



Ontario Institute for Education Leadership

*Ontario Leaders Collaborating
for Student Achievement, Equity and Well-being*

STRENGTHENING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARENESS

Safe Space for Transitioning Student

A newly appointed principal of a high school located in a small, rural, becomes alerted to a disturbance in the boys' bathroom. Upon entering, he sees a student on the ground being kicked and spat upon by a group of three boys. The student's face is bloody and he is trying to get away. Everyone stops when you enter and one of the boys says the student is a "fairy" and should not be in that bathroom.

The student being assaulted identifies as transgender and prefers to be called Kloe. The parents are very supportive and respect their child's need to transition to female.

The three boys were disciplined by the principal. One of the boys' parents wants to know why an "abomination of nature" is allowed to attend at the school, believing her child was standing up for his values. While she doesn't condone violence, she feels this incident would not have happened if the student had not been allowed to enroll in the school. She shares her comments with Kloe's parents and demands to know what the school is doing to get these "people" out of the school.

This incident is the final straw for Khloe's parents. The bullying and lack of support for their child is unacceptable. They too demand that the issue be dealt with immediately or they are going to go to the media.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

1. What are the issues in this situation that need to be addressed?

2. What conversations need to be had with the students and with the parents?

3. What processes should be in place for dealing with parents and students to ensure their voices are heard?

4. What plan needs to be put in place that involves the entire student body rather than focus exclusively on the group of students who were involved in this incident?

5. What policies are in place to ensure all students are supported?
