

Making Bathrooms Safer Spaces!

As you may have read about or heard, the Equity & Anti- Bias Workgroup is underway! They have had several meetings with parents, staff, and Middle School students participating in the discussions. I was thrilled to hear that the Taskforce's first recommendation is something we've wanted to address for some time, and that their proposal is an easy one to roll out for next school year: although the Arts Barn is the newest building, it is the only building with gendered bathroom design and signage. We've wanted to ensure that all students, staff, parents, and visitors feel safer and welcome using the bathroom that works for them.

Have you seen the informational signs in the Arts Barn bathrooms recently? We recently posted signs that highlight that "We realize sharing a bathroom could feel new and different — we appreciate your understanding", while explaining the negative impact of bathrooms labeled with only "Women" or "Men" as options. Instead, the message we want to send is that "It's important that we proactively work to create safer spaces whenever and wherever we can. We realize sharing a bathroom could feel new and different — we appreciate your understanding." This message is supported by the 2017 National School Climate Survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (now more inclusively referred to as GLSEN) which found that "4 in 10 students avoided gender-segregated spaces in school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable."

After much discussion, the Equity and Anti-bias Workgroup settled on a recommendation of changing the gender binary Arts Barn bathroom signs to read "all genders" with a pictographic of a toilet and/or a urinal communicating the facilities in the specific bathroom. The administration have a few other solutions in the works too, and will be making the change over summer break. We are looking into options to have the urinal enclosed or replaced with a toilet. If you have any ideas about this, please let me know.

Towards inclusivity,
Tamara