# Affirming Gender, Names, and Pronouns in Student Information Systems

This overview document is intended to offer a short reminder for the name and gender change process, and was developed as a supplemental resource alongside the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) *Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance to Schools* released in 2023. ODE encourages districts to refer to the Student Records section of the guidance to understand the laws and policies in place relating to student records.

*The information within the following resource document is not legal advice, nor should it be relied on as legal advice. If you require legal advice regarding the issues discussed in this document, please consult an attorney.*

## Recommended Process for Sex/Gender Marker Changes through SSID & SIS

*Steps to change sex/gender marker on the student record:*

1. Update the student's sex/gender marker in your **Student Information System (SIS)**
   a. In consultation with the student and SIS vendor, determine how the sex/gender marker is shown across the platform and daily use documents, such as attendance records, transcripts, report cards, etc.
   b. ODE recommends removing gender from all daily use documents except those required in the student's permanent record.
2. Update the student's sex/gender marker in **Secure Student Identification System (SSID)**.
3. Check for errors in any collections that do not catch the sex/gender marker change.
4. Remind students and staff they all have the right to M/F/X sex/gender marker options.

For more information, please refer to 1.f.i. Sex/Gender Markers in Student Records and State Data Collection.

## Reporting Name Changes through SSID

ODE requires districts and schools to report a student's legal name within the SSID, and provides districts and schools the opportunity to enter a student's asserted name in the "preferred name" field which will be used by default when ODE sends reports with individual student information, including assessment systems. When the "preferred name" field is empty, the legal name will be used by default.

*Steps to report name changes through the SSID:*

1. If a student has made a **legal name change**:
   a. Update the student's legal name fields to reflect this change.
2. If a student **asserts a name in alignment with their gender identity** without making a legal name change:
   a. Enter the name the student is asserting into the "Preferred Name" field in the SSID report.
      i. *Note: There are preferred name fields for first, middle, and last names in order to support a variety of student safety needs.*

For more resources to support gender expansive students, visit the ODE guidance webpage.     *Updated January 2023*

3. **Districts and schools must prioritize student safety.** Districts and schools should inform students that updating their student record may allow their parent or caregiver to view their asserted name if a parent or caregiver makes a FERPA request, or if the central SIS links to other local systems that parents or caregivers have access to (e.g., gradebooks, directories, online schooling platforms, school email, etc.). If the student does not want specific individuals to have access to this information, the school should discuss alternative individualized name and pronoun supports with the student in lieu of records changes.
4. **Check for errors** in any collections that do not catch the name change.

## Best Practices for Name Changes through SIS

ODE Recommends that districts and schools work with their contracted Student Information System (SIS) vendor(s), their Information Technology (IT) department, or other knowledgeable school district staff if student information is managed through a local solution to ensure that the options for student name change are affirming for the student requesting the change. Districts and schools are encouraged to follow the lead of the student to best prioritize the student's safety and well-being in order to reduce potential for deadnaming or outing of a student's gender identity.[1]

Some considerations to guide district conversations with gender expansive students and SIS vendors are outlined below:

- While the SSID requires a student's legal name to be reported, there is no legal requirement for the legal name to be stored in the SIS. Some SIS platforms offer the ability to securely store the legal name and omit it from view based on the confidentiality and safety needs of the student.

- Most SIS platforms have a "preferred name" field to which the asserted name can be added using the SSID steps above. However, districts must confirm that the preferred name appears in daily use documents (e.g., gradebook, directories, online learning platforms, attendance records, standardized test forms, etc.), in consultation with the student, based on their safety and confidentiality needs.

- If the SIS does not have a "preferred name" field or if it defaults to show the legal name throughout daily use documents, then districts may replace the legal first name with the student's asserted first name as long as the SSID retains the legal name either in the middle name field or in a confidential notes field.

- Districts and schools must prioritize student safety. Discuss with the student who will be able to view their updated name in the SIS, including whether specific teachers, school support staff, parents or caregivers, or peers will have access to the update. If the student does not want specific individuals to have access to their asserted name, the school should discuss with the student if privacy options are available within the SIS or if alternative individualized name and pronoun supports are available in lieu of records changes.

- Districts and schools should create supportive procedures for updating the names and pronouns of gender expansive parents and caregivers within school records and SIS systems to ensure family communications are affirming and accurate.

---

[1] Please note, the terms deadnaming and outing are defined in the Terminology Appendix within the guidance.

- For more ideas, districts may review the [Student Information Systems](#) resource offered by national organization Gender Spectrum.

For more information on student records and name changes, please refer to [1.f.ii. First Name Changes](#).

## Name Change Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*Q: Can a student's name be changed to their asserted name for tests within the Oregon Statewide Assessment System (OSAS)?*
Yes, there are a few options for support. ODE will automatically send the "preferred name" field from the SSID system to Cambium, if there is a preferred name listed, which is the name that students will see during a test. The SSID system only connects to Oregon's interim and summative tests, not local district assessment systems or SAT/ACT assessments, so additional local action may be needed to be taken to change a student's name outside Oregon assessments.

Steps below show how this can be done, and give information on who you can reach out to for more support.

1. First, the school/district needs to update the "preferred name" field within the SSID system to reflect the student's asserted name by updating the preferred name field. It may take one to two days to see the change reflected. In some districts, the District Test Coordinator (DTC) is in charge of this. *Please note: Updates to the SSID are reflected onto a student record, and students should be made aware they may be visible by parents and caregivers who have access to student files.*

2. Second, confirm the new asserted name from the SSID is reflected in the Test Information and Distribution Engine (TIDE) which district test coordinators use to set up the assessments (assigning students to rosters, enabling supports and accommodations, setting up local testing windows). For questions about getting the TIDE system updated, reach out to OSAS through the Cambium Assessment [Helpdesk](#). *Please note: Depending on local policies and practices, various school and/or district personnel may access student information in TIDE to assign students to rosters, enable accessibility features, etc. Care should be taken to inform these personnel based on the confidentiality and safety needs of the student.*

*Q: Can the student information system be updated to show the accurate name at school and legal name on all other documents?*
Some Student Information Systems (SIS) allow a student's asserted name to show up as preferred name, or an alias or Nickname, but usually require specific settings and visibility to be turned on in order to be shown in daily use items like attendance sheets. ODE recommends school districts work directly with their contracted SIS vendor to learn more about the options for affirming student's asserted and legal names.

*Q: Can the student information system be updated to show the students asserted pronouns?*
ODE recommends school districts work directly with their contracted SIS provider to learn more about the options for affirming student's asserted pronouns.