

# What's going on in Ontario schools

## Event Summery



**Christine Hsu**

she/they

Christine talks about important ideas regarding gender, emphasizing that it's a spectrum rather than a strict binary. They highlight terms like transgender, intersectionality, and nonbinary, often using the Gender Unicorn as a reference. In supporting queer and trans students, Hsu stresses the need to provide them with the language and support to navigate their identities, acknowledging that students may bring up new terms as they explore their identities.



**Narina Nagra**

she/her

Narina discusses her experiences raising a transgender child. She emphasizes the importance of affirming a child's gender, using correct pronouns, and apologizing for mistakes. Nagra also talks about the early socialization of gender roles and the challenges of breaking free from societal norms, especially within cultural contexts. She challenges the notion of parental rights as a reason to limit exposure to LGBTQIA+ topics, advocating instead for openness and acceptance.



**Alice Te**

she/her

Alice explores what inclusive school policies and practices look like for 2SLGBTQI students. She discusses the variations in policies among different school boards and emphasizes the importance of proactive measures to create inclusive environments. Te also highlights the role of educators in implementing inclusive practices and the importance of community representation.



**gitanjali lena**

they/them

gitanjali emphasizes the importance of conversations about consent, safety, and bodily autonomy for all children. They critique efforts to restrict discussions of gender and sexual orientation in school curriculums, arguing that it's often done under the guise of protecting children's innocence. Lena also highlights, from the legal perspective, that parental consent is not always required, noting the banning of conversion therapy in Ontario.



# What's going on in Ontario schools

## Questions & Answers

### “ What is social transitioning? How is it distinct from medical transitions?

Social transitioning refers to parts of transitioning that are not specifically medical. This can include the process of “coming out”, changing one’s name (either socially or legally), changing the pronouns one uses, changing dress or hairstyle to alter gender presentation, shifting participation in socially gendered activities (i.e. sports teams), among others.

### “ Could you please expand on the requirements for educators to notify parents before teaching curriculum related to gender identity/sexuality?

Bill 162 in Ontario states that schools and educators must inform parents about instruction directly related to human and sexual development, and gives parents the right to exempt their child from any formal teaching regarding sexual health and sexual education. My advice to educators is to get the guidance of their board in terms of policies and practices so that they know their rights and protections. Practices may slightly differ per board, allowing for students to be exempted from instruction on an individual basis, according to certain conditions.

More info here: <https://bit.ly/3VmIFTw>

### “ How would you go about organizing a GSA with elementary students of all ages (primary-intermediate) that follows a curriculum (given the nature of conversations in a GSA)?

The right for students to have a club under the name “gay-straight alliance” is protected under Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act (2012) in Ontario. Ideally, GSA clubs are student-led and organized, so knowing the interest and commitment level of the youth you wish to support is a good place to start. As an educator or parent, you could help students in organizing the required paperwork and permissions, getting strategized, and/or meeting with the principal or relevant administrators to advocate for the group.