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Transgender Students in Elementary Schools: How Supportive Principals Lead

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Abstract

Purpose: Increased awareness and acceptance of transgender people in the United States is reflected in our nation's schools. Unfortunately, educational leaders do not typically receive training related to transgender youth and educators express fear about working with transgender students. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of school leaders whom parents characterize as supporting their transgender children. **Method:** Qualitative interviews were conducted with supportive principals from 20 elementary schools across six states. **Findings:** The findings indicate that supportive principals (a) employed a child-centered approach to decision making, (b) leveraged learning and knowledge to create a positive elementary school experience for transgender children, and (c) characterized their experience as professionally and personally beneficial. **Implications:** These findings indicate that, in the context of a supportive principal, both the school community and the transgender student can have positive experiences. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that disrupting binary gender norms and shifting the larger school culture to be more gender inclusive is a formidable task. Results from this study may be helpful to elementary principals who hope to create accepting school environments for transgender students or for preparation programs that want to develop supportive principals.

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> When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.
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> —Adrienne Rich (1986, p. 119)

Nationwide, the United States has experienced greater awareness and acceptance of transgender and gender-expansive people. This increased visibility is reflected in our nation's schools, which mirror the demographic shifts happening in society. Legal rulings provide protection for transgender students under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681). At the same time, school climate surveys report high levels of hostility toward transgender students, putting them at risk for social exclusion, emotional distress, and disrupted learning (Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, & Danischewski, 2016). School leaders play a crucial role in the development of inclusive schools (Riehl, 2000) and have the potential to significantly influence transgender students' school experience. Unfortunately, educational leaders do not typically receive training related to transgender youth (O'Malley & Capper, 2015) and educators express fear about working with transgender students and potential backlash from the school community (Payne & Smith, 2014, 2018).

To gain a better understanding of how elementary schools can better support transgender students, this study examines the experiences of school leaders whom parents characterize as supporting their transgender children. This phenomenological study asks,

- What approach to decision making did supportive principals utilize with regard to transgender children?
- How did supportive principals create a positive elementary school experience for transgender students?
- How do supportive principals describe their experience working with transgender elementary students?

Supportive principals from 20 elementary schools across six states provided insights into their experiences working with transgender students and their families. For this study, I am using the term "transgender" to be inclusive of

all gender identities other than cisgender (someone whose gender identity and expression align with the sex and social norms assigned to them at birth). This includes, but is not limited to, gender expansive, gender nonconforming, agender, gender fluid, and gender queer persons. I also use "binary transgender" to refer to persons whose gender identity conforms to social constructs for male/female, albeit for the sex other than the one assigned to them at birth. This term does not include people with gender expressions or identities that eschew traditional gender norms, who are sometimes referred to as "nonbinary."

The findings from this study indicate that supportive principals (a) employed a child-centered approach to decision making, (b) leveraged learning and knowledge to create a positive elementary school experience for transgender children, and (c) characterized their experience as professionally and personally beneficial. These findings indicate that, in the context of a supportive principal, both the school community and the transgender student can have positive experiences. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that shifting the larger school culture to be more gender-inclusive is a formidable task. Results from this study may be helpful to elementary principals who hope to create accepting school environments for transgender students or for preparation programs that want to develop supportive principals.

Framing the Study

To frame the study, I present literature related to three fields of study. First, I briefly explain the term "transgender" in relationship to other concepts that are easily conflated: sex, gender, and sexuality. Second, I review the literature on transgender children in school, describing schools' legal obligation, available supports and what is at stake for transgender children. I conclude with a discussion of decision making in schools and the considerations that can influence how school leaders respond to transgender students.

Transgender People: New Visibility

The notion that some people are transgender remains a new concept to many Americans, even though transgender individuals have been documented across cultural contexts for centuries (Stryker, 2017). Confusion about what it means to be transgender is often compounded by the conflation of sex, gender, and sexuality.

From a scientific standpoint, sex is a combination of multiple physiological characteristics including hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy; however, sex is commonly understood as a binary construct (male/female) and determined

on the basis of observed external genitalia. People with physiological variations that differ from those generally associated with males and females are known as intersex and account for approximately 1.7% to 2% of live births (Blackless, Charuvastra, Derryck, Fausto-Sterling, Lauzanne, & Lee, 2000), similar to the percentage of redheads. Sex is also a medico-legal category that is constructed by institutions and regulated by governmental entities, which establish the criteria for sex categorization (Meyer, 2009).

Gender is one's internal sense of identity and, like sex, it is often understood as a binary (woman/girl or man/boy). People who experience congruence between their sex assigned at birth and their gender are known as cisgender (nontransgender). Those who experience incongruence between their sex and gender are broadly understood as transgender. The prefix trans means *to cross boundaries*. The term "transgender" is an umbrella term and is sometimes written as trans* whereby the asterisk corresponds to the wildcard in a database search to convey the expansive nature of transgender identities. Even without the asterisk, transgender is an adjective that refers to a wide variety of gender identities and expressions. Some transgender people conform to binary societal gender norms albeit for the "opposite" sex from the one they were assigned at birth. Nonbinary transgender individuals do not conform to binary gender norms and may describe themselves as gender fluid, gender queer, gender nonconforming, or gender expansive. Developmental psychologists agree that children's core gender identity develops by the age of 2 or 3 years for both transgender and cisgender children and continues to develop through young adulthood (Martin & Ruble, 2010; Olson, Key, & Eaton, 2015).

New research provides data on the percentage of people in the United States who identify as transgender. Binary transgender people comprise 0.6% of adults (approximately 1.4 million people) and 0.7% of youth aged 13 to 17 years (approximately 150,000 people; Herman, Flores, Brown, Wilson, & Conron, 2017). A recent study of California teens aged 12 to 17 years indicates that 27% are gender nonconforming, with 6.2% characterized as "highly gender nonconforming" and 10.8% as androgynous (Wilson, Choi, Herman, Becker, & Conron, 2017). While we lack longitudinal data documenting the transgender population over time, scholars agree that the increased visibility of transgender people is likely a result of greater acceptance as opposed to an increase in actual population size (Stryker, 2017).

Incongruence between sex and gender can cause distress, which the medical field refers to as "dysphoria." Unsupportive social contexts and interactions can exacerbate dysphoria. Not all transgender people experience dysphoria but for those who do, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy, humiliation, self-hatred, and depression. To decrease dysphoria, many transgender people socially transition

and live as their affirmed gender. Research shows that socially transitioned transgender children have low levels of depression and anxiety in comparison with children who experience dysphoria yet are unable to socially transition (Olson, Durwood, DeMeules, & McLaughlin, 2016). Some transgender people also medically transition, which involves altering one's body to promote greater congruence between sex and gender and to reduce distress. Medical transition occurs during or postpuberty and can include hormone suppression, hormone replacement, and/or affirmation surgeries.

Like cisgender people, transgender people reflect the entire range of sexual orientations and may identify as straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, or asexual, to name a few. Even though transgender people may be heterosexual, they are commonly linked to "LGB" (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) individuals. This alliance reflects the need to build social, political and legal influence; however, gays and lesbians can also exhibit bias toward transgender people (Marine & Nicolazzo, 2014; Minter, 2000; Stone, 2009; Weiss, 2003, 2011).

Transgender Children in Schools: New Responsibility

The growing visibility of transgender children in elementary schools presents new responsibilities for school leaders whose professional training seldom addresses inclusive practices for transgender people (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Mayo, 2013; O'Malley & Capper, 2015). Current data suggest that there are an estimated 150,000 binary transgender students, aged 13 to 17 years, in the United States (Herman et al., 2017) and one study estimates that 1.5 times that number (an additional 375,000 youth) may identify as nonbinary, genderqueer, or gender nonconforming (Meerwijk & Sevelius, 2017).

Schools are common sites for gender policing (Mayo, 2013; Pascoe, 2007) and transgender children's natural gender expression is often met with pathological levels of intolerance. As the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey reported,

> Fifty-four percent (54%) of those who were out or perceived as transgender in K–12 were verbally harassed, nearly one-quarter (24%) were physically attacked, and 13% were sexually assaulted in K–12 because of being transgender. . . . Seventeen percent (17%) faced such severe mistreatment as a transgender person that they left a K–12 school. (James et al., 2016, p. 9)

When binary gender is understood as normative and strictly enforced, gender nonconforming people become the target of prejudice, discrimination, and even abuse (Gordon & Meyer, 2007; Roberts, Rosario, Corliss, Koenen, &

Austin, 2012). For transgender individuals with additional marginalized identities—race, ethnicity, language, class, citizenship, and so on—the adverse effects of intolerance are even greater (James et al., 2016; Singh, 2013). These data underscore the need for proactive school leaders who can disrupt the binary thinking that creates dangerous school environments for transgender children (Mangin, 2018).

Legally, under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681), schools cannot discriminate against transgender students. To clarify these federal protections, the Obama-era Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) issued implementation guidelines, with regard to transgender students. The guidelines stated, in part:

> Under Title IX, a recipient generally must treat transgender students consistent with their gender identity in all aspects of the planning, implementation, enrollment, operation, and evaluation of single-sex classes. (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2014, p. 25)

Subsequently, in 2017, the Trump administration rescinded these guidelines and took additional steps to restrict transgender people's civil rights and freedom from discrimination (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2019).

Despite these efforts, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 remains unchanged and states,

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . (20 U.S.C. § 1681 [a])

Some states have developed their own guidelines for educating transgender and gender nonconforming youth (e.g., Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2017; New York State Education Department, 2015; Whalen & Esquith, 2016).

Furthermore, 10 legal rulings in eight states: Florida, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin, uphold existing protections for transgender students.[1] Collectively these rulings indicate that, under Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, schools must allow equal access to restrooms for transgender students; school policies that protect transgender students do not violate others' rights; and, discrimination against transgender students is sex discrimination. These rulings reinforce federal civil rights protections for transgender students despite shifting political contexts.

In this legal context, school leaders must develop appropriate policies and practices for meeting the needs of transgender students. This includes matters related to privacy and disclosure, student records and information systems, use of names and pronouns, dress codes, sex-separated facilities and activities (e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms), as well as harassment and bullying (Orr & Baum, 2015). Various independent organizations have developed resource materials intended to provide guidance and support in the form of written materials, online resources, social media networks, and regional conferences. For example, Gender Spectrum hosts a website with resources for students, parents, and educators including a *Back-to-School Toolkit* and annual conferences (see www.genderspectrum.org). Five nonprofit organizations collaborated to produce the 68-page *Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools* (Orr & Baum, 2015). These kinds of resources build on practical knowledge and provide important information to school staff who may otherwise lack training and experience supporting transgender students.

Empirical research specific to transgender children in schools comes primarily from the fields of human development, public health, counseling, and psychology (e.g., Case & Meier, 2014; Chen-Hayes, 2001; Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2014) and has the potential negative effect of situating transgender people as psychologically deficient (Stryker, 2017). Nevertheless, research situated in the field of education is limited and studies that decouple gender from sexuality are scarce. Small-scale studies have examined transgender students' experiences (McGuire, Anderson, Toomey, & Russell, 2010; Wyss, 2004); cisgender educators' beliefs (Katch & Katch, 2010; Meyer, 2008; Meyer, Tilland-Stafford, & Airton, 2016; Payne & Smith, 2014; Ryan, Patraw, & Bednar, 2013), leadership efforts (Leonardi & Staley, 2018; Payne & Smith, 2018; Slesaransky-Poe, Ruzzi, Dimedio, & Stanley, 2013), and transgender policy (McQuillan, 2018; Meyer & Keenan, 2018). In addition to these empirical works, education scholars have documented the history of transgender people in schools (Griffin & Ouellett, 2003; Lugg, 2016), advocated for inclusive curriculum (Jiménez, 2014; Keenan, 2017; Meyer, 2014; Miller, 2016), and teacher education (Ingrey, 2014; Kitchen & Bellini, 2012; Rands, 2009; Suárez, 2019).

Despite limited research on school leaders' efforts to support transgender students, the studies that exist are informative. Many administrators struggle to implement supportive practices for transgender students (Payne & Smith, 2014, 2018); however, their difficulties may be linked more to lack of know-how than lack of motivation (Leonardi & Staley, 2018; Slesaransky-Poe et al., 2013). In their study of six principals who worked to implement trans-affirming policies, Leonardi and Staley (2018) found that principals

struggled to sustain the work over time, shift cultural norms, and create opportunities for the parent community to engage in deep conversations about gender and gender-inclusive practices. Payne and Smith (2014, 2018) described principals as resisting LGBTQ-related professional learning due to fear of community backlash and a belief that it was not relevant. Principals' ability to create a positive school experience for transgender students was facilitated by a good relationship with the child's parents and professional development focused on gender (Leonardi & Staley, 2018; Slesaransky-Poe et al., 2013). These findings form the beginnings of a knowledge base related to principal support for transgender students.

Given the negative school experiences that transgender children report coupled with the possibility that increased supports could improve their school experience, the need for increased educational research is critical. Currently, education lags behind other professions such as medical and mental health (see American Psychological Association, 2015; World Professional Association for Transgender Health, 2012), underscoring the need for systematic research.

Decision Making in Schools: Influential Factors

The school leader's role demands continual decision making related to a seemingly infinite number of topics. Decision making in schools is influenced by the complex nature of educational organizations, the competing demands of multiple stakeholders, and finite resources. Decision making related to transgender students may be especially challenging given the politicization of transgender people. Here, I consider some of the factors that may influence school leaders' decision making with regard to transgender students.

In the realm of economics, decision making is commonly portrayed as a zero-sum game in which the gains for one group equal losses for other groups (Rozycka-Tran, Boski, & Wojciszke, 2015). In education policy, Green (1994) presents this concept as a matter of "competing goods," explaining that competing educational priorities, such as excellence and equity, cannot be maximized simultaneously. At the school level, leaders must make decisions about committing resources to some endeavors at the expense of others. According to social psychologists, zero-sum thinking can lead individuals and groups to behave competitively and exhibit less collaboration (Meegan, 2010). Zero-sum thinking is widely understood as contributing to pervasive inequities and the reluctance of dominant populations to share power and opportunities (Noguera, 2001; Norton & Sommers, 2011). Zero-sum thinking may lead some to believe that decisions in support of transgender students could somehow disadvantage cisgender students.

While decisions about the distribution of finite resources can produce demonstrable winners and losers, this logic does not hold when making decisions about human or civil rights. Human rights are fundamental, that is, they are not granted or distributed but rather, "inalienable." For moral theorists, all people are endowed with human rights by virtue of our common humanity, whereas political theorists rely on human rights to protect the interests of individuals in the context of more powerful actors (Macklem, 2015). Human rights may be protected in laws as civil rights; however, in the United States, we have a long history of restricting the civil rights of marginalized peoples. This is true despite the fact that human and civil rights can be extended without reducing or compromising the rights of others. For example, extending marriage rights to same-sex couples does not impinge on the rights of heterosexual people to marry. Extending human rights—such as the right to life, education, and expression—as well as civil rights—such as the right to equal protection and freedom from discrimination—to transgender people does not infringe on the rights of cisgender people (HG.org Legal Resources, 2018). Therefore, decisions about transgender students' access to human and civil rights should not be treated as a zero-sum game.

Decision making can also be influenced by leaders' values and beliefs. Deficit perspectives and low-performance expectations can lead to decisions that significantly and adversely affect children's educational experiences and outcomes (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005). Deficit models frame children and their families as intrinsically deficient and shift responsibility for educational inequities away from educational systems (Valencia, 1997, 2010). Deficit thinking is commonly applied to transgender people. Monolithic views of transgender people as victims, diseased, or deviant position transgender people as pathological and problematic (Lugg, 2016). School leadership and educational research must reject deficit perspectives and seek an "antideficit orientation" (Skrla & Scheurich, 2004). A range of theoretical perspectives can facilitate asset-oriented thinking, including culturally responsive leadership (Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016), ethical leadership (Marshall, Patterson, Rogers, & Steele, 1996), student-centered leadership (Robinson, 2011), and social-justice leadership (Theoharris, 2007), to name a few.

Method and Data Sources

The study design conformed to institutional review board-approved procedures for use with human subjects including informed consent and confidentiality safeguards. I used a snowball sampling approach, drawing on my network of support organizations for parents of transgender children, including, but not

limited to PFLAG and Gender Spectrum. I sampled for variation, selecting participants from different states to represent a range of legal, political, and educational contexts. All participants met three criteria for participation. First, they were educational leaders working in an elementary school setting. Second, they had experience working with transgender youth in their school setting. And, third, the leaders were perceived as supportive by the parents recommending them for participation in the study. For the purpose of this study, the notion of "supportive" was entirely subjective and defined by the parents. As such, there is no common understanding across parents about what constitutes support. Moreover, I accepted the parents' perception at face value and with no effort to measure or categorize different types of support. This decision recognizes that children's needs differ and the kinds of support they require from educators may similarly differ.

Some additional sampling considerations are as follows. When principals worked in schools with both elementary and middle school populations they were included if the transgender student was enrolled prior to Grade 6. All of the schools had at least one transgender or gender-expansive child, whose parent recommended the principal as a possible participant. The child did not have to be a current student. Some schools had additional identifiable (known to the principal) gender-expansive or transgender students.

This article reports on a purposeful sample of supportive elementary school leaders, selected from 20 schools in the North East region of the United States. Of these leaders, 19 were principals. One school, Pacificus Learning Collaboratory, used a collaborative teacher-run model of leadership; therefore, I interviewed the teacher who led efforts to support the transgender student. When the term "principal" is used in this article, the lead teacher from Pacificus Learning Collaboratory is included. The final sample of schools was drawn from six states: New Jersey ($n = 2$), New York ($n = 6$), Delaware ($n = 1$), Rhode Island ($n = 1$), Massachusetts ($n = 8$), and Pennsylvania ($n = 2$). The schools included 15 public, 1 public-charter, 3 private-independent, and 1 private-religious school. The community populations ranged from 4,000 people to 2,600,000. Median family income ranged from 26,000 to 160,000 annually and skewed more heavily toward middle and upper incomes. Thirteen communities were predominantly White, with populations ranging from 60% to 92% White. In the seven communities that were majority People of Color, there was a mix of racial and ethnic identities. For example, one community was 64% Latinx and another was 42% Black (see the Appendix).

Data were collected using semistructured interviews with the school leader and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Two interviews were conducted by phone and all others were conducted face-to-face at the principals' school.

Data trustworthiness was facilitated through in-depth interview techniques that align with the recommendations from Brenner (2006) including strict confidentiality for participants and sequencing of questions from recall and descriptive queries to more interpretive and feelings-based inquiries. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Supplemental data include written policies, letters to parents, and training materials related to transgender youth in schools. Data analysis procedures for this qualitative study were ongoing and inductive, building on insights from the study participants, and conformed to the recommendations by Patton (2002). The names of all people and schools in this article are pseudonyms.

Despite a robust study design, two methodological limitations merit mention. First, the findings are drawn from principals' self-reports, which may be partial representations or not reflect the experiences of other school community members. Second, as part of the sampling criteria, all the study participants were characterized as supportive as a way to learn from effective leadership. As a result, findings from this study may not generalize to other school populations where either principals or parents may not be supportive of transgender children.

Supporting Transgender Elementary Students

Findings are presented in three sections. First, I describe the child-centered approach that supportive principals employed to guide their decisions related to transgender children. Second, I describe how principals leveraged knowledge and learning to create a positive elementary school experience for transgender students. Third, I share principals' reflections on their experience working with transgender students and their families.

Child-Centered Approach to Decision Making

The principals participating in this study reported that their support for the transgender child/children at their school was strongly influenced by their child-centered approach to school leadership. The principals conveyed that decision making in schools should be guided by children's needs and with regard to their well-being. The principal at Harborside Cooperative School, a public school situated in a dense city, explained,

> The thing that was first and foremost in our mind, we need to take care of this person. That's always first on my mind when I think about all the kids in our school. Hope is one unique kid, but we have lots of unique kids that are unique for other reasons, and they are also quite vulnerable in different ways. We have

> kids with special needs. We have kids living in poverty, kids living in shelters and in temporary housing. Everyone has got a story and some of them are quite intense. So, I think for all of the adults in the school that was always first and foremost in our minds.

This notion that children have social and emotional needs that must be met was a common observation by the principals in this study. The principal from Crescent Elementary, explained,

> I'm really here for the students, and what is best for students, and so in every situation [I ask] what are we doing for the student at hand? . . . Keeping that focus is really what my goal is, to keep kid focused and centered.

Such claims reflect a personal philosophy of education that places children at the center of educational practice. The expectation that school leaders should be focused on students' needs may seem intuitive; however, transgender people's needs are often portrayed as being at odds with the interests of larger society.

In some cases, the principal's child-centered approach reflected the larger mission of the school. Several schools in this study reported school-level aims that included social justice and social–emotional well-being as a central focus. For example, at Ovid Preparatory, a private religious school where approximately one third of the students have disabilities that require specialized services, the principal explained,

> [We are] really, really attuned to kids' individual needs, both academic and social emotional. We do a lot of work building community and on social emotional conversations. We take a holistic approach to the child not just academic but also self-esteem and how to be in relationship with each other.

The emphasis on individual's well-being in the context of a religious community created a supportive environment for Olive, a transgender girl who entered kindergarten at Ovid Preparatory. The principals at Talbot Elementary, Northstar Charter and Pacificus Learning Collaboratory also pointed to their school mission as guiding their decision making and compelling them to focus foremost on the transgender student's needs.

Another factor that facilitated principals' child-centered approach to educating transgender children was their relationship with the child's parents. All of the principals in this study characterized their communication with the parents as open and ongoing, explaining that strong communication helped ensure mutual understanding between the school and family. The strength of the relationship was also bolstered by the principals'

propensity to value the parents' insights. Principals frequently conveyed deep respect for the family and willingness to learn from them. The Principal at Aberdeen Academy, an independent school, stated, "I draw on the preference of the parent and the child, follow their lead." The principal at Quail Road Elementary shared,

> In our case, the family has worked hard to be on the same page [as us]. It could have played out very differently if the family wasn't forthcoming, if the family had a lot of conflict among themselves, about how to approach, process, digest, accept [having a transgender son]. Having a relationship with the family perpetuated deeper, more honest communication, and [helped] educators put their best selves forward to encourage a young man and help him thrive.

According to this principal, open communication between the family and school increased agreement about actions to take and how to address challenges. For all of the schools in this study, the parents' active involvement and the principals' willingness to nurture a relationship with the child's family facilitated a child-centered approach.

Open communication with the family also facilitated principals' access to information, which reinforced the principals' child-first approach to decision making. Principals in this study identified parents as their primary source for information about transgender children and explained that information allowed them to better understand what it means to be transgender and anticipate the kinds of supports a transgender student might need. When asked, principals acknowledged that the district attorney also served as a resource, particularly for district-level administrators; however, the principals in this study reported that their decisions were guided by the children's needs, not minimum legal requirements. The principal at Aberdeen Academy quipped that her biggest concern was "to not mess up." She explained,

> The goal has been to make sure we get it right. Don't put up any roadblocks, because these kids have enough roadblocks. Some of them are internal, and they're certainly going to have external roadblocks, because not every environment is going to be like [Aberdeen], so it's just making sure that we don't put up the roadblocks.

Knowing about the kinds of challenges that transgender children face further reinforced the principals' child-centered philosophy. While few of the principals in this study had prior knowledge about transgender people, all indicated that the information and resources they received from the family underscored their commitment to creating transgender-inclusive schools.

In practice, a child-centered approach to decision making translated into adequate supports and an overall positive school experience for the transgender child. Indeed, the principals in this study were recommended for participation because the parents characterized them as supportive. While this article does not detail the practices that principals employed to support transgender students,[2] the principal from Mercer Elementary presents one example:

> A parent called me and was out of her mind on the phone saying, "what are we supposed to do? That's a boy using a girl's bathroom. He shouldn't be allowed to do that. My daughter doesn't feel comfortable." . . . I said to her, "your child is welcome to use the nurse's bathroom." It came to me naturally. Why should [Georgia] be treated any differently? . . . I believe I also said to the mom, "Everybody here deserves what they need. Equal doesn't necessarily mean fair. Here we give everyone what they need and that's what [Georgia] needed." And the other child did not choose to use the nurse's bathroom, which is how I knew it was a parent issue and not a student issue. After that one conversation, it never went anywhere else.

In this example, the Mercer Elementary principal employed a child-centered approach that preserved Georgia's need to use the bathroom corresponding to her gender identity while simultaneously meeting the espoused need of the other child for increased privacy. The principal's child-centered response facilitated her ability to create a supportive and accepting school environment for the transgender child.

In sum, all of the principals in this study described using a child-centered approach to decision making that enhanced their ability to support transgender children. Numerous factors contributed to this approach including the principals' personal philosophy, the school mission, communication with the child's family, and access to factual information.

Leveraging Learning and Knowledge to Create a Positive School Experience

Principals in this study emphasized the importance of learning and knowledge for creating a positive school experience for transgender elementary students. They worked to educate themselves, their staff, the larger school community, and the students in their schools about transgender children. Factual knowledge, combined with their child-centered approach, aided their efforts.

Self, school, and district personnel. All of the principals in this study reported needing to learn more about transgender children. Only two principals had thought extensively about gender and transgender people. One had an agender spouse and the

other had been politically active in the LGBTQ community. Several principals had peripheral exposure to transgender adults: a second cousin, the parent of a student, a friend from college, but no in-depth knowledge. Therefore, the majority of the principals in this study started with little to no specialized knowledge that could inform their efforts to support transgender children. When describing her level of knowledge, the principal at Quail Road Elementary admitted,

> I really didn't understand. I hadn't had a personal experience close enough to provoke or probe my thinking. I was of the old way of thinking, and I hope not in a judgmental way, but I didn't have enough information. I knew that if I went to [a certain restaurant] on Tuesday nights a group of transvestites met there. I had some very surface impressions based on old terminology. I looked at things through the sexual identity lens. I didn't appreciate that gender identity was something real that didn't have ties to sexual preference.

Like this principal, some began with harmful misconceptions of what it means to be transgender.

The principals in this study recognized their lack of knowledge and positioned themselves as learners, browsing websites, reading books, and attending trainings alongside teachers. The principal at Talbot Elementary introduced himself saying, "I like to describe myself as the poster child for someone who can't deal with this, who is a white, Catholic, male, straight, over 60, person." However, he went on to describe the learning stance he had assumed with regard to transgender children:

> Probably my biggest goal is just to educate myself. I think if it were happening to one of my colleagues, I probably would not have been very open minded. I have to be honest. So, I've been trying hard to fight that intellectual instinct and emotional instinct and just be open and try to learn. [Reading the book] *Becoming Nicole* [the story of the Maines family] was really a game changer for me. It was either the biggest crock ever written or it's just such an incredibly difficult life that, regardless of what I think and feel, I have to protect and welcome these children, which makes me think that I need to learn more and be more open myself, which I think I am.

Many of the principals in this study reported shifting their personal convictions and overcoming their initial disbelief that a young transgender child could know their gender identity. This misconception stands in contrast to the widely accepted and seldom questioned belief that cisgender children can know their gender identity.

Even for principals in more progressive communities or schools with a social justice mission, the topic of transgender children constituted a gap in their knowledge. As the principal at Griffin Elementary confided, "I always

thought I was, you know, enlightened but I left [the training] thinking I really wasn't that enlightened." Similarly, principals with connections to the LGBTQ community indicated a need for more knowledge and worried that they might be mistakenly perceived as transgender experts. The principal at Dixon Primary, an openly gay male, explained,

> They're careful not to look to me as the expert because I made it clear right away that I don't have more expertise because I'm a gay male . . . I'm open, safe and willing to have any conversation and nothing can be construed as a silly or stupid question. But at the same time, I may not know the answer because [being transgender] has not been my experience.

None of the principals in this study reported having sufficient knowledge to adequately support transgender students prior to having a transgender student and educating themselves.

In addition to their own professional learning, principals worked to develop the knowledge base in their schools, particularly for teachers in direct contact with the transgender child and for support staff such as guidance counselors. To help build their knowledge base, principals commonly sought assistance from local organizations or consultants. These professional development sessions took a variety of formats including all-day workshops, after-school presentations at the faculty meeting, community-wide panel discussions, as well as public Q & A sessions with the child's parents. The events typically included factual information coupled with personal experiences from the perspective of transgender people. The lead teacher at Pacificus Learning Collaboratory described the training that took place at her school prior to the transgender child's enrollment:

> Before school started the Transgender Alliance came and did a workshop with us that was really wonderful. The first question they asked us was, "when did you decide you were a girl or a boy?" I thought that question was so great because nobody decides. They just know. Everybody says, "I just knew" and so I thought that was a great way to frame it. That was our first introduction to how to think about transgender students.

Some schools provided all their teachers and support personnel with mandatory professional learning. Other schools trained a limited number of school community members and/or developed learning opportunities that community members could attend on a voluntary basis. In most schools, professional learning related to transgender education was limited to a single session.

Access to resources for transgender training varied across schools and states. Some locations had a dedicated educator focused on providing

LGBTQ-related professional development. In some instances, the transgender student's family paid for training. The principal at Griffin Elementary explained that in addition to the state-department's LGBTQ liaison, who presented at a faculty meeting, the child's family paid for five key staff members to receive additional training:

> It was one day at the children's hospital. At that point, Georgia was going into third grade and they wanted to make sure that we all collectively knew. It was just school staff and they arranged for us to go.

Given the lack of resources in schools, financial support from the family increased the likelihood that school personnel would receive adequate professional learning.

Some principals developed their own professional learning sessions, drawing on available resources. The Evergreen Elementary principal explained how she combined her own secondary research with legal information provided by the district attorney to design training for her teachers.

> I trained my own staff about the terms, the definitions, what their roles and responsibilities are. I provided them with some handouts. We talked about the definitions. We talked about some of the laws, the ones I felt they needed to know about in terms of bathroom issues, parental rights, and student rights. We used two faculty meetings to address how we were supporting Eric and then just educating them in the laws and our responsibilities as educators.

While this principal developed training for the teachers at her school, some districts opted to provide district-wide professional learning. This was more likely to be true when districts were aware of having multiple transgender or gender-expansive students enrolled. The principals from Dixon Primary and Iroquois Valley Elementary, which reside in the same small district, explained that their superintendent offered professional learning to district administrators first, before providing whole-school training. The primary school (kindergarten, first, and second grades) principal explained,

> An outside organization that specializes in supporting transgender students came in and talked to us about best practices and things we could do. That definitely helped guide us. It was a half-day with the entire district leadership team. From there, we made plans to have that trainer come back and speak to each of the faculties in a faculty meeting in the fall.

His colleague, the elementary school (third, fourth, and fifth grades) principal stated,

> Our superintendent is at the forefront of the issue and has a definite stance and feelings about it. . . . So, we are always talking about trainings that we've been to, possible guest speakers, and just making sure that our network is connected.

In this example a supportive superintendent helped ensure that everyone in the district received similar exposure to information about transgender students and the school's responsibility to meet their needs.

The larger school community. To a lesser extent, learning opportunities extended beyond school and district personnel to include the parent/guardian community and sometimes the general public. Depending on the child's needs, principals often limited communication to those parents/guardians with children in the transgender child's class or grade-level. This kind of grade-level parent/guardian education was most prevalent when the child's classmates observed their social transition. The principal at Lincoln School supported one family's desire to share information about their child's transition with the parent community.

> Mom wrote a letter to all fifth-grade parents explaining "We have a daughter who continually said I'm not a girl, I'm a boy." So, the letter recounted the experience from the parent's perspective and ended with "we just want our child to be happy and healthy and we ask that you embrace this as much as you can. Here are some questions your child may ask and here are some answers you can give them." It was very useful because parents want to say the right thing and a lot of times they didn't know the answers. It was truly an education because, as much as you want to do the right thing, you don't want to use the wrong terminology.

In this example, the child's parents worked with the principal to craft an educational letter that would inform parents and guardians and help them respond to questions their children might ask at home.

For children whose transgender status was undisclosed, principals created more general learning opportunities that were informative without divulging information about a particular child. For example, the lead teacher at Pacificus Learning Collaboratory explained, "If a student had diabetes, we wouldn't share that information with the school community." Although it was less common, some principals in schools with undisclosed transgender students worked to create learning opportunities for the broader school community. The principal at Iroquois Valley Elementary described district-sponsored community events that were open to the public.

> We had a panel that the Family Support Center put together. It included three transgender people who were willing to talk about their experience and take questions from a public forum. It was mainly parents from our district, but there were definitely parents and community members from other districts as well. . . . It was very respectful. Everybody who came walked out of there appreciating that we put that together and feeling better informed and able to be more supportive.

Other principals described similar kinds of events including early morning info sessions and evening book discussions for parents. The principal at Kirby Learning Center, a progressive independent school, explained that they received a financial donation to host Lori Duron, author of the blog and book, Raising My Rainbow. The event was held at a local liberal arts college and open to the public. These kinds of events, which were held outside traditional work-day hours, provided parents, guardians, and members of the public with an opportunity to learn more about transgender children.

Students. Creating opportunities for the student population to learn about gender and transgender children was somewhat more challenging for the principals in this study. The principals who worked at socially progressive schools reported that the task of making transgender people visible aligned with their overall mission. These principals reported greater confidence that gender was an acceptable topic for children to discuss in school. The lead teacher at Pacificus Learning Collaboratory shared, "I think parents really were grateful that their children were in a community that valued and honored Paloma. It made them feel good about their own children being here and being supportive." The principal at Kirby Learning Center, which has five transgender students, described how they handled a kindergartener's decision to disclose that she was transgender.

> The family and child worked out a process with the teachers. They read a book aloud and the child told the class that she was transgender and explained what that meant with help from her teacher. The parents wrote a letter the same day to the parent community. Then, we're a constructivist school so a lot of the work is child led. The children wanted to make her a book. So, the kids all sat down and drew pages in the book. One was Katie you're a beautiful butterfly and I'm so proud of you. It's just this beautiful book that she got to take home.

In this progressive school, the decision to talk with kindergarteners about having a transgender classmate was not perceived as contentious. The

teachers responded to the child's need to share about herself and created a space where she could comfortably share her gender identity.

Similarly, principals at schools with a strong social–emotional component reported that it was relatively easy to incorporate the topic of gender into their existing curriculum. At Belmont Elementary, which has 400 students in grades Pre-K through kindergarten, the majority of whom are students of color from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the principal explained that a strong character education program could facilitate conversations about gender.

> If social and emotional student development is the backbone of your school, then you can have conversations from that tree, and they can branch out so many different ways, but the root of it is always about treating each other with respect, with love, with kindness, and what does it look like in the classroom, on the playground, in the bathroom, in the hallways? . . . So, when students make other students feel a sense of otherness or tell them that they're different, we have a basis to have a conversation.

The principal went on to describe the puppet program created by their librarian, which included a gender-expansive puppet as a way to discuss gender stereotypes. Neither the students' young age nor their cultural diversity inhibited the principal's willingness to discuss gender.

While all of the principals in this study were characterized as supportive by the parents who recommended them, some were cautious about introducing students to the concept of transgender children. This concern was highlighted by the principal at Talbot Elementary, the self-professed "White, Catholic, male, straight, over 60, person," when he decided to add books about transgender children to the library. He described extended conversations with the school counselor, a gender consultant, and the transgender child's parents.

> We had a long, long series of discussions about whether the parents should know or not. When it came right down to it, I just thought I owed it to the parents to warn them. I felt it was better to communicate and to let the parents know that we have these books available. I wrote a whole article about it and sent it out. A couple of parents came in to see me very concerned that their children were going to be exposed to something they didn't feel they were ready for. The people who have those concerns they don't get to dictate how we welcome people and keep them safe. They do get to dictate how they deal with these issues in their own home with their own kids. I thought it was disingenuous to just put the books in the library and say, "well you should have known."

In this passage, the principal, who worked in an affluent school with an undisclosed transgender kindergartener conveys his sense of commitment to creating opportunities for students to learn about gender while simultaneously acknowledging his belief that parents have a right to be informed about books that raise new and possibly challenging topics to address with young children.

Generally speaking, the principals in this study were more reticent to explicitly address the topic of transgender children with the students in their schools. All of the schools added books to their school library and/or to teachers' classroom libraries that introduced transgender children. However, explicit efforts to teach children about gender and transgender children were limited. In most cases, such discussions were confined to those classrooms where children were socially transitioning and their classmates needed language to make sense of the situation. Thus, educators' opportunities to learn about transgender children did not always translate into explicit opportunities for children to learn about gender or transgender children.

Principals' Reflections on Working With Transgender Students

Near the conclusion of each interview, principals were asked, "If you were to step back and view the situation from a 10,000-foot vantage point, how would you characterize your experience working with a transgender student?" All of the principals from this study described their experience as professionally and personally beneficial. Some of the language they used included "humbling," "powerful," "enlightening," an "honor," "exciting learning opportunity," "emotional experience," and "transformative." These kinds of expressions were representative of the entire sample of school leaders. These responses stood in stark contrast to the negative assumptions that school leaders commonly hold about how school communities would react to a transgender student.

According to the principals in this study, having a transgender student constituted a growth opportunity. Not only did principals learn factual information about being transgender, the situation challenged them and their school community to grow in unanticipated ways. The principal at Quail Road Elementary explained,

> It was one of the most powerful learning experiences I've ever gone through professionally, and I suspect for others. Intellectually, we had a lot to learn about [being] transgender. Emotionally, it helped us remember to be open-minded and compassionate and empathic in ways that [are] implied as part of

> our professional community, but spending concerted time to consider a student's feelings, the family's feelings, the community impact, it was really powerful. It was a really powerful growing opportunity for all of us.

This principal describes the intellectual and emotional growth that occurred as a result of working with a transgender boy and his family. They were challenged to act in ways that would reflect their professional beliefs and values and consequently, experienced a "powerful growing opportunity." Thus, supporting a transgender student resulted in benefits for the entire school community and not just for the student.

The depth and intensity of these experiences were also remarkable. One quarter of the principals got choked up and/or were moved to tears during their interview. For example, in response to being asked to characterize her experience the principal at Clearview Elementary stammered,

> You're going to make me cry, sorry . . . I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I think it is an emotional experience, and that's why I'm crying, because you want what's best for the kids and the families, and you can feel from meeting with them and talking to them that there is so much going on in the background that you want this to be their safety net. You don't want this to become the problem. You want this to be the solution to whatever else is going on.

Here the principal conveys her sense of responsibility and her belief that schools should be a place where students are nurtured and supported. Having a transgender student, understanding the challenges they face, and realizing that the school context can, quite literally, mean the difference between life and death, was a profound experience for many of these principals.

In fact, some of these principals referred to their experience working with a transgender student as one of the most significant experiences in their career. For example, the principal at Lincoln School was nearing retirement when one of her students socially transitioned. She described the impact of that experience on her career as an educator and principal:

> If I were to phase out into my career with just what I had done, I don't know that I would be happy. It would be okay but I wouldn't have done anything meaningful really that changed peoples' lives in the way that is obvious. I know people say, 'of course you change children's lives. You do things every day.' Yes, but this was so evident that what I experienced was transformative for me as a person and as a leader. I really did something meaningful and it just rejuvenated me as a leader.

Successfully supporting a transgender student prompted this principal to delay her retirement. In addition to staying on as principal she began to counsel other principals on how to support transgender students and shared her experience at a regional conference. While the Lincoln School principal's experience stands out as especially transformational, all of the principals resoundingly described their experience working with a transgender student as a positive growth opportunity for themselves and their school community.

Interpreting the Results

The findings from this study provide new information about supportive elementary principals' child-centered approach to decision making and how they leveraged learning to create positive school experiences for transgender students. The findings also show that principals' experiences working with transgender children were overwhelmingly positive. The results of this study mark a contrast from previous research that documents educators' fears and resistance (Payne & Smith, 2014, 2018) and, thus, the study results help us imagine how we might foster educators' support for transgender students.

Unlike prior research illustrating the role that policy plays in principals' decision making (Leonardi & Staley, 2018), the principals in this study reported using a child-centered approach to guide their decision making related to transgender students. First and foremost, these principals followed the child's lead in consultation with their family. The principals did not default to policy guidelines, minimum legal requirements, or "majority rule" as their first consideration. That is not to say the principals were uninformed about policy or the law; however, their first consideration was the child's well-being. Payne and Smith (2014) reported a similar finding with one of their study participants who, "Unlike other participants, whose initial thoughts were fears about things like student safety and district liability, this participant focused her attention on the needs of this child" (p. 407). A child-centered approach may allow principals to set aside their fears and assume a proactive stance. Being child-focused may also inhibit principals from disregarding transgender children as statistically insignificant, particularly when faced with a non-hypothetical child with real needs. The principals' child-centered approach may have also decreased zero-sum thinking that is sometimes evident in response to efforts to increase the rights of oppressed populations (Noguera, 2001; Norton & Sommers, 2011). Instead, the principals in this

study seemed to understand that supporting transgender children's rights does not decrease other students' rights.

In addition to their child-centered approach to decision making, the principals in this study sought to educate themselves and others as a way to increase awareness, understanding, and acceptance of transgender children. Thus, the findings corroborate and expand on past research conducted by Leonardi and Staley (2018) and Slesaransky-Poe et al. (2013) who found that principals sought information and training. While all of the principals in this study leveraged learning and knowledge to create positive experiences for their transgender students, systematic efforts to provide learning opportunities to the wider school community were generally limited in scope and duration. Educators working directly with the transgender student were most likely to receive training; however, it was commonly limited to a single session. These findings expand and align with the results from Leonardi and Staley (2018) who reported that principals struggled to sustain conversations about trans-affirming policies over time. In addition, most of the principals in this study reported that children had limited opportunities to learn about gender. While many schools added books about gender to their school and classroom libraries, explicit instruction about gender was typically limited to those classrooms where transgender children had socially transitioned and wanted to share about their personal story. Children in other classrooms, without openly transgender classmates, were less likely to learn about gender or transgender children. These findings point to principals' uncertainty about how and when to discuss gender with elementary-age children and suggest the need for preparation programs to better prepare principals to handle gender-related topics in school.

Findings from this study also provide new information about principals' experiences working with transgender children, which were overwhelmingly positive for all the principals in this study. While these results suggest that principals' anxiety regarding transgender students may be exaggerated, they also compel us to consider the range of variables that may contribute to principals' positive experiences. Leonardi and Staley (2018) found that the two principals in their study with transgender students had positive experiences when the parents supported their child's gender identity but a more negative experience when there was a lack of parental support. Similarly, Slesaransky-Poe et al. (2013) document the positive school experience of one transgender boy, which included strong parental support and on-going communication with the principal. Likewise, the principals in this study consistently report working closely with supportive parents. These findings seem to suggest that parental support may create the conditions necessary for principals, transgender students, and the

school community to have a positive experience. Unfortunately, having supportive parents is a privilege that is not afforded to all transgender children. In fact, some parents reject and even punish or abuse their children for being transgender (Roberts et al., 2012). Furthermore, being a supportive parent does not ensure that the principal will respond similarly. Research is needed to help us understand how parents can successfully advocate for their children and how schools can support students despite unsupportive parents.

While the findings from this study provide helpful and encouraging information about principals' support for transgender students, the results also reveal the limitations inherent in the principals' child-centered approach to decision making. While a focus on the individual child's well-being positively influenced the transgender student's school experience, it did little to make the broader school culture more gender inclusive. Generally speaking, principals were led by the question, "how can I support this student?" Few principals asked themselves "how can I create a school culture that supports all transgender and gender-expansive children, including those whose identity is unknown to me." While these two questions can and should be pursued simultaneously, for the principals in this study a child-centered approach often eclipsed school-wide conversations about gender and how to create a gender-inclusive school culture. Thus, even when individual transgender students' needs were met the overall school culture retained binary gender norms that create the conditions for rejection and discrimination.

To create gender-inclusive schools, principals need to facilitate extended learning that interrogates the ways in which rigid gender norms facilitate heteronormative and cisnormative school environments. Schools are common sites for gender policing (Mayo, 2013; Pascoe, 2007) and it can be difficult for administrators to sustain conversations about gender (Leonardi & Staley, 2018). However, schools' failure to create gender-inclusive spaces have especially dire consequences for children who are perceived as transgressing gender norms, as documented by the National Center for Transgender Equality (James et al., 2016) and GLSEN (Kosciw et al., 2016). School leaders play a crucial role in the development of inclusive schools (Riehl, 2000) but the findings from this study suggest that even motivated administrators may not know how to facilitate a shift in gender norms.

The supportive principals in this study actively worked to learn about transgender children and to share that knowledge with other educators in their schools; however, their efforts did not emphasize the importance of disrupting binary gender norms and changing school culture. Opportunities

to learn were often limited to a single workshop or restricted to the teachers working directly with the identified transgender child. The broader community of educators, parents, and students had fewer opportunities to learn about transgender children and how to support them, making school-wide implementation of gender-inclusive practices improbable. In fact, principals reported that efforts to make educational practices less gendered (e.g., replacing ballroom dancing with square dancing; using gender-neutral bathroom passes; referring to "children" rather than "girls" and "boys") reverted to more traditional practices once the transgender child advanced to the next grade. The temporary use of gender-inclusive practices reflects a belief that such practices only benefit transgender children. It also presumes that transgender students are identifiable. In reality, less restrictive gender norms benefit all children and unless a child discloses their identity, it is impossible to tell whether children are transgender.

Finally, it is worth noting that in this study the transgender children who served as the conduit for principal sample selection were largely binary in their gender expression. That is, transgender girls (who were assigned male at birth) generally conformed to gender norms for girls and transgender boys (who were assigned female at birth) mostly conformed to the gender norms associated with boys. The sampling strategy allowed for principals of both gender-expansive and binary transgender students; however, the majority of the students conformed to binary gender norms. This predominance of binary transgender children raises the question of whether principals are less likely to support gender-expansive or gender-fluid children. Transgender children who conform to binary gender norms may fit relatively well into gendered school spaces; whereas, children who present as gender expansive may challenge school norms in ways that make others uncomfortable or that require more significant changes to practice. As a result, gender nonconforming children may pose a greater challenge for schools and, consequently, may receive less support. Future research should examine differing levels and kinds of support for transgender children who vary in the extent to which they conform to binary gender norms.

Given the results of this study, it would appear that principals with a child-centered approach to leadership may be motivated to support transgender children. At the same time, a child-centered approach appears insufficient for creating a more gender-inclusive school culture and could even undermine such efforts. Principals will need additional learning and supports to successfully create school cultures where all children, including those who are gender expansive, children who are undisclosed, or those with unsupportive parents, are afforded the right to learn in an environment where all forms of gender expression are valued.

Appendix

School Community Demographics.

	School Name	School Type	Community Population	Community Racial/Ethnic Makeup	Community Median Family Income
A	Aberdeen Academy School	Private-independent	150,000	45% Latinx (any race); 33% White (non-Latinx); 19% Black; 2% Asian	37,000
B	Belmont Elementary	Public	40,000	44% White (non-Latinx); 27% Black; 19% Latinx (any race); 8% Asian	108,000
C	Crescent Elementary	Public	75,000	60% White (non-Latinx); 28% Latinx (any race); 7% Black; 3% Asian	45,000
D	Dixon Primary	Public	210,000	42% Black; 37% White (non-Latinx); 16% Latinx (any race); 3% Asian	31,000
E	Evergreen Elementary	Public	5,000	92% White (non-Latinx); 4% Latinx (any race); 2% Black	84,000
F	Forrest School	Public	23,000	70% White (non-Latinx); 25% Asian	156,000
G	Griffin Elementary	Public	68,000	65% White (non-Latinx); 13% Latinx (any race); 6% Black; 6% Asian	100,000
H	Harborside Cooperative School	Public	1,600,000	46% White (non-Latinx); 26% Latinx (any race); 17% Black; 12% Asian	72,000
I	Iroquois Valley Elementary	Public	210,000	42% Black; 37% White (non-Latinx); 16% Latinx (any race); 3% Asian	31,000
J	Jefferson Elementary	Public	58,000	81% White; 7% Asian; 5% Black; 3% Latinx (any race)	115,000

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

	School Name	School Type	Community Population	Community Racial/Ethnic Makeup	Community Median Family Income
K	Kirby Learning Center	Private-independent	17,000	87% White (non-Latinx); 7% Latinx (any race); 2% Black	46,000
L	Lincoln School	Public	12,000	78% White (non-Latinx); 11% Asian; 7% Latinx (any race)	160,000
M	Mercer Elementary	Public	68,000	65% White (non-Latinx); 13% Latinx (any race); 6% Black; 6% Asian	100,000
N	Northstar Charter	Public-charter	19,000	64% Latinx (any race); 20% White (non-Latinx); 14% Black	26,000
O	Ovid Preparatory	Private religious	2,600,000	36% White (non-Latinx); 35% Black; 20% Latinx (any race); 12% Asian	45,000
P	Pacificus Learning Collaboratory	Private-independent	33,000	72% White; 10% Black; 9% Asian; 7% Latinx (any race)	75,000
Q	Quail Road Elementary	Public	4,000	91% White (non-Latinx); 4% Asian; 3% Latinx (any race)	150,000
R	Rosa Parks Public School PS25	Public	2,600,000	35% White (non-Latinx); 35% Black; 19% Latinx (any race); 11% Asian	45,000
S	Silas Country School	Public	1,500	90% White (non-Latinx); 6% Latinx (any race)	72,000
T	Talbot Elementary	Public	15,000	75% White (non-Latinx); 13% Latinx (any race); 8% Asian; 2% Black	122,000

Source. www.census.gov.

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1. See *Adams v. School Board of St. Johns County*, FL, 2018; *A.H. ex rel. Handling v. Minersville Area School District*, PA, 2017; *Dodds v U.S. Department of Education*, OH, 2016; *Doe v. Boyertown Area School District*, PA, 2018; *Doe v. Regional School Unit 26*, ME, 2014; *Evancho v. Pine-Richland Sch. Dist.*, PA, 2017; *G.G. v. Gloucester County School Board*, VA, 2018; *M.A.B. v. Board of Education of Talbot County*, MD, 2018; *Tooley v. Van Buren*, MI, 2015; *Whitaker v Kenosha Unified School District*, WI, 2017.
2. For an in-depth treatment of the practices that principals and other educators employed to support transgender children and create more inclusive schools, please see forthcoming (2020) book, to be published by Harvard Education Press.

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