

March 1, 2024

Dear Natick School Committee:

Parents should have primary authority over their children, especially around issues that impact their physical and mental health. School policies are bad policies if they allow parental exclusion in the name of student safety and inclusion. **We'd like you to revise the gender identity policy and support plans to require parental consent for all student gender transitions in Natick Public Schools.**

Beyond The Trevor Project, there is a plethora of science, data, scholarly work, and important information around mental health issues relevant to Natick Public Schools' gender policies and practices:

A recent long-term study from Finland (attached) looked at the suicide risk of gender dysphoric kids as compared to the general population. It found that there is no statistical difference; suicide risk is based on other psychiatric morbidities and "gender affirming care" does not reduce suicide risk.

An amicus brief by The Manhattan Institute (attached) provides robust medical research and information on why social transition is considered a mental health treatment and arguments for why parents are best positioned to decide the gender transition health risks and benefits for their own child.

These are just some of many other long-term studies and research that the School Committee should understand if you're going to claim to base school policies on "science and data."

Current Natick Public Schools' gender policy and support plans (attached) allow children to determine if they want their parents to be notified and involved in changing their gender status at school. As well, on November 21, 2023, the current Natick School Committee Chair confirmed

the district follows guidance from the State for children undergoing gender transitioning, which can involve secrecy from parents and gives children authority over their parents about life-changing decisions that can impact their health. Here's what the School Committee Chair told us on public record about its policy:

*"In each specific case, a plan is developed with the student. Each plan is different and developed in collaboration with the students and a team of folks at the school, **and the parents if appropriate. If a student is developmentally able, we honor their wishes in the planning stages, which may include not revealing this information to their families.** If this is the case, we do try to counsel them regarding how to communicate with their families. Ultimately, being able to advocate for yourself is the developmental milestone we look for here, **regardless of the age.**"*

Natick Public Schools' gender support plan and gender communication plan documents (attached) show how the district implements its parental exclusion policy with children: **"If the student's guardians are not aware and/or supportive of the student's gender status, how will school-home communications be handled?"**

Gender dysphoria is a complex mental health issue and parents should be involved in all aspects of treatment, including social transitioning at school.

Thank you,

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