Gender Inclusive Schools

How to **Affirm** and **Support** Gender-Expansive Students

Dave Edwards

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Praise for *Gender-Inclusive Schools: How to Affirm and Support Gender-Expansive Students*

"As a transgender educator who has known and worked with Dave Edwards for seven years, I wholeheartedly endorse his book. Dave combines practical and accessible strategies with a passionate personal connection as a parent of a gender-expansive child. This invaluable resource equips educators with essential tools to support and affirm gender-diverse students, offering model language and reflective activities to foster truly inclusive learning environments." —**Mitchell Klages-Bombich, M.S.Ed.,** professional development coordinator, United Federation of Teachers Positive Learning Collaborative

"As an educator, a teacher of teachers, and a parent, I have gained so much wisdom and so many inclusive strategies and tools from Dave Edwards. His message is clear, kind, practical, and powerful. If you work with children in any capacity, you should have this book in your possession. It might even help you save a child's life." —**Shanie Israel, M.Ed.,** associate director of curriculum, professional development, and multicultural innovation, Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, New Jersey

"As a pediatrician, I see the outsized mental health impact that schools have on gender-expansive children, for better or worse. When a school community approaches *all* its students with intention, love, and a sense of duty, these children blossom and thrive. Schools that embrace the concepts so thoughtfully organized and articulated here by Dave Edwards will be doing more for their students' mental health than all of us medical providers combined." —**Rhamy Magid, M.D.,** pediatric hospitalist at Children's Minnesota, former medical director of Hennepin Healthcare's Pediatric Gender and Sexual Health Clinic

"This book is a resource that every educator, no matter their role, should possess, study, and use to move the needle of school climate toward affirmation, inclusion, celebration, and safety." —**Toni Smith,** board member and professional development lead, Georgia Safe Schools Coalition

"Every student deserves the opportunity to learn, and it is the responsibility of the adults in their lives to create safe and supportive environments for them to do so. In this necessary book, Dave Edwards offers resources and implementable strategies to ensure that school leadership has effective tools to create and maintain affirming learning communities for gender-expansive students." —**Martinique Starnes, Ed.D.,** director of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, Westside Neighborhood School, Los Angeles, California

"In *Gender-Inclusive Schools*, Dave Edwards shares a wealth of knowledge from his years of work with educators across the country. This accessible guide is a great foundation for anyone seeking to create schools that are welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQ+ students—not just on paper, but in practice." —**Kat Rohn,** executive director, OutFront Minnesota

"This essential guide for educators is an invaluable resource for fostering inclusivity and acceptance in the classroom. Its exceptional organization ensures it will be a go-to tool for implementing inclusive practices, making it indispensable for supporting all students. Dave Edwards's experience shines through every page." —**Lourdes Buck, M.A.,** coordinator of educational equity, Saint Vrain Valley Schools, Longmont, Colorado, and author of *Sue's Sky*

"Dave Edwards's approach is clear and practical, helping schools ground their practices and communication in their school's mission so that everyone in the community can understand this work. The tools in this book will help educators support the kind of environment we want for all of our students: to be known in the ways they choose, to have appropriate privacy and confidentiality, and to be fully included and able to participate in all aspects of school life."—**Julie Strong, Ph.D.,** assistant head of school for teaching and learning, French American International School and International High School, San Francisco, California

"*Gender-Inclusive Schools* is an invaluable resource for educators and school staff, offering practical strategies and insights to support transgender and gender-expansive students. It's an essential tool that I highly recommend for creating inclusive classrooms. Educators often fear making mistakes. While there's no way to get it right every time, this book empowers educators and school staff to commit to doing better consistently, using real-life examples heard in classrooms all the time." —**Rebby Kern,** training lead, Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Welcoming Schools

"Dave Edwards has written the essential guide for ensuring that gender-expansive students are safe and supported in school. Guided by two principles—supporting happy, healthy kids and respecting their privacy and confidentiality—this book offers practical and accessible steps for educators working to ensure safe and supportive schools. The book relies on the wealth of experience Dave has as a parent, educator, and leader in this work." —**Danielle Murray, M.Ed.,** assistant head of school, Boston Latin School, Boston, Massachusetts

"Dave Edwards facilitates productive discussions, helping us address underlying concerns, clarify misconceptions, and develop clear communication strategies for use in classrooms and with parents. This book is going to be incredibly informative and helpful for our educators." —**Gretchen Ievers, M.S.,** assistant head of primary school, Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, New Jersey

"Gender in education has been a topic of debate since humans first created institutions for learning, and it has once again come to the forefront of conversation. This book provides answers to questions on the minds of countless families, educators, and administrators about how to best create an environment where a person of any gender can learn and grow free of stigma and discrimination. The book provides concrete examples and strategies that can be employed today to prepare our youth for a more interconnected and gender-affirming future." —**Rick Oculto, M.S.W.,** education specialist

"I was honored to represent Dave Edwards and his family when they brought a precedent-setting case to end discrimination at his daughter's school—and I agree with him: There's no need for educators to wait for legal rulings to get it right. If you are an educator, now is the time for you to take action on behalf of gender-expansive students in your school. In ten deeply researched and eminently practical chapters, this book will show you how." —**Jill Gaulding,** cofounder of Gender Justice

"Dave Edwards has created a blueprint for other parents, educators, and helping professionals. His invaluable direct experience is laid out in this tremendous resource." —**Andrea Jenkins,** transgender advocate, author, poet, and Minneapolis city councilmember

"This guidebook will prove to be a vital resource for anyone who wants to do better by our young people. Students in our schools deserve nothing less than to be safe, secure, valued and loved—so they can grow, learn, and thrive. As an out LGBTQ+ legislator, I receive frequent calls from parents, teachers, and administrators in every corner of Minnesota wanting help responding to challenges their LGBTQ+ students and families are facing. Sometimes those challenges are grave and dire. I always turn to Dave Edwards for help. I'm so glad others will have access through this book to his wisdom and insights." —**Scott Dibble,** Minnesota state senator

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Foreword by Kade Goepferd, M.D.

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Dedication

To my amazing older daughter, Hildie: I am so lucky to be in your orbit as you courageously, unapologetically, and authentically create a better world with your brilliant light and power. You have forever changed our family for the better by being exactly who you are supposed to be. Keep being you.

To my outstanding younger daughter, Dahlia: You fill our family with love and laughter. I am in awe of the way you lead and influence every space you are in with your bravery, kindness, humor, and resolve. Keep being you.

To my forever partner and wife, Hannah: Parenting with you has been the biggest responsibility and privilege of both of our lives. It's been more eventful than I could have imagined, but our love for each other has always been effortless. Your work to support gender-expansive kids and their families is inspiring to me and the world. Thank you for truly seeing me and for being my biggest supporter. We make an amazing team.

To transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive students learning in every school and in every community all over the world: You are worthy of respect, affirmation, and love. You are perfect.

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