

Issue 19  
Winter 2022

# CURRICULUM CORNER

*The Official Curriculum Newsletter of Westfield Public Schools*



## *Diversity, Equity, and Belonging*

Westfield Public Schools is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and is working to build a safe, respectful, and responsive culture. We strive to create a community that is grounded in connection and understanding, and we seek opportunities to appreciate and learn from our differences. This issue explores strategies for creating a greater sense of belonging for our LGBTQ+ population.

### **We Want to Hear from You!**

Are you trying something in your classroom that might help others? We would love to hear about it! Please send us an email about your best practices! We would also love to hear your thoughts about future topics that you would like to see in an upcoming issue of the Curriculum Corner. **[Submit here!](#)**

# What does it mean to be an ally?

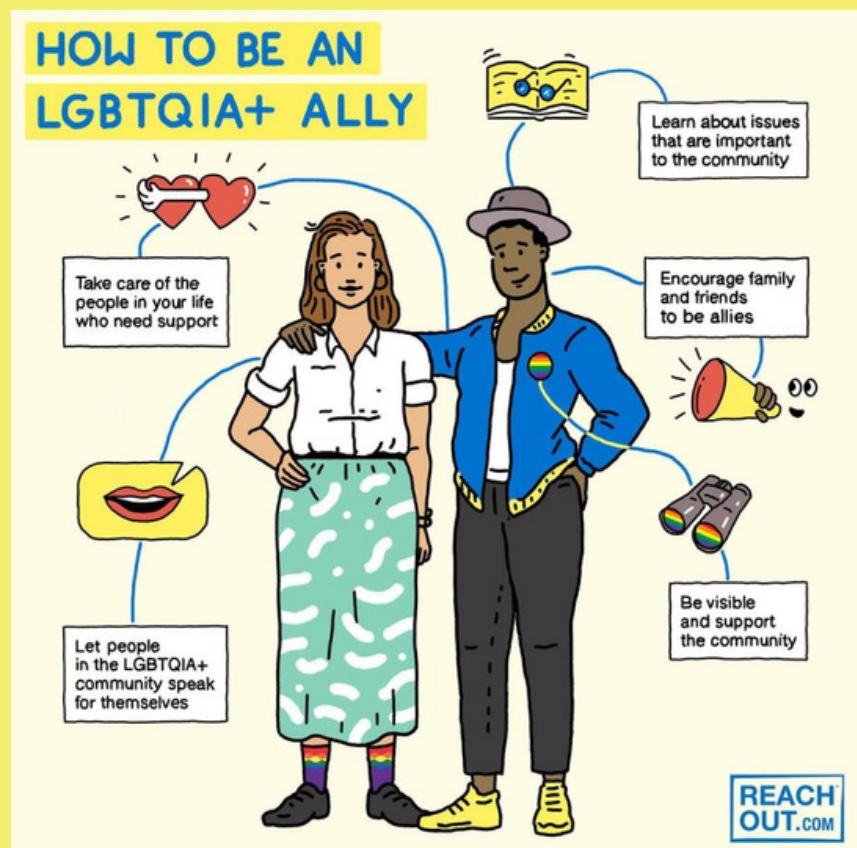
An LGBTQ+ ally is someone who supports and advocates for LGBTQ+ people and the LGBTQ+ community.

# How can we show up for LGBTQ+ students?

- Listen to students and families
- Ask for and use students' chosen names and pronouns
- Use your pronouns in your email signature
- Keep books with LGBTQ+ characters in your classroom and school library
- Wear Pride clothing and display Pride flags and Safe Space signs in your classroom
- Support Gender & Sexuality Alliance Clubs (GSA) in Westfield Public Schools
- Attend professional development on LGBTQ+ topics

# Why is it important to be an ally?

LGBTQ+ students are 2.1 times more likely to be bullied at school; 3.6 times more likely to be threatened or injured with a weapon at school; 3 times more likely to seriously consider suicide; and 4.4 times more likely to have made a suicide attempt in the past year. (Data from the MA Youth Behavior Survey, 2019.)



# Resources for Continuous Learning

## Massachusetts Specific Resources

- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education published [guidance on gender identity](#) to support schools in creating safe, supportive learning environments for trans and nonbinary students.
- [Book recommendations](#) for elementary and middle school students, as well as books for parents and families.
- [The Safe Schools Program](#) for LGBTQ Students website has model inclusive curriculum units for social studies and language arts.

## Resources for LGBTQ+ youth in Western MA:

- [Translate Gender](#)
- [GLSEN Massachusetts](#)
- [Out Now](#)
- [Safe Homes](#)

## Language Learning Resources:

- [Nonbinary Wiki](#) - Has wealth of information and external links for adapting various languages to be gender inclusive. See language-specific links for more info: English, Spanish, French, Dutch, German, etc.
- [MyPronouns.org](#) - Provides a wealth of information about gender-neutral/neo pronouns (along with other pronouns), ways to practice, and more.

## Inclusive Curriculum Resources and Special Education Guidance:

- WBUR published a [resource list](#) for kids and parents about understanding nonbinary identities.
- The ACLU created a [comprehensive guide on supporting transgender students](#) in K-12.
- [Learning for Justice](#) publishes classroom resources with an easy-to-search lesson plan finder for specific age-appropriate lessons on a variety of issues including gender and sexuality, social justice, racism, and much more.
- [Welcoming Schools](#) offers reading lists, curriculum guides, and other resources for K-12 schools.

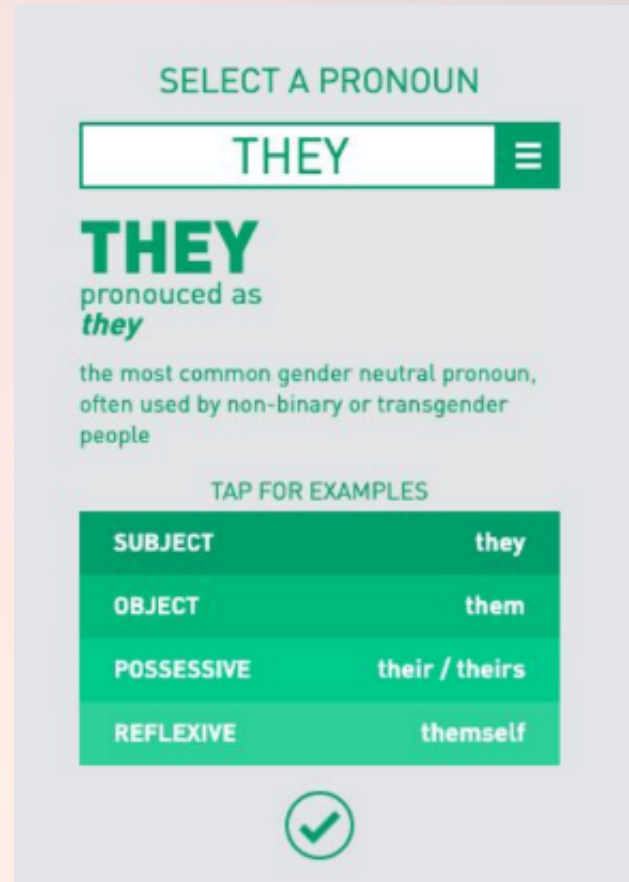
# TECH TIP

Pronouns are words used to refer to a person other than their name. When a trans person comes out they may have new pronouns they want to use.

They, She, and He are all examples of common pronouns. However, some people also prefer less common pronouns.

They, Xe, and Ey are a few common gender-neutral pronouns. They're pronouns that don't imply 'male' or 'female.'

Using new pronouns can be harder than expected, but making the effort can go a really long way.



[Click Here](#) to practice using Pronouns!

# SEL TIP



Making a little change can help a child feel less rejected and more accepted. This can make a huge difference in reducing a young person's risk of mental health issues.

A children's book your class might enjoy is Sparkle Boy by Leslea Newman.

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# Contact Us



If you have additional ideas, suggestions, or questions, please share them with us!



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