

Greenwich Township School District

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The Greenwich Township Board of Education recognizes the importance of providing a learning environment where all students feel safe, included and supported. The Board, its Administration, and our dedicated and caring staff, make sure that all students in our district are seen, heard, and valued.

As you may know, the Board of Education previously discussed certain community concerns with the wording of Policy 5756. This policy, provided by the District's policy service, contains an almost verbatim recitation of guidance provided by the New Jersey State Department of Education. To further understand the community concerns and gain a stronger pulse of our community, the District sent out a community survey about the policy. 232 community members filled out the survey. The Board and I also received many emails from both community members and non community members sharing their insight on this policy.

The survey results reflected a 60/40 split in the community regarding the policy. 60% of responders do not fully support the current policy, while 40% do. The language of the policy remains a concern to many. But a common theme amongst all is that our school district needs to continue to be a safe, inclusive, and supporting environment for every student.

Interestingly, regardless of whether survey respondents were for or against the policy, the District's practice in implementing the policy matches most of the community's input.

The primary concerns of the those indicating opposition to the policy fell into 3 main categories:

Parental Rights

Bathrooms Usage

Sports Teams

Policy supporters shared that the policy maintains a safe and secure inclusive environment for all students that promotes acceptance.

After reviewing all of the information from the survey, further discussing and understanding the current practice in GTSD, and also considering guidance from counsel, the board committees decided not to put this policy up for voting at this time, but to wait on further guidance from the state and federal government.

To further understand this decision, the Board considered that the District has not had one complaint in its current implementation of this policy. Also, the District's current practice includes providing bathrooms so that **all** students can feel safe and secure. And most importantly, the District actively communicates with parents and encourages parent involvement in all situations that may arise. Our main goal is to have children who feel safe and secure sharing how they feel with their families. Our Board, our Administration, and our staff, all appreciate the importance of parent involvement in the education of our students, value our partnership, and facilitate open and frank communication on important matters.

The Board is also cognizant of the fact that there is no sports or locker room usage in the GTSD. As such, any reference in the policy to sports or locker room usage are simply inapplicable to our learning community.

In conclusion, the Board, our Administration, and every one of our staff members are committed to ensuring that **all** students feel safe and secure, and all families understand that the District's practices and policies are clear and transparent, and support the family unit. The Board will remain vigilant in hearing from our community, and appreciates all feedback shared on this and other issues affecting our students.

The first public comment was opened beyond just agenda voting items to gain further input from the community on Policy 5756.