



**Using Change Management Principles to Support Leaders in Providing Coordinated Care for Transgender Students in Dutch International Secondary Schools**

Claire O'Brien

MASTER'S THESIS  
March 2023

Masters in Educational Leadership

## ABSTRACT

Within Dutch international schools, school leaders are struggling to provide adequate care for transgender students, and are reliant on conflicting and sometimes outdated advice. This thesis examines the current literature along with the perspectives of school leaders on current supports available to transgender students. The findings are contextualised against a framework of change management to provide schools with a comprehensive and cohesive approach to supporting transgender students. Much of the current research is focused on providing an overview of the situation and the current realities faced by trans and gender non conforming students but does not extend to providing advice on how to proceed. The research questions concern assessing what is going *well* in terms of the current system, identifying the barriers faced by leadership in providing effective care, determining if the information available can be synthesised into a set of reasonable recommendations according to change management principles and finally providing a concise set of possible next steps. The key findings can be summarised as follows; Dutch international school leaders are by and large open and enthusiastic towards providing coordinated and cohesive support to trans students, however indeed they are struggling to determine the best course of action in many instances and cite a lack of available resources and training as a primary cause. The current system can be primarily described as “ad hoc” in nature and relies heavily on *who* works at a certain school as opposed to *what* is in place to support students. The final recommendations include employing a step by step approach informed by change management principles that would allow for a more reflective and less panicked process. This thesis could be considered as contributing to the development of the field of educational and leadership research as it advocates a novel approach in taking an emotive and complex topic and applying a comprehensive and cohesive plan of action that can be used by educational leaders in other (similarly complex) situations.

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu  
Tampere University of Applied Sciences  
MBA in Educational Leadership

Claire O'Brien  
Using Change Management Principles to Support Leaders in Providing  
Coordinated Care for Transgender Students in Dutch International Secondary  
Schools

Masters Thesis 56 pages, appendices 10 pages  
April 2023

---

Key words: transgender, education, secondary, educational policy

## **CONTENTS**

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND	6
1.2 THE OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	8
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	8
1.4 CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH	9
1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH	10
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT TRANS STUDENTS	11
2.2 CURRENT KNOWLEDGE	13
2.3 AVOIDING THE ISSUE	14
2.4 WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE	15
2.5 WHY DO TRANS STUDENTS NEED POLICIES?	15
2.6 CONTROVERSY AND COMPLEXITY	18
2.7 THE STUDENT VOICE	21
2.8 WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP	21
2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE ROLE OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT	22
2.9.1 INCLUSION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT	25
<b>3 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY	28
3.2 APPROACH TO THEORY DEVELOPMENT	29
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, RESEARCH STRATEGY, TIME HORIZON	30
3.4.1 MONO QUALITATIVE METHOD	30
3.4.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY, NARRATIVE INQUIRY	31
3.4.3 TIME HORIZON	32
3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	32
<b>4 RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 WHAT IS GOING WELL IN TERMS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM	33
4.1.1 STUDENT CENTRED APPROACH AND POLICY	34
4.1.2. STAFFING AND EXPERTISE	35
4.2 BARRIERS FACED BY LEADERSHIP	38
4.2.1 STUDENT AGENCY vs PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	38
4.2.2 CONCRETE BARRIERS TO SUPPORT	38
4.2.3 FOLLOW UP	39
4.3 THE APPLICATION OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT	40
<b>5. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>6. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>46</b>
6.1 LIMITATIONS	46
6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	47
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>58</b>

**GLOSSARY**

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Transgender	A person who does not identify with their assigned sex at birth
Cisgender	A person who identifies with their assigned gender at birth
Nonbinary	A person who does not adhere to traditional notions of gender such as male and female
Gender Fluid	A person whose gender identity shifts over time
Gender Non Conforming	A person whose gender does not adhere to traditional notions of male or female
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, A-sexual community
Heteronormativity	The pervasive ideology that heterosexuality is the “norm” or “default”
Wellbeing	A department within an international school that focuses on student wellbeing, safety and discipline
DEIJ	Diversity Equity Justice and Inclusion
DISS	Dutch International Secondary School Network

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

This thesis takes on the question of what is happening in Dutch international secondary schools regarding the provision of care for transgender students in terms of leadership and planning and how the system may be amended moving forward.

The visibility of trans or gender non-conforming students in schools is a relatively recent phenomenon as evidenced by the uptick in trans youth registering for care according to the *Nederlands Jeud Instituut* (Dutch Youth Institute), it does appear as though schools are lagging behind in terms of providing students with adequate support, informed by up to date information and relevant expertise (Nederlands Jeud Instituut, 2021). For some this increased visibility of and subsequent changing expectations around trans and gender non-conforming students represents a significant social change that is demanding change from educational institutions. As significant change within educational institutes is overseen by school leaders it is therefore important to review their current position with regard to support for transgender students. It is also essential to also ascertain what they may need to provide a more comprehensive and cohesive set of supports for transgender students. Finally a comprehensive set of recommendations can be provided to the leaders of Dutch international secondary schools by synthesising the findings of key literature, reviewing the current provisions in place alongside the gaps in support provided by school leaders themselves and finally analysing the findings through the lens of change management. The results will thus provide a more comprehensive and less “ad hoc” approach to supporting these students from a leadership standpoint and ensure that there is a cohesive approach across the DISS network.

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Although transgender individuals have always existed within school systems the past few years have marked a noticeable increase in the presence/visibility of trans and gender non-conforming students in schools across western society. A report published in June 2022 pertains to the US population but is reflective of the overall trend. According to the Williams Institute researchers estimated that

there were 150,000 transgender teens in the US in 2017, with the inclusion of new high school survey data added in 2022, that estimate has now doubled to 300,000 (Herman, 2022). To contextualise this within a Dutch environment according to the *Nederlands Jeud Instituut* (Dutch Youth Institute) more and more young people are registering for transgender care. The number of registrations of young people under the age of 18 increased from 1,179 people in 2020 to 1,855 in 2021, which represents an uptick of 57.3% (Nederlands Jeud Instituut, 2021).

In terms of legislative incentive there is not much for schools to go on for now, schools are encouraged to provide “gender inclusive” sexual education that is considered “age appropriate” and could easily be limited to affirming the existence of transgender individuals (SLO, 2022). Schools have a duty of care to all students but there are as of the time of writing no specific provisions or guidelines for the care of trans students.

As is the case with many social and societal changes the legislation (or lack thereof) lags behind the lived reality of trans individuals. As according to the Dutch Framework the diagnostic criteria to be considered “trans” and gain access to vital services relies heavily on the idea of a person experiencing “gender dysphoria” or an intense discomfort with their assigned gender at birth, however according to Merkel (2017) among others many trans individuals do not experience dysphoria at all but rather a strong sense of what is right for them in terms of gender identity (Merkel 2017). Thus, the Dutch system is likely to be undeserving or excluding elements of its trans population within a system that is already underserved.

Where guidelines exist for schools they are sparse and as previously mentioned are required to provide a safe environment for all students, including transgender students (School en Veiligheid, 2022). This lack of provision means that the burden of “asking” for provisions falls on the individual trans student and their families to advocate - and leaves little room for trans students whose parents are not supportive. Dutch international schools are also subject to two other systems of governance the International Baccalaureate and the Council for International Schools, although CIS has recently added a requirement for a

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy for schools, specific provisions for trans students are limited to a singular blog post about protecting LGBTQIA+ students (COIS, 2022; Ibid).

The lack of precision within the framework can lead to issues as providing a safe environment for “all students” (a truism, generally speaking) can be used as a justification for separating trans students in the name of “protecting” the majority of students, although this case study comes from the UK the issue that transgender teens provoke “controversy” by merely existing is not limited to any country, a parent group known as “Transgender Trend” has released a series of professional looking guides for schools that strongly push segregating trans teens within school facilities to prevent “contagion” (Davies-Arai, 2021). It can therefore be concluded that strong and effective leadership is required in order to protect and allow trans students to flourish within secondary schools.

## **1.2 THE OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The objectives of the research are to provide a cohesive overview of the current system of care implemented by school leaders in six Dutch International Schools and to compare this with the findings of the prior academic research framed within a body of change management as a means of simplifying and streamlining this process. With the hope of subsequently finding an adequate model or these perspectives can be synthesised to provide reasonable recommendations for policy/school developments and support that can be offered within schools taking into account the need to aid schools in coping with significant social change.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary focus of this thesis is to take account of what is already happening in the Dutch International Secondary School in terms of leadership and the provision of care for transgender students and which elements of existing strategies can be synthesised into a set of recommendations according to the principles of change management. This perspective can be summarised in a series of questions seen in section below:



1. What is going *well* in terms of the current system of providing support to trans and gender non conforming systems?
2. What are the barriers faced by leadership in providing effective care?
3. How can the literature and information be synthesised into a set of reasonable recommendations with a view of coping with and successfully managing change?
4. What should be the next steps?

#### **1.4 CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

The Dutch International Secondary School network is a collection of International Secondary schools located around the Netherlands that cater to the educational needs of the International community

As each member school tends to exist as a unique institution within the major Dutch cities (with the exception of Amsterdam) many of the schools in the network have experienced rapid growth in recent years with student enrollment numbers growing year on year (DutchNews, 2019).

The school network equally occupies an unusual position in terms of international schools. In accordance with Dutch law the schools are not considered “private” in the traditional sense and are instead considered “semi-private” institutions with parental contributions making up a portion of the school’s income and the Dutch government contributing the rest (van der Wel et al., 2016). An important note to make in terms of context is that the teachers in Dutch International Secondary Schools are considered to be employees of the state and the school is equally expected to adhere to Dutch laws.

According to the Dutch framework schools are required to provide an anti-homophobia education, rooted in advocating “acceptance, assimilation”, and tolerance (ECR, 2019). The notion of “tolerance education” has been heavily criticised in recent years as it leaves notions of normativity

un-interrogated and does not challenge the status quo, thus leaving opportunities for enhanced subjectification on the table. According to Sieben and Wallowitz (2009), tolerance education “reinforces the normalisation of heterosexual identities” (Sieben & Wallowitz, 2009, 45). This idea of tolerating and in many cases “keeping the peace” is also identified as harmful by Ladson-Billings (2000) who have asserted that when promoting tolerance education in terms of intercultural competence; ‘African American and white students in the same classroom “ take away very different understandings about the meaning and content of the curriculum...simultaneously valorizing one group while destroying another” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, 167). Thus Dutch International Secondary Schools are somewhat incentivised to “discourage” homophobia in the purest sense of the word but are not required or incentivised to have a specific policy related to the care of transgender students.

### **1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH**

In some cases Dutch International Secondary schools are not prepared for an increase in the number of publicly transgender students and are struggling to make accommodations for those already emerging in schools, when contextualised against barriers such as parental grief (the loss of the identity of the child), complex and messy medical provisions and a general lack of care systems for transgender youth school leadership teams can be stressed and confused by the lack of and presence of conflicting information.

Additionally trans students remain categorically unsafe in their school environments, scholars have explored the legal issues involving LGBTQIA+ harassment and bullying. Studies have also found that transgender students have higher rates of suicide especially in those schools with climates that are less inclusive (Hatzenbuehler, Birkett, Van Wagenen, & Meyer, 2014). Grossman and D’Augelli (2007) observed that over one quarter of those transgender students interviewed reported making a suicide attempt (Grossman and D’Augelli, 2007). Another study found that transgender youth had 3.2 times the risk of suicide attempts and 3.6 times the risk of suicidal ideation when compared with cisgender youth (Reisner et al., 2015).

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT TRANS STUDENTS**

Prior to understanding the landscape of the existing systems of care for Transgender Students it is necessary to understand the underpinning ideologies and mindsets present in the literature, that can also explain why the existing systems are not “further along” in their development or the factors that may be hindering their progress. According to Mangin (2019) while there is a deficit in terms of studies that look into leaders’ efforts to support transgender students, the studies that do exist are illuminating in their findings. It is a truism to assert that leaders struggle to implement supportive policies, however, Mangin asserts that their difficulties may be linked more to “lack of know-how” than lack of motivation (Mangin, 2019).

Another mindset present in the literature is that of a “scarcity mindset” as discussions of issues that pertain to the rights of marginalised groups are sometimes viewed as almost a “threat” to the rights of others. As though expanding the rights of one group contracts the rights of others. Mangin (2019) further illuminates this concept by explaining that although generally speaking the expansion of rights does not lead to the infringement of others, however, at the school level leaders must make decisions about committing resources to some goals at the expense of others so this line of thinking (despite being a flawed ideology) is understandable to some degree (Mangin, 2019, 262). According to social psychologists such as Meegan (2010), “zero-sum thinking” can lead individuals and groups to behave competitively and exhibit less collaboration (Mangin, 2019, 262). Thus the fear of having one’s rights infringed upon can incite the dominant group to behave in ways that are unsupportive of marginalised groups such as transgender students. In order to circumnavigate this ideological penny-pinching it is recommended by Valencia (2010) that institutions attempt to foster an “anti deficit orientation” whereby the idea that the rights of different groups are in any way limited is widely debunked and discussed across all levels of the institution (Valencia, 2010).

Another ideology which may be limiting progress in this area is that of the ubiquity of heteronormativity, it is widely accepted within the realm of queer theory and studies that the idea of heterosexual, cisnormative identities being the “default” is so pervasive in society that dismantling this idea and making room for more variation (both conceptually and physically). As many movements within institutions focus on the “normalisation” of queer identities (in fact, they do not seem so to many people), a more nuanced approach to internal politics, Nelson (1999) asks how “linguistic and cultural practices manage to naturalise certain sexual identities but not others?” (Nelson, 1999, 378). This pervasive dominance of heteronormativity consequently gives rise to what Lindville recognises as gains that ‘remain tenuous and contested’ (Lindville, 2017). Furthermore, according to Martino et al (2020) in many cases stakeholders are focused on merely securing the rights of individual trans students (Martino et al, 2020).

This idea of Heterosexuality being the “norm” also could be argued to feed a culture of “exceptionalism” around transgender students’ identities. Transgender students are faced with an overwhelming culture of heteronormativity and must ask for provisions on a needs basis, as Spade explains it in his book *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law* such a system in which one type of body (cisgendered) is held up as the norm works to therefore invoke “a mode of individualism that ultimately obscures the structural forces which contribute to trans marginalisation and vulnerability in the first place” (Spade, 2015, 58). In other words even as institutions try to be accommodating to transgender students as issues arise, by not having systems in place prior to the students’ requests they are likely to also unintentionally entrench the “normalcy” of cis gendered identities while further othering those of a transgender identity. Beauchamp and D’Harlingue (2012) also caution against what they call “trans embodied visibility” which may result in “transgender bodies becoming abstracted figures of exception, tools for teaching against biological essentialism and the sex-gender binary”, or in other terms that we allow for students to become a metaphorical “sacrificial lamb” for advancing gender politics in school (Beauchamp & D’Harlingue, 2012, 30).

## 2.2 CURRENT KNOWLEDGE

As previously mentioned, leadership in schools struggle with a lack of knowledge around trans issues and are therefore reticent to take action for fear of “doing something wrong”, this lack of knowledge is similarly found in the literature that pertains to the topic of transgender students in schools. Although the existence of trans people is in no sense novel (indeed, according to Talalay ((2005)) unearthed drawings from the Mediterranean region have shown evidence of trans people as far back as 12000 years ) the increased visibility of trans people is a relatively recent phenomenon to many as previously mentioned (Talalay, 2005). There is nevertheless a striking superficiality to much of the literature that pertains to this topic as many of the texts continually revisit basic facets of the discipline and will explain the meaning of a trans identity. For example in Rafferty’s *Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents*, the opening paragraphs are devoted to explaining that being transgender does not imply a sexual orientation (Rafferty et al., 2018, 142). It feels somewhat contradictory to break down the (complex discussion of the provision of care to a marginalised group) into simplistic terms geared towards the uninitiated, one may wonder in what other disciplines this degree of recursion would occur. This may also contribute to the aforementioned lack of progress within this realm.

Relating to a lack of knowledge present in the literature is a pervasive sense that trans or queer issues are perhaps only relevant to those who fall on what one might call the “overtly queer side of the spectrum”. Conversely, the forces that oppress transgender students act upon individuals of all identities as detailed by Segewick in her 1990 book *Epistemology of the Closet* ( widely considered a primary text in Queer Theory and its studies) (Sedgwick, 1990). This stands in contrast to what Nelson labels the “minoritizing view” that sees the binary as relevant only to a fixed minority (gay people) (Nelson, 1999, 375). A contemporary (if rather extreme) example of how these forces are relevant to all identities (and not just those belonging to a sexual or gender minorities ) would be the ideology exhibited by the emerging “men’s rights” movement’s commentators such as Andrew Tate, whose expectations of men stray into what Lawson (2022) calls “extreme” masculinity as he perpetuates (arguably quite

popular) ideas such as “women are a man’s property” and should “work inside the home” (Lawson, 2022). Another common example from Bute (2009) would be the frequency with which young women are asked if they would like children, a seemingly innocuous question, it nonetheless evokes notions of the expectations of a gender - to produce children (Bute, 2009). To sum up, the pressure of gendered expectations and restrictions are not limited to the pressures exerted upon transgender people, thus it is reasonable to assert that expanding the rights of transgender people provides more freedom for all.

### **2.3 AVOIDING THE ISSUE**

As previously mentioned, is it not uncommon for those belonging to dominant identities to believe that transgender issues do not consequently impact them or involve them in any way. This ideology (as might be expected) translates therefore to the school environment and is generally recognised in the literature. Journell recognises it as a “misconception” that schools and teachers should attempt to create a “politically neutral” classroom due to the “risks associated with teaching in a politically polarised environment” (Journell, 2016, 26). Research has held in contrast to the belief indicated that teachers who try to be politically neutral in their classroom are not delivering the political neutrality they do desire, but rather their positions are interpreted by students through their silence on certain points (Journell, 2011a, 2011b, 2016a, 2016b; Niemi & Niemi, 2007). Thus the attempt to avoid the issue of transgender identities on the grounds of “political neutrality” is rendered moot. In sooth, an aversion to the topic can in itself be considered a political position. This point is further illustrated by Smith et al who take a stronger position by outlining the powerful dynamics at play in the class; “educators must accept their role as defining reality”(Smith et al, 2010, 3). In this sense Smith rather than positioning “politically charged” issues as unavoidable in schools they additionally frame them as the moral duty of the teacher to engage with them - although frankly queer educators may wish that those in education with more conservative views would keep out of the conversation, this conceptual imperative is not without its fallacies.

## **2.4 WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE**

It is clear in the literature that schools lack protective or effective policies that serve trans students and that those policies that *do* exist (however well meaning) can in some circumstances do more harm than good by further categorising the trans student body and limiting their identities to that which can be legislated. So what is commonly available to students in high schools?. As mentioned in the introduction the most common form of support is Antihomophobia education, rooted in advocating acceptance, assimilation, and tolerance, does not require investigating the construction, production, and maintenance of what is considered normative, nor does it challenge the status quo. Siben and Wallowitz (2009) recognise that tolerance reinforces the normalisation of heterosexual identities (Sieben and Wallowitz, 2009)

## **2.5 WHY DO TRANS STUDENTS NEED POLICIES?**

As previously mentioned transgender students face challenges not experienced by other students such as rejection and a sense of confusion as to where they belong and where they are safe. It is therefore reasonable to contend that specific policies should be put in place to protect vulnerable students such as transgender students, just as a school would develop policies to support other underserved groups.

As with all aspects of this topic the development and implementation of policies to provide for and protect transgender students are mired in controversy. Lewis and Eckes (2019) shape this conversation around the issue of the bathroom policies in US high schools (Lewis & Eckes, 2019). It was noted that in schools where non inclusive policies were in place the team observed significant harm to transgender students. (bully, academic harm, medical concerns and inconsistencies in implementation) (Lewis & Eckes, 2019, 47). As in the discussion of more equitable approaches to gender and identity Lewis et al also argue that more “inclusive policies will benefit all students (Lewis et al., 2019, 47). Nevertheless the team also observed that schools had concerns about violating the privacy rights of cisgender students while affording more rights to

transgender students (again, the scarcity mindset appears in the conversation) (Ibid). Herman (2013) takes this conversation further and looks at the concrete medical complications that come from non-inclusive bathroom policies and posits that the stress of finding a bathroom to use in a school where no policy exists or the policy is contested or poorly enforced results in higher incidences of kidney and bladder infections in transgender students as well as heightened consequent anxiety and a feeling of a lack of belonging (Herman, 2013). Lewis and Eckes (2019) also identify urinary tract issues as highly prevalent in transgender student population as a result of avoiding using the toilet but also assert that the issue is even more complex as even schools that try to be inclusive will often take a “binary approach” in policy development and facilitate the use of what they see as the “correct” bathroom for the transgender students’ stated identity but are often nonplussed by and don’t take into account the existence of non-binary students (Lewis and Eckes, 2019, 51). This also speaks to the age of the literature as many of the relevant studies in this area were conducted prior to 2016, after which point many have recognised an increasing shift in gender complexity, with the emergence of more and more non-binary teenagers, as well as gender fluid and other gender non conforming identities (Diamond, 2020).

An additional issue in policy development noted by Lewis and Eckes (and previously noted by the author) is that “LGBTQ students tend to be lumped together for the purpose of research, policy, and practice” (Lewis & Eckes, 2019, 49). Although indeed members of the LGBTQIA+ will occasionally band together to have their voices heard and do indeed reap cross benefits from policy development it is also vital for schools to understand the unique challenges faced by each group of students and that putting all these identities together in one policy does not benefit any one group, in fact there has been an increasing recognition of the complicity of the “L” in the LGBTQIA” community in the limitation of transgender rights across the spectrum of societal access, indeed as evidenced by Werthen (2022) the last 2-3 years have seen the emergence of a relatively new threat to the rights of transgender individuals (particularly trans women) with the rise of the “TERF” (trans exclusionary radical feminist) a group of women (many of whom would consider themselves Lesbians) who are actively working to limit the rights of trans women (Werthen,



2022). It is therefore vital that schools do not rely on members of the LGBTQIA+ community on staff solely based on their perception that they belong to this marginalised group and must therefore harbour useful insights about policy development. Or as Mangin puts it quite simply; “don’t forget the bias homosexuals can display towards the T in the alphabet” (Mangin, 2019, 259).

Additionally in opposition to this ill-advised grouping of marginalised identities according to Lewis and Eckes, cases involving transgender students remain in the minority of policy priorities in schools (Lewis and Eckes, 2017, 67). Which indeed speaks to the aforementioned trend of trans-exceptionalism that requires a tremendous amount of courageous demands on behalf of the transgender student.

There is also a sense in the literature that policies can occasionally be replaced by supportive structures such as Gay Straight Alliances or mentorship programmes with staff. Craig et al recognises these as vital infrastructures that affirm and uplift students across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum but are “not structured to address the mental needs of LBGT youths who may be experiencing stressors both inside and outside their school contexts (Craig et al., 2018). There is also an implication here that an effective policy would make provisions for structural and systemic support for transgender students (although how this may look remains to be seen).

On the other hand, to put it plainly no policy can fully capture the intricacies of human life. As trans scholars and activists have often stated there is simply no all encompassing definition of ‘transgender.’ When schools develop policies with the intention of including trans students, they run the risk of simultaneously systemizing (and ideologically solidifying) what it means to be trans in their context and limiting whose gender expression may be covered by such policies. Spade (2011) argues that this shows the limits of law, writing that ‘administrative systems that classify people actually invent and produce meaning for the categories they administer, and those categories manage both the population and the distribution of security and vulnerability’ (Spade, 2011, 159). Therefore, a conclusion can be reached that schools may better exist with entirely fewer policies that try to detail the classification of what can often be fluid, changeable and highly contested (internally and externally) identities. Indeed, Spade (2011),

argues that “rights-based legal recognition and inclusion are often not actually beneficial to trans people of colour, immigrants, those with disabilities, and others who suffer the most structural violence and harm” (Spade, 2011, 184). He asserts that such policy are not typically written or developed in consultation with those they hope to serve - trans people themselves.,” and is often based on a relatively narrow ideology of what it might mean to be a trans person (Spade, 2011, 185)

Consequently it seems a truly effective policy would have to take an unprecedented shape. A policy that protects and uplifts, created in consultation with the identities it legislates for, allows freedom for the individual trans student to assert their identity while relieving them of the burden of “exceptionalism” and is supported by leadership in a comprehensive and structural fashion while being brought to life through conversations and actions of the staff of the school. Where would parents fit into this policy? That remains to be determined.

## **2.6 CONTROVERSY AND COMPLEXITY**

Even as globally more schools have policies in place to protect trans students, and courts rule in favour of trans students’ rights to have access to toilets and changing rooms that correspond to their gender identity, trans students are still fighting safety and recognition. According to Khan (2016) they continue to experience high rates of harassment, bullying, and other types of in-school victimisation, including verbal or physical assault by peers and humiliation by educators refusing to use the correct pronouns (E, Khan, 2016).

It is fair therefore to assert that the current realities for trans students as the struggle for “basic acceptance” continues, that stakeholders involved in the wellbeing of trans students would find this “ground-hog day-ish” nature of the situation disheartening. What does it take for an issue to be determined politically “settled”? According to Journell, determining the tipping point from open to settled is “difficult...particularly with respect to when the rights of one group can be determined to be of public value. Consider, for example, the issue of same-sex marriage, which some scholars have argued could be taught as settled” (Journell, 2017, 343). Indeed, the issue of same-sex marriage is still in 2023 a potent discussion in many places, at the time of writing same-sex

marriage is only recognised in 32 countries (Khan, 2023). When looked at from a statistical standpoint it perhaps makes more sense as to why the conversation can appear to be stalled even as teenagers and LGBTQIA+ individuals explore increasingly complex expressions of identity and gender.

Another element of controversy present in the literature is difficult to pin down but relates heavily to the aforementioned “ubiquity of heteronormativity” but in a slightly more sinister sense rather than only involving the maintenance of the status quo there is somewhat of an orientation towards “wrongness” present when discussing trans youth and identity. This perspective cannot be avoided even when a study is conducted by advocates of trans youth, for example Kurt and Chenault in their study of the challenges administrators face when implementing policies to protect trans students that some administrators worried that “educators might ‘create external circumstances’ that could ‘persuade or influence’ the student into a trans identity that the adults don’t recognise as ‘firm,’ therefore implying that trans identity is not the preferred outcome. The word persuasion strongly implies coercion. It is also accurately pointed out that such concerns are never raised when cisgender children express a strong identification with the gender they were assigned at birth (Frohard-Dourlent, 2016, 131). Frohard-Dourlent recognises this as a consequence of a “hetero- and cisnormative culture and invites us to imagine ‘hetero gendered’ lives as the default path” (Frohard-Dourlent, 2016, 132). What remains unexamined in this sort of scholarship is the privileged positions of those with congruent gender identities and assigned sex. It has been recognised by Rubin (1998) (and other scholars) that cisgendered individuals tend to feel it is the responsibility of queer individuals to explain and change the prevailing ideologies (Rubin, 1998)

The lack of recognition of trans identities and resulting lack of “legitimacy” can also be seen in the fears often associated with trans youth being “too young” to make such decisions about their identity, although the inverse would not be true should a teenager align themselves with a cis gendered identity. Rafferty also recognises that this as an outdated approach in which a child’s assertions are held as a possibility until an arbitrary age (often after pubertal onset) when they can be considered valid, an approach that authors of the literature have termed “watchful waiting” (Rafferty, 2018, 4). This approach does not necessarily serve

or support the child because it means that support is delayed. Watchful waiting is rooted in binary conceptions of gender in which gender diversity is framed as harmful; in watchful waiting, one also assumes that gender identity becomes fixed after a certain point (this is untrue in many cases). The approach is also influenced by a group of early studies which, according to Rafferty were mired with “ validity concerns, methodologic flaws, and limited follow-up on children who identified as TGD” (Rafferty, 2018, 4).

This can also be related to the previously mentioned fear-mongering stoked by groups such as Transgender Trend, whose (published) theories around the concept of trans-contagion (the notion that teenagers exposed to trans identities are likely to falsely identify as such) have recently been debunked by empirical evidence put forward by Turban et al (2022) (Turban et al, 2022). in 2022. Indeed scholars agree that the (indeed, striking) increased visibility of transgender people is likely a result of greater acceptance as opposed to an increase in actual population size (Stryker, 2017). Mangin recognises this is a problem of binary thinking, in which the cisnormative majority continue to hold what he calls “monolithic” views of trans people as either “victims” or “deviant” (Mangin, 2019, 263). Craig et al also put forward an interesting theory that it is not some sort of ingrained prejudice that is holding people back but it simple a lack of “training” - the idea being that with increased understanding and training in “affirmative practices” those working in educational institutions would let go of this pervasive “orientation towards wrongness” (Craig et al, 2018, 233).

Mayo examined ways in which this conversation is further steeped in controversy as it intersects heavily with other aspects of fairness and equity such as racially stratified access to resources (an issue that is no more settled in the Netherlands than the plight of trans students- see the recent Zwarte Piet controversy ) (Mayo, 2004; (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid, 2022)). LGBTQIA+ students of colour often lack the same resources and support systems as LGBTQIA+ White students, because education often ignores the two identities as simultaneously relevant. Kumashiro has taken this concept further and critiqued the field of educational research for ignoring the important intersections between race and sexuality. However, while these researchers

offer important perspectives, their work is an exception in larger discussions of education.

## **2.7 THE STUDENT VOICE**

As previously mentioned, few studies within educational research include LGBTQIA students' perspectives, particularly those students from high-risk contexts. Craig et al have heavily advocated for creating a "research context in which LGBTQIA youths are acknowledged as the experts on their own needs, creating a research environment that more conscientiously uncovers the needs of the community being studied" (Craig et al, 2018, 233)

This would require a quite a substantial reframing put trans students at the centre of decision-making processes (while as previously mentioned, not burdening them with "exceptionalism"). Additionally by positioning the student as the expert on their own life, it also serves to disrupt cisnormative pressures in schools that automatically assume all children are cisgender. According to Holm (2006) It also challenges the aforementioned view that young people and children are too immature to make important decisions about their lives and bodies, and undermines 'adult society's need to control young people as well as its fear of them being autonomous' (Holm et al., 2006, 118). Linville echoes this sentiment by stating "We need to view students as stakeholders, that we don't necessarily know what's best" (Linville, 2010, 78). According to Mangin the most supportive leaders employed a child centred approach to decision making, "leveraging learning and knowledge to benefit trans students", he also recognises this as a "formidable task" that requires significant training (another element of the literature that is unclear, several authors refer to successful "training" but the nature or form of the training is unclear in most instances) (Mangin, 2019, 268).

## **2.8 WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP**

Clearly the literature has important Implications for educational leadership. It is equally clear that in terms of the advancement of the position of trans students, difficulties with acceptance fall primarily with the adults, thereby emphasising the role of administrators, teachers, and parents. In general it is observed students take their cues from adults (Lewis & Eckes, 2019, 74). Additionally, according to Lewis and Eckes there is a proven link between the importance of leadership and a socially safe school environment (Lewis & Eckes, 2019, 52). Something that is not mentioned in the literature is what happens when a school does not have a leader who supports or understands trans students. This is a question that remains open and un-answered. Although it is known what happens when it is communicated to transgender students that they are not valued as individuals in school, as according to Lewis and Eckes it fails to recognize their “humanity and questions their dignity” (Lewis Eckes, 2019, 75). Many of the success stories also seem to hinge on having a good relationship with parents - which belies the undeniable fact that some trans students will undoubtedly struggle with unsupportive parents or dangerous home situations. Cotton recognises the complexity of the involvement of parents in this situation and the potential role of leadership in helping navigate these challenges (Cotton, 2014). This might mean guiding parents to comprehensive support networks, but also understanding that the parents own struggle may mean the child had to be treated in isolation from the parents with a lot of sensitivity for all parties.

## **2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: THE ROLE OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

It is clear from the initial findings of the literature that the increase in the presence of trans and gender non conforming students is not a change that schools can simply ignore or one that may settle with time. As a highly emotive and controversial topic with relatively large amounts of uncharted territory for leaders it makes sense to construct a plan of approach that takes into account the emotional sensitivity needed to approach its management but also prioritises a distinctly pragmatic approach based on proven approaches to managing change. It is therefore possible to synthesise the findings of key

change management literature with the initial findings of the literature on the provision of care for transgender students to create a potential step by step application of the principles. Thereby providing a framework for approaching the issue in a structured and systematic manner. The subsequent interviews will compare the hypothetical model to the lived experience of school leader practice and possibilities to make recommendations. With a core aim of removing the sense of uncertainty and murkiness from the process.

the change. The first step involves creating a sense of Urgency, although this may be felt more strongly than others in the team it may be necessary to work explicitly on “Urgency” as a core topic. As a second Step Kotter advises creating a specific team to deal with change, this team should consist of a cross-functional group of individuals with diverse skills and expertise (Kotter, 2019, 10). The team should be responsible for developing a plan for supporting transgender students and ensuring that the plan is implemented effectively.

A further extension of the second step could be to establish a coalition of supporters. A coalition of supporters is a group of individuals who are committed to promoting change and have the influence and resources to make it happen (Goin, 2011). In the case of transgender students, the coalition could include representatives from the school board, teachers' unions, parent-teacher associations, community organisations, and other stakeholders. The coalition can provide support and guidance to school leaders, help to build consensus, and provide feedback on proposed changes. What is most pertinent here is to ensure that the coalition consists of highly qualified individuals who are conscious of the complexities and realities of the experiences of trans students. It may be that institutions need to take an unorthodox approach and seek advice from outside the normal network.

The team should also be responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan and making necessary adjustments to ensure that it remains effective.

The third step according to Kotter is to develop a vision and strategy (Kotter, 2019, 18). The vision and strategy should be focused on creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for transgender students that promotes their academic, social, and emotional well-being. The strategy should be based

on best practices and policies that promote inclusion and nondiscrimination, such as those recommended by the American Psychological Association and the Human Rights Campaign ( American Psychological Association, 2015; Human Rights Campaign, 2022 ). These reports would need to be effectively contextualised within the Dutch international context and leaders may need more support in this regard.

This could also involve engaging with transgender students, relevant experts, and allies to develop a clear vision and goals for initiatives that can support transgender students. The vision statement should be inspirational, specific, attainable, and relevant to the needs of transgender students, and should drive action towards achieving the set goals.

The fourth step in using change management principles to support school leaders in supporting transgender students is to communicate effectively (Kotter, 2019, 32). In theory school leaders should communicate the plan for supporting transgender students effectively to all stakeholders in the school community. According to the literature the communication should be clear, concise, and consistent to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the plan and understand their role in supporting transgender students. This may look slightly different to a traditional change management plan as ethical considerations limit the extent to which stakeholders should be informed of the particulars of individual students, but in a broader sense informing stakeholders of a cohesive plan of approach in terms of support they can offer and potentially curriculum development where possible.

The fifth step is to empower broad-based action (Kotter, 2019, 22). Empowering action involves creating the necessary structures, processes, and resources to implement the vision and strategy. This may involve reviewing school policies, developing training programs for teachers and staff, providing access to gender-neutral facilities, and establishing support mechanisms for transgender students. According to the principles laid out by Kotter school leaders should involve the coalition of supporters in implementing these changes and create opportunities for feedback and evaluation.



The sixth and seventh steps require celebrating successes and consolidating gains; this will require a nuanced approach as “celebrating” also needs to take into account the privacy of individual students (Kotter, 2011). Consolidation in this case may equate to enshrining and documenting supportive school policies.

### **2.9.1 INCLUSION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

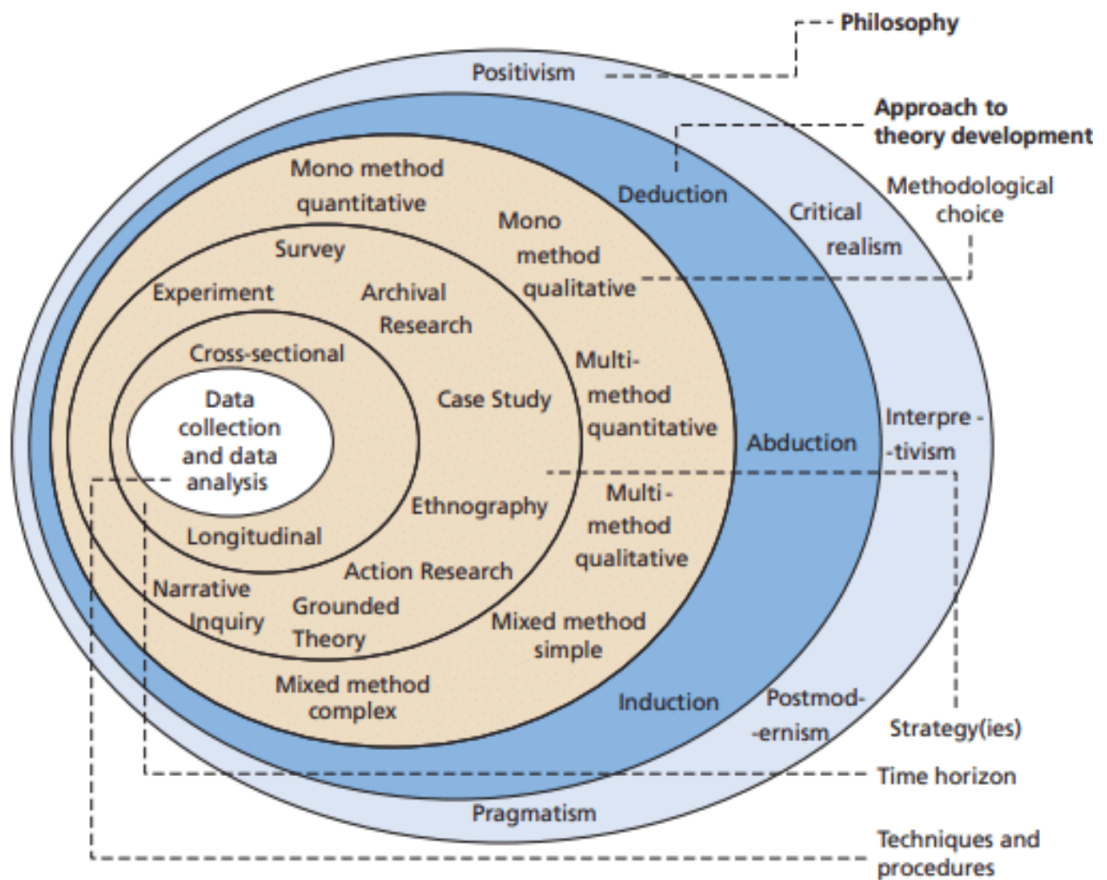
As previously discussed the conceptual framework on which subsequent research is based and to which findings are compared could be considered to be a question of both inclusion ( as it falls under the umbrella of issues that are often considered to be issues of Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion) and change management (as it is evident from the literature review that the uptick in the presence of trans identities is a change in terms of norms and processes and is a “change” that schools are struggling with). In this instance we can borrow from and synthesise a framework that deals with both DEIJ themes and change management. Subsequently the analysis lean heavily on the article entitled “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts Are Organisational Change Management Efforts” authored by Davis et al (Davis et al, 2022). Although the article was published in a journal devoted to radiology as a practice, the comparable themes such as caring for vulnerable members of society and the socio-emotional competency required by both education and medical leadership is comparable as is the importance of leadership in ensuring that the DEIJ related change is adequately handled.

Davis et al contend that institutions (and therefore leadership) must take a multi modal approach to address exclusion across several organisational structures, they also specify that leadership must change their behaviours and be open to changing standard management practices while engaging with this theme (Davis et al, 2022). It is therefore appropriate to employ the model of Kotter in this case as it is a model that takes into consideration change at multiple levels of the institution.



Pushing actors in the system out of their comfort zone may lead to a fearful response (Yvanovich, 2020)

### 3 METHODOLOGY



Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p130)

The research will lead to a snapshot of where leadership currently stands in relation to the issue and some concrete recommendations they could take within a reasonable zone of proximal change, to glean lessons and options that can be used by other international schools. The research design is laid out according to the parameters of the research onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) (Saunders et al, 2019). This is a complex, occasionally messy and sometimes emotive process that involves several (highly invested) stakeholders, using a clear systematic structure ensures the process is logical in its sequencing

### 3.1 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Pragmatism as a research philosophy is again, a logical choice for the subject of the provision of care to transgender students as it emphasises practicality and usefulness in research. According to James, "pragmatism is a method of approaching problems that emphasises practical outcomes rather than theoretical purity"(James, 1907). This is a topic that can stray into the overly philosophical and stall over anxiety and hand wringing. A pragmatist approach to research recognizes the importance of understanding and addressing problems that can lead to tangible outcomes. Unlike traditional research methods, a pragmatic philosophy allows for flexibility and adaptation as new information emerges, which is especially important given the relative speed at which the complexity of youth gender identity issues have evolved (Ghorayshi, 2022).

Pragmatism also values multiple perspectives and recognizes the need for collaboration and dialogue in the research process. This can be particularly useful in the case of the provision of care for trans students as a multidisciplinary approach is clearly recommended by the literature (Chen at al, 2016). However it may be argued that as the issue of the provision of care for trans students concerns many (highly) subjective voices and opinions it may be more suited to an interpretivist approach. However as this research is limited to leadership and strategies of care that relate to the role of the leader, pragmatism remains a satisfactory choice. That is not to say however, that the choice of pragmatism will lead to a clear and concise outcome to the research, recommendations have to take into account not just what will objectively help operations but rather more complex, what do people think and what are they willing to do?

### 3.2 APPROACH TO THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Induction is an approach to theory development that involves observing patterns in data and drawing conclusions based on those observations. As an iterative process that involves gathering data, analysing it, and then refining or revising theories based on the results, employing it for this research will allow for a more nuanced and detailed understanding of complexity involved in the case of the provision of care of transgender students .

One of the key advantages of induction in this instance is that as it is based on empirical evidence, rather than on preconceived notions or assumptions, it can act to limit the bias of the researcher to a certain extent. There is also a history of using induction to conceptualise of previously little studied phenomena for which current theories may not be an exact fit, for example, induction has been used to develop theories of collective action, where groups of individuals pursue goals that are aligned with their interests but not necessarily with those of the larger society (Klandermans, 1997). This can be particularly useful in this research as the discussion of the best approach for providing care for trans students remains somewhat up in process and is not tied to a concrete theoretical background as a result.

Another advantage of induction is that it allows for the exploration of new ideas and hypotheses that may not have been considered before. This can lead to the development of novel theories that help to advance the field in new directions, for example, induction has been used to explore the formation of social capital (Putnam, 1993). As previously mentioned, the provision of care for trans students in Dutch International Secondary Schools has not been extensively studied; it is reasonable to assert that some novel approaches to the discipline of DEIJ and Change Management may be ascertained.

One limitation of induction is that it can be challenging to generalise findings beyond the specific context in which the data were gathered. This is because induction is often based on qualitative data that are focused on specific cases or situations (Eisenhardt, 1989). However as the research is designed to provide

recommendations to schools in a similar context this renders the limitation somewhat moot.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODS, RESEARCH STRATEGY, TIME HORIZON**

#### **3.4.1 MONO QUALITATIVE METHOD**

In terms of the last four steps of the research onion the following approach is taken:

According to Azorin et al (2010), a mono qualitative method is a research approach that uses in-depth interviews, focus groups, observations, or other qualitative data sources. This method provides a deep understanding of the research question from the perspective of the participants or the researcher. It can be applied to an MBA thesis to understand the experiences of organisational leaders, the impact of their decisions, and to explore the various factors that affect their decision-making processes (Azorin et al, 2010, 96 ).

A mono qualitative method, allows more scope to look into opinions of leadership as they are the ones that lead change, it makes little sense to attempt a qualitative research of leadership in Dutch International School contexts as there are only 18 such schools in the Netherlands it does not even approach of an appropriate qualitative threshold (Sharma, 2020). In practice this means creating a series of questions that can be asked reflexively in an interview context with leadership that synthesises the key findings of the literature with the core concept of managing change.

This approach allows researchers to collect data that is not easily quantifiable, such as the participants' experiences or perceptions, and provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Tenny et al, 2022). This is therefore ideal for a research that investigates the experiences of leaders. Furthermore, the mono qualitative method helps uncover unexpected insights

and explore new research areas in a way that quantitative research cannot (Tenny et al, 2022).

However, despite its strengths in this instance, the mono qualitative method has limitations. It can be difficult to replicate the research findings, and the data collected is often considered subjective and based on the researcher's interpretation of the data, when paired with an inductive approach it is intended that this outcome is mitigated (Tenny et al, 2022).

### **3.4.2 RESEARCH STRATEGY, NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

Clandinin (2006) contends that a narrative inquiry can help researchers gain insight into how individuals understand their own lives and work, how they make sense of their experiences, and how they construct their perspective This can be useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes of individuals within institutions (Clandin, 2006, 44). The narrative inquiry methodology allows the researcher to explore the leaders personal and professional stories, making it an ideal research method when examining issues of identity, culture, and organisational behaviour.

This may not, on the surface, seem to meld well with aspects of the research philosophy (pragmatism), with its emphasis on empirical inquiry and experimentation. Dewey however argued that knowledge is derived from interaction with the environment, and this knowledge is therefore practical rather than abstract (Dewey, 1910; Dewey, 1938, 6) . It is hoped that by pairing more abstract methods with a more concrete philosophy one can gain a more complete understanding of a complex phenomenon that may be otherwise difficult to obtain.

### **3.4.3 TIME HORIZON**

The research is primarily cross sectional in nature in terms of time horizon as the interviews are mostly focused on where the leaders stand in terms of their current actions, policies and challenges. However, although the research is firmly rooted in the current realities, in a lesser sense the trajectory of the outcomes is horizontal in nature as it concerns what school leaders can do moving forward into what may be an increasingly complex future for education.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

As previously mentioned the data collection is designed as a series of questions that synthesise the outcomes of the literature review with the core concept of managing change. The transcribed interviews will subsequently be analysed using Narrative Analysis, the analysis will focus on content and look to code specific themes that emerge that relate to the research question. The data will be analysed, following the identification of themes and patterns the researcher will look for recurring phrases, ideas, or concepts. These themes and patterns can then be grouped together and labelled.

The third step is interpreting the data. In this step, the researcher tries to make sense of the themes and patterns that emerge by exploring their significance in relation to the research question.

When analysing interviews, it is important to keep in mind the context in which the interviews were conducted. This includes factors such as the participants' backgrounds, their relationship with the interviewer, and any other relevant contextual information. The researcher must also be mindful of their own biases and assumptions, as these can influence the interpretation of the data.



## 4 RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 WHAT IS GOING WELL IN TERMS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

One aspect of the study that has proved to be undeniably positive is the overall atmosphere in Dutch International Schools in terms of leader enthusiasm and general acceptance. Although this could be considered a case of confirmation bias, every school leader 7/18 of the DISS network expressed enthusiasm and a strong desire to learn and improve their approach to supporting trans students. While there are significant barriers that limit success in this area it is clear that apathy is not a factor in limiting the success or cohesion of support of trans students within these institutions.

In terms of Potential controversy, perhaps owing to the progressive nature of the Netherlands all school leaders were indifferent to the question of “pushback” or controversy when dealing with supporting trans students. One school leader observed that the only form of active resistance they experience in the school environment is simply non compliance.

*“I mean we’ll have discussions about doing a more inclusive curriculum or doing a review or whatever and you see the look on their face and you just know...they aren’t going to do that. They wouldn’t openly say, no i’m not putting LGBTQ stuff in my curriculum, they’ll just go off and do their own thing...and I guess if you look at it like that, do you really want someone homophobic putting LGBT stuff in their curriculum? Probably not, right? School Leader 4.*

One school leader said he had a staff member react to the school developing more inclusive policies by invoking their religious rights but this was quickly quashed by other staff members who were able to invoke the previously mentioned anti-discrimination laws that all schools must adhere to (ECR, 2019) That is not to say that all DISS schools are active and successful in their support of trans students, it is simply to say that the amount of institutional resistance is demonstrably lower than other contexts such as the US (whereby the issue remains mired in controversy) (NYT, 2023).

#### 4.1.1 STUDENT CENTRED APPROACH AND POLICY

Most leaders within the subsection of the DISS network interviewed indicated that they take a student centred approach, meaning that students can tell the school what they need in terms of support.

*“We don’t like to assume that we know what they need, it’s better if the student tells us themselves”* School Leader 2.

*“We will ask them what they need and how we can best support them, they usually know what they need or can discuss it with their parents”* School leader 4.

This can be considered as going well and also an element of support that needs work. Indeed, as previously mentioned Linville and Mangin agree with this approach, asserting that the most effective leaders employed a child centred approach to decision making, “leveraging learning and knowledge to benefit trans students”, he also recognises this as a “formidable task” that requires significant training (Mangin, 2019, 268).

What a lot of schools are not taking into account is how difficult it may be for a young teenager to ask adults to take what they might see as highly inconvenient actions, moreover a teenager can not possibly have the intimate knowledge of school systems required to imagine the possibilities for supporting trans students. As previously mentioned Frohard-Dourlent wholeheartedly rejects this form of offering support as it burdens the student with interrogating existing power structures and tasks them with asking difficult questions (Frohard-Dourlent, 2022).

In a related theme every school leader interviewed indicated that they employ few (if any) concrete policies when it comes to supporting trans students. When referring to a concrete policy leaders would refer to an overall anti discrimination policy or LGBTQ policy (some of which may have been inherited from dutch sister schools). Again, as in the case of having students themselves dictate support needs this could be considered a positive element in some senses as it

allows the school flexibility in terms of support without being limited to a written policy or risking controversy by concretising inclusive practices in writing. Indeed this is the sentiment echoed by Meyer and Keenan (2018) as they recognise that the specificity often expected of school policy can indeed lead to arbitrary and unnecessary classification of trans students' identities and therefore (despite well intentioned beginnings) inadvertently lead to further discrimination (Meyer & Keenan, 2018, 738). A major issue also was highlighted by the interviews conducted, none of the existing (formal or informal, written or unwritten) policies took into account the lived experience of trans individuals. This is in keeping with the findings of the literature, regarding the tendency for policy makers to talk *about* trans people rather than *to* them (Holm, Daspit & Young 2006, 86) . This was somewhat discussed by leaders however as one school leader explained that they would like to get more insight from trans individuals, however they felt they needed to consult someone who had both the lived experience and experience in education as they explained:

*“It’s definitely important to get that actual witness account and check if you are...yeah..doing the right thing, you know? But the problem is finding someone who also knows what happens in education. I don’t want to sit there and say “OK, nice, very interesting but we can’t do that or we can’t do this, because of this law or that law and we need to think about this factor” that only someone who works in education would fully understand. So yes, I want to have that conversation, of course but it needs to be with the right person or it will end in frustration or disappointment”.* School Leader 3

#### **4.1.2. STAFFING AND EXPERTISE**

A theme that was highlighted as presenting quite an issue for schools but is also considered to be an element that is going well is the issue of staff expertise. All school leaders interviewed expressed a desire for further training (the notion of “training” is something to be discussed later) and 4/6 school leaders interviewed were able to express a nuanced understanding of both the identities of trans students and the issues they face. However despite (perhaps because of) their relatively expansive knowledge of the topic they were all able

to highlight significant gaps in their understanding and could recognise the limitations of their experience.

*“Well I can read books and I can google things but I am missing a few things and I have to actively practise how to use the right words and not get things wrong, I ask the students for a bit of understanding because I am trying really hard but...indeed I am coming up short in a few areas and there are always things I am going to forget, for example when one kid was going on a sports trip I totally forgot about the changing room situation and I didn't engage the sports department in that conversation prior...so yes, we are all still learning” School Leader 2.*

Almost all leaders see a need for further training for their staff and themselves but aren't always sure where to turn or how to get their hands on viable information. This training would involve staff learning about pronouns, discrimination, the elements of discrimination, how they can use the most up to date language etc. Leaders also want to support their staff to develop more inclusive curriculums but don't know how to equip them, most of the leaders mentioned the importance of LGBTQ+ students seeing themselves in the curriculum but were cautious in the approach, as previously mentioned they want the staff involved in the development of an inclusive curriculum to be allies and well informed. It seems as though the training itself is something that is stymied by two primary issues. The first is that as identified previously in terms of literature, when leaders could find training, the training was definitively rooted in what one leader called an “emergent mindset”, meaning that it is often a beginners course on broad LGBTQ+ issues such as using the correct pronouns. A second issue is that there is no agreed upon definition of training and when pressed most leaders were unable to identify appropriate training means, style or source for appropriate training for staff. The school leader with perhaps the most nuanced approach to supporting trans students had completed a course with the Dutch health authority the GGZ, however they also indicated that there was a two year waiting list.

Three of the school leaders mentioned that they rely heavily on their own staff expertise when it comes to providing support for trans students, this will often

involve a department commonly known as “Wellbeing” in international schools. Only one leader mentioned asking LGBTQ+ staff to help out and advise when it comes to supporting trans students. As previously mentioned there is a risk in involving LGBTQ+ staff members in the provision of care of trans students, as there is a significant amount of inter-LGBTQ+ discrimination that occurs within the community, an issue that is exemplified by the significant involvement of lesbians in the anti-trans youth movement within the UK (Wethen, 2022). As discussed an ideal solution would perhaps be the presence of trans educators in schools with sufficient time and expertise in education to weigh in on complex situations. This is not as straightforward as merely hiring trans educators (even withstanding issues of tokenization). One school leader highlighted their openness to hiring trans and gender non conforming individuals but said that there isn't a huge presence of trans applicants for whatever reason (this sentiment was also validated by two other leaders). They also mentioned looking further afield as a possibility in terms of recruitment but spoke of the difficulties in finding qualified staff in general.

*“As DIS schools we occupy a really challenging position in terms of staffing, DUO (Dutch Education Department who validate teaching credentials) are so strict, it's crazy, even within europe there are some countries whereby we can barely validate the person's qualifications - we had an excellent teacher working for us who was from Portugal, they didn't have the exact amount of credits that a Dutch university would require from a maths degree so we couldn't hire them permanently and they left teaching. We have had more LGBT applicants but if they don't make the DUO requirements I can't even interview them because we won't be allowed to hire them and it's a waste of their time”* School Leader 4.

## **4.2 BARRIERS FACED BY LEADERSHIP**

### **4.2.1 STUDENT AGENCY vs PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

As discussed the lack of provision and guidelines for schools means that the burden of “asking” for provisions falls on the individual trans student and their families to advocate - meaning that students are dependant on having understanding and well informed parents to access all the support available in a school (School en Veiligheid, 2022). No leader interviewed envisioned a system in which students under 16 are making decisions for themselves. The parents have to be involved, if the parents don't know they will coach the student to tell them. The reason for this is simple, in that the Dutch law is not only clear but very strict on defining a distinct difference in the rights and responsibilities of a student under 16 in that parents must be informed and involved in any and all developments involving their child (OLVG, 2022).

Although, as highlighted, this could create an awkward hierarchy in which students with understanding parents are supported and others are not, but the law is clear and there is no straightforward solution. Schools cannot therefore take a more fluid approach to student identity while the law remains so clear-cut, in fact in some contexts schools have found themselves in trouble for “withholding information from parents” (NYT, 2023).

### **4.2.2 CONCRETE BARRIERS TO SUPPORT**

School leaders have recognised that there are real concrete barriers to supporting trans students in terms of bathrooms and existing architecture. It has been recognised that having inclusive bathrooms is paramount to the well-being of trans students (Lewis and Eckes, 2015). Leaders are struggling to provide adequate space for students as one leader explained the genuine limit to what is possible within their building:

*“We have a historical site, OK? So we are limited in what we are allowed to do but nonetheless we wanted to provide a gender neutral bathroom in every*

*building as part of our agreement with the GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance), we have bathrooms on each floor and need to have a “ladies”, a “gents” a disabled bathroom, a gender inclusive bathroom and a teachers bathroom in each building. We have four bathrooms in one building and five bathroom needs. Can the disabled bathroom be the same as the gender inclusive bathroom? Well, not really...then you are muddying the issue, saying that they are the same, you can't do that. So one group will have to go to another building to go to the bathroom, you can't disadvantage an entire gender so maybe it should be the teachers. Then the teachers are upset they might need to go in a hurry. Can we have co-ed bathrooms? Then people complain. There is no easy solution here.”*

School Leader 4

It does appear that many of the issues facing schools in terms of providing support are much more systematic in nature than previously suspected and require broader systematic changes to remove the barriers to effective change.

#### **4.2.3 FOLLOW UP**

Noone is expecting schools to conduct in depth qualitative research on a yearly basis to determine the efficacy of their practices (although perhaps this should be the norm). A more reasonable expectation might be considered checking in with former students who identified as trans or gender non conforming to ascertain whether the student found the existing supports helpful or not. Simple logic would dictate that if you are unsure that you are doing the correct thing (which many leaders have expressed ) then you should follow up with the primary stakeholders (trans graduates) and check how the procedures have impacted them. Although one school leader described a trans graduate as seeming “happy enough” it was clear that there is no precedent within the DISS network for following up on these cases and determining what was working and what could be better. This was equally evident when leaders were questioned about inter-school communication and asking other schools within the network for advice or sharing best practice as it was clear that this is neither a common

practice within the network nor something that has been previously considered as an option.

### 4.3 THE APPLICATION OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

It is clear from the findings of the interviews that many of the barriers faced by schools are in fact systemic and need to be addressed on a national and governmental level, such as the provision of physical space for inclusive structures, the stringency of the law surrounding the ability of under 16s to make decisions for their care along with the narrow requirements set out by DUO. Nevertheless, as schools are the ones tasked with supporting trans students and cannot wait until an ideal moment in which the barriers are removed to provide this care, it is necessary to subsequently focus on what *can* be done to provide an informed, comprehensive and cohesive level of support across the DISS network. This will be examined by revisiting Kotter's model and reframing the model through the lens of the insights provided by the school leaders (Kotter, 2011).



(Kotter, 2012)



### Step One: Creating a Sense of Urgency

Although many of the school leaders described a sense of unease around the topics of trans students and their support, only half of them expressed any sense of urgency around the issue. Another interpretation of “creating a sense of urgency” could also be considered “highlighting the importance of an issue”. This is where the DISS network can help in highlighting the necessity that leaders’ prioritise the wellbeing of their trans and gender non conforming students. This may be achieved through conversations with an adult who has the lived experience and can adequately explain the complexities of their experience and the importance of proper support. This can be centralised and made more efficient and accessible by inviting such an expert to a DISS meeting ( a monthly meeting in which all DISS leaders are invited).

### Step Two: Build a Guiding Team

As discussed and as highlighted by the leaders themselves, they rarely act as individuals and heavily rely on their staff for their expertise. Nevertheless it doesn’t hurt to formalise and enshrine a supportive team within the structures of the school.

This team should consist of a cross-functional group of individuals with diverse skills and expertise (Kotter, 2011). This could mean representatives from the “wellbeing” team, student support, leadership and especially knowledgeable teachers. What is important is that members of the team are not chosen for their enthusiasm or interest but rather for their *expertise*, as highlighted throughout the research, even well meaning practitioners can do more harm than good when not sufficiently informed of the complexities of the issues facing trans students. This again, comes back to training and the school may need to invest in significant training for this team. The barrier to this was highlighted by a school leader who had perhaps the most experience and education around the topic, there is training available through the GGD (Dutch Health Authority) “Schoolsout” programme, although this comes with a two year waiting list (NJI, 2020). A further way to benefit from DISS membership and possibly circumnavigate the lengthy wait would be to collectivise this training and coordinate several multi school workshops whereby all DISS schools are

trained together. Another element of this plan that needs to be considered by the schools was also mentioned by another leader who explained the complexities of the work allocation system in Dutch schools that can limit what staff are able to do.

*“Staff are legally limited to work a maximum number of hours per week. In Dutch (and Dutch international Schools), you get a “task sheet” that is tied to my overall number of hours for all the staff. So I need to ensure that the right people have the hours free, otherwise all I could offer in that case would be whoever had the hours free.”*

Therefore it is fair to assert that schools would need to calculate the number of hours they wish to invest in the change management team and take that into account at the beginning of each school year. This is another factor that may be limited by national and governmental factors as the number of hours a school receives are generally not linked to the goals of the school but to the number of students enrolled the previous academic year.

The team should be responsible for developing a plan for supporting transgender students and ensuring that the plan is implemented effectively. This also indicates that while an individual plan should be available to each student an ad hoc approach to developing the plan may be a less wise option to pursue as supported by the literature (Lewis & Eckes, 2019, 46).

### Step Three: Develop a Vision and Strategy

This is a pertinent point especially in the context of the schools involved in this research. It is clear from the interviews that a lot of important (undocumented) work has taken place and there is a presence of a highly informal but quite inclusive policy in most of these schools. However if this is not translated into a documented and cohesive plan the school risks losing all progress with a change in leadership. In theory each school should develop its own vision and strategy in discussion with staff and students' but in this case it is vital that the schools follow the previous two steps and invest in training so that this vision and strategy is vastly informed by expertise and evidence. I would also highly recommend schools make research and data collection a vital part of the

strategy as this has been identified as a weakness by the Dutch inspectorate and also through the lack of follow up of graduates whose experiences could inform future policy development (EAL, 2022).

#### Step Four: Communicate for Buy-in

As previously discussed this will not resemble traditional communication as ethical considerations limit the extent to which stakeholders should be informed of the particulars of individual students, but should focus on communicating around importance, education and support the team can offer as well as specific action to be taken to develop an inclusive curriculum. Leaders strongly indicated that curriculum change would not be possible without specific action and consistent training and communication to their teachers.

#### Step Five: Empower broad-based action

As mentioned this means creating the necessary structures, processes, and resources to implement the vision and strategy. This should involve documenting school policies, developing training programs for teachers and staff (as a result of step two) as well as empowering student interest groups through the development of a GSA or other supportive structures (Mangin, 2019, 263). Kotter has also highlighted the importance of feedback from the change management team as well as the wider staff body as part of this step of the process (Kotter, 2011). I would strongly recommend this feedback be focused on which aspects of the plan are helping teachers and students develop skills and perspectives on the topic rather than on any feedback that invites opinion as to whether or not this is a “good use of their time”.

#### Step Six: Celebrate Successes

The sixth step in using change management principles to support school leaders in supporting transgender students is to celebrate success (Kotter, 2011). In theory school leaders should celebrate the achievements of the team and stakeholders in supporting transgender students, As again, a lot of the processes surrounding the support of trans students concern not only privacy

but also on occasion controversy, it will be necessary to take a highly nuanced approach to this element. Examples of appropriate short-term wins for the process could include the installation of gender-neutral restrooms, the inclusion of gender identity and expression in school policies, or the development of training programs for teachers and staff.

#### Step Seven: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change

The seventh step is to consolidate gains and produce more change (Kotter, 2011). Consolidating gains means building on the momentum generated by short-term wins to achieve larger and more substantive changes. School leaders should monitor progress, gather feedback, and adjust strategies as necessary to ensure that the changes are sustainable and produce the desired outcomes. Consolidating gains could involve revising curricula to include transgender issues, establishing partnerships with community organisations, and developing mentorship programs for transgender students. An important element in this step could also be considered the institutionalisation of the changes, so that, as previously mentioned, the gains made in the provision of support are not lost with a later change in leadership.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion the situation in the Dutch International School system is not perhaps as bleak as the literature belies, at least from a leadership perspective. It does appear as though Kotter's Model can be applied to the broad social change schools are experiencing but with limitations as many of the issues that remain are highly systematic in nature. From a leadership perspective this would take care of a few elements of difficulty faced by leadership, as they face a lack of confidence in their actions, an unease around saying or doing the wrong thing and a lack of expertise in their schools. The model focuses primarily on deeply enhancing the knowledge of the few while supporting the training and development of the skills and awareness of the many.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 LIMITATIONS**

There are significant limitations of the study that would need to be revised should the study be repeated. For example the author has worked with trans youth in the past but identifies as cisgendered and takes a different approach than would perhaps be taken by a researcher who was the parent of a trans child or a trans adult themselves.

There may also be significant levels of confirmation bias within the interviews themselves as the interviewees were emailed and asked to participate in a project to look at “how to support transgender students in Dutch International Secondary Schools”. Thus the participants have self selected based on their interest in the topic and willingness to participate and work on a study that aims to help trans youth. Thus the perspectives gathered may show a distinctly sunny side of the Dutch International School System and may not uncover any leaders who are disinterested in or biased against trans youth.

Moreover, the validity of the literature review may also be called into question as much of the research and resulting literature is conducted in the United states. Indeed a much more conservative and controversial context was depicted than was actually found in Dutch Schools. Therefore the relevance of some of the literature is questionable.

Finally, the ability of schools to actually follow recommendations may be seriously limited by the issue of governance and the amount of national and legislative change required to provide a more hospitable environment for trans students. Although attempts were made to provide realistic recommendations, schools may still struggle to implement these as they grapple with staff shortages and daily issues of leadership.

## 6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

An element that is missing from this research is that of the perspective of trans individuals whose lived experiences would provide a more cohesive overview of the issues and solutions. Thus, the research could be replicated with the addition of the perspectives of trans educators and their perspectives.

Another element of the research that should be further researched would be how to involve more trans people in education. It seems as though there is a significant need in schools for the presence of more experts. Questions arise as to why there don't seem to be many trans people involved in education at present and how schools and national institutions could work to increase that number.

An additional question would be to look at the systemic barriers from a national viewpoint and interrogate potential solutions to the issues of lack of space and time.

Finally another valid research avenue to explore would be the results of the change management plan and how effectively it can be implemented in schools and alternatively how effectively the change management approach can be used to manage similarly complex situations.

## REFERENCES

Azorín, J. F. M., & Cameron, R. (2010). The application of mixed methods in organisational research: a literature review. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 8(2), 95–105. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Roslyn\\_Cameron/publication/228933128\\_The\\_Application\\_of\\_Mixed\\_Methods\\_in\\_Organisational\\_Research\\_A\\_Literature\\_Review/links/0fcfd50f138d28da18000000.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Roslyn_Cameron/publication/228933128_The_Application_of_Mixed_Methods_in_Organisational_Research_A_Literature_Review/links/0fcfd50f138d28da18000000.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

American Psychological Association. (2015). Guidelines for psychological practice with transgender and gender nonconforming people. *American Psychologist*, 70(9), 832–864. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039906>

ASCD. (2021, June 4). The Schools Transgender Students Need. <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/the-schools-transgender-students-need>

Baker, Katie J. “When Students Change Gender Identity, and Parents Don't Know.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 22 Jan. 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/22/us/gender-identity-students-parents.html>.

Beauchamp, T., & D’Harlingue, B. (2012). Beyond Additions and Exceptions: The Category of Transgender and New Pedagogical Approaches for Women’s Studies. *Feminist Formations*, 24(2), 25–51. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2012.0020>

Beemyn, G. (2012). The Experiences and Needs of Transgender Community College Students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 36(7), 504–510. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2012.664089>

Bolton, K. (2002). Chinese Englishes: from Canton jargon to global English. *World Englishes*, 21(2), 181–199. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-971x.00241>

Braun, Virginia, and Clarke, V (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, pp. 77-101.



Burnes, B (2014). *Managing Change: A Strategic Approach to Organisational Dynamics*. Pearson Education, 2014.

Bute, J. J. (2009). "Nobody Thinks Twice About Asking": Women With a Fertility Problem and Requests for Information. *Health Communication*, 24(8), 752–763. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410230903265920>

Cameron, Esther, and Mike Green. *Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools and Techniques of Organizational Change*. Kogan Page, 2015.

Chen, D., Hidalgo, M. A., Leibowitz, S. G., Leininger, J., Simons, L., Finlayson, C., & Garofalo, R. (2016a). Multidisciplinary Care for Gender-Diverse Youth: A Narrative Review and Unique Model of Gender-Affirming Care. *Transgender Health*, 1(1), 117–123. <https://doi.org/10.1089/trgh.2016.0009>

COIS. (2022, February 2). How international schools can safeguard LGBTQ+ students and faculty. Council of International Schools. <https://www.cois.org/about-cis/news/post/%7Eboard/perspectives-blog/post/how-international-schools-can-safeguard-lgbtq-students-and-faculty>

COIS. (2023, February 14). Inclusion via diversity, equity & anti-racism (I-DEA) - CIS. Council of International Schools. <https://www.cois.org/for-schools/inclusion-via-diversity-equity-and-anti-racism>

Cotton, R. (2014). Supporting transgender students in schools. *British Journal of School Nursing*, 9(3), 141–143. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjsn.2014.9.3.141>

Craig, S. L., McInroy, L. B., & Austin, A. (2018). "Someone to Have My Back": International Education and IB Programmes. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 3(2), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240904044387>

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE.

Davies-Arai. (2021, August 5). School Resource Pack, 3rd Edition. Digital Download. Transgender Trend. <https://www.transgendertrend.com/product/school-resource-pack-3rd-edition-digital-download/>

Davis, Melissa & Dupree, Cydney & Meltzer, Carolyn. (2022). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Efforts Are Organizational Change Management Efforts. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. 19. 181-183. 10.1016/j.jacr.2021.09.011.

Dewey, J. (1910). *How we think*. D.C. Heath & Co.

Dewey, J. (1986). Experience and Education. *The Educational Forum*, 50(3), 241–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131728609335764>

Diamond, L. M. (2020). Gender Fluidity and Nonbinary Gender Identities Among Children and Adolescents. *Child Development Perspectives*, 14(2), 110–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12366>

Diversity and inclusion in schools report | Pearson UK. (n.d.). <https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/schools/issues/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-and-inclusion-in-schools-report.html>

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550.

Frohard-Dourlent, H. (2016). Muddling through together : educators navigating cisnormativity while working with trans and gender-nonconforming students.

Frohard-Dourlent, H. (2017). "The student drives the car, right?": trans students and narratives of decision-making in schools. *Sex Education*, 18(4), 328–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2017.1393745>

Gendered restrooms and minority stress: The public regulation of gender and its impact on transgender people's lives. (2013). *Journal of Public Management & Social Policy*, 19(1), 65. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Restrooms-Minority-Stress-Jun-2013.pdf>

Ghorayshi, A. (2022, June 10). Report Reveals Sharp Rise in Transgender Young People in the U.S. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/10/science/transgender-teenagers-national-survey.html>

Goodrich, K., & Barnard, J. (2018). Transgender and gender non-conforming students in schools: one school district's approach for creating safety and respect. *Sex Education*, 19(2), 212–225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2018.1490258>

Grossman, A. H., & D'Augelli, A. R. (2007). Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 37(5), 527–537. <https://doi.org/10.1521/suli.2007.37.5.527>

Gubrium, Jaber F., and Holstein, J (2009). *Analyzing narrative reality*. Sage Publications, 2009.

Hatzenbuehler, M. L., Birkett, M., Van Wagenen, A., & Meyer, I. H. (2014). Protective School Climates and Reduced Risk for Suicide Ideation in Sexual Minority Youths. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104(2), 279–286. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2013.301508>

Herman, J. L. (2022, September 27). How Many Adults and Youth Identify as Transgender in the United States? *Williams Institute*. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-adults-united-states/>

Holm, G., Daspit, T., & Kelaher Young, A. (2006). *The Sky is Always Falling: (Un)changing Views on Youth in the U.S.* In *A New Youth? Young People, Generations and Family Life*. Aldershot.

James, W. (1907). *Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking*. Longmans, Green.

Journell, W. (2011). Teachers' Controversial Issue Decisions Related to Race, Gender, and Religion During the 2008 Presidential Election. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 39(3), 348–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2011.10473459>

Journell, W. (2016). Teacher Political Disclosure as Parrhēsia. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 118(5), 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811611800508>

Journell, W. (2017). Framing Controversial Identity Issues in Schools: The Case of HB2, Bathroom Equity, and Transgender Students. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(4), 339–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2017.1393640>

Kahn, E. (2016). The Schools Transgender Students Need. *Educational Leadership*, 70(3), EJ1119259. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1119259>

Kelley J, Pullen Sansfaçon A, Gelly MA, Chiniara L, Chadi N (2022). School Factors Strongly Impact Transgender and Non-Binary Youths' Well-Being. *Children*. 2022; 9(10):1520. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9101520>

Khan, K. (2023, January 7). Which countries in the world allow same-sex marriage? *The Indian Express*. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-law/which-countries-in-the-world-allow-same-sex-marriage-8365484/>

Klandermans, B. (1997). *The social psychology of protest*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Kotter, J (2012) *Leading Change*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2012

Kotter, J (2012). "Guiding Coalition: A Dream Team to Help You Implement Strategy Quickly." *Forbes*, *Forbes Magazine*, 17 Feb. 2012, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2012/02/08/guiding-coalition-a-dream-team-to-help-you-implement-strategy-quickly/>.

Kotter, J. (2011, March 23). *Dennis Goin - Large-Scale Change* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6au4\\_gyV2yE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6au4_gyV2yE)

Kotter, J. (2018). *8 Steps to Accelerate Change in Your Organisation* [Online]. <https://www.kotterinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/8-Steps-eBook-Kotter-2018.pdf>

Kurt, L. J., & Chenault, K. H. (2017). School Policy and Transgender Identity Expression: A Study of School Administrators' Experiences. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2017v12n3a757>

Ladson-Billings, G (2000). "Racialized Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin, and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 257–277. London, UK: SAGE.

Lawson, R. (2022, October 27). An Tate: how the 'manosphere' influencer is selling extreme masculinity to young men. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/andrew-tate-how-the-manosphere-influencer-is-selling-extreme-masculinity-to-young-men-192564>

Lewis, M. M., & Eckes, S. E. (2019). *Storytelling, Leadership, and the Law: Using Amicus Briefs to Understand the Impact of School District Policies and Practices Related* . <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x19840389>

Linville, D. (2017). *Queering Education: Pedagogy, Curriculum, Policy* (37th ed.) [PDF]. Bank Street Occasional Paper Series. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573409.pdf>

Mangin, M. M. (2019). Transgender Students in Elementary Schools: How Supportive Principals Lead. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(2), 255–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x19843579>

Martino, W., Kassen, J., & Omercajic, K. (2020). Supporting transgender students in schools: beyond an individualist approach to trans inclusion in the education system. *Educational Review*, 74(4), 753–772. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2020.1829559>

Mayo, C. (2004). The Tolerance That Dare Not Speak Its Name. *Counterpoints*, 240, 33–47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42978378>

Merkel, J. (2017). Access to Healthcare and Lack Thereof for Transgender People. *Theory in Action*, 10(4), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.3798/tia.1937-0237.1724>

Meyer, E. J., & Keenan, H. (2018). Can policies help schools affirm gender diversity? A policy archaeology of transgender-inclusive policies in California schools. *Gender and Education*, 30(6), 736–753. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1483490>

Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid. (2022, December 20). Uitstelbrief antwoorden Kamervragen over Zwarte Piet geweld in Staphorst. Kamerstuk | Rijksoverheid.nl.

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/12/20/uitstelbericht-kamervragen-over-zwarte-piet-geweld-in-staphorst>

Nelson, C. (1999). Sexual Identities in ESL: Queer Theory and Classroom Inquiry. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(3), 371. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587670>

Niemi, N. S., & Niemi, R. G. (2007). Partisanship, Participation, and Political Trust as Taught (or Not) in High School History and Government Classes.

Theory & Research in Social Education, 35(1), 32–61.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2007.10473325>

NOS. (2021, September 15). Steeds meer jongeren willen transgenderzorg | Nederlands Jeugdinstituut.

<https://www.nji.nl/nieuws/steeds-meer-jongeren-willen-transgenderzorg>

Oriëntatie op jezelf en de wereld - Mens en samenleving - kerndoel 38. (n.d.).

SLO. <https://www.slo.nl/thema/meer/tule/orientatie-jezelf-wereld/kerndoel-38/>

Pinar, W. F. (2012). Queering/Querying Pedagogy? Or, Pedagogy Is a Pretty Queer Thing. *Queer Theory in Education*, 126–138.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410603760-8>

Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rafferty, J., Yogman, M., Baum, R., Gambon, T. B., Lavin, A., Mattson, G., Wissow, L. S., Breuner, C., Alderman, E. M., Grubb, L. K., Powers, M. E., Upadhy, K., Wallace, S. B., Hunt, L., Gearhart, A. T., Harris, C., Lowe, K. M., Rodgers, C. T., & Sherer, I. M. (2018). Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Transgender and Gender-Diverse Children and Adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 142(4). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-2162>

Riessman, C (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage Publications, 2008

Rubin, H. S. (1998). Phenomenology as Method in Trans Studies. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 4(2), 263–281.  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-4-2-263>

“Rights and Obligations.” OLVG,  
<https://www.olvg.nl/english-your-visit-to-olvg/rights-and-obligations/>.

Ryan, C., Huebner, D., Diaz, R. M., & Sanchez, J. (2009). Family Rejection as a Predictor of Negative Health Outcomes in White and Latino Lesbian, Gay, and

Bisexual Young Adults. *Pediatrics*, 123(1), 346–352.  
<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2007-3524>

School en Veiligheid. (2022, February 4). Een veilige school voor transleerlingen. *School En Veiligheid*.  
<https://www.schoolenveiligheid.nl/kennisbank/een-veilige-school-voor-trans-leerlingen/>

Sharma, A. (2021, December 16). Is n = 30 really enough? A popular inductive fallacy among data analysts. *Medium*.  
<https://towardsdatascience.com/is-n-30-really-enough-a-popular-inductive-fallacy-among-data-analysts-95661669dd98>

Sieben, & Wallowitz. (2009). “Watch What You Teach”: A First-Year Teacher Refuses to Play It Safe. *The English Journal*, 98(4), EJ832266.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ832266>

Spade, D. (2015). *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law* (Revised, Expanded). Duke University Press Books.  
 Stryker, S. (2017). *Transgender History* (Seal Studies) (2nd ed.). Seal Press.

Talalay, L. E. (2005). The Gendered Sea: Iconography, Gender, and Mediterranean Prehistory. *The Archaeology of Mediterranean Prehistory*, 130–155. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470773536.ch6>

Tenny S, Brannan JM, Brannan GD (2022). Qualitative Study. 2022 Sep 18. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2023 Jan–. PMID: 29262162. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>

*Transgender + Non-Binary Resources*. (n.d.). Human Rights Campaign.  
<https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender>

Transvisie. (2022, September 5). Jongeren (Go) – Transvisie. [transvisie.nl](https://transvisie.nl/onderling-contact/transgender-jongeren/).  
<https://transvisie.nl/onderling-contact/transgender-jongeren/>



Turban, J. L., Dolotina, B., King, D., & Keuroghlian, A. S. (2022). Sex Assigned at Birth Ratio Among Transgender and Gender Diverse Adolescents in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 150(3). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-056567>

Valencia, R. R. (2010). *Dismantling Contemporary Deficit Thinking: Educational Thought and Practice (The Critical Educator)* (1st ed.). Routledge.

van der Wel, J., Bertling, L., & Renooy, P. (2016, October). Internationaal onderwijs in Nederland. Officiële bekendmakingen. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/blg-802814.pdf>

Yes, there are still places at an international school in Amsterdam. (2019, March 28). DutchNews.nl.

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/features/2019/03/yes-there-are-still-places-at-an-international-school-in-amsterdam/>

Yvanovich, R. (2020b, September 11). Change management: Understanding the different stages of change | TRG International. TRG International. <https://www.trginternational.com/gallery/change-management-understanding-the-different-stages-of-change/>

Zacko-Smith, J. D., & Smith, G. P. (2010). Recognizing and Utilizing Queer Pedagogy: A Call for Teacher Education to Reconsider the Knowledge Base on Sexual Orientation for Teacher Education Programs. *Multicultural Education*, 18(1), 2–9. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ916840.pdf>

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Sample Questions

1. What is your context? What is your background like your subject etc?  
How long have you been in your current role?
2. Have you noticed an increase in the number of trans or gender non conforming students?
3. How has that impacted your school?
4. Do you have a procedure in place to support these students?
5. Who leads that procedure?
6. Have you had any pushback from parents or teachers?
7. Who do consult in terms of outside agencies? Who can help you when the expertise is not available in house?
8. Is there anything holding you back in terms of supporting these students?  
Any specific barriers you can think of?
9. In terms of the provision of care for trans students? Do you ever check back in with them about how they experienced the provision of care in the school?
10. Do you see a link to hiring policies?
11. What do you need as a school leader?

## Appendix 2. Theme From Interviews

Present   
 Absent   
 Inconclusive   
 somewhat 

Theme	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3	Leader 4	Leader 5	Leader 6	Leader 7
Student centred approach	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Concrete Policies	No	Some what	No	No	No	No	Some what
Complete Student Agency	Some what	No	No	No	No	No	No
Automatic Referral to Mental Health Support	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Want More Training	Some what	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some what
Difficulty Accessing Information and Training	Some what	Yes	Yes	Some what	Some what	Yes	Some what
Attempts to Develop Curriculum Support	Inconclusive	Yes	Inconclusive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Follow Up With Students to Gauge Success of Support	No	No	No	No	Some what	No	No
Link to Hiring Policy	Inconclusive	Inconclusive	Some what	Inconclusive	Some what	Some what	Inconclusive
Anxiety	No	Yes	Yes	Some	Some	Yes	Yes

Around Supporting Trans Students				what	what		
----------------------------------	--	--	--	------	------	--	--

Time in Current Role	Leader 1	Leader 2	Leader 3	Leader 4	Leader 6	Leader 7
	2	28	25	30	10	14

## Appendix 3. Transcript One

Speaker 1 (00:00):

Okay what kind of school are we in? What kind of context? So this is a Dutch International School. We have a primary school and secondary school. That is spread over multiple campuses. And so we

Speaker 1 (01:01):

cater to International families and families Dutch families. Also that are likely to move abroad so they need International Education for their children. We also run a curriculum. So, all the way through from primary from primary all the way through to the final years for the diploma program. So we've got the PYP, MYP and DP program, And again, this case for helps continuity, and whether families coming from abroad from an International Education and coming into the Netherlands or preparing them to move to another country. So, it's kind of transient population that we deal with.

Speaker 2 (01:54):

Do you have any trans students?

Speaker 1 (01:57):

We have one openly trans students on our other campus, but not on this particular campus, not that I currently aware. I have had several trans students in my previous job, so I won't necessarily mention name, but student came in and had already gone through a, the correct wording for this, but had already gone through the transition. And yeah, it was a super interesting for us to produce in case studies. Well, because how do we manage that as a school? And the conclusion very much was putting it into the hands of the how, the student felt and what the student needed rather than putting down the policy as a school saying, we need to do this for know, what does a student need is? What? It came down to it. So it was a constant, you know, conversation that we had communication, we had between the student and the parents and how, you know, how they felt about situation, what they specifically need?

Speaker 2 (03:02):

Would you use a similar approach again?

Speaker 1 (03:17):

because I think, you know, depending on on the individual and what they are going through, I think it's always important to see what their needs are rather than putting a generalized approach. I think we need to be differentiated in that particular approach, because you know, sometimes they themselves as individuals don't really know where they stand what they need, what they want. So, I think it's important to listen to their needs rather than putting a blanket policy saying all trans students, have to be dealt with in this way or fall under a specific policy. I don't think that that's really helpful because we're putting them in a box. When actually, what we need is for them to discover themselves. And how do we do that? Well, we listen to the student.

Speaker 1 (04:01):

So I think I would very much proceed in a similarly. Great.

Speaker 2 (04:04):

Did you ever receive Professional development. That would have helped you deal with specific set of issues that trans students are dealing with?

Speaker 1 (04:17):

I had a very short training, in Brazil was a, don't know if the word is actually is but person that specialized in sexology or something along those lines, I excuse me. If I don't know the proper terms but there's a very very small of therapists that deal specifically in that. And yeah, it was well, was before the trans student joined and it really was about how best to listen to the students. How best to deal with issues that may arise? It was only a one-time session. So I can't say that have had extensive training in.

Speaker 2 (05:04):

What kind of, what kind of things did you have to do that to you? Did you have to do for example, did you have to change their pronouns in your system?

Speaker 1 (05:13):

You need to talk to teachers, what you actually have to do yourself. So, at the time, the student identified as a male student, having transitioned, from actually came to our school having transitioned, and in the previous school identified as a female student. So the student with that being said, obviously wanted to change their pronouns but did not necessarily want to be referred to as "they" there but was okay with he/him, he because the right pronouns and so the transition for the student was leaving one school I guess identifying as a specific and then moving onto or moving on to the next school. So the transition for them was quite clear as well and in some ways that helped us. So from an administrative standpoint, we didn't have to create a category or anything in our system?

Speaker 1 (06:36):

How much of that process fell on you as a school leader and how much fell on the wellbeing coordinators? So we had a social emotional counselor and we had a what we call it a student support counselor. So both of them worked together to see how best (I mean I was involved to a certain extent in enrollment Etc), but on a day-to-day basis fell to the counselor or you're saying the The well-being Department to make sure that the student not only felt at home, but also got everything that they needed at that point as well. It was important that teachers were made aware, but more not asked to do anything specific. Just the student would like, to be addressed and identifies as a male Student. Please treat the student as a male student, and that was the thing that we laid out. I've got to say that having seen the student graduate. It actually was, it was only one case but it was a very successful case.

Speaker 1 (07:33):

He SEEMED very happy leaving the school and, you know, that's what I'm saying. How would, how would I treat it next time around? I've only had one case or that's, I think I would stick with that. But then again, it was a successful story, graduated. Well he's going on to art college in the u.s. so really successful.

Speaker 2 (07:56):

In terms of ethical questions, the parents just like did you did you envision any push back from parents?

Speaker 2 (08:03):

I think it may be more tricky. our school's parents are more progressive in terms of inclusion, in terms of conservative ideology,

Speaker 1 (08:25):

Other parents? The other parents were never informed. Because the students wish was to be, well, because they wanted to be known or understood as a male student and not for the rest of the families to be involved. That was the students decision at the time. And so, we respect that. So well, that's why it wasn't made public. Let's say so student used to use the male bathroom, for example.

Speaker 2 (08:57):

I imagine, in this case, the students parents were supportive?

Speaker 1 (09:01):

Actually, the mother was extremely supportive. The father was a little bit in denial and struggled with the idea. Brazilian conservative parents was not too happy about the whole situation but, you know, we saw over the things, the student was with us about 3-4 years. So most high school The father's stance started to change, but we did notice that the beginning, the meetings were only with e mother, father, didn't necessarily want to be involved didn't want to turn up we came to understand from the mother that he was was finding it difficult.

Speaker 2 (09:43):

I think my from my initial research, I would be interested to hear your take, my initial research has shown that trans students who have a supportive parent or parents and are much more likely to get to support than those students whose parents are not supportive,

Speaker 1 (10:06):

I think that's a fair comment because again from the experience that I've had, I mean, despite the fact that not both parents were necessarily nvolved. The mother was very supportive and because the mother was so involved and



supportive and wanted to make sure that the became a success story. It was, but again, that's only based on one example. So, I would generally say that I can, I can make a slight (I don't know if it's appropriate) but it's like a step towards my brother-in-law. Who was gay was openly gay. But had a...he only came out later in life and e still struggles with the idea that he didn't feel supported earlier on which meant that he didn't want to come out and he wasn't able to be himself. And now is his parents are very supportive but he didn't feel like he had that support and so because he didn't have that support, he didn't get that support in school or when he was a teenager and only felt that he could come out in his mid-20s. So I guess if I can make a comparison with that, yes, I think I can see that the more support is available when parents are open to it. Likely, they will get better support. Yep.

Speaker 2 (11:19):

I just two or three more questions in terms of the Netherlands, where, where would your team go if you needed advice on how to provide for trans or gender nonconforming students. Well I would first go to our head of well-being, she's got all the necessary contacts in Amsterdam, governmental context in what not. I think being a DISS school. We do fall under Dutch labor laws and we do fall all under Dutch regulation. So I think it's always important to first- see what are our our legal obligations so it's important that we know our legal obligations and how far we go and what we can offer.

Speaker 1 (12:02):

So I think the first point is going to see that from a legal standpoint then you know Organizations that openly support trans students would be a route that we would go down, you know, looking if the I guess the home situation is safe as well supportive, there's that that route we can go down but yeah, my route would be as ahead of Campus will be going through the head of well-being because I don't feel

Speaker 1 (12:32):

well versed enough on the situation.

Speaker 2 (12:38):

What kind of support? if I say, okay, my ideal world, they're going to get everything we need at the school. Money's No Object. What would you have in place for specific trans students?

Speaker 1 (12:50):

Well one thing that would be really important would be space, a non-binary toilet for example, non-binary changing rooms. So we have changing rooms in this school that is boy or girls. And if someone does not necessarily associate with either, I think it's important. We have a space for staff members, we have a known...what is it? Non assigned or un-gendered bathrooms. But, for students, we still have we still have assigned bathrooms so that again I think bathrooms and changing rooms would be important. I think that's the obvious one. But equally I think one thing that we are missing is a school and I think quite a few other schools Miss is an actual counselor that you know is available for students to be able to walk through what they are feeling, what they are going through. So, a support structure beyond the facilities, I think, Structure from a social emotional standpoint, I think would be very important as well. So if we could hire hire a person that's specifically versed in that I would put money into that as well.

Speaker 2 (14:11):

Anything else?

Speaker 1 (14:33):

I think the important oint here to, to mention, I think, what's interesting about the research is we have to be prepared as well. And we have to start thinking about it and have a conversation about it, and we can't be caught off guard. I don't think we have any excuse to say, we don't know what to do. We have to be, we have to inform ourselves and make sure that something is in place, you know, because it is likely that we will have more trans students either now, or in the future, Right.

Appendix 4. Transcript Two.

Speaker 1 (05:35):

What kind of context are we in?

Speaker 1 (05:35):

International school in the North of the Netherlands

Speaker 1 (05:35):

Have you noticed the uptick in gender non conforming or transgender students?

Speaker 1 (05:40):

Definitely, it's been challenging, we have quite a few in a small school so actually 3% of our students could be described as trans or gender non conforming. We've tried our best, staff training, changing rooms, information sessions, had a bit of resistance, one staff member wanted to start a bible study club as a response, it's definitely changing,

It's a bit tricky because we want to do more in the curriculum and in terms of visibility but teachers don't know where to start and some teachers wouldn't even know the correct words to use.

We also started looking at our hiring policy .

It would seem that supporting non-conforming students starts with hiring gender-nonconforming staff. So, I mean, if you're already given those opportunities in the hiring process, I think you're really really onto something like creating that sort of environment that you're looking for and yeah.

1):

Yeah. Yeah. We're working on covid-19 has a similar. I'm similar lack of diversity. So we call it and, and do you. Okay, I just this, just like a really specific question about the Coordinated Care. So when a student comes to you as an educator or come to the school or to their mentor and I'm presenting themselves as trans, is there a procedure in place or does it really depend on the individual.

It really depends on the student, what do they want and need? Do they have supportive parents, because if they are under 16 we legally cant do anything with them without the parents' support, but if they dont have the parents on board we can support them with that

Speaker 1 (10:32):

Yeah, it's it is. I think that is the safest policy if I'm honest. Because yeah you can really do say, you can do alot of damage but yeah, it's very sensitive. And then in terms of because like there is there, alot of different schools of thought, in terms of actually, how we should sort of care for students who come out as trans and there, there are two distinct camps and then there's everybody else in the middle. So there's one camp that says

Speaker 1 (11:02):

Parents should be informed and involved from the very beginning. And then there is the other really other side of it, which kind of says that it should be entirely student-led and that the parents should be informed at the students in the students own time. So do you, do you have a sort of do you? Is that again, something you just gauge as you go or do you just try to keep or the parents usually involved from the beginning?

Speaker 1 (11:34):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

So what? That's actually one of my other questions. They are argue curve. Like do you do communicate with outside agencies?

It's a bit difficult because we work with the GGz but they have a huge waiting list that took two years to get a workshop and then one organization will say one thing and then another will recommend something different,

What do you need?

We need information, a set of best practices, what are schools doing and what should they be doing?

Speaker 1 (17:02):

This was one of my initial ideas, was to make a curriculum, that is up-to-date informed by the needs of trans students within the distant atwork. And the only qualms I have it. That is the the lack of autonomy. The teachers would have within that framework. So you have to be careful and you have to leave room especially because we're in the Netherlands. And you know, everyone here is a professional and they, you know, they want their Freedom. Freedom as well. So, I'm trying to sort of think about how to head to frame this

Speaker 1 (21:36):

Yeah. And what? Yeah, I mean you've talked on you've just done some really, really interesting themes. It's at this one that I actually think is particularly interesting, especially with this project and it's kind of like do you want? It's like what do we need? We need more guidance. Do we need a prescriptive approach that is also quite difficult and quite like it's a big question in this kind of work because and again, with with the transgender issue,

Speaker 1 (22:01):

transgender student issue. For example, once you write down a rule about pronouns or name change, it becomes set in stone and then kind of actually become more difficult for students because people will stick to the rule religiously and the the lives and the cases of these students are notoriously complex so we can't. Yeah it's unfortunate. We can't take all the complexities into account when we write these rules so we actually in this sort of work stay intentionally vague but it's that's why it's also so frustrating.

Speaker 1 (22:33):

So if then it's a paradox but we are trying. I'm and yeah.

How do we honor these kids in front of us without putting them in a box?

We need to be patient with these teachers who are trying to use the correct pronouns

Speaker 1 (25:03):

It's I think it's I it's a question that comes up in a lot of cuz I also consult on this or anything. So it's sort of like how do you honor the child in front of you without putting them in a box? It's 98. Yeah, yeah. And it's something that has come up before and I guess I think that is a really good sort of focused question. Good practice and how do we honor these kids? What else

Speaker 1 (25:35):

You weren't able to them. Fantastic, happy to have weekly II. I will hold that promise I really am I really, really appreciate your time and I will I will I will let you wrap it off because I think I have a lot to work with. This is brilliant. Thank I really appreciated it. Really I like I'm not I'm I've talked to quite a few schools, also outside the Netherlands.

Speaker 1 (26:01):

I do think you're doing now, you're doing great. If I'm honest, I think. And, yeah, I'll keep in touch. I'll, I'll keep you. Informed of the, I need to go back and book facilities and things for the little Equity Summers, and then I'll let you know about the particulars hopefully, within the next week. All right. Thank you so much again. Thank you. Bye-bye. I like,

## Appendix 5. Transcript Three.

so I'm just going to start. So, um, can you tell me, just like, what kind of context are we in and what kind of school are we in? What kind of school are we in?

Yeah. International school. Um, nearly 1500 students from the age of four. Well, actually under four. Foundation. Right the way through to graduation. We also have after school care, and we have, like, child care. So really, we have students, babies from the age of zero right the way through to when they graduate. And in the secondary department, we now have about 700 students from the ages of 11 to graduating 18, 19 year olds.

Does that make us one of the bigger international schools? Actually, yeah. We're one of the biggest international schools. I think The Hague is bigger than us. Um, but, but that's probably yeah, if we're talking about the Dutch international schools. Yeah. We're now one of the biggest network. Yeah. And we're the only dis school that also has a Dutch department primary department on the same campus. All the other schools have them a different areas. They're all part of the, the network, but they're not on the school campus. So we're the only school, I think. Yeah.

And then in terms of you in your background, your what kind of subject background did you have before you became a leader? And then, um, how long have you have you been in leadership within education? Yeah. Yeah, I trained as a designer, a visual arts design, art and design teacher. Although I have taught I was head of ELL, I've taught English, lang and Lit. I've taught multicultural studies when it was a subject. I've also taught the bilingual when they were immersed with our international students. So they were part of the Dutch totality with part came for certain subjects like multilingual multiculturalism. Yeah. Um. Oh gosh, it probably taught pretty much everything. Year to two. I've done NYP coordinating diploma, everything, and I've been in a leadership position.

For nearly 30 years, I think. Okay. Yeah. You. Could be the longest standing leader in the Diss Network. Uh, I probably, um. Yes, I think so. Yes, Probably in

the same role. Yeah. My role has been named a few different things. It's changed a lot. It started as International Stream coordinator. Yeah. And then I worked with the 11 to 16 year olds, so I brought in the NYP program. We were lcse school and then I worked closely with the diploma coordinator, so is coordinator, diploma coordinator. And then later we had, I think I was deputy head or something like that, and it changed a few times. Yeah. To now I'm head of secondary. So part of XY of the whole of Sopho schools. Nice and good to know that I'm trying to rack my brains now of anyone else. No, No one I've come across. Mike, I remember he was a science teacher. Six years. No, Mike was. I met him. No, he was a science teacher, I think. No, I think so. Yeah, it could possibly be. Um, and okay, I'm going to just start and look at the say in terms of like the presence of trans or gender non-conforming kids.

Have you noticed that there's been an increase over the last few years?

Um, I don't know if there's been an increase, but certainly there's more awareness now, so that that's a very good point actually. Yeah. I don't, I don't. Yeah. If I think over the years we've had lots of diversity and now in hindsight looking back, you can you can see the differences could have been all sorts of things trans. I can't. It's only been possibly in the last 5 or 6 years that I can specifically remember a student who was transitioning and was open about it and that we were aware of it. That's so interesting. That's exactly what the head of Arnhem said. Yeah. And I don't know whether it's just society is becoming more open and maybe because of age that students didn't feel comfortable until after they're grown up. I mean, after school age, but certainly diversity in different genders and sexual orientation and all that have always been there in the same way as I would say, for different learning needs, special needs. It wasn't as like things like autism, even ADHD wasn't talked about. But you knew as a teacher or as an educator, there was different approaches to different students. They had different needs, but maybe we couldn't label them. That's a really interesting point. In fact, I was so funny last night when I like to diverse a little bit. Yeah, yeah. Go all over the place. I was with my husband last night and I've got an ex student on my LinkedIn. Yeah, she's in her 30s now with her own business about breathing and all sorts of fantastic things and. But she was my very first. I was also the special needs coordinator at one point. She was my



very first student I ever met who had Asperger autism. And it was so new and almost unheard of with girls. And her name is Ava and her name is I called my second child because it was the first time I heard that name. So I even had a link. I totally remember that experience. I learned so much then about the way we had to interact and and speak to the students differently. And I remember how ostracized she was from the teachers that would literally throw her out the class constantly. So that was my first experience of really having to yeah, like work with a student who just did not fit in the mold and nobody was there to say, Oh, this is because it just wasn't talked about then it was so new. So yeah, I've had the opportunity to be able to have, you know, experience lots and lots of changes and diversity and seeing if you see hundreds and hundreds of students coming through, you're going to notice you can spot patterns and changes and needs and things. But certainly over the last few years, I think. Visibility. Would you call it visibility? And it feels that the younger people are open. Not 100% acceptance. That's not the right word. But to talk about it is in their vocabulary. So they're kind of it's not like when you see something like somebody's gender fluid or somebody's transitioning or somebody. It's not something that they get shocked about. It's kind of they talk. They just talk that way. So that's kind of very nice to hear that change. That's really cool. Um, has the increase in visibility impacted the way you do things at school? Uh, yeah, for sure.

Appendix 6. Transcript Four.