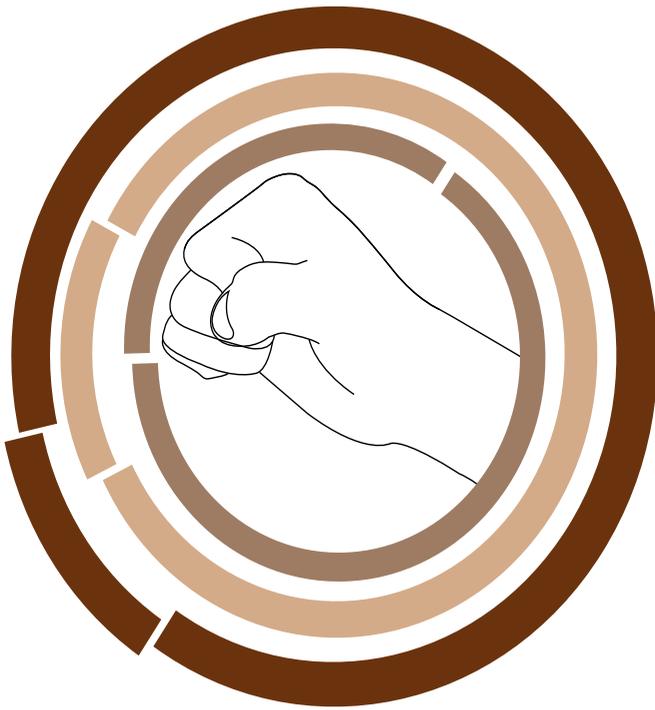


# THE TRANS GENDER



For individuals who expressed a transgender identity or gender nonconformity in grades K-12 nationwide:

- 35% of trans individuals experience physical assault
- 15% of trans individuals leave their school due to harassment.
- 12% of trans individuals experience sexual violence

## TOPIC

### Accommodations for transgenders may soon find its way to MHS

Ariel Jones | Staff Writer

Nationwide, transgender students are in a tough spot: right between the Men's and Women's restrooms.

After considerable debate, the Kentucky Senate passed a bill called "The Kentucky Student Privacy Act", limiting transgender students to use only unisex bathrooms or ones matching their biological sex. While schools in Louisville are adapting to the new policy, schools in Ohio are caught in a crossfire. Transgender students are pushing for schools to assign restrooms and locker rooms based on gender identity; however, there is disputation among legislators and families affected by the decision.

A concern that has been continually voiced by students' parents is the well-being of transgender students once the regulations are established due to the sudden spotlight on the transgender community. Ha-

arrassment toward the LGBT community has taken its toll, with the transgender suicide rate at a staggering 41 percent; about 25 times higher than the rate of the overall population at 4.6 percent, according to The Williams Institute. A victim to transgender bullying and discrimination was 17-year-old Kings High School student, Leelah Alcorn. She committed suicide on December 28, 2014. In her suicide note, she accounts overwhelming discrimination and lack of acceptance as a factor toward her suicide.

"Although the reaction from my friends was positive, my parents were pissed," Alcorn said. "They felt like I was attacking their image, and that I was an embarrassment to them. They wanted me to be their perfect little straight Christian boy, and that's obviously not what I wanted."

According to this post on Alcorn's

blog, changes in society are necessary to prevent further tragedies.

"My death needs to mean something...fix society. Please."

While Mason hasn't been faced with the requisition for transgender/unisex bathrooms/locker rooms, it may become a demand from the student body in the near future. According to Mason High School principal, Mindy McCarty-Stewart, once a situation arises, Mason will develop a course of action to accommodate transgender students without infringing on the rights of other students.

"I think the potential does exist that the issue may arise before we have any specific legislation that guides us into what we're supposed to be doing," McCarty-Stewart said. "I think with Kentucky's movement, it helps foresee that something may come up in Ohio. Fortunately, we have facilities available to offer gen-

der neutral restrooms, so we could offer that as an opportunity to handle that situation. But I believe that we are prepared to handle situations in a delicate manner, and the right manner."

Alcorn's final plea for equality has been taking shape across the country from schools to fitness centers. In early March, a woman filed a complaint to Planet Fitness for letting a transgender woman use the women's locker room. Planet Fitness' corporate office stated that they are a "no judgement" zone, therefore telling the woman that she was in violation of their "no judgement" policy. Planet Fitness canceled the membership of the woman who complained, saying in a statement that her behavior was "deemed inappropriate and disruptive to other members, which is a violation of the membership agreement," according to CNN.

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