



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER NAPLES

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
THE **POWER** OF COMMUNITY.

COLLIER EDUCATOR GRANT “STAND UP FOR JUSTICE”

Sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples

A monetary grant will be made to the educator whose lesson(s) and/or activity(s) is selected as best meeting the criteria below. The purpose of this grant is to honor Collier County’s elementary, middle, and high school educators who strive to counter the prevailing tendency within today’s popular culture for students to deride or denigrate others based upon difference. The lesson(s) or activity(s) should have as its major objective the purpose of instilling the positive character trait of “respect for others” in students. All applicants must have created lessons and/or activities of their own design or have successfully made adaptations from other programs and show evidence of a positive nature as a result of implementation. All applicants will submit a copy of the lesson(s) or activity(s), a description of its implementation, and evidence of its effectiveness. Applicants may include Collier County elementary, middle, and high school teachers, guidance counselors, supervisors, school librarians, administrators, psychologists, and media specialists. Students, parents, colleagues, and community members are encouraged to nominate an educator. Self-nominations are also encouraged and accepted.

View previous winners and submissions here: <https://jewishnaples.org/outreach/educator-award>

Applicant’s name: **Mr. Daniel Selvey Shaw & Ms. Beth Barrus**

Applicant’s email: **ShawD1@collierschools.com; BarruB@collierschools.com**

Number of years teaching: **15 years** Grade or subject taught: **GSA Sponsor + HS Math**

School: **Gulf Coast High School** School Address: **7878 Shark Way, Naples, FL**

Phone (work): **(239) 377-1458** Phone (cell): **(239) 223-2424**

Principal’s name: **Mr. Joe Mikulski** Principal’s email: **MikulJo@collierschools.com**

Principal’s Phone: **(239) 377-1404**

Requirements due by February 12, 2021:

On a separate page(s) with the name of the applicant on each page (BE SURE TO COMPLETE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING):

- Describe the precipitating events that motivated you to initiate these lessons or activities.
- Describe the lesson(s) or activity(s); and if adapted from another source please reference.
- Explain how the lesson(s) or activity(s) teach students the importance of respecting others no matter what religious, racial, cultural, or other differences exist.
- Explain how it helped them counter bigotry and bullying and prepared them to stand up for justice.
- Please provide evidence/proof of effectiveness such as but not limited to: a questionnaire, interviews, documented anecdotal conversations and/or observations, student writings, and etc.

Please complete the following if you have encouraged someone other than yourself to apply:

Your name: _____ Your email: _____

Phone (daytime): _____ Phone (evening): _____

Your relationship to this applicant: _____

Submit the completed form in writing, by email, or video format no later than February 12, 2021, to:
Beth Povlow, Educator Grant Coordinator, C/o JCRC, Jewish Federation of Greater Naples
2500 Vanderbilt Beach Road, Suite #2201, Naples, FL 34109



Stand Up for Justice

The Inspiration:

I have been a high school math teacher for 16 years. I have been out as a gay man for the past ten years, approximately. However, my perspective on the LGBTQ community never really grew until I agreed in the Fall of 2019 to be the sponsor for our GSA, Gender & Sexuality Alliance, at Gulf Coast High School. Despite being a member of the community, I myself was fairly ignorant as to the issues facing many of the students sitting in my classroom and across campus. It did not take long for me to realize these students desperately needed advocates anywhere they could find them.

I very quickly learned that our transgender youth are often the most marginalized, most excluded, most at-risk students. Because they so often fail to see themselves positively reflected in culture, in education, in politics – in society as a whole – they struggle to find their place or value. I have come to realize they are also often the most misunderstood humans. It is natural to fear or avoid that with which we are not familiar. However, when this fear prevents any one of us from getting to know those who are different, we passively contribute to the cycle of bigotry and bullying that is so prevalent in the hallways and classrooms of our schools.

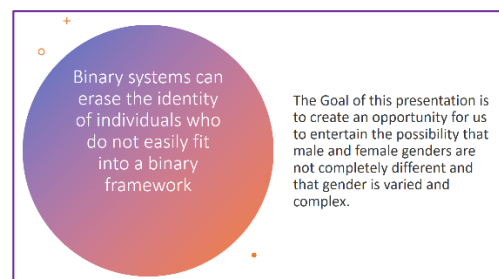
In one of our early GSA meetings, one of our members communicated their frustration and difficulty in having a conversation with parents regarding gender. It was often reduced down to the genitalia in one's pants, and several students echoed their difficulties introducing some of the more complex factors into the conversation. The students agreed that a more factual approach, as opposed to an emotional plea, may help in getting through to parents and peers. After some brainstorming, we decided to approach our biology teachers on campus to see if they had any interest in coming in to lead a conversation from a more scientific perspective. Ms. Beth Barrus very quickly volunteered.

The Activity:



On Tuesday, January 26th, Ms. Barrus joined our GSA meeting after school to lead “A Discussion on Gender & Science.” We had two main goals in mind as we began the meeting: (1) educate our own club members on gender and science so they themselves could engage with peers and family in a more informed and clear manner, and (2) welcome those interested in learning more to join us and ask questions. It was so remarkable and encouraging that we were able to accomplish so much more than we ever anticipated.

Ms. Barrus states, “The Goal of this presentation is to create an opportunity for us to entertain the possibility that male and female genders are not completely different and that gender is varied and complex.” By recognizing that gender is predominantly a social construct, we were able to deconstruct the notion of gender as binary thus creating a safe space to navigate the discussion.



“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem

As we worked collaboratively to determine some generally accepted definitions of some of the terms, we used the term intersex to represent the subset of the population with “variation of chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones and genitals.” While this only applies to approximately 1.5% of the population, it allowed us to establish a framework to begin digging deeper into the actual genetics of gender. Ms. Barrus was able to present some of the chromosomal variances that affect one’s gender assigned at birth while also explaining one’s affirmed gender. She followed up with some very insightful questions that allowed us to facilitate some very productive conversation.

“We live in a binary society, but research shows us that sex is anything but binary”
Simon D Sun, “Stop Using Phony Science to Justify Transphobia”, Scientific American, June 13, 2019

Intersex

- Variation of chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones and genitals
- The term is a descriptive term, not a prescriptive one
- Includes intersexed people
- 1.5% of people have intersex
- 2016 UN Human Rights Report
- <https://www.unhcr.org/refugees/intersex>

Point of Discussion

Can chromosomal influences on gender identity provide a biological explanation for variations in individuals that do not fit into a binary system?
Does accepting or relying on a scientific explanation of sex determination invalidate individuals?
Can it empower individuals?

Biological sex
Belief that sex arises from chromosomal makeup alone is wrong.

Figure 2: Genetic causes of sex differences

Figure 2 illustrates the genetic causes of sex differences. It shows two pathways: Female (XX) and Male (XY). The Female pathway involves the presence of two X chromosomes, leading to the development of female sex characteristics. The Male pathway involves the presence of one X and one Y chromosome, leading to the development of male sex characteristics. The Y chromosome is highlighted as containing the SRY gene, which is responsible for the development of male sex characteristics.

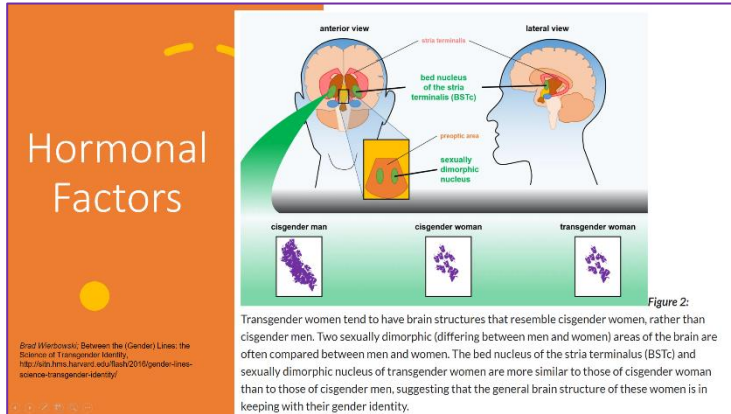
SRY gene is found on the Y chromosome

- SRY is a transcription factor
- SRY influences a host of genes that collectively steer development down the male pathway.

Many of the students in attendance who identified as transgender or nonbinary expressed a sense of relief and self-awareness understanding that there may be a scientific explanation as to how they perceive themselves. However, the second question is the one that helped us understand how to better respect how others identify. Some of the students were confused as to how the science could be used to invalidate one’s gender identity. One of the cisgender students pointed out that others could use this to require extensive testing to validate one’s gender identity. For example, a transgender girl could use the restroom and locker room she is most comfortable in IF she could provide scientific evidence that showed some form of intersex variance. Ultimately, we were able to come to the conclusion that invasive demands such as this are both demeaning and disrespectful. Even those with limited knowledge of transgender issues agreed that the science should empower those who are gender non-conforming that they have a place in this world, but it should not empower others to invalidate who anyone is in any way, shape, or form – particularly in such an invasive manner that we had discussed. This was an issue of respecting others as humans above our own biases and beliefs.

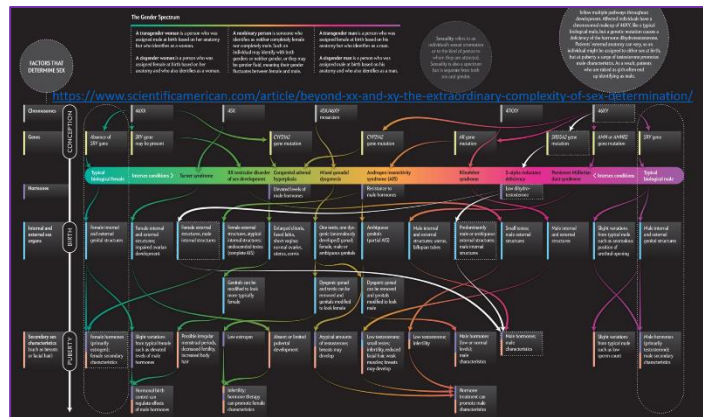
In Part Two, Ms. Barrus presented some fascinating research in the field of endocrinology and how hormones play a significant role in gender development. She shared two graphics that everyone in the room found to be mind-blowing.

“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem



The first graphic referenced a study comparing the brain structures of transgender women (assigned male at birth but identify as female) and cisgender women (assigned female at birth and identify as female). When comparing two areas of the brain that are typically different between a men and women, there was a large amount of evidence that the brain of a transgender woman more closely resembles that of a cisgender female.

The second graphic was a flowchart that examined various factors that can affect sex (assigned gender) and explored the different paths towards “maleness” or “femaleness” or some form of gender in between. This seemed to be the most powerful part of the presentation as students, staff, gay, straight, cisgender, transgender, and nonbinary individuals were all fixated on the complexity and the intricacies of gender and science we were seeing.



Point of Discussion

Cell communication encompasses the expression of genes through hormonal exposure and other factors.

In what ways can science support hormone therapies for non-binary individuals?

This led to some very open conversation about what it means to be intersex, transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming. Many of the club members expressed that they often had self-doubt, largely due to the social construct of gender as binary, but for the first time in a while, many of them portrayed confidence in who they were. It seemed to remove, or at least reduce their need for external justification for how they felt inside.

Students were all chattering throughout the room, sharing their own thoughts and insights as we began to discuss how this impacts all of us. A student very perceptively asked if this meant that someone who did not identify as cisgender then should be able to provide scientific evidence as their affirmed gender. The manner in which he asked it made it very evident that he was blown away that this could potentially be asked of anyone to justify who they were. Many great points were made to help us use the science to understand those that are not cisgender better, but never to use it as a means to require one to justify one’s self to anyone else. It was amazing to hear the students come up with so many different perspectives that supported this conclusion.

A copy of the PowerPoint used for this discussion will be attached. In it you will find a more thorough outline of the presentation as well as the references Ms. Barrus used throughout.

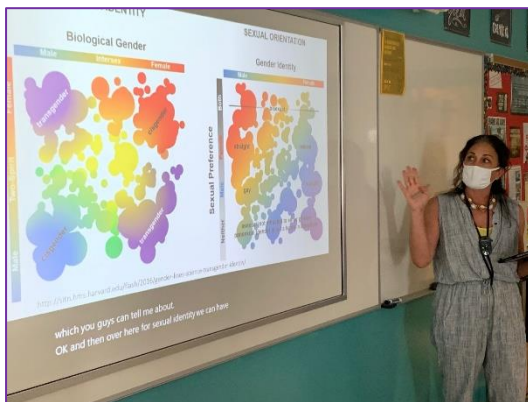
“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem

The Outcomes:

Our purpose as a club is primarily to provide a safe space for LGBTQ students, but we also work hard to provide a positive influence and affect the culture on campus and throughout the community. Oftentimes, it is so difficult to accomplish this when we feel like we are the only ones advocating for ourselves. Having allies who are willing to stand in the gap for us, willing to stand up for justice, even when it isn't their own, is so important and helps to affect change in a more significant way.

After the meeting, a couple of male students stuck around to chat. They turned out to be two cisgender, straight boys with no direct connection to any of the staff or students in the room. They simply saw the flyer and wanted to be a part of the discussion. They largely came to self-educate, and they were very encouraged by the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where they were the minority. One of them even attended our subsequent club meeting on Tuesday, February 2nd and indicated he intends on remaining a part of the club moving forward. He seems to have very quickly become an ally and wishes to learn more so that he can become a better advocate.

At our subsequent club meeting on February 2nd, one of the regular members made a comment about the boy who should not have worn "Trump" socks to our meeting the week before. She was unaware that this was the same student who was an ally to the LGBTQ students at our school and that he was sitting a few feet away. While this certainly was distasteful and unfair to the student, it provided us with an opportunity to turn the tables and discuss respecting others' differences ourselves, even when we don't agree or understand – after all, that is what we are asking of our parents, our families, and our friends.



While we were able to provide an open forum to educate and discuss some of the misunderstandings and disagreements surrounding gender, the most important outcome was a consensus that we must respect others who are different whether or not we understand or agree with them. One of the ways we can show respect is to seek ways to better understand them – not as a means of justification, but rather as a means to become more aware, more sensitive, and ultimately more appreciative of diversity. Students were able to see themselves reflected in science thus instilling a greater sense of self-respect, also. This in turn creates a greater degree of credibility to those who see us embracing who we are. This is how we change the culture of bigotry and bullying into one of respect and inclusion.

“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem

In a world where bigotry and bullying are so often the norm, we must work to remove the stigma associated with perceived differences such as one's gender identity. We can continue the fight to change behaviors, hearts, and minds, but the battle is also one of education. So often students go through school never seeing themselves reflected in the literature or history they study. More specifically, transgender students often are not able to see themselves reflected in their science curriculum if a teacher is not willing or informed enough to dive into the genetics or endocrinology of gender. One of the most exciting outcomes for me as a teacher is to hear Ms. Barrus say, "My work on the presentation has informed my teaching moving forward." Knowing that our transgender students that are part of her biology class will now see themselves within the curriculum brings joy to my heart and tears to my eyes. Through an inclusive education, Ms. Barrus will also reduce the stigma of being transgender in a very significant way which, in turn, will ultimately promote acceptance of and respect for their transgender peers.

Transgender students are the most bullied and most at risk of any minority group, and there is a newfound thirst to better understand and advocate for them. The feedback regarding "A Discussion on Gender & Science" has been incredibly encouraging. Our message of inclusion and advocacy for our transgender youth has reached a staff member whose child is wrestling with their gender, several teachers, our entire school administration here on campus at GCHS, multiple district administrators for CCPS, other GSAs around Collier County in addition to the LGBTQ students and some new allies among our own student body. We plan to build on the momentum and develop this into a series of discussions with the following sessions to be scheduled in the months to come:

- A Discussion on Gender & Psychology with Mrs. Jessica Duesler
- A Discussion on Gender & Sociology with Mr. Adam Baldwin
- A Discussion on Gender & Religion with Mr. Dawson Taylor


When we began planning this back in November of 2020, never did we envision it growing into what it is becoming, nor did we realize the depth of the impact it could have in affecting real cultural change. We have been humbled by the feedback and support, and we consider it a privilege to equip others to become advocates as we fight the stigmas and the bullying transgender youth face on a daily basis. A special thanks goes to the following individuals for helping to make this event the success that it was:



- ❖ Beth Barrus (she/her)
 - Guest Presenter
 - Biology Teacher, GCHS
- ❖ Lauren McIntyre (she/her)
 - GSA Club Co-sponsor
 - English/ESE Teacher, GCHS
- ❖ Em Batuman (she/her)
 - GSA Club President
 - Student, GCHS
- ❖ Luna Dabees (she/her)
 - GSA Club Vice President
 - Student, GCHS

"Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions." –Suzy Kassem

The Evidence:**Beth Barrus (she/her) – Biology Teacher at GCHS & Guest Presenter**

 Fri 2/5/2021 9:15 AM
Barrus, Beth
RE: Stand Up for Justice
To Shaw, Daniel

Action Items


Hi Daniel,
Wow! I am blown away by what you wrote. It is very powerful to read from you the issues facing our youth and how a simple discussion can create a lively dialogue and bring so many different constituents together. It is positive that you have planned other discussions and are building the momentum.

I like the Outcomes part of your piece. You emphasized how important a dialog is for both parties when you revealed what happened at the Feb 2 follow up meeting between the club members and GSA's new ally in the Trump socks. I am sure that was a difficult moment, but you used it to teach a very important concept. Well done!

Once again, thank you for inviting me and including me in your application. I feel like I am part of a larger GCH community now. I am happy that you have strong support from faculty for more discussions. Change comes from every angle including the top. I said it before and I will say it again, the discussion changed me. It feels good to connect in meaningful ways with interdisciplinary faculty in support of our students. I am excited and can't wait to watch your GSA program grow and for your next discussion.

Please let me know if you need me for anything. What you are doing is innovating and important. I received a thank you note from Sheila Harris with GLSEN. I was invited to an event two years ago to hear Em speak and I had a nice time chatting with GLSEN members. I am glad they were part of the live stream and it was nice to hear from them.
Great job! I think you are amazing!
Best,
Beth

Allison Ferraro (she/her) – School Counseling Coordinator (9-12) for CCPS


 Mon 2/8/2021 9:02 AM
FERRARO, ALLISON (M)
RE: quick reflection?
To Shaw, Daniel

Bing Maps

Daniel-


On January 26th, I quietly sat in the back of your classroom continuously in awe with the climate you have created and the sense of belonging you are building. Visually, your room is warm and welcoming- your smile and kind words made everyone who walked in feel noticed and seen. It has been a long while since I sat in a group of such diverse people- male, female, gay, straight, trans, young and old in all shapes, sizes and colors. You're willingness to tackle the topic of Gender by setting up a mini-series lead by school staff and local community members is an innovative way to educate your school community and affirm the identity of the youth you serve. You provided an opportunity to build relationships that would not normally have a place to develop had you not spear-headed this endeavor. Daniel, you are a leader and, quite possibly, a life saver- you have put yourself out in front of your students, colleagues and administration, standing up for the justice of all- combating bigotry and hatred, creating safe spaces for our most valuable resources. Thank you- thank you for making Gulf Coast High School a safer, more welcoming space for students and staff and thank you for inviting me in to bear witness to something quite amazing.

Respectfully,

 **Allison Ferraro**
Coordinator, School Counseling 9-12
Pronouns: She/Her/Hers
Collier County Public Schools
5775 Osceola Trail | Naples, FL 34109
p: 239.377.0515 | f: 239.377.0164

“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem


Brennen Trowbridge (he/him) – Student at GCHS & new Member of GSA

 Tue 2/9/2021 3:46 PM
Brennen Trowbridge <brennenstrowbridge@gmail.com>
External -Reflection
To Shaw, Daniel

This Email originated outside of Collier County Public Schools and may contain a link. Please do not click links you were not specifically expecting, even from known senders.

When I saw the ad on canvas I was hesitant and wasn't really planning on going to the meeting. I would hear whispers about it throughout the day and people would joke around about going just to mess with people. I decided to go because I think the best way to learn is from listening to every perspective regardless of whether or not you agree with it. The meeting itself was very explanatory and accommodating for people who don't know much about the LGBTQ+ perspective so even if you had no idea what the meeting was about, you'd still understand it in a basic way. During the meeting I happened to be wearing Trump socks that day so I knew I was getting stared at and people were judging me without even knowing me. People in GSA tend to dislike Trump and I could feel the disapproval. I think my presence as a straight white male conservative was important for the GSA club's growth because like I said, the best way to learn is via listening to all perspectives, and I am not a perspective they hear often. During the next meeting someone made a snarky comment about my socks (not knowing I was in the room) which gave Mr. Shaw and I a great opportunity to voice the following point: Everyone should listen respectfully to everyone. Even if your opinion doesn't change afterwards, simply listening and respecting people is 90% of it. After the presentation, I know that my eyes were opened more about people's experiences in the LGBTQ+ community. The PowerPoint was very organized and helpful and really allowed me to enjoy my experience while listening because it wasn't too pushy or commanding. I enjoyed many of the talking points in it because they cited credible sources and used firsthand studies and statistics. I think the invite extended via canvas was beneficial for all sides and helped everyone become more open minded and learn more about other people's perspectives. I now frequently go to GSA because it's a welcoming environment and I really enjoy taking a break from acting "hard" and unaccepting so I don't get bullied. Also Mr. Shaw is great teacher and person and is very good at making sure people feel welcomed.

Em Batuman (she/her) – Student at GCHS & President of GSA


 Wed 2/10/2021 12:00 PM
Emily Batuman <emilybatuman@gmail.com>
External -Stand Up for Justice
To Shaw, Daniel

This Email originated outside of Collier County Public Schools and may contain a link. Please do not click links you were not specifically expecting, even from known senders.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend my GSA's discussion on Gender and Science hosted by Ms. Barrus. It was an amazing discussion. I learned about the different chromosomes and variations within them that indeed make biological sex less binary than society has shown. I think that is a fantastic conversation starter, as we all asked many questions regarding gender, sex, and stereotypes set around them in today's setting. I loved a slide in particular, showing the biological and sociological aspects of gender through a spectrum. I found it interesting how the different variations completely redefined sex as a concept, due to XX and XY males and females. Overall, it was an enlightening experience, and I can't wait for the best discussion on Gender and Psychology! I believe that this will open up a safe space for discussion, as well as give the students in our community the tools to educate others just as we had been. The first step to advocacy is education and awareness, and this talk prepared us with the facts to support our non-binary and transgender peers as well as speak with logic.

Thank you!
Em Batuman
She/Her

Luna Dabees (she/her) – Student at GCHS & Vice President of GSA

 Tue 2/9/2021 8:40 PM
outlook_D757186C2CD984D7@outlook.com <mdabees@gmail.com>
External -Reflection
To Shaw, Daniel


This Email originated outside of Collier County Public Schools and may contain a link. Please do not click links you were not specifically expecting, even from known senders.

The Science of Gender presentation shown to us on the 26th was highly educational. I learned a lot about the genetics behind transgender and cisgender individuals, and I think this knowledge can help spread awareness and understanding regarding transgender issues. Although the existence of transgender students does not need to be justified, I think a more widespread understanding of the science behind gender would increase acceptance of transgender individuals among our society. I look forward to our future guest presentations on the field of gender.


“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kassem

Michelle Cotto (she/her) – Office Manager at GCHS

Mon 2/8/2021 9:09 AM

 Cotto, Michelle
RE: quick reflection?


To Shaw, Daniel

 You replied to this message on 2/9/2021 9:16 AM.

[Bing Maps](#)


The discussion was so informative and extremely helpful! By first explaining the genetic and scientific components that prove that gender is non-binary, it was much easier to have a non-judgmental conversation about how 'we' the audience felt about the data presented. Because the information was presented as science, I believe this attracted many people from varied backgrounds and beliefs to attend. This created a welcoming atmosphere for everyone, and I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts and experiences. By using science – which by nature is neutral – the presentation served to teach but also prompted the audience to think and to ask honest questions. I left this presentation with a much greater understanding of gender and genetics, and also why so many people refuse to accept the reality of the same. I was taught all my life that gender was binary – so it was eye – opening for me to see the truth presented in actual data. This helped me tremendously to not only accept the truth, but to also question any other prejudicial or judgmental notions still indoctrinated me. I am certain, that because we were presented with cold hard facts, many in the audience were able to have a better understanding of the LGBTQ experience with regards to gender. And when faced with any bullying behavior, will be compelled to defend and stand up for our LGBTQ friends and family. The information and experience of this event was so compelling, I immediately began sharing what I learned with everyone I know! I have a feeling, many in the audience did the same! I am so grateful that I attended and I look forward to continuing to learn and grow in my support and understanding of LGBTQ students and community!

Best,

 **Michelle Cotto**
Office Manager
Gulf Coast High School
7878 Shark Way
Naples, FL 34119
p: 239.377.1403 | f: 239.377.1401
cottom@collierschools.com

Lauren McIntyre (she/her) – English Teacher at GCHS & Co-Sponsor of GSA

Thu 2/11/2021 7:35 PM

 McIntyre, Lauren
Re: "A Discussion on Gender & Psychology"

To Shaw, Daniel

Our GSA club had an incredible opportunity to hear from one of our very own science teachers on "Gender & Biology." I have always been a very loving and accepting person, and I realized that I was a member of the LGBTQQIAA+ community when I was in college. I was honored when asked to co-sponsor our GSA club for so many reasons. I have learned so much from our student members and from our meetings and presentations. The presentation given on "Gender & Biology" was most intriguing and informative. It gave real, hard facts that disputed the notion of the biological gender, but especially of the binary sort recognized in our society--and all without trying. It was a simple presentation of facts, granted that the science was highly complex. The audience was fully captivated by the presentation and engaged in meaningful and appropriate discourse to better understand the topic and their own perceptions of the matter. After my conversation with a few students in attendance who are not members of the LGBTQQIAA+ community, it was clear that they gained knowledge and a better understanding of what does and does not make people who they are; these students even stated that was their purpose of attending the meeting. I believe that it opened the eyes of everyone there to a whole universe of possibilities when it comes to gender, if gender is even anything other than a figment of our society's imagination. The presentation showed us that the science of "gender" is highly complex: chromosomal, genetic, hormonal, etc. With the knowledge and perspective gained, all who attended now have some scientific background to stand up for justice and dispel arguments for inhumane treatment of others based on "biological sex/gender." I can't wait to continue our mini-series with "Gender & Psychology," "Gender & Sociology," and many more!

Lauren McIntyre (Hart)
ESE Inclusion/English 4
mcint1@collierschools.com
239-377-1457

“Speak up, stand up, and keep correcting the false perceptions.” –Suzy Kasseem