



News Release

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Chicago Public Schools Introduces New Guidelines to Support Transgender Students, Employees and Adults

Guidelines Create More Inclusive Environment for Greater CPS Community

CHICAGO – Chicago Public Schools (CPS) today announced the implementation of new guidelines to support transgender students, employees and adults to ensure CPS schools are safe, welcoming environments for everyone in the school community. For the first time, CPS is providing clear guidance on restroom, locker room and overnight trip accessibility, and establishing support for employees and adults in addition to students.

“The guidelines released today will help ensure every student and adult in the CPS family can participate in an environment of complete tolerance and respect,” said CPS Chief Education Officer Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “CPS, like much of the country, has become far more aware of the needs and experiences of the transgender community, and it’s crucial for CPS guidelines to reflect our commitment to promoting safe and inclusive schools. These guidelines build on our commitment to fostering healthy and supportive learning opportunities across the District so that each of our students can reach their full potential.”

CPS’ new guidelines build on the student guidelines implemented in 2014, which clarified, among other things, that transgender and gender nonconforming students should be provided the same opportunities to participate in physical education, sexual health education, sports, clubs and school events as all other students. Today’s more expansive guidelines provide clear guidance on restroom, locker room and overnight trip accessibility.

Additionally, for the first time the District established guidelines to support transgender employees and adults. To develop the District’s new guidelines, CPS worked with the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, Mikva Challenge, Lambda Legal and Lurie Children’s Gender and Sex Development Program.

“The Gender Program at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago applauds CPS for revising their guidelines around gender inclusion,” said Jennifer Leininger, Program Manager of the Gender Program at Lurie Children’s Hospital. “Lurie Children’s will continue to collaborate with Chicago Public Schools as they proactively approach gender diversity and strive to ensure that all trans and gender nonconforming members of the school community are supported and celebrated.”

CPS guidelines ensure students will have access to the restrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identity. If students request more privacy or an alternate option, schools will provide students with an alternative arrangement. The guidelines also require schools to provide accommodations and supports to students questioning their gender identity.

The new guidelines will help ensure transgender students and students questioning their gender identity will not be denied access to the same educational opportunities that are afforded to their peers – including the ability to participate in overnight field trips – due to their transgender status. The guidelines clearly establish that transgender students must be able to participate in overnight field trips in accordance with their gender identity, and additional accommodations should be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the needs of each student are met.

"The Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is grateful for Chicago Public Schools' leadership in revising their gender guidelines to ensure that students as well as staff and volunteers have confidential and affirming access to school facilities," said Owen Daniel-McCarter, Esq., Policy & Advocacy Director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. "We will continue to support CPS as they implement these supports and resources throughout the District."

At the school level, a student administrative support team at each school will develop confidential support plans for each student to ensure they receive the resources and supports they need to be successful members of the school community. District staff from the Office of Social & Emotional Learning will support school staff to ensure transgender and gender nonconforming students receive appropriate supports and resources.

In addition to the revised student guidelines, CPS introduced guidelines to address the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming adults while employed, volunteering or participating in District programming. The guidelines clarify that individuals and employees shall have access to the restroom that corresponds with their gender identity, and upon request single-stall restrooms should be provided when available. Additionally, adult employees and volunteers will not be denied the opportunity to participate in overnight trips due to their transgender status. In accordance with CPS policy, no adults can share rooms with students who are not their own children.

The new guidelines clarify that transgender or gender nonconforming adults have the right to discuss their gender identity or keep that information private. Under the new guidelines, management, human resources staff and coworkers may not disclose information that may reveal an employee's transgender status to others without consent.

The guidelines issued today can be found at http://cps.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/TL_TransGenderNonconformingStudents_Guidelines.pdf.

Chicago Public Schools serves 392,000 students in 660 schools. It is the nation's third-largest school district.