

Affirming Gender, Sexual, and Family Diversity: Promising Practices to Launch the Year

Names: There are many students who don't use the names listed in formal school records. Rather than calling roll, allow students to name and identify themselves on the first day of class. Be sure to change the names on your class list to reflect names that students use. When you have sub, be sure to share that list.

Pronouns: There are many ways to learn students' pronouns, but sometimes students don't want to share them on the first day and with the whole class. One way to learn students' pronouns is to have them fill out index cards and to include their names, pronouns, and anything else they might want you to know about them. Ask them how they want to be identified in class so you know how to address them. When you engage students in a conversation about pronouns, give some context. First, share your own pronouns. You might say, *We share pronouns as a way to recognize that we never really know how someone identifies unless they tell us. Sharing pronouns allows us to understand and to recognize one another in ways that make sense to us.* Also, it's crucial to respect and maintain students' privacy. If students share their gender and/or sexual identities with you, follow their lead, and keep that information private.

Bathrooms: Be sure that there are all-gender restrooms and that students know where they are. These bathrooms are for everyone, not just for students who are trans or gender expansive. On the first day of school, make an announcement about where these options are. This does a few of things: one, it tells students where the bathrooms are; it also signals to folks who want to use those bathrooms that your school is on board to support all students. And, it starts a conversation that teachers can lead, rather than allowing a less productive, even destructive conversation to take place. If there aren't all-gender restrooms at your school, advocate for creating some.

Language and Discourse: Avoid using "ladies and gentlemen," "boys/girls" and otherwise gendered language to address students. There are plenty of creative ways to address students that don't have to do with their gender identities-- scientists, readers, athletes, writers, artists, scholars, awesome-sauces, etc.

Grouping students: Related to what's above, avoid grouping/dividing students by gender. Other ways to group include birthdays, preferences based on... (e.g., vanilla/ chocolate ice cream, dogs/ cats, summer/ winter), etc. Some of these are nerdy, but better to use them than to alienate

students who don't fit into gender boxes.

Make your ally status known: Many of us went into teaching because we care about kids, but sometimes we take for granted that students know that we're active allies. So, how can you make your active ally status explicit from day 1? Hang a rainbow flag, share your pronouns and include them on your email signatures, support your school's GSA (attend events, support the GSA sponsor), hang a Safe Zone poster and talk about it. **But, please don't hang a sign if you aren't committed to being proactive in creating a safe space for all students.**

Top 5 Points for Allies of Transgender People To Remember

1. **Respect:** Respect transgender students' names and pronouns. In all interactions, address them with their preferred names and the pronoun they use. Respect their privacy by not outing them or telling others of their identity without permission.
2. **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy of transgender student-athletes must be a top priority for school personnel. All medical information shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local and federal privacy laws.
3. **Support:** Listen and be supportive. Allow trans students to control who they tell about their identity and how they tell them.
4. **Every journey is different:** Some trans people use hormones, some do not. Some have surgery, many do not. Every trans person's journey is unique. People have both a gender identity and sexual orientation, but some trans individuals don't identify with one or either and don't consider these descriptions part of their identities. Trans people can be straight, gay, bisexual, asexual, or have a different sexual identity.
5. **Educate yourself:** Challenge your own notions of gender roles and expectations. Use inclusive language. Continue your education on trans topics; do not expect trans people to be responsible for educating you. Do not ask invasive questions.

**Sourced from TRANSATHLETE.com

For more information, resources, and support, please visit: aqueerendeavor.org