Leading with Inclusion

Statements that Promote Belonging, Equity, and Affirmation

This tip sheet offers a collection of statements that school administrators across Massachusetts have used to affirm their commitment to safe, supportive, and inclusive schools for all students. These statements are grounded in values of student belonging, equal access, and educational equity—particularly in areas such as LGBTQ+ inclusion in sports, curricula, and restroom access.

Consider using these statements to set a clear standard of belonging:

- Every student in our school—regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation—deserves to learn, participate, and thrive in an environment free from fear, judgment, or exclusion.
- LGBTQ+ students belong in every part of our school community, and we will continue working to ensure that sense of belonging is felt and protected each day.

Consider using these statements grounded in legal protections:

- Equal protection under the law is not up for debate—it is a foundational commitment we uphold for every student, including LGBTQ+ youth.
- Providing students with access to restrooms, programs, curricula, and activities that align with their affirmed identity is not only inclusive practice—it is a matter of civil rights.
- We are legally and morally obligated to protect LGBTQ+ students and ensure their full participation in school life, just like any other student.

Consider using these statements to reject hate unequivocally:

- Our school does not tolerate hate in any form, including attacks on the dignity, rights, or existence of LGBTQ+ students.
- Attempts to undermine the inclusion of LGBTQ+ students—whether through misinformation, discrimination, or intimidation—will be met with firm and consistent opposition.
- Our policies and practices reflect not only the law, but the deeply held values of our school and district: respect, dignity, and opportunity for all.

Consider using these statements to connect inclusion to school community values:

- Affirming LGBTQ+ students in classrooms, on sports teams, and throughout all school spaces is critical to creating safe, supportive, and academically successful environments.
- When we affirm and protect LGBTQ+ students, we are strengthening our entire school community and modeling what it means to be a safe and welcoming place for everyone.

Tips for Use

- Pair your message with specific actions—such as staff training, student leadership initiatives, or inclusive policy updates—to reinforce your commitment.
- Speak with **clarity, purpose, and confidence**. You are upholding both the law and your school's core values.
- For additional support or guidance, contact the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students.

Phone/Text: 617-721-5555 **Email: safeschoolsprogram@mass.gov** **Website:doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq**