

**SCHOOL SAFETY & EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR
LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER & QUESTIONING (LGBTQ) STUDENTS**

WHEREAS: LGBTQ students, nationally and in Michigan, are targeted with physical violence and experience a hostile school environment more frequently than their non-LGBTQ peers, and face additional challenges that threaten their health, safety, and learning opportunities in schools; and

WHEREAS: LGBTQ students who are bullied, harassed, or experience a hostile, stigmatizing, or disrespectful environment are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, feel excluded from the school or college community, and experience lower academic achievement and stunted educational aspirations; and

WHEREAS: To ensure academic and developmental progress, all students deserve a safe, supportive educational environment where they are treated equally and fairly, respected for who they are as a person, protected from discrimination based on real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and have an opportunity to participate equally in all programs and activities; and

WHEREAS: Adverse health and educational consequences for transgender students are even greater than those for LGBQ students and, in a national report, 26 percent of transgender students were assaulted, (e.g., punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon) in school in the past year because of their gender expression; and

WHEREAS: LGBTQ students with intersecting marginalized identities (e.g., black gay males, LGBTQ students with disabilities) are at greater risk of negative emotional, health and educational achievement outcomes; and

WHEREAS: An individual's gender identity is a defining aspect of their sex, and the U.S. Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission have clarified that discrimination on the basis of gender identity or gender nonconformity is literally sex discrimination; and

WHEREAS: The U.S. Department of Education has asserted a significant interest in ensuring that all students, including transgender students, have the opportunity to learn in an environment free of sex discrimination, clarifying that Title IX prohibits sex discrimination including discrimination based on gender identity, gender-nonconformity and sex stereotyping, and that transgender students must have access to programs and facilities consistent with their gender identity; and

WHEREAS: Many jurisdictions have adopted policies or developed model guidance on providing safe and welcoming learning environments for LGBTQ youth, including the Michigan State Board of Education Proposed *"Guidance on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students"* which specifically recommends that schools:

- 1) Implement anti-bullying policies explicitly protecting LGBTQ students
- 2) Offer professional development opportunities on issues affecting LGBTQ students;
- 2) Support extra-curricular clubs such as Gay-Straight Alliances;
- 3) Develop meaningful family engagement and support for families of LGBTQ students;
- 4) Integrate respect for human rights including LGBTQ rights across the curriculum;
- 5) Provide developmentally appropriate resources on LGBTQ issues (e.g. in libraries, faculty resources);
- 6) Collect and review data to identify disparities and barriers for LGBTQ students;
- 7) Designate a building level staff person who is conversant in issues relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression;
- 8) Adopt specific policies for ensuring transgender students are treated in a manner consistent with their gender identity including:
 - a) Using chosen name and pronouns,
 - b) Changing name and gender in school records,
 - c) Ensuring student privacy and confidentiality in disclosing private student information,
 - d) Providing access to facilities and programs according to the student's gender identity,
 - e) Implementing gender neutral dress codes, and
 - f) Reviewing all gender-based activities; and

WHEREAS: AFT Michigan and its locals have played a critical and historic role in fighting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression—including being the only union in Michigan to support marriage equality in 2004 and calling for protections against discrimination based on gender identity in 2005—and have a long institutional history of leadership in securing better educational and working conditions and better lives for members of all groups facing stigma and pervasive discrimination; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan supports adoption, implementation and enforcement, at the institutional and state levels, of policies which support the safety and educational achievement of LGBTQ students in K-12 as well as post-secondary education, which specifically ensure that transgender students have equal access consistent with their gender identity to sex-segregated facilities and programs, reinforcing the Administrative Board's endorsement of all of the policy recommendations expressed in the Michigan School Board of Education's *"Guidance on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students"*; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will actively oppose the adoption, implementation or enforcement of policies or legislation at the district, state and federal levels that undermine the safety and education of LGBTQ students, or that limit transgender student access consistent with their gender identity to sex-segregated facilities or programs, or that otherwise discriminate against students or staff, on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender non-conformity; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan supports inclusion of items relating to gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation in Michigan school data collection to identify, track

and address health and achievement gaps in these at-risk youth; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan supports training for union members, staff and leadership, as well as all instructional staff, school-related personnel, and administrators at the school, institutional and state levels, to deepen understanding of LGBTQ issues and policy implementation to support LGBTQ students, including training specific to the needs of transgender and gender-nonconforming students; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED: That AFT Michigan will actively seek adoption of the principles in this resolution at the 2016 AFT National Convention.

Submitted by:

Lecturers' Employee Organization Local #6244

Graduate Employees' Organization Local #3550

Revised & Recommended by Human Rights Committee (May 2, 2016)

Revised and Approved by AFT Michigan 74th Convention (May 14, 2016)