

Supporting LGBTQ+ Students: Providing a Safe Zone

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Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Session Overview

- Participants will learn more about:
 - How sexuality and gender influence everyday experiences & the impact on students and their families in the educational setting.
 - Written antidiscrimination policies regarding LGBTQ+ students.
 - Legal and ethical issues (state and federal).
 - Training of educators and administrator support.
 - Inclusiveness of curriculum.
 - Creating and sustaining meaningful change in schools.

Impact on Students and Families



Significance in Schools



- A survey of 12,000 LGBTQ+ teenagers across the United States was completed by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation and the University of Connecticut in 2017, indicating the challenges these teens experience.
- Study revealed that LGBTQ+ teenagers experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and rejection, as well as feeling unsafe in schools.
- Participants indicated that supportive families and inclusive schools are key to their success and well-being (HRC, 2020).

LGBTQ+ Youth Outcomes

- Literature review (66 articles) completed by Annie E. Casey Foundation (2016) found that youth identifying as LGBTQ+ are at significantly higher risk of negative outcomes related to safety, permanency, and mental health than their heterosexual and/or cisgender peers.
- Among the most common negative outcomes were homelessness, sexually risky behavior, substance use and abuse, suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and disproportionate representation in the juvenile justice system.
- When compared to their heterosexual peers, LGBTQ+ youth have more incidences of anxiety, depression, anger and even posttraumatic stress disorder related to abuse (Mitchell et al., 2015).

School Climate

- Curriculum that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals, experiences, and events and is responsive to LGBTQ+ youths' needs as a way to positively impact school climate allows LGBTQ+ youth to recognize their own value and helps others in the school community to develop greater understanding and acceptance (Fisher & Huchting, 2019).
- For middle and high school LGBTQ+ students, victimization based on gender expression are correlated with higher absences, lower grades, and decreased school belongingness (Kosciw et al., 2016), with harassment and discrimination continuing beyond graduation (Fisher & Huchting, 2019).

School Climate

- LGBTQ+ youth often navigate more hostile school climates than their heterosexual, cisgender peers. LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risk of poorer mental health and academic outcomes (Sinclair, Bauman, Poteat, Koenig, & Russell, 2012), and of engaging in risky behaviors and substance use.
- LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to experience school-based harassment, victimization, and bullying than their cisgender and heterosexual peers (Day, Fish, Grossman, and Russell, 2019).

School Safety (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- 90% of students felt safe at school with 50% of students reporting that they felt “very safe.”
- The most common reason students reported feeling unsafe at school was related to their appearance/body size (33%), followed by sexual orientation (10%), and race/ethnicity (9%).
- 18% of students reported missing one or more days of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

LGBTQ+ School Safety (GLSEN, 2015)

- 58% of LGBTQ+ students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, and 43% because of their gender expression.
- 32% of LGBTQ+ students missed at least one day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and 10% missed 4+ days in the past month.
- Over a third of LGBTQ+ youth avoided gender-segregated spaces in school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (bathrooms: 39%; locker rooms: 38%).
- Most reported avoiding school functions (72%) and extracurricular activities (66%) because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

Harassment and Assault at School (GLSEN, 2015)

- 85% of LGBTQ+ students experienced verbal harassment at school.
- 27% of LGBTQ+ students were physically harassed in the past year.
- 13% of LGBTQ+ students were physically assaulted in the past year.
- 48% of LGBTQ+ students experienced cyberbullying in the past year.
- 59% of LGBTQ+ students were sexually harassed in the past year.
- 57% of LGBTQ+ students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff, most commonly because they doubted that effective intervention would occur or the situation could become worse if reported.
- 63% of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response or told the student to ignore it.

Teacher and School Staff Intervention (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- Over a third of students reported teachers and other school staff intervened often or very often when they heard racist remarks (36%) or sexist remarks (34%).
- Over a quarter of students reported that school staff often or very often intervened when hearing “that’s so gay” or other homophobic remarks (28%).
- Students were least likely to report that staff intervened in hearing negative remarks about gender expression – only 19% reported that they did so often or very often.
- In 2015, students were less likely to report that school staff intervened in homophobic remarks and sexist remarks than in 2005.

Anti-LGBTQ+ Remarks at School (GLSEN, 2015)

- Almost all of LGBTQ+ students (98%) students heard “gay” used in a negative way at school.
- 95% of LGBTQ+ students heard other types of homophobic remarks.
- 95% of LGBTQ+ students heard negative remarks about gender expression.
- 85% of LGBTQ+ students heard negative remarks specifically about transgender people.
- 56% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff.
- 63% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from teachers or other school staff.

Bullying & Harassment (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- Students named the most common reasons other students are bullied, called names, or harassed as: their body size/appearance (36%), actual/perceived sexual orientation (19%), race/ethnicity (10%), academic ability (10%), and how masculine or feminine they are (9%).
- 74% of students reported personally experiencing some type of peer victimization in the past school year.
- The majority of students experienced incidents of bias-based bullying, i.e., bullying based on personal characteristics.
- Higher levels of in-school victimization were related to lower educational aspirations, higher rates of school discipline, and greater likelihood of missing school.
- From 2005 to 2015, no changes were found in students' reports of their personal experiences of bias-based victimization.

Biased Remarks from Teachers & Staff (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- 25% of students reported hearing school staff make negative remarks related to students' gender expression.
- 20% of students reported hearing school staff make negative remarks about students' academic ability (23%) and sexist remarks (21%).
- Students also reported hearing school staff make homophobic remarks (15%), racist remarks (14%), negative remarks about religion (14%), and negative remarks about transgender people (13%).

Discriminatory School Policies & Practices (GLSEN, 2015)

- 82% of LGBTQ+ students reported that their school engaged in LGBTQ+-related discriminatory policies or practices:
 - 30% reported being disciplined for public displays of affection that were not disciplined among non-LGBTQ+ students.
 - 22% were prevented from wearing clothes considered inappropriate based on their legal sex.
 - 17% were prohibited from discussing or writing about LGBTQ+ topics in school assignments, and 16% were prohibited from doing so in school extracurricular activities.
 - 16% of students were prevented from attending a dance or function with someone of the same gender.
 - 14% of students were restricted from forming or promoting a GSA.
 - 13% of students were prevented from wearing clothing or items supporting LGBTQ+ issues.
 - 11% were prevented or discouraged from participating in school sports because they were LGBTQ+.
 - 4% of students reported being disciplined for simply identifying as LGBTQ+.
 - 51% of transgender students had been prevented from using their preferred name or pronoun.
 - 60% of transgender students had been required to use a bathroom or locker room of their legal sex.
 - 71% reported that their schools engaged in some form of gendered practice in school activities.
 - 54% reported that their school had gender-specified honors at school activities.
 - 36% reported that their school required gendered attire at school graduation, and 32% for school photographs.

Effects of Victimization & Discrimination (GLSEN, 2015)

- LGBTQ+ students who experienced higher levels of victimization because of their sexual orientation and/or gender expression:
 - Were three times as likely to have missed school in the past month than those who experienced lower levels,
 - Had lower grade point averages (GPAs) than students who were less often harassed (2.9 vs. 3.3),
 - Were twice as likely to report that they did not plan to pursue any post-secondary education than those who experienced lower levels,
 - Were more likely to have been disciplined at school, &
 - Had lower self-esteem and school belonging and higher levels of depression
- 42.5% of LGBTQ+ students who reported that they did not plan to finish high school, or were not sure if they would finish, indicated that they were considering dropping out because of the harassment they faced at school.

Differences in LGBTQ+ Students' School Experiences by School Characteristics (GLSEN, 2015)

• School Level

- LGBTQ+ students in middle school were more likely than students in high school to hear homophobic language and negative remarks about gender expression in school.
- Students in middle school reported slightly higher frequencies of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression than students in high school.
- Students in middle school were less likely to have access to LGBTQ+-related school resources (GSAs, supportive educators, inclusive curriculum, and comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies).
- The disparity between middle and high school students was greatest for GSAs (14.5% for middle school students vs. 61.2% for high school students).

Differences in LGBTQ+ Students' School Experiences by School Characteristics (GLSEN, 2015)

- **School Type**
- LGBTQ+ students in public schools experienced higher frequencies of anti-LGBTQ+ victimization compared to other students.
- Students in parochial schools reported more anti-LGBTQ+ related discrimination compared to students in public schools and private schools.
- Students in private schools had greater access to LGBTQ+-related resources and supports in school than students in other schools, whereas students in parochial schools had less access to most LGBTQ+-related resources.

Differences in LGBTQ+ Students' School Experiences by School Characteristics (GLSEN, 2015)

- **Region**

- LGBTQ+ students attending schools in the Northeast and the West reported lower frequencies of hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks than students attending schools in the South and Midwest.
- Students from schools in the Northeast and the West reported somewhat lower levels of victimization based on both sexual orientation and gender expression than students in schools in the South and the Midwest.
- Students in the South were most likely to experience anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination at school.
- Students in the Northeast were most likely to report having LGBTQ+-related resources at school.

Differences in LGBTQ+ Students' School Experiences by School Characteristics (GLSEN, 2015)

• School Locale

- LGBTQ+ students in rural/small town schools reported hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks most often.
- Students in schools in rural/small town areas experienced the highest levels of victimization based on both sexual orientation and gender expression.
- Students in schools in rural/small town areas were more likely to experience anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination at school than students in suburban and urban schools.
- Students in rural/small town schools were least likely to have LGBTQ+-related school resources or supports, particularly GSAs and supportive school personnel.

Antidiscrimination Policies Regarding LGBTQ+ Students



Anti-Bullying Policies

- School policies facilitate professional development, perhaps by mandating training for school staff.
- Teachers in schools with an anti-bullying policy were more likely to receive professional development on bullying/harassment issues.
- Teachers in schools with LGBTQ+-enumerated policies were more likely than teachers in schools with generic policies and schools with no policies to have received LGBTQ+-related professional development (Greytak, et al., 2016).
- 32% of LGBTQ+ students who reported that they did not plan to finish high school, or were not sure if they would finish, indicated that they were considering dropping out because of the hostile climate created by gendered school policies and practices (GLSEN, 2015).

Anti-Bullying Policies (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- Although most teachers reported that their school had an anti-bullying policy, considerably fewer noted that the policy was LGBTQ+-enumerated. Teachers in schools with LGBTQ+-enumerated policies were more likely to report biased language and bias-based bullying.
 - 91% of teachers believed their school had an anti-bullying policy; 52% reported that their school's policy was LGBTQ+-enumerated for both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
 - Teachers in schools with an anti-bullying policy (regardless of type) reported hearing sexist remarks and expressions using gay in a negative way more often than teachers in schools without a policy.
 - Teachers from schools with an LGBTQ+-enumerated anti-bullying policy heard homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression, religion, and transgender people more often than teachers in a school with a generic anti-bullying policy.
 - Teachers in schools with LGBTQ+-enumerated policy reported higher prevalence of bullying and harassment due to race/ethnicity, appearance, and academic ability than teachers in schools with no policies.
 - Teachers in schools with anti-bullying policies (regardless of type) reported higher levels of comfort addressing bullying based on sexual orientation compared to teachers in schools with no policy.

Comprehensive Bullying / Harassment Policies (GLSEN, 2015)

- Although 84% of students had an anti-bullying policy at their school, only 10% of students reported that their school had a comprehensive policy (i.e., that specifically enumerate both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression).
- Students in schools with a comprehensive policy:
 - Were less likely to hear “gay” used in a negative way often or frequently (52% compared to 74% of students with a generic policy and 80% of students with no policy)
 - Were less likely to hear other homophobic remarks often or frequently (44% compared to 61% of students with a generic policy and 68% of students with no policy)
 - Were less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression often or frequently (53% compared to 64% of students with a generic policy and 69% of students with no policy)
 - Were more likely to report that staff intervene when hearing anti-LGBTQ+ remarks
 - Experienced less anti-LGBTQ+ victimization
 - Were more likely to report victimization incidents to school staff and were more likely to rate school staff’s response to such incidents as effective.

Written Antidiscrimination Policies

- Antibullying policies are associated with lower suicidal ideation among LGBTQ+ youth and suicidal ideation is also lower in schools in which there are multiple supports for LGB youth (GSAs, LGBTQ+-inclusive curricula, harassment policies that enumerate protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and staff training).
- Comprehensive antibullying policies in schools are also associated with higher self-esteem and positive school climates for LGBTQ+ youth, and are effective for addressing both homophobic and gender-based bullying.



Public Schools

- **District Policy on Bullying:**
- The Board of Education is committed to providing all students and employees with the right to a safe, positive and civil educational environment, free from harassment and/or bullying. The Board recognizes that bullying and harassment create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detract from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the District to maintain an educational environment in which bullying and harassment in any form is neither tolerated nor permitted.
- The Board recognizes that some conduct that qualifies as bullying may also trigger responsibilities under one or more federal anti-discrimination laws. Peer harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin/ ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion is specifically prohibited.
- (<https://www.pghschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=2200&dataid=2977&FileName=PPS%20Bullying%20Guide%20for%20Teachers.pdf>)

The School District of



- The purpose of this policy is to ensure safety, equity, and justice for all students regardless of gender identity or gender expression so that they can reach their fullest human and intellectual potential. This policy is intended to facilitate compliance with other local and federal laws and School District of Philadelphia policies concerning bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- School District of Philadelphia Policy Section 102, Multiracial-Multicultural-Gender Education (August 2004), states that policy of the School District is to foster knowledge about and respect for those of all races, ethnic groups, social classes, genders, religions, disabilities, sexual orientations (perceived or known) and gender identities (perceived or known). School District of Philadelphia Policies 248 and 249 (September 2010) prohibit all forms of harassment and bullying by District students, and further prohibits reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report these acts or who are targets, witnesses and/or bystanders in order to provide a healthy, safe, positive learning environment for District students. The School District Student Code of Conduct (2015-2016) states that students shall have the right to dress in accordance with their stated gender identity and/or expression within the constraints of the school's dress code.
- (<https://www.philasd.org/src/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2017/06/252.pdf>)

North Clarion School District

POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

- North Clarion County School is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or limited English proficiency in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- North Clarion County School is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or limited English proficiency in its activities, programs, or employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- (<https://www.northclarion.org/files/user/5/file/2019%202020%20Student%20Handbook.pdf>)

Legal and Ethical Issues



Federal Legislation (GLSEN, 2015)

- President Obama called for an end to “conversion therapy” for LGBTQ+ youth, and some states, such as Oregon, have since enacted bans on such practices.
- 2015: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - increases accountability for the educational experiences of certain marginalized student groups, requires states to report school-level data on bullying and harassment, compels states to outline plans to improve learning conditions to obtain federal funds, and allows schools to use federal dollars for bullying prevention programs.
 - However, the two proposed bills that would ensure safe and accessible schools for LGBTQ+ students specifically, the Safe Schools Improvement Act and the Student Non-Discrimination Act, were not included in the final legislation.



Federal Legislation (GLSEN, 2015)

- 2014: U.S Department of Education began collecting data on incidents of sexual orientation-based bullying from public schools as part of its civil rights data collection efforts.
- 2015: Interagency workgroup was established to improve measurement of sexual orientation and gender identity in federal surveys, including education and youth-related surveys.
- 2015: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention included new sexual orientation items on the national and standard state/local versions of their Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The addition of these items will allow for population-based national and state data for LGBTQ+ youth.
- 2016: National Center for Education Statistics included LGBTQ+ identity measures in a student survey for the first time; items were asked as part of the High School Longitudinal Survey. Resulting data will provide valuable information on LGBTQ+ young adults and retrospective assessments of their school experiences.

Title IX

- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 declares it is unlawful for the federal government to fund education programs or activities that discriminate on the basis of sex. Title IX states:
 - *“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”*
- Gender identity / expression is included as a protected class under Title IX.

State Legislation



- The first piece of LGBTQ+ civil rights legislation introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly was in 1976 by Rep. Norman Berson (D-187, Philadelphia) regarding non-discrimination.
- The only piece of LGBTQ+ equality legislation to become law in Pennsylvania was the Hate Crimes law of 2002. It was ultimately struck down by the Commonwealth Court in 2008 due to a technicality. This was the only piece of LGBTQ+ equality legislation ever adopted by the General Assembly.
- <https://payoutcongress.org/pa-equality-center/state-legislative-history/>

State Legislation

- Pennsylvania law does not offer specific non-discrimination protections for students based on their actual or perceived gender identity or expression.
- The State Board of Education offers limited non-discrimination protections on the basis of sexual orientation (22 Pa. Code §§ 4.4, 12.4, 235), but there are no statutory protections on the basis of sexual orientation.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has yet to issue a formal position on transgender student inclusion, or in response to any of the federal guidance issued or withdrawn on supporting transgender students.

State Legislation

- Given federal guidelines and the absence of state policy on transgender students, it is incumbent on each school district to adopt a comprehensive policy to support transgender and gender expansive students.
- As of March 2020, over 20 comprehensive board-approved policies or guidelines that specifically detail inclusion for transgender students had been identified.
- More than 30 school districts have included gender identity as a protected class in their student non-discrimination policy. Of those districts, seven updated their student non-discrimination policy to include gender identity/expression between May and December 2016.
- <https://dignityforall.payouthcongress.org/statepolicy/>

Title IX & Pennsylvania

- According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania schools rely on over \$1 billion each year in federal funding.
- Violating Title IX could cause the federal government to pull its funding from an individual school entity.
- By accepting federal funding, a school entity is essentially signing a contract that they will follow the parameters set by the federal government, including Title IX and how the Department of Education provides guidance on the law.

Pennsylvania's Equality Profile

- https://www.lgbtmap.org/equality_maps/profile_state/PA
- <https://beyondido.org/states/pennsylvania/>
- In 2018, Governor Tom Wolf signed an executive order creating the Pennsylvania Commission on LGBTQ Affairs, the first in the nation.
 - “The creation of the commission on LGBTQ Affairs is one step of many we have taken to ensure obstacles are removed for anyone who is facing an unfair disadvantage based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. It’s a step we took together with our stakeholder and advocacy groups and one that those involved asked for – a commission to help coordinate and drive statewide equality efforts.” ~ Governor Tom Wolf
 - <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/governor-wolf-launch-first-statewide-lgbtq-affairs-commission/>

Training of Educators & School Support



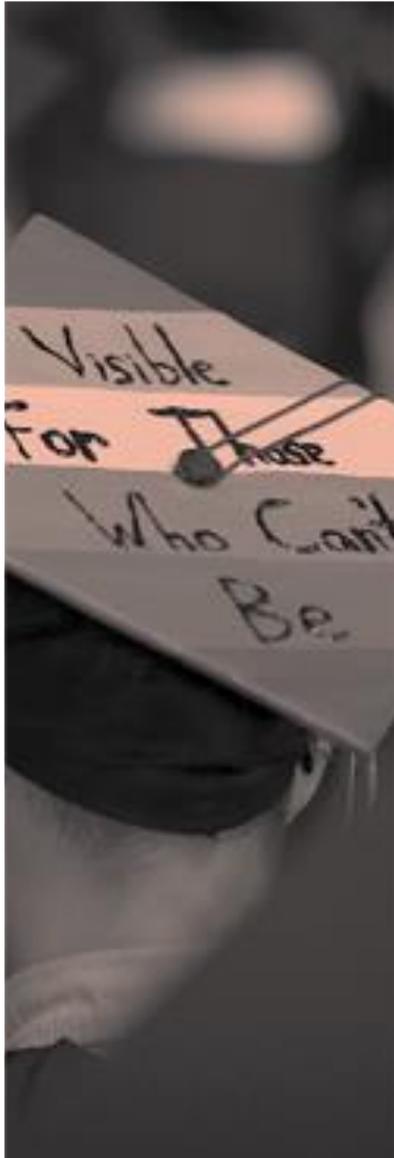
Supportive School Communities

- Safe schools - caring educators who treat students fairly, the presence of school support groups, inclusive curricula, educators willing to support LGBTQ+ youth, and comprehensive policies designed to protect these students from harassment.
- Result in increased feelings of safety and belonging, higher GPAs, and higher educational aspirations among LGBTQ+ students.
- In schools with supportive student groups and inclusive/affirming policies, LGBTQ+ and other sexual minority students feel safer, even when exposed to heterosexist bullying (Goodenow et al., 2006; Murdoch & Bolch, 2005).
- LGBTQ+-focused school policies strengthen social supports in schools for LGBTQ+ students (Day, Fish, Grossman, and Russell, 2019).

Student Attitudes & Familiarity with LGBTQ+ People (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- 88% of students indicated that they did not have a problem with people who are LGBTQ+.
- 82% reported knowing someone who was LGBTQ+
 - They were more likely to report knowing someone who was lesbian, gay, or bisexual than they were to report knowing someone who was transgender.
- 72% of students reported knowing an LGBTQ+ classmate.
- 23% of students reported having LGBTQ+ family members, including 2% with LGBTQ+ parents.
- Students who knew someone who was LGBTQ+ held less negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people than students who did not know any LGBTQ+ people.

Supportive Educators (GLSEN, 2015)



- 97% of LGBTQ+ students could identify at least one staff member supportive of LGBTQ+ students at their school.
- Only 64% could identify at least six supportive school staff.
- 41% of students could identify 11 or more supportive staff.
 - These students were less likely to feel unsafe, less likely to miss school, had higher GPAs than other students, were less likely to say they might not graduate, were less likely to not plan on pursuing post-secondary education, and felt more connected to their school community.
- 37% of students reported that their school administration was supportive of LGBTQ+ students.
- 29% of students had seen at least one Safe Space sticker or poster at their school.
 - These student were more likely to identify school staff who were supportive of LGBTQ+ students and more likely to feel comfortable talking with school staff about LGBTQ+ issues.

Engagement in LGBTQ+ Supportive Practices (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- 50% of teachers reported engaging in at least one LGBTQ+-related practice.
- 34% discussed LGBTQ+ issues with students and 28% provided one-on-one support to LGBTQ+ students.
- 15% included LGBTQ+ topics in their curriculum and 12% displayed LGBTQ+ supportive materials.
- 10% advocated for staff training or educated staff on LGBTQ+-related issues, 9% advocated for LGBTQ+-inclusive policies, and 4% served as a GSA advisor.
- Most teachers felt comfortable supporting LGBTQ+ students (60%) and responding to students' questions about LGBTQ+ people (63%).
- Teachers were less comfortable with those activities that entailed more official or public roles: GSA (35%) and incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into their teaching or curriculum (33%).

Training of Educators

- Over the past decade, more teachers report feeling responsible for creating supportive environments for LGBTQ+ youth, and LGBTQ+ youth report greater feelings of safety at school (Fisher & Huchting, 2019).
- Payne and Smith's (2011) Reduction of Stigma in Schools (RSIS) workshop promotes inclusive LGBTQ+ school climates. The workshop is delivered by an educator and is informed by relevant research (Greenspan , Whitcomb, & Griffith, 2019).
 - <http://www.queeringeducation.org/rsis/about-rsis>

Training of Educators (Greytak, et al., 2016)

- Professional development on diversity, LGB issues, and transgender issues were most closely related to greater involvement in LGBTQ+-supportive practices.
 - 85% of teachers received some type of professional development on topics of bullying and harassment and 76% received training in diversity/multicultural education.
 - Only 33% of teachers had any professional development on LGBTQ+ student issues and only 24% had any on transgender student issues.
 - Teachers were least likely to have received professional development during their pre-service education, as opposed to in their current or former position.

Concerns of Educators

- Teachers cited concerns about parental response, problems with supervisors, loss of employment, being hesitant to “make waves,” and being reluctant to publicly discuss matters of sexual identity.
- 23% of elementary educators selected at least one of what was categorized as a ‘fear-based’ reason for what would prevent them from addressing LGBTQ+ topics in the curriculum [parents opposed, legal implications, administration opposed, school board opposed, don’t have permanent contract, and might be turned down for promotion) (Meyer, Quantz, Taylor, and Peter, 2019)].

Preparedness of Educators

- Results of one study involving pre-service teachers, school counselors (SCs), and school psychologists (SPs) showed they overlooked issues related to the LGBTQ+ population.
- Participants reported being unprepared to intervene and concerned about repercussions from administration, colleagues, and parents; felt unprepared to engage in advocacy for sexual minority youth in schools.
- SPs reported relatively positive attitudes toward lesbians and gay men, though they expressed low to moderate levels of knowledge of and felt underprepared to work with LGBTQ+ students.
- McCabe, Dragowski, and Rubinson (2013) found that some SPs did not recognize verbal insults as heterosexist harassment.
- Studies of SCs revealed negative and unexplored attitudes toward homosexuality and a lack of professional development/training opportunities.

NASP (2020)

- Under Domain 8 of the Professional Standards of NASP (2020), “(s)chool psychologists have knowledge of, and inherent respect for, individual differences, abilities, disabilities, and other diverse characteristics and the effects they have on development and learning. They also understand principles and research related to diversity in children, families, schools, and communities, including factors related to child development, religion, culture and cultural identity, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, and other variables. School psychologists implement evidence-based strategies to enhance services in both general and special education and to address potential influences related to diversity. School psychologists demonstrate skills to provide professional services that promote effective functioning for individuals, families, and schools with diverse characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds through an ecological lens across multiple contexts. School psychologists recognize that equitable practices for diverse student populations, respect for diversity in development and learning, and advocacy for social justice are foundational to effective service delivery. While equality ensures that all children have the same access to general and special educational opportunities, equity ensures that each student receives what they need to benefit from these opportunities” (NASP, 2020, p. 20).

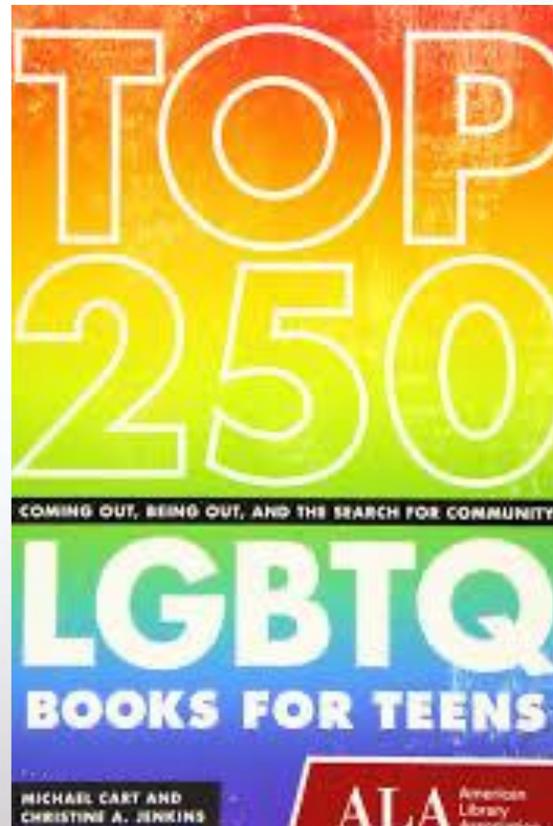
NASP (2020)

- Standard I.2.5: Privacy Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression (NASP, 2020) insures that “(s)chool psychologists respect the right of privacy of students, parents, and colleagues with regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status. They do not share information about the sexual orientation, gender identity, or transgender status of a student (including minors), parent, or school employee with anyone without that individual’s permission” (NASP, 2020, p. 57).
- NASP Guiding Principle I.3. Fairness, Equity, and Justice states that “(i)n their words and actions, school psychologists promote fairness and social justice. They use their expertise to cultivate school climates that are safe, welcoming, and equitable to all persons regardless of actual or perceived characteristics, including race, ethnicity, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, socioeconomic status, primary language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or any other distinguishing characteristics” (NASP, 2020, p. 57)

Training of School Psychologists

- NASP's Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists (NASP, 2020) directs that training programs prepare candidates in a way such that "(a)ll aspects of human diversity and social justice are recognized as strengths that are valued and respected throughout the school psychology program. Human diversity is broadly defined as it relates to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, linguistic differences, ability, and intersection of any above. Social justice ensures that all children and youth are valued and that their rights and opportunities are protected in schools and communities" (NASP, 2020, p. 32).
- School psychologists and school counselors may engage in targeted efforts that highlight their areas of content expertise and support new learning for intervention implementation,. They may also act as consultants to problem-solve barriers to facilitate consultee behavioral change (Greenspan, Whitcomb, & Griffith, 2019).

Inclusiveness of Curriculum

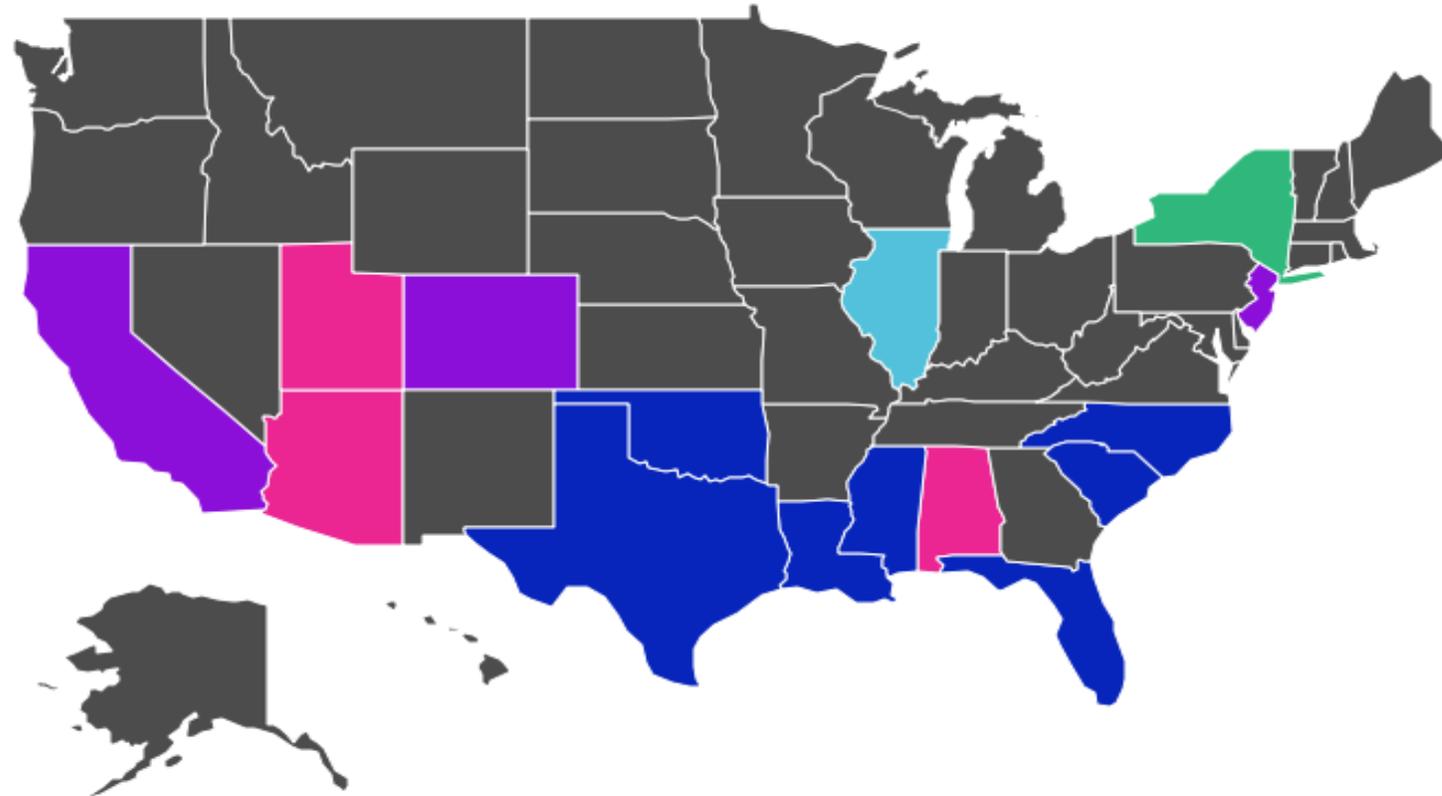


Inclusive Curricular Resources (GLSEN, 2015)

- Only 22% of LGBTQ+ students were taught positive representations of LGBTQ+ people, history, or events in their schools; 18% had been taught negative content about LGBTQ+ topics.
- 42% of students reported that they could find information about LGBTQ+-related issues in their school library.
- 49% with Internet access at school reported being able to access LGBTQ+- related information online via school computers.
- LGBTQ+ students in schools with an LGBTQ+- inclusive curriculum:
 - Were less likely to hear “gay” used in a negative way often or frequently
 - Were less likely to hear homophobic remarks such as “fag” or “dyke” often or frequently
 - Were less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression and transgender people
 - Were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation (40% vs. 63%)
 - Were less likely to miss school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable
 - Were less likely to say they might not graduate high school or pursue post-secondary education
 - Were more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBTQ+ people
 - Felt more connected to their school community than other students

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum

www.the74million.org



- Lifted restrictions on LGBTQ content
- No ban or mandate
- Mandated LGBTQ inclusion in curriculum
- Restrictions on LGBTQ content
- Restrictions on LGBTQ content, considering LGBT inclusivity mandate
- Considering LGBTQ inclusivity mandate

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curricula

- LGBTQ+ students who attend schools that embrace a curriculum that is LGBTQ+-inclusive say they are less likely to feel unsafe (Batchelor, Ramos, and Neiswander, 2018).
- Presentation of LGBTQ+-themed literature and lessons may help build tolerance and acceptance among students, thereby reducing bullying and abuse.
- Teachers can use LGBTQ+-themed literature in classrooms as a mirror, a window, and to assist in identity; literature can create experiences that advocate positive feelings for all students.
- Heteronormativity prevalent in curricula may isolate and further marginalize students; using texts that offer a mirror for LGBTQ+ students to see themselves in may help to combat heteronormativity in education.

Creating & Sustaining Meaningful Change



Support for Staff & Students

- School leaders should counter the heteronormative perspectives that often permeate schools and school districts, such as presumptuously identifying all students as heterosexual.
- School leaders should combat any school culture where support for straight students translates into marginalization of LGBTQ+ and perceived-LGBTQ+ students.
- School leaders should create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to learn about LGBTQ+ issues and to dialogue with LGBTQ+ individuals.
- School leaders should help LGBTQ+ youth feel included in their surroundings by encouraging personal affiliations with LGBTQ+ individuals or to make neutral references regarding sexual orientation to and by all faculty, staff, and students.

Support for Staff & Students

- School leaders may institute rituals, celebrations, and activities designed to affirm LGBTQ+ youth, such as participation in national programs developed to counter the negative experiences that these students are having and to shed light on the issue in schools [No Name-Calling Week, Day-of-Silence protests, and Gay–Straight Alliances (GSAs)].
- School leaders should be knowledgeable about district policies and advocate on behalf of LGBTQ+ individuals.
 - Students should be provided a process whereby they can quickly and confidentially report bullying.
 - Safe zones, or areas of a school where students can freely express themselves, constitute another example of how schools can support LGBTQ+ students.
 - Allies in the community—support groups, advocacy groups, and the like—are critical in this effort.

Increasing Engagement of Staff

- Educators should take responsibility to educate themselves to further their understanding and confidence related to LGBTQ+ topics.
- Local advocacy groups such as P-FLAG, GLSEN, or Safe Schools Coalitions, and experts often offer workshops in the community and can provide staff development.
- Additional staff development, such as reading LGBTQ+-inclusive texts, hosting a guest speaker, or holding a schoolwide assembly may be beneficial.

Support for Families

- Invite parents into dialogue, rather than responding from a place of defensiveness.
- Disrupt the commonplace with regard to LGBTQ+ curricula and ask parents to reconsider their assumptions of curriculum.
- Hear parent concerns while responding with your own.
- Expect listening, discussion, and exchanging of ideas from all parties' perspectives, opening space for true dialogue.
- Focus on sociopolitical issues by explaining to parents why they teach how they teach and how that teaching is meant to include people with marginalized identities, including LGBTQ+ identities.

Support for Families

- Teach parents to rethink the scope of curriculum, reframing community building and equity work as curricular-supported academic skills.
- Call on parents to take action: either choose to allow your child to continue to learn in LGBTQ+-inclusive ways, or choose to teach your child that not everyone deserves a place at the table.
- Classrooms should continue to be inclusive - any change to that arrangement must be initiated by the parents (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2019).

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs)

- LGBTQ+ youth in schools with a GSA report significantly less victimization compared to those without (Marx & Kettrey, 2016).
- School personnel are more likely to intervene when they hear homophobic remarks than those in schools without GSAs (Kosciw et al., 2016).
- LGBTQ+ youth report greater school connectedness and lower negative mental health outcomes when attending schools with GSAs (Heck et al., 2013).
- Youth engage in less risky behaviors related to alcohol, tobacco, and sex, and are less likely to be truant (Poteat, Sinclair, DiGiovanni, Koenig, & Russell, 2013).
- LGBTQ+ youth report more support from classmates, teachers, and administrators (Day, Fish, Grossman, and Russell, 2019).

Teaching Tolerance (2018)

Best Practices for Serving LGBTQ+ Students: *A Teaching Tolerance Guide* provides suggestions for both school policy (students' rights; anti-bullying/harassment policies; bathroom / locker room access; inclusive sports policies; dress codes; inclusive sex education; inclusive & empowering environment) and classroom culture (learning essential terms; modeling inclusive pronoun use; facilitating conversations about identity; challenging gender norms), as well as suggestions for instruction and family/community engagement.



Teaching Tolerance (2018)

- Provides a school self-assessment checklist to address:

- Prom
- Anti-Bullying
- Privacy
- Policies
- School Culture
- Curriculum



- <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/best-practices-for-serving-lgbtq-students/school-checklist>

State Resources



- **The Attic Youth Center:** Creates opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth to develop into healthy, independent, civic-minded adults within a safe and supportive community, and promotes the acceptance of LGBTQ+ youth in society. Philadelphia's only independent LGBTQ+ youth center.
- **Equality Forum:** Mission is to advance national and international LGBTQ+ civil rights with an educational focus.
- **Equality Pennsylvania:** Advancing equality, equity, and fairness for LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians and their families.
- **The Mazzoni Center, Ally Safe Schools Program:** Dedicated to meeting the health and wellness of the LGBTQ+ communities.
- **Pennsylvania Youth Congress:** PYC unites young LGBTQ+ leaders from across the commonwealth within their schools and communities in order to create a responsive and organized statewide movement. PYC helps ensure that the issues facing young LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians are addressed in local and state government.
- **Dignity for All:** An online resource for Pennsylvania transgender student policy
- **TransCentral PA:** Provides advocacy and support for transgender individuals, their significant others, families, friends, and allies; also provides gender education and information to businesses, organizations, educational institutions, and governmental agencies.
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/LGBTQ+.html>

Additional Resources

- **Creating Safe and Welcoming Schools** - HRC Foundation's Welcoming Schools is the most comprehensive bias-based bullying prevention program in the nation to provide LGBTQ+ and gender inclusive professional development training, lesson plans, booklists and resources specifically designed for Pre K - 8 educators and youth-serving professionals. <https://www.welcomingschools.org>
- **Practice Kit 10: LGBTQ+ Youth Advocacy (Children's Law Center, 2015)** - Provides a compilation of best practices that have been found to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth. Documents may be used by families, practitioners and professionals and include lists of best practices, legal considerations when working with LGBTQ+ youth, training materials, and self-assessments for practitioners. www.childrenslawcenter.org/resource/practice-kit-10-LGBTQ+-youth-advocacy

What is Safe Zone?

- Safe Zone Workshops are opportunities for people to honestly communicate with each other, educate one another, and ask questions about sexuality and gender in a non-judgmental, safe, and educational environment.
- Workshops help to set and clarify a common vocabulary on LGBTQ+ issues, provide activities and lectures that serve as a space for critical discussion and examination of privilege, bias, and identity, give a space for participants to ask and discuss any questions they have, and empower participants to feel personally involved and invested in issues of gender and sexuality.

Become Safe Zone Certified

- Safe Zone provides opportunities to learn about LGBTQ+ identities, gender, and sexuality and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege. Attending a Safe Zone training, having a deeper familiarity and comfort with vocabulary, inclusive practices, and privilege can help you identify ways that your organization can continue to be a safer and more inclusive space for LGBTQ+ students and colleagues.



<https://thesafezoneproject.com>

References & Resources

- Available upon request (crjackson01@ysu.edu) & via Dropbox <https://www.dropbox.com/home/ASPP%202020>