



Office of Legal Services

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Mission: Each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

Memorandum

To: Building Administrators
Executive Directors
From: Wanda T. Lillis, Associate Legal Counsel
Dr. Dan Good, Superintendent
Date: August 15, 2016
Re: Diversity Support Team – Transgender Students

Columbus City Schools is committed to a safe and supportive environment for all students. Current Board policies prohibit discrimination and harassment of students based upon many characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. The District wants to ensure that transgender students experience the same safe and supportive environment free from discrimination and harassment as other students.

In recent months, school districts across the country have received guidance from the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education addressing issues relating to transgender students in schools.¹ These Departments contend that transgender students are entitled to protection under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs and activities that receive federal funds. There are also several court cases pending throughout the United States regarding issues related to transgender students, including the use of restrooms and locker rooms. However, there is no federal or state court decision which would govern how Ohio schools must address these issues.

In order to support CCS students, parents, and staff in addressing questions and issues that arise regarding transgender students, and to support building administrators in discussing these issues, the District has established a Diversity Support Team. This Diversity Support Team will be led by Jimmie Beall, CCS Resource Counselor and may also include a school counselor, social worker, nurse, and/or psychologist as well as appropriate building staff. The Diversity Support Team is available to meet with principals as well as students and parents to guide discussions, answer questions, and offer suggestions as to how issues may be addressed within the building and within the District. Because each situation is unique, individual decisions will be made on a case by case basis to best meet the needs of the particular student. To enlist the assistance of the Diversity Support Team, please contact Ms. Beall at 365-5201 or jbeall@columbus.k12.oh.us.

¹ <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201605-title-ix-transgender.pdf>