

# Inclusive and Welcoming Learning in MCPS



Dear MCPS Community,

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is committed to cultivating an inclusive and welcoming learning environment and seeks to create opportunities where all students see themselves and their families in curriculum materials.

In alignment with [Board of Education Policy](#), MCPS has a responsibility to include instructional materials that reflect the diversity of the local and global community by exploring the aspirations, issues, and achievements of men and women, people with disabilities, people from diverse racial, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as those of diverse gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

We value the partnership we share with our parents, caregivers, community members, and stakeholders in providing our students with the best possible education, so that they emerge from MCPS college, career, and community ready.

**MCPS follows all Maryland and federal Department of Education laws and uses a process that aligns with the school system's core values when choosing supplemental curriculum materials for students in all grades.** We encourage all interested stakeholders to read the information provided here about the LGBTQ+ inclusive books that have been introduced as supplementary material for grade level standards instruction.

Montgomery County Public Schools

## CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

### How materials are selected:

To ensure support for the curriculum, professional staff evaluate and select instructional materials according to specified procedures, which include parental and public review and examination. ▶

These procedures encourage the selection of instructional materials that:

- Are age and developmentally appropriate.
- Are directly connected to both language arts standards and competencies for social and emotional learning, which the Maryland State Department of Education encourages schools to teach.
- Make a positive contribution to the MCPS program and align with the MCPS curriculum.

For additional information on curriculum and instructional materials, see [Regulation IIB-RA](#) and [MCPS Policy on Nondiscrimination, Equity and Cultural Proficiency](#).

## INCORPORATING LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE TEXTS AND RESOURCES

As a reflection of MCPS's ongoing commitment to inclusive texts for supplemental use to increase representation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning community are approved for use in the PreK-12 English Language Arts curriculum, because:

- Inclusive books support a student's ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with diverse peers and encourage respect for all.
- A more tolerant, inclusive, and accepting school environment helps children learn to recognize and resist stereotypes. We teach children to stand up for others, resist bullying, and work together.
- Children learn to respect one another and work together regardless of their differences at school. Creating an awareness of gender diversity and identity diversity is part of that work.
- LGBTQ+ inclusive books benefit all students by promoting acceptance and respect and teaching them more about the diverse people and families in the world.

The intention is for learning to occur through awareness of diversified genders and gender identities, not from explicit instruction. The diverse composition of MCPS families makes it impossible to notify parents of upcoming readings, discussions, or classroom activities that may conflict with their personal beliefs. Maryland law permits students and families to opt out of "Family Life and Human Sexuality Unit of Instruction" but not other curriculum, such as the English Language Arts Curriculum.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Questions	Answers
Is there an LGBTQ+ curriculum in elementary school?	There is no LGBTQ+ curriculum in elementary school.
Can parents opt out and request an alternative text/assignment?	Students and families may not choose to opt out of engaging with any instructional materials other than certain units within the state-mandated health curriculum as specifically permitted by Maryland law.
Must all teachers use the LGBTQ+ inclusive texts and resources?	Yes, and teachers may choose from a variety of inclusive texts within identified literacy units.
Are principals and teachers required to notify the parents/guardians before introducing the LGBTQ+ inclusive texts to students? Is it required for teachers to send a letter home before the books are read?	It is our policy that we teach with diverse representation; therefore, it will not be possible to notify parents every time we introduce a character representing the diversity of our community in our curriculum resources or text.
Can I keep my child home when students are learning from LGBTQ+ inclusive texts in class?	Attendance expectations and requirements are outlined in MCPS Regulation: <a href="#">JEA-RA Attendance</a>
Why should my child learn about gender identity and sexuality at school?	There is no content instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation in elementary school. The books include a diversified representation of people. Inclusive books support a student's ability to empathize, connect, and collaborate with diverse peers and encourage respect for all.
Isn't my child too young to be learning about gender and sexual identity?	There is no explicit instruction on gender and sexual identity in elementary school as part of content instruction. Diversifying texts in elementary school will help young people develop empathy for a diverse group of people and learn about identities that might relate to their families or community members.  Research also shows that inclusive materials are a key component of a safe and supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students and increase positive psychosocial and educational outcomes.
Ideas about gender diversity go against the values we are instilling in my child at home. Are you trying to teach my child to reject these values?	Students are learning the curriculum indicators outlined for each grade level. For example, "determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text."
How were the books selected?	For information on this process, <a href="#">visit the evaluation and selection page of the MCPS website.</a>

## More Resources:

[MSDE \(Maryland State Department of Education\) Health Education Framework Pre K - High School](#)