School District No. 1
in the City and County of Denver and State of Colorado
RESOLUTION NO. ______________

Board of Education Resolution on Inclusion for Our LGBTQIA+ Employees, Students, and Community Members

WHEREAS, Denver Public Schools (DPS) is a district of more than 93,000 students and more than 15,000 full time and part time team members and where our diversity is a treasure that we deeply value and celebrate; and

WHEREAS, all students, team members, and community members of the District deserve and are expected to be respected, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and

WHEREAS, DPS Board policies have prohibited discrimination and/or harassment of students based on their gender identity since 2003, five years before Colorado law prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender identity in public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, DPS has long supported the right of students to use bathrooms that correspond to their gender identity as well as other accommodations such as locker rooms; and

WHEREAS, our board policy AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity expresses our commitment to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity and inclusiveness and the policy is implemented and enforced through a robust system of procedures that we refer to as the Discrimination Prevention and Response (DPR) process; and

WHEREAS, DPS is already working towards greater inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other (LGBTQIA+) team members and students, including, for example, updating our HR and student records systems so that all students and staff are able to easily and transparently update their preferred names; and

WHEREAS, DPS has a strong LGBTQIA+ “Belong Group” for employees who are working to make DPS more inclusive by identifying needs of the LGBTQIA+ staff and students and advocating for policy change within DPS to support these needs and hosting events for LGBTQIA+ staff, students, and community; the District also recently hired a LGBTQIA+ Equity Initiatives Program Manager; and

WHEREAS, on November 15, 2018, the DPS Board of Education (the Board) passed its “Resolution Objecting to Any Limitation on the Rights of our LGBTQ+ Students, Employees, and Community Members,” where the Board restated its strong commitment to the rights of our LGBTQIA+ students, team members, and community members as part of the District’s effort to ensure that our schools are safe and welcoming places regardless of one’s race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, native language, sexuality, or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, as examples of these commitments, the Board stated in the 2018 resolution that students, employees, and community members can expect that:
They will be supported if they seek to transition; and
They will be supported if they wish to be gender fluid, gender expansive, nonbinary, or gender non-conforming; and
DPS will not require students or employees to undertake any expensive formal legal process to change their names in DPS student or personnel records and DPS employees are directed to honor requested name changes and pronoun preferences; and

WHEREAS, the District has worked to expand GSAs in schools, including increasing the number of GSAs in the District’s middle schools; the District does not require parental consent to participate in a GSA; and

WHEREAS, we recognize creating LGBTQIA+ inclusivity in Denver Public Schools is not about any one action, and it does not happen magically with the change of a policy or the passage of a resolution, but it is about a shift in paradigms and the understanding of sexual and gender diversity and that this shift requires appropriate communication, professional development, and a commitment from the Board, the District, and all schools to support these shifts; and

WHEREAS, we know that LGBTQIA+ youth still face significant barriers to inclusion, including experiences of bullying and harassment at roughly two times the rate of their non-LGB peers (2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey); and

WHEREAS, systemic transphobia, biphobia, and homophobia push LGBTQIA+ youth out of school and those same systems of oppression may cause long-lasting negative mental health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, affirming gender identity and gender expression for youth is one of the most effective mental health interventions for supporting transgender youth, gender-expansive youth, and gender-nonconforming youth; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the District shall make available for all students, team members, and DPS community members, at least one all-gender restroom facility in currently existing DPS facilities and a commitment to including a minimum of one all-gender restroom facility in all new facilities construction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District supports students and team members by affirming their right to be “out” with students, staff, and community members — the right to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity and to speak about their personal and family lives in the same manner as their non-LGBTQIA+ peers; it is never appropriate to discipline a team member who in good faith comes out to another member of the DPS community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District supports the right of its employees to post in their classrooms, offices, or halls a rainbow flag or other sign of support for LGBTQIA+ students or staff, because these are symbols consistent with the District’s equity-based curriculum; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District will continue to honor and respect a student’s self-reported gender identity and gender expression at school regardless of outside adult acknowledgement or acceptance; the District will work to support adults important to the child on greater acceptance and
acknowledgement; however, the District will not wait for such adult acceptance or require parents’ or guardians’ consent before honoring the student’s self-reported gender identity and gender expression; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the District will continue to push the federal and state government and national corporations to eliminate binary categories that prohibit students from self-identifying outside of those non-binary gender categories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board, the District, and appropriate stakeholders commit to both the urgency and the need for long-term, sustainable, and well-informed action around LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

Approved this 23rd day of January 2020.

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Carrie A. Olson, PhD, Board President   Tay Anderson, Secretary