



November 2, 2017

Re: Draft of WCS Gender Identity and Access to Gender-Segregated Activities and Facilities policies

Dear WCS Parents, Staff, and Community Members,

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with up-to-date information regarding the transgender policies that have been under consideration for adoption by the board. The Board has heard the concerns of the many voices of the community and have incorporated these concerns in the two policies up for action (please see attached). We recognize the vital role that parents play in the success of our district and appreciate the civil and respectful way that you expressed your concerns.

When this issue was first taken up in committee, we sought to develop a policy that would fulfill two basic purposes. The first was to ensure that our school community knows that Williamston Community Schools will be a place where all students, including those who may identify as transgender, are welcome and will be supported. The second purpose of the policy was to provide guidance to our staff in their efforts to support the often unique needs of transgender students.

In lieu of the policy first proposed on September 18, we have developed two separate policies to achieve these purposes-- one policy specifically addresses gender identity and the second covers all users of district facilities including restrooms and locker rooms. Because there have been so many iterations of this policy, please read them carefully so that you are operating from the most current information.

The board expects to vote on these policies during our regular meeting scheduled for Monday, November 6 at 7:30 pm in the Middle School Cafeteria. The public is welcome to attend this meeting. Should you have thoughts you would like to share with the board, but prefer not to speak during public comment, please send an email to WCSBoard@gowcs.net.

We know that the success of Williamston Community Schools is due in large part to the support of parents and community members who are engaged and passionate about the achievement and well-being of our children. It's our hope that as we move forward, we can all continue to work together to make Williamston Community Schools a place where all students can thrive and be successful.

Thank you once again for all you do for our students.

With sincerity and hope,

Greg Talberg
President, WCS Board of Education

The Williamston Community Schools fosters an educational environment for all students that is safe, welcoming, and free from stigma and discrimination, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. WCS requires compliance with local, state, and federal laws concerning bullying, harassment, privacy, and discrimination (See Policy 8260 and 8260-R Bullying).

WCS shall accept the gender identity that each student asserts reflecting the student's legitimately held belief once the student and/or his or her parent/guardian, as appropriate, notifies District administration that the student intends to assert a gender identity that differs from previous representations or records. The District will customize support to allow each student's equal access to the District's educational programs and activities.

Parental and family support are key determinants of transgender and nonconforming student health; therefore, student support teams, staff, and community partners should provide resources to help families and students locate information, counseling, and support services. School officials must consider the health, safety, and well-being of the student, as well as the responsibility to keep parents informed.

This policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, school district staff, students, parents, and volunteers.

Legal References: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.; Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq.; Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, MCL 37.2101, et seq.

Adopted:

Williamston Board of Education, Williamston MI 48895

Any student who is uncomfortable using a gender-segregated facility, regardless of reason, shall notify WCS staff of his or her discomfort. WCS staff will work with the student to find an alternative that takes into account the privacy rights of all students, staff, and visitors. The Board directs administration to incorporate single-user facilities and measures to ensure greater privacy into new construction or renovation. The Board also directs administration to assess ways to increase privacy for all students in existing facilities. This may include, for example, the addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule. WCS will follow all local, state, and federal laws with respect to restrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities.

This policy applies to the entire school community, including educators, school district staff, students, parents, volunteers, and visitors.

Adopted:

Williamston Board of Education, Williamston MI 48895