When the Door is Closed, Find a Window: Advancing LGBTQ Policy in Michigan Schools

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American School Health Association
St. Louis, Missouri
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Objectives

1. Discuss Michigan’s story of working with the State Board of Education to develop a statement and guidance to support LGBTQ students.

2. Analyze various approaches to advancing LGBTQ policies and how they apply beyond Michigan.

3. Identify three strategies for advancing LGBTQ policies and practice in their own state or school-community.
Who’s in the Room?
Find a Partner!

What is a door that is currently shut for you pertaining to making schools more inclusive for LGBTQ students? Write it down. Share with your neighbor!
Politics, Partnerships, and Policy
The Michigan Journey
Michigan State Board of Education (SBE)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Policy Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>14 State Board of Education Policy on Michigan’s Transparency Dashboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>20 State Board of Education Model Local School Wellness Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>16 State Board of Education Statement Opposing A-F Grading of Schools and in Support of a Non-Letter Grading Accountability System</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 State Board of Education Policy for the Emergency Use of Seclusion and Restraint</td>
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Michigan Context: Strengths

Michigan has trainings and local champions in place

60+ trainings
2035 people
335 districts
3300 guides disseminated
Michigan Context: Weaknesses

Non-Discrimination Laws

Michigan has no civil rights protections in state law.
The Request from the SBE President

Draft a State Board of Education Statement and Guidance to Support LGBTQ Students
Reached Out to Our Partners
Draft Guidance Was Developed

1. Recommendations for supporting LGBTQ students

2. Specific guidance for supporting transgender and gender nonconforming students.
Presented to the Board and Shared with the Public
The Calls Started Pouring In

Michigan Schools To Let Students Choose Gender, Name And Bathroom

PETER HASSON
Reporter, Associate Editor

Parents THIS is wrong, very wrong!
Karen Braun | March 21, 2016 | 5 Comments

The Detroit News
State school board gets an earful on LGBT policy
The Legislative Response

Bills introduced to defund the State Board of Education and/or to remove it all together.

Bill would ban Michigan's transgender students from using certain restrooms.
The arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.

(Martin Luther King, Jr.)
The Voices of Parents and Students

Don’t Leave Parents Out of the Equation!
### The Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action/Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 28, 2016</td>
<td>First stakeholder review meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 8, 2016</td>
<td>LGBTQ Guidance Presentation to State Board of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9, 2016</td>
<td>Public comment officially begins (online, email, phone, fax, snail mail)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 12, 2016</td>
<td>Public comment at State Board of Education meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 10, 2016</td>
<td>Public comment at State Board of Education meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 11, 2016</td>
<td>Public comment officially ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 2016</td>
<td>Review and coding of public comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 2016</td>
<td>Second stakeholder review meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July &amp; August, 2016</td>
<td>Final updates to guidance based on public comment, stakeholder review, US Departments of Education &amp; Justice, Federal Court rulings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14, 2016</td>
<td>Updated LGBTQ Guidance Presentation to State Board of Education</td>
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</tbody>
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Find Your Allies

American Federation of Teachers Michigan
Michigan Association of School Administrators
Michigan Association of School Boards
Michigan Association of School Nurses
Michigan Association of School Psychologists
Michigan Association of School Social Workers
Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence
Michigan Department of Civil Rights
Michigan Education Association
Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association
Michigan High School Athletic Association
Michigan Parent Teacher Association
Michigan School Counselor Association

• Michigan School Health Coordinators Association
• Society of Health and Physical Educators (Michigan)
• Community organizations
• Early childhood education
• Higher education
• Legal counsel and policy firms supporting school districts
• Local and intermediate school districts
• McKinney-Vento (homeless)
• Mental health providers
• Pediatricians
• Pupil accounting
• Parents
• School administrators and educators
• Special education
• Students
• Title IX coordinators
Educate Your Internal Chain of Command

“The higher-ups want to see you.”
Law Doesn’t Trump Beliefs

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights

May 13, 2016

Dear Colleague:

Schools across the country strive to create and sustain inclusive, supportive, safe, and nondiscriminatory communities for all students. In recent years, we have received an increasing number of questions from parents, teachers, principals, and school superintendents about civil rights protections for transgender students. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and its implementing regulations...
Know Your Negotiables
“Voluntary” Can Be Helpful

“These guidelines are voluntary and should not be considered mandates or requirements. Decision by districts to utilize this guidance should be made at the local level employing the normal community input process.”

Local Control
Success!!!

News Release

State Board Of Education Approves New School Guidance Protecting LGBT Students

September 14, 2016

LANSING – The State Board of Education today approved new voluntary guidance to assist schools in creating school environments where LGBT students can live, learn and thrive.

The 6-2 vote in favor of the revised guidelines follows a thorough public comment period in which nearly 13,000 comments were received and analyzed by the Michigan Department of Education, and two public meetings were held by the State Board to gather feedback.

“Today’s vote sends a clear message about the kind of state Michigan is going to be,” said State Board of Education President John Austin. “The board members supporting this guidance showed that we’re serious about improving learning and life outcomes for all our school children, including LGBT children. We’re providing a roadmap for schools across Michigan to ensure that all our kids are safe in school and put in a position to succeed.”
It Took a Village...
Resources Were Leveraged to Create a Position at the Michigan Dept. of Education

[Images of logos and a person]
Times Have Been Challenging

Don't stare at the closed door too long... you'll miss the window opening!
We Have Seen Little and Big Victories...

New transgender policy at Ann Arbor Schools sends 'strong message'

Transgender bathroom policy reaffirmed by Grass Lake School Board
1. Building Relationships
2. Framing the Message
3. Mobilizing Parent and Youth Voices
4. Knowing How/When to Compromise
5. Presenting data strategically
6. Not rushing the process
At Your Tables...

Which strategies or lessons could help you open a window?
Find a Partner!

What is one window that is open for you? Write it down. Share with your neighbor!
NO ONE CAN DO everything... BUT EVERYONE CAN DO something

For More Information...
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