



## Learning in the Rainbow: Legal and best practices for ensuring educational equity across gender & sexually diverse students

Gender and sexually diverse students continue to experience a complex educational landscape. Sociopolitical influences oftentimes run contrary to evidence-based practices, resulting in diminished academic and social emotional success within the educational environment. Advancing legal and cultural incursions on the rights of LGBTQ+ students further complicate these dynamics, despite significant gains across some elements of case and statute. This presentation will update attendees on ongoing best practice recommendations to ensure the public educational community continues to promote diversity, equity, and inclusive practices to meet the needs of students who are gender and sexually diverse. In addition, review of relevant updates to statutes across Title IX, recent *Supreme Court* decisions, and Ohio specific case law and proposed legislation will be reviewed.

This workshop will emphasize gender and sexually diverse children and adolescents within the PreK-12 educational environment. Participants will learn about advocacy for the LGBTQ+ student population from the context of evidence-based educational practices to endure educational equity.

**Audience:** School Counselors & Social Workers, teachers, directors, assistant principals, principals, superintendents, administrators, and other interested educators.



**Presenter:** Dr. Erich Merkle is presently the central office school psychologist for the Akron Board of Education where he oversees the Pupil Adjustment Program (PAP) between the Departments of Student Support Services and Office of Special Education. Within the school psychology specialty, Dr. Merkle has concentrated his work on consultation, evaluation, and intervention for students with severe social-emotional and behavioral needs that have resulted in substantial educational disciplinary sanctioning, expulsion, placement into residential facilities, or the judicial system. He is also a frequent professional development trainer on a diversity of topics that represent the intersection of psychology and education as well as the legal aspects of those practices. Dr. Merkle holds an APA accredited and NASP approved doctorate (Ph.D.) in school psychology and psychology, an educational specialist (Ed.S.) in educational administration, a master's degree (M.Ed.) in mental health counseling, and a master's degree (M.A.) in human development, all from Kent State University as well as a baccalaureate degree (B.S.) in psychology from Heidelberg

University. He holds professional licensure as both a school psychologist and educational administrator as well as national certification as a school psychologist (NCSP). Dr. Merkle commits himself to service within the professions of psychology and education, serving on the governance boards of numerous professional and community agencies. During 2014-15, Dr. Merkle was the President of the Ohio School Psychologists Association (OSPA) and in 2019-20, he served as the President of the Ohio Psychological Association (OPA). He is also the shared Association liaison between OSPA and OPA. Dr. Merkle has participated in numerous media interviews over his career on a diverse set of psychoeducational topics. He is also the recipient of the Ohio Public Sector Psychologist of the Year and President Awards from the Ohio Psychological Association.

**Date:** Thursday, May 12, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 – 2:30 PM – Virtual

**Cost:** FREE

**Registration Assistance:**

[Mary.pramik@escneo.org](mailto:Mary.pramik@escneo.org)

**To Register:**

