

STUDENT TAKE: SHOULD STUDENTS AT FHN BE ABLE TO USE THE BATHROOM OF THEIR CHOICE?



"I feel like, due to other people's privacy, they should use the bathroom assigned to them at birth."

KATHERINE VONHARZ, 11



"If they have proof that they're transgender, then they should be able to use the bathroom of their choice, but I don't think that anybody who just says they're transgender should be able to."

CAMERON KAUT, 9



"They should be able to use the bathroom of their choice. If they're transgender that means that they should use what they want to be. No one will see thAn using the bathroom."

LEXI DAVIS, 10



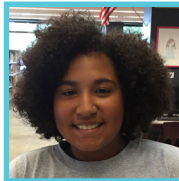
"Unless you do the surgery to change it, I feel like it should be based on what you have, not what you identify as."

DANIELLE GALLAHAN, 12



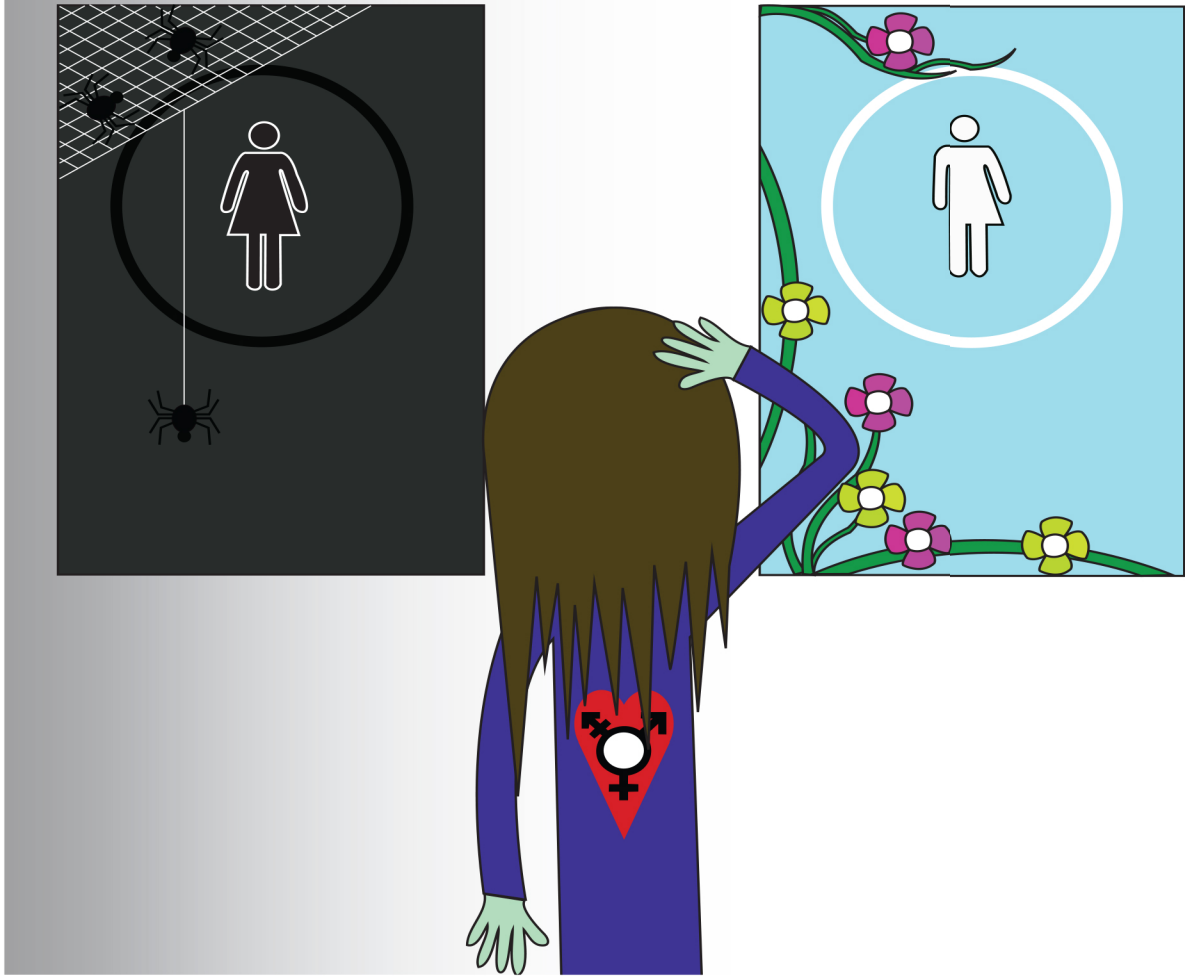
"It depends of the issue. If they don't make it public, then it's up to them whichever one they want to use."

PAYDEN ESTES, 10



"They should be able to use the one they choose because it's what they identify as."

DANIELLE FREY, 11



NORTH STAR TAKE: TO PEE OR NOT TO PEE

While FHN is a good at offering accommodations for transgender students, they should have more gender-neutral bathrooms

On Behalf of the Editorial Staff

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The wide variety of gender identifications and sexual orientations have become more and more acknowledged over the years. With these LGBT identifications, specifically for transgender and nonbinary people, there are some challenges, including bathroom use. There have been instances around the nation of discrimination and rules against some individuals using certain bathrooms, potentially affecting transgender students. At FHN, students are free to choose whatever bathrooms they want to use as long as they inform the principal. This school policy is to accommodate students based on individual needs and requests. This encourages

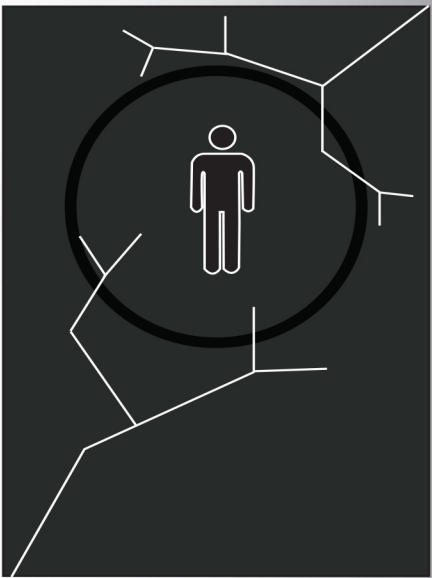
expression, offers protection and promotes tolerance and respect.

School is a place for learning, not just English and Math, but about who we are. With this policy, FHSD tries to provide the best learning environment for students of all identities. Although the school works hard to accommodate everyone, transgender students have still faced some challenges. One addition that might improve the school's policy and be beneficial to the needs of transgender students is having more gender-neutral bathrooms available.

While letting students decide where to use the restroom protects them and their privacy, having neutral bathrooms would offer even more security. There is a private bathroom in the nurse's office available, but since the

nurse's office isn't conveniently located, it is hard to reach all the time. An investment in converting even one regular bathroom into a neutral or unisex bathroom in the building will be beneficial for all students, especially transgender and nonbinary students. A good option for a newly converted bathroom would be the single-stall bathrooms in the Commons. That bathroom would offer isolation for students and would allow them to use the restroom in private. The district has no plans to add any neutral bathrooms. Even though making this change in the Commons won't be difficult, supplying the school with even one more neutral bathroom will be beneficial in the long run.

Issues of discomfort may also arise with the locker rooms. The act of undressing and changing into clothes is even more intimate. Some people, both transgender students and their peers, may be uncomfortable with this situation. Students could use neutral bathrooms as a safe space to change if they feel uncomfortable doing so in the locker rooms. These rooms would offer more protection and insure that everyone is content.



Jake Price

(Illustration by Jake Price)

Even without these neutral bathrooms, FHN's bathroom policy helps all students feel comfortable at school. In February, senators introduced a new bill to Missouri. The Missouri Student Physical Privacy Bill would have required all students to use the bathroom based on their "biological sex." Even though the bill offered some accommodations, transgender students would have to give up their right of being themselves in order to use the restroom. Luckily, this bill has already failed and students at FHN are free to chose who they want to be.

According to The New York Times, nearly 150,000 American teens from ages 13-17 would identify as transgender. It also says that an estimated 0.7 percent of teens ages 13-17 in Missouri would identify as transgender. These teenagers should be free to portray themselves however they choose. At FHN, they are able to pick whatever bathroom they feel most comfortable being in. While neutral bathrooms may be not be a reality for a while, our school has done a good job protecting all students. This inspires an accepting and open atmosphere, which makes all students feel more secure and focused on learning.

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