



April 2017

Dear Parents and Caregivers of BPS high school students,

Boston Public Schools is proud to be part of the National OUT for Safe Schools Campaign. The OUT for Safe Schools Campaign is a campaign launched to ensure that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning (LGBTQ) students and their families feel welcomed and affirmed in every school community.

For some LGBTQ-identified youth, school can be an unwelcoming and invalidating place. Nationally, LGBTQ students continue to be at greater risk of being bullied, harassed, and the victims of violence. These students also experience greater percentages of depression, substance abuse, homelessness, and dropping out of school. A school's climate affects not only our students' educational success, but also their mental well-being. The OUT for Safe Schools Campaign is one strategy that we are using to help make our schools safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for ALL students.

School personnel play a huge part in building communities where LGBTQ students are accepted and feel safe. Research has shown that when staff members intervene when negative remarks or comments about gender identity or expression are made, students are more likely to feel safe and less likely to miss school.

Boston Public Schools is excited to participate in this campaign by providing an OUT for Safe Schools badge to school-based personnel. By wearing an **OUT for Safe Schools badge**, staff will visually demonstrate that they are safe space ambassadors and allies for LGBTQ-identified students and their families. They will be able to refer students to internal and external resources and supports.

The National Out for Safe Schools Campaign is not a policy or curriculum change, but does stress the importance of creating safe and supportive schools, one component of BPS' Wellness Policy. While the focus of the campaign is on LGBTQ youth, efforts to create a welcoming and affirming environment for them will have a positive effect on the environment for *all* youth.

For further information, please contact your school's headmaster or Kenya Elisa-McLaren, Empowering Teens Through Health Grant Manager: kelisamclaren@bostonpublicschools.org.

Thank you for supporting our effort to make Boston Public Schools safe, healthy and welcoming school communities for all students, ensuring they are able to reach their highest potential.

Sincerely,



Tommy Chang, Ed.D.,
Superintendent

