



Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

About PHIMC

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

(PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources.

Deepening Our History in Today's Legal Landscape

Nat Duran, M.Ed

Pronouns: they/them

Safe Schools Consultant

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance



Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Illinois Safe Schools Alliance

The mission of Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is to promote safety, support, and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.



ILLINOIS
SAFE
SCHOOLS
ALLIANCE



Learning Objectives

- Understand the legal landscape around transgender students' rights at the state and federal level.
- Learn about current legislation in Illinois that impacts LGBTQIA+ students.
- Discuss implemented Administrative Procedures from Illinois districts for transgender student support.



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Learning Objectives

- Comprehend the history, specifics, importance, and impact of the Inclusive Curriculum Law
- Understand how affirming learning environments make inclusive curriculum more effective
- Analyze the frameworks and strategies for implementing inclusive curricula
- Gain confidence in accessing existing tools and resources that can be used in the classroom



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<https://bit.ly/TazewellMasonPM> - linked

<https://bit.ly/TazewellMasonPM>

- PDF of all slides w/live links



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Foundational information on LGBTQ+ students

- [Southwest's Leadership in the Gender Equity Index](#) (Southwest Airlines' commitment to gender equity and diversity)
- [Google's Gender Equity Index](#) (Google's commitment to gender equity and diversity)
- [GEI 2023 National Gender Equity Index](#) (GEI's commitment to gender equity and diversity)
- [Practices for Affirming Learning Environments](#) (Practices for Affirming Learning Environments)
- [Gender Spectrum Gender Inclusion Toolkit](#) (Gender Spectrum's commitment to gender equity and diversity)
- [Teaching Transgender and Gender Equity for Students](#) (Teaching Transgender and Gender Equity for Students)
- [Innovative Gender Equity Practices](#) (Innovative Gender Equity Practices)

Resources for an Inclusive Curriculum

- GREEN DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP PROJECT 2004-2007
SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR ALL FROM 2001-2007
THE LEADERSHIP PROJECT 2004-2007
THE LEADERSHIP PROJECT
FISH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH



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Additional Resources

- [Illinois State Board of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance on Supporting Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Nonconforming Students](#)
- [Illinois State Board of Education Sample Board Policies and Administrative Procedures](#)
- [Strengthening Inclusion in Illinois Schools Report of the Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force to Governor JB Pritzker](#)
- [Illinois Safe Schools Alliance Advocacy Request Form \(a collaboration with Equality Illinois\)](#)



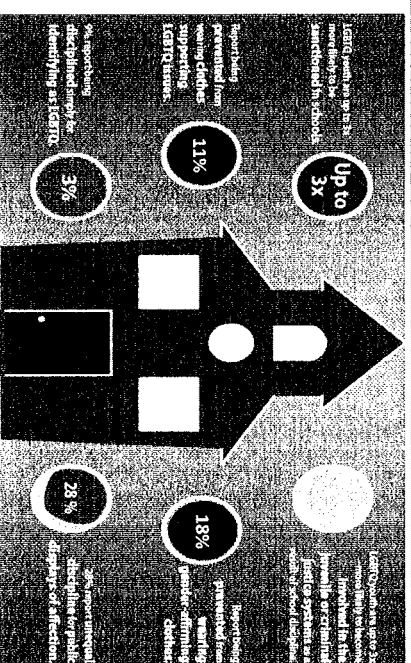
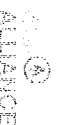
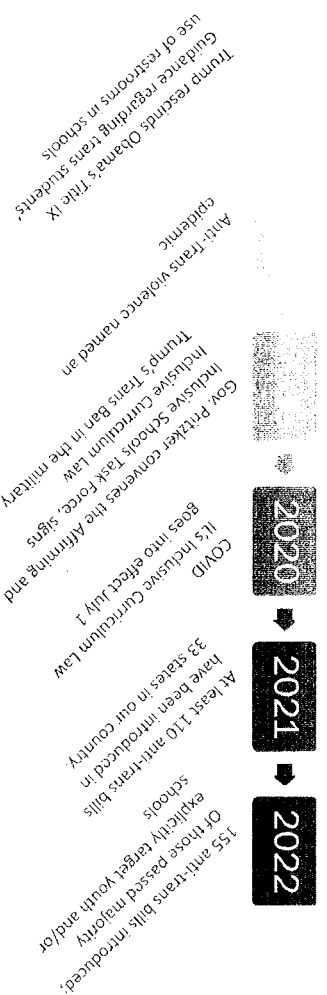
Anti-Transgender Legislation

According to data from the Human Rights Campaign, one of the nation's largest LGBTQ advocacy groups, at least 120 bills have been introduced in the current 2023 legislative session that target the transgender community.



Last 6 Years in Review

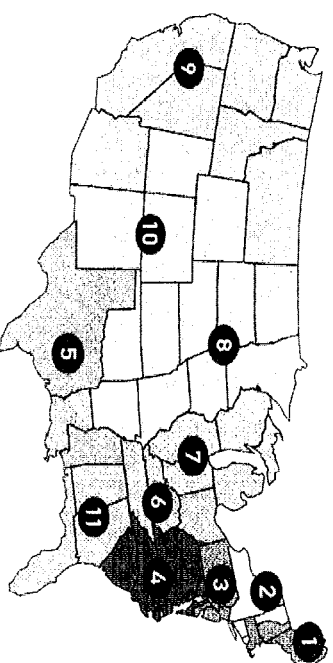
Disproportionate Disciplinary Measures



LGBTQ+ Students' Rights are Protected by:

Federal Protections

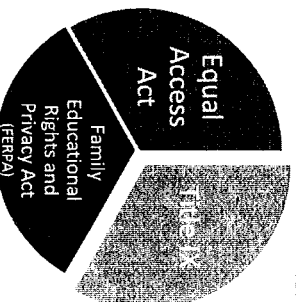
School	• Mission • Vision • Values • Learning Philosophy
District	• Equal Education Opportunities • Anti Discrimination • Bullying and Harassment
State	• Illinois Human Rights Act • Illinois Prevent School Violence Act • Conversion Therapy Ban
Federal	• Title IX • Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) • Equal Access Act • PENDING: Equality Act



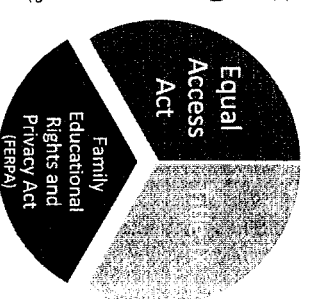
Equality Act – pending legislation

FERPA

- Primarily intended to amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to explicitly protect those whose identities fall under the realm of sexual orientation and gender identity.
- If passed, the Equality Act, an anti-discrimination law, would provide protections for LGBTQIA+ people across all areas of life, including the education system.
- How this differs from previous legislation? It would differentiate these protections from falling under the umbrella of "sex" and expand protections.
- Passed the House on February 25th, 2021, and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee

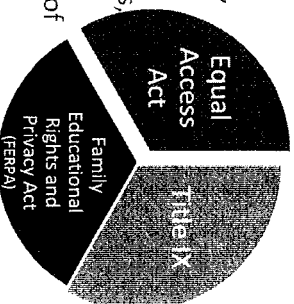


- Protects the privacy of personal information about students in educational records, and in most circumstances prohibits release of this information without consent.
- FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records.
- These rights transfer to the student when they reach the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level.



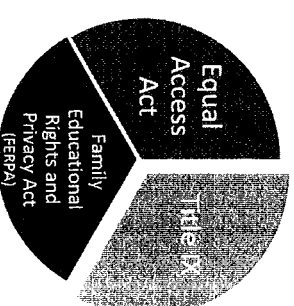
Equal Access Act

- Applies to public, secondary schools that receive federal funding and allow at least one student-led, non-curricular club that meets outside of class time.
- Requires all school-affiliated student organizations, such as a GSA's, to be treated equally.
- This means that schools cannot ban certain types of groups or single them out for worse treatment.



Title IX

- The Department of Education provides protection for all students, including transgender and gender non-conforming students under Title IX.



Bostock v. Clayton (2020)

After acknowledging his participation in a gay softball league at work, Gerald Bostock was terminated for "conduct unbecoming of [the county's] employees."

The Supreme Court found that "discrimination on the basis of homosexuality or transgender status requires an employer to intentionally treat employees differently because of their sex." (Title VII discrimination)



Biden's Application of Bostock

"In Bostock v. Clayton County, the Supreme Court held that Title VII's prohibition on discrimination "because of . . . sex" covers discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation. Under Bostock's reasoning, laws that prohibit sex discrimination — including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972...prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, so long as the laws do not contain sufficient indications to the contrary."

Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board (2021)

DOE v. Township High School District 211

In 2017, Gavin Grimm sued his school board for excluding him from using the restroom that aligned with his gender identity. This discrimination was in violation of Title IX.

The case spanned four years – including a trip to the Supreme Court – back into the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit for the state of Virginia where it ruled in favor of Gavin on August 26, 2020. The Supreme Court denied the school board a petition in 2021.



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Opinion from Magistrate Judge Jeffery Gilbert

Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District No. 1.

OCT 18, 2016

Judge Gilbert recommends the Preliminary Injunction for the Parents and Students of Doe v. D211 be set aside.

“High school students do not have a constitutional right not to share restrooms or locker rooms with transgender students whose sex assigned at birth is different than theirs”

“Sharing a restroom or locker room with a transgender student does not create a severe, pervasive, or objectively offensive hostile environment.”



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In a resounding legal victory for Wisconsin student Ash Whitaker, the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (which has jurisdiction over WI, IN, and IL) ruled that federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of “sex” protect transgender students as well and require schools to allow transgender students to access the restrooms that correspond with their gender identity.



HELD: Both Title IX and the U.S. Constitution required gender-affirming restroom access for trans students.

Student A requests support, is denied access to locker room, and files complaint with the Department of Education.

Department of Education investigates her complaint and attempts to settle with D211.

Department of Education finds D211 in violation of Title IX due to lack of locker room access.

District complies with settlement. Parents of some transgender students file Federal complaint against Department of Education and D211.

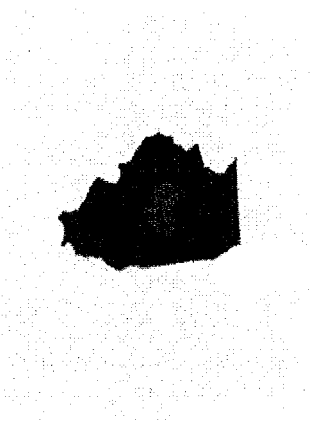
Magistrate Judge pending decision in the Whitaker Case.



2016

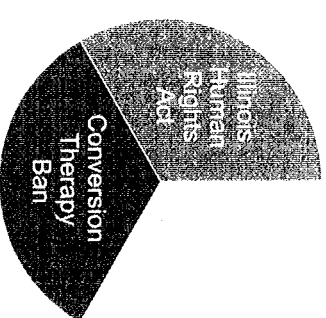
2017

Illinois Protections



Prevent School Violence Act

- Seeks to prevent violence from occurring in school, by addressing root causes of violence
- States that bullying is prohibited in all school districts on the basis of actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation



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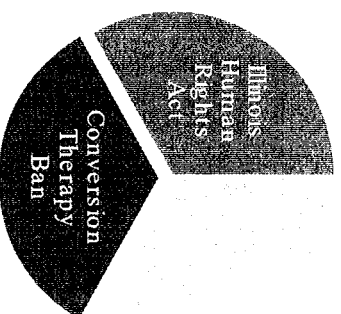
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Conversion Ban Therapy

- Under no circumstances shall a mental health provider (including school psychologists and licensed school social workers) engage in sexual orientation change efforts with a person under the age of 18.
- Includes efforts to change behaviors or gender expressions



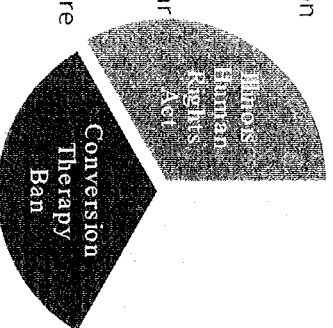
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IL Human Rights Act

- Protects all Illinois students from discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and other classifications.
- States that schools cannot exclude students from school or extracurricular activities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and schools cannot discipline students more harshly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.



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Maday v. District 211

Nova Maday fought for unrestricted locker room use since her sophomore year. In late November 2017, during her senior year, Maday filed a lawsuit against Township High School District 211, saying they violated the Illinois Human Rights Act by treating her differently from other female students by requiring her to dress behind privacy curtains in the locker room. The case was settled in 2020.



Quote from student Alex McCray: "I am very pleased that we were able to come to an agreement, mostly because it's going to benefit other students like myself," says Alex. "By putting in this reasonable policy in place, all students will be protected, including future transgender students."

McCray v. Williams-Sherman CUSD #15

- CUSD #15 implemented an affirming District-wide administrative procedure as a part of the settlement reached with the Illinois Department of Human Rights.

Illinois State Board of Education

District Protections

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS						
Data Elements	Code	Value	Description	Date Type	EFT Validations	Mandatory/ Optional
Gender		F Female M Male	Gender Male or Female: For most students, no distinct gender entry; the student's name and gender are reported on the student's birth certificate. However, if the student has been assigned a different gender choice to enter the database with which the student prefers to enter than the student's biological gender (if necessary), this choice may also enter the first name box (student uses F) or last name box (student uses M). Does not include the student's STD number or the student's last name if a separate ID number is not provided for the student.		Valid Character Codes	Mandatory
Birth Date		D or F 22 of M	A month or a day A year or a day	MM/DD/YYYY	MM/DD/YYYY Birth date must be greater than 0 and less than 23 years	Mandatory

Check your Districts' **7:10 Equal Educational Opportunity Policy** to see if "Gender Identity," "Gender Expression," and/or "Sexual Orientation" are named as protected classes.

Berwyn South District 100

- Pre-K-8 District implemented a board supported Administrative Procedure for transgender student support in the 2015-2016 school year.
- In the 2016-2017 school year examined curriculum to ensure LGBTQIA+ identities were represented

Quote from school board member Deanna Durica:

"You know all kids are going to have a lot of challenges as they grow up, but I don't want our school district to be one of those challenges they had to overcome."



Harlem District 122

- Pre-K-12 District passed a board approved administrative procedure for transgender student support
- Was implemented in the 2016-2017 school year

Quote from Superintendent Julie Morris:

"As a leader of a public school system, we educate every single child. And that seems cliché, but it's very difficult to do when you're not honoring every child in front of you," Morris said.

Chicago Public Schools Revised Guidelines

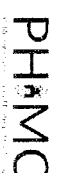
"Guidelines Regarding the Support of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students"

- Implemented "Guidelines Regarding the Support of Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Individuals"
- Includes Staff, Parents, and Visitors

Chicago Public Schools Bathroom Policy (2021)

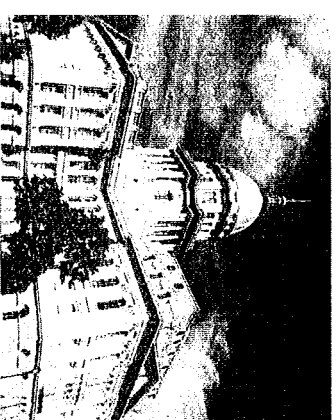
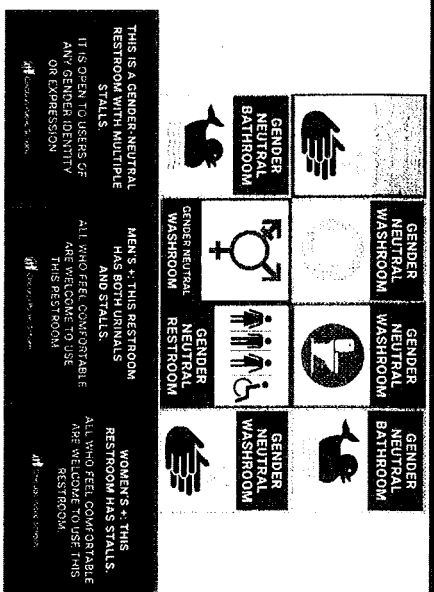
Twitter Video – Nov. 27th, 2021

"In compliance with new federal guidelines, all CPS students and staff will have fair and equitable access to bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity. We will be providing all schools with updated signage that makes our bathrooms more inclusive. It will identify the fixtures available in each restroom, and make it clear that all restrooms are open for use by anyone who feels comfortable."



New CPS Bathroom Signage

Illinois Legislative Updates



Illinois Vital Records Act Updated - HB1785

Relevant Vital Records Act Updates

SIGNED INTO LAW ON AUG 25, 2017

- Removes surgery standard to be consistent with Federal standards of "appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition."
- Allows for individuals to change the gender marker on Illinois birth certificates without proof of surgery, instead requiring a declaration from a licensed medical or mental health professional that the individual has undergone clinically appropriate treatment.
- Modernizes the language "sex change" to "change of sex designation."

- Effective Jan. 1st, 2022, the State Registrar of Vital Records must establish a new certificate of birth when they receive a statement signed by a legal adult in which they attest to making the request *for the purpose of affirming their gender identity or intersex condition* of a minor and that the sex designation on the minor's certificate of birth should therefore be changed.

Why is a Birth Certificate Important?

Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Act

Some common situations where a birth certificate is required:

- In **elementary or secondary schools** in Illinois must provide their child's birth certificate within 30 days to verify their child's identity
- Illinoisans applying for their **first passport** must show both a State ID or driver's license and their birth certificate
- Illinois residents applying for a **mortgage** from a large privately owned mortgage bank must show their birth certificate
- A person starting a **new job** may be asked to provide their birth certificate and other forms of identification.



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SIGNED INTO LAW AUGUST 18, 2017

- Authorizes providers who are counseling minors without parental consent to use their judgment and experience to continue or discontinue counseling the minor without parental consent.
- Increases the number of sessions a provider who is counseling a minor, between the ages of 12 and 17, may provide without parental consent to eight 90-minutes sessions (rather than five 45-minutes sessions).

Public Act 102-0543: Reporting Student Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Public Act 102-0543: What It Means for School Districts

- Expands the demographic data collection and reporting requirements for the Illinois State Board of Education include age, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and primary or preferred language.
- ISBE will begin collecting the new demographic data elements in the Student Information System for school year 2022-23
- School districts must provide the opportunity for all students or their parents/guardians to disclose this information; however, students or their parents/guardians **do not** have to complete these fields.
- School districts must not disclose a student's gender identity or sexual orientation to others, including the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), unless legally required to do so or unless the student has authorized such disclosure.
- [Link to ISBE Guidance](#)



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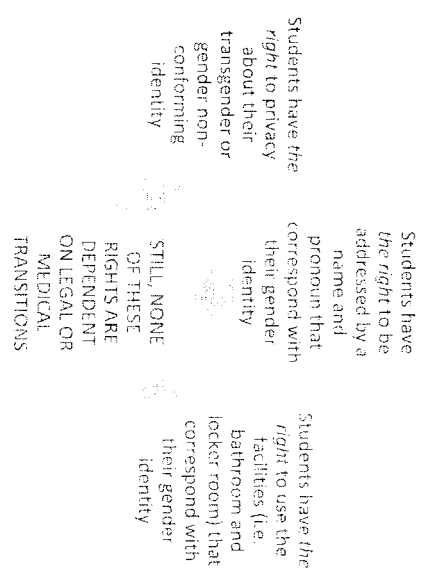


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Name Change Modernization (HB 2542)

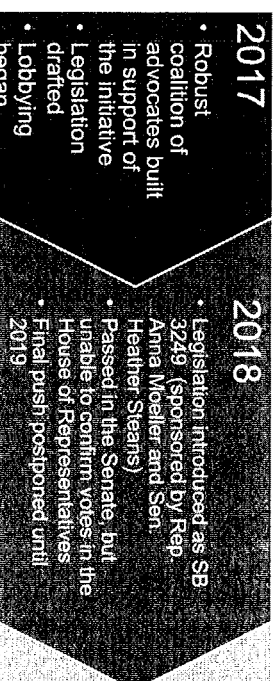
- Brings state's overly-restrictive name change law in line with the majority of other states and help transgender and gender-expansive individuals and survivors of human trafficking to live safer and more authentic lives by removing the **ten-year waiting period and the lifetime ban**.

What does all this mean?



Illinois Inclusive Curriculum Advisory Council

Pursuing the Inclusive Curriculum Law



Inclusive Curriculum Law Overview

- Took effect July 1, 2020.
- Mandates that all Illinois public schools include the contributions of LGBT people in the history of Illinois and the United States.
- The mandate applies to grades K-12, and instruction must be included by 8th grade.
- Requires that textbooks and any other instructional materials must not discriminate against any of the protected classes found under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

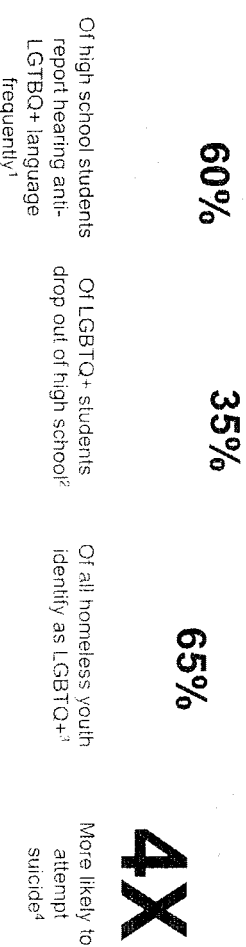
Inclusive Curriculum Law Overview

- School districts determine how content is taught.
- The law suggests content be taught in social sciences, but does not limit this content to social sciences.
- The law does not require the purchase of new textbooks.
- There are many free resources and tools available to support schools.

What This Means for Educators

- Educators have an opportunity to present material and supplements in a way that reflects the unique nature of their classroom, especially those of LGBTQ+ students.
- You may be wondering:
- How can I integrate the content into existing curricula?
 - What additional resources are available?

Why is this important?



School Climate

Impact of an Inclusive Curriculum

Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) or similar clubs

Inclusion of LGBTQ+ history in curriculum...

According to

Supportive school policies

GLSEN, schools are more affirming

Instills

Encourages

Promotes

when students

Trained and supportive school staff

have access to:

Curricular resources that are inclusive of LGBTQ+ identities and topics

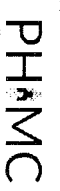


Approach to Affirming Learning Environments

Personal Belief and Professional Responsibility

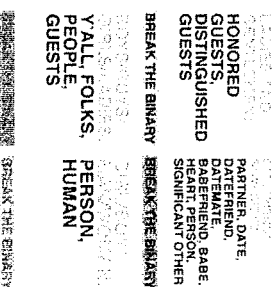
- Examine your own personal beliefs and professional responsibility to your students.
- Understand the importance of language and be willing to learn essential terms.
- Assess classroom practices to ensure inclusion for all students and challenge gendered practices and norms.
- Spot and integrate opportunities for dialogue and learning.
- Integrate LGBTQ-inclusive content into curriculum.

PERSONAL BELIEF	PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

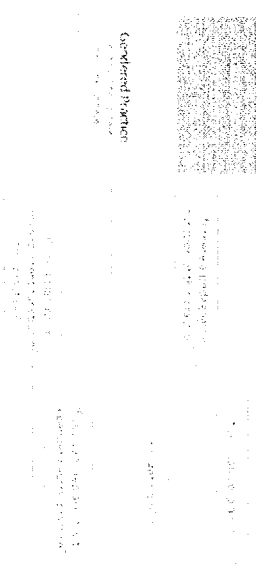


The Importance of Language

- Be intentional about the language you use.
- Engage your students in conversations around the evolution of identity-based language, especially when introducing primary source material.
- Be proactive with pronouns.
- Challenge yourself to be more aware of gendered language.



- Examine your curriculum for gendered practices.
- Meet your students where they are at.
- Respect privacy.
- Create a safe space.



Gender-Affirming Curricular and Educational Practices

- Provide ongoing training to all staff members.
- Create a non-punitive environment that focuses on prevention.
- Ensure accountability for inclusive practices.
- Provide easily accessible information and supports. Be clear about the complaint procedure.



Report from the Affirming and Inclusive Schools Task Force to the Governor of Illinois
March 2022



“Creating Affirming Learning Environments”

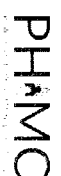
For a more in depth professional development session on these foundational frameworks and approaches, visit:

<https://www.ilsafeschools.org/professional-development-1>

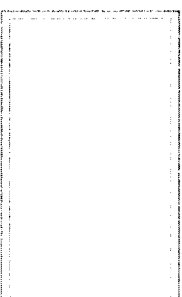
LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum

"When someone with the authority of a teacher...describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked in the mirror and saw nothing."

-Adrienne Rich



Framework: Curriculum as Mirrors and Windows



LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM BENEFITS ALL STUDENTS BY:

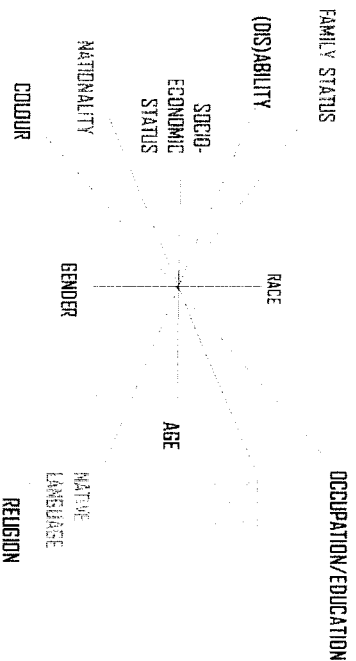
- Exposing them to more inclusive and accurate accounts of history
- Helping them have better understanding of LGBTQ people.
- Encouraging them to stand on stereotypes about LGBTQ people.
- Promoting acceptance.



LGBTQ-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM BENEFITS LGBTQ STUDENTS BY:

- Validating their existence and experiences.
- Empowering their voice and self-worth.
- Providing support for their voices.

Framework: Intersectionality



Framework: Inquiry-Based Learning

*"Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember,
involve me and I understand."*

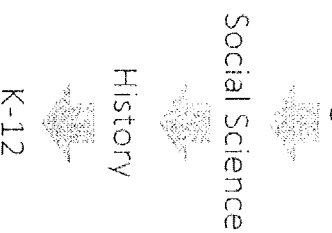
—Benjamin Franklin

- **Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries**
 - Constructing Essential Questions
 - Constructing Supporting Questions
 - Determining Helpful Sources
- **Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence**
 - Gathering and Evaluating Sources
 - Developing Claims and Using Evidence
- **Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**
 - Communicating Conclusions
 - Critiquing Conclusions
 - Taking Informed Action

Strategy: Alignment and Integration with Illinois Learning Standards

Strategy: Alignment and Integration with Illinois Learning Standards

IL Learning Standards



How to Read the Standards

Civil and Political Institutions		SS-ESS-3 Science	Content Discipline
K	SS.CV.1.K Compare the roles and responsibilities of people in a community.		
1	SS.CV.1.1 Explain how different roles and responsibilities are shared in a community.		
2	SS.CV.1.2 Explain how different roles and responsibilities are shared in a community.		

Social Science Example: 4th Grade Alignment and Integration

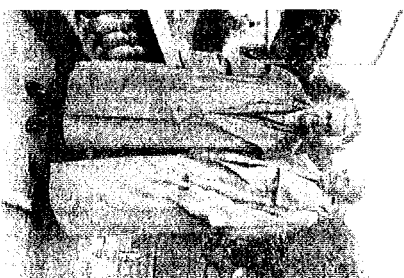
How to Talk About Jane Addams as an LGBT Figure

Historical Sources and Evidence

SS.H.2.4. Using artifacts and primary sources, investigate how individuals contributed to the founding and development of Illinois.

LGBT Integration

- How did Jane Addams and her life contribute to the founding and development of Illinois?
- Students can take a field trip to the Hull House.



Addressing Questions and Pushback

Social Science Example: 9th – 12th Grade Alignment and Integration

"Beginning these conversations in elementary school will help young people develop empathy for a diverse group of people, and to learn about identities that might relate to their families or even themselves. It is never too early for schools to set up a foundation of understanding and respect."

"Students of all ages must be given an opportunity to learn that the words 'gay,' 'lesbian,' and 'transgender' are adjectives that should be used with respect to describe people in their community, not words used in a negative way to hurt, insult, and degrade."

Source: GLSEN Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources



Grades 9-12

Grades 9-12. The evolution of modern LGBT communities and identities, twentieth-century persecution of sexual and gender minorities and the growth of the LGBT rights movement.

Change, Continuity, and Context

SS.H.2.9-12. Evaluate how historical developments were shaped by time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

SS.H.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity, either and across historical eras.

SS.H.3.9-12. Evaluate the influence of people and institutions in proposed change.

LGBT Integration

- What factors have led to the gradual acceptance of the LGBT community?
- How do the 20th century laws differ from that of the 21st century? How did they manifest in certain laws or policies?
- What is the Kinsey Scale and what does it measure?

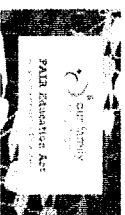


Examples

Historical Events

- HIV/AIDS activism in the 80's and 90's
- Fight for marriage equality
- Stonewall Riots (New York)
- Compton's Cafeteria Riot (San Francisco)
- Police raids at the Black Cat Tavern (Los Angeles)

Lesson Plan



Kinsey & Heteronormativity Changing Understandings of Human Sexuality

Author: Jessa Nothman



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Image: Bayard Rustin



Level 4: The Social Action Approach
Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them

Level 3: The Transformation Approach
The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspectives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups

Level 2: The Additive Approach
Content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure

Level 1: The Contributions Approach
Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural events

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Strategy: James Banks Approach

Level 1: Contributions Approach

1. Activate prior experience: Before today, have you ever heard of Rustin in your social studies class?
2. Read the biographical information and view the following website: <https://civildigital.org/2016/06/22/>
3. Group Discussion: What was his most significant accomplishment? How has Rustin's work contributed to your understanding of equality?
4. Extend knowledge: How do you think Rustin's discrimination as an African American was like his discrimination as a gay man? How do you think it was different?

Level 2: Additive Approach

1. Website investigation: Which of the following GLAT indicators contributed to the Civil Rights Movement?
2. View the interview for the film "Brother Outsider" at <https://www.itsa.org/2017/01/03/brother-outsider-video-interview/>
3. Determine how these contributions can be incorporated in an investigative research assignment within your discipline or content area.



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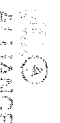


Image: Bayard Rustin

Strategy: James Banks Approach

Level 3: Transformational Approach

1. Describe the significance of why Rustin was so effective in his work?
2. Reflect on why Rustin may not be as well known as other civil rights leaders of his era and/or how his homosexuality affected his life's journey. What impact did his repeated separation from his work have on the Civil Rights Movement?
3. Demonstrate your findings regarding these changes and develop your own vision statement through an oral presentation (using Animoto or other visual software).

Level 4: Social Action Approach

1. Extend your own personal understanding of "Rainbow Politics" and develop your action plan for change.
2. Based upon your own learning in school and investigation of Bayard Rustin's life, how would you demonstrate your own movement in society today?
3. Normalize a role model who has demonstrated beliefs and values for change.

PHAMC

The Legacy Project's Lesson Plans

1. Name (Last, First, Middle Initial): 2. Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY): 3. Social Security Number (XXX-XX-XXXX): 4. Current Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): 5. Current Telephone Number (Area Code, Number): 6. Current Email Address: 7. Current Employer (Name, Address, City, State, ZIP): 8. Current Occupation (Title, Company Name): 9. Current Salary (Annual, Hourly, Monthly): 10. Current Marital Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed): 11. Current Number of Dependents (Name, Date of Birth, Relationship): 12. Current Health Insurance (Policy Number, Provider Name): 13. Current Life Insurance (Policy Number, Provider Name): 14. Current Auto Insurance (Policy Number, Provider Name): 15. Current Home Insurance (Policy Number, Provider Name): 16. Current Credit Cards (Card Number, Issuer Name): 17. Current Bank Accounts (Account Number, Bank Name): 18. Current Rental Properties (Property Address, Tenant Name): 19. Current Vehicles (Vehicle Make, Model, Year, VIN): 20. Current Assets (Asset Name, Value): 21. Current Liabilities (Liability Name, Amount): 22. Current Net Worth (Total Assets minus Total Liabilities): 23. Current Tax Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed): 24. Current Tax Filing Status (Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed): 25. Current Tax Exemptions (Exemption Name, Amount): 26. Current Tax Credits (Credit Name, Amount): 27. Current Tax Deductions (Deduction Name, Amount): 28. Current Tax Payments (Payment Name, Amount): 29. Current Tax Refunds (Refund Name, Amount): 30. Current Tax Returns (Return Name, Amount): 31. Current Tax Documents (Document Name, Amount): 32. Current Tax Forms (Form Name, Amount): 33. Current Tax Schedules (Schedule Name, Amount): 34. Current Tax Statements (Statement Name, Amount): 35. Current Tax Notices (Notice Name, Amount): 36. Current Tax Penalties (Penalty Name, Amount): 37. Current Tax Interest (Interest Name, Amount): 38. Current Tax Fees (Fee Name, Amount): 39. 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- 50 lesson plans are currently available in the database
- Lessons are prepared by a professional with either a Ph.D. in Library Science or Ed.D. in Education
- Located on a searchable website, free of charge
- Information is compiled into a matrix as a way to identify K-12 lesson plans that include:
 - Individual Illinois standard codes
 - Academic subject matter
 - Grade level in school
 - Related fields of contribution
 - General demographics

The Legacy Project's Lesson Plans

PHARMACIA

English: Key Approaches

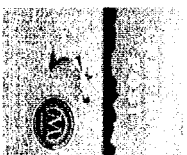
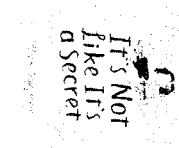
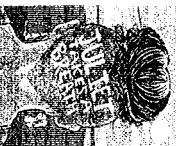
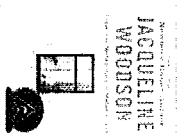
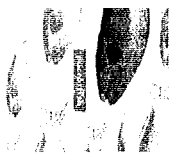
- Introduce students to LGBTQ+ authors and themes
- Compare depictions of LGBTQ+ characters and themes in different contexts
- Explore different representations of gender
- Set up speeches, discussions, and writing activities on LGBTQ+ topics
- Include LGBTQ+ topics in teaching on grammar and language

Elementary and Middle School Recommended Readings

- Introduce students to LGBTQ+ authors and themes
- Compare depictions of LGBTQ+ characters and themes in different contexts
- Explore different representations of gender
- Set up speeches, discussions, and writing activities on LGBTQ+ topics
- Include LGBTQ+ topics in teaching on grammar and language

Source: Stonewall Education for All

High School Recommended Readings



GLSEN – Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources

- Suggested LGBTQ-Inclusive Learning Opportunities
 - Early Elementary: “Ready, Set, Respect!”
 - Upper Elementary: Identity Flowers
 - Middle School: Challenging Assumptions
 - High School: Learning Empowerment and Self Identification
- This resource identifies many examples split up by subject area and grade



Learning for Justice – Classroom Resources

- 600+ learning plans based on:

- Race & Ethnicity
- Religion
- Ability
- Class
- Immigration
- Gender & Sexual Identity
- Bullying & Bias
- Rights & Activism



LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

- Many align with inquiry-based learning

- Can filter by grade



Teaching Tolerance

Learning Plan Critical Thinking about Traditional Stories

Knowing the stories we’re told in the past, what are they for? How do they shape our assumptions? What are the stories that we tell ourselves? How do they shape our assumptions? What are the stories that we tell ourselves? How do they shape our assumptions?

Learning Plan

Gender and sexual identity

How do we get to know others and allow others to know about us?

What are the stories we tell ourselves about gender and sexual identity?

What are the stories we tell ourselves about gender and sexual identity?

How can we provide others with and receive support?

GRADE LEVEL: K-2

Subject: Social Studies, ELA

Topic: Gender, Identity, Diversity, Social Studies, ELA

Grade: K-2

Special Interest: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

GRADE LEVEL: 3-5, 6-8

Subject: Social Studies, ELA, Science, Art, PE

Topic: Gender, Identity, Diversity, Social Studies, ELA

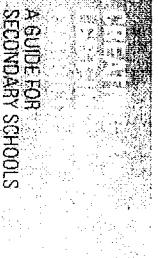
Grade: 3-5, 6-8

Special Interest: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion



Stonewall Education for All

Addressing Questions and Pushback



This resource provides examples for different subjects – includes key approaches and example lesson plans

"LGBTQ+ students with inclusive curriculum have better academic and mental health outcomes, and are less likely to miss school."

"Teaching LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum acknowledges the reality that many students come from LGBTQ+ headed families, are being taught by LGBTQ educators, and are increasingly identifying as LGBTQ+ themselves even in elementary school."



PHAMC



Source: GLSEN Developing LGBTQ-Inclusive Classroom Resources

PHAMC

Thank you!

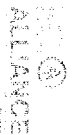
Additional Resources

Sign up for our newsletter to receive updates, tools, and resources on Inclusive Curriculum Law implementation:

<https://www.ilsafeschools.org/inclusive-curriculum-updates>

Provide feedback and recommendations to improve this workshop:

<https://tinyurl.com/ICLPD2020>



Stonewall Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



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TSER
Texas Student Educational Resources



Youth Services



Lambda Legal



gender spectrum

GLSEN



PFLAG

National Center for Transgender Equality

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
The Pediatric Transgender Advisory Group (TAG) is a collaborative effort of the hospital's transgender and gender-diverse patients, families, and healthcare providers.

PHAMC

Thank you!

Please complete this quick evaluation:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ISSAPD>



You may access additional resources here:

<https://www.ilssafeschools.org/>



References

¹ GLSEN National School Climate Survey (2017).

² GLSEN Educational Exclusion: Drop Out, Push Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline among LGBTQ Youth

³ National Coalition for the Homeless (June 2017).

⁴ CDC. Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016).

⁵ Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," University of Chicago Legal Forum, Vol. 1989: 135-1, Article 8.

⁶ Illinois Social Science Learning Standards, Illinois State Board of Education (June 2017).



PHIMC

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Thank you!

www.phimc.org

Monday, September 11, 2023 at 7:29:37 AM Central Daylight Time

Joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Sander, Joseph
To: michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael
Cc: craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock

How about Wednesday, after the Leadership meeting?
Joe

On Sun, Sep 10, 2023 at 8:55 PM Saunders, Michael <michael.saunders@mcusd709.org> wrote:

Hello Craig,
Hope you had a good weekend! Just wanted to bring the following comments from the Board meeting video to your attention. At some point before the next board meeting, I would like to discuss how these comments can be addressed.

Michael

Heather McMeekan

8:29 "the principal who needs to be investigated for assaulting a child for the crime of hanging a pride flag poster in the school"

Michelle Gaede

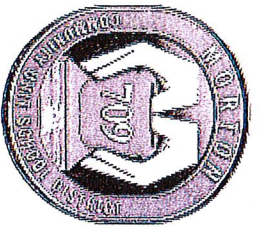
27:13 "all 3 (Saunders, Smock, Krall) have had a hand in creating an unsafe space for teachers, staff, students, and parents who do not hold their same beliefs"

Bryan Groth

49:14 "Mr. Saunders is there to prescribe a rigid ideology to staff and students. He's not there to support everyone as the superintendent purports. In fact, he is there to hold children down because they challenge his worldview and authority. What's important to realize is that's a hostile environment for those that are held down. It's also harmful for those to see it's OK for an adult to do that. It may be convenient to label children like my son as the problem, Mr. Saunders certainly did so."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NNyJv4ZMs4>

Make it a great day!



Joseph G. Sander Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent

Monday, September 11, 2023 at 8:31:47 AM Central Daylight Time

michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael
To: joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Sander, Joseph
Cc: craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock

That works for me if it works for both of you.

On Mon, Sep 11, 2023 at 7:29AM Sander, Joseph <joseph.sander@mcusd709.org> wrote:
How about Wednesday, after the Leadership meeting?
Joe

On Sun, Sep 10, 2023 at 8:55 PM Saunders, Michael <michael.saunders@mcusd709.org> wrote:
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NjYjv4ZMs4>

Make it a great day!

the pot calling the kettle black...

michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 7:49:43 PM Central Daylight Time
To: craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock, troy.teater@mcusd709.org Troy Teater, joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Joseph Sander

This is rich!

https://oig.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/oig/investigations/documents/investigative-reports/20-00478-McMeekan-Released-Redacted-Summary-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2SFJUN0B0eMvDdewyTE3CUCZPVwQMKGZkeufGmH6TkZmPtr9L5i9Gf8MsWg_aem_AWkLYH2OV15Xqxpbrd1yMGDFwA5uCV1x5NSRL_NbTT9hziSsKZuAsO2HFwGV36b950

Attachments:

20-00478-McMeekan-Released-Redacted-Summary-report.pdf 1.2M

joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Sander, Joseph Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 8:15:10 PM Central Daylight Time

To: michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael
Cc: craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock, troy.teater@mcusd709.org Troy Teater

Wow! How ironic.

On Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 19:50 Saunders, Michael <michael.saunders@mcusd709.org> wrote:
This is rich!

https://oig.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/oig/investigations/documents/investigative-reports/20-00478-McMeekan-Released-Redacted-Summary-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2SFJUN0B0eMvDdewyTE3CUCZPVwQMKGZkeufGmH6TkZmPtr9L5i9Gf8MsWg_aem_AWkLYH2OV15Xqxpbrd1yMGDFwA5uCV1x5NSRL_NbTT9hziSsKZuAsO2HFwGV36b950

craig.smock@mcusd709.org Smock, Craig Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 7:51:22 AM Central Daylight Time

To: joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Sander, Joseph
Cc: michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael, troy.teater@mcusd709.org Troy Teater

I saw that a while back when she first surfaced. Both ladies have a solid, documented records of being a liar.

On Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 8:15 PM Sander, Joseph <joseph.sander@mcusd709.org> wrote:
Wow! How ironic.

On Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 19:50 Saunders, Michael <michael.saunders@mcusd709.org> wrote:
This is rich!

https://oig.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/oig/investigations/documents/investigative-reports/20-00478-McMeekan-Released-Redacted-Summary-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2SFJUN0B0eMvDdewyTE3CUCZPVwQMKGZkeufGmH6TkZmPtr9L5i9Gf8MsWg_aem_AWkLYH2OV15Xqxpbrd1yMGDFwA5uCV1x5NSRL_NbTT9hziSsKZuAsO2HFwGV36b950

Dr. Craig Smock
Superintendent
Morton C.U.S.D. 709



troy.teater@mcusd709.org Teater, Troy

Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 8:42:33AM Central Daylight Time

To: joseph.sander@mcusd709.org Sander, Joseph

Cc: michael.saunders@mcusd709.org Saunders, Michael, craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock

Probably why she is so passionate about personal emails on work computers.....



Troy A. Teater Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent

On Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 8:15 PM Sander, Joseph <joseph.sander@mcusd709.org> wrote:
Wow! How ironic.

On Wed, Sep 6, 2023 at 19:50 Saunders, Michael <michael.saunders@mcusd709.org> wrote:
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https://oeig.jillinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/oeig/investigations/documents/investigative-reports/20-00478-McMeekan-Released-Redacted-Summary-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2SFUjN0B0eMvdDewyTE3CUZPVwQMgZkeufGmH6TkZmPt9L5i9Gf8Mswg_aem_AWkLYH2OV15Xqxpbrd1yMGDFwA5uCV1x5NSRL_NbTT9hziSsKZuAso2HFWGV36b950

PUBLICATION OF REDACTED VERSION

OF THE OEIG FOR THE AGENCIES UNDER THE GOVERNOR

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Case # 20-00478

Subject(s): Heather McMeekan

Below is the redacted version of an investigative summary report from the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor. The General Assembly directed the Executive Inspector General to deliver to the Executive Ethics Commission (Commission) a copy of the investigation's summary report and response from the ultimate jurisdictional authority or agency head. 5 ILCS 430/20-50(c-5). The General Assembly also directed the Commission to redact information from this report that may reveal the identity of witnesses, complainants, or informants and "any other information it believes should not be made public." 5 ILCS 430/20- 52(b). Furthermore, the General Assembly directed the Commission to make available to the public the redacted investigative report and response. 5 ILCS 430/20-52(a) & (b). By publishing the below redacted summary report, the Commission neither makes nor adopts any determination of fact or conclusions of law for or against any individual or entity referenced therein.

The Commission exercises its publication responsibility with great caution and seeks to balance the sometimes-competing interests of transparency and fairness to the accused and others involved. To balance these interests, the Commission may redact certain information contained in this report and identify where said redactions have taken place. Additionally, the Commission may redact certain information relating to allegations that do not determine that a reasonable cause exists to believe a violation has occurred. Redactions of allegations against a person who was determined not to have committed a violation are made with the understanding that the subject or subjects of the investigation have not had the opportunity to rebut the report's factual allegations or legal conclusions before the Commission because this publication is only the result of the Executive Inspector General's investigation and not the result of an adjudication before the Commission.

The Commission received this report and a response from the ultimate jurisdictional authority and/or agency in this matter from the Agencies of the Illinois Governor Office of Executive Inspector General ("OEIG"). The Commission, pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52, redacted the OEIG's final report and responses and mailed copies of the redacted version and responses to the Attorney General, the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor, and the subject(s) last known addresses.

The Commission reviewed all suggestions received and makes this document available pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52.

AMENDED FINAL REPORT¹

I. ALLEGATION

On March 5, 2020, the Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received an anonymous complaint alleging that Western Illinois University (WIU) employee Heather McMeekan used personal social media accounts during work hours to post material in support of a political organization to which she belongs, the [Political Organization 1].²

II. BACKGROUND

Ms. McMeekan has worked as an Information Technology Technical Associate, commonly referred to as Webmaster, in WIU's Web Services offices of University Technology since 2006. According to Ms. McMeekan's job description, Webmasters act as support for "university communications and marketing efforts through the production of the top-tier University web pages and other various University departmental and unit web sites." Additionally, Webmasters provide web-related support to other office staff members and University personnel.

According to the [Political Organization 1] website, Ms. McMeekan founded the organization in 2019 and serves as its current president.³ According to its mission statement, the [Political Organization 1] is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization that focuses on increasing the participation of women and girls in civic engagement, politics, and public policy-making at the local, state, and federal level.⁴

The State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (Ethics Act) prohibits State employees from conducting political activity during compensated time and prohibits use of State property/resources for the benefit of a campaign or political organization.⁵ The Ethics Act defines prohibited political activity as including working on a campaign for elective office; preparing for or organizing a political rally, demonstration, or other political event; and preparing for distribution campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office.⁶ WIU policy also prohibits certain political activity, stating that "University facilities and services shall not be used to promote, help finance, or to support any individual, group, or

¹ In the original founded report, issued on June 30, 2021, the OEIG wrote that it identified 82 social media posts from Ms. McMeekan's personal social media account. It has since come to the OEIG's attention that 6 of the previously identified posts occurred during times when Ms. McMeekan was on approved leave or that cannot be verified whether or not she was on leave. These 6 posts have been deleted from the current chart in this Amended Final Report, located on pages 4–5. These amendments do not change the basis of the OEIG's findings against Ms. McMeekan.

² [The information in this footnote is redacted because it relates to an allegation in which the OEIG did not make a determination that reasonable cause exists to believe a violation has occurred. Therefore, the Commission exercises its discretion to redact this section pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52].

³ [Website of Political Organization 1].

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ 5 ILCS 430/5-15. The Ethics Act defines a political organization as including a party, committee, association, fund, or other organization (whether or not incorporated) that is required to file a statement of organization with the State Board of Elections or a county clerk under Section 9-3 of the Election Code, but only with regard to those activities that require filing with the State Board of Elections or a county clerk. 5 ILCS 430/1–5 *et seq.*

⁶ *Id.*

organization campaigning for an elected office” other than listed exceptions that are not relevant to this investigation.⁷

WIU’s Appropriate Use Procedures require employees to “[u]se only those computing resources that they are authorized to use and use them only in the manner and to the extent authorized.”⁸ WIU’s Policy on Email Usage and Political Activity states: “Individuals receiving direct, person-to-person electronic messages have a responsibility to tell the sender to discontinue unwanted communications.”⁹

III. INVESTIGATION

A. Ms. McMeekan’s Work Hours And Time Records

According to WIU’s [WIU Employee 2] Ms. McMeekan’s work hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Ms. McMeekan’s timesheets document the total hours worked per day, 7.5 hours, and whether any benefit time was taken each day. The timesheets do not allow for the recording of time used for breaks or lunch, nor do they indicate the start or stop times for an employee’s workday. The bottom of each timesheet requires both the employee and supervisor to “confirm” the accuracy of the time reported by indicating “Y/N” above their respective names.

WIU policy states that Civil Service employees, such as the Webmaster, must take a minimum of a thirty-minute lunch between 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM but may not exceed one hour. Additionally, supervisors may authorize 15-minute breaks or “reasonable rest periods” during each half-day of the workday, and breaks may not be used to cover a late arrival or early departure.

B. Review Of Ms. McMeekan’s WIU Email Account

The OEIG obtained emails that were sent to and from Ms. McMeekan’s university email account from July 1, 2018 to April 7, 2020. In total, the OEIG received over 20,000 incoming emails and over 1,500 outgoing emails. In light of the volume of emails, the OEIG searched them for various politically oriented search terms.¹⁰ Through these searches, and subsequent further review of her email account, OEIG investigators identified the following emails sent from Ms. McMeekan’s WIU email address, or forwarded from her personal email address to her WIU email address, during her scheduled work hours on days when her time records reflected that she was working:

⁷ WIU’s Policy on Political Activity is found within the Official University Policy Manual, located at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/polact.php>.

⁸ WIU’s Appropriate Use Procedures are found within the Administrative Procedures handbook, located at http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/administrative_procedures_handbook/appropriateUse.php.

⁹ WIU’s Policy on E-Mail Usage and Political Activity is found within the Official University Policy Manual, located at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/email.php>.

¹⁰ The search terms used included the following: Republican, Democratic, Conservative, Vote, Support, [Politician 1], [Politician 2], [Politician 3], and [Politician 4].

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Content</u>
10/1/2018	9:46 AM	Ms. McMeekan forwarded to her work email, an email chain that discussed biographies for a McDonough County Board election and picking up campaign signs in support of [Elective Office 1] and [Elective Office 2] candidates, [Candidate 1] and [Candidate 2], respectively.
10/19/2018	8:08 AM	Ms. McMeekan replied to an email from [Elective Office 1] candidate [Candidate 1] that inquired about the status of memes that were being used for his campaign. Ms. McMeekan stated that "a few" memes would be ready for [Candidate 1] by that Sunday.
11/30/2018	3:47 PM	Ms. McMeekan emailed a [Political Organization 1] member the [Political Organization 1] organization constitution as an attachment.
1/4/2019	10:45 AM	Ms. McMeekan sent a [Political Organization 1] member a [Internet Company 1] Forms document that contained the [Political Organization 1] Membership Application."
2/27/2019	12:35 PM	Ms. McMeekan replied to an email from another WIU employee with the subject, "tonight: democratic women," that inquired about an event scheduled that evening at City Hall. Ms. McMeekan stated, "We are going to be pressing all our local decision makers to start addressing Climate Change locally. We cannot wait for the federal government to make them."

Additionally, OEIG identified numerous emails that Ms. McMeekan received from political organizations on her State email account, including approximately 1,663 emails from the [Political Organization 2], 515 from the [Campaign 1], 221 from [Political 2], 179 from [Politician 3], and 74 from the [Politician 4] campaign for [Campaign 2]. During the 12 days between October 27, 2018 and November 7, 2018, Ms. McMeekan's State email account received over 430 emails, the majority of which were related to the November 6, 2018 election.

In the emails received on Ms. McMeekan's State email account from various political organizations, each organization provided some type of mechanism to unsubscribe from or stop receiving future emails. For example, the [Political Organization 2] emails contained two options at the bottom of each email that would allow recipients to unsubscribe from or limit the number of emails received: (1) "If you'd like to take a break from [Political Organization 2] emails, click here"; and (2) "If you'd like to stop receiving all emails from [Political Organization 2], please click here." Each option provided a link for the recipient to click on in order to be removed from the organization's mailing list. The emails from the other political organizations contained similar

¹¹ In order to access [Internet Company 1] Forms, one must first use credentials to log in to the associated email address. If a [Internet Company 1] Forms document is sent to a recipient, the document arrives in the recipient's email inbox and also appears in the sender's email sent box.

variations of these mechanisms.¹² A review of Ms. McMeekan's outgoing emails did not identify any emails that she sent requesting any political organizations to remove her State email address from their email list.

C. Social Media Posts

On April 1, 2020, OIG investigators initially reviewed social media posts published on a [Social Media Service 1] page with the name "Heather Marie McMeekan," and subsequently periodically completed additional checks of that page through May 21, 2020.¹³ Investigators compared these posts with Ms. McMeekan's signed timekeeping records, and identified many posts made to Ms. McMeekan's page during her scheduled work hours on days when her time records reflected that she was working. The OIG randomly sampled eleven days for which Ms. McMeekan's timesheets reflected she worked full 7.5-hour days, and determined that on these days, there were posts and/or comments on Ms. McMeekan's personal [Social Media Service 1] page a total of approximately 76 times during her scheduled work hours of 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, as detailed below:

Dates	Time(s)	Total # of Posts
Thursday, 2/20/20	10:57 AM, 10:58 AM, 11:57 AM, 1:04 PM, 1:15 PM, 1:51 PM, 1:57 PM, 2:15 PM, 2:26 PM	9
Friday, 2/21/20	9:41 AM	1
Tuesday, 2/25/20	2:55 PM, 3:20 PM, 3:48 PM	3
Wednesday, 2/26/20	8:00 AM, 9:05 AM, 9:33 AM, 9:35 AM, 9:49 AM, 9:52 AM, 10:37 AM, 11:03 AM, 11:23 AM, 11:25 AM, 12:02 PM, 12:03 PM, 12:06 PM, 12:27 PM, 1:05 PM, 2:24 PM, 2:35 PM, 3:44 PM, 3:47 PM	19
Thursday, 2/27/20	9:49 AM, 9:53 AM, 11:25 AM, 11:51 AM, 1:15 PM, 1:25 PM, 2:00 PM, 2:12 PM, 2:18 PM, 2:24 PM, 4:25 PM	11
Monday, 3/16/20	8:23 AM, 8:30 AM, 8:59 AM, 9:01 AM, 9:16 AM, 10:59 AM, 11:20 AM, 11:51 AM, 1:54 PM, 2:08 PM	10
Tuesday, 3/17/20	9:52 AM, 10:10 AM, 12:51 PM, 1:13 PM	4
Thursday, 3/19/20	8:10 AM, 8:40 AM, 8:46 AM, 9:01 AM, 9:41 AM, 10:26 AM, 10:27 AM, 10:40 AM, 11:03 AM, 2:31 PM	10
Friday, 3/20/20	8:35 AM, 12:41 PM	2

¹² Many of organizations also included the following language: "If you believe you received this email in error or no longer wish to receive emails from us, please unsubscribe," along with a link that would remove the recipient from future email lists.

¹³ Ms. McMeekan confirmed in her OIG interview that this page was her personal [Social Media Service 1] page.

Tuesday, 3/24/20	9:45 AM, 9:46 AM, 10:59 AM	3
Monday, 4/6/20	9:47 AM, 10:10 AM, 11:17 AM, 2:01 PM	4
Grand Total		76

As noted above, for some of the dates reviewed, there were multiple posts and/or comments throughout Ms. McMeekan's scheduled working hours. For example, the following summarizes posts and comments that were posted on Ms. McMeekan's page from Ms. McMeekan's account during her scheduled working hours on Monday, March 16, 2020, a date when her time records indicated she was working:

March 16, 2020 Posts

Time	Summary of Post/Comment
8:23AM	Link to an article from [News Source 1] "Italy Has Been Trying To Send Us A Warning. Will We Listen? The country with the world's second-worst COVID-19 outbreak is imploring..."
8:30AM	Caption: From 2018...but in their haste to destroy all Obama's good work, they destroyed pandemic preparedness, too. Republicans have condemned us all to far more suffering and deaths thanks to their anti-science stupidity." Link to an article from [News Source 2] "Top White House official in charge of pandemic response exits abruptly"
8:59AM	Link to an article from [News Source 3] "Coronavirus is exposing America's shameful selfish streak. We have forgotten how to make sacrifices for each other. We have forgotten..."
9:01AM	Link to an article from [News Source 4] "Groups: Release immigrant detainees at high coronavirus risk. Immigrant rights groups want U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement..."
9:16AM	Post of an image that reads: "Sending love to immuno compromised people, people without stable income, anyone experiencing chronic anxiety, students struggling financially, emotionally, or physically, parents worried about their child(ren)'s well-being, anyone struggling mentally & physically."
10:59AM	Caption: "Gee....BTW, Macomb, Rushville's response by their city leaders puts ours to shame" Link to an article from [News Source 5] "Taylorville mayor asks residents to stay home"
11:20AM	Link to an article from [News Source 6] "15 Broadway Plays and Musicals You Can Watch On Stage From Home [News Source 6]"
11:51AM	Caption: "...Any politician not pushing for immediate closure of all public spaces and events doesn't deserve our support." Link to an article from [News Source 7] "It could happen to anybody: Kenner lawyer, 45, in critical care with coronavirus, wife says"
1:54PM	Link to an article from [News Source 8] "If you voted for [Politician 1], You Owe My Children an Apology"
2:08PM	Post of an image that reads: "Straights: I can't believe the government would just ignore an epidemic that threatens thousands of lives. Gays: You don't say..."

While many of the posts to Ms. McMeekan's page were about political issues, in the sampling reviewed the OEIG did not identify any during her scheduled working hours on days when her time records reflected that she was working, that related to working on a campaign for elective office, organizing a political event, soliciting campaign contributions, soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate, distributing campaign literature, or other activities listed in the Ethics Act's definition of prohibited political activity.¹⁴

OEIG investigators also reviewed social media posts from an organization [Social Media Service 1] page under the name "[Political Organization 1]." On the dates reviewed, OEIG investigators identified numerous posts on the [Political Organization 1] [Social Media Service 1] page made during Ms. McMeekan's scheduled work hours, but these posts do not identify the user who created and posted them from the [Political Organization 1] [Social Media Service 1] page.

OEIG investigators also reviewed posts made on a [Social Media Service 2] account under the name "Heather McMeekan" with the username "[Social Media Service 2 Username]"¹⁵ Although OEIG identified numerous [Social Media Service 2 Posts] made on Ms. McMeekan's scheduled workdays, the times of posting could not be identified.

D. Interview Of Heather McMeekan

On October 6, 2020, OEIG investigators interviewed Ms. McMeekan. Ms. McMeekan stated that as Webmaster in WIU's University Technology department she has "direct responsibility for over 38,000 webpages" at WIU, and that she provides direct support and was listed as an administrator for several WIU departmental webpages and [Social Media Service 1] pages. She said that she has an office on WIU's campus, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, she has been working from home since March 2020. Ms. McMeekan confirmed that she was issued a WIU laptop but said that WIU did not issue her a work cell phone. She said that since she has been working from home, she has been using her personal laptop computer rather than the WIU-issued laptop.

Ms. McMeekan stated that she also is the founder and current president of the [Political Organization 1], which she identified as a 501(c)(4) non-profit educational organization that cannot endorse candidates.¹⁶ In addition, she said that she is the committee person in the MC-1 [precinct for National Political Organization 1].

Ms. McMeekan stated that prior to March 2020, her usual workday at WIU was Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with two paid 15-minute breaks and a one-hour paid lunch break taken at varying times.¹⁷ Ms. McMeekan stated that due to the nature of her work, she and

¹⁴ See 5 ILCS 430/1-5.

¹⁵ Ms. McMeekan confirmed in her OEIG interview that [Social Media Service 2 Username] was her personal [Social Media Service 2] account.

¹⁶ OEIG reviewed the Illinois State Board of Elections website and did not identify any filings by the [Political Organization 1].

¹⁷ As noted above, WIU's CIO advised the OEIG that Ms. McMeekan's scheduled work hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. In an August 31, 2020 interview, Ms. McMeekan's supervisor, [WIU Employee 1], stated that Ms. McMeekan's

her team often receive three 5-minute breaks in lieu of each 15-minute break. She stated that while working from home, her lunch times were "all over the place," but she tried to take her lunch sometime between 10:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Ms. McMeekan stated that due to [Personal Medical Issue 1] since working from home, her supervisor, [WIU Employee 1], has allowed her to check in early (around 4:00 or 5:00 AM), answer emails, go back to sleep for one to two hours, and then continue working later in the evening. Investigators showed Ms. McMeekan various timesheets throughout her interview, and for each timesheet shown, Ms. McMeekan confirmed that she reviewed and approved the timesheets.

Ms. McMeekan confirmed that between 2018 and 2020, she received approximately 74 emails from [Politician 4] campaign and over 1,600 emails from the [Political Organization 2] on her WIU email. Ms. McMeekan claimed that she never registered her WIU email address to either organization or requested to get emails from either organization. Ms. McMeekan said that her WIU email address was used when the forms were completed to name her to the [Precinct Committee for National Political Organization 1] Precinct Committee, and the emails from both organizations may have started around that time. She further stated that she received on her WIU email account approximately 15 to 20 emails per day from the [Campaign 1]. Ms. McMeekan stated that as a "public figure," she receives a great deal of unwanted or spam email from political organizations.

According to Ms. McMeekan, she has tried adding the [Political Organization 2] and the [Politician 4] campaign to the email spam filters and unsubscribing from their email lists, but that she "gave up" with regard to reporting the [Politician 1] emails as spam. Ms. McMeekan maintained she also sent a message to the [Politician 4] campaign to stop sending emails to her WIU email account but said she did not receive a response. Additionally, Ms. McMeekan claimed she contacted the chair and the secretary for her local [precinct for National Political Organization 1] to remove her WIU email address from their rolls, but said she was still getting emails from the organization.

Ms. McMeekan said that her username and password are required to log into her WIU account, and that she has not given her computer sign-in information to anyone. Investigators showed Ms. McMeekan copies of the emails sent from her WIU email address on November 30, 2018 and January 4, 2019, which, as noted in the chart above, sent information related to the [Political Organization 1]. Ms. McMeekan confirmed that she sent both emails from her work email address, and that the emails were not related to her work at WIU. Ms. McMeekan said that the November 30, 2018 (3:47 PM) email was not sent during a break, but she claimed that she may have been off work already if she started her workday early that day. Ms. McMeekan also claimed that she believed she was using her personal email account and her personal cell phone when she sent these emails.¹⁸

work hours were 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, but in a subsequent November 24, 2020 interview [WIU Employee 1] stated that prior to March 2020 Ms. McMeekan's scheduled work hours were 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.¹⁸ OEIG discovered the other emails on Ms. McMeekan's WIU email address that are listed in the chart above, after Ms. McMeekan's interview had already been completed. As a result, Ms. McMeekan was not asked about these emails or their contents.

Ms. McMeekan said that in order to access a [Social Media Service 1] page for a WIU department, she first has to sign onto her personal [Social Media Service 1] page. However, Ms. McMeekan said that, related to use of [Social Media Service 1], she and [WIU Employee 1] have discussed that she had to work to “keep personal and professional lives separate.” She said that these discussions occurred at various times, including after a 2018 complaint was filed against Ms. McMeekan about her online presence during work hours.¹⁹ Ms. McMeekan confirmed that those in her work section also have “regular talks” about being cautious when using social media during the workday.

Ms. McMeekan confirmed that the [Social Media Service 1] page under the name “Heather Marie McMeekan” was her personal [Social Media Service 1] page, and that all posts on that page were created or reposted by her. Ms. McMeekan confirmed that she had not given anyone else access or permission to use her personal social media accounts, including [Social Media Service 1] and [Social Media Service 2]. OEIG investigators showed Ms. McMeekan a sampling of posts obtained from her personal [Social Media Service 1] page that were published during her assigned work hours on days she reported working on her timesheets. Other than a couple of posts that she said she did not recall, Ms. McMeekan admitted that she published the posts on her [Social Media Service 1] page.

For example, OEIG investigators asked Ms. McMeekan about multiple posts on her [Social Media Service 1] page from March 16, 2020 with various timestamps, including 8:23 AM, 8:30 AM, 8:59 AM, 9:01 AM, 9:16 AM, 10:59 AM, 11:20 AM, 11:51 AM, 1:54 PM, and 2:08 PM, as listed in the chart above. Ms. McMeekan stated that the 8:23 AM post, which discussed Covid-19, was posted from her cell phone during her break. Ms. McMeekan said she typed the 11:20 AM post regarding Broadway plays during her lunch break. She indicated that she shared these plays with “traumatized people” who do not have the funds to be able to pay for online entertainment and it was good for WIU’s campus community. Ms. McMeekan also confirmed that she posted the content in the 11:51 AM post regarding a family affected by Covid-19 for the sake of WIU’s campus community. Ms. McMeekan said that she made her 1:54 PM post regarding individuals who voted for then-[Politician 1] because she felt that “it was destroying our children’s safety.” Ms. McMeekan stated that all of these posts occurred during her normal scheduled work hours but that she might have been working a modified schedule that day. Ms. McMeekan indicated that she worked a modified schedule during spring break to cover her department, working later in the evening, and added that she might have been half asleep when posting. Ms. McMeekan further claimed that if she was at work when these posts were made, they were created using her cell phone during her work breaks or lunch period.

Ms. McMeekan stated that she tries to make sure posts on her personal [Social Media Service 1] page are of benefit to WIU students when posted during the workday, or that posts are made during her breaks. During her interview, Ms. McMeekan often referred to herself as an “ally” for WIU students, claiming that many of her [Social Media Service 1] posts made during work hours were done so because of her role as a student ally. When asked what she did when acting as an ally, Ms. McMeekan said she was able to “ask tough questions of people in power,” and she was available to attend to “emotional needs.” Ms. McMeekan also stated that she usually

¹⁹ [The information in this footnote is redacted because it relates to allegations that the WIU determined were unfounded. Therefore, the Commission exercises its discretion to redact this section pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52.]

takes a ten-to-fifteen-minute walk during the afternoon, where she makes it a point to post one to two items on her [Social Media Service 1] that she deems "important."

Additionally, Ms. McMeekan confirmed that she set up the [Political Organization 1] [Social Media Service 1] page and still maintained administrative access to add or remove posts to it but said that other members also have access to add or remove content on that page. Ms. McMeekan said she had shared community news on the [Political Organization 1] [Social Media Service 1] page that occurred during her workday, such as notices of lost dogs or significant news events from the area around WIU, and said that [WIU Employee 1] was aware of those uses. Ms. McMeekan added that [WIU Employee 1] warned her to use caution when posting on [Social Media Service 1], and that even though she uses [Social Media Service 1] for WIU purposes, she was not to post to "the [National Political Organization 1] stuff" during her workday. Ms. McMeekan said that any work she did in her role as the committee person in the MC-1 [precinct for National Political Organization 1] was completed outside of her work hours.

Ms. McMeekan confirmed that [Social Media Service 2 Username] is her personal [Social Media Service 2] account, and that she has not given anyone else access or permission to use it. When shown various [Social Media Service 2] posts from that account that were made on days when she reported working, Ms. McMeekan said that if she posted the [Social Media Service 2 Posts], it probably would have been when she was on a break.

Ms. McMeekan offered to investigators that she suffered from [Personal Medical Issue 1], [Personal Medical Issue 2], and [Personal Medical Issue 3].²⁰ Ms. McMeekan called it "a struggle" to keep separate her computer activities for work and for her outside activities, and attributed mistakes due to these episodes to her [Personal Medical Issue 3]. For example, Ms. McMeekan said that due to her [Personal Medical Issue 3] she has different "fragments," and "under duress, those fragments may be more driving the bus." Ms. McMeekan stated that some of these fragments may be younger but she cannot access the skills from an older fragment until she reaches out to a friend, and "all of sudden the wall of [Personal Medical Issue 3] lets down." Ms. McMeekan further stated that when her [Personal Medical Issue 2] is triggered during the workday, she sometimes has to reach out to friends using her phone or [Social Media Service 3].

Ms. McMeekan said she had a letter and other documents on file for a reasonable accommodation for her [Personal Medical Issue 2], which allowed her to go online for support "during times of stress." Ms. McMeekan also stated that [WIU Employee 1] had granted her permission to work a modified schedule as part of these accommodations.

E. Interviews Of [WIU Employee 1]

The OEIG interviewed [WIU Employee 1] on August 31, 2020 and November 24, 2020.²¹ [WIU Employee 1] stated that he has been Ms. McMeekan's supervisor since he became the

²⁰ At the beginning of her interview, Ms. McMeekan was asked whether she had any physical or mental condition that would affect her ability to understand and answer questions. Ms. McMeekan did not indicate that she was having any trouble understanding or answering questions during her interview.

²¹ For purposes of this report, the OEIG will generally refer to his "OEIG interview" when describing statements made and exhibits shown on either day.

[identifying information redacted] in 2005 or 2006. [WIU Employee 1] said that as part of her WIU duties, Ms. McMeekan has used her personal [Social Media Service 1] page during her workday to access WIU [Social Media Service 1] pages for maintenance and to assist other departments, but that that was infrequent. [WIU Employee 1] said he had never given Ms. McMeekan permission to make posts or changes to her personal [Social Media Service 1] or [Social Media Service 2] accounts during work hours. [WIU Employee 1] said Ms. McMeekan's involvement with students for web-related questions or problems was "almost zero," and that working as an "ally" was not part of her job.²²

In his initial interview, [WIU Employee 1] stated that Ms. McMeekan's work hours were 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, but in his subsequent interview he stated that Ms. McMeekan's scheduled work hours had been 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. [WIU Employee 1] said that she had a one-hour lunch break taken at varying times between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM, and that in addition to the lunch break, WIU policies allowed his employees to have two 15-minute work breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. [WIU Employee 1] said no one had asked him about separating their 15-minute work breaks into three 5-minute sections, and that he probably would not allow that, because that idea went against the intentions of a break.

[WIU Employee 1] said that any changes in Ms. McMeekan's hours had to be requested and approved by him and documented in the team calendar. [WIU Employee 1] said occasionally Ms. McMeekan mentioned that she "[Personal Medical Issue 1]," but said she had made no requests for any accommodations for [Personal Medical Issue 1]. He said that Ms. McMeekan did not have permission to work a modified schedule, such as doing work during times [Personal Medical Issue 1] then splitting her workday, and that she had not asked him about working during early morning hours while she was awake. [WIU Employee 1] said there was not enough work to do outside normal office hours to justify someone working other than normal office hours.

[WIU Employee 1] said Ms. McMeekan had told him that she had an occasional inability to concentrate, causing her to be easily distracted, which she said was caused by her medical condition. [WIU Employee 1] said he worked with WIU's Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) to position Ms. McMeekan's work desk in the WIU offices so she could see her office door, and worked with Facilities Management to install full-spectrum fluorescent lighting in her office. [WIU Employee 1] said Ms. McMeekan had not told him, nor does he have any documents from the EOA, that Ms. McMeekan may use her cell phone or [Social Media Service 3] as an accommodation, adding that would be "an odd accommodation." [WIU Employee 1] said that Ms. McMeekan had mentioned her medical condition to him but said he had not received any documents from EOA about the condition.

[WIU Employee 1] said that in the past, he had reminded Ms. McMeekan to make sure her political activities did not involve university resources and were done outside her work hours. [WIU Employee 1] confirmed that these discussions have occurred at various times, including when an employee complained to him about Ms. McMeekan's online activities or when Ms. McMeekan was at work discussing her outside activities with him or other employees. [WIU Employee 1] said as recently as January 2020, he reminded Ms. McMeekan not to discuss politics

²² Ms. McMeekan's job description does not reflect any duties relating to interacting with WIU students in any capacity.

in the office, saying she was telling him about using benefit time to attend a political rally in Springfield. [WIU Employee 1] said he also discussed with her to avoid doing personal things during work hours.

[WIU Employee 1] said it was not appropriate for Ms. McMeekan to receive political emails at her WIU email address, and that he assumed Ms. McMeekan had the computer knowledge to unsubscribe from them. In addition, [WIU Employee 1] said that she could have asked the University Technology Support Center to block nuisance emails from a WIU email account at the server level. During his interview, [WIU Employee 1] used his computer to check support staff work tickets dated back to 2016 and reported that he saw no record of Ms. McMeekan requesting assistance regarding email-related issues.

[WIU Employee 1] said he had no knowledge that Ms. McMeekan was posting to her personal [Social Media Service 1] page during her workday. When shown multiple posts on Ms. McMeekan's [Social Media Service 1] page dated April 6, 2020, including at 9:47 AM, 10:10 AM, 11:17 AM, and 2:01 PM, [WIU Employee 1] said he could attribute two or three of the posts to Ms. McMeekan's work breaks and lunch breaks, but not all of them, because the times would not add up correctly.

F. Accommodation Documents

Because Ms. McMeekan claimed to have received accommodations for medical conditions which allowed her to use her personal social media during her work hours and work a modified schedule, investigators asked WIU to produce its policies relating to requests for reasonable accommodations, and any records relating to accommodations granted to Ms. McMeekan.

WIU policy requires employees seeking a reasonable accommodation of a disability to provide appropriate documentation of the disability and meet with the Affirmative Action/ADA Compliance Office and the employee's supervisor to discuss the essential functions of the job position, the needed reasonable accommodation, the appropriateness of the accommodation to the work environment, and the recommended course of action. WIU determines all reasonable accommodations requests on a case-by-case basis specific to the impact of the disability on the individual.²³

In response to the OEIG's request for documents relating to any allowances or accommodations provided to Ms. McMeekan based on any physical, psychological, or mental disability or condition, WIU produced documents related to a 2011 accommodation request. The documentation indicated that the only accommodations requested and provided were for full spectrum lighting, a headset, an office away from odors, and a desk-facing door.

IV. ANALYSIS

Although the OEIG discovered only minimal instances of Ms. McMeekan sending to or from her State email account campaign-related emails, evidence showed that she received a

²³ WIU's policy "ADA Services for Faculty/Staff" can be located at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/adafacstaff.php>.

significant number of emails from multiple political organizations on her State email account over an extended period of time. The OEIG's investigation also revealed that Ms. McMeekkan regularly and frequently posted on her personal social media throughout her work hours. Finally, Ms. McMeekkan provided false statements in her OEIG interview regarding receiving permission to work a modified schedule and using social media for personal purposes during her work hours.

During its investigation, the OEIG identified several emails in Ms. McMeekkan's State email account over a nearly two-year period that arguably constitute prohibited political activity under the Ethics Act. Further review of Ms. McMeekkan's personal [Social Media Service 1] page did not identify posts that met the Ethics Act's definition of prohibited political activity. While Ms. McMeekkan is the president of the [Political Organization 1] and has access to its [Social Media Service 1] page, and the OEIG identified posts made to it during Ms. McMeekkan's State work hours, Ms. McMeekkan stated that other individuals also have access to the [Political Organization 1] [Social Media Service 1] page. In light of the minimal evidence of prohibited political activity, the OEIG does not make a finding that Ms. McMeekkan violated the Ethics Act's prohibited political activity provision.

However, the OEIG discovered an extensive number of emails that Ms. McMeekkan received on her State email account from political organizations. Between July 1, 2018 and April 7, 2020, Ms. McMeekkan received over 2,100 emails from various political organizations, and during just a 12-day period from October 27, 2018 through November 7, 2018, Ms. McMeekkan received approximately 430 emails, the majority of which were from political organizations. Although Ms. McMeekkan claimed that she tried to take steps to either unsubscribe or contact the organizations, OEIG did not find any evidence to support her assertions. The evidence showed that all of these emails included some type of mechanism allowing a recipient to easily unsubscribe from or stop receiving future emails, but the emails continued to come to Ms. McMeekkan's account from multiple political organizations over an extended period of time. A review of Ms. McMeekkan's outgoing State emails did not reveal any emails that she sent requesting political organizations to remove her State email address from their email list. Additionally, [WITU Employee 1] confirmed that the University Technology Support Center would have helped block these emails, but he saw no record of Ms. McMeekkan requesting assistance regarding email-related issues. Especially given that Ms. McMeekkan is an IT employee, she was perfectly capable of knowing how to unsubscribe, request assistance from the Support Center to block these emails, or even simply to email them back saying to stop.

Per WITU's Policy on Email Usage and Political Activity, "[i]ndividuals receiving direct, person-to-person electronic messages have a responsibility to tell the sender to discontinue unwanted communications."²⁴ Ms. McMeekkan's failure to take action to inform the various political organizations to discontinue communications violated WITU's email usage and political activity policy, and thus, this allegation is [REDACTED].²⁵

²⁴ WITU's Policy on E-Mail Usage and Political Activity is located at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/email.php>.
²⁵ The OEIG concludes that an allegation is "[redacted]" when it has determined that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of law or policy has occurred, or that there has been fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, nonfeasance, misfeasance, or malfeasance.

The OEIG also discovered that Ms. McMeekan frequently posted to her personal [Social Media Service 1] page during her State work hours. For example, in a sampling of 11 days when Ms. McMeekan's timesheets reflected she worked full 7.5-hour days, there were posts and/or comments on Ms. McMeekan's personal [Social Media Service 1] page a total of approximately 76 times during her scheduled work hours. Ms. McMeekan admitted that she created many of the posts she was asked about and confirmed that she was the only person who had access to her personal social media accounts but claimed that she made many of these posts during her breaks. The OEIG, however, identified multiple dates with posts and comments that were made throughout her scheduled work hours, all of which could not have been made solely during her two 15-minute breaks or half-hour lunch period. For example, even accepting Ms. McMeekan's claim that she was on a morning break when she posted to her [Social Media Service 1] page at 8:23 AM on March 16, 2020, and that she was on her lunch break when she posted at 11:20 AM that day, she could not have also been on breaks for all of her various other posts at 8:59 AM, 9:01 AM, 9:16 AM, and 10:59 AM that day.

Ms. McMeekan also claimed that she was permitted to divide her 15-minute breaks into three 5-minute breaks, allowing for a total of six breaks throughout the day, in addition to her lunch period, and that her supervisor, [WIU Employee 1], permitted her to work a modified schedule due to her [Personal Medical Issue 1]. The evidence does not support Ms. McMeekan's assertions. [WIU Employee 1] denied ever permitting Ms. McMeekan to divide her breaks into smaller increments and confirmed that Ms. McMeekan was only entitled to two fifteen-minute breaks and a half hour lunch period. [WIU Employee 1] also said in his interview that he did not give Ms. McMeekan permission to work a modified schedule, and WIU did not produce any documentation verifying that Ms. McMeekan requested and received a reasonable accommodation that would allow for such a schedule.

Additionally, Ms. McMeekan claimed that posting to her personal [Social Media Service 1] page was part of her work duties and was permitted because she was helping the community and acting as an ally on behalf of WIU students. However, Ms. McMeekan's job description does not mention any Webmaster duty or responsibility relating to interacting with WIU students. [WIU Employee 1] confirmed that her job does not include such duties and said he had never given Ms. McMeekan permission to make posts or makes edits or changes to her personal social media accounts during work hours. Thus, the allegation that Ms. McMeekan abused State time by posting to her personal [Social Media Service 1] page during her State work hours is [REDACTED].

Finally, during Ms. McMeekan's OEIG interview, she made statements that were false. Among other questionable statements, she stated in her interview that [WIU Employee 1] permitted her to work a modified schedule due to her [Personal Medical Issue 1], and that she had reasonable accommodations in place with WIU for her [Personal Medical Issue 2], which included allowing her to go online for support. However, [WIU Employee 1] said Ms. McMeekan had made no requests for a modified schedule, and that she did not have permission to work a modified schedule, such as doing work during times she could not sleep then splitting her workday. In addition, there is no documentation of any accommodations granted to Ms. McMeekan that allowed her to modify her scheduled work hours or use her personal social media during her workday, and [WIU Employee 1] was unaware of any accommodations granted to Ms. McMeekan

to use her cell phone or her personal computer/[Social Media Service 3] as therapy or an accommodation.

Section 20-70 of the Ethics Act provides that “[i]t is the duty of every . . . employee under the jurisdiction of an Executive Inspector General . . . to cooperate . . . in any investigation Failure to cooperate includes . . . intentional omissions and knowing false statements.”²⁶ Because Ms. McMeekan made statements during her OEIG interview that were false, the OEIG finds that the allegation that Ms. McMeekan failed to cooperate with the OEIG’s investigation is [REDACTED].

V. [REDACTED] AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its investigation, the OEIG concludes that there is **REASONABLE CAUSE TO ISSUE THE FOLLOWING [REDACTED]:**

➤ **[REDACTED]** – Ms. McMeekan violated WIU’s email use and political activity policy by her failure to take action to stop communications from various political organizations sent to her State email.

➤ **[REDACTED]** – Ms. McMeekan abused State time by frequently accessing her personal social media accounts during her work hours.

➤ **[REDACTED]** – Ms. McMeekan failed to cooperate with an OEIG investigation, in violation of the Ethics Act, by knowingly making false statements during an OEIG interview.

The OEIG recommends that WIU discipline Ms. McMeekan and place a copy of this report in her personnel file.

Additionally, WIU’s timekeeping system only requires employees to record the total hours worked, and does not require them to record their start, end, or break times. Nearly two years ago, in September 2019, the OEIG referred case number 19-00674 to WIU with a recommendation that WIU:

reconsider its timekeeping policies and require employees to record the actual times worked, specifying start times and end times, to the nearest quarter hour so that it may be determined when employees are on State compensated time.

As this case illustrates, WIU’s continued use of a timekeeping system that does not include such requirements makes effective supervisory oversight of employees difficult, and makes it difficult to later determine whether employees are on State compensated time when they conduct non-work activities, including prohibited political activity. Therefore, the OEIG again recommends that WIU implement a new timekeeping system requiring employees to record start times, end times, lunch periods, and any permitted breaks.

No further investigative action is needed, and this case is considered closed.

Date: July 20, 2021

Office of Executive Inspector General
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor
69 West Washington Street, Ste. 3400
Chicago, IL 60602

By: Grace Donovan
Assistant Inspector General



WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY

July 21, 2021

Via Electronic Mail at [REDACTED]

Ms. Susan M. Halting
Office of the Executive Inspector General
69 W. Washington, Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: OEIG Case No. 20-00478

Dear Executive Inspector General Halting:

This is in response to the OEIG's Final Summary Report related to the above-subject matter. The report indicated that the OEIG found evidence to support a conclusion that Western Illinois University (WIU) employee, Heather McMeekan violated WIU's email use and political activity policy by failing to take action to stop communications from various political organizations sent to her State email address, abused state time by frequently accessing her personal social media accounts during her work hours, and failed to cooperate with an OEIG investigation by knowingly making false statements during an OEIG interview violating the Ethics act.

Human Resources sent a copy of the final report to Ms. McMeekan on July 13, 2021 and she was placed on administrative leave, effective July 14, 2021. Human Resources met with Ms. McMeekan and her union representatives on July 15, 2021. On July 16, 2021, the University initiated the State Universities Civil Service Act pre-discharge proceedings. Human Resources sent Ms. McMeekan the required State Universities Civil Service notification of the intent to initiate discharge. The effective date of discharge is not yet known.

The University is in the midst of a multi-year Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) implementation project. WIU has begun the process of converting our administrative information management system to the ERP system, which will support the collection, storage, processing and reporting of data records including payroll and timekeeping. As part of this project, WIU is reviewing options for timekeeping data collection.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Duvall
General Counsel

Office of the General Counsel
Sherman Hall 208, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390
Tel 309.298.3070 Fax 309.298.3080



WESTERN
ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY

September 2, 2022

Via Electronic Mail at [REDACTED]

Mrs. Susan M. Halting
Office of the Executive Inspector General
69 W. Washington, Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: OEIG Case No. 20-00478

Dear Executive Inspector General Halting:

This is an updated response related to the above-subject matter.

The arbitrator found that she was not discharged for just cause. He directed the University to rescind Mrs. McMeekan's July 28, 2021 discharge and reinstate her to her former position as an Information Technology Associate (Webmaster) in the Web Services Office of the University Technology Department, by or before Monday, June 20, 2022. In place of McMeekan's rescinded discharge, WTIU was directed to substitute with a 10 working day disciplinary suspension without pay.

She returned to work on June 13, 2022.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Duval
General Counsel

Office of the General Counsel
Sherman Hall 208, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390
Tel 309.298.3070 Fax 309.298.3080

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Morton 709 Board Meeting - September 5th, 2023

bryan.l.groth@gmail.com Bryan Groth

Friday, September 8, 2023 at 11:17:51 AM Central Daylight Time

To: amanda.leman@mcusd709.org, thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org, diane.krall@mcusd709.org, jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org, timothy.braker@mcusd709.org, david.cross@mcusd709.org Cross, David, andrew.roth@mcusd709.org

Morton 709 Board Members,

The audience participation portion of Tuesday's board meeting was unsettling for my family on so many levels. I'm not sure where to start. For now, I will ask each of you five questions:

1. Do you personally endorse or condemn the hatred, bigotry, shaming, and proselytizing on full display in the room Tuesday evening. This would include the laughing and heckling by a person I believe to be the superintendent's adult son.
2. Are you personally willing to protect an educator that uses a work email address to subscribe to HATE or EXTREMIST groups as designated by the Southern Poverty Law Center and Anti-Defamation League?
3. Can you personally assure me that LGBTQ youth and their allies, like my son, are safe in Morton 709 schools and protected from bigotry, hatred, shaming, negative bias, discrimination and retaliation?
4. Are each of you prepared to make structural changes to increase awareness and understanding of marginalized groups at the Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High levels in an effort to reduce the hatred and bigotry within the schools and our community.
5. Will each of you publicly condemn the slanderous statement against my minor son made by the presenter wearing the militia-style shirt?

I would ask all of you to respond individually.

Respectfully,

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

timothy.braker@mcusd709.org Braker, Timothy

Friday, September 8, 2023 at 3:39:07 PM Central Daylight Time

To: amanda.leman@mcusd709.org Amanda Leman, david.cross@mcusd709.org David Cross, diane.krall@mcusd709.org Krall, Diane, jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org Jerry Rudd, thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org Thomas Neeley, andrew.roth@mcusd709.org Andrew Roth, craig.smock@mcusd709.org Craig Smock

Good afternoon

I would suggest we have one reply from the board.

I will have Dr Smock and group assist. Let one of know if you have thoughts

Tim

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bryan Groth** <bryan.l.groth@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Sep 8, 2023, 11:18 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Morton 709 Board Meeting - September 5th, 2023
To: <amanda.leman@mcusd709.org>, <thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org>, <diane.krall@mcusd709.org>, <jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org>, <timothy.braker@mcusd709.org>, Cross, David <david.cross@mcusd709.org>, <andrew.roth@mcusd709.org>

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- I would ask all of you to respond individually.

Respectfully,

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

craig.smock@mcusd709.org Smock, Craig

To: timothy.braker@mcusd709.org Braker, Timothy
Cc: amanda.leman@mcusd709.org Amanda Leman, david.cross@mcusd709.org David Cross, diane.krall@mcusd709.org Diane, jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org Jerry Rudd, thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org Thomas Neeley, andrew.roth@mcusd709.org Andrew Roth

Please call me with any questions.

I'll be working on a draft.

Craig

Monday, September 11, 2023 at 7:47:51 AM Central Daylight Time

On Fri, Sep 8, 2023 at 3:39 PM Braker, Timothy <timothy.braker@mcusd709.org> wrote:
Good afternoon

I would suggest we have one reply from the board.

I will have Dr Smock and group assist. Let one of know if you have thoughts

Tim

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bryan Groth** <bryan.l.groth@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Sep 8, 2023, 11:18 AM
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] Morton 709 Board Meeting - September 5th, 2023
To: <amanda.leman@mcusd709.org>, <thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org>, <diane.krall@mcusd709.org>, <jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org>, <timothy.braker@mcusd709.org>, Cross, David <david.cross@mcusd709.org>, <andrew.roth@mcusd709.org>

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- I would ask all of you to respond individually.

Respectfully,

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

Dr. Craig Smock
Superintendent
Morton C.U.S.D. 709



timothy.braker@mcusd709.org Braker, Timothy

To: bryan.l.groth@gmail.com Bryan Groth

Cc: amanda.leman@mcusd709.org, thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org, diane.krall@mcusd709.org, jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org, david.cross@mcusd709.org Cross, David,
andrew.roth@mcusd709.org

Saturday, September 16, 2023 at 11:11:57 AM Central Daylight Time

Mr. Groth,

I am sending this email on behalf of the Board of Education in response to your questions.

The Board has opted to respond as a whole, and not individually. As you may know, individual board members hold no power, acting alone.

The Board of Education is not responsible for any words spoken, nor the tones, attitudes, or decorum of the public in the boardroom. I did address interruptions to the speakers, on two occasions. Apart from extreme profanity, the Board is not to disrupt speakers during the time for audience participation. That evening, there were certainly several disruptions from many people on all sides of the issues. The Board certainly does not condone any disrespectful behavior nor attempts to stop others from speaking. The freedom of speech allows for all types of speech, even if it is inflammatory or offends others in the room. Unfortunately, there is also no guarantee that people will withhold their reactions to what is said, nor that the speech will be suitable for children to hear.

Although, according to our policies, employees are allowed to use work email for personal use, it is the Board's intent to recommend and advise employees to use their own private email account for personal use.

With respect to "hate group designations," the Board is not aware of any group to which Mr. Saunders subscribes that would commonly be considered a "hate group." Some organizations may feel that beliefs contrary to theirs constitutes hate or extremism. The bottom line is that the Board expects all people to be treated with respect and dignity, and we will deal with any situation where that expectation for conduct is not met.

We have policies and practices in place intended to prevent and stop mistreatment, bullying, and other types of harassment. But, we are not in 100% control of what students might say or do on any given day. Certainly, there are consequences for violators that we will enact based on our policies. That said, students do have the right to free speech and the freedom of religion.

In fact, students' freedoms are greater than that of school employees. And, under those rights, students may engage in conversations that are contrary to your views or your child's views. If those conversations are civil and welcome, as an exchange of ideas, then there is no harassment, even though there is disagreement. A student who communicates one belief should reasonably expect that another student might counter that belief, because both students have the freedom to passionately, but respectfully, express agreement or disagreement with one another.

If disagreement on sensitive topics is troubling for a student, that student can obviously avoid this type of confrontation and disagreement simply by not engaging in controversial conversations with other students. Once a student expresses a desire to stop a conversation, it can be considered harassment if other students continue the argument. This is the case whether students are discussing favorite baseball teams, movies, or other more serious matters. No matter the topic, passions can elevate to the point where the conversation should stop as it is disrupting the school environment for one or both students.

We believe that we already have the policies and practices in place to address bullying, discrimination, and harassment. These policies pertain to all groups and ages equally. We would encourage anyone who feels that this is happening to them, regardless of their age, identity, or beliefs, to report it immediately to a school authority. We will be reminding people of these policies and how to report incidents of harassment so that it can be addressed as soon as possible.

Again, unless the comments are extremely profane, the Board has no authority to limit a person's speech nor make any determinations about whether or not statements are "slanderous." That is a legal, fact-based determination that is best made by a court of law, and not our Board.

Sincerely,

Tim Braker, Board President

On Fri, Sep 8, 2023 at 11:18AM Bryan Groth <bryan.l.groth@gmail.com> wrote:
Morton 709 Board Members,

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Respectfully,

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

bryan.l.groth@gmail.com Bryan Groth

Saturday, September 16, 2023 at 10:14:15 PM Central Daylight Time

To: timothy.braker@mcusd709.org Braker, Timothy
Cc: amanda.lemay@mcusd709.org, thomas.neeley@mcusd709.org, diane.krall@mcusd709.org, jerry.rudd@mcusd709.org, david.cross@mcusd709.org Cross, David, andrew.roth@mcusd709.org

Morton 709 Board Members,

Thank you for your response. I will have additional comments and questions for all of you at a later date, but I will start with this. Obviously none of you have done your homework on the groups revealed in Michael Saunders' email and ignorance is not an excuse. I'll make it easy for you. I suggest you review the following presentation. The hate groups in the presentation were all contained within Mr. Saunders' March 2023 inbox.

I would assume that all of you are familiar with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) founded in 1913 and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) founded in 1971, but if you need additional information here are the links. I suggest you think very carefully before impugning these watch groups.

<https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/history>

<https://www.splcenter.org/what-we-do>

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

On Sat, Sep 16, 2023, 10:12 AM Braker, Timothy <timothy.braker@mcusd709.org> wrote:
Mr. Groth,

I am sending this email on behalf of the Board of Education in response to your questions.

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Sincerely,

Tim Braker, Board President

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5. Will each of you publicly condemn the slanderous statement against my minor son made by the presenter wearing the militia-style shirt?

I would ask all of you to respond individually.

Respectfully,

Bryan Groth
309-696-4922

This is a staff email account managed by Morton Community Unit School District 709. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender.

Attachments:

Saunders Emails.pdf 866k