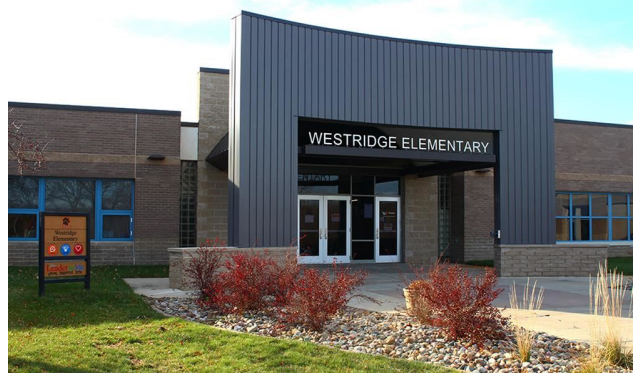


# **WEST DES MOINES PARENTS: Sixth-grade female student using male restroom at Westridge Elementary**



October 17, 2021

Parents of a West Des Moines sixth-grader told The Iowa Standard their son has been using the boys' bathroom at least twice in the last year when a female student who identifies as a male entered the restroom.

The incidents have taken place at Westridge Elementary. It first happened last year when the then-fifth-grade student was going to the bathroom. The student was told to let his parents know if it happens again.

And it did just a couple of weeks ago.

"We addressed it with the principal at his school and told them it was a little awkward for our son to be standing at a urinal standing up, doing his business and see somebody come in and it was this young lady — a sixth-grader," the father said. "A little girl."

The parents were told it would take a couple of days, but they'd receive answers. The parents had to follow up with the principal and said they were put on a call with the school counselor and the equity, inclusion and diversity director.

The parents were told the policy is if someone is uncomfortable in a bathroom setting then that individual will be given accommodation and be offered the use of a different bathroom.

"I said, 'can you clarify to me who gets the accommodation,'" the father said. "And he said, 'well, at this point your son would be offered to go to a different bathroom.' And I said, 'well, my son is in the boys' bathroom and he's always been a little boy and always gone to the bathroom and he shouldn't have to be told to go somewhere different.'"

The parents said they met with the equity, inclusion and diversity director last week and he was calm and nice. He listened to what they had to say and gave some basic information on what the policy is from the school board and the state.

If their son doesn't take advantage of the accommodation offered and use a different bathroom, then the situation may happen again.

"We reached out to the Governor's office, they were supposed to call us back," they said.

Someone from the board of education is supposed to do research and contact the parents this week.

The father of the boy who used the bathroom said he isn't just concerned about his son, but also for the little girl.

He mentioned the situation in Loudoun County currently unfolding before the country's eyes.

"We don't want that to happen to this little girl," he said. "In another couple of years, three more years she's in high school, not that it would, but it sure could lend itself to being a possibility...what would happen if she went into the boys' bathroom and some boy took advantage of her?"

The parents said they intend to reach out to their representatives and let them know what is happening. They're hopeful someone, somewhere will do something to stop these incidents.

"There's truth and then there's appropriateness," the father said. "No matter what you think your gender is, I don't believe in that but I can't change it...but no matter what you think your gender is, there is still appropriateness that I believe we should have as humankind. If you are made this way and have that certain anatomy, you belong in a certain bathroom. It's not appropriate for my son to walk into the girls' bathroom — it's not appropriate. At the mall, I couldn't just walk into the women's bathroom. I'd be arrested. What difference does it make if they're sixth-graders? That's where they should be learning and knowing what appropriateness is."

The Iowa Standard reached out to the principal at Westridge and the West Des Moines School District director of equity, inclusion and diversity. Neither responded.