



COURTESY OF PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

suggested that students read *My Princess Boy*, a children's book about a boy who likes to wear jewelry and pink clothes. Since then, the issue has been resolved.

"He's opening people's minds, definitely," she says.

Across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Wash., another mother wanted a similar strain of support at her child's school, except her child, who is now age 10, is transgender.

The mother, who wishes to go by the name Susan to protect the identity of her child, says she ultimately decided private school would be best. She and her husband chose the Gardner School of Multiple Intelligences in Vancouver not only for the trans support it could provide, but for the higher quality of education; her son, who was born with female genitalia, also has an above-average IQ, she says.

"But when he started going there, we didn't know about changing his name, or about him using the boys' bathroom and not the girls'," Susan says.

She says her child started saying he was a boy around age 2, but she didn't start the transition process for him until after he had started school.

"Faculty wanted to know what was going on. They said he would play with the boys and say he was a boy," she says.

Susan and her child talked with a trans therapist, who told her, "You have a little boy here," Susan says. Susan then worked with the teachers and administrators to make the transition. The child left for summer vacation as a girl, but returned in the fall a boy. He had a new name and used the boys' bathrooms.

"We didn't come up against any issues or hurdles, so I know it seems like we are kind of an anomaly, and I'm grateful for that," Susan says. "Other people need to know

Options for Transferring

Students attend schools paired with the district in which they live. If a parent wishes to transfer a child without moving, Portland Public Schools offers two services:

Lottery

Students name schools to which they would like to be transferred, and winners are selected at random. Last year, 3,500 students applied (out of about 45,000 students in the district), and 70 percent of those were transferred to one of their choice schools.

Hardship transfer

Students may submit an individual petition if they have circumstances that prevent them from being at their present schools. Circumstances include bullying, proximity to after-school childcare or a parent's place of employment, and other situations. In the 2009-10 school year, 1,134 students petitioned for a hardship transfer, and about 60 percent were approved.

Also, private schools, including the Gardner School and Catlin Gabel, offer financial aid to families who would not otherwise be able to afford the schools.

Information provided from Judy Brennan, director of family support and school choice at Portland Public Schools

this school is a great place to be if your kid is queer."

The Portland nonprofit TransActive, which specializes in support for transgender and gender non-conforming children, says recommending schools to parents is "difficult because supportive schools are usually made that way by faculty and administrators, which change frequently. TransActive's Zena Britadesco suggests interviewing schools and talking to parents before choosing.

The group Parenting Lesbians of Portland, or PLOP, meets monthly to discuss issues pertaining to LGBTQ parents and their children. The group has open membership. ☐

For more information on TransActive, visit transactiveonline.org. For more information on PLOP, visit ploppdx.wordpress.com.

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