



Eligibility Questions

1. Is your school located in the United States of America or one of its territories? [Yes](#).
2. Is your school a public or charter secondary (middle or high) school? [Public High School](#).
3. Will this grant support LGBTQ+ students and educators at your school? [Yes](#).
4. Will your grant project successfully include student/youth participation in the planning and execution of the proposed project? [Yes](#).
5. Do you have a project plan that can be executed within one school year? [Yes](#).
6. Will this grant fund research, political activities, scholarships, or the needs of a single student (NOTE: These types of activities will NOT receive funding.)? [No](#).

SCHOOL INFORMATION (Section 1 of 7)

1. Project Name: [Coming Out of the Closet In Style \(Clothing Closet at Rock Bridge High School, MO.\)](#)
2. Upload a screenshot from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of your school information.






NOTE: The inclusion or exclusion of a school in this locator does NOT constitute an endorsement of the school and should NOT be used in any way to infer the accreditation status of the school.

School Directory Information
[Search Results](#)
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(2020-2021 school year)

School Name: ROCK BRIDGE SR. HIGH	NCES School ID: 290100000299	State School ID: MO-010093-1075010093
District Name: Columbia 93 district information	NCES District ID: 2901000	State District ID: MO-010093
Mailing Address: 4303 S PROVIDENCE RD COLUMBIA, MO 65203-7159	Physical Address:  4303 S PROVIDENCE RD COLUMBIA, MO 65203-7159	Phone: (573)214-3100
Type: Regular school	Status: Open	Charter: No
Supervisory Union #: N/A	Grade Span: (grades 9 - 12) <div style="display: flex; border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;"> 9 10 11 12 </div>	

School Details (2020-2021 school year)

County: Boone County schools in county	
Locale: City: Midsize (12)	Total Students: 1,971
Magnet: No	Classroom Teachers (FTE): 110.36
Title I School: No	Student/Teacher Ratio: 17.86
Title I School-Wide Program: †	

4. School State: [Missouri](#)
5. School City: [Columbia](#)
6. School Website: <https://www.cpsk12.org/RBHS>

CONTACT INFORMATION (Section 2 of 7)

Below, please provide the name and contact information for the main faculty advisor and student leader directly overseeing the grant project .

1. Faculty Advisor Name: [James Meyer](#)
2. Faculty Advisor Title: [Gifted Education Teacher](#)
3. Faculty Advisor Email: JMeyer@cpsk12.org
4. Student Leader Name:
5. Student Leader Email:

GENDER AND SEXUALITIES ALLIANCE (GSA) OR SIMILAR CLUB INFORMATION (Section 3 of 7) In this section, we'd like to learn if your school has a Gender and Sexualities Alliance (GSA) or similar club, and if so, more information on the group. If your school does not currently have a GSA or similar club, don't worry. This will not penalize your application.

1. Does your school have a GSA or similar club? [Yes](#)
 - i. Name of your GSA or similar club (if applicable) [GSA](#)
 - ii. How often does your GSA or similar club meet? [Weekly](#)
 - iii. Average Student Attendance per Meeting [15](#)
 - iv. How many years has your GSA or similar club been active? [12+](#)
 - v. Tell us about your GSA or similar club. Describe the history of your club, if you have a leadership structure, what your goals and objectives are, and previous activities and campaigns. (400 word limit)

[Our GSA has been around for more than 12 years and has the purpose of being a welcoming space for LGBTQ+ students and their allies. This club is mainly student-led and is actively involved in projects throughout the school, one of which is a recent T-Shirt Drive with the purpose of donating money to The Trevor Project. This campaign earned a total of \\$1,400 in suicide prevention funds. The entire project was run completely by students and this volunteer contribution can be expected in our clothing closet as well. While the GSA has cycled through several faculty sponsors, the staff continue to be involved with this club even after their terms end.](#)

[In a typical meeting, the time is spent addressing a certain concern of LGBTQ+ students within our school. One of their recent meetings was on the uses of pronouns. Most meetings consist of presentations and student-driven conversations. There is extra time delegated for students to receive peer support and discuss difficult experiences. The GSA also makes it their goal to extend inclusivity towards other student organizations. Many students in other activities have had difficult experiences coming out to their families and transitioning. They have expressed that the GSA has helped them cope with their emotions during this process, and many of them show up regularly to the meetings to contribute.](#)

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT (Section 4 of 7)

If your school does not have a supportive administration or school environment, this will not be counted against you. The following questions will be used to understand your application.

1. What are the greatest challenges and needs of LGBTQ+ students at your school? (350 word limit)

Within our school, LGBTQ+ students face several challenges when it comes to gender neutral bathrooms. There are a total of four in the entire school but none of them are openly advertised to the student body, meaning that the students who need to use them often don't even know of their existence. There have been multiple incidents of teachers being uninformed that students can, in fact, use these gender neutral bathrooms, leading to various reports of teachers prohibiting their students from using them. We have brought this to the attention of the district administration and they are presently working towards a solution. The bathrooms' locations also cause problems due to there being so few in such a large school, resulting in the bathrooms being quite far from various classes. There are multiple teachers who impose time limits on restroom breaks which is a restriction that most LGBTQ+ students are often unable to meet if they have to travel across the school to reach the bathrooms. The time limits for bathroom breaks, combined with the lack of awareness from teachers, create an overall uncomfortable and sometimes hostile relationship between the queer student body and the Rock Bridge High School Administration.

LGBTQ+ activism within our district has received mixed responses in the past, an example being in one of our local middle schools. Students in their GSA put up educational posters about various sexualities and gender identities and this led to pushback from some parents of students who attended the school. This was a complicated scenario, especially for the students involved, because it had a tremendous impact on their mental health. This middle school is a feeder school for Rock Bridge, meaning that the students who experienced this trauma are currently attending our high school. The entire situation was very hard on them and this, in conjunction with the current political climate, only increased the stress and anxiety on our school's queer student body.

2. How does your school currently address bullying and/or harassment, particularly of LGBTQ+ students? (350 word limit)

Our school district has a very strict anti-bullying, anti-harrassment, and anti-illegal discrimination policy, called 'Policy AC' (Last Revised: 2/14/22). Employees, students, and visitors must report any behavior or incident that could constitute discrimination, harrassment, or retaliation, in order for an official investigation to begin. If a student alleges sexual misconduct on the part of a district employee, that person is required by state (Missouri) law to report the allegation to the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services. Any case involving sexual harrassment is also required to be reported to the Title IX coordinator for evaluation under another district policy, called 'Policy ACA.'

Reports are investigated by a compliance officer of the district or an outside enforcement agency. The Student Compliance Officer for Columbia Public Schools is the Chief Equity Officer, and the Employee Compliance Officer for Columbia Public Schools is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. These compliance officers consider multiple aspects in their investigation of a report, including the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, the relationships between the parties involved, past incidents, the context in which the alleged incidents occurred, and all other relevant information. Compliance officers come to a decision after an investigation lasting no more than 30 working days, as to whether or not a violation of the AC Policy has occurred. The alleged victim, someone other

than the alleged victim who filed the grievance, and the alleged perpetrator have opportunities to appeal the decision made by the compliance officer.

If a decision concluding that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has indeed occurred, then appropriate interim measures and consequences are introduced. Especially if these incidents have occurred between students, the district takes immediate action by altering a class seating arrangement, providing additional supervision, or suspending an employee pending an investigation. The district will also notify students, employees, and others involved in the investigation to protect them from retaliation. The consequences for discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, include disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees, while students violating the AC Policy will also face disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion.

3. Do you think your grant project will receive support from administrators at your school? Explain. (350 word limit)

Yes, absolutely. Rock Bridge has shown support for student led initiatives in the past, the GSA fundraiser for the Trevor Project being an example. When we first introduced this idea to our administration we received immediate encouragement, particularly from our outreach counselor and our principal. We quickly arranged a meeting with them, our GSA student leaders and sponsors, and another counselor. In this meeting, we discussed all aspects of the project, with all administrators offering support for our goals, extending their own ideas at times. Our principal helped us submit our proposal to the district business office in order to get us approved to submit our application.

Another way that our school supports LGBTQ+ youth is through individual support plans, depending on the gender identity/expression of the student. A meeting with the student, student's family, building principal, and counselor, is scheduled in order to develop this individual support plan. In this process, parents remain the primary educational decision-makers up until their student turns 18. The content of the plan includes any educational adjustments that need to be made for the student, with their family's consent. This includes name changes, pronoun changes, changing the student's designated restrooms, and the student's designated locker rooms. A copy of the individual support plan is sent to the Chief Equity Officer in our school district, in order to be implemented.

PROJECT VISION (Section 5 of 7)

Up until now, you have been showing us how your school currently stands. Now is the opportunity to paint a vision for the future at your school.

1. **UPLOAD A PDF:** Describe the project you would accomplish with a grant from the It Gets Better Project. Please provide a project narrative, which must include a thorough breakdown of your proposed project, objectives you hope to achieve with this project grant, a timeline executable within one school year, and how your project justifies the need for this grant based on the challenges and needs of LGBTQ+ students at your school. (2 page limit)

Content of the PDF:

Coming Out of the Closet In Style.

As my friend (my now-project collaborator) was scrolling through Instagram one night, they stumbled upon an advertisement from your organization, the \$10,000 catching their eye. The next day in one of our shared classes, they explained the whole project to me, knowing I would be interested. I, personally, am a bisexual trans man, currently going through the process of starting hormone therapy, and my friend and I are very invested in the mental health outcomes of students within our school, spending countless hours of class time discussing my experiences and the issues that we see around us. One of the classes that we share has the premise of finding an area that we are passionate about and creating a lasting positive impact in some way. The It Gets Better Project fit perfectly, so we agreed to team up and take on the grant project. We spent several days brainstorming various ideas, combining my personal experiences with things from my project collaborator's perspective. They later attended a GSA meeting at our school and after observing the experiences and concerns expressed by the club members, we eventually settled on establishing a clothing closet. My project partner and I discussed that we want the closet to be a welcoming space for students of all races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, gender identities, gender expressions, sexes, sexual orientations, national origins, disabilities, and ages. We also discussed how we will inform all teachers about it so that knowledge of the closet can be passed on throughout the student body and reach anyone who is interested. Our end goal for the closet is for it to be staffed and run completely by students.

Both of us have a diverse array of friends who do not have the financial means to afford clothing, and I can personally attest to how expensive it is to revamp your entire wardrobe. We decided that the clothing closet would have a variety of more masculine and more feminine clothes, including coats and jackets, an array of formal wear such as dresses and tuxedos for school dances and fine arts performances, along with a large selection of shoes (high heels, sandals, boots, tennis shoes, etc.), a variety of undergarments, athletic wear, and then a collection of makeup that students can use. We also plan on factoring in modesty wishes of students and their families and will make sure to purchase ample clothing for students of all religious backgrounds and beliefs. Once we had created this fairly basic list, we approached our school's outreach counselor and explained the idea of our project to her. She then told us about the PBX closet. This is an already existing closet in our school's basement that is filled with emergency clothing for students in desperate need. She described how students who needed clothes after a family accident or private incident could go down there and pick out something to wear until they can be given access to a Rock Bridge High School care fund. The idea of the closet is amazing and both my project partner and I are thankful it is already available for students in need, but we realized that it could use more fashionable clothing and become more accessible for all of Rock Bridge. It could accomplish all of this, while also keeping its original purpose of helping students in need. Upon seeing the closet, we quickly understood that it wasn't being maintained. When our counselor showed it to us, there were piles of dirty clothes on the floor, unorganized heaps on the shelves, a shoe rack on the verge of collapsing, and nests of wires and electrical boxes lining the walls.

While unattractive, we knew that we could reorganize it and, with the grant money, be able to revamp it. We spent several class days downstairs in the closet, picking up clothes, sorting them into piles of laundry and boxing duplicates of Rock Bridge merchandise that we knew we could donate. We hung up all the clean clothes and organized them by design (jackets, shirts, athletic wear, pants, etc.) in a way that would make it easy to take inventory in the future.

Throughout the process of organizing the closet, my project collaborator and I came up with a list of things that we wanted added to make the space more inviting, creating a budget alongside it, and planning out how we would meet our goals if we received the grant money.

We also created a timeline going hand-in-hand with our budget plan, factoring in our summer availability and the time we would have to spend working on it before the school year started. By September 1st, 2022, we will have all clothing items purchased for the closet. By November 1st, 2022, the closet will be furnished with curtains, a rug, lights, a mirror, etc. By February 1st, 2023, all clothes will be tagged, inventoried, racked and sorted, the closet organization itself being ready for use. By March 1st, 2023, a system for checking out clothing will be established and student leaders and staff will be appointed to maintain and oversee the closet use. All of Rock Bridge faculty will also be informed about the closet and how they can direct students towards it. By March 15th, 2023, the closet will be up and running and the rest of the school year will be spent taking inventory and collecting data on how successful this project is. When we take inventory of the items being checked out of the closet, we will also record the names of the students who are accessing it and the date that they accessed it. Guardians may request to know if their student has accessed the closet at any time.

This closet will serve all of Rock Bridge. We will include specific items to support students looking to informally wear or experiment with their style without having to spend money, but we absolutely plan on the closet's purpose to be overarching and still be a resource for students in need of clothes, no matter the level of necessity. We hope that by providing this resource, we will help empower students within our school and aid people along their journey in finding themselves. I can personally attest to how isolating the process of self-discovery can be, no matter what environment or circumstances you are in, and realize how vital it is that students have this free and accessible resource. It is also highly significant to note the student drive behind it. While Rock Bridge has many absolutely wonderful and supportive teachers, it can sometimes be hard for students to reach out and trust adults so readily. This clothing closet being established by students and supported by student-led organizations will provide a much more welcoming atmosphere that may increase the use and success of this closet.

2. How will you evaluate and measure the success of your project? What metrics will you be using? (350 word limit)

Every year Rock Bridge conducts the Student Culture Survey, which is a simple anonymous survey about our student body demographics as well as how each student views the environment within Rock Bridge. There are questions directly asking how safe students feel and how comfortable they feel expressing their gender and sexual identities at school. There are also questions addressing the comfort level that students have with the Rock Bridge faculty and how willing they are to share their concerns and experiences with them. Figures from our fall school culture survey revealed that 22.9% of LGBTQ+ students do not feel that the rules for behavior, language, and dress, are non-discriminatory, and 20.7% answered that these policies needed improvement. A concerningly large margin of LGBTQ+ identifying students (19%) responded "needs improvement" when asked if they felt that they were welcomed at school. Almost 22.3% of LGBTQ+ students felt that disciplinary action isn't applied equitably, and nearly 30.2% of LGBTQ+ students did not believe that all students are spoken to in the same manner of respect or held to consistent standards of behavior. We plan on observing the results of this survey every year and seeing if the environment within Rock Bridge changes with the introduction of our closet.

Our administration did not previously collect any data pertaining to the number of students that have been using it in the past. We currently have a functional closet in the lower floor of our school called the PBX closet. It is stocked with the extra t-shirts that school clubs and organizations have left over from the beginning of the year. Typically, students only access this closet if they have a family calamity or restroom accident, but our project expands this need for all students within our school who are looking to develop their personal sense of style. Students can access the closet by requesting their counselor to open it for them. After we establish the closet as a resource, we will take an inventory of the items being checked out and keep track of the students who utilize the closet.

3. What challenges or barriers do you foresee for a successful execution of your project? How will you address the above challenges and barriers? Please explain thoroughly. (400 word limit)

We know that in order to establish this closet, we will encounter a few logistical challenges. We plan on being very methodical when it comes to the general purchases and inventory of clothing so that we can cater to the needs of the diverse Rock Bridge student body. Another challenge that we are currently experiencing is the long process we must go through in order to submit this proposal. Our school district requires any grant applicant to first seek approval from the Columbia Public Schools' Business Office, and then obtain approval from the Board of Education, depending on the content of the grant. Since our grant is requesting \$10,000, it is necessary for us to obtain Board approval before we can implement this project. This process will involve several administrators from different departments and we will have to coordinate seamless communication between them. Another challenge that we foresee is making sure that we purchase clothes and other items for all purposes. We will look for everything from formal wear to athletic wear, making sure that Rock Bridge students have access to free resources that they can use in all environments. We also plan on acquiring student input when it comes to what they want to wear, keeping up with what Columbia teenagers find to be fashionable. The final logistical difficulty that we may encounter is with bookkeeping, specifically with keeping track of the students that go in and out of the closet and what they take with them. We will take detailed inventory of the items that get checked out so that there aren't any instances of stealing. We will also have to go in every now and then and make sure that the closet remains maintained and organized, all items being laundered and then put back in their designated places. Counselors already take care of the laundry in the current closet and this will continue for our project as well. Throughout all of this, several of our staff and administrators have voiced overwhelming verbal support and encouragement, which we are certain to have in the ongoing maintenance of the closet.

4. How could your project incorporate broader community involvement, if any? (Optional) a. Please note that grants will be prioritized to project plans that incorporate broader community impact and involvement. Any community involvement must be school-based and student-focused. For example, projects can include establishing a partnership between LGBTQ+ students at your school and LGBTQ+ seniors in your area.

Our long-term goal for this project is to open these closets in each of the four high schools in our community so that we can foster an environment of inclusivity and support for students in Columbia, and we want to make sure that every high school student has access to free resources. By earning this grant, we can show our capability to see a project like this through and it will motivate the district to sponsor similar initiatives at the other high schools!

There is a resource in our local community called The Center Project and they have already established a clothing closet, similar to the one that we are trying to introduce in our school. This organization is heavily involved in the Mid-Missouri PrideFest and they host a youth group on Thursday nights for students who are experiencing difficulties with finding their identity. Our classmate's mother is a board member for this organization and we are going to utilize her help in setting up our clothing closet.

My project partner and I truly believe that fashion is one of the most important forms of self-expression and this closet gives all Rock Bridge students the chance to experiment with their personal style. We would like to provide some level of relatability to the students who are accessing this closet by showcasing models of diverse backgrounds within our community, wearing the clothes that we bought. This can help our peers feel more represented and welcome, knowing that there are people of similar backgrounds who have emerged happier and in style. We plan on reaching out to local modeling agencies and also to anyone else who is interested in modeling our clothes, because there are so many people in our community working at businesses and schools who are confident within themselves and can help empower and uplift Rock Bridge students struggling to find self-esteem. Another major aspect of our closet is makeup, and we have several cosmetics stores within our community (like Ulta and Sephora) who can potentially provide inclusive classes and tutorials using the money from this grant.

BUDGET (Section 6 of 7)

1. UPLOAD A PDF: Provide an estimated budget for your project. List any estimated professional services, materials, or other costs anticipated with your project.

(Below Page Break)

Closet Items	Projected Expenses
Clothing (sweaters, hoodies, athletic and non-athletic t-shirts, shorts, skirts, jeans, polos, dresses, tuxedos, suits, coats, jackets, modesty clothing, etc.)	\$4,000
Shoes and Accessory Clothing (flip-flops, high heels, sandals, baseball hats, boots, scarves, winter hats, gloves, sunglasses, ties, belts, jewelry, etc.)	\$2,500
Inner Wear (various undergarments, bras, socks, etc.)	\$1,500
Furnishings (a new sign, black curtains, a floor length mirror, a rug, paint for decorative artwork, fairy lights for overhead pipes within the closet, clothing hangers, shoe rack, bags and jewelry stand, etc.)	\$1,000
Makeup (brushes, sponges, and applicators, foundations/concealer shades, eyeshadow pallets, eyeliners, blush, lipsticks, etc.)	\$500

Closet Items	Projected Expenses
Clothing (sweaters, hoodies, athletic and non-athletic t-shirts, shorts, skirts, jeans, polos, dresses, tuxedos, suits, coats, jackets, modesty clothing, etc.)	\$4,000
Shoes and Accessory Clothing (flip-flops, high heels, sandals, baseball hats, boots, scarves, winter hats, gloves, sunglasses, ties, belts, jewelry, etc.)	\$2,500
Inner Wear (various undergarments, bras, socks, etc.)	\$1,500
Furnishings (a new sign, black curtains, a floor length mirror, a rug, paint for decorative artwork, fairy lights for overhead pipes within the closet, clothing hangers, shoe rack, bags and jewelry stand, etc.)	\$1,000
Inventory and Bookkeeping Materials (scannable barcodes and printable tags)	\$500

Total \$10,000

2. Does any of your school's funding currently go towards supporting LGBTQ+ students specifically? **Yes**
 If yes → Please describe how funding is currently supporting LGBTQ+ students at your school. (350 word limit)

Our school's GSA sponsor is currently the manager for any funds that the organization earns through fundraising.. This money is sure to be used for any of their future projects. At the end of the year, the GSA is allowed to request a small amount of money to be used for their next year's budget (as a club) but our school doesn't necessarily allocate any specific funding towards LGBTQ+ students.

3. If you were to receive this grant, what is the process for receiving and spending the funds? (350 words) For example, some schools require that the funds go to a school and/or district bank account, while others allow for funds to be sent to a nonprofit fiscal sponsor (some schools refer to this as a booster organization).

The funds for this grant will be housed within our district's Business Services office. We will need to send a copy of the grant to them so that they can set up account codes and a report writer for the operation of the grant. Every month, the report writer will review the expenditures with us. After our grant period ends, the report writer will help us prepare a final expenditure report and we will submit this to you after approving it by the Business Services office. The line of communication between us and the office is Mr. Cherrington, reachable at jcherrington@cpsk12.org. He and the senior accountant, Brian Benter, CPA, reachable at bbenter@cpsk12.org, will help us withdraw funds for our closet purchases.