Honoring Equity Heroes from the LGBTQ+ Community

June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month. The month commemorates the 1969 **Stonewall Riot**, a six-day rebellion between LGBTQ+ individuals and police who raided the **Stonewall Inn**, one of the most popular gay bars in New York City. Following the June 28, 1969, Stonewall raid, individuals organized protests. The Stonewall Riot catalyzed the modern gay rights movement. In the years since, June parades have commemorated this historic uprising and demonstrated the LGBTQ+ community's ongoing fight for visibility, freedom, and equal rights.

The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was an activist group from the late 1960s to mid-1980s following the aftermath of the Stonewall Riot. The group held and participated in several protests in support of gay rights. In 1970, the GLF protested the American Psychiatric Association's classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Marsha P. Johnson and **Sylvia Rivera**, two young trans women of color, played a critical role in the events at the Stonewall Inn in 1969. Both advocated for the transgender community, eventually co-founding Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) – one of the first transgender rights organizations in the country.

Illinois State Rep. Greg Harris was the first openly gay person in Illinois to become a member of the legislative leadership and was also openly living with HIV. Harris has championed legislation dealing with mental health and substance abuse, homelessness among at-risk youth, disability protections, health care and insurance reform, breast cancer services, and discrimination. Harris also championed the Illinois Marriage Equality Law in 2013.

Admiral Rachel Levine serves as the 17th assistant secretary for health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and head of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. Levine **made history** when she became the nation's highest-ranking transgender official and its first transgender four-star officer. As assistant secretary for health, Adm. Levine is working to help our nation overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and build a stronger foundation for a healthier future.

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Did you Know?

- One year after the Stonewall Riot, the first Gay Pride events occurred in Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.
- LGBTQ stands for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer." Some people will use LGBTQIA. The I stands for "Intersex" and the A stands for "Asexual" or "Ally."
- **Public Act 101–0227** specifies that as of July 2020, in Illinois public schools, "the teaching of history shall include a study of the roles and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the history of this country and this state."
- The first **Pride** flag was created by artist, activist, and openly gay military veteran Gilbert Baker in 1977. It has undergone several changes over the years to increase inclusivity.

"When all Americans are treated as equal no matter who they are or whom they love, we are all more free."

— Barack Obama

You can support the LGBTQ+ community and celebrate Pride Month by:

✓ Embracing the identity of each individual by learning and respecting pronouns and the chosen names of friends, family, colleagues, and community members   ✓ Participating in **Pride events**   ✓ Checking out art, literature, music, and films by or featuring the LGBTQ+ community   ✓ Volunteering or donating to an LGBTQ+ organization   ✓ Being an **ally** by creating safe and welcoming spaces to discuss LGBTQ+ topics and allow for members to exist safely

Resources for teacher to student support

✓ **Inclusive Curriculum Implementation Guidance**   ✓ **Supporting Transgender, Nonbinary, and Gender Nonconforming Students**

If you have a suggestion for an Equity Hero theme, please email equity@isbe.net.