



Gender Neutral Bathrooms in K-12 Schools District Wide



Current Policy

PROCEDURE NO. 3211P

Series 3000 - Students

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Adopted: 04/20/17

Revised: 02/05/2020

Restroom Accessibility

Students will be allowed to use the restroom that corresponds to the gender identity they assert at school. No student will be required to use a restroom that conflicts with their gender identity. Any student—regardless of gender identity—who requests greater privacy should be given access to an alternative restroom. However, schools may not require a student to use an alternative restroom because of their transgender or gender-expansive status.

Proposal

We want to implement single stall gender inclusive bathrooms district wide in every building where gendered bathrooms are available with gender inclusive signage.






Why this matters?

- To normalize gender neutral bathrooms at a young age
- Helps all students feel comfortable and included
- In a Cambridge University paper...
 - 59% of people refrain from using restroom facilities outside of their home
 - 24% had been asked if they were in the right bathroom
 - 9% had been denied access to restrooms
 - 12% “verbally harassed, physically attacked, and/or sexual assaulted when accessing or while using a bathroom in the past year”



Personal Stories




“I’ve only had to use Gendered bathrooms a few times, but every single time it’s made me feel incredibly uncomfortable. I know that many other people who identify as Nonbinary or Trans also have that anxiety of what to do when needing to go to the bathroom and there aren’t any gender neutral bathrooms. It would be so much easier If there were more gender neutral bathrooms”

“I think that gender-inclusive restrooms would resolve a lot of anxiety for other students and I think it would show trans/NB students that they’re not alone and there’s people who support them in their community”

“The act of having to selectively go into a gender specific bathroom is enough to cause that dysphoria for some people. Not only would adding gender-neutral bathrooms allow for a more comfortable school experience for our non-binary, agender, or trans students, but it would also show our community and other schools that we are inclusive and that we live up to all of our talk of being a safe and LGBTQ+ friendly school.”

“I have been in some gender neutral bathrooms and I have felt they are more inclusive to my identity because then I don’t have to pick between two bathrooms, instead I can just go to one that all genders can use. I have felt like these provide a safe space for people that don’t identify as the traditional cisgender identity and I think that if its possible there should be bathrooms like this in each building of our schools.”



“I had come out before attending MVHS and by the time I got there, one of the members of the staff had a strange meeting with me. She gave me the key to the staff restroom and suggested I use that one because of the struggles she thought I would face. While she may have thought this was a nice gesture, it was very othering. For me, I was okay using the men’s room - if there was a gender neutral option, I probably would’ve even preferred that. Having that gender neutral option prevents ‘othering’ from happening and it is a very important feeling, especially for trans kids developing K-12. It is very common for schools to either coddle the trans kids coming in or treat them poorly. We do not need either. By simply having resources available for them and normalizing trans people as being a part of the school and therefore deserving to influence it - certain traumas can be avoided developing for trans students K-12. I’ve also had to share a bathroom with people who would discriminate against me and tell me to get out. This move would be a key one for the school board to side with trans folks I think.(I graduated last year in 2020).”

“When I first came out as transgender, I didn't feel like I had a bathroom I could go and use without making other people uncomfortable or people asking me why I was in the bathroom which did cause me to feel more disgusted with myself and I wasn't able to use the bathroom without being fearful. So when they introduced the gender-neutral bathrooms at MVHS, even if there weren't many of them, I felt so much better and more comfortable to do a normal function that felt like I was barred from because I didn't pass as a male nor did I look feminine. I cannot speak for everyone in a similar situation as me, but I feel like there are some students who feel the same way and would appreciate normalizing and making gender neutral bathrooms more accessible to students.”



“As someone who has both struggled with and knows people who struggle with solidifying their gender identity, using binary restrooms can be uncomfortable. Not only are gender neutral bathrooms a nice way to place these students at ease, but it also comes at no cost to their other classmates. With only 1 gender neutral bathroom (previously in the Fine Arts Building), students shouldn't have had to trek across campus with the risk of getting disciplined for being gone too long just in order to feel comfortable... implementing more gender neutral bathrooms on all MVSD campuses normalizes their use.”

“To begin, gender neutral restrooms make schools a safer space for trans and gender non conforming students. Using a restroom that matches your birth assigned sex is invalidating and often feels unsafe, but risks of harassment still exist even when you use the bathroom correlating the most closely with your gender identity. However, this system still forces students into a gender binary that restricts self agency and expression, meaning that it isn't enough to simply allow non cis students to use the bathroom they are most comfortable with. Instead, it is critical to be proactive and install specifically gender neutral restrooms. This also protects students who are questioning their identity from misgendering themselves or risking outing themselves while at school.”



Implementing Gender Inclusive Bathrooms

- Converting teacher bathroom
- Construction of bathrooms (ex. Old Main)
- Education with implementation
- Available to everyone (safe place)
- Promotes diversity and inclusion



Conclusion

- Future Plans
- An important step towards creating a more inclusive and safe environment for students, but shouldn't be the last!
- Questions?