



by: Linda Thomas-Fowler

This is an update on the changes and proposed changes to policy regarding transgender students in the Shenandoah County Public School system.

In January, the school board banned the teaching of anything related to gender identity by modifying policy INB: Teaching About Controversial Subjects to include the following:

To ensure consistency with these principles, the School Board has established the following policy regarding instruction on Gender Identity

“Gender Identity” shall mean or refer to an individual's self-conception as a male, female, a blend of both or neither. Without limitation, Gender Identity shall be interpreted to mean the teaching of more than two genders or the ability to identify as a gender other than one's actual biological sex at birth.

Shenandoah County Public Schools shall not provide or allow any employee or third party to provide instruction, guidance, activities, or programming regarding Gender Identity to students enrolled in prekindergarten through 12th Grade.

In February, school board member Gloria Carlineo tried to remove the section of policy GBAB/JFHAB that would allow parents to inform the school of the name and pronouns to be used for their children. Fortunately, this effort failed in a 3 to 2 vote (school board member Streett was absent).

In March, there was another proposed amendment to policy INB: This one does not repeal the January ban but does soften it somewhat by proposing this addition:

This softens the effect of the January change and I spoke in support of this in the March meeting though I recommended they remove the January change or at least add teachers to the mix of people allowed to speak with students. Carlineo was very opposed to the draft change and managed to get the board to postpone taking a vote on at the April meeting.

At the April meeting, in addition the the draft proposal presented in March there were two additional competing drafts.

The one listed as **draft 2** contains this change:

School administrators, counselors, student support specialists, social workers and psychologists may respond to individual student inquiries about gender and gender identity without promoting personal beliefs or advocating for any viewpoint. Discussions should remain within the scope of professional responsibilities, subject to the parental notification requirements in policy GBAB/JFHAB.

It also removes the phrase, “*guidance, activities, or programming*” from the January change.

The one listed as **draft 3** contains this change:

For avoidance of doubt, this policy concerning Gender Identity shall not be interpreted to interfere or restrict designated school staff from being able to provide help to students as provided by Sections III.A.3 and III.A.4 of Policy JFHAB/GBAB (Gender Identity Policy).

Of the three drafts they are considering, draft 2 appears to be the best, followed by draft 1. Draft 3 does not appreciably improve things.

The board will be discussing these drafts at their April 24 working meeting and the expectation is they will vote on this at the May meeting.

Here is a link to the agenda item with all the policy INB information from the April meeting: <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/shenandoah/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=DER22700022>

You can see the current policy and all three proposed drafts there.

Between now and April 24 would be the best time to contact your school board members to express your views. Here is the list of school board members and their contact info:

District 1

Dennis C. Barlow
Chairman
Phone: 540-820-8385
dcbarlow@shenandoah.k12.va.us

District 2

Thomas A. B. Streett
Phone: 540-975-1470
tastreett@shenandoah.k12.va.us

District 3

Gloria E. Carlineo
Phone: 215-589-2000
gemarkus@shenandoah.k12.va.us

District 4

Kyle L. Gutshall
Vice Chairman
Phone: 540-325-9656
klgutshall@shenandoah.k12.va.us

District 5

Larry E. Vance
Phone: 540-333-1696
levance@shenandoah.k12.va.us

District 6

Michael D. Rickard
Phone: 540-335-7389
mdrickard@shenandoah.k12.va.us

Dr. Melody Sheppard
Division Superintendent
masheppard@shenandoah.k12.va.us
540-459-6222

Unfortunately, I do not know of a map that shows where the districts are but there is no reason why we can't write to all of the members. Do, be polite but firm in your delivery. There is some indication that at least some members of the board are hearing us even if they aren't engaging very much. We need to keep up our efforts to help educate them and to help them see past the lies being told about transgender and nonbinary students.



Feeding Families of Shenandoah County



As we ALL experience the rising costs of food, we at PFLAG Woodstock want to help families in our community. We are looking for your help to raise money for our *Feeding Families in Shenandoah County Campaign*.

When you share the campaign with others we can establish a fund that would be used to purchase groceries for families who are struggling with food insecurity both now and in the future.

School ends in May so we have set a May 1, 2025 deadline of to raise funds for this cause. However, we may extend the campaign to collect more funds for the future.

#PFLAGProud

Let's Feed The Families in Shenandoah County with LOVE!

Donate Here



Game DAY #3



Our next game day is only days away and we don't want you to miss it!

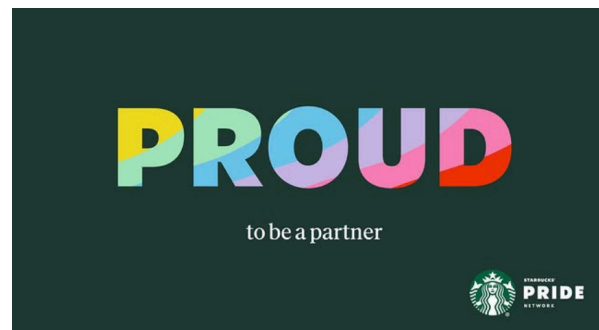
Join us for another day of games and community gathering. We will again meet at the [UU church in Stephens City on April 19th from 1-5PM](#) to play Dungeons and Dragons and other board games. Snacks and drinks will be provided and if you can't make it to join us in person we are happy to get a donation from you to allow us to help donate to the church for the space or for the purchase of food. We truly hope that you will join us and we plan to be there at 12 noon to set up with requires us to move all the chairs out and bring in the tables. If you would like to help with that we would also really appreciate that help.



Register for Game Day April 19th

2025 PRIDE at Starbucks Woodstock VA

We are excited to announce that we will hold a PRIDE meet and greet at Starbucks in Woodstock at 526 W Reservoir Rd, Woodstock, VA on **Wednesday night June 4th from 4-7 PM**. We did this several years ago and had lots of fun hanging out there and getting to know the community and let the community get to know us better. Come out and hang out with us for a few hours and pick up some of our swag to show your PRIDE support for the LGBTQIA+ in our community.



Thank you to Jacob Tellinghuisen, manager at Starbucks Woodstock, VA for supporting PFLAG Woodstock, VA.

Free Self Defense Class

Building a Supportive Community ⚠️

...one class at a time

FEMALES & LGBTQIA+
soldbytammyd@gmail.com

Free Martial Arts Classes

June 21st from 1:00-3:00 PM

We have the wonderful opportunity to present a free, 2-hour long self defense class for our local LGBTQ community! With the current climate being fostered by our federal administration, many in the queer community are feeling unsafe and have expressed a need for this type of training. If this applies to you, **please join us at the UU Church in Stephens City on Saturday, June 21 from 1-3 pm** to gain skills that will hopefully help you feel more empowered.

Please check out our website in the next few weeks for details and a chance to RSVP! You can also email us at pflagwoodstockva@gmail.com



Community Connect and Serve...

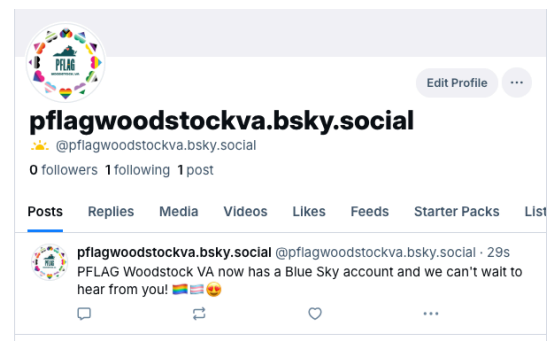
Thursday April 24th from 5-7pm

Come on out to the Shenandoah County Fairgrounds and join us for this free informative event! Participants will have the opportunity to visit representatives from many non-profit and faith-based organizations, as each agency will have tables filled with information, goodies, a chance to win prizes and more. You will be able to get more information about the needs in our community, see how agencies are filling those needs, sign up to volunteer, and make lots of good connections. You might be surprised at the variety of resources in our community! PFLAG Woodstock will have a colorful table there, so please stop by and visit!



PFLAG Woodstock VA just got a BlueSky account....

send us a message and follow us there.



We hope you are having a good spring and are taking care of yourselves,

Susie Wilburn, she/her

President, PFLAG Woodstock VA

Leading With Love!