



The Autism Department, at SOESD Regional **INCLUSIVE** services stand in agreement with the statements from the following organizations:

Autistic Self Advocacy Network, National LGBTQ Task Force, and National Center for Transgender Equality Joint Statement on the Rights of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Autistic People:

"Autonomy, dignity, and self-determination are basic human rights. But both transgender communities and autistic communities have had to struggle to assert those rights in the face of pervasive discrimination."

https://www.thetaskforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/joint_statement_trans_autistic_GNC_people.pdf

OCALI: (Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence)

"...We believe every human deserves the opportunity to live their best lives for their whole lives. It is only by recognizing the humanity in others and joining together to lift each other up – rather than tearing each other down – that we can realize this goal."

<https://www.ocali.org/project/OCALIs-statement-denouncing-hate-bigotry-racism-and-discrimination?scrlybrkr=d4058b81>

TransActive Gender Project

"Every community should be a place where truth and evidence matter, where every child knows that they belong, and where every teacher has the training and skills to promote the healthy development of every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, country of origin, disability, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, or gender expression."

We Recognize the following:

- Recent studies highlight the intersectionality between gender diversity and autism spectrum disorder. Among 859 transgender youth, 22.5% reported an existing diagnosis of ASD (*Strauss et al., 2017*). Other studies across various age ranges have reported rates of ASD diagnosis in 6%–25.5% of gender-diverse individuals (*Strang et al., 2018a*).
- The Trevor Project's *National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health* (The Trevor Project, 2019) indicated that LGBTQ youth who report having at least one accepting adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year.
- No student should be denied access to a safe school environment, where they are given the opportunity to thrive as an individual, based on other's perceptions of the student's gender.
- Creating safe spaces and modeling affirming practices is crucial for students to successfully access education.

We are committed to supporting our LGBTQIA+ students on our Regional Autism Caseload, as well as colleagues, caregivers, and families through the following affirming practices:

- Complying with local, state, and federal laws that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- Fostering inclusive and welcoming learning and working environments that are free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Collaborating with school teams to increase social emotional engagement through gender affirming practices such as correct name and pronoun use.
- Providing evidence-based resources that support best practices to promote learning success of LGBTQIA+ students who are eligible under the category of autism.