



**Maryland Commission
on LGBTQIA+ Affairs**

Youth & Education Committee Minutes
May 27, 2025, 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Zoom Meeting

Members Present:

Asher Kennedy, Committee Chair
Wendy Novak, Committee Vice Chair
Joan Bryan
Brandon Russell

Members Not Present:

Sarah Stern
Kijana West
Ex-Officio: Lee Blinder

Staff Present:

Director: Jeremy Browning
Special Assistant: Taylor Harer

- I. Committee Chair Kennedy called the meeting to order at 7:03pm
- II. Committee Chair Kennedy acknowledged housekeeping and meeting guidelines.
- III. Roll call was conducted by Committee Chair Kennedy
- IV. Approval of the Agenda: There were no additions or changes requested. Hearing no additional discussion, the body approved the agenda by unanimous consent.
- V. Approval of 4.28.2025 Minutes: There were no additions or changes requested. Hearing no additional discussion, the body approved the minutes by unanimous consent.
- VI. Discussion: Challenges in Calvert County Public Schools -
 - A. Commissioner Russell reported that safe space, Be Kind/Rainbow, and diversity stickers were being removed from school environments, reportedly following a recommendation from a member of the local school board. Commissioner Novak

added insight from Carroll County, where similar issues have arisen, particularly concerning bans on certain flags and other restrictions on what kinds of displays are permissible in schools

- B. Director Browning added to the discussion by highlighting the importance of compliance reporting and ongoing monitoring efforts.
 - C. Committee Chair Kennedy raised concerns that these types of restrictions may inhibit educator autonomy and limit the creation of inclusive and welcoming public spaces within educational institutions.
 - D. Director Browning recommended scheduling a follow-up meeting with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Before that meeting is scheduled, the Committee expressed a preference to consult with ex-commissioner Jabari Lyles. If a full Committee representation is not possible for that discussion, Director Browning will represent the Committee independently.
- VII. Discussion: MSDE Requests / 2025 Youth & Education committee Priorities - The Committee discussed the timeline for finalizing its recommendations and collectively agreed that recommendations should be completed by September.
- A. The next committee meeting will be held on July 1, 2025 at 6:00pm.
 - B. Chair Kennedy encouraged all members to thoroughly review the existing recommendations prior to the July meeting.
- VIII. Meeting adjourned by Committee Chair Kennedy at 8:01pm.

Minutes submitted by: Special Assistant, Taylor Harer