



From the Board of Trustees

Creating safe and caring learning environments

At the CBE, we work together every day to create welcoming, safe, caring and respectful school communities where each and every student feels a sense of belonging. When students feel that they belong, it encourages them to stay in school, to learn and to succeed.

Our schools welcome students and families from every background and from all over the world, and we foster healthy and respectful relationships where diversity is celebrated. Students, staff and school communities share the responsibility of cultivating environments that welcome everyone and provide opportunities to thrive in life and learning. This includes ensuring we create safe, caring environments for gender and sexual minority youth.

This responsibility is reflected in our mission, in our Results policies and Three-Year Education Plan. It is also expressed in law, in the *School Act* and *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Alberta Education recently released guidelines to ensure school boards create learning environments that specifically respect diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

Those who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning (LGBTQ) and particularly transgender individuals, typically experience much higher rates of harassment, discrimination, assaults, suicide rates, homelessness and poor health outcomes. As a whole, this is a vulnerable group that is often marginalized in our society.

While many individuals identify as LGBTQ, approximately only 0.3% of the population identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. This is a relatively small group, but one that requires and deserves support and protection.

By March 31, all school boards have been asked to use the provincial guidelines to develop or update their own policies, regulations and procedures related to creating learning environments that are safe, welcoming, caring and respectful. The provincial guidelines are aligned with many of the practices already in place in CBE schools to protect and care for all students.

We recognize the important role all of us play in providing these safe, inclusive environments where all students can thrive.

For more information, a parent/guardian FAQ is available on the [CBE website](#). Search for "Guidelines for best practices for LGBTQ students."