



LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 51

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Dear Board of Directors OUTReach Southern Alberta:

Re: Open letter regarding the maintenance of safe and caring environment for all students

Please consider this a response from Lethbridge School District No. 51 Board of Trustees regarding your inquiry.

To update you on our progress regarding an explicit policy that protects the rights of LGBTQ students, a policy, *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, is currently in draft form and at the step of the Policy Committee gathering feedback from representative groups. Preface to the draft policy states that, "All members of the school community have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment. Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity rights will be protected under District policy as is guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Alberta Human Rights Act, and Alberta School Act." The policy addresses the establishment of GSA's as well as a commitment to the development of other strategies to "ensure that sexual and gender minority students are welcomed and treated with respect and dignity."

Policy development included engagement of students and staff, and we are gathering feedback from parents. Once feedback is gathered, the draft will go back to the Policy Committee to make any revisions based on feedback. It is scheduled to go to the Board at the February Board meeting for first reading. Once the policy receives first reading, it will go out for further feedback and back to the Board in March for 2nd and final reading to meet the Minister of Education's request to have policy in place by the end of March.

We certainly have in common a genuine interest and commitment to school environments that are safe and caring, and foster and maintain respectful and responsible behaviors.

Regards,

Mich Forster
Board Chair
Lethbridge School District No. 51