



October 15, 2019

**Comments in response to the New York City Department of Education’s Proposed Amendments to Chancellor’s Regulation A-831 (Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment).**

Dear Chancellor Carranza and Panel for Educational Policy,

Thank you for the important changes to the 2011 policy on student-to-student sexual harassment in New York City public schools. These changes reflect a desire to create safe, supportive academic environments for all students, including cisgender and transgender girls and non-binary youth, who face especially high rates of school-based sexual violence.

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) is a Brooklyn, New York based advocacy and direct-service organization, founded in 2001 with the explicit purpose of ensuring that schools and communities were safe and supportive places for cisgender and transgender girls and non-binary youth of color. GGE has an almost two-decade history of fighting against gender-based violence, and currently works directly with students from New York City schools who are survivors of child sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence. GGE is the leading organization advocating on behalf of student-survivors of sexual violence in New York City. GGE previously was the fiscal sponsor for the international MeToo Movement, founded by former GGE Senior Director, Tarana Burke. In the urgency of the MeToo movement, GGE shifted its anchor youth leadership program, Sisters in Strength, to specifically serve young people who are survivors - as well as their allies.

In 2016, GGE published a report called *The School Girls Deserve*, which was the result of a participatory action research process with over 100 New York City public school students.<sup>1</sup> **The data collected from those students indicated that 1 in 3 students experience some form of sexual harassment.** Our research found that 97% of sexual harassment survivors surveyed did not report because sexual harassment is normalized within school culture and students did not know the process. This continues to be an on-going issue, as reflected by lawsuits against the Department of Education (DOE) over the past two years. In response to that report, GGE led a campaign, supported by over a dozen other organizations to ensure that the City of New York allocated over \$850,000 toward hiring of at least seven Title IX Coordinators with the explicit purpose of

---

<sup>1</sup> Girls for Gender Equity, *School Girls Deserve*, 2016.



addressing school-based sexual violence in DOE schools. This is especially crucial as reports have indicated for years that many school administrators were unable to name the Title IX Coordinator or did not believe their schools had the role.<sup>2</sup>

In the early part of 2019, Legal Services of New York City (LSNYC) filed a lawsuit on behalf of four students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) who had all experienced some form of sexual harassment or assault connected with their DOE school. All of those girls were students of color. This is an example of what GGE has recognized for years, Black and Latinx girls are disproportionately harmed by sexual violence in DOE schools, and we would like to remind this body that addressing school-based sexual violence is both a gender and racial equity issue. These issues can only be resolved through a widespread commitment from the adults in each school building and through a systematic prevention strategy. We appreciate the DOE's recognition of the need for a clear, intentional, long-term strategy for prevention and response to sexual violence in DOE schools. **GGE believes that this strategy should not be isolated amongst the DOE's legal staff, or Title IX Coordinators, but instead should include all relevant departments, especially the Division of School Climate and Wellness. The DOE cannot meaningfully address the widespread occurrence of school-based sexual violence without a commitment to shifting school climate and the underlying beliefs and practices of the adults who interface with students on a daily basis.**

GGE is in support of several of the new proposed changes, which we believe are crucial for creating safe and responsive school communities. (1) We strongly support the clarification that "sexual harassment may be a single incident or a series of related incidents." This is an important recognition that a single incident of harm can have a deleterious effect on a student's feelings toward school and their ability to learn. (2) We support the expansion of the definition of sexual harassment to include "telling lies or spreading rumors of a sexual nature, stalking through the use of technology, leering, sexual flirtations, and pinching, among others." (3) GGE is in full support of the designation of Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons in every DOE school, and that these are full-time staff members. (4) We support the use of Title IX Coordinators to ensure that investigations are handled fairly and competently. (5) We support the clear articulation of accommodations which will be made available to student-survivors who report experiencing sexual harassment.

---

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Nefertiti Martin, Girls for Gender Equity.(2011) Accessed: <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/investigations/I-TEAM-NYC-Schools-Fail-Student-Sex-Complaints-Regulations-169309146.html?akmobile=o&nms=y>



However, there must be more coordination and long-term planning applied toward a strategy for *preventing* school-based sexual violence. Such planning must include advocates, students, and community. A policy that does not involve the input of experts in trauma, anti-violence, LGBTQ advocacy, racial justice, and disability rights is short-sighted.

### **Girls for Gender Equity Recommendations:**

While we support the aforementioned changes, there are areas of the proposed regulation that do *not* meet the needs of students, that are not clear to students, that fail to create meaningful school-wide accountability, or are not far enough in their scope. Specifically, GGE recommends that **(1)** Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons receive training at least annually, at the start of each school year, and that said training includes information about supporting LGBTQ/GNC students, about misogyny, about consent and healthy boundaries, and that training records are publically available.<sup>3</sup> **(2)** GGE recommends that prevention is prioritized, through a publically available, city-wide strategy that includes staff at all levels. **(3)** GGE recommends prioritizing prevention by ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary information to choose not to engage in sexual harassment, and that schools place an emphasis upon being communities of consent, including comprehensive sexual health education. **(4)** GGE recommends that schools where there is a desire to shift culture or proactively address sexual harassment or assault, are equipped to change school climate through on-going, intensive, interventions which focus on culture shift, specifically led by Title IX Coordinators or outside experts as needed. **(5)** GGE recommends that students are fully informed about who the designated Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaison is, the scope of their duties, including where to report staff-to-student or School Safety Agent-to-student sexual harassment. Students must have easy to understand reporting pathways. **(6)** GGE recommends that restorative practices are available, and in some instances prioritized, with the consent of student-survivors, to respond to school-based sexual harassment. **(7)** Student-survivors should have access to therapists or counselors, at no cost to them, who specialize in supporting survivors of gender-based violence, and not be limited to counselors within their own schools.

- 1. Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons should receive training at least annually, at the start of each school year, and training should include information about supporting LGBTQ students, combatting misogyny, consent and healthy boundaries, and training records should be publicly available.**

---

<sup>3</sup> GGE must be involved in training curricula development and vet the trainings prior to approval



Girls for Gender Equity strongly supports the presence of full-time staff in every DOE school, who are fully prepared to prevent and respond to school-based sexual harassment and assault. However, these staff will not be effective if they are not properly trained in methods for prevention, particularly, teaching students about consent and the beliefs about girls and femmes which lead to gender-based violence. Educators and students should be able to look to this designee for information about practices within their classrooms which facilitate safe and supportive environments. These staff should ideally not be deans or ordinary disciplinarians. **These staff should take on the responsibility of ensuring that other staff are not encouraging sexual harassment or failing to intervene when it occurs. Further, students, parents, and community should have access to information about the training providers, curriculum, and methods for all trainers.** Training should take place at minimum, annually, and preferably at the start of each school year, to ensure that staff are fully prepared to respond to trends and patterns in student interactions. In a similar fashion, organizations are required to hold a "School-Aged Child Care" license which requires current staff to receive 30 hours of professional development per year. Line staff must complete 15 hours. School staff should at minimum, receive a similar quantity of training in sexual harassment prevention, and responding to the trauma related needs of survivors.

In a 2019 federal complaint filed by Legal Services of New York City, four different students, attending different DOE schools came forward to school personnel to report incidents of rape or sexual harassment.<sup>4</sup> One student, an eighth-grader, was raped in her school stairwell in September 2018. Another student, a sixth-grader, was raped while walking home from school by a classmate. Another student was teased in a trans antagonistic manner and sexually harassed by other students.<sup>5</sup> The complaint states that in response to reports of sexual violence, the Defendants (DOE personnel) “. . . declined to investigate and document sexual assault, mocked Plaintiff [students], and dismissed their claims.” The complaint alleges, and we agree, that the harm the students experienced can be attributed to a “system-wide culture of indifference to gender-based violence. . . .”<sup>6</sup> **It is crucial that the DOE address the gaps in leadership, training, and strategy that make widespread gender-based violence possible in DOE schools.** The proposed Chancellor’s regulations offers only that liaisons will receive training, but makes no mention of the frequency or content of said training. This is insufficient to address the existing gaps. GGE highly recommends that each school’s liaison be required to receive some training at least annually on the attitudes and behaviors which make sexual harassment possible in a school community. The trainings offered by the New York City Commission on Human Rights have a great deal of

---

<sup>4</sup> *Doe v. Carranza*, No. 1:19-cv-02514-PKC-SJB, at 2 (E.D.N.Y. Apr. 29, 2019), ECF No. 3

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 35

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 4



promise, and once tailored to meet the needs of K-12 academic spaces, can be models for the trainings that liaisons receive. These staff should also be trained in trauma-informed responses to student disclosures and have a clear line of communication to the seven Title IX Coordinators. Because of our almost two decades of expertise GGE would like to be engaged as a partner in reviewing the curriculum, with an eye toward conversations around healthy relationships and consent.

**2. GGE recommends that prevention is prioritized, through a publically available, district-wide strategy which includes staff at all levels.**

In order for parents and students to have clarity and full confidence in the DOE's ability to ensure safety within DOE schools, the DOE should publish a district-wide strategy for *preventing* school-based sexual violence. This strategy should be informed by research, evidence-based practices, and community input. It is imperative that the DOE does not take on a reactionary posture, but instead does the long-term thinking that ensures student safety. This strategy should include a distribution plan for materials which help students and staff understand the behavior which constitutes sexual harassment, notices that are conspicuously displayed on each school's website, a thoughtful implementation of the aforementioned trainings for Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons, and any other information that students and community members deem to be necessary.

**It cannot be overstated that the adults within each school building must set the tone for the behavioral expectations within schools, and that adults are capable of supporting students as they learn about healthy communication, consent, and boundaries.** In one of the claims made by Legal Services of New York City, a student, known as Jane Doe in the complaint, who was raped in her school stairwell, after years of being groped by the same student, reported not only to her school principal, but to her school's guidance counselor. Both staff ignored the student's complaints and failed to take action to address the factors that could have led to the rape. In addition, Jane Doe has had to endure taunts from other students after disclosing her rape, (complaint 138), which is a clear indication that students who experience gender-based violence, and report said violence are then subject to public humiliation as a result.<sup>7</sup> The stigma attached to experiencing sexual violence is one that must be addressed through school-wide messaging and education. GGE recognizes that this stigma has the potential to push survivors out of school, and prevent them from completing their education. It is imperative that the DOE prioritize efforts to shift culture and change beliefs about the severity of sexual violence and the gender-stereotypes

---

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 26



which force girls in particular to bare the burden of said stigma.<sup>8</sup>

**There are many promising examples of building cultures of consent in public schools. While it requires a concerted effort by school administration and teachers to address gender-based violence, the results show improved academic performance and better student mental health outcomes. Schools must implement comprehensive sexual education, clear reporting pathways, restorative justice practices, and bystander intervention training to make strides towards changing school environment.** When students report, a response must be made. As an anti-carceral organization, GGE encourages investment into restorative and transformative justice practices, as they are shown to create better outcomes for both survivor and harm-doer.<sup>9</sup>

Other interventions include offering meditation spaces for K-12 students rather than detention and creating a reflection room in schools. Critically, there also must be an effort to remove police officers and SROs from schools. Data collected by Dignity in Schools Campaign shows that restorative practices are negated when there is a police or SRO presence.<sup>10</sup> Rather than spending exorbitant amounts of money on school policing, efforts should continue to invest in social workers and psychologists to encourage this atmosphere of restoration.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, courses on consent, sexual education, and healthy relationships can prevent gender-based violence. GGE provides such school trainings on shifting the culture of the school to one of consent. In the 2018-2019 school year, GGE trained 282 students who received 26 workshops during the course of the year on topics of consent and coercion. The 9th grade class received five workshops around the topics of gender based violence prevention in school (tech and dating, healthy relationships, etc.) This commitment to student and staff education is required to shift culture.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, staff received the same training, professional development opportunities, and held debrief circles with students during their advisory periods to unpack the conversations.

---

<sup>8</sup> We at GGE have seen this effort implemented through our partnership with Day One. In of GGE's partnering schools we trained 282 students and offered 26 workshops during the course of the school year. The school administration prioritized shifting the culture in that school to one of consent and therefore the entire student body received a workshop on consent and coercion. The 9th grade class received a battery of 5 workshops around the topics of gender based violence prevention in school (tech and dating, healthy relationships, etc.) It is this type of commitment that is required to shift culture. Staff also received the trainings and held debrief circles with students during their advisory periods.

<sup>9</sup> Oakland Unified School District. Restorative Justice Implementation Guide. Accessed: <https://www.ousd.org/Page/1054>

<sup>10</sup> Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY Chapter Coalition Meeting. September 16th, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/779-15/mayor-de-blasio-roadmap-reduce-punitive-school-discipline-make-schools-safer>

<sup>12</sup> Nicole Hamilton, Girls for Gender Equity



3. **GGE recommends prioritizing prevention by ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary information to choose not to engage in sexual harassment, and that schools place an emphasis upon being communities of consent, including comprehensive sexual health education.**

There is strong evidence that one of the most powerful tools for preventing sexual harassment or assault is comprehensive sexual health education. In one study, based on surveys of over 3,000 young adults and high school students nationwide in addition to formal interviews and informal conversations, a Harvard University research group, *The Making Caring Common Project*, investigated the attitudes of young people toward their sex education, both in schools and from their parents. Their research found that 65% of participants indicated that they wanted guidance on some emotional aspect of romantic relationships in a health or sex education class at school.<sup>13</sup> In 2008, a quantitative study was done with 30 public middle schools in New York City, specifically 117 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes (over 2,500 students) that were chosen to randomly receive sexual health education interventions. After the “six- session curriculum that emphasized the consequences for perpetrators of dating violence and sexual harassment, state laws and penalties for dating violence and sexual harassment, the construction of gender roles, and healthy relationships,” students were less likely to be the victim and perpetrator in peer sexual violence, to be the victim of sexual dating violence, and less likely to perpetrate sexual harassment.<sup>14</sup> Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) offers information about how to address this issue through their #TeachThem campaign which “highlight[s] the lack of education surrounding sexual assault, harassment, and consent in schools.”<sup>15</sup> The campaign also provided “resources for individuals to advocate for better sexuality education policies in their communities.”<sup>16</sup>

The New York City Mayor’s Task Force created four goals with subsequent recommendations for sexual health education:

- a. Prioritize a Culture of Sexual Wellness and Inclusivity in Schools

---

<sup>13</sup> Richard Weissbourd et al., “The Talk: How Adults Can Promote Young People’s Healthy Relationships and Prevent Misogyny and Sexual Harassment,” *Making Caring Common Project*, May 2017, page 2, available at: <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/reports/the-talk>.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce Taylor et al., “Shifting Boundaries: Final Report on an Experimental Evaluation of a Youth Dating Violence Program in New York City Middle Schools.” *Police Executive Research Forum*, 2011, pages 8-12, available at: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/236175.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, “#TeachThem Campaign Advocates for Sex Ed that Includes Consent, Violence Prevention Education,” November 2017, available at: <https://siecus.org/teachthem-campaign-advocates-for-sex-ed-that-includes-consent-violence-prevention-education/>.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*



- b. Ensure All Students are Served by Well Equipped and Supported Health Education Instructors
- c. Improve the Content, Substance, and Methods of Sexual Health Education
- d. Strengthen Accountability and Reporting<sup>17</sup>

Schools have a responsibility to support students who face harassment based on their identities, especially LGBTQ/GNC youth, and offering comprehensive sexual education can shift school culture to become more affirming and increase accountability. The Task Force recommended developing City-wide expectations for health education with an expansion of comprehensive sexual education and School Wellness Programs and Councils. The expectations will guide the implementation of school health policies, the equitable allocation of resources to sexual health education programs, and hold staff accountable to the curriculum and in having the competency to refer students to outside resources. The community must be engaged through culturally relevant public awareness campaigns to increase support and work on sustaining social norms change about relationships and intimate partner violence.

Health education instructors must be certified, skilled, and culturally responsive to be employed full time by NYCDOE. The Task Force recommends investing in programs to increase the number of health education instructors, offering incentives to current teachers to gain certification, as well as, establishing funds to attract representative instructors, specifically Black men and LGBTQ/GNC teachers. There must be a continued effort to expand the support and resources for curriculum development and evaluation. Instructors, students, and parents should be involved in the curriculum review and be able to participate in creating new initiatives for sexual health education. It is essential that NYCDOE incorporates these recommendations into the school curriculum to create safer environments and encourage healthy relationships.

- 4. GGE recommends that schools where there is a desire to shift culture or proactively address sexual harassment or assault are equipped to change school climate through on-going, intensive, interventions which focus on culture shift, specifically led by Title IX Coordinators or outside experts as needed.**

There must be a mechanism for a school's leadership to request additional support to address on-going challenges, for example, students playing "Booty Tag." There is a significant risk of

---

<sup>17</sup> Sexual Health Education Taskforce "Sexual Health Education in New York City: Findings & Recommendations." New York City. (2018).





underreporting incidents, and it is imperative that schools are not discouraged from being truthful about their need for intervention. Our research indicates that certain district schools experience higher rates of school-based sexual harassment. It is likely that there are pockets within the DOE where sexual violence is more likely to occur than others. The DOE must take seriously complaints of sexual harassment and focus its efforts toward school-wide interventions rather than exclusively relying on removal of individual student-actors. In addition, the public, particularly parents and students should be made aware when a school has had numerous, or above average complaints of sexual harassment or assault. Those schools will likely require additional interventions to identify the factors in the school environment which facilitate sexual violence.

- 5. GGE recommends that students are fully informed about who the designated Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaison is, the scope of their duties, including where to report staff-to-student or School Safety Agent-to-student sexual harassment. Students must have a clear reporting pathway.**

Students will only report sexual violence if they are made aware of who they should report to, and if they know which behavior constitutes sexual harassment or assault. **Information about Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons should be prominently shared on *multiple* posters within the school building and conspicuously on the school's website.** For example, if a student endures repeated lewd or sexually suggestive comments, but does not know that verbal harassment can be reported, they will not report. It is the responsibility of the DOE to ensure that information regarding the behavior which constitutes harassment is accessible and clear. **Further, students should have access to clear information about how they go about reporting, and to whom. It must be obvious to students and their families where reports are sent, and the mechanics of the entire investigation process should be articulated in a clear and concise document. This is a key requirement of a successful sexual harassment and assault response strategy.** The regulation focuses exclusively on discipline and compliance and does not reflect the need for a DOE prevention strategy. Students cannot be held accountable for behavior for which they were never taught or trained. Further, this regulation focuses exclusively on student-to-student sexual harassment and there is no separate regulation which offers guidance about how students can report sexual misconduct at the hands of School Safety Agents. The Sexual Harassment Prevention Liaisons must be trained to receive and triage complaints outside of simply student-to-student harassment, as this is not clear in the Chancellor's Regulation A-750 regarding Child Abuse and Maltreatment. The proposed regulation does not include a reporting path for students who experience sexual harassment or assault caused by a staff member or School Safety Agent,



however adult-to-student is an on-going issue, as evidenced by several high-profile incidents.<sup>18</sup>

**6. GGE recommends that restorative practices are available, and in some instances prioritized, with the consent of student-survivors, to respond to school based sexual harassment and intimate-partner violence.**

There should be room in the response and accountability process for students to learn and change their behavior. GGE supports the DOE's development and investment in restorative practices and they should be made available, with student-survivor consent, whenever it is appropriate. Restorative practices have the benefit of being able to invite reflection, honesty, and change behavior in a way that more adversarial (suspension hearings, administrative hearings) processes cannot. Adversarial processes require the student-survivor to experience repeated questioning, and in some cases cross examination by an attorney. The outcomes of school suspension, expulsion, and criminal processes often leave the survivor with no tangible remedies and these processes do not meaningfully address school culture. GGE recognizes that the ultimate goal of the DOE is to educate students and prepare them for future endeavors. The overwhelming majority of students in DOE schools are not legal adults, and their brains have not fully developed.<sup>19</sup> There must be room for the types of interventions that have been proven to be most effective, rather than relying on interventions that focus solely on punishment and not on changed behavior or making a survivor whole.

GGE joins our partners in education justice work, Advocates for Children of New York, in highlighting the example of the Berkeley Unified School District. Berkeley Unified School District adopted a policy that "encourages the use of restorative justice and alternative resolutions in lieu of expulsion hearings, even in the most serious cases including cases of sexual assault and sexual battery."<sup>10</sup> The school board recognized that: "Restorative justice is, in many cases, *more likely to repair harm* to complainant(s) and likely to be less traumatic to complainant(s) than an adversarial expulsion hearing."<sup>11</sup> A national leader in restorative justice has explained that restorative justice provides an option for complainants "to receive healing and vindication in the face [of] the harms suffered."<sup>12</sup> Research also indicates the effective use of restorative practices in schools to address

---

<sup>18</sup> Aliza Chasan, *NYC Teacher Arrested for Sex Abuse; Sources Say Victim Was an 11-year-old Student*, Pix11 Accessed: October 10, 2019. <https://pix11.com/2019/04/15/nyc-teacher-arrested-for-sex-abuse-sources-say-victim-was-an-11-year-old-student/>

<sup>19</sup> Massachusetts General Hospital, Center for Law, Brain & Behavior (Dr. Laurence Steinberg) <http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/steinberg/>



bullying.”<sup>20</sup> (Emphasis added).

Students are still children. With that in mind, there must be room to correct and change behavior rather than suspend and expel. Kindergarteners for example may play “house” and engage in behavior that would otherwise be considered to be harmful or inappropriate, the DOE should certainly not foreclose on restorative or educational processes in these and many other instances. Whenever possible, **Title IX Coordinators should work in tandem with Restorative Justice coordinators to develop clear processes that are capable of meeting student-survivor safety needs, changing the behavior of students who have done harm, and offering opportunity for accountability.**

In light of the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education and the New York City Police Department, there should be more thought applied to situations where school staff invite the police into schools – particularly schools that serve students of color and undocumented students. The instructions within the regulation related to reporting procedures, mandate that staff contact the police whenever they believe criminal activity is afoot.<sup>21</sup> This is overbroad and invites criminalization. The DOE should encourage access to diversion services or existing school resources which can actually support behavior change and accountability. Further, many teachers do not have expertise to understand the New York State Criminal Code definition of sexual harassment or assault, which may be different from the colloquial definition, or the understanding in the anti-violence community. It is imperative that careful consideration is applied before mandating that teachers or school staff invite law enforcement into a school.

**(7) Student-survivors should have access to therapists or counselors, at no cost to the student, who specialize in supporting survivors of gender-based violence, and not be limited to counselors within their own schools.**

GGE fully supports the regulation’s efforts to provide accommodations to student survivors, including rearranged schedules, and referrals to the school social worker, guidance counselor, or psychologist. However, it is not clear that referrals to outside resources (“community-based

---

<sup>20</sup> See, Advocates for Children of New York letter to PEP 2019 Berkeley Unified School District Board of Education, Board Policy 5144.3 Administrative Regulation 5144.3, (last visited July 25, 2019), <https://www.berkeleyschools.net/schoolboard/policies/>.

<sup>21</sup> Chancellor’s Regulation A-831 Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment



agencies for counseling, support, and/or education, or mental health services”) will not require a financial expenditure by the student or their family.<sup>22</sup> While it is critical that DOE staff are appropriately trained to be responsive to trauma, as it stands, it does not appear that the bulk of school social work staff are specifically trained in sexual assault response, which should be distinguished from other types of youth-focused training. **Students must be able to access care through organizations and providers who specialize in sexual abuse and assault response, and care for survivors.** A crucial part of being a survivor-centered community must provide accommodations and meaningful healing supports for student-survivors. Those supports must be tailored to each student’s needs and experiences. To that end, a student may not wish to receive counseling or support through their school, and the DOE must arrange for that student to access healing or counseling services through other means, with no cost to them or their families.

### **Conclusion:**

The proposed regulations present a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue regarding the tactics to keep students, especially cis and trans girls and non-binary youth safe, supported, and thriving. The DOE must avoid the impulse to focus exclusively on investigations and protection from liability, and instead create a long-term, DOE-wide prevention strategy, which takes in the input from students, families, community, and advocates. Further, this effort must include the Division of School Climate and Wellness. While there are many important first steps articulated in the proposed regulation, it is absolutely necessary that staff at all levels are adequately trained in prevention and understand the importance of building a culture of consent within their school. GGE looks forward to collaborating with the DOE on next steps toward creating safe, affirming, and educational environments within all DOE schools.

---

<sup>22</sup> Chancellor’s Regulation A-831 Student-to-Student Sexual Harassment, IV(B) - Follow Up Action