Community Allies of Rainbow Youth (CARY)

We are caregivers, students, staff and community members, who advocate for LGBTQIA+ youth and raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues within the HCPSS

Rainbow Ribbon Schools Initiative

The aim of the Rainbow Ribbon Schools (RRS) initiative is to inspire HCPSS school leaders to provide a safe and affirming environment for LGBTQIA+ students. Feedback from LGBTQIA+ students will be central to the RRS application and evaluation process.

RRS Criteria

Schools must demonstrate meeting 7 universal criteria and 2 additional criterion of their choice to be considered for RRS designation

Documentation:

Documentation to demonstrate implementation of the criteria will be required.

- Focus groups with your school's LGBTQIA+ affinity group will be used to verify implementation where noted
- Photos, student work samples (names redacted), and other artifacts will be submitted to CARY by May 10, 2024

Central Office staff will conduct focus groups with your school's LGBTQIA+ affinity groups

- Initial focus group to be conducted first semester
- Final focus group to be completed by May 10, 2024

LGBTQIA+
Focus Groups
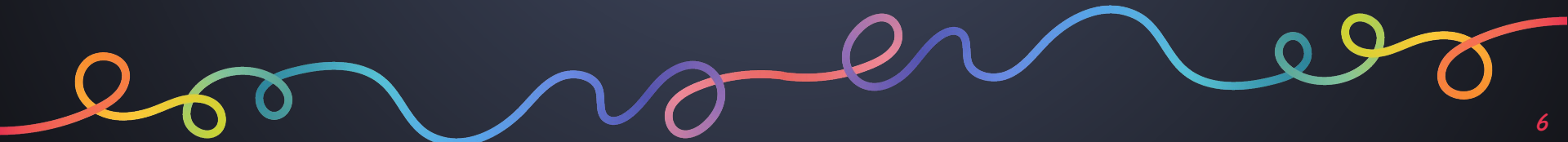
LGBTQIA+ Focus Groups

- Students who participate in the LGBTQIA+ affinity group(s) at your school will be invited to anonymously participate in an initial and a final focus group led by HCPSS Central Office staff
- The purpose of these focus groups is to obtain student feedback on your school environment
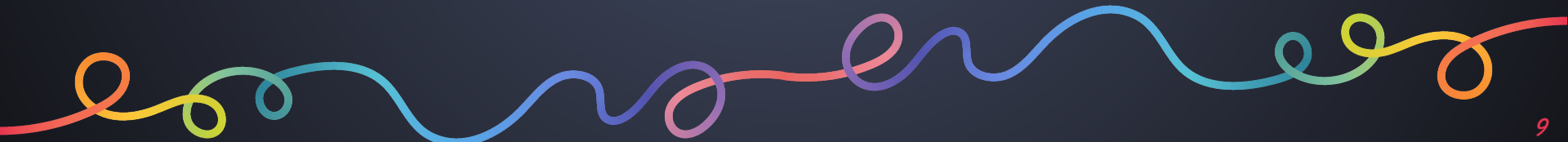
Required Criteria

#1 Inclusive Curriculum and Instruction

LGBTQIA+ identities are affirmed, and their contributions highlighted, across all contents

#1 Inclusive Curriculum and Instruction

- **All Content Areas**: Positive representations of LGBTQIA+ people's contributions to history, math, science, art, literature, sports, and more are used to enhance all curriculum areas. Documentation should demonstrate LGBTQIA+ identities are represented in classrooms across the school, including media, health, Related Arts, and SEL classes. Student work samples and verification by the focus groups are required

- **All Content Areas**: Teachers model inclusiveness during instruction by:
  - Using examples of LGBTQIA+ individuals and families
  - Using non-binary pronouns (e.g. 'they/them') and gender-neutral language (e.g. 'students', 'third-graders', or 'Bobcats' instead of 'guys' or 'boys and girls')

To be verified by the focus groups

#2

Establish a Rainbow Representative for Your School

#2 Establish a Rainbow Representative (RR)

- The RR should be part of the school's RRS application process
- The RR should be listed on the 'School Resources' page of the school's website, with contact information and a description of their role
- Students in the school should be aware of the RR as a resource/safe space (as verified by the focus groups)
- High School RRs should ensure that the school's LGBTQIA+ web page is updated in a timely manner

#3 Affinity Group

The school must offer and promote a LGBTQIA+ affinity group or groups

#3 Affinity Group

- Secondary schools must have a GSA/SAGA (or similar) club
- Elementary schools must have a LGBTQIA+ affinity group, such as a Rainbow Reading Group, Lunch Bunch, Rainbow Family Group, etc.

#4 Act Against LGBTQIA+ Bullying

The school should work toward being free from bias-based bullying, harassment, and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ students

#4 Act Against LGBTQIA+ Bullying

- Student focus groups must indicate that school-based administrators responded in an effective and timely manner to end bias against LGBTQIA+ students
- Schools must have well-known and well-understood procedures for reporting bullying, harassment, and discrimination
- Students report that bullying, harassment, and discrimination are quickly acted upon and corrected, as outlined in HCPSS Policies 1060 and 1010
- These criteria will be verified by the focus groups

#5 Identifiable Allies

LGBTQIA+ staff and allies are visible in the school community

#5 Identifiable Allies

75% of students participating in the focus groups can identify at least one staff member by name (who is not the school's affinity group sponsor) who openly presents themselves as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community or as an ally, as verified by the focus groups

#6 Professional Learning for Staff

School staff receive training and information on building an affirming and inclusive environment

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- At least 65% of the school staff participate in professional learning on building an LGBTQIA+ affirming and inclusive school environment. Examples include: Rainbow Conference participation; completion of an LGBTQIA+ CPD course; attendance at a staff or team meeting at which an LGBTQIA+ PL was conducted; or participation in an LGBTQIA+ book study. Please reach out to one of the RRS liaisons (listed on slide 29) if your school has other ideas for LGBTQIA+ PL that you would like to have approved
- The school's Rainbow Rep periodically provides information to all school staff via email on best practices in supporting LGBTQIA+ students
- Documentation of staff participation is required to demonstrate implementation

#7 Media Collection

The school's media collection should contain LGBTQIA+ themed titles that are accessible to all students

#7 Media Collection

- At least 5% of media purchases for the school year must include LGBTQIA+ themed selections OR

- Your school's media purchases during the RRS application process (3 consecutive years) has increased your LGBTQIA+ selections by 5%

- LGBTQIA+ themed selections should be available for checkout in the general collection

- Documentation is required

Select Two Criteria

ALL-GENDER RESTROOM

Have all-gender restroom(s) in main student/staff areas. Restrooms must be easily accessible in a prominent area of school building (verified by focus groups). HS students' all-gender restroom should be as close to locker rooms as possible. Documentation required to demonstrate implementation

SCHOOL-WIDE ANTI-BULLYING CAMPAIGN

A school-wide campaign that promotes acceptance and prominently includes LGBTQIA+ identities is held. Documentation and focus group feedback are required to demonstrate implementation

VISUAL AFFIRMATIONS

Signage and visual displays prominently welcome and celebrate LGBTQIA+ identities, as verified by students in the focus groups

STUDENT INTERACTIONS

The student body is well-educated on how to interact with and address their LGBTQIA+ peers, as verified by the focus groups

Choose Two:

SCHOOL-WIDE CELEBRATION

The school organizes a school-wide event that celebrates Pride, recognizes LGBTQIA+ history/accomplishments, or creates an affirming and inclusive environment. Documentation of the event is required to demonstrate implementation
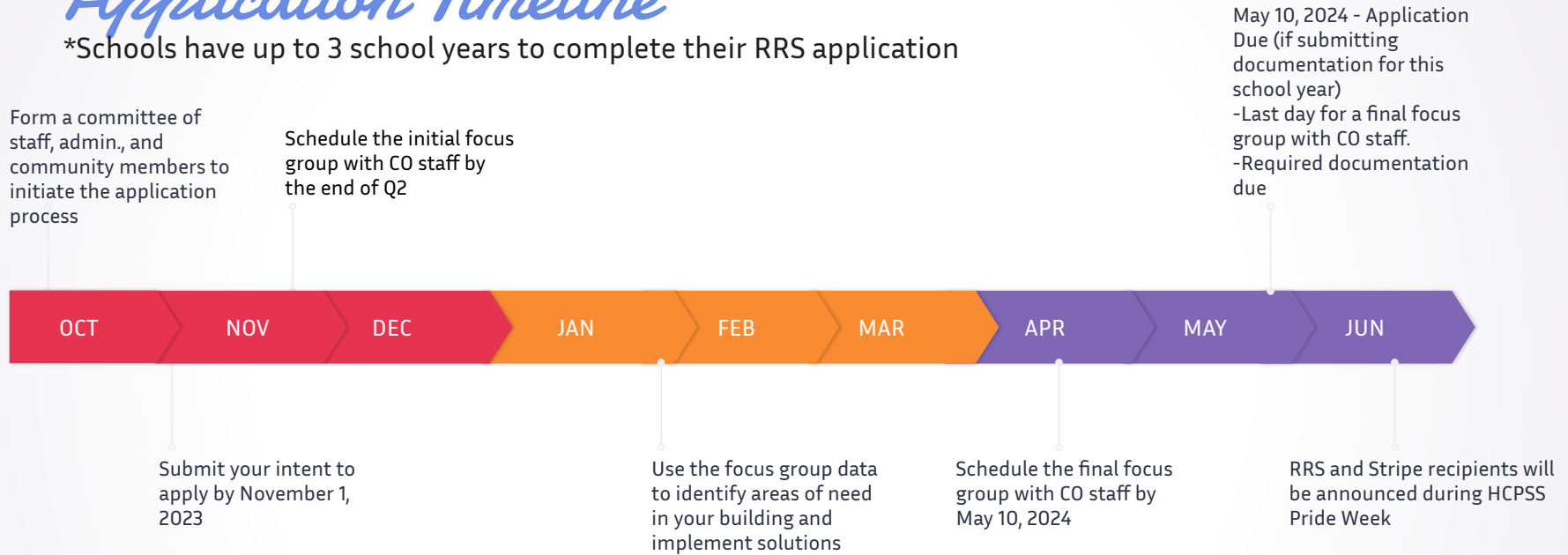
Stripe Recognition Awards

- Schools will be recognized for their progress as they meet each of the criteria. For each criterion that is met, schools will receive one "Stripe" toward their final Rainbow Ribbon

- Schools can earn more than one stripe in a school year as they continue to work towards their Rainbow Ribbon. However, some schools may choose not to submit documentation during a given school year, and wait until they believe their application is complete before submitting. (Thereby forgoing any Stripe awards)

- **Schools have 3 consecutive years to complete their application and earn a full ribbon.**

Application Timeline*

*Schools have up to 3 school years to complete their RRS application

Form a committee of staff, admin., and community members to initiate the application process

Schedule the initial focus group with CO staff by the end of Q2

May 10, 2024 - Application Due (if submitting documentation for this school year)
-Last day for a final focus group with CO staff.
-Required documentation due

| OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN |

Submit your intent to apply by November 1, 2023

Use the focus group data to identify areas of need in your building and implement solutions

Schedule the final focus group with CO staff by May 10, 2024

RRS and Stripe recipients will be announced during HCPSS Pride Week

Recognition!

Rainbow Ribbon flag or stripe(s) graphic for your school's website

Recognition by the BOE

Recognition on CARY's website

Rainbow Ribbon School

Congratulations to the 2022–23
Rainbow Ribbon Schools!

Bollman Bridge Elementary School

Mt. Hebron High School

Cedar Lane School

Mount View Middle School

Hammond High School

Patapsco Middle School

Wilde Lake High School

Stripes Recognition Awards

CARY recognizes HCPSS schools with Stripe Recognition Awards for their achievements in creating LGBTQIA+ affirming and inclusive school environments. These schools are progressing towards earning a Rainbow Ribbon, by demonstrating that they have met the following criteria:

- Demonstrate inclusive curriculum and instruction in which LGBTQIA+ identities are affirmed, and their contributions highlighted, across all contents.
- Establish a Rainbow Representative for Your School
- The school must offer and promote a LGBTQIA+ affinity group or groups
- The school should work toward being free from bias-based bullying, harassment, and discrimination of LGBTQIA+ students
- Identifiable Allies: LGBTQIA+ staff and allies are visible in the school community
- Professional Learning for Staff: school staff will receive training on building an affirming and inclusive environment
- Choose 1: All-gender Restrooms; Student Interactions; Visual Affirmations; or School-wide Celebration
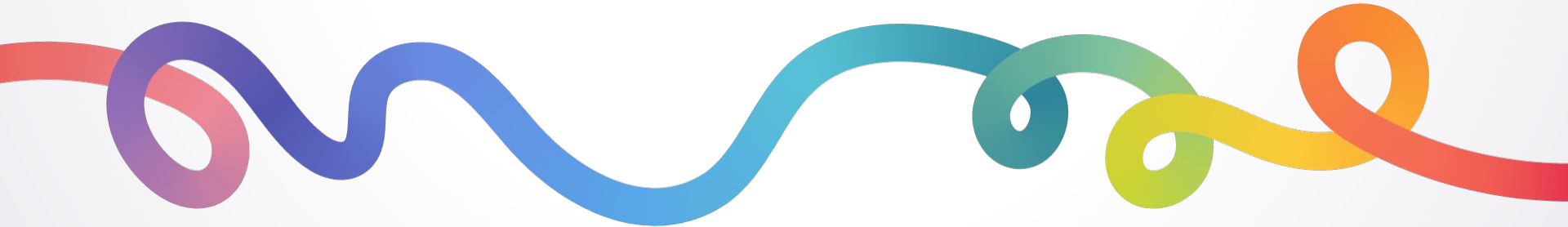
Congrats!

CARYS's 2022-23 Stripe Recognition Award Schools

Atholton High School

Burleigh Manor Middle School

Dayton Oaks Elementary School

Ducketts Lane Elementary School

Lake Elkhorn Middle School

Reservoir High School

River Hill High School

RRS Intent to Apply

Intent forms are due November 1, 2023

Thanks!

Any questions?

Elementary Support:

- Paul_Carpenetti@hcpss.org
- Amy_Urban@hcpss.org

Secondary Support:

- Robyn_Page@hcpss.org
- Amy_Holly@hcpss.org

Become a CARY member

Email CARYmembership@gmail.com or visit https://www.cary-hoco.org/

Credits

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