

# The Reality of Transness At Oak Hills

By Payton Simonson

*“As I look at the disgusted faces of adults as they meet my eyes and realize the reality of who I am, I know that I am the worst nightmare of many parents in this community. I am who they pray their daughters will never become. And this reality was a thing I had to learn to accept as young as 14 years old.”* This quote comes from Marshall Shorten, a trans male Oak Hills student in his letter to



the school board where he urges the school board to consider adding gender-neutral bathrooms, his requests later being ignored. Ultimately, the addition of these bathrooms would be an easy solution to the dysphoria brought on by these students having to use the incorrect restroom because it would validate their identity, but compromising with what the school board has shown that they are comfortable with.

The largest issue for trans people is that there are few open resources for them to aid their dysphoria. The Media Center will allow students to change their deadnames to their real names, new lunch accounts can be made with updated information, and students can use the staff bathrooms (with much confusion among the actual staff who are never notified), but this isn't common knowledge. Simply having a section of the Oak Hills website dedicated to resources or posters around the school would take away a lot of stress from those who need this information.

The accommodations given to students by Oak Hills still leave a lot to be desired. For instance, school emails cannot be changed, which leaves transgender students with

a constant source of dysphoria. Secondly, teachers and substitutes will misgender and deadname students with zero consequence. Transgender students are also forced to either use the incorrect bathroom, leaving students uncomfortable or the staff bathroom, leaving teachers uncomfortable. Another ongoing inconvenience for these students is that when meeting with counselors, accommodations take many meetings to gain where there should simply not be such a hassle just to make these students feel as validated as others are.

What do the transgender students themselves say about Oak Hills? I interviewed 12 different individuals under the trans umbrella about their experiences, and here are some of the highlights.

- “I think that if Oak Hills included basic education in something like X bell about LGBTQ+ students, then people would be more sympathetic,”
- “Oak Hills should treat using the incorrect pronouns deliberately as a serious disrespectful issue,”
- “I wish that there were more resources for us to take advantage of,”
- “Staff doesn’t understand us,”
- “I have accepted that I will never be comfortable in this school.”

What can be done to solve these problems? Attendance at school board meetings would be the best way to get what we want heard by those who have the power to make the executive decisions that can best aid these students. To find out when and where these meetings are, look to the [ohlsd.us](http://ohlsd.us) website under “Board of Education.” Another way to get demands out there would be through attendance at SAGA meetings, which are every other Monday after school in either room 320 or

(Cook's room), or on the Mondays where SAGA is not held, the Progressive Club, held in room 320 after school, so that the like-minded people who care about ensuring better treatment to this population can organize together to make positive change.