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Principles for Gender Inclusion Now Available for Puberty and Health Educators

Emeryville, CA- As understandings of gender are shifting in the US and globally, educators are looking for tools they can use to reflect these changes in puberty and health education curriculum. With this in mind, Gender Spectrum, the national nonprofit whose focus is children, youth, and gender, has created the first ever comprehensive guide to bringing gender inclusion into puberty and health education classes.

“This new resource gives educators the overarching principles that they can use now to bring gender inclusion into their current puberty education curricula,” said Joel Baum of Gender Spectrum. “Every child will travel a unique road as their bodies develop, so it is vital that students understand that there are many paths to a healthy adulthood.”

Gender-inclusive principles of puberty and health education acknowledge the diversity of pathways to adult bodies and families and affirm the experience of every student. This is important for all students, and can be critical for transgender and other gender-expansive youth, who often do not see their experience reflected in the curriculum. “Simply stated, gender inclusive puberty and health education is life-affirming for all students, and life-saving for some,” said Stephanie Brill, the founder and Board Chair of Gender Spectrum.

The principles for gender inclusive puberty education outlined in the guide are in part an outgrowth of Gender Spectrum’s pioneering work on understanding gender for all children with school systems and educational professionals for more than decade. Gender Spectrum developed the principles for inclusive puberty and health education with valuable contributions from a diverse group of organizations that are recognized for their commitment to young people, including Advocates for Youth, Answer, GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, Planned Parenthood and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). In 2015, these six organizations issued a report, [A Call to Action: LGBTQ Youth Need Inclusive Sex Education](#) urging educators and others to take immediate steps to provide LGBTQ inclusive education for all students. The Gender Spectrum “Principles” guide released today is the first publication to address this call specifically related to gender diversity.

Representatives of the “Call to Action” groups responded to the release of the Principles:

"Done well, sex education can create a foundation for sexual health throughout someone's lifetime," said Nora Gelperin, Director of Sexuality Education and Training at Advocates for Youth.

"Transgender young people have the right to lead healthy lives, and they need and have the right to puberty education that addresses their needs and answers their questions."

"Everyone goes through puberty, but not every student sees their experiences reflected in their puberty and health education," said Daniel Rice, the Director of Training at Answer. "This resource provides a much-needed framework for educators to reflect the complexity of gender in their lessons and provide critical information to transgender and gender expansive youth."

"This resource is an invaluable, and first of its kind, tool that provides concrete examples of how to talk about bodies in a relatable, gender-inclusive, and developmentally appropriate way," said Becca Mui, Education Manager at GLSEN. "GLSEN's work underscores the need and importance of this guiding framework for an inclusive approach to puberty and health education that represents and affirms all students."

"Representations matters. Not just on television or in film, but in the classroom, too. And our transgender and gender expansive young people—especially those of color—need to see their experiences reflected and their bodies validated and respected within puberty education," said Jennifer Driver, State Policy Director at SIECUS. "This resource allows educators to make that happen."

"All young people deserve accurate, nonjudgmental information about their bodies and relationships, so that they can freely explore and express who they are as they grow into adulthood. Planned Parenthood is proud to support gender-inclusive puberty and sex education," said Dr. Sara C. Flowers, Vice-President of Education at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "We know that individuals, schools, and communities reap the benefits when each and every student sees their own identity, experience, and family reflected in lessons and language. As sex educators, advocates, and health care providers, we are committed to inclusive practices that position young people for success by helping cultivate opportunities for a healthy and more equitable future."

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