TRANSGENDER QUESTIONS

Important Information for you to Know:
- By federal law, the School is prohibited from disclosing any student’s personal information with members of the public. This includes answering questions about whether a transgender student is enrolled in the School or at a specific building.
- School policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender conformity.
- It is expected that school employees treat all students fairly and provide all students with equal access to educational programs and activities.
- Any requests for information about transgender students, policies, etc. should be sent to administration.

East Middle School

Legal Questions:

1. What is the legal requirement of administration to identify the transgender students and to relay that information to the teachers? BCSC allows name changes with a letter from the student’s parent(s) and a letter from a health care professional. These letters must both be submitted before a change is made in PowerSchool. In the year the change takes place we will notify the teachers. Once the change in PowerSchool, etc. has taken place, there would be no further notification of future teachers unless requested by the parent and/or student.

2. What is the legal protocol for a student deciding to change his/her name? BCSC allows name changes with a letter from the student’s parent(s) and a letter from a health care professional. These letters must both be submitted before a change is made in PowerSchool.

BCSC Policy Questions: BCSC is working to develop policy that reflects the answers of this document.

1. What is the BCSC policy regarding restroom and locker room usage for transgender students? It is BCSC practice that Transgender students can use the restroom of their choice.

Logistical Questions:

1. How do teachers determine which restroom the student should use? (4) Teacher will not make the determination; the student can use the restroom of their choice.

Revised 1/3/18 kj
2. **What is the best way to approach a name change during the course of the school year to the rest of the class?** This is a conversation that should happen with the student and the counselor. The name change will, in most cases, happen with no announcement to the class. If students ask about the name change, the teacher would respond along the lines of, “Jessica is her name. Please be sure that is the name you are calling her.”

3. **How does the transgender situation affect sporting events (i.e., locker room changing, teams, etc.)?** For sporting events, IHSAA has guidelines for schools to follow. We will follow those same rules at the middle school. As far as locker rooms and changing, fully transitioned students will be allowed to use the dressing room of their gender. Students who are not fully transitioned will be allowed an alternate dressing location.

4. **What do groups do about uniforms (i.e., orchestra, band, choir, sports, etc.) when they fit differently and are gender specific?** The uniform that matches the student’s chosen gender should be offered.

5. **What does the choir do about singing parts that are gender specific (i.e., student identifies as gender A but can only sing the parts for gender B)?** ISSMA has developed rules regarding transgender students and singing parts. Students should be placed in singing groups according to their vocal ranges, not their gender.

**West Middle School**

**Legal Questions:**

1. **Can we legally call a student by his/her preferred name with no other background information or legal paperwork?** BCSC allows name changes with a letter from the student’s parent(s) and a letter from a health care professional. Both must be submitted before a change is made in PowerSchool. Once that is completed, the name/gender in PowerSchool should be used.

2. **What is the legal liability for employees using the wrong pronouns or names with transgender students? (2)** It is the employee’s professional responsibility to follow the expectations and guidelines set forth. (Please see the question and answer above for additional guidance.) The consequences in this case could depend on if this is the first time and/or the intent in calling the student the wrong name/pronoun.

3. **What is the legal requirement for following the student’s wishes and the parent’s wishes regarding the name change as well as the gender change?** Which do we follow: student or parent? This is a parental choice; they are involved in this process.

**BCSC Policy Questions:** BCSC is working to develop policy that reflects the answers of this document.

Revised 1/3/18 kj
1. **What is the BCSC policy on informing employees that a student is transgender?** In the year the change takes place we will notify the teachers. Once the change in PowerSchool, etc. has taken place, further notification would be done on a case by case basis at the discretion of the school counselor.

2. **What is the BCSC policy on transitioning transgender students to BHS (i.e., counselors, teams, etc.)?** The middle school counselors will work with the student and their family on the initial transition to the high school. Once the high school counselor has been brought on board, the high school counselor will begin to work with the student to make the transition to BHS.

3. **What is the BCSC policy on consistency between EMS, WMS, and BHS in terminology and policy?** It is our belief that terminology and policy should be the same between the middle schools and high school. This document assists in communicating a coherent plan.

4. **How is the district handling the situation?** BCSC is working to create an environment which is accepting of all students.

5. **How early is the situation being dealt with and addressed within our schools?** We are dealing with situations as we become aware of them.

**Logistical Questions:**

1. **How do we handle students who want to be called by a different name?** We expect staff to call students by the name in PowerSchool. It is fine for teachers to call students by a commonly accepted nickname – Kim or Kimmy for Kimberly, Alex or Xander for Alexander, etc.

2. **How do we handle restroom issues? (4)** Transgender students can use the restroom of their choice.

3. **How do we explain transgender student situations to the other students?** Teachers do not need to explain transgender situations to other students. If students want to talk about transgender topics, they can speak with their counselor.

4. **What do we do with the parent complaints regarding restroom usage by transgender students?** Send the concerns/complaints to administration.

5. **How do we avoid students “claiming” they are x gender to use a different restroom?** If there are students you feel are abusing this, please contact administration.

Revised 1/3/18 kj
6. **How do we avoid the restroom use becoming a distraction?** If the use of bathrooms is a distraction, please contact administration to discuss your concerns.

7. **How do we address the “pronoun” issue?** (2) It is our expectation that teachers use the pronoun associated with the gender as it appears in PowerSchool. If they/them is requested, we expect that pronoun to be used as well.

8. **Can we still split the class into boys and girls (i.e., Pacer Test)?** Yes. However, a transgender student would be placed with their identified gender. Staff are encouraged to consider other ways of dividing students rather than always using gender – alpha order, birth month, etc.

**Awareness/Informational Questions:**

1. **What does transfluid mean?** This gender identity is described as a mix between male and female. People who are transfluid report feeling more male at times and at other times more female.

2. **Can you review terminology and how to properly use it?** Specific terminology is needed to answer this question.

3. **How do we help educate and support while still respecting that this issue can be controversial?** Our expectation is that staff is supportive of all of our students. As we understand it is a controversial issue, we feel it is best to not attempt to educate students about transgender issues.

4. **What are some suggestions for the struggles with culture and with handling situations with transgender students?** We should strive to create a culture that is tolerant of all students and their differences.

5. **What are some suggestions for handling the students who do not understand and/or the parents who wish for their child/children not to learn or to be exposed to these topics?** We understand there are parents and students who do not want to learn about or be exposed to these topics. As stated above, we do not expect staff to educate about these topics. Rather, we expect for our staff to demonstrate and encourage respectful behavior.

6. **Will there be an LGBTQ club?** There is currently an Equality Alliance Club at the high school, however, it does not provide counselor directed support. An Equality Alliance Club could be started at the middle school level based on student interest and sponsor interest.

Revised 1/3/18 kj
7. How much of the transgender behavior is attention seeking behavior? This question is difficult to answer as attention seeking behavior is based on individual actions not the actions of a group.
High School

Legal Questions:

1. How do we legally deal with a student telling us not to reveal their transgender identification to their parents? Staff members who are told by a student they are transgender and have not told their parents should encourage the student to discuss this with either their guidance counselor or an administrator. If the staff member is concerned about the welfare and/or does not believe the student will seek out the counselor or administrator, the staff member should contact the counselor or administrator immediately.

2. What is our legal responsibility in keeping gender choices and names from parents (per student’s request) especially if the student is a minor? Changing a student name and/or gender in PowerSchool is a parental choice; they are involved in this process. Staff members are required to call students by the name listed in PowerSchool.

3. When contacting parents, which name do we use: legal or requested? The name listed in PowerSchool is the name you should use.

4. Legally, do we go with the parental choice on name/gender or the student’s choice? The name in PowerSchool should be used.

5. What are the legal expectations required by teachers when working with a transgender student/parent(s)? Are they merely suggestions, or are they requirements by law? If this question is referring to the name of a student – the name in PowerSchool should be used; this BCSC practice based on current case law.

6. Are teachers required to call the student by his/her preferred gender? The name/gender in PowerSchool should be used.

7. What legal consequence would a teacher receive if accidentally calling a student by the wrong name/pronoun especially if the student is explosive and reports the incident or if the situation leads to their self-harm or their reporting of my action? It is your professional responsibility to follow the expectations and guidelines set forth by the school district. The consequences in this case could depend on if this is the first time and/or the intent in calling the student the wrong name/pronoun.

8. What legal documentation is required by the student who is transgender (i.e., name change, etc.)? BCSC allows name changes with a letter from the student’s parent(s) and a letter from a health care professional. These letters must both be submitted before a change is made in PowerSchool.

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9. Because of the medication aspect for some transitioning transgender students, is a 504 plan warranted in these cases? What is the legal responsibility? 504 plans are investigated on a case by case basis. Just because a student is on medication does not require them to be on a 504 plan.

10. What are the legal implications if the student has not made us aware of the change or we do not know of the change? We can only deal with what we are aware of.

BCSC Policy Questions: BCSC is working to develop policy that reflects the answers of this document.

1. How will the corporation respond to those who believe transgender issues reveal a level of mental illness? If a staff member feels a student has any mental health issue they should be contacting the student’s counselor. Staff members should not confront students regarding what they believe could be a mental illness. They should refer all concerns of this nature to the counselor or administration.

2. What is the policy on teachers taking the student’s cue to call him/her by a different name if there is no office/administrative directive? Do we honor that as a corporation? (12) We expect staff to call students by the name in PowerSchool. It is fine for teachers to call students by a commonly accepted nickname – Kim or Kimmy for Kimberly, Alex or Xander for Alexander, etc.

3. What is the BCSC policy on overnight trips and the transgender students? For example, what is the policy on parents (or students) who demand that their children room with students of the opposite sex? (6) BCSC will not allow students of opposite birth gender to room together during overnight trips. Alternatives will be discussed well in advance of any trip and can include, but not limited to: rooming alone, rooming with a parent, etc.

4. Does BCSC provide support groups for transgender students? We don’t have any specific support group, but the Quality Alliance Club is available for students. This group, however, does not provide counselor directed support.

5. What is the process or requirements for changing names of transgender students in Power School? Can Power School be marked to identify parent knowledge or lack of knowledge in the change to the student’s name? The name is only changed in Power School if we have a parent letter and letter from a medical professional.

6. If there is no change of name/gender in Power School or no support from home in making this change, how does BCSC proceed? Is there a policy in place? (8) Same question as above

Revised 1/3/18 kj
7. What is the policy on informing parents of the change? Who informs the parent? There would be no change without parent involvement.

8. What are the bus seating policies? (4) Currently, we have worked through each bus situation on a case by case basis. Typically, the school counselor or administrator works with the Transportation Department to develop a solution.

9. What if a student identifying as the opposite gender wants to be in a sport of the opposite gender? Does BCSC policy allow for this? The IHSAA has guidelines for schools to follow regarding this. BCSC will follow these guidelines. ISSMA also has guidelines regarding transgender students. BCSC will follow these guidelines.

10. How are transgender students identified in our school data sub groups: by birth gender or assumed gender? Birth gender

11. What is the policy on dressing room assignments for transgender students? (2) Fully transitioned students will be allowed to use the dressing room of their gender. Students who are not fully transitioned will be allowed an alternate dressing location.

12. What is the policy on informing teachers about the students who are identified as transgender? In the year the change takes place, once we have parent permission, we then notify the teachers. Once the change in PowerSchool, etc. has taken place, there would be no further notification of future teachers unless requested by the student and/or parents.

13. What is the policy on giving teachers as much information on the student as possible so as to avoid potential problems? We provide teachers with the information that is necessary. If there are additional concerns/issues, those should be addressed with the building administrators.

Logistical Questions:

1. Are transgender students allowed to inform classes about personal experiences through classroom writing or speaking? Like all students, transgender students can write about whatever topic they choose given the teacher instructions. However, as a teacher you have a choice on how you allow students to share their work. If the assignment is a speech, within parameters, the student can address what is considered appropriate. For example, a student might give a speech on racism, woman’s equal rights, etc. and that is fine. So a transgender student talking about transgender topics is appropriate. There are some topics we wouldn’t permit any student to talk about in an assignment or a speech such as intercourse, etc.

2. What are the restroom policies? (4) Transgender students can use the restroom of their choice.

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3. Can the Senior Academy have a restroom for transgender students as many go to the clinic and miss class? We do not plan to change any restrooms in the Senior Academy. As the renovations continue at BHS, there will be additional single person and/or family restrooms. These restrooms will be available for anyone to use during the school day.

4. What do we do with students who are transgender who use one restroom one day and the other restroom the next day? Teachers should make the counselor aware of this and the counselor will have conversation as to why this is happening.

5. Are we allowed to use the student’s last name only? We have agreed to this for the 2017-2018 school year, but moving forward it is our expectation the student will be called by the first name listed in PowerSchool.

6. Can teachers refuse to call the student by his/her preferred name? Staff members need to call students by name in PowerSchool.

7. In classes where guest speakers come in to speak on gender specific topics, where do we send the transgender student (i.e., health topics)? This situation should be discussed between the teacher/counselor and the student to determine what session is the most appropriate.

8. There are labels for restrooms in the building. Will there be labels for a specific transgender restroom...or a family restroom be designated for them? There are no planned changes for the restrooms. As the renovations continue at BHS, there will be additional single person and/or family restrooms. These restrooms will be available for anyone to use during the school day.

Awareness/Informational Questions:

1. Where is the line drawn on “pleasing” students and their beliefs? It is our job to make all students feel welcome and accepted in the public school environment.

2. What questions are acceptable to ask of transgender students? The same questions that are acceptable to ask any other students are acceptable to ask a transgender student. Asking why they are transgender— not appropriate.

3. What is the correct way to approach a transgender student when asking questions? Ask a question the same way you would address any other student. Imagine asking this same question and trading transgender for African American or female, or special education.

4. How many students at BHS are transgender? This number has the potential to change.
5. Where do we send students for help or questions on this topic? School Counselor

6. How much goes into finding the validity of transgender claims? If a parent tells us their student is transgender, we require a letter from the parent and one from a medical professional.

7. Are we ignoring what many high level health institutions are saying regarding the allowance of transgenderism in students under the age of 18? That’s not our decision / place to make that decision.

8. How do teachers break from their personal biases and beliefs so that we can best serve our students? We know this is a difficult topic for some staff members, however, when you work in a public school, you sign up to follow the law and the policies/practices of that organization and that might mean following practices that are different than your beliefs.

9. What feedback and information has been received from the transgender students? They appreciate teachers who are accepting and supporting of them. They feel dehumanized by teachers they perceive as not being accepting or who continue to use the wrong pronouns or names. Non-transgender students in classrooms with transgender students have stated they feel uncomfortable in classrooms where teachers are not accepting. For example, teachers that call students by their last name, don’t use correct pronouns, don’t speak to the student or acknowledge them, etc.

10. How do we address other students who are uncomfortable, who laugh, who call names, etc.? (5) This is bullying and should be dealt with in the manner we deal with other bullying situations.

11. Are teachers the only ones being told to be patient with transgender students, or are students being told as well? We have an expectation that all students will treat each other with respect.

12. How do we deal with a student exploding in anger with being called the wrong name or gender? If it’s the fifth time this week the staff member has messed up the pronoun, then the staff member needs to get on board. However, if the student explodes on one small mistake, we would address the student behavior as we normally would.

13. Can we receive some resources to help us deal with the topic of transgenderism? We will look for information to be able to share. These answers are a step in bringing clarity to this topic.

14. Can we receive information regarding the change that takes place during hormone therapy for transgender students? We can provide information.

Revised 1/3/18 kj
15. What is the number of transgender students in 2007 compared to 2017? How has the population grown? We do not have that data.

16. Is there information on dealing with students glorifying the transgender lifestyle for attention? What do we do with that? We would treat this in the same manner we would treat other children with attention seeking behaviors.