

# Supporting Our Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming School Community





# Agenda

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- Icebreaker and Introductions
  - Understanding Gender
  - Understanding the Need
  - Break
  - Understanding the Transgender Policy Guidance
  - Putting it all together: Case Studies
  - Closing
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# Icebreaker



Turn to a partner and respond to the prompts below:

What is a question or topic related to gender, transgender identity or gender non-conformity that you want to gain a better understanding of today?

Talk about a time in your life when you felt at odds with the expectations of your family, peers or community regarding to your gender.

Talk about a time when you were the “only” in a room, how did you feel, and how/if at all did it impact your experience?

# Understanding Gender

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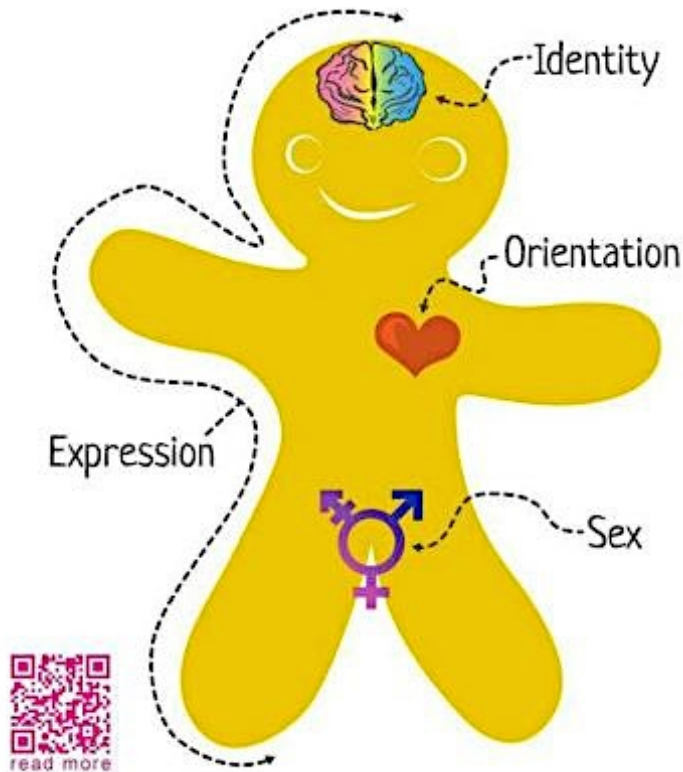
# The Genderbread Person

## [Student Identities](#)

# Understanding Gender

## The Genderbread Person

by [www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com](http://www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com)



Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.



Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.



Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.



Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

## Understanding Gender





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# The Need

Gender-based discrimination, bullying, harassment and family rejection often shape the life outcomes of transgender and gender-nonconforming people at all ages.

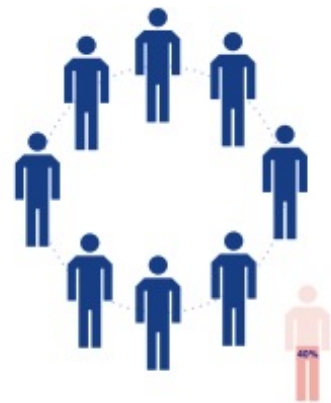
## Understanding Gender



# The Need

## Exclusion and Harassment

- Approximately **40 percent** of transgender or gender-nonconforming students report being:
  - **Excluded** frequently or often by their peers.
  - **Verbally harassed** and called names at school.
  - Called names involving **anti-gay slurs** frequently or often at school.

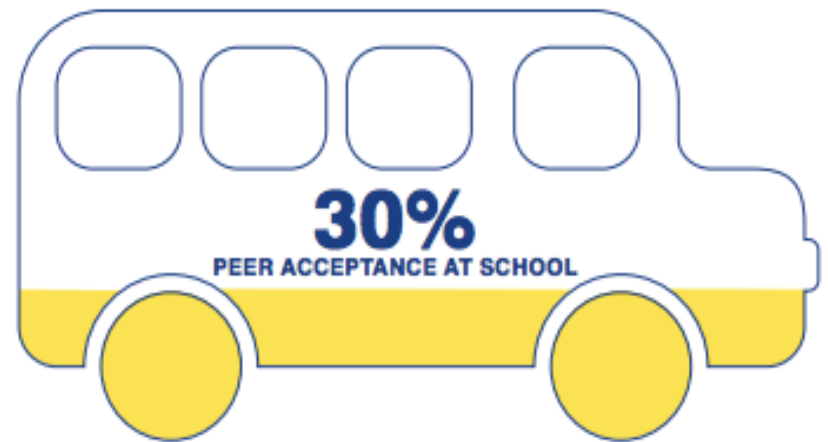


<sup>1</sup>Harsh Realities: <http://www.glsen.org/sites/defaultfiles/Harsh%20Realities.pdf>

# The Need

## School Acceptance

Less than one-third (**30 percent**) of gender-expansive students report “strongly agreeing” that most of their peers do not have a problem with their LGBT identity.<sup>1</sup>

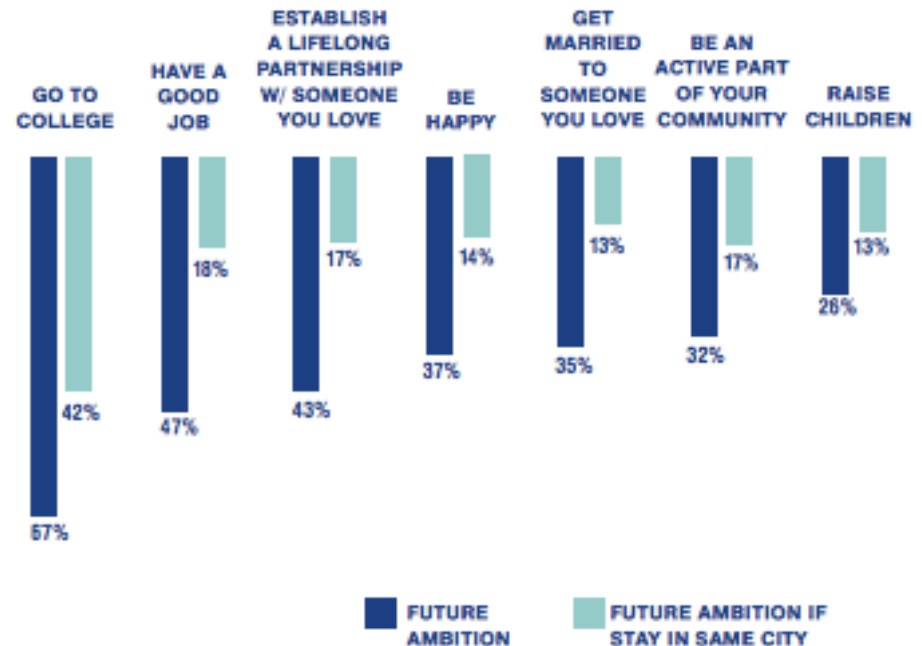


<sup>1</sup>Supporting and Mentoring Gender Expansive Youth: <http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files/assets/resources/Gender-expansive-youth-report-final.pdf>

# The Need

## Ambitions

- For **all seven ambitions**, students reported a **significant drop** in the likelihood of it happening if they stayed in the same city/town in which they currently lived.
- Nearly **70 percent** of students are interested in going to **college**
- Only 42 percent think it will happen if they stay where they are.**



1. Harsh Realities: <http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Harsh%20Realities.pdf>

# The Need

## School Discipline

*"...there's one student in my class who's masculine and she [came] in to class super late and its totally unexpected of her because she always comes in on time and...the teacher had got so mad at her and put her out of class and I was like 'what was the purpose?' You see all these other boys coming in late and matter of fact there was a boy who came in right after her and the teacher let him stay in the classroom."*<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/GSA\\_GNC\\_FINAL-web.pdf](https://www.gsanetwork.org/files/aboutus/GSA_GNC_FINAL-web.pdf)

# The Need

## School Push-out

Nearly **one-sixth (15%)** of transgender people surveyed were forced to **leave school** due to the severity of the **harassment** they experienced there.



Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011.

# The Need

## School Push-out

- CeCe McDonald - black transgender young woman from Minneapolis
- Victim of a racist and transphobic assault.
- Served 41 months in a men's prison
- Cece experienced harassment discrimination and school push-out



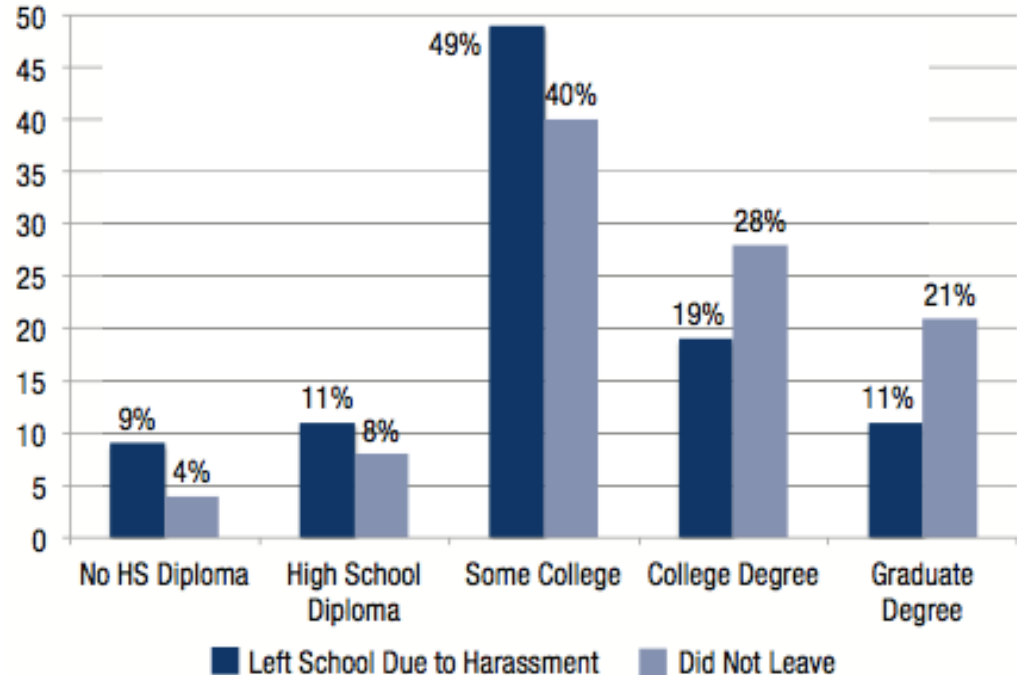


# The Need

## Student Achievement

Mistreatment in school correlated with lower levels of educational attainment. Those who had to leave school due to harassment were less likely to graduate from high school, college or graduate school.”

Educational Attainment of Those Who Left School Due to Harassment



Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011.

# Break



# Understanding Gender

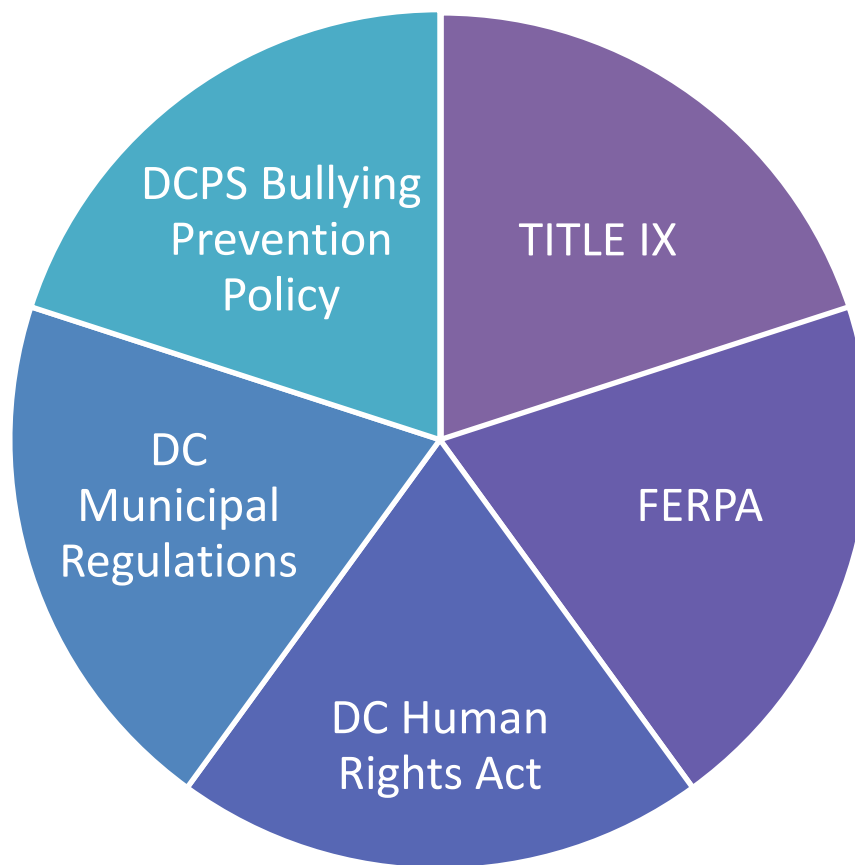


# Understanding the Policy Guidance

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# Policy Review

Laws, regulations and policies together build protection for transgender and gender nonconforming people in DC.





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# Student Transitions

The process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another.



## Student Transitions

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Transitioning is a private matter. Any and all communication about a student's transition should remain private unless discussion is initiated **by the student.**

## Student Transitions (*Primary Schools*)

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- Generally a parent or guardian will inform the school of a student's impending transition.
- It is appropriate to notify a parent or guardian if a student's gender identity or expression is creating difficulty for a student in school.
- ***However, be mindful that notifying parents or guardians can put a student's safety at risk.***
- Use the School Planning Guide with the student to make the appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student's transgender status.



## Student Transitions (*Secondary Schools*)

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- Students may choose to have their parents participate in the process, but parental consent is not required.
- Not necessary to notify parents or guardians – may already be aware and supportive.
- ***Notifying parents or guardians can put a student's safety at risk; ask the student to what degree they should participate.***
- Work closely with the student to determine whether parents and guardians should be involved, and to what degree.
- Use the School Planning Guide with the student to make the appropriate plan regarding the confidentiality of the student's transgender status.

# Appendix III: School Planning Guide

## Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Policy Guidance



### School Planning Guide for Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students

**Directions:** This planning tool should be reviewed with the student and relevant parties as a way to ensure the school environment is both safe and supportive of the student. Please file this in-house with the school principal. If there is anything that you are unsure about or have questions about, please call the Office of Youth Engagement on (202) 442-5103.

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred name/gender identification: \_\_\_\_\_

Is a gender change for STARS/Aspen being requested?  
 **yes**  no

Current name in the STARS/Aspen database:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current gender marker in the STARS/Aspen database: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian name(s) and Contact Information:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

School contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the parent aware of the student's preferred name and gender identification?  yes  no

Should the parent or guardian be informed as part of this process?  yes  no

# Appendix III: School Planning Guide

## Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Policy Guidance

### Plan Checklist:

- Meeting of the interested parties is scheduled for: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Who will be attending?
  - Administrator
  - Parent/Guardian
  - School Contact Person
  - Teacher
  - Nurse
  - Community Provider
  - LGBTQ Liaison
  - Homeless Liaison
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Which staff person will be the student's "go-to" POC in the building? (Weekly check-ins agg expected for the first few weeks, as needed after.)  
Name of staff person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Who else in the building will be able to support the student?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Plan for bathroom (where they are, which will be used, do a walk-through with student to ensure that they know where facilities are located):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Plans for changing for PE:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- Plan for field trips (who is responsible for seeing the plan in place for each field trip?):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix III: School Planning Guide

## Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Policy Guidance

- Plan for gendered activities (*such as sports*):

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- Staff training plan (*all or selected staff?*):

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- Date for follow-up check-in meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Please share relevant resources with the student. Additional resources can be found in **Appendix VII**:

- Housing:
- Mental health:
- Legal:
- Sexual health:
- Social support services:

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# Names and Pronouns

## Names/Pronouns

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If you are unsure of what pronouns a student uses, it is always ok to privately and politely ask. Remember that students may use different names or pronouns in different settings, contingent upon their level of comfort and sense of safety.

## Names/Pronouns

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- Student has the right to be addressed by their preferred name and pronouns.
- All unofficial records should reflect student's preferred name.
- List a student's preferred name in ASPEN. No court order is necessary.
- Advise student that FERPA grants parents access to student's educational record, including a preferred name in ASPEN. Work with student to ensure student's safety and comfort.
- Diplomas must reflect a student's legal name, but counselors should work with student on how the student would like their name is displayed.

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## School Facilities



Image credits:1. <http://www.gotomyrtlebeach.com/public-restrooms/>

2. <http://www.mensfashionforless.com/purple-v-neck-short-sleeve-t-shirt-khaki-pants-brown-belt-brown-ankle-boots.html>

3. <https://chellywood.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/lockers-iclip.jpg>



## Bathrooms

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- Transgender and gender-nonconforming student are entitled to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity.
- *Any* student, who has a need or desire for increased privacy, has the right to access a single-user restroom.
- The single-user bathroom **may not** be given as the *only* option for transgender or gender-nonconforming students.



## Locker Rooms

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- All students must have access to the locker room facility that corresponds to their gender identity.
- If there is a request for increased privacy, *any* student should be offered access to a reasonable accommodation:
  - A separate changing schedule
  - Use of a private area in the facility
  - Use of a nearby private area
  - Assignment of student locker in close proximity to staff office or a supportive peer group



## Dress Code

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- Any dress code must be gender-neutral (school day, special events).
- Students can dress in accordance with their gender identity, within the constraints of the school dress code.
- School staff must not enforce a school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender-nonconforming students.



## Gender-Based Activities

### Intramural/Interscholastic Athletics and Physical Education

- All students must be permitted to participate in **athletic activities**, **intramural sports** and **physical education classes** that correspond with their gender identity.



## Quick Tips and Best Practices

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### Names and Pronouns

- Elements of a student's transition, especially in early stages, may be "site-specific" i.e. using one name and set of pronouns in certain places or settings, and another name or set of pronouns in another setting.
- It is always ok to privately and tactfully ask the student what they prefer to be called. *(See page 5 of the policy guidance for terms to never use).*

### Dress Code

- Gender-neutral dress codes also apply to special events such as Graduation or Prom.

### Bathrooms

- Any student uncomfortable sharing a gendered bathroom with their transgender classmate(s) has the option of using a single-user restroom.
- Single user restrooms must be designated gender-neutral.

## Quick Tips and Best Practices

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### Language

- Avoid dividing students arbitrarily by gender or using gendered language such as “ladies and gentlemen” instead try “students” or “scholars.”
- When talking to or about transgender students, they should be addressed by their preferred name and gender pronoun.

### Dress Code

- Gender-neutral dress codes also apply to special events such as Graduation or Prom.

### Bathrooms

- Any student uncomfortable sharing a gendered bathroom with their transgender classmate(s) has the option of using a single-user restroom.



# Resources!

- Appendix I:** Policies and Law (page 19)
- Appendix II:** Additional Definitions (page 23)
- Appendix III:** School Planning Guide (page 27)
- Appendix IV:** Sample Letter About Student Transition (page 31)
- Appendix V:** Sample Letter for Teacher/Staff Transition (page 33)
- Appendix VI:** Sample Letter About Parent/Family Transition (page 35)
- Appendix VII:** Relevant LGBTQ Resources





## For more information

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### **School Principal or School-based LGBTQ Liaison**

#### **DCPS Student Wellness Division**

Diana Bruce - Director of Health and Wellness [Diana.Bruce@dc.gov](mailto:Diana.Bruce@dc.gov)

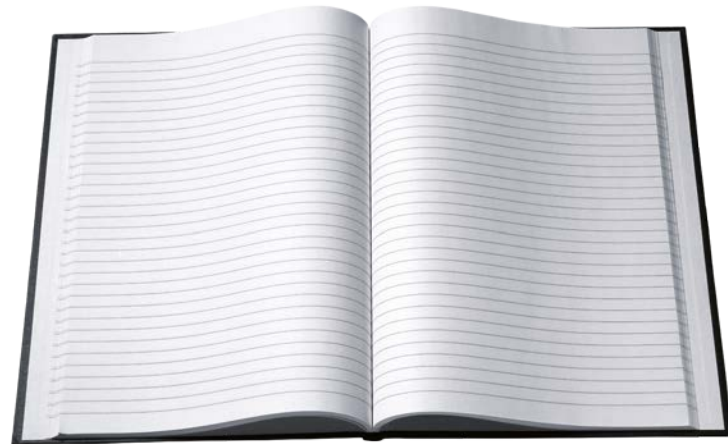
Wesley Thomas- Manager, HIV/STI Prevention [Wesley.thomas2@dc.gov](mailto:Wesley.thomas2@dc.gov)

#### **DCPS Office of General Counsel**

(202) 442-5000



# Case Studies



Role Play:

# Garnering Staff Support



Role Play:

# Supporting and Educating Students



Role Play:

# Working with Families





# Closing



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Thank You!

