

# MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

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TO: RSU 9 Board of Directors  
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent  
RE: Gender 101 Poster Review  
DATE: August 29, 2022

It came to my attention that some parents and community members shared concerns with the Board about a poster in the Guidance Office at Mt. Blue High School. Our initial review did find the poster “Gender 101” on the wall in that office. Upon further review, we also found the poster was also up in the guidance office at Mt. Blue Middle School.

Let me be clear that I understand this is a highly sensitive subject. The discussion/presentation of gender issues among students, parents, and community members is one that generates intense emotions among many members of the public in RSU 9 and around our state.

We take these concerns/inquiries seriously and in response took the following steps:

- I immediately spoke with our Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Special Projects, Laura Columbia, and asked about the curriculum inferences being suggested. She said that to her knowledge or approval that we do not have a district curriculum or unit that we teach connected to this poster.
- We gathered staff, upon their return, from around our district this past week to help answer the questions posed by the people who contacted Board Members. These discussions included a review of our curriculum with guidance and administrative staff from both schools. As suspected, I found that the Gender 101 Poster is not part of any lesson, unit, or a curriculum plan that we teach in RSU 9. The poster is purely informational.
- Concern was voiced that OUT Maine is a political organization. I spoke to Maine Dept. of Ed. (MDOE) staff about this concern and was told that OUT Maine is a resource that the Department has used and has recommended to school systems for years. In fact, OUT Maine resources have been listed on the MDOE Website under the last two administrations (Lepage & Mills).
- Finally, I reviewed the poster in question and considered it in the context of RSU 9 policies – specifically, Policy AC ([AC: Non Discrimination / Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#)); CF ([CF: School Building Administration](#)); and our RSU 9 [Transgender Student Guidelines](#). I also reviewed state and federal law touching on issues involving student gender and sex discrimination, including the Maine Human Rights Act, Maine’s anti-bullying and harassment



statutes, relevant case law, Title IX, and guidance from the federal Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.

Given these assessments, I have determined that it is appropriate for our schools to continue to display the Gender 101 Poster. This poster was produced by OUT Maine, a reputable organization that has provided support for LGBTQ+ students for more than twenty-five (25) years to school systems around our state. The poster is informational in nature and is designed to create a common understanding of terminology related to the LGBTQ+ community among ALL students and to our staff. It provides accurate definitions of this terminology as defined by state and federal agencies. I am confident that this poster provides students, staff, and visitors with appropriate information, and will therefore allow the poster to remain in place.

By keeping the Gender 101 Poster up in these two guidance offices we are sharing age-appropriate information that assists *“in the educational and social integration of transgender students”* with *“available resources as appropriate.”*

The purpose of the [RSU 9 Transgender Guidelines](#) is stated clearly in its first section as follows:

*“A. Purpose*

*The purposes of these guidelines are: 1) to foster a learning environment that is safe, and free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying; and 2) to assist in the educational and social integration of transgender students in our schools.”*

*“Administrators and school staff are expected to consider the needs of students on a case-by-case basis, and to utilize these guidelines and other available resources as appropriate.”*

I understand that some may disagree with this decision. However, I am hopeful that they will respect the district’s decision to provide support for all of our students, including our LGBTQ+ students.