is committed to ensuring that every member of its community, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or other individual characteristics, feels valued and supported. Through the implementation of comprehensive and affirming policies, MCCSC strives to empower all faculty and staff towards self-determination and professional success, thereby creating a thriving and equitable school community.

Related Board Policies

- [-Monroe County Community School Corporation Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#)
- [-Policy 2260 Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity](#)
- [-Policy 3518 Anti-Racism Professional Staff](#)
- [-Policy 4518 Anti-Racism Support Staff](#)
- [-Policy 5517 Anti-harassment](#)
- [-Policy 5517.01 Bullying](#)
- [-Policy 5600 Student Discipline](#)
- [-Policy 8400 School Safety](#)
- [-Student Handbook Statement on Anti-Racism Microaggression](#)
- [-Resolution 2021-10 Social Justice](#)
- [-Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
- [-Resolution 2023-07 Serving LGBTQIA+ Students](#)

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Resources

1. **ADL Resource LGBTQIA+:**
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2. **Great Lakes Equity Center:**
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3. **Human Rights Campaign:**
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4. **Learning for Justice:**
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5. **National Education Association (NEA):**

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6. **The Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network (GLSEN):**

GLSEN. (2019). *Championing LGBTQ issues in K-12 education since 1990*. GLSEN. <https://www.glsen.org/>

7. **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)-The Monroe County Branch:**

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8. **The Trevor Project Website:**

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- The Justice Department. (2021, August 17). Federal Government Back-to-School Address for Transgender Students. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGHtoBJMcgU>
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10. **Welcoming Schools.org:**

Welcoming Schools. (n.d.). Welcoming Schools. <https://welcomingschools.org/>