

1 **Trans and Nonbinary Music Students: An Update**

*Emma Joy Jampole, PhD
California State University, Stanislaus*

2 **The Urgency of the Moment**

- Many states are considering or have approved legislation to limit trans youths' participation in sports, access to health care, or use of chosen name or pronouns (ACLU, 2021; Chapel, 2022).
- "Don't say gay" and divisive concepts laws are problematic for students, families, faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Veterans' health care and pensions are in jeopardy.
- When traveling, passports and other identity documents may be questioned, rejected, or confiscated.
- Trans students are more likely to experience bullying, online harassment, or assault than straight, cisgender youth (Kosciw, Clark, et al., 2020; Kosciw, Greytak, et al., 2014).

3 **What Is "Biological Sex," Anyway?**

- Genes
- External appearance
- Internal organs
- Hormone disruptions
- Brain
- Preferred terms are
 - Assigned sex at birth (ASAB)
 - Assigned male at birth (AMAB)
 - Assigned female at birth (AFAB)

4 **Cayari, Graham, Jampole, & O'Leary, 2021**

- Transgender youth are typically aware of their gender discordance at an early age.
- Trans youth usually feel shame and keep their gender identities secret.

- Puberty can exacerbate trans adolescents' dysphoria.
- Education, including music education, engages with gender.
 - Binary gender is typically normalized in schools (classroom organization, uniforms and dress codes, washrooms and locker rooms).
 - Gender influences musical roles and opportunities.

"Music classes can offer spaces for students to explore and express their gender through music making" (p. 52).

5 **Five actionable suggestions**

- Learn about trans communities.
- Inspect your language and biases.
- Respect the diversity of trans people.
- Promote healthy music making and identity development.
- Model allyship.

6 **Inspect Your Language and Biases**

- Listen to your speech and that of others.
 - How often do you say or hear gendered expressions?
 - Binary expressions leave no space for nonbinary, gender nonconforming, genderfluid, or other identities.
- Use names and pronouns that students request.
- If a student asks you to use a particular name or pronoun, ask which name and pronoun to use when speaking with the parent/caretaker.

7 **Respect the Diversity of Trans People**

- The term, *transgender*, may encompass many diverse gender identities.
 - Binary
 - Nonbinary

- Gender nonconforming
- Genderfluid
- Numerous additional gender identities
- Identities and the terms used to describe them change over time.
- Other identities intersect with (and co-construct) gender identity.
 - Racialized, classed, and national identities
 - Faith, language, and other cultural traditions
 - Dis/ability, neurodiversity
 - Sexual and romantic orientation

8 **Promote Healthy Music Making and Identity Development**

- Voice ranges
 - Social identity
 - Changes at puberty
 - Changes related to hormone therapy (HRT)
- Choir
 - Uniforms and staging: Voice range/section proximity

"Join the section that most matches their voice type but experience discomfort and friction with their gender identity or join the section that aligns with their gender identity, which may cause vocal discomfort that may lead to tension and dysfunction." (p. 55)

9 **Promote Healthy Music Making and Identity Development**

Gendered ensembles

- can serve to exclude trans youth or reinforce gender roles ...
- ... or might allow for inclusion (being "one of the girls" or "one of the boys") ...
- ... or the challenging of gender roles.

10 **Legal Update**

11 **2025 Executive Orders**

- #14168 – "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and

Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government"

- #14190—"Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling"
- #14201—"Keeping Men out of Women's Sports"
- #14187—"Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation"

And others, including

- #14173—"Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity"
- #14151—"Ending Radical and Wateful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing"
- #14183—"Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness"

12 **Model Allyship**

Not racist, or antiracist? (Kendi, 2019)

"Similarly, being *antitransphobic* includes advocating for the rights of trans people when they are not present as well as offering your physical (or digital) presence and emotional support while empowering trans people to speak for themselves."

(Cayari, Graham, Jampole, & O'Leary, 2021, p. 55)

13 **Research to Practice: Schoolwide Implications**

Strive to use pronouns and names that individuals request.

Avoid needlessly gendered language.

Extinguish bullying.

Support (or organize) your school's GSA.

14 **Research to Practice: Music Ensembles**

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