

**Proclamation in Support of Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ+) Students and Staff**

- 1) **WHEREAS** Natick Public Schools are committed to creating an inclusive, safe, caring, and challenging learning environment viewed through an equity lens; and
- 2) **WHEREAS** the Natick Public Schools recognize the importance of equity and inclusion; and
- 3) **WHEREAS** all students deserve to feel safe and welcome in their schools, to be known by their preferred name and gender identity, as well as to see themselves represented in the curricula; and
- 4) **WHEREAS** everyone should be able to live without fear of prejudice, discrimination, violence, or hatred based on gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, and that right should be acknowledged at all levels of public education; and
- 5) **WHEREAS** Natick Public Schools are an integral part of the Natick community and the staff of Natick Public Schools are valued community members; and
- 6) **WHEREAS** it is imperative that students and staff, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, feel valued, safe, empowered, and supported by their peers, educators and community leaders; and
- 7) **WHEREAS** the School Committee and staff are also committed to honoring, valuing and affirming LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families through its policies practices, and curriculum; and
- 8) **WHEREAS** the Natick Public Schools, its School Committee and staff stand by our LGBTQ+ students and staff and take seriously our responsibility to provide safe and nondiscriminatory and inclusive environments for people of all orientations and identities as they reflect our diverse community; and
- 9) **WHEREAS** the Natick Public Schools rejects hateful language and actions based on gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation; and
- 10) **WHEREAS** on June 15, 2020, the US Supreme Court held that discrimination based on an individual's status as gay or transgender constitutes sex discrimination within the meaning of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- 11) **WHEREAS** the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 5 states that "all public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights

of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation;" and

- 12) **WHEREAS** in 1993 a joint initiative between the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth created the Safe Schools Program in response to concerns about LGBTQ+ youth suicides and other risk factors; and
- 13) **WHEREAS** the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey showed that 23% of Natick Public Schools' students in grades 6-12 identify as LGBTQ+, and 69% of high school students and 61% of middle school students in Natick Public Schools have experienced a decline in their mental health since the beginning of the pandemic; and
- 14) **WHEREAS** the National School Board Association (NSBA) believes that education is a civil right, and no student should be discriminated against based on characteristics including gender and identity; and
- 15) **WHEREAS** the Natick Public Schools and its School Committee urge our citizens and community members to value and recognize the numerous social, historical, legal, and political contributions of LGBTQ+ staff and students and actively promote the principles of equity and liberty; and
- 16) **WHEREAS**, increasing visibility and raising awareness fosters a welcoming school climate where LGBTQ+ students, families, and educators can live their authentic lives and be treated with dignity and respect; and
- 17) **THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED** that the Natick Public Schools urge all to respect and honor our diverse community and celebrate and build a culture of inclusivity and equality throughout the entire year; and
- 18) **BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED** that the Natick Public Schools will fly the Progress Pride Flag beneath the American Flag outside of all school-owned buildings year-round to signify that it affirms, supports, and values the gender identities and gender expressions of all students and staff and will continue to further efforts in our schools to create a welcoming safe, and inclusive learning environment for our transgender and all LGBTQ+ students.