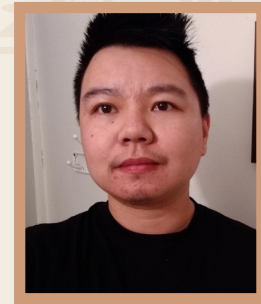


2021 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

■ SAM LONG



In a nation transformed by the intersection of Covid-19, social upheaval, and increased reliance on technology, qualified educators that can connect to all three are at a premium. Colorado's Sam Long is that qualified educator.

As a S.T.E.M. wiz in the state's St. Vrain Valley School district, Sam is known as a champion of the LGBTQ community. He was able to put his considerable set of skills to the test in 2020, when switching to a virtual learning environment coincided with increased online interest from young people in social justice.

Being well-versed in a blended learning environment enabled Sam to navigate this new normal. He was added to the district's Launch ED program, encompassing an online student body of 2,700, as a Chemistry and Biology instructor, during a time that the "E" in "S.T.E.M." often stood for "Equality".

Sam sponsors his school's Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) club, during a time when protections for LGBTQ students are being removed at the federal level, and he makes the political personal; dedicating a class to introduce his own gender identity, encouraging others to feel free to take part in that discourse.

Sam Long's roots in youth advocacy run deep. He's the co-founder of the Colorado Trans & Non Binary Education Network (COTEN), noted for passing the 2020 "Right to be Out Rule". This landmark legislation mandates safe spaces free from harassment of individuals for being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools.

He's served on the History, Culture, Social Contributions, and Civil Government in Education Commission, helping to revise state standards for inclusivity in curriculum, advocating for the inclusion of matters relating to historically marginalized populations. Sam is also the co-founder of Gender Inclusive Biology (genderinclusivebiology.com), a web-based resource that allows biology educators to develop strategies for creating gender-sensitive learning. The group provides professional development and consultation for teachers on small shifts in classroom practice that have a large impact on teaching and learning.

Picking up the torch lit by pioneering LGBTQ rights educator, the late Virginia Uribe, Sam Long is determined to "S.T.E.M." the tide of gender identity-based discrimination.