

ILLINOIS
SAFE
SCHOOLS



THE ALLIANCE

presents:

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!
ORGANIZING
AND
ADVOCACY
CURRICULUM**





KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! ORGANIZING AND ADVOCACY CURRICULUM

These materials are also available in Spanish, if you are interested in receiving the Spanish materials, please contact the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. Translation was provided by the ¡Comunicaté! Translation & Interpretation Collective.

¡Comunicaté! Translation & Interpretation Collective

We are a collective who seeks to bridge accessibility between Spanish and English, in spoken and written form, in order to promote and enable community members to be their full selves in spaces where language would otherwise be a barrier. Our professional expertise are reflective of our lived experiences as bilingual, immigrant, queer, and/or femmes of color. Our aim is grow alongside our community and ultimately create a more language inclusive world.

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ABOUT THE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS PROJECT



The mission of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (the Alliance) is to promote safety, support and healthy development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, in Illinois schools and communities, through advocacy, education, youth organizing and research.

This curriculum was created by staff of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance. Antonio Gutierrez was consulted when developing our Know Your Rights comic materials, whose contents informed this curriculum. Antonio Gutierrez, is a queer, gender non-conforming undocumented immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico. Antonio has lived in Chicago after immigrating to the United States to reunite with family members.

Antonio joined the immigrant-rights movement in 2012 as an organizer with the Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL), an undocumented-led organization. Antonio has engaged in and remains active in collective organizing of community events such as fundraising programs, mass marches, national retreats, city-wide ordinance campaigns and civil disobediences.

Antonio is one of the co-founders of the Autonomous Tenants Union (ATU), an all-volunteer anti-displacement organization in the City of Chicago. Antonio is a member of the steering committee of Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD), an undocumented-led group that fights deportations and criminalization of Black, brown and immigrant communities in Chicago.

Goals for this Project

The goal of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance is to support young people's success in their school environments by providing essential information about their rights, and the responsibility their schools have to honor and accept them. When students know their rights, they are more likely to get the support they need to address the root causes of the problems at hand and demand remedies that allow them to thrive in their academic setting. When doing so, they develop key leadership and advocacy skills. Our goal is to meet the needs of youth and respond to requests for more legal resources, opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring, legal and medical rights awareness, and support around discriminatory discipline practices in school.

Why this Project?

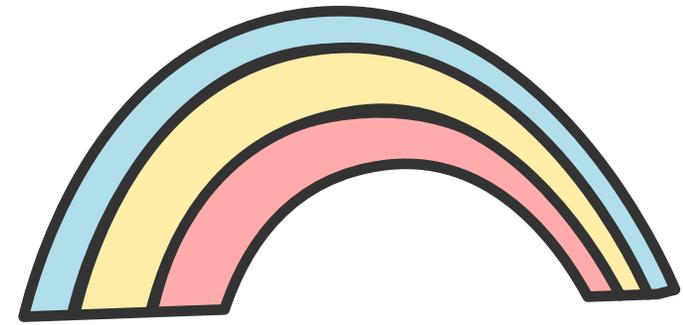
As a youth-advocacy organization, we see grossly disproportionate access to education depending on race, economic resources, family support and geographic location. Lack of access to safe and supportive education can impact achievement later in life & limit opportunity for mobility, employment, and health. At the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, we believe that all students, not just LGBTQ students, flourish in environments where diversity is valued.

**DISCLAIMER:
THIS CURRICULUM IS FOR INFORMATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF
PROVIDING LEGAL ADVICE.**

HOW TO USE THE KNOW YOUR RIGHTS CURRICULUM



The Know Your Rights (KYR) project is designed for youth, by youth, to educate young people and youth-serving organizations about students' rights in regards to School Discipline, Law and Policy, LGBTQ+ Rights in School, Sexual Health, and Organizing and Advocacy. Due to the nature of our work, this is done through an LGBTQ+ lens. This project is informed by Illinois law, Federal law, and best practices, and the information is only applicable in the state of Illinois.



The KYR materials are made up of a comic booklet and a corresponding curriculum. The curriculum is meant to be used to create workshops that will have young people interact with the comic booklets. The activities in the curriculum are meant to engage and familiarize participants with the corresponding comic booklets, and allow them to practice exercising their rights in different scenarios. If the participants want a deeper understanding of the topic in the activity, they can find most of that information in the comic booklets.



Choose your own adventure!

In this curriculum, you will be able to choose the activities that best fit your needs, learning goals, and time. Each section consists of at least one activity and all activities can stand alone. Participants don't need prior knowledge to participate in any of the activities.

GETTING SET UP FOR YOUR WORKSHOP



Before you start your workshop, you should do the following things to ensure it goes as smoothly as possible.

First and foremost, remember to familiarize yourself with the material and the activities you plan to do beforehand.

Read through the comic booklets and the curriculum at least twice before presenting. If you know of anyone who has experience leading workshops, you can also ask them to help you lead one of these!

Establish Guidelines:

At the beginning of the workshop, it is helpful to establish group guidelines. These guidelines are informal rules that are established by the group to reflect expectations of how group members should behave and interact with each other. Some examples of guidelines you could establish within your group are:

One Mic: Only one person talks at a time, the person talking should have the floor and everyone else should be listening respectfully.

Take Space, Make Space: If someone has not participated a lot, encourage them to "take space" and be more involved in the activity. If someone is very involved in the activity and is not giving others a lot of time to participate, encourage them to "make space" and let others participate more.

Don't Yuck My Yum: If someone says that they like something, don't downplay their likes because we're all entitled to our own opinion.

Focus Goggles: This is a term to get back on track. If someone feels the group is getting distracted, they can say "focus goggles" and everyone becomes silent and uses their fingers to build goggles around their eyes. They can then focus on the activity again.

Presentation Basics:

When presenting, it is important to create a space where you can see all participants and engage with them. Be sure to project your voice so that you can be heard clearly in the room. Remember, a pause is better than a 'like' or an 'Um'- if you are unsure or struggling to find the right words, take a pause and gather your thoughts.

Familiarizing yourself with the material and the activities you plan to do beforehand can help lower the number of times you need to pause throughout the workshop, and help you feel more comfortable while presenting.

And finally, **be honest about what you don't know**, questions will come up in these workshops that you may not have answers to, and that's OK. You do not need to be an expert on these topics to give these workshops or to participate in the workshops. If you do not know an answer to a question, you can say "I'm not sure" and offer to help that person research the answer. We do not want to come up with an answer on the spot and give people false information.

Keeping Time:

It is important to keep track of time and plan your activities according to the amount of time you have. It is helpful to have a timer/stopwatch on hand for activities and discussion time. For example, if you have an activity that is supposed to take 15 minutes, you should set your stopwatch and watch the time. If the activity goes over the time slotted you do not have to end the activity right away, but should consider wrapping it up and moving on.

Another way of managing your time is setting an agenda. This will not only help you keep time, but also organize the activities you will be facilitating during the workshop. We have provided model agendas on page 12 to help you set up your workshops.

Getting Feedback:

It is a good idea to get feedback on your workshops so you can improve them in the future. You can also use the feedback to improve your presentation and workshop facilitation skills in general.

When developing these workshops, we offered these questions to people via an anonymous survey:

- » Describe how you feel about the workshop in one word.
- » Can you say more about this word? What do you mean?
- » Were any parts of the workshop confusing? Which parts?
- » Do you feel like you could apply what you learned to your experiences in school?
- » What is one thing the facilitators did well? What is one thing they could practice more?
- » Do you have any suggestions for future workshops?

You can decide to give a similar anonymous survey for participants to fill out, or you can decide to lead a discussion verbally so people can give you feedback immediately. If you decide to do a discussion, we recommend taking notes so you can reference them later.

Making an Agenda

In this curriculum, you will be able to choose what activities best fit your needs, learning goals, and allotted time. Each section contains at least one activity that you can choose from and facilitate. Below you will find examples of 30, 45, and 55 minute workshops.

Agenda #1 (30 Minutes):

Organizing & Advocacy

- Intros & Overview of Workshop, 5 minutes
- Activity #1: Power Mapping, 20 minutes
- Feedback and Closing, 5 minutes

Agenda #2 (45 Minutes):

Organizing & Advocacy

- Intros & Overview of Workshop, 5 Minutes
- Activity #1: Power Mapping, 20 minutes
- Activity #3: Non-Negotiables, 15 minutes
- Feedback and Closing, 5 Minutes

Agenda #3 (60 Minutes):

Organizing & Advocacy

- Intros & Overview of Workshop, 5 minutes
- Activity #1: Power Mapping, 20 minutes
- Activity #2: What Do We Do Now?, 15 minutes
- Activity #4: Direct Action!, 15 minutes
- Feedback and Closing, 5 minutes

Based on the amount of time you have, you can use the suggested agendas or create a tailored agenda to fit your particular learning goals, time, and needs. There are five different activities to choose from and you can include as many or as few activities as you want, in any order.

ACTIVITY #1: POWER MAPPING



15-20 minutes

Activity Goals:

- Participants will be introduced to the concept of power mapping
- Participants will learn more about how to influence decision makers in their lives
- Participants will learn more about how to identify key decision makers in policy work

Materials:

Depending on your resources, you can choose one of these options to present the scenario:

- Print one copy for each participant
- Transcribe them on a board that is visible to everyone
- Project them from a computer

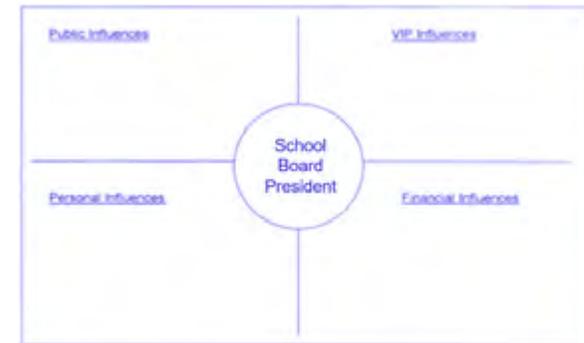
Based on what route you pick, you may need the following materials:

- Printed copies of “Scenario for Activity #1”
- Chalk/markers
- Projector, laptop, and screen
- The Know Your Rights comic materials (for any of the set-ups)

Directions:

NOTE: Steps 1 and 2 should be completed before the workshop for the best use of time. All the diagrams included take a while to draw, and waiting to do them after the workshop starts will dramatically increase the length of the activity.

1. Draw one set of Power Mapping Grids on poster paper for every five participants you will have in the workshop, each set should contain
 - **One grid for the School Board President, which should look like this:**



- **One grid for School Board Member 1, which should look like this:**

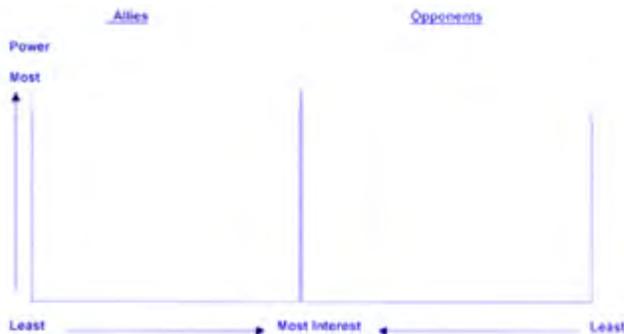


Directions (Continued) :

- One grid for **School Board Member 2**, which should look like this:



2. Draw one blank Power & Interest chart on poster paper for every five participants you will have in the workshop, they should look like this:



3. Break participants up into small groups. If you have less than 5 people, then there is no need to break up into groups, everyone can work on the activity together as one group.
4. Present the scenario to each group. If it is projected or written on the board, ask for volunteers to read it aloud.

Directions (Continued) :

5. Give groups about 6-8 minutes to discuss and respond to the prompt at the bottom of the scenario. Have groups assign one or two people to report out to the larger group.
6. Go around and have one or two people from each group share what their answers to the questions are.
7. After groups report back, give the model answer at the end of the activity (see: Model Answer for Activity #1).



Scenario for Activity #1

In this scenario, you will be power mapping. Power mapping is a visual tool used by organizers to identify which decision makers are important to them in their process to create change.

You are a student in a school district. You and your friends are organizing to pass a gender inclusion policy in your school district to support transgender and gender expansive students' right to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

You have done research with your friends and have found out the best way to do this is by getting the school board to pass the gender inclusion policy by voting on it at a board meeting. You have found out the following information:

- **The school board has three voting members, they are:**
 - **The School Board President**
 - **Board Member #1**
 - **Board Member #2**
- **They each have these powers:**
 - **Nothing gets a school board hearing or gets voted on by the board unless the Board President allows it. However, the School Board President only has one vote in the voting process.**
 - **Board Member 1 is a voting board member. They get one vote in the process, but can't force a vote on something.**
 - **Board Member 2 is a voting board member. They get one vote in the process, but can't force a vote on something.**

In order to pass a policy, you need a majority of the board to vote 'Yes' on the policy after the School Board President has called it for a vote.

After doing more research, you find out these things about the specific board members:

School Board President

- **Really wants to get re-elected to their position**
- **Was endorsed by Nat Duran, State Representative for Illinois House District #120 and chief sponsor of trans-friendly legislation, in their last election**
- **Received money from Planned Parenthood in their last election**

Board Member 1

- **Is very conservative and is planning to retire after this term**
- **Is a member of American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). ALEC is a nonprofit organization of conservative state legislators and private sector representatives who draft and share legislation for distribution among state governments in the United States.**

Board Member 2

- **Doesn't know if they are going to run for re-election**
- **Used to work at Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, an organization that helps draft and implement gender inclusion policies**
- **Has told you that they're planning to vote 'yes' on policy**

Now that you know this information:

1. Fill out a power mapping grid for each of the board members.

This means mapping out public influences, VIP influences, financial influences, and personal influences for all three board members.

- **Hint:** You do not have enough information to fill out all four categories for all of the board members

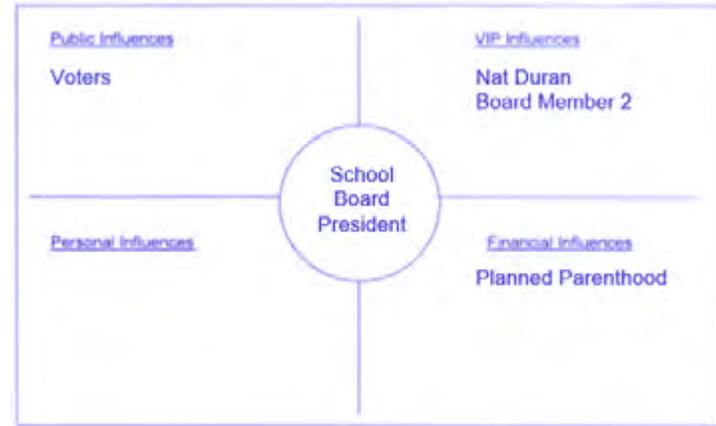
2. Plot the three board members on a power and interest chart.

3. Figure out who are the key decision makers in this process. Whose vote should you be focusing on?

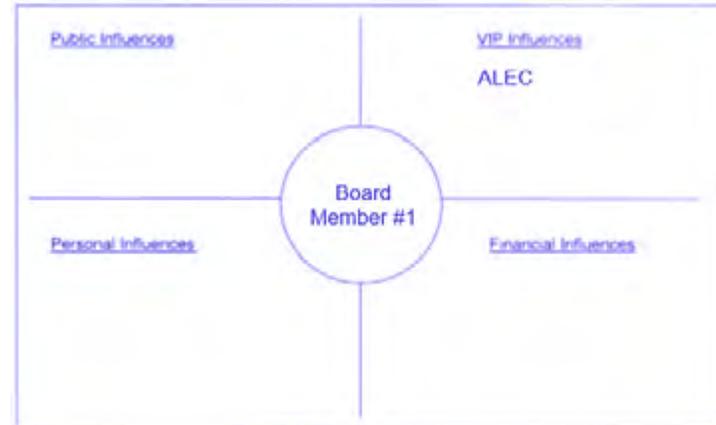


Model Answers for Activity #1 :

Power Mapping Grid for School Board President



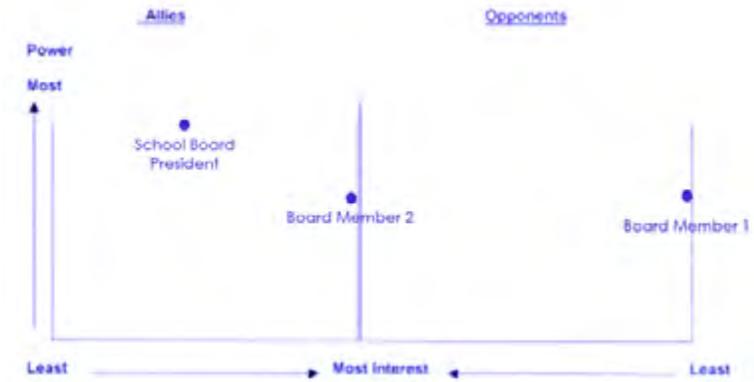
Power Mapping Grid for School Board Member #1



Power Mapping Grid for School Board Member #2



Power & Interest Chart for Board Members



Whose vote should we be focusing on?

We should be focusing most of our resources on the School Board President and some of our resources on Board Member #2.

The School Board President has the most power out of the three of them, but isn't very interested in passing a gender inclusion policy. We should focus most of our resources on convincing the School Board President to act favorably toward our goal.

We should focus some of our resources on Board Member #2 just to make sure they stay interested.

We should focus very little or no resources on Board Member #1 since they are not likely to ever support a gender inclusion policy.

As long as we have the School Board President and Board Member #2 in support of a policy, we should be able to have the School Board President call the policy for a vote, and both the President and School Board Member #2 should vote 'yes' on the policy.

ACTIVITY #2:

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?



10-15 minutes

Activity Goals:

- To teach participants the principle of escalation in organizing
- To help participants analyze situations and decide how to escalate from there

Materials:

Depending on your resources, you can choose one of these options for the handouts:

- Print one copy per participant
- Transcribe them on a board that is visible to everyone
- Project them from a computer

Based on what route you pick, you may need the following materials:

- Printed copies of scenarios
- Chalk/markers
- Projector, laptop, and screen
- The Know Your Rights comic materials (for any of the set-ups)

Directions:

1. Break participants up into small groups. If you have less than 5 people, then there is no need to break up into groups, everyone can work on the activity together as one group.
2. Hand out scenarios to each group of participants.
 - **You do not need to use every scenario.**
 - **Each group can work on different scenarios.**
3. Groups will read their assigned scenario(s). Together they will answer the question(s).
 - **The “Know Your Rights” comic book can serve as a resource for groups to find ways to escalate in the scenario.**
4. Give groups about 3-5 minutes to discuss. Have groups assign one or two people to report back to the larger group.
5. Allow 1-2 minutes for each group to share the scenario(s) they were assigned, and what the person in the scenario(s) can do.
6. You have an answer key and should provide feedback to their responses (see: Answers to Activity #2 Scenario Questions).
 - Please note there are multiple ways for the students in the scenarios to navigate the situations. The steps we recommend should not be seen as the only “correct” answer
 - If a group comes up with an answer that you think is wrong, be sure to offer the information that is provided in the answer key as well.

Activity #2 Scenarios

In all of these scenarios you will be asked how the person can **escalate**. **Escalation** is the concept that when decision makers tell us they can't help us with our goal, we have to do more in order to convince them. In all of these scenarios, you should be thinking of what the person can do next to help them achieve their goal. Most of the time, we don't want to **escalate** to a point where we've used all our options. For example, if a Principal tells you they can't help you with something, you may want to get other people to talk to them first before trying to get a lot of people to come to a school board meeting. It can be a lot of work to get people to come to a school board meeting and it might be more work than you need to do to get what you want. And the school board may not even have the power to make the decision you want the Principal to make!

Because our resources and times are limited, we have to be strategic about how we **escalate**.

Scenario 1

Jason (he/him pronouns) wants his school's administration to update the school's dress code so that it is not gendered. Currently, the dress code states that students who are listed as boys in the school's directory must wear pants or shorts that end below the knee. Several students have been disciplined for not complying with this dress code. Jason and some students met with the Assistant Principal but the Assistant Principal told them the dress code cannot change, because it helps create a focused learning environment.

How can Jason escalate?

Scenario 2

Issa (she/her pronouns) is a transgender girl who wants to run for Homecoming Queen, but the school administration has told her she can't. They've told her that she can run for Homecoming King or not run at all. After she and her parents met with the administration, they were told that they couldn't accommodate her because then they couldn't keep other students from running for whatever Homecoming court position they wanted.

How can Issa escalate?

Scenario 3

Juan (they/them pronouns) wants to change the name and gender marker on their student ID to reflect their identity. After asking the office clerk that prints IDs to change their ID, they were told that the Principal would have to make that decision.

How can Juan escalate?

Answers to Activity #2 Scenario Questions

Scenario 1

Jason and the other students can ask for a meeting with the Principal or Superintendent about the dress code. They can come with talking points about how changing the dress code would not harm the focused learning environment and how this would actually benefit students. For example, certain people may be listed in the school directory as a boy even if that's not how they identify – transgender girls could be disciplined for expressing their own gender. If there are transgender girls who have been disciplined for this, it might be good to have them at the meeting.

They can also ask the Principal or Superintendent why they think changing the dress code might disrupt the learning environment. If they feel like they have good responses, they can address them right there. For example, if the Principal or Superintendent says that too many boys will be bullied for wearing shorter shorts or skirts, then the students can discuss how changing the dress code would actually support boys who want to wear shorter shorts and skirts. If the school is worried about bullying, it can counteract that by creating an environment where everyone is affirmed and supported, and by working with students to help them understand why boys' clothing options should not be so limited.

And the students can always try to change the dress code so it is not gendered. If certain types of clothing are deemed 'unacceptable for school', the gender of the person wearing the clothing shouldn't matter, since dress codes should focus on solely clothing.

Scenario 2

Issa can do a lot of things here. She can ask to meet with the Superintendent or members of the School Board to get them to change the Principal's decision. If she's comfortable, she can make her request more public, by doing any of the following:

- **Circulating petitions so people can sign their names saying they support her running for Homecoming Queen.**
- » She can focus on distributing the petition to existing student groups that might be supportive, such as a GSA, Social Justice Club, Diversity Club, or Feminist Club.
- **Getting people to attend the next school board meeting and testify in support of her running for homecoming queen.**
- **Reaching out to local media outlets to see if they'll cover the story.**
- **Asking other people to attend the meetings with the Superintendent or the school board. These can be any supportive people, including students, parents, teachers, school employees, etc.**

Answers to Activity #2 Scenario Questions (Continued):

Scenario 3

Juan can ask for a meeting with the Principal and ask supportive people to join them at the meeting. This can include social workers, counselors, supportive teachers, or parents. They can come prepared with reasoning on why this is important to them and the consequences of having an ID that doesn't reflect their identity, like getting called the wrong name by teachers, being asked why they are in a certain bathroom, someone using the wrong pronouns when talking about them, and anything else they might have experienced.

They can also show the Principal page 3 of this document: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/student_demographics.pdf. The document is from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and states "...(F)or students identifying as transgender, districts may choose to enter the gender with which the student identifies...If necessary, the district may also enter the first name the student uses if it differs from the birth certificate." Juan does not need to have their name or gender marker changed on any government IDs or a birth certificate for their school to change their name or gender marker on their ID.

ACTIVITY #3: NON-NEGOTIABLES



15-20 minutes

Activity Goals:

- To teach participants the concept of non-negotiables in the negotiation process
- To help participants develop the key advocacy skill of explaining their reasoning for their position

Materials:

Depending on your resources, you can choose one of these options for the handouts:

- Print one copy per participant
- Transcribe them on a board that is visible to everyone
- Project them from a computer

Based on what route you pick, you may need the following materials:

- Printed copies of scenarios
 - "Background Information for Activity #3"
 - "Scenarios for Activity #3"
- Chalk/markers
- Projector, laptop, and screen
- The Know Your Rights comic materials (for any of the set-ups)

Directions:

1. Break participants up into small groups. If you have less than 5 people, then there is no need to break up into groups, everyone can work on the activity together as one group.
2. Present the handout “Background Information for Activity #3” to each group. If it is projected or written on the board, ask for volunteers to read them aloud.
3. Hand out scenarios to each group of participants.
 - **You do not need to use every scenario.**
 - **Each group can work on different scenarios.**
4. Groups will read their assigned scenario(s). Together they will answer the question(s).
5. Give groups about 3-5 minutes to discuss. Have groups assign one or two people to report back to the larger group.
6. Allow 1-2 minutes for each group to share the scenario(s) they were assigned, and what the person in the scenario(s) can do.
7. You have an answer key and should provide feedback to their responses (see: Answers to Activity #3 Scenario Questions).
 - **Please note there are multiple ways for the students in the scenarios to navigate the situations. The steps we recommend should not be seen as the only “correct” answer.**
 - **If a group comes up with an answer that you think is wrong, be sure to offer the information that is provided in the answer key as well.**

Background Information for Activity #3

You are part of a group that is organizing in your school district to pass a policy that supports and affirms transgender and gender expansive students. After several meetings, students in the school district have identified key components of a model policy. Of those key components, the students have decided that the following are non-negotiable:

Gendered Facilities & School-Sponsored Programs

Students should have access to gendered facilities and accommodations, including restrooms and locker rooms, in line with their gender identity. Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy should be provided access to an alternative restroom such as a single-stall staff bathroom or nurse’s bathroom, regardless of gender identity. However, no student shall be required to use a single-stall restroom because they are transgender or gender expansive.

Students should also be able to access fine and performing arts programs, and athletic programs that correspond to their gender identity.

Dress Codes

All students shall be permitted to wear gender-affirming clothing to school including at school-sponsored functions such as dances and graduation.

Discrimination & Harassment

No students shall be bullied or harassed based on actual or perceived gender identity or gender expression.

Non-negotiable means that no matter what, these things have to be included in the policy. Decision makers you meet with may try to change policy language, but it is up to the students to be firm, organize, and make sure that these pieces are included in the final policy.

Scenarios for Activity #3

Scenario 1

Your policy is being discussed at a school board meeting, and one of the board members is raising concerns about it. They state that they support the policy, but aren't sure about the part that mentions bathrooms. They state that having separate bathrooms for transgender students 'has worked fine in the past' and that they should keep things as they are.

You are given an opportunity to speak at the school board meeting. What can you tell the school board member so that they understand the importance of having equal access to bathrooms?

Scenario 2

You are in a meeting with several school employees who tell you that they don't think it's important to have a section about discrimination & harassment in the policy since they already have a separate bullying policy.

What can you tell the school employees to convince them to keep the discrimination and harassment portion of the policy?

Answers to Activity #3

Scenario Questions

Scenario 1

You can ask questions to the School Board Member who believes it's 'worked fine in the past.' Have they heard this from transgender students? If the policy is meant to support transgender and gender expansive students, then they should be the ones dictating what goes into the policy. Students can also speak to how stigmatizing it can be to have to use a separate bathroom from everyone else, how using a separate bathroom can make them late for class, and how it can even 'out' them to other students.

Scenario 2

You can let the school employees know that students think this is a very important part of the policy. If the bullying policy already protects transgender and gender expansive students from being bullied, then this part of the policy just restates that and there should be no problem with restating it. A lot of transgender students may not be familiar with the bullying policy, but they will probably become familiar with a policy specifically meant to support them – including language around discrimination and harassment may feel important for them, and this may be the only time they see language concerning discrimination and harassment.

If there are students who have been bullied based on their actual or perceived gender identity, then it could be useful to have those students talk about their experiences and the importance of having this language in the policy.

ACTIVITY #4: DIRECT ACTION!



15-20 minutes

Activity Goals:

- To help participants develop skills of multi-step planning and organizing.
- To help participants think through how they can best support people participating in direct actions by planning ahead.

Materials:

Depending on your resources, you can choose one of these options for the scenario:

- Print one copy per participant
- Transcribe it on a board that is visible to everyone
- Project it from a computer

Based on the route you pick, you may need the following materials:

- Printed copies of scenarios
- Chalk/markers
- Projector, laptop, and screen
- Paper and markers for each group
- The Know Your Rights comic materials (for any of the set-ups)

Directions:

1. Break participants up into small groups. If you have less than 5 people, then there is no need to break up into groups, everyone can work on the activity together as one group.
2. Hand out the scenario to each group of participants.
3. Groups will read their assigned scenario(s). Together they will answer the question(s).
4. Give groups about 6-8 minutes to discuss. Have groups assign one or two people to report back to the larger group.
5. Allow 2-3 minutes for each group to share their answer for the scenario.
6. You have an answer key and should provide feedback to their responses (see: Answers to Activity #4 Scenario Questions).
 - **Please note there are multiple ways for the students in the scenarios to navigate the situations. The steps we recommend should not be seen as the only “correct” answer.**
 - **If a group comes up with an answer that you think is wrong, be sure to offer the information that is provided in the answer key as well.**

Scenarios for Activity#4:

Your school district's school board is considering passing a policy that will end all student clubs at school, including the Genders & Sexuality Alliance. You and several students are organizing so that all student clubs can remain open and accessible to all students.

After meeting multiple times with the administration, school board members, and testifying at multiple school board meetings, the school board is still planning to pass the policy. Based on research, you know that media coverage often pressures the school board to change their minds. You've reached out to multiple news outlets, but they have told you that they will not cover the story because it is 'not exciting enough.'

Your group is considering several types of direct action to get more media coverage, they are:

- Holding a rally in front of the school district's offices demanding that they do not pass the policy
- Staging a walk-out at school, where as many students as you can convince leave the school during the school day



Identify the goals that your group has, and based on these goals, decide on which of the direct actions above might be the best fit:

- **What you need to do to plan the direct action and who will be responsible for doing it.**
- **How to get people to come to your action.**
Who do you want there? Are there specific people you don't want to know about your action?
- **What you need to do at the direct action and who will be responsible for doing it**
- **How will you get media there? How can you make sure they know the goal of the action?**

You can reference page 30 of the Organizing & Advocacy handbook for ideas

Answers for Activity #4

Scenario Questions

Rally

What you need to do to plan the direct action and who will be responsible for doing it.

For a rally, you may find having these teams helpful:

- **Logistics** – a group of people who are responsible for planning the whole action and making sure it's successful.
- **Arts** – a group of people that will make visuals, such as signs, banners, apparel, or props.
- **Outreach** – a group of people responsible for making sure people come to your action.
- **Caretakers & Peacekeepers** – a group of people who make sure that the crowd at the rally remains calm, happy, healthy, and in the area they are supposed to be.
- **Media** – a group of people who are in charge of reaching out to media.

If you think police might be present or that arrests might be made, it is very important to have these roles filled. Please keep in mind that police being present does not necessarily mean people will be arrested. At times, police will come to manage the crowd and keep people off of certain types of property (often private property or streets that cars pass through.)

Rally (Continued):

Legal – people who reach out to attorneys to assess what sorts of charges people may face, if any, or what immigration consequences the charges may have for someone who is a non-citizen.

- **Some attorneys in the National Lawyers' Guild will offer these services at no cost, you can find your local chapter at: <https://www.nlg.org/chapters/>**

Police Liaison – if police are present, then at least one person should speak to police on behalf of the people at the rally. The police will often tell you what is considered a 'crime scene'. People who do not want to get arrested, should stay away from the crime scene. For example: the street may be considered a 'crime scene' but the sidewalk may not be – it's important to know that information.

How to get people to come to your action. Who do you want there? Are there specific people you don't want to find out about your action?

If the rally is meant to influence school board members, you will want to get students, parents, and voters in the district to come. Since this policy impacts all student clubs, you can focus on having members of several (or all!) student clubs present, to show the importance of not adopting this policy. Ideally, you would want school employees there as well. However, they might notify the board, who could start organizing to keep your rally from happening, or making sure that the media focuses on their perspective rather than yours. You may want to be discreet in how you share information about the rally.

What you need to do at the direct action and who will be responsible for doing it.

Since it's a rally, you mostly need people present, chanting, and clapping. The more supporters there, the better, and a lot of art with your message and demands on it will be very helpful. However, if the main goal is to attract media, you want to have designated people there who will be speaking to media and will be available for interviews. These people should be prepared to share why everyone is there and what you all are demanding.

How will you get media there? How can you make sure they know the goal of the action?

Almost every media outlet has a designated email and number you can call to give them information on a potential story. Your media team should look up this information and save it all. If the rally or walkout will be a surprise, you can wait until right before you start it to send the information and call the news outlets. Often times, people will write a press release. A press release is a statement from your organization to news outlets that lets them know what is happening and has contact information so they can reach out to you.

You can also provide your own media via social media. You can go live on Facebook or Instagram, tweet videos and photos of the action, or just generally post about the action on different platforms. You can come up with a hashtag so people can follow it on whatever social media you use to share the action.

Walk Out

The answers are essentially the same! Except this is a little trickier, because walking out of school is against the rules in most cases. So, you may find it more important to make sure that school employees do not know of the walkout, and that you have more people committed to doing it. If more people do it, the harder it is to stop it from happening.

Additionally, some students may be disciplined more harshly for participating in a walkout – like students who are supposed to be serving a detention or in-school suspension but leave to participate in the walk out. Some students may also want to consider what school work they'll miss by participating in the walk out. For example, if a student has a test scheduled for the time of the walk out, they may want to figure out how their participation will impact their test score, and if they'll be able to make it up later.

You may want to take precautionary measures, like not having art be very visible before the walkout, not posting it on social media until it happens, or anything that helps you all keep information secure.





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