

September 23, 2019

To the Trustees of the Austin independent School District:

We, the Undersigned, are members of the City of Austin Human Rights Commission. Some of the Commission's duties include the following:

1. Advise and consult the Austin City Council on all matters involving racial, religious or ethnic discrimination and devise practices to promote equal opportunity.
2. Advisory body on non-discrimination policies, investigate complaints of prejudice and discrimination and conduct educational programs.
3. Secure for all individuals in the City freedom from discrimination because of race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or age.

In light of #3 above, and after hearing some of the discussions by a few members of the public in response to the new AISD Human Sexuality curriculum, we write to add our voice in support of your work.

Not only are we pleased to see that these studies cover the usual discussions of anatomy, physiology, puberty, reproduction, and HIV and STDs, but it also includes conversations about healthy relationships, the need for personal safety, and gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. In a state where anyone can be fired for any reason, including for just loving someone of their choice, these conversations are vital.

In response to some of the hateful things said at the AISD Board of Trustees meeting on August 26, 2019, the Austin HRC felt the need to especially mention our strong support in making sure that transgender lives are a part of this curriculum. At last count, 18 transgender individuals have been killed so far this year in this country; 24 were killed in the United States last year. In fact, the American Medical Association has said that the violence facing the transgender community is an "epidemic" and is especially amplified for transgender people of color.

Let's be very clear here. Every person, be they straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, intersex, non-binary, transgender, or whatever anyone wants to identify as, regardless of color, is a human being. The Austin HRC applauds what you are trying to do here. Thank you so much for your very important work.

Sincerely,

Sareta Davis, Chair

Kristian Caballero, Vice Chair

Jared Breckenridge, Commissioner

Garry Brown, Commissioner

Jamarr Brown, Commissioner

Isabel Casas, Commissioner

Idona Griffith, Commissioner

Maram Museitif, Commissioner

Courtney Santana, Commissioner

Alicia Weigel, Commissioner

Nathan White, Commissioner