

# TIPS FOR READ-IN VOLUNTEERS

1st Annual LGBTQ+ Literature Read-In Week, June 25 - 29, 2018



OAKLAND  
PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND



OAKLAND  
SCHOOL  
VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for celebrating the 1st annual LGBTQ+ Read-In Week with us! This supplemental tips sheet is intended to prepare you for a successful and impactful volunteer visit. The topic of LGBTQ+ people, historical and current events, and families can be sensitive at times, and these tips will help you communicate with students in a positive way. (Please be sure that you read our general read-aloud tips sheet as well.)

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*Local Author Luain Maryeno Reads Aloud at Emerson Elementary. Her books is called "One of a Kind Like Me | Unico Como Yo".*

## **I. WHAT MAKES THIS READ-IN IMPORTANT**

School is a place where children are taught to respect one another and learn to work together. Creating a more inclusive and accepting school environment teaches children to recognize and resist stereotypes. We teach children to stand up for others, to resist bullying, and to work together. Learning about the gender spectrum is part of that work. Gender nonconforming and transgender people are still a frequently oppressed minority group that deserves protection and understanding. Gender is about self-identity. When we discuss gender, we discuss how people present themselves, and the activities they engage in, not sexuality.

Anti-LGBTQ and gender-related put-downs are among the most common slurs in school environments, and addressing these slurs is essential for the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of all students. Schools are places where people of different races, families, ethnicities, faiths and gender identities come together. Understanding, discussing, and valuing differences at school is essential for healthy learning environments. Students will meet people in their lives both in and outside of school with many kinds of families and identities, and hear about LGBTQ people in their places of worship, at the dinner table and on TV. It is normal for students to be curious about LGBTQ people. Adults must be prepared to participate in conversations with students to help them to learn facts instead of myths and stereotypes.

## **2. SUGGESTED RESPONSES TO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

To Any Question:

- “I am still learning about that myself and I do not know the answer to your question.”
- “I am not sure how to answer that.”
- “Perhaps this is a good question to ask an adult at home.”
- “We aren’t talking about that right now.”

Regarding Stereotyping Gender:

- There are not “boy colors” or “girl colors”. Colors are colors. Different people like different colors.
- Why do you like blue, or green, (or whatever color that child likes)? Why don’t you like pink?
- Girls and women can have hair in many different styles and lengths and so can boys and men.
- Sometimes people say that some toys are for boys and some are for girls, but anyone can play with whatever toy they want to.

### 3. VOCABULARY

You are not responsible for teaching students these words. We are sharing student-friendly definitions below in case questions come up during your special guest read aloud that you are comfortable addressing.

- Ally - A student who speaks up in the moment for someone else, comforts someone privately, or who gets help from a caring adult in a bullying situation.
- Bystander - Someone who sees bullying but doesn't get involved.
- Cisgender - When your gender identity (how you feel) is the same as what doctors or midwives assigned to you when you were born.
- Gay - People who love people of the same gender.
- Gender - How you feel. Your internal sense of being a girl, boy, both, or neither.
- Gender Identity - Someone's personal sense of their own gender.
- Heterosexual - People who love people of the opposite gender. Also called straight.
- Lesbian - People who love people of the same gender, specifically two women.
- LGBTQ - Acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.
- Sexual Orientation - describes an individual's enduring physical, romantic, emotional, and/or spiritual attraction to another person.
- Transgender - When your gender identity is different than what the doctors or midwives assigned to you when you were born.

### 4. OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD POLICY

- The District acknowledges that a key element in a sound educational program is providing students with an understanding and appreciation of the differences of others.
- The California Board of Education and OUSD have clear policies that support LGBTQ inclusive lessons. LGBTQ discussions are expected, required, and make a huge difference in creating safer schools for all students.

*This information is adopted from the OUSD "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questions (LGBTQ) Tool Kit" and [www.welcomingschools.org](http://www.welcomingschools.org).*