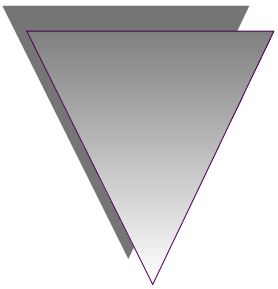
Technical Assistance Sampler

Sexual Minority Students

(Updated 2016)



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Sexual Minority Students

Introduction

National Registry of Evidence Based Practices Learning Center's Literature Review: LGBT Youths 1

Issues facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff 9

Research about Harassment & Discrimination 9

Bullying & LGBT Students 10

Peer Victimization 15

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity 16

More on Bullying 17

Students who are Undocumented and Identify as Queer 19

Transgender Students and Schools 25

Some Research on Relationships with Peers, Teachers, and Significant Others 31

Sexual Minority Teachers and Staff 33

Interventions for Assisting Sexual Minority Students 35

NASP Position Statement 35

A Few Examples of Research 40

Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices 41

Project 10 65

GSA Clubs 66

A Few More Research Examples 67

References & Resources 70

Additional References 71

Agencies, Organizations, and Internet Sites Consultation 72

Quick Find - TOPIC: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Issues 74

TOPIC: Hate Groups:

NREPP SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices

Literature Review
LGBT Youths

Youths' sexual orientations and gender identities are complex and are often still being shaped during adolescence, a time in people's lives when they are unsure of themselves and begin to question who they are (Poirier, Fisher, Hunt, & Bearse, 2014; IOM [Institute of Medicine], 2011). For lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youths, this period of transition is often more difficult; research has shown that LGBT youths are more likely to confront certain barriers and environmental risk factors connected to their sexual orientations and gender identities, compared with their heterosexual classmates and peers. For example, LGBT youths are more likely to experience bullying at school (Mitchum & Moodie–Mills, 2014); experience rejection or victimization perpetrated by their parents or caregivers, which often results in youths running away from home (Friedman et al., 2011); face homelessness (Burwick, Oddo, Durso, Friend, & Gates, 2014); attempt suicide (IOM, 2011; Craig, Austin, & Alessi, 2012); and suffer from illicit drug use (Heck et al., 2014).

Defining the Population

Sexual orientation is usually classified as heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual (lesbian or gay) and is based on the gender of the person or persons to whom someone is emotionally, physically, sexually, or romantically attracted. Sexual orientation involves attraction, behavior, and identity and is expressed in relationship to others who fill a need for love, attachment, and intimacy (IOM, 2011; SAMHSA, 2014).

Gender identity refers to an individual's internal sense of being male or female, or in between, regardless of the person's assigned sex at birth (Irvine, 2010; ACLU, 2013; SAMHSA, 2014). *Gender nonconforming* or *gender variant* refers to youths who have gender identities or gender expressions that break social norms (Irvine, 2010).

Transgender is a term that encompasses a variety of ways people may identify or express their gender, usually in opposition to one's biological sex (Hopkins & Dickson, 2014). As Irvine explains: "[A] transgender girl is a girl whose birth sex was male but who understands herself to be female. A transgender boy is a boy whose birth sex was female but who understands himself to be male" (2010, p. 1). Transgender is not defined by whether a person has undergone surgery or hormone treatment to change his or her appearance or anatomy. Rather, it is defined by a person's internal sense of feeling male or female (Shuster, 2014).

Many of these terms may overlap in meaning. For example, gender nonconforming is a broad term that can include transgender youths. However, any youth who does not conform to the social norms or expectations of his or her gender (through mannerisms, behavior, or even

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clothing choices) may be considered gender nonconforming, although that individual may not necessarily be LGBT (Youth.gov, 2014).

Two-spirit is a term used by some Native American communities with regard to LGBT individuals. According to Poirier, Fisher, Hunt, & Bearse (2014), two-spirit refers to "American Indian/Alaskan Native American people who (a) express their gender, sexual orientation, and/or sex/gender roles in indigenous, non-Western way, using tribal terms and concepts, and/or (b) define themselves as LGBTQI in a native context" (p. 2). Native American people who are two-spirit are believed to bridge social categories of male and female and the spirit and human worlds. However, this is not a term used among all Native American communities; some use terms from their own culture and language (SAMHSA, 2010).

Risk and Protective Factors of LGBT Youths

Sexuality as a Risk Factor for LGBT Youths

A 2011 report on health issues related to LGBT individuals stated:

> LGBT youth face the same challenges as their heterosexual peers, but also stigma that may contribute to the identified disparities in health status between sexual- and gender-minority youth and heterosexual youth (IOM, 2011, p. 142).

Research has shown that adolescence is a time of heightened risk-taking behavior and, as noted above, there are several unique risk factors that LGBT youths are more likely to experience.

Family

Youths may experience verbal and physical abuse from their families because of rejection of their sexual orientation or gender-nonconforming behavior. As many as 30 percent of LGBT youths experience family violence after "coming out" to family members (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011). The Family Acceptance Project (a research initiative studying the influence of family reactions on the physical and mental health of LGB adolescents and young adults) examined the effect of family-rejecting reactions to sexual orientation and gender expression during adolescence on later health problems (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009). The results showed that higher rates of family rejection were significantly associated with poor health outcomes. Specifically, LGB young adults who experienced higher levels of family rejection during adolescence were 8.4 times as likely to have reported attempting suicide, 5.9 times as likely to report high levels of depression, and 3.3 times as likely to use illegal drugs, as compared with LGB young adults who reported no or low levels of family rejection (Ryan et al., 2009; SAMHSA, 2014).

Countless LGBT youths are kicked out or "thrown away" by their families, and many decide to run away from home because of familial rejection. This can in turn increase the likelihood that a youth will be placed in a group home or foster care, or experience homelessness. One study found that LGB and gender-nonconforming youths were twice as likely as their heterosexual and gender-normative peers to report they had been removed from their home by a social worker, had lived in a group or foster home, or had ever been homeless after being kicked out of their home or running away (Irvine, 2010).

School

In school, LGBT youths face bullying and victimization from classmates and even from teachers or administrators. *The 2013 National School Climate Survey* conducted by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network found that 74.1 percent of LGBT students were verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened), 36.2 percent were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved), and 16.5 percent were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, injured with a weapon) at school because of their sexual orientation (Kosciw, Greytak, Palmer, & Boesen, 2014). In addition, 51.4 percent of LGBT students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff. LGBT youths are also more likely to face harsh disciplinary actions, including expulsions, from school administrators (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011; Morgan, Salomon, Plotkin, & Cohen, 2014). The hostile school environment can contribute to higher rates of truancy, absenteeism, and dropping out, in addition to lower academic scores/grades and psychological trauma (Mitchum & Moodie–Mills, 2014).

Individual

LGBT youths are also at higher risk for mental health–related issues such as depression, mood and anxiety disorders, and suicidal ideation and attempts, compared with their heterosexual peers. Although most LGBT youths are well adjusted and healthy, LGBT youths, on average, are 2 to 7 times as likely to have attempted suicide, compared with their heterosexual peers (IOM, 2011; Craig et al., 2012). LGBT youths are also at a higher risk for substance use disorders and have higher rates of reported smoking, alcohol use, and drug use. For example, longitudinal data from the *Growing Up Today Study* found that youths indicating their sexual orientation as bisexual or lesbian/gay were more likely than heterosexual youths to report past-year illicit drug use such as marijuana, and misuse of prescription drugs such as pain killers (Corliss et al., 2010).

Higher suicide ideation and attempts and drug abuse and misuse can be attributed to numerous factors, such as victimization and rejection suffered by youths related to their sexual orientation and gender identity. Some researchers maintain that mental health and substance abuse disparities experienced by LGBT individuals can be explained, in part, by the minority stress theory. The minority stress theory contends that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals encounter constant stress owing to their experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and stigmatization, which may cause higher rates of psychiatric disorders among this group (IOM, 2011; Diamond et al., 2012; Mustanski, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011). Sexual minority youths, in particular, face constant stress because of the possibility of total rejection from their families and lack of ongoing support.

In addition, LGBT youths, especially those who are homeless, are more likely to engage in high-risk sexual behaviors, such as survival sex or other sex work, compared with heterosexual youths (Burwick et al., 2014). A 2013 report by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council (IOM, 2013) found that being gay, bisexual, or transgender was an individual-level factor that increases boys' and girls' vulnerability to commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. Moreover, recent research suggests that LGBT youths are also at higher risk of experiencing dating violence. A 2014 study by Dank, Lachman, Zweig, and Yahner found that significantly higher percentages of LGB youths reported being victims of physical, psychological, and cyber-dating abuse, as well as sexual coercion, compared with heterosexual

youths. However, the study also found that higher percentages of LGB youths reported perpetrating these forms of dating violence. Because previous studies on youth dating violence have not distinguished LGBT youths in their samples, it is unclear whether the studies' findings are in line with prior research (Dank et al., 2014).

Protective Factors for LGBT Youths

Although a great deal of research has been directed at the challenges and obstacles faced by LGBT youths, some research has begun to focus on factors that can promote their health and well-being. For example, although family rejection can have a negative impact on youths, especially those who have revealed their sexual orientation or gender identity, family acceptance can be an important protective factor. As noted previously, a study by Ryan et al. (2009) found that young adults who reported high levels of family acceptance during adolescence had significantly higher scores on self-esteem, social support, and general health and significantly lower scores on measures of depression, substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, suicidal thoughts, and suicidal attempts, compared with young adults who had reported low levels of family acceptance. In 2014, SAMHSA released a resource guide for practitioners who work with families and parents or caregivers of LGBT children. The guide discusses the importance of family acceptance and rejection with regard to the health and well-being of LGBT adolescents, and promotes a family-oriented approach to working with LGBT youths and their families. This means that practitioners should consider the context of families, and not necessarily try to change the values or beliefs of parents who react to their LGBT children with ambivalence or rejection, but rather help them understand how negative reactions can contribute to serious health-related issues for their children and provide them with education and services that can help increase support for LGBT youths (SAMHSA, 2014).

Mustanski et al. (2011) argued that it is important to consider protective factors that can help promote healthy development of LGB youths, despite their exposure to negative stressors. They described the importance of focusing on resilience research, and examined the effect of family and peer support within the context of victimization experienced by LGB youths. Their study looked at the self-reported victimization of 425 LGB youths in the Chicago area (the study did not include youths who reported a transgender identity, or reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual or questioning). They found that 94 percent of the sample had experienced some form of victimization as a result of their sexual orientation. Consequently, youths displayed a moderate increase in psychological distress. However, the results showed that psychological distress associated with victimization decreased in the presence of strong peer support and family support. Social support from peers was found to have the strongest promotive effect for LGB youths. The measure of peer support illustrates a lack of social loneliness, peer acceptance of homosexuality, and a sense of having friends as a resource. Family support also had an effect on decreasing the psychological distress of LGB youths; however, the effect was not as strong as peer support, showing that relationships with friends become important for LGB youths, especially in later adolescence. Although peer and family were found to be important, they did not completely eliminate the negative effects of victimization (Mustanski et al., 2011).

Outcome Evidence

There are only a handful of programs that are designed to target the specific needs of LGBT youths, and even fewer evaluations examining the effectiveness of such efforts.

Some research has begun to identify the importance of adapting treatment and services for LGBT youths, to properly address the distinct risk factors that they experience (Craig et al., 2012; Goldbach & Holleran Steiker, 2011). One therapeutic approach that has been adapted to address the specific treatment needs of LGBT youths is Attachment-Based Family Therapy(ABFT). ABFT is a treatment for adolescents ages 12 to 18, which is designed to treat clinically diagnosed major depressive disorder, eliminate suicidal ideation, and reduce dispositional anxiety. The model is based on an interpersonal theory of depression, which proposes that the quality of family relationships may precipitate, exacerbate, or prevent depression and suicidal ideation. ABFT aims to strengthen or repair parent–adolescent attachment bonds and improve family communication (Diamond et al., 2002). Studies found that ABFT had significant impacts on measures of major depression disorder, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideations, and anxiety symptoms of adolescents, including those referred to a hospital-based psychiatry clinic (Diamond, Reis, Diamond, Siqueland, & Isaacs, 2002; Diamond et al., 2010). ABFT for adolescents is an intervention that is also included in the *NREPP* database.

Diamond et al. (2012) examined the adaptation of ABFT with suicidal LGB adolescents and their families. The ABFT manual was modified to make it sensitive to the unique needs of LGB adolescents and their families such as suggesting more alone time between youths and their parents, to reconcile religious beliefs and address fears about disappointment and rejection. A pilot open trial was conducted with 10 self-identified LGB suicidal adolescents and their parents (although only eight youths completed the full course of treatment sessions). The preliminary findings showed that, over the course of treatment, there was a significant decrease in suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms. However, there was no significant impact on attachment-related anxiety or attachment-related avoidance (Diamond et al., 2012). The results suggest that the modified version of ABFT could address some of the mental health issues that LGB youths deal with as a result of a strained relationship with their parents, although more rigorous research is needed.

Overall, the research on services and treatment for LGBT youths, including adaptations of evidence-based programs, is still being developed. There are few rigorous evaluation studies (with an appropriate comparison group) that have been conducted to determine the efficacy of interventions specifically targeting LGBT youths. The research that has been conducted suffers from several limitations, including lack of comparison groups, small sample sizes, short follow-up periods, and selection bias (Craig et al., 2012; Goldbach & Holleran Steiker, 2011; Craig, Austin, & McInroy, 2014; Diamond et al., 2012). It should also be noted that an additional challenge to accurate data collection is the evolution of sexual orientation and gender identity during adolescence.

Conclusion

More research is needed to further understand risk/protective factors, prevalence, experiences, and outcomes for LGBT youths. For example, youths' experiences are rarely influenced by one factor in their lives, but rather are shaped by the intersection of various demographic or sociodemographic characteristics (sexual orientation/gender identity, race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.). Research studies are merely beginning to explore the impact of this intersection on youths. For instance, studies have begun to examine the experiences of LGBT youths who are part of a racial minority group (Dank et al., 2014).

Although more research is needed, there has been an increased emphasis and recognition of the specific needs of this population in recent years. Resources and guides from various government agencies and organizations are also available for family members, friends, or other individuals who wish to offer support to youths. For example, SAMHSA's Office of Behavioral Health Equity has an entire Web page dedicated to providing resources and other information for the LGBT population (http://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/lgbt). Similarly, Youth.gov offers briefs, featured articles, publications, videos and podcasts, websites, and other resources on LGBT youths (http://youth.gov/youth-topics/lgbtq-youth).

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Issues Facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff

>Research about Harassment & Discrimination

Research & Reports Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network

http://gsanetwork.org/resources/research-reports

Research about harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in schools is a valuable tool for understanding the experiences of LGBT youth, youth with LGBT parents, and students who are perceived as LGBT in our schools. Research can help us identify what steps schools can take to improve school safety and create a positive school climate for all youth.

In this section, you'll find important research and reports about LGBT issues in education. Use this research to help you advocate for change in your school.

If you would like to conduct your own school climate survey, GSA Network can provide you with sample surveys and help you analyze the results. Contact us!

In this section you'll find:

- California Research & Reports
  Research specifically focused on LGBT issues in California schools.
- National Research & Reports
  Research conducted with youth across the country about LGBT issues in education, and reports from national organizations and professional associations on LGBT and education issues.
- Family Acceptance Project
  Learn about GSA Network's partnership with the Family Acceptance Project, which has conducted groundbreaking research on issues of family acceptance and rejection as it relates to health outcomes for LGBT young people.
- Publications
  Find the books, publications, and academic journals featuring GSA Network or co-authored by our staff.

RESOURCES

- #GSAs4Justice - Campaigns
- Building Your GSA
- Creating Inclusive GSAs
- Coalition Building
- GSA Actions & Events
- Adults and Advisors
- Legal Resources
- Research & Reports
  - California Research
  - National Research
  - FAIR Education
  - Family Acceptance Project
  - Publications
- Recursos en Español

>Bullying and LGBT Students

Bullying is an ongoing problem in schools across the nation. Bullying is commonly discussed as including a physical, verbal, or psychological attack that purposefully harms or distresses the victim and that usually involves an imbalance of power and repeated acts (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010). Approximately one third of teenagers reported that they had been bullied in the past school year, with 7 percent indicating that they were bullied every day (e.g., Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009). Such victimization tends to exacerbate whatever problems a student has (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002).

How Much of a Problem is Bullying in Schools for LGBT Students?

As the federal government stresses, youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) and those perceived as LGBT are at an increased risk of being bullied (stopbullying.gov -- http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/). Data on the problem are gathered annually by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) (see http://www.glsen.org/learn/research/national-school-climate-survey).

In the 2007 GLSEN survey, 86.2 percent of LGBT students reported having been verbally harassed, 44.1 percent reported having been physically harassed, and 22.1 percent reported having been physically assaulted at their school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. Relatedly, 60.8 percent felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; feeling unsafe caused 32.7 percent to skip at least a day of school in the previous month. The 2011 survey indicates "a decline in anti-LGBT language over the years, and for the first time the 2011 survey shows a significant decrease in victimization based on sexual orientation, although overall levels of anti-LGBT language and experiences of harassment and assault remain high" (e.g., see Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012).

What is the Impact on Bullied LGBT Youth?

Studies report that outcomes associated with bullying based on actual or perceived orientation are much more severe than outcomes associated with non-biased bullying (California Safe Schools Coalition and 4-H Center for Youth Development, 2004). Data from the California Healthy Kids Survey indicate that bullying based on actual or perceived sexual orientation is associated with much higher levels of health risk and lower levels of resilience (https://chks.wested.org/reports). Specifically, students bullied because of actual or perceived sexual orientation had lower grades, were three times more likely to miss school because they felt unsafe, had higher rates of depression, were more

*The material in this document was culled from the literature by Elisheva Hochberg-Miller as part of her work with the national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

than three times as likely to seriously consider and make a plan for attempting suicide, were more likely to report substance use, and were more likely to carry a weapon to school than other students. Additionally, students bullied based on actual or perceived sexual orientation reported feeling less connected to their communities and schools and feeling less support from teachers, family, and friends. And GLSEN reports stress that frequently bullied LGBT students are more likely to state that they are not planning to attend college.

From a psychological perspective, bullied LGBT youth may link their feelings of vulnerability to their LGBT identity and incorporate this as a core part of their self-concept. Fortunately, research suggests that a protective school climate and effective social support can mitigate the negative impact of bullying (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenigh, 2009; Hatzenbuehler, Birkett,Van Wagenen, & Meyer, 2014; Williams et al., 2005).

What are Schools Doing to Address Bullying of LGBT Students?

A variety of reviews discuss policies and practices used to address bullying in schools (see Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2011; also see the Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on Bullying – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/bully.htm). Reviews stress that findings on the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs are mixed. At the same time, it is recognized that poor outcomes may be due to poor implementation.

General Approaches

What schools do specifically for LGBT students is embedded in their overall approaches to bullying. In general, the recommended emphasis is on promoting student and family engagement, monitoring and addressing problems, and providing essential supports, especially during the transition to a new school. Widely suggested are the following:

- *Promoting engagement through enrichment activities, including opportunities for all students to engage in community service.*
- *Pairing a student with a specific adult advocate/mentor for regular support.* The adult should be open to discussing all concerns and easily available. Promoting peer buddies/mentors also is viewed as potentially helpful.
- *Monitoring and addressing attendance problems.* Students should be given the opportunity to make up missed work with support from teachers and family.
- *Preparing teachers and staff to model caring behavior.*
- *Involving students in establishing rules against bullying.*
- *Teaching students what to do when they witness a bullying incident.*
- *Confronting bullies in private.* A general caution is that confronting a bully in front of their peers may actually worsen the situation by enhancing their status or perpetuating their power-seeking behavior.

Specific Strategies for LGBT Students

While schools are concerned with creating a safe environment for all youth, the federal government also stresses that "there are important and unique considerations for strategies to prevent and address bullying of LGBT youth" (see stopbullying.gov -- http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt/). In general, the GLSEN surveys consistently indicate that a safer school climate is associated with availability of LGBT school-based resources and support, including Gay-Straight Alliances, inclusive curriculum, supportive school staff and comprehensive anti-bullying policies (e.g., see Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012). Discussions about helping LGBT youth feel physically and emotionally safe commonly emphasize the importance of ensuring that schools pay special attention to:

- *Countering actions aimed at LGBT youth.* Sexual orientation and gender identity protection are important matters to specifically address in school policies. In addition, when schools stress that it is unacceptable to mistreat anyone, the messages should emphasize this includes individuals who are, or are perceived to be, LGBT.

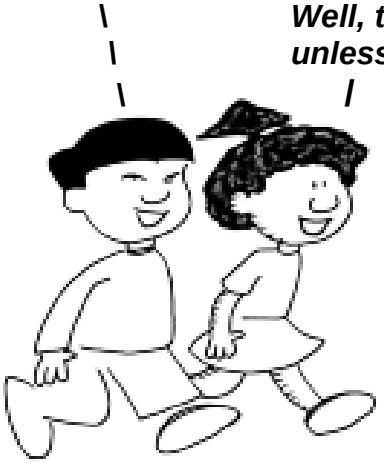
  Note: While federal civil rights laws do not cover harassment based on sexual orientation, many states protect against bullying because of sexual orientation in their state laws. And when bullying targets youth who do not conform to gender norms, this may be sexual harassment covered under Title IX. (Read more about federal civil rights laws -- http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/federal/index.html#civil).

- *Creating gay-straight alliances (GSAs)*. Note: The Equal Access Act makes it clear that schools must allow these groups if they have other "non-curricular" clubs or groups.

- *Protecting a student's privacy*. Without a student's consent, confidential LGBT concerns that a student shares should not be disclosed to others.

I see that bully stole your lunch again.

Well, this time he's in for a surprise, unless he likes broccoli and tofu.



Creating a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment for LGBT Students

In summary, in addition to general bullying policies and practices, the literature suggests specific strategies focused on LGBT concerns can reduce bullying of LGBT students, enhance their feelings of safety, counter their fears, reduce risk of suicide, enhance their feelings of empowerment, reduce isolation and encourage engagement in activities that make positive contributions at school, and enhance achievement and reduce dropouts (California Safe Schools Coalition and 4-H Center for Youth Development, 2004; Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2007; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Murdock & Bolch, 2005). The following are frequently cited:

- Anti-bullying policy at the school should include a specific focus on addressing and practices should counter harassment directed at sexual orientation.
- Ensure teachers are trained with respect to understanding and addressing concerns that arise related to LGBT students (e.g., how to help address the psychological and social impact on all students with respect to dealing with differences in sexual orientation; strategies for reducing homophobia in schools; how to integrate the matter of gender differences into curricula on human development and differences, health education, social studies, history, and literature in age appropriate ways).
- Strive to ensure that LGBT students feel proactively supported by their teachers and all school staff (e.g., post an LGBT sticker in the classroom, discourage derogatory or homophobic comments, as necessary develop safe spaces or zones).
- Ensure LGBT students know where they can go for information and support.
- Enable establishment of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or similar student clubs and support groups, as well as facilitating referral and access to social, physical, and mental health services.
- Protecting student privacy.

Note: From the perspective of our Center at UCLA, addressing specific concerns (such as bullying) and specific subgroups (such as LGBT students) should be done within the broad context of improving how schools address the wide range of barriers to learning and teaching. Our Center stresses that failure to embed discrete interventions into a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports risks making the efforts just one more fragmented and marginalized approach to effectively addressing major and multiple problems experienced by many students. A unified and comprehensive system can enable schools to provide the broad range of student and learning supports that are essential to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed at school and beyond.

See *What Is a Unified and Comprehensive System of Learning Supports?* (http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/whatis.pdf).

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>Peer Victimization

The Influence of Peer Victimization on Educational Outcomes for LGBTQ and Non-LGBTQ High School Students

S.R. Aragon, P. Poteat, D.L. Espelage, & B.W. Koenig (2014).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 11, 1-19.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2014.840761

Abstract

A total of 11,447 high school students were surveyed to test the relation between victimization and the educational outcomes of truancy, post–high school intentions, and grades for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) and non-LGBTQ students. LGBTQ students reported statistically higher truancy, lower grades, greater expectations not to finish high school, and lower expectations to attend a four-year college. Victimization partially mediated these differences between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth. These results highlight the role of victimization in partially accounting for academic disparities between LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ youth.

>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

http://www.nea.org/tools/18846.htm

Sexual orientation is an identity based on whether someone is attracted to people of a sex different than their own, the same sex, or both sexes (i.e., heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual). Gender identity is a person's internal sense of being male, female, or somewhere else along the gender spectrum. Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from their biological sex or the sex they were assigned at birth. The acronym GLBT stands for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. While progress has been made since the Stonewall Rebellion in New York City (1969) —widely considered to be a pivotal moment in the GLBT rights movement—GLBT individuals still face discrimination and intolerance based on pervasive stereotypes and myths about GLBT people.

Main Issues

GLBT-related issues often arise in schools. These include bullying or harassment against students (and sometimes school personnel) who are or are perceived as GLBT; the high rates of truancy, dropout, substance abuse, homelessness and suicide among GLBT youth; controversy surrounding GLBT school events and student clubs; the right of school personnel to "come out" or identify as GLBT in school; and other issues. In many jurisdictions, GLBT school personnel still lack legal or contractual employment benefits, rights and protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Strategies

To address GLBT issues effectively, NEA members may consider taking one or more of the following steps in their schools or communities:

- Educate yourself about facts vs. myths surrounding GLBT people, especially the facts related to health and safety of GLBT students Find ways to support your GLBT students and colleagues
- Prevent bullying and harassment of GLBT students and colleagues through programs, training, and events
- Advocate for staff development on GLBT issues, diversity, safe schools and social justice in your school
- Establish policies, rights, benefits and protections that support GLBT students and employees
- Partner with parents, guardians and community organizations to address GLBT issues in schools or in the community
- Stay in close communication with your administration, your building representative, your Uniserv director, and your local and state affiliate offices

Links

For more information on sexual orientation and gender identity, visit the following:

- Safe Schools for Everyone: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Students
- Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, a leading organization addressing GLBT issues in schools
- GenderPAC, an organization that effectively addresses intersections between sexual orientation, gender and gender identity
- Groundspark features a useful documentary film for adult educators on GLBT issues titled *It's Elementary*
- Safe Schools Coalition, useful Web site on a variety of GLBT topics for educators and community members

Send an e-mail for information about the NEA's Safety, Bias & GLBT Issues Program.

>More On Bullying

Youth Who Are Bullied Based upon Perceptions About Their Sexual Orientation

http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/bullying_sexual_orientation.page

Home
Bullying
Dating Violence
Youth Suicide
Professional Education
Funding
News
State Information
Affiliates & Partners
Key Resources

By Jane Riese, LSW

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power. Most often, it is repeated over time. Bullying can take many forms: physical bullying (hitting or punching), verbal bullying (name-calling, teasing), social or emotional bullying (exclusion, hurtful gestures), or cyber-bullying (negative messages via e-mail or text messaging).

Verbal bullying is the most frequent form of bullying experienced by both boys and girls. Often, even among young students, this form of bullying can involve negative language that is sexual in nature.

Sometimes, this sexual language refers to another person's actual or perceived sexual orientation (for example, targeting an individual as being "gay").

Bullying Based on Perceptions about Sexual Orientation

- As many as 93 percent of teenagers hear derogatory words about sexual orientation at least once in a while, with more than half of teens surveyed hearing such words every day at school and in the community.[1]
- Negative name-calling and harassment about sexual orientation can be harmful to all students. Three out of four students who are bullied with such remarks are not identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (GLBTQ).[2] These derogatory comments are often used broadly to inflict harm in a school setting.
- Seventy-eight percent of gay (or believed to be gay) teens are teased or bullied in their schools and communities, a percentage significantly higher than for heterosexual youth.[3]
- According to findings from the Indicators of School Crime and Safety report, in 2003, 12 percent of students ages twelve to eighteen reported that someone at school had used hate-related words against them, and 36 percent of students saw hate-related graffiti at school during the previous six months. One percent reported that the hate-related words concerned their sexual orientation.[4]
- A national survey of 760 students, ages twelve to seventeen, indicates that the most likely group to be bullied are "kids who are gay or thought to be gay." Most teens (78 percent) said that they disapproved of anti-gay teasing or bullying.[5]
- In a nationally representative sample of nearly 3,500 students ages thirteen to eighteen, one-third reported that students in their school are frequently harassed because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation.[6]

Negative Impact of Bullying

- Bullying and harassment can have negative effects on the development and mental health of GLBTQ students, such as extreme anxiety and depression, relationship problems, low self-esteem, substance abuse, and thoughts of suicide. These students are also at much greater risk of physical assault than other children and youth.[7]
- Students who had experienced anti-gay harassment are four times more likely than non-harassed youth to be threatened with or injured by a weapon.[8]
- Twenty-two percent of GLBTQ students had skipped school in the last month for safety concerns and are three times more likely to drop out of school.[9]
- GLBTQ students are also at risk for not getting the support they need when they are being bullied due to their perceptions that adults at school may have intolerant attitudes or may not provide confidential help in which to deal with their situation.[10] Four out of five GLBTQ students say they know of no supportive adult at school.[9]
- GLBTQ students are two to three times as likely to commit suicide as heterosexual students and may account for a startling 30 percent of all completed youth suicides.[11] These students are also more likely to experience suicidal thoughts, plans, and attempts than other students.[12]

About Sexual Orientation

- It is estimated that approximately 5 to 9 percent of youth are gay or lesbian, bisexual, or uncertain about their sexual orientation.[13]
- The American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association changed their stance on homosexuality in the 1970s, stating that it is not a disorder and that sexual orientation is not a person's individual choice, nor can mental health professionals "change" the sexual orientation of their clients.[14]

Adult Responses Are Important!

These are things adults can do:

State Information

Interactive map of state efforts to prevent bullying, hazing, and harassment

Prevention Curriculum

Lifelines: A Suicide Prevention Program provides suicide awareness resources for school administrators, faculty and staff members, parents, and students.

- No child or adolescent deserves to be bullied. Do not tolerate any anti-homosexual slurs.
- Work with student government and other school clubs to hold programs on respect, school safety, and anti-bullying.
- Be alert to signs of youth who may be in distress.
- Encourage any young person who is bullied to tell a teacher, counselor, or parent.
- Provide confidential help-consult with a school counselor or other mental health professional if you feel uncertain about how best to support a student.
- Support training and education for staff about these issues.[15]

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>Students Who are Undocumented and Identify as Queer

> When you're a teenager and you know that you're the illegal faggot, you start internalizing what that is. And there's a kind of hardening that happens.
>
> Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Jose Antonio Vargas

> Next time someone asks how the contemporary immigrant rights movement came about, tell them that queer undocumented youth built it.
>
> Prerna Lal & Tania Unzueta

Research on the matter is limited, but estimates suggest there are 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. Of these, recent appraisals suggest a range from 267,000 to as many as .5 million identify as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, etc.). Many of these are minors or young adults pursuing an education.

Despite some progress in establishing rights for undocumented and LGBTQ students, barriers that interfere with their schooling are common for these youngsters. And this is especially so for undocumented young people who also identify as "queer."

About Being Undocumented

Undocumented students are young immigrants who were born outside the U.S. and came here alone or with their parents and do not have official documents of entry and residence. An estimated 2 million immigrant youth in K-12 schools are undocumented.

An indication of the barriers undocumented students experience comes from data indicating that 40% of undocumented youth in the U.S. do not complete high school, and only 25% enroll in college. (In contrast, the figures for documented immigrants is 15% do not complete high school and 53% go to college.) Researchers also find that undocumented students report significantly elevated levels of anxiety and depression. And, as with others encountering significant barriers to learning at school, undocumented students generally have inadequate supports for dealing with matters interfering with their well-being.

About Identifying as LGBTQ

Best estimates are that about 10 percent of students are LGBTQ. Many try to be "invisible" because they fear harassment (physical and verbal). Based on reports from LGBTQ high school students, it is estimated that they encounter slurs as often as 26 times a day, and 19% experience physical attacks. The impact on them is reflected in the data indicating that 26% drop out of school, and some become suicidal. Data also indicate that, while harassment is a frequent occurrence, school staff are reported as intervening only 3% of the time.

As with undocumented students and others experiencing significant barriers to staying in school, LGBTQ students find too few supports at school and often are reluctant to access what is available for fear of exposing themselves. The problem of exposure is compounded when the student is also an undocumented immigrant. In general, the combined effects of queer, illegal, and ethnic minority status raise major concerns about the impact on student learning, health, and well-being.

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*The material in this document reflects work done by Yibing Yang as part of his involvement with the national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

About the Intersection

Prejudice and discrimination in schools creates a stigmatizing and stressful social environment for undocumented and for queer students. When a student is undocumented *and* identifies as queer, the impact is likely to be compounded. And many of these students do not seek out help at school for fear of the consequences of being identified. Therefore, even though most undocumented and queer youth need strong support and nurturance, they remain one of the most poorly accounted for groups on campuses.

A Student's Perspective

As one UCLA student emphasized: "Though viewing the issues faced by the undocumented and queer students respectively can offer some insight on the problems that undocumented queer students face, the experience of an undocumented queer student cannot be understood in terms of being undocumented, and of being a queer person, considered independently, but must include the interactions, which frequently reinforce each other.

For example, deeply rooted homo/heteronormativity within the queer and immigrant rights movements places many limitations on the scale of coherence between the queer and undocumented identities. ... Undocumented queer people are often alienated and excluded from both the queer and the immigrants community, hindering a healthy development of the queer undocumented identity. The combined effects of illegal status, ethnic minority status, and queer status pose a set of unique ... problems for undocumented queer students in the United States."

Politics and Empowerment

Grassroots movements often reflect a systemic void and offer direction for changes in policy, practice, and research. The LGBTQ community has produced various grassroot activist movements. For example, Immigrant Youth Justice League, Students Working for Equal Rights, National Immigrant Youth Alliance, Dreamactivists.org, Immigrant Youth Coalition and the UndocuQueer movement. This last group stresses that the queer rights and immigrant rights movements are not parallel, but rather intersect in the fight for social justice. The movement bridges the gap between the queer and undocumented communities and has significantly increased political mobilization of the two.

UndocuQueer movement members have chosen to come out of the "double-closet" of being both queer and undocumented and demand a space in society to discuss the issues that the intersecting identities create. They are being vocal about the concept of intersectionality and are creating spaces that foster discussions between the queer and undocumented communities so that they find common ground for dealing with mutual concerns.

The movement pushes for empowerment by helping queer and undocumented individuals take back control by reducing social stigma and alienation, establishing a sense of shared existence, and enhancing resilience and personal and social competence. To accomplish this, the members of the movement have focused on creating spaces for educating, empowering, and supporting queer and undocumented individuals with an emphasis on sharing intersectional experiences and communicating their presence to the world through enhanced visibility (e.g., building hybrid cultures, creating and launching visual art, utilizing social media, organizing in person collective action).

Addressing the Intersection

As Jose Antonio Vargas stated: "All of us are multitudes. When I see the gay pride flag, in the same way I see the American flag, I've always wondered: How included am I in it?"

To Undocuqueer movement is seen as addressing this concern. As Prerna Lal and Tania Unzueta state: “In order to acknowledge the intersectional oppression, the spaces being created, and foundational work of queer undocumented youth, members of the newly-formed National Immigrant Youth Alliance (NIYA) coined the phrase 'Undocuqueer' as a political identity. This inspired the creation of the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project within United We Dream to continue pushing for the inclusion of LGBT issues in immigration reform.”

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/prerna-lal/how-queer-undocumented_b_2973670.html

Implications for Schools

It is evident that immigrant students often find it difficult to succeed in U.S. schools, and schools often find it challenging to meet the needs of immigrant students. Moreover, as the UndocuQueer movement has grown, it has underscored the need for schools to account for students who identify as both undocumented and queer. As with too many other students, undocumented queer students' education, mental and physical health, and general well-being are threatened by persisting social oppressions and lack of appropriate resources provided by schools. All this raises the question of what is the best way for schools to address these and related concerns.

We have discussed these matters in various publications and Center documents. See, for example:

>Immigrant Children and Youth in the U.S.A.: Facilitating Equity of Opportunity at School (2015). *Education Sciences* (epub) http://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/5/4/323/pdf

>*About Sexual Minority (LGBT) Youth Subculture* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/lgbt.pdf

For more of the Center's discussion of immigrant and LGBTQ matters and links to other resources on these topics, see the Center's Quick Finds:

>*Immigrant Students* -- http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/immigrantkids.htm

>*LGBTQ* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3017_02.htm

What do involved students want?

From the perspective of the students involved, there is an immediate need to address barriers to their well-being and success at school. Activist students want schools to provide spaces that enable activities and discussions that account for all LGBTQ students and that include a focus on the special concerns of undocumented queer students.

In providing such spaces, schools need to develop ways to ensure they are inviting and open to all. They must avoid further isolating subgroups. They must engender a shared sense of commonality, purpose, and well-being. They should reflect Jose Antonio Vargas' common sense perspective that "we are stronger when we're together. We are stronger when we address not just how these issues intersect, but how we as people are multidimensional." Given this, the activities should

- not simply provide information, but encourage informed discussions about the common ground among oppressed groups and their shared goals for civil rights
- involve all staff and students in learning about the problems and issues faced by oppressed groups and ensure that students feel free to talk about their experiences
- provide information on student and learning supports
- develop leadership capacities, reduce alienation, counter bullying, and generally work to enhance a safer, supportive, and nurturing school climate for all students.

Concluding Comments

Despite the recent accomplishments of the queer rights movement as well as the immigrant rights movement, analyses of research, practice, and policy highlight the lack of attention to discussion of the intersection queer and undocumented students. Schools can play a role in addressing this inequity.

Of course, the job of schools is not just to ensure that the needs of a particular subgroup are met. Available data clearly indicate that at every stage in the progression from pre-K-16, too many students in every subgroup are falling by the wayside. The reality is that schools are confronted daily with multiple, interrelated neighborhood, family, schooling, peer, and personal problems that require multiple and interrelated solutions.

If schools are to enhance equity of opportunity, the next decade must mark a turning point for how schools and communities address the problems of all children and youth. Needed in particular are transformative initiatives that enhance how schools work to prevent and ameliorate the learning, behavior, and emotional problems experienced by many students. This requires a policy vision for how to facilitate equity of opportunity by coalescing a comprehensive system of school and community efforts to address barriers to school success. Such a vision must encompass reshaping the functions of all school personnel who have a role to play in addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Furthermore, policy and practice must fundamentally transform how schools connect with homes and communities so they can work together in pursuing shared goals related to the general well-being of the young and society.

Equity of opportunity is one of a society's most elusive goals. Public education has an indispensable role to play in achieving this goal, but schools are hampered by fundamental gaps in school improvement policy and practice. Given the deficiencies of current approaches, the call is for new directions that move toward transforming how schools address barriers to learning and teaching. The end product must be schools where everyone—staff, students, families, and community stakeholders—feels supported.

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Links to Some Additional Resources

CDC provides a list of *Resources for Educators and School Administrators* and *Resources for Parents and Family Members* – http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm#school

Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Network: Transforming Schools – http://www.gsanetwork.org/what-we-do/transforming-schools

GLAAD's Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project – http://www.glaad.org/tags/queer-undocumented-immigrant-project

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network) – http://www.glsen.org/educate/resources

Immigrant Youth Justice League – http://www.iyjl.org

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs – http://www.avp.org/about-avp/coalitions-a-collaborations/82-national-coalition-of-anti-violence-programs

Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation – https://www.raceforward.org/research/reports/better-together-bridging-lgbt-racial-justice?arc=1

The Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP) – http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/quip/

UIC Resources – http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/residency/

>Transgender Students and Schools

Some lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) people have made incredible contributions to this world. They've been scientists, diplomats, athletes, artists, soldiers and human rights activists. Some of the people in your history books were LGBTQ, but you never learned that about them either because of the prejudices of the people who wrote those books or because the person lived at a time when people didn't understand or talk about sexual diversity.

In the U.S. at least 5 LGBTQ individuals -- mostly young trans people of color -- die in brutal hate crimes every year. Thirteen states and Washington, DC prohibit hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity; 17 others, on sexual orientation (but not gender identity). Fifteen have hate crime laws that mention neither of these types of crimes and 5 have no hate crime laws at all.

From the Safe Schools Coalition
http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/whatisageappropriate.pdf

Despite the dramatic advances related to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals, discrimination and bullying of LGBT students remains a significant concern at schools. This is especially so for transgender students. (See the brief glossary of terms appended). Such individuals continue to face wide-spread discrimination and have few legal protections when compared to other minority groups.

While exact numbers are not available, estimates suggest that at least 0.3% of adults in the United States (i.e., 700,000 people) identify as transgender (Gates, 2011). The current generation of young people may be more willing to acknowledge LGBT identities, so previous data probably underestimate prevalence. In any case, transgender youth are an increasingly visible and persecuted minority.

Harassment, Discrimination, and Exclusion Experienced at School

A study by the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) revealed that 90 percent of transgender students surveyed had experienced derogatory remarks at school with respect to gender expression. Only 11 percent of these students reported that school staff intervened upon hearing such negative remarks (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009). These data suggest that harassment is frequent, and support often is not forthcoming at schools.

Harassment against transgender students comes from students and even staff. It includes shaming students for deviating from gender norms and may include attempts to coerce them into behaving more in line with stereotypical gender roles. Although attacks usually are verbal, a survey revealed that 12% of LGBT youth had been physically assaulted due to their gender expression. Even youth who are not transgender or even LGBT may be harassed for non-binary gender expression, with gender nonconforming boys facing intense harassment (Pardo & Schantz, 2008).

Discrimination manifests itself in various ways at school. A commonly cited problem is gender-segregated restrooms. Transgender students generally must use restrooms designated for their sex as assigned at birth. Entering such enclosed spaces designated for a gender with which they do not identify and may not even look like can be alienating, stressful, and a location where harassment is likely (American Psychological Association, 2009).

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*The material in this document reflects work done by Alexander Levine as part of his involvement with the national Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA.

Minorities often experience feelings of alienation and exclusion. For transgender students, these feelings may be compounded daily by the absence of representation and discussion of transgender individuals and culture in classroom and school-wide activity. For example, only 16% of transgender students report finding LGBT-related topics in school curricula and readings; 43% indicated not being comfortable discussing LGBT issues in school (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009).

Transgender Youth and Mental Health Problems

As with others experiencing barriers to learning at school, long-term consequences of negative experiences at school span a range of mental health, social, and societal concerns. Compared to peers, transgender youth have been described as particularly vulnerable to mental health problems. They can feel fundamentally distressed about the sex and gender they were assigned at birth. (This is labeled gender dysphoria in DSM-5.) Harassment, discrimination, and exclusion can counter feelings of well-being and exacerbate negative self-image, stress, anxiety, feelings of depression, and learning and behavior problems.

47 percent of transgender students reported skipping school at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe, and harassed transgender students earn on average lower GPAs than their peers (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009).

Other mental health concerns arise related to considerations about formal gender transition. Students wanting to make the transition commonly experience significant disapproval and negative input from others, particularly parents. And while transitioning to the gender with which they identify may alleviate some gender dysphoria symptoms, transitions are associated with other mental health concerns (UCSF Center of Excellence for Transgender Health, 2015). These arise from such factors as adaptation difficulties, encountering new forms of environmental stress, and reactions to hormomal medication.

50 percent of transgender youth reported they had seriously contemplated suicide, and transgender individuals are at risk for alcohol and substance abuse and for engaging in unprotected sex (American Psychological Association, 2009).

Legal Protections for Transgender Students

While specific legal protections vary from state to state, protections for transgender students have been increasing in recent years. Nevertheless, transgender students lack rights in many states. There are no federal laws which explicitly protect people from discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender identity and gender expression. However, in 2014 the Department of Education declared that Title IX, the federal law which prohibits sex discrimination in government-funded education, applies to discrimination against transgender students (Margolin, 2014). This declaration has not resulted in nationwide school policy changes.

Currently, 15 states (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, and North Carolina) and the District of Columbia have specific legal protections for transgender students (Margolin, 2014). An example: California's School Success and Opportunity Act of 2013 amended Section 221.5 of the state's education code to permit students to participate in sex-segregated programs and use sex-segregated facilities in accordance with their gender identity, and not their legal sex. California's standards are echoed in laws in Massachusetts, Colorado, and Maine (American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California, 2013).

Examples of School Policies

With respect to policy at the school level, it is noteworthy that only 12 percent of transgender students surveyed by GLSEN reported that their school had policies specifically protecting transgender students (Greytak, Kosciw, & Diaz, 2009). The trend seems to be that it is mostly large urban districts that detail the rights of LGBT students and the actions schools should take to ensure the rights are protected. Here are a few examples:

Los Angeles, California : Schools should be mindful of a student's privacy in regards to their transgender status. Official records use the student's legal name and gender, but unofficial records may also include the student's preferred name, labeled "Also Known As." Students are permitted to use restrooms and facilities and participate in sports and activities which correspond to their gender identity. School dress codes are required to be gender-neutral. School administration and staff are expected to respond to harassment situations and support students' gender expression and identity (Los Angeles Unified School District, 2014).

New York, New York : Schools are expected to work closely with students and parents to keep a student's transgender status confidential. The school may use a student's preferred name and pronouns on school records, even if they do not match the student's legal status. Students may join sports teams and other gender-segregated activities in accordance with their gender identity. The policy does not explicitly allow transgender students to use restrooms in accordance with their identity, but notes that they cannot be required to use restrooms which conflict with their gender identity, stating that they may be afforded access to a private restroom. Students may follow gender-specific dress codes which align with their gender identity (New York City Department of Education, 2015).

Columbus, Ohio : Schools should protect the confidentiality of transgender students. Transgender students may participate in athletics without discrimination on the basis of gender identity. It is not stated whether transgender students have rights to be known by their preferred name and use restrooms and dress in accordance with their gender identity (Columbus School District, 2015).

Huntsville, Alabama : The school board policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. However, the policy manual makes no mention of transgender students, or even LGBT students in general (Huntsville City Board of Education, 2015).

Improving School Environments for Transgender Students

As schools transform their student and learning supports into a unified, comprehensive, and equitable system, they must fully embed plans for addressing the rights and well-being of all students. Special attention is needed to minimize harassment, discrimination, and exclusion at school. School policy must explicitly protect and support all students; curricula must represent and positively portray all subgroups in society; social and emotional learning must emphasize a sense of community and respect for all.

With specific reference to LGBT students, studies suggest that

- promoting respect for gender identity and expression, fostering resilience, encouraging tolerance and a respectful school community are facilitated when all students learn about sexual and gender diversity;

- pursuing such desirable outcomes is further facilitated when staff use a youth's preferred name and pronouns, respect gender identity privacy, and value individual contributions (Pardo & Schantz, 2008);

- feelings of welcome and safety are engendered by intervening to prevent harassment, discrimination, and exclusiton and taking appropriate action when problems arise and by decreasing emphasis on gender binary through use of mixed-gender rather than segregated activities (including providing for organizations such as Gay-Straight Alliances);

- addressing problems related to access and use of school facilities and activities in ways that align with students' gender identity.

About Teaching School Children about Sexual and Gender Diversity

The *Safe Schools Coalition* has outlined age-appropriate ways to teach school children about sexual and gender diversity. They emphasize teaching acceptance of diverse forms of gender expression and sexuality from a young age, focusing on normalizing LGBTQ individuals in school curricula by showing their accomplishments alongside those of heterosexuals beginning in middle school, and teaching appropriate terminology and legal contexts in high school. Such an approach gradually introduces LGBT concepts to all youth, and promotes acceptance of diversity, which is essential to preventing children from forming negative attitudes towards LGBT. This is particularly important in showing a different perspective to students who may only hear negative things about sexual and gender diversity.

Learning About Sexual Diversity at School: What Is Age Appropriate?
http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/whatisageappropriate.pdf

Concluding with a Student's Perspective

"Transgender individuals continue to face high levels of harassment, discrimination, and intolerance from society and their peers, reflecting ugly prejudices within a seemingly increasingly LGBT-friendly nation. No one deserves to face prejudice and even risk their personal safety simply for authentically expressing their identity in a way that harms no one else. Schools have the potential to help end these grossly unfair prejudices.

By supporting transgender students and integrating them into the student population, schools can help transgender students feel like the normal and valued members of society that they deserve to be. Since success in school has a strong influence over success later in life, supporting transgender students in schools through policies emphasizing equality and diversity can help transgender individuals close the gap between them and their peers. As one of the first large social environments all children experience, schools have the potential to promote diversity of gender expression rather than propagate socially constructed and sometimes harmful stereotypes. Educating students on the diversity of gender expression and promoting acceptance of diversity can encourage all students to be tolerant of gender nonconformity and to even accept their own nonconforming characteristics. This would help lead to more accepting future in which individuals of all gender identities are viewed as equal and valuable members of society."

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For more, see the Center for Mental Health in School's Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on: *>LGBT – Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Issues –* http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3017_02.htm

Also, see the following for more about the role of young people:

>American Civil Liberties Union – www.aclu.org/lgbt-rights
>Amplify Your Voice – http://amplifyyourvoice.org/
>Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere – www.colage.org/programs/youth
>Gay Straight Alliance Network – www.gsanetwork.org
>International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission – www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/content/takeaction/index.html
>Lambda Legal – www.lambdalegal.org/publications/out-safe-respected
>National Gay & Lesbian Taskforce'|s Creating Change Conference – www.creatingchange.org
>Safe Schools Coalition – www.safeschoolscoalition.org/youth/activists.html
>Youth Resource – http://www.youthresource.com/

Brief Glossary

adapted from http://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender

- Sex classifies humans as male or female. Medical professionals usually assign a sex to an individual at birth based on the person's genital anatomy.
- Gender identity is how an individual views their own gender, and is usually considered an inseparable aspect of their personal identity. A person may consider themself to be male, female, somewhere in between, or neither.
- Gender expression is how a person portrays their gender through features such as their name, pronouns, clothing, hairstyle, voice, behavior, and body.
- Transgender is an adjective describing people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differ from what is normally expected of their sex as assigned at birth. The term describes how a person feels about their gender, and is not dependent upon the person's appearance or upon any medical procedures they may or may not have had.
- Cisgender describes people whose gender identity does align with their sex as assigned at birth.
- Transition is the process in which transgender individuals begin to publicly express themselves according to their gender identity. It may, but does not necessarily, include any of the following: adoption of a new name, becoming legally recognized as a different gender, dressing differently, undergoing hormone therapy, and surgery.
- LBGTQ has been adopted to include those who identify as Queer.

Influences of peers, teachers, and climate on students' willingness to intervene when witnessing anti-transgender harassment

L.J. Wernick, A. Kulick, & M.H. Inglehart (2014).
Journal of Adolescence, 37, 927–935.
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014019711400102X

Abstract

Transgender young people are at increased risk for bullying, harassment, and negative mental health and academic outcomes compared to the general population as well as compared to other members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and similarly identified (LGBTQQ) communities. To inform interventions to support transgender students, the present study investigates students' willingness to intervene when witnessing anti-transgender harassment, using data collected from a participatory action research project investigating school climate. Multi-step linear regression was used to test the impacts of hearing transphobic language and witnessing teachers and others students intervene, while controlling for demographics and school. Hostile climate negatively predicted intervention intentions while witnessing peer intervention positively predicted likelihood to intervene. Witnessing teacher intervention did not significantly predict the outcome. These findings suggest that youth-led interventions in peer networks might be effective in diminishing transphobic bullying and supporting the healthy development of transgender young people.

Intergroup contact, attitudes toward homosexuality, and the role of acceptance of gender non-conformity in young adolescents

K.L. Collier, H.M.W. Bos, & T.G.M. Sandfort (2012).
Journal of Adolescence, 35, 899–907.
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197111001783

Abstract

This study explored how contact with gay and lesbian persons affects adolescents' attitudes toward them, and whether this association is mediated or moderated by one's acceptance of gender non-conformity. We analyzed survey responses from 456 Dutch adolescents aged 12–15 who reported having no same-sex attractions. Data were collected in 2008 at 8 schools in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Preliminary analyses showed that contact with lesbian/gay persons outside of school was positively associated with attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. Multilevel analyses showed that acceptance of gender non-conformity mediated rather than moderated the relationship between intergroup contact and sexual prejudice in males. The effect of intergroup contact on females' attitudes toward lesbian women was no longer significant in multilevel analyses. The findings suggest that attention to both intergroup contact and acceptance of gender non-conformity would enhance our understanding of attitudes toward homosexuality in adolescents.

How a romantic relationship can protect same-sex attracted youth and young adults from the impact of expected rejection

L. Baams, H. M.W. Bos, & K. J. Jonas (2014).
Journal of Adolescence, 37, 1293–1302.
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0140197114001638

Abstract

Same-sex attracted youth's well-being is jeopardized by components of minority stress, but this stress can be buffered by social support. What is unknown is whether a romantic relationship can also serve as a buffer. With an online survey we examined the link between components of minority stress, psychological well-being, and its moderated relation by romantic relationship status among 309 Dutch same-sex attracted youth (16–24 years old, 52.9% female). The results showed that minority stress components (internalized homophobia, expected rejection, and meta-stereotyping) were negatively related to psychological well-being. Moderation analyses revealed that only the impact of "expected rejection" on psychological well-being was buffered for those involved in a romantic relationship. This shows the particular functional link of romantic support in rejection contexts.

How Does Sexual Identity Disclosure Impact School Experiences?

R.J. Watson, C.W. Wheldon, & S.T. Russell (2015).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 12, 385-396.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2015.1077764?journalCode=wjly20

Abstract

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals disproportionately report negative academic outcomes and experiences as a result of stigma and discrimination. No research to date has investigated how being out in different social relationships may affect these youth. We compare youth who are out to family, friends, and people at school to understand which patterns of disclosure are related to school experiences. More complex patterns of "outness" were associated with lower academic achievement and more harassment, whereas being out to no one or everyone was associated with the best outcomes. These findings have important implications for scholars, stakeholders, and counselors.

LGBT Faculty

http://www.aft.org/position/faculty-diversity/lgbt-faculty

Over the past four decades, the nation has seen an explosion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activism, now touching nearly every college campus. Yet, far too many people still encounter discrimination based on their individual sexual identity, gender identity, and/or gender expression. The United State Constitution and subsequent laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protect citizens from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and sex. LGBT individuals lack this protection and the void can leave them with no legal recourse to address the violation of their rights. Having the federal government explicitly extend full civil rights protections to LGBT people is paramount in the struggle for equality for this population.

The lack of civil rights protections also creates secondary problems in being able to collect data that would enable analysts to understand how pervasive the discrimination against LGBT people actually is. We do not have the information necessary to make claims about wages or issue of representation as the data sources we commonly use such as the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System do not track sexual orientation and have no means of tracking transgender identity. Our own work on this issue has been forced to take a different tack than our work on racial and ethnic diversity and gender diversity in the faculty ranks: instead of focusing on issues of underrepresentation and economic discrimination we will instead be focusing on the campus climate for the LGBT population and how to improve it. We are indebted to organizations such as Campus Pride for resources such as the 2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender People, a survey conducted with more than 5,000 students, faculty and staff at colleges and universities in all 50 states, which let respondents identify their sexual identity, gender identity and gender expression in multiple ways.

The perceptions of campus climate for LGBT people at a particular institution can have an impact on LGBT students and faculty there. This population faces an array of challenges, ranging from personal attacks, both verbal and physical, to actions (intentional or otherwise) that isolate and alienate LGBT individuals, to institutional policies that prevent individuals from freely expressing their sexual identity and/or gender identity. Institutions can support LGBT students in a number of ways from creating clear institutional policies such as nondiscrimination policies and housing that accommodates LGBT people and supporting LGBT resource centers and student organizations.

As with students, the campus climate toward LGBT people can have a significant impact on how welcome LGBT faculty and staff feel on campus. Sixty percent of all faculty and 54 percent of all staff reported observing instances of LGBT harassment in their workplace. As with LGBT students, having well-defined university policies that are inclusive of LGBT concerns, and committing university resources and services to serving LGBT people, can help make for a positive campus climate for faculty and staff. Equitable access to benefits, particularly partner benefits, is a particularly significant issue.

We see the process of effectuating a diverse faculty and staff as an essential element in achieving a greater measure of economic and social justice in America. We recommend that each AFT higher education local make faculty diversity an important part of the union agenda on campus. This can be done by conducting an inventory to asses the condition of diversity on campus, discussing these conditions with leaders and members, and designating a group of people to coordinate the union's efforts in this area.

To learn more about what AFT recommendations for locals wishing to address gender diversity on their campus, read our report (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/genderdiversity_lgbt0413.pdf)

RELATED ARTICLES

- Racial and Ethnic (//www.aft.org/position/faculty-diversity/racial-and-ethnic-diversity)
- Gender (//www.aft.org/position/faculty-diversity/gender-diversity)
- LGBT (//www.aft.org/position/faculty-diversity/lgbt-faculty)
- Related Research (//www.aft.org/position/faculty-diversity/related-research)

NASP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF School Psychologists

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth

https://www.nasponline.org/assets/Documents/Research%20and%20Policy/Position%20Statements/LGBTQ_Youth.pdf

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) supports that all youth have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from educational and mental health services within schools regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Harassment, lack of equal support, and other discriminatory practices toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth violate their rights to receive equal educational opportunities, regardless of whether the discrimination takes the form of direct harassment of individuals or is directed at the entire group through hostile statements or biases. Failure to address discriminatory actions in the school setting compromises student development and achievement. NASP believes that school psychologists are ethically obligated to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for the development and expression of their personal identity in a school climate that is safe, accepting, and respectful of all persons and free from discrimination, harassment, violence, and abuse. To achieve this goal, education and advocacy must be used to reduce discrimination and harassment against LGBTQ youth by students and staff and promote positive social–emotional and educational development.

When compared to youth who are heterosexual, youth who identify as LGBTQ or those who are gender nonconforming are more likely targeted for harassment and discrimination. For example, when over 7,000 LGBTQ students nationwide were surveyed regarding their school experiences, 84% reported being verbally harassed, 40% reported being physically harassed, and 18% reported being physically assaulted at school within the past year based on actual or perceived sexual orientation (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010). Of the students who reported harassment experiences to school staff, one third said no subsequent school action was taken. Additionally, LGBTQ students were four times more likely than heterosexual students to report skipping at least one day of school in the previous month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. While LGBTQ youth appear to experience higher levels of mental health and academic difficulties, school-based social situations like victimization and lack of support are frequently related to these heightened risk levels (Bontempo & D'Augelli., 2002; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006).

Whereas members of other minority groups likely share their unique identity with family members and a visible community, LGBTQ youth may have few to no opportunities to learn coping strategies related to dealing with anti-LGBTQ sentiments and behaviors from a family support network (Ryan & Futterman, 1998). Additionally, LGBTQ youth are at an increased risk for emotional and physical rejection by their families and may become homeless as a result of disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity (Rivers & D'Augelli, 2001). Concealing one's LGBTQ identity may increase a youth's risk for anxiety, depression, hostility, demoralization, guilt, shame, social avoidance, isolation, and impaired relationships (Pachankis, 2007).

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CREATING SAFE SCHOOLS FOR LGBTQ YOUTH

Individual and systems-level advocacy, education, and specific intervention efforts are needed to create safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ youth. These should include, but not be limited to, the following strategies.

Establish and enforce comprehensive nondiscrimination and antibullying policies that include LGBTQ issues. Many schools already have nondiscrimination policies, but these may not include reference to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Explicitly including these characteristics in policy statements gives legitimacy to LGBTQ concerns and keeps schools accountable for enforcing nondiscrimination and antibullying standards. Explicit policies also support staff who may fear repercussions for openly intervening and advocating for LGBTQ youth.

Educate students and staff. NASP supports educating students and staff about LGBTQ youth and their needs through professional development about the range of normal human diversity that includes sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Professional development training can lead to immediate and maintained improvements in students' and educators' motivation to interrupt harassing remarks and increased awareness of LGBTQ issues and resources (Greytak & Kosciw, 2010). NASP also supports the provision of information and training about relevant research, the risks experienced by these youth, effective strategies for addressing harassment and discrimination directed toward any student, and improving the school climate (e.g., inservices, staff development, policy development, research briefs, and program implementation). In addition, creating an educational context that includes the broad array of human diversity can help demystify sexual orientation and gender identity, along with promoting a positive self-concept for LGBTQ youth. This can include infusing issues pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity into the curriculum, which may decrease feelings of isolation and promote a more positive self-concept. Curricula may include presenting theories about the development of sexual orientation or gender identity in a science class; reading works of famous gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender authors in a literature class; discussing the LGBTQ rights movement in historical context with other civil rights movements in a social studies class; or including LGBTQ demographic statistics in math exercises. In addition, including LGBTQ issues in health education can increase decision-making skills for all youth, by preparing them to make positive choices and reducing unsafe behavior.

Intervene directly with perpetrators. As with any instance of school violence, harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ youth, or any gender nonconforming youth, should be addressed both through applying consequences and educating the perpetrator. Education should be provided to the perpetrator to help prevent future aggression. Interventions should emphasize that discrimination and harassment must be addressed regardless of the status of the perpetrator. Youth, teachers, support staff, and administrators must be educated to make policies effective.

Provide intervention and support for those students targeted for harassment and intimidation and those exploring their sexuality or gender identity. Up to one fourth of adolescents may question their sexual orientation or gender identity (Hollander, 2000). School personnel should make no assumptions about youth who may be questioning, but provide opportunities for students to develop healthy identities. In addition to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, other diversity characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) may add additional challenges or serve as strengths toward positive mental health and academic development and should be considered.

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Counseling and other supports should be made available for students who have been targets of harassment, for those who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, for those who are perceived as LGBTQ by peers or others, and for those who may become targets of harassment in the future by disclosing their status as LGBTQ (e.g., Gay-Straight Alliance). Interventions should focus on strategies that allow students to experience safety and respect in the school environment, including empowerment of students to address harassment of students who are LBGTQ.

Promote societal and familial attitudes and behaviors that affirm the dignity and rights within educational environments of LGBTQ youth. Schools should promote awareness, acceptance, and accommodation of LGBTQ students and their needs in fair ways. Schools can promote attitudes that affirm the dignity and rights of LGBTQ youth by becoming aware of and eliminating biases from their own practice. They can model nondiscriminatory practice by providing services to all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, or other minority status. School psychologists can promote and model affirming attitudes, use language that is nondiscriminatory and inclusive, and educate students and staff. Moreover, schools can function as powerful agents of change when they actively address slurs and openly confront discrimination, and they can address the actions or statements of other school staff or administrators who neglect the needs of LGBTQ youth or who actively discriminate against them. School psychologists can provide information, expert opinions, and evidence-based strategies to ensure that effective policies and practices are adopted and enforced, increasing the acceptance and tolerance of differences in the school environment by supporting development of student groups that promote understanding and acceptance of human diversity. Gay-straight alliances (GSAs) have a positive impact on school climate (Kosciw, Diaz, Greytak, & Bartkiewicz, 2010) and should be supported by school psychologists. Students who reported having GSAs in their schools were less likely to feel unsafe, less likely to miss school, and were more likely to feel that they belonged at their school than students in school with no such clubs (Kosciw, et al.). Schools should also be informed about programs in the community that facilitate and support healthy development of LGBTQ youth and support their families, and be prepared to advise parents, school personnel, and youth about these resources.

Recognize strengths and resilience. While much of the research has focused on negative factors impacting the development of LGBTQ youth, there are strengths as well. Savin-Williams (2009) posits a developmental trajectory that can impact a student positively or negatively with regard to psychosocial and educational domains. Further review of the research indicates that LGBTQ youth are capable of developing methods to keep themselves safe and find support from their environment. School psychologists should work to identify and build strengths and resilience in LGBTQ youth.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

School psychologists can function as role models of ethical practice and inform staff and students that they are available to all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. School psychologists can address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity in inservice training with teachers and programming for parents, actively counter discriminatory practices, and utilize NASP and other resources to advocate for LGBTQ youth. On an individual level, in counseling sessions, school psychologists can be mindful that sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression encompass a broad spectrum, and that many students question their sexual orientation and gender identity or are gender nonconforming. School psychologists are also in a position to educate students about a number of issues related to high risk behaviors that are especially frequent among gay, lesbian, bisexual,

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transgender, and questioning youth, creating a more inclusive and healthier environment for both the school population in general and LGBTQ youth in particular.

SUMMARY

NASP recognizes that students who identify as LGBTQ, or those who are gender nonconforming, may be at risk for experiencing harassment and discrimination, as well as risk factors for social, emotional, and academic problems related to psychosocial stressors (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002; D'Augelli, 2006; Ryan & Futterman 1998). A successful program to address these issues educates both those who discriminate and those who are discriminated against because of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender nonconformity. School psychologists can participate in education and advocacy on a number of levels by promoting nondiscrimination policies; conducting school-wide inservice training; actively addressing discrimination and neglect of student needs; sharing information about human diversity and evidence-based practices to address student needs; and modeling ethical practice through accepting and affirming attitudes, language, and behaviors in daily interactions with all students and staff. In addition, school psychologists can provide intervention to individual students. Any program designed to address the needs of LGBTQ youth should also include efforts to educate and support parents and the community through collecting information about services and establishing involvement with other organizations committed to equal opportunity for education and mental health services for all youth. Schools can only be truly safe when every student, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is assured of access to an education without fear of harassment, discrimination, or violence.

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>Examples of Research

Developing Allies to Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Youth: Training for Counselors and Educators

K.A. Case & S.C. Meierb (2014).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 11, 62-82.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2014.840764

Abstract

Lack of training regarding transgender youth leaves K–12 educators unprepared to become allies to this disenfranchised community and attend to their needs. This article explores the pedagogical strategies of two professional workshop models (GLSEN Houston training and the Gender Infinity practitioner training), which provide skills and resources for educators and counselors in K–12 settings to become adult allies to gender-nonconforming youth. Discussion includes pedagogical approaches and implications regarding sessions that provide training, resources for counselors and teachers to develop skills to support transgender youth, and responses from participants about the outcomes associated with workshop training.

Effects of "Safe School" Programs and Policies on the Social Climate for Sexual-Minority Youth: A Review of the Literature

W.W. Black, A.L. Fedewa & K.A. Gonzalez (2012).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 9, 321-339.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2012.714343?journalCode=wjly20

Abstract

Research indicates lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth are a vulnerable population—a status that can be attributed to a hostile social climate at school. Intervention strategies, such as educational policies, programs, and a supportive environment, improve the social climate for LGBT students in secondary schools and universities. Yet, no studies have compiled and synthesized existing research to show the exclusively positive effect safe school interventions and supportive environments have on LGBT youth. This article presents a summary of the various intervention strategies, examines the strengths and limitations of the existing body of knowledge, and makes recommendations for future research.

Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Safe and Healthy Students

May 2016

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/emergingpractices.pdf

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Safe and Healthy Students

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May 2016
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This guide is also available on the Office of Safe and Healthy Students website at www.ed.gov/oese/oshs/emergingpractices.pdf. Any updates to this guide will be available at this website.

If you need technical assistance, please contact the Office of Safe and Healthy Students at: OESE.Info.SupportingTransgenderStudents@ed.gov

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Examples of Policies and Emerging Practices for Supporting Transgender Students

The U.S. Department of Education ("ED") is committed to providing schools with the information they need to provide a safe, supportive, and nondiscriminatory learning environment for all students. It has come to ED's attention that many transgender students (*i.e.*, students whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth) report feeling unsafe and experiencing verbal and physical harassment or assault in school, and that these students may perform worse academically when they are harassed. School administrators, educators, students, and parents are asking questions about how to support transgender students and have requested clarity from ED. In response, ED developed two documents:

- ED's Office for Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division jointly issued a Dear Colleague Letter ("DCL") about transgender students' rights and schools' legal obligations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.[1] Any school that has questions related to transgender students or wants to be prepared to address such issues if they arise should review the DCL.

- ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education compiled the attached examples of policies[2] and emerging practices[3] that some schools are already using to support transgender students. We share some common questions on topics such as school records, privacy, and terminology, and then explain how some state and school district policies have answered these questions. We present this information to illustrate how states and school districts are supporting transgender students. We also provide information about and links to those policies at the end of the document, along with other resources that may be helpful as educators develop policies and practices for their own schools.

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[1] 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688; Dear Colleague Letter: Transgender Students (May 13, 2016), www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201605-title-ix-transgender.pdf.

[2] In this document, the term *policy* or *policies* refers generally to policies, guidance, guidelines, procedures, regulations, and resource guides issued by schools, school districts, and state educational agencies.

[3] ED considers *emerging practices* to be operational activities or initiatives that contribute to successful outcomes or enhance agency performance capabilities. Emerging practices are those that have been successfully implemented and demonstrate the potential for replication by other agencies. Emerging practices typically have not been rigorously evaluated, but still offer ideas that work in specific situations.

Each person is unique, so the needs of individual transgender students vary. But a school policy setting forth general principles for supporting transgender students can help set clear expectations for students and staff and avoid unnecessary confusion, invasions of privacy, and other harms. The education community continues to develop and revise policies and practices to address the rights of transgender students and reflect our evolving understanding and the individualized nature of transgender students' needs.

This document contains information from some schools, school districts, and state and federal agencies. Inclusion of this information does not constitute an endorsement by ED of any policy or practice, educational product, service, curriculum or pedagogy. In addition, this document references websites that provide information created and maintained by other entities. These references are for the reader's convenience. ED does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. This document does not constitute legal advice, create legal obligations, or impose new requirements.

Table of Contents

Student Transitions 1

1. How do schools find out that a student will transition? 1
2. How do schools confirm a student's gender identity? 1
3. How do schools communicate with the parents of younger students compared to older transgender students? 2

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Student Records 4

4. How do schools protect a transgender student's privacy regarding the student's transgender status? 4
5. How do schools ensure that a transgender student is called by the appropriate name and pronouns? 5
6. How do schools handle requests to change the name or sex designation on a student's records? 6

Sex-Segregated Activities and Facilities 7

7. How do schools ensure transgender students have access to facilities consistent with their gender identity? 7
8. How do schools protect the privacy rights of all students in restrooms or locker rooms? 7
9. How do schools ensure transgender students have the opportunity to participate in physical education and athletics consistent with their gender identity? 8
10. How do schools treat transgender students when they participate in field trips and athletic trips that require overnight accommodations? 9

Additional Practices to Support Transgender Students 10

11. What can schools do to make transgender students comfortable in the classroom? .. 10
12. How do school dress codes apply to transgender students? 10
13. How do schools address bullying and harassment of transgender students? 11
14. How do school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and school social workers support transgender students? 11
15. How do schools foster respect for transgender students among members of the broader school community? 12
16. What topics do schools address when training staff on issues related to transgender students? 12
17. How do schools respond to complaints about the way transgender students are treated? 13

Terminology 14

18. What terms are defined in current school policies on transgender students? 14

19. How do schools account for individual preferences and the diverse ways that students describe and express their gender? 15

Cited Policies on Transgender Students 16

Select Federal Resources on Transgender Students 18

Student Transitions

1. **How do schools find out that a student will transition?**

Typically, the student or the student's parent or guardian will tell the school and ask that the school start treating the student in a manner consistent with the student's gender identity. Some students transition over a school break, such as summer break. Other students may undergo a gender transition during the school year, and may ask (or their parents may ask on their behalf) teachers and other school employees to respect their identity as they begin expressing their gender identity, which may include changes to their dress and appearance. Some school district or state policies address how a student or parent might provide the relevant notice to the school.

- Alaska's Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District issued guidelines ("Mat-Su Borough Guidelines") advising that transgender students or their parents or guardians should contact the building administrator or the student's guidance counselor to schedule a meeting to develop a plan to address the student's particular circumstances and needs.

- The guidelines issued by Washington's Superintendent of Public Instruction ("Washington State Guidelines") offer an example of a student who first attended school as a boy and, about midway through a school year, she and her family decided that she would transition and begin presenting as a girl. She prefers to dress in stereotypically feminine attire such as dresses and skirts. Although she is growing her hair out and consistently presents as female at school, her hair is still in a rather short, typically boyish haircut. The student, her parents, and school administrators asked her friends and teachers to use female pronouns to address her.

2. **How do schools confirm a student's gender identity?**

Schools generally rely on students' (or in the case of younger students, their parents' or guardians') expression of their gender identity. Although schools sometimes request some form of confirmation, they generally accept the student's asserted gender identity. Some schools offer additional guidance on this issue.

- Los Angeles Unified School District issued a policy ("LAUSD Policy") noting that "[t]here is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that

students must meet in order to have their gender identity recognized and respected" and that evidence may include an expressed desire to be consistently recognized by their gender identity.

- The New York State Education Department issued guidance ("NYSED Guidance") recommending that "schools accept a student's assertion of his/her/their own gender identity" and provides examples of ways to confirm the assertion, such as a statement from the student or a letter from an adult familiar with the student's situation. The same guidance also offers the following example: "In one middle school, a student explained to her guidance counselor that she was a transgender girl who had heretofore only been able to express her female gender identity while at home. The stress associated with having to hide her female gender identity by presenting as male at school was having a negative impact on her mental health, as well as on her academic performance. The student and her parents asked if it would be okay if she expressed her female gender identity at school. The guidance counselor responded favorably to the request. The fact that the student presented no documentation to support her gender identity was not a concern since the school had no reason to believe the request was based on anything other than a sincerely held belief that she had a female gender identity."

- Alaska's Anchorage School District developed administrative guidelines ("Anchorage Administrative Guidelines") noting that being transgender "involves more than a casual declaration of gender identity or expression but does not require proof of a formal evaluation and diagnosis. Since individual circumstances, needs, programs, facilities and resources may differ; administrators and school staff are expected to consider the needs of the individual on a case-by-case basis."

3. How do schools communicate with the parents of younger students compared to older transgender students?

Parents are often the first to initiate a conversation with the school when their child is transgender, particularly when younger children are involved. Parents may play less of a role in an older student's transition. Some school policies recommend, with regard to an older student, that school staff consult with the student before reaching out to the student's parents.

- The District of Columbia Public Schools issued guidance ("DCPS Guidance") noting that "students may choose to have their parents participate in the transition process, but parental participation is not required." The guidance further

recommends different developmentally appropriate protocols depending on grade level. The DCPS Guidance suggests that the school work with a young student's family to identify appropriate steps to support the student, but recommends working closely with older students prior to notification of family. The guidance also provides a model planning document with key issues to discuss with the student or the student's family.

- Similarly, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued guidance ("Massachusetts Guidance") that notes: "Some transgender and gender nonconforming students are not openly so at home for reasons such as safety concerns or lack of acceptance. School personnel should speak with the student first before discussing a student's gender nonconformity or transgender status with the student's parent or guardian. For the same reasons, school personnel should discuss with the student how the school should refer to the student, *e.g.,* appropriate pronoun use, in written communication to the student's parent or guardian."

- Chicago Public Schools' guidelines ("Chicago Guidelines") provide: "When speaking with other staff members, parents, guardians, or third parties, school staff should not disclose a student's preferred name, pronoun, or other confidential information pertaining to the student's transgender or gender nonconforming status without the student's permission, unless authorized to do so by the Law Department."

- Oregon's Department of Education issued guidance stating, "In a case where a student is not yet able to self-advocate, the request to respect and affirm a student's identity will likely come from the student's parent. However, in other cases, transgender students may not want their parents to know about their transgender identity. These situations should be addressed on a case-by-case basis and school districts should balance the goal of supporting the student with the requirement that parents be kept informed about their children. The paramount consideration in such situations should be the health and safety of the student, while also making sure that the student's gender identity is affirmed in a manner that maintains privacy and confidentiality."

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Student Records

4. How do schools protect a transgender student's privacy regarding the student's transgender status?

There are a number of ways schools protect transgender students' interests in keeping their transgender status private, including taking steps to prepare staff to consistently use the appropriate name and pronouns. Using transgender students' birth names or pronouns that do not match their gender identity risks disclosing a student's transgender status. Some state and school district policies also address how federal and state privacy laws apply to transgender students and how to keep information about a student's transgender status confidential.

- California's El Rancho Unified School District issued a regulation ("El Rancho Regulation") that provides that students have the right to openly discuss and express their gender identity, but also reminds school personnel to be "mindful of the confidentiality and privacy rights of [transgender] students when contacting parents/legal guardians so as not to reveal, imply, or refer to a student's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression."

- The Chicago Guidelines provide that the school should convene an administrative support team to work with transgender students and/or their parents or guardians to address each student's individual needs and supports. To protect the student's privacy, this team is limited to "the school principal, the student, individuals the student identifies as trusted adults, and individuals the principal determines may have a legitimate interest in the safety and healthy development of the student."

- The Mat-Su Borough Guidelines state: "In some cases, a student may want school staff and students to know, and in other cases the student may not want this information to be widely known. School staff should take care to follow the student's plan and not to inadvertently disclose information that is intended to be kept private or that is protected from disclosure (such as confidential medical information)."

- The Massachusetts Guidance advises schools "to collect or maintain information about students' gender only when necessary" and offers an example: "One school reviewed the documentation requests it sent out to families and noticed that field trip permission forms included a line to fill in indicating the student's gender. Upon consideration, the school determined that the requested information was irrelevant to the field trip activities and deleted the line with the gender marker request."

5. **How do schools ensure that a transgender student is called by the appropriate name and pronouns?**

One of the first issues that school officials may address when a student notifies them of a gender transition is determining which name and pronouns the student prefers. Some schools have adopted policies to prepare all school staff and students to use a student's newly adopted name, if any, and pronouns that are consistent with a student's gender identity.

- A regulation issued by Nevada's Washoe County School District ("Washoe County Regulation") provides that: "Students have the right to be addressed by the names and pronouns that correspond to their gender identity. Using the student's preferred name and pronoun promotes the safety and wellbeing of the student. When possible, the requested name shall be included in the District's electronic database in addition to the student's legal name, in order to inform faculty and staff of the name and pronoun to use when addressing the student."

- A procedure issued by Kansas City Public Schools in Missouri ("Kansas City Procedure") notes that: "The intentional or persistent refusal to respect the gender identity of an employee or student after notification of the preferred pronoun/name used by the employee or student is a violation of this procedure."

- The NYSED Guidance provides: "As with most other issues involved with creating a safe and supportive environment for transgender students, the best course is to engage the student, and possibly the parent, with respect to name and pronoun use, and agree on a plan to reflect the individual needs of each student to initiate that name and pronoun use within the school. The plan also could include when and how this is communicated to students and their parents."

- The DCPS Guidance includes a school planning guide for principals to review with transgender students as they plan how to ensure the school environment is safe and supportive. The school planning guide allows the student to identify the student's gender identity and preferred name, key contacts at home and at school, as well as develop plans for access to restrooms, locker rooms, and other school activities.

6. How do schools handle requests to change the name or sex designation on a student's records?

Some transgender students may legally change their names. However, transgender students often are unable to obtain identification documents that reflect their gender identity (*e.g.*, due to financial limitations or legal restrictions imposed by state or local law). Some school district policies specify that they will use the name a student identifies as consistent with the student's gender identity regardless of whether the student has completed a legal name change.

- The NYSED Guidance provides that school records, including attendance records, transcripts, and Individualized Education Programs, be updated with the student's chosen name and offers an example: "One school administrator dealt with information in the student's file by starting a new file with the student's chosen name, entered previous academic records under the student's chosen name, and created a separate, confidential folder that contained the student's past information and birth name."

- The DCPS Guidance notes: "A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student does not need to change their official records. If a student wishes to go by another name, the school's registrar can enter that name into the 'Preferred First' name field of [the school's] database."

- The Kansas City Procedure recognizes that there are certain situations where school staff or administrators may need to report a transgender student's legal name or gender. The procedure notes that in these situations, "school staff and administrators shall adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information."

- The Chicago Guidelines state: "Students are not required to obtain a court order and/or gender change or to change their official records as a prerequisite to being addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity."

- The Massachusetts Guidance also addresses requests to amend records after graduation: "Transgender students who transition after having completed high school may ask their previous schools to amend school records or a diploma or transcript that include the student's birth name and gender. When requested, and when satisfied with the gender identity information provided, schools should amend the student's record."

Sex-Segregated Activities and Facilities

7. **How do schools ensure transgender students have access to facilities consistent with their gender identity?**

Schools often segregate restrooms and locker rooms by sex, but some schools have policies that students must be permitted to access facilities consistent with their gender identity and not be required to use facilities inconsistent with their gender identity or alternative facilities.

- The Washington State Guidelines provide: "School districts should allow students to use the restroom that is consistent with their gender identity consistently asserted at school." In addition, no student "should be required to use an alternative restroom because they are transgender or gender nonconforming."

- The Washoe County Regulation provides: "Students shall have access to use facilities that correspond to their gender identity as expressed by the student and asserted at school, irrespective of the gender listed on the student's records, including but not limited to locker rooms."

- The Anchorage Administrative Guidelines emphasize the following provision: "However, staff should not require a transgender or gender nonconforming student/employee to use a separate, nonintegrated space unless requested by the individual student/employee."

8. **How do schools protect the privacy rights of all students in restrooms or locker rooms?**

Many students seek additional privacy in school restrooms and locker rooms. Some schools have provided students increased privacy by making adjustments to sex-segregated facilities or providing all students with access to alternative facilities.

- The Washington State Guidelines provide that any student who wants increased privacy should be provided access to an alternative restroom or changing area. The guidelines explain: "This allows students who may feel uncomfortable sharing the facility with the transgender student(s) the option to make use of a separate restroom and have their concerns addressed without stigmatizing any individual student."

- The NYSED Guidance gives an example of accommodating all students' interest in privacy: "In one high school, a transgender female student was given access to the female changing facility, but the student was uncomfortable using the female changing facility with other female students because there were no private changing areas within the facility. The principal examined the changing facility and determined that curtains could easily be put up along one side of a row of benches near the group lockers, providing private changing areas for any students who wished to use them. After the school put up the curtains, the student was comfortable using the changing facility."

- Atherton High School, in Jefferson County, Kentucky, issued a policy that offers examples of accommodations to address any student's request for increased privacy: "use of a private area within the public area of the locker room facility (e.g. nearby restroom stall with a door or an area separated by a curtain); use of a nearby private area (e.g. nearby restroom); or a separate changing schedule."

- The DCPS Guidance recommends talking to students to come up with an acceptable solution: "Ultimately, if a student expresses discomfort to any member of the school staff, that staff member should review these options with the student and ask the student permission to engage the school LGBTQ liaison or another designated ally in the building."

9. How do schools ensure transgender students have the opportunity to participate in physical education and athletics consistent with their gender identity?

Some school policies explain the procedures for establishing transgender students' eligibility to participate in athletics consistent with their gender identity. Many of those policies refer to procedures established by state athletics leagues or associations.

- The NYSED Guidance explains that "physical education is a required part of the curriculum and an important part of many students' lives. Most physical education classes in New York's schools are coed, so the gender identity of students should not be an issue with respect to these classes. Where there are sex-segregated classes, students should be allowed to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity."

- The LAUSD Policy provides that "participation in competitive athletics, intramural sports, athletic teams, competitions, and contact sports shall be facilitated in a

manner consistent with the student's gender identity asserted at school and in accordance with the California Interscholastic Federation bylaws." The California Interscholastic Federation establishes a panel of professionals, including at least one person with training or expertise in gender identity health care or advocacy, to make eligibility decisions.

- The Rhode Island Interscholastic League's policy states that all students should have the opportunity to participate in athletics consistent with their gender identity, regardless of the gender listed on school records. The policy provides that the league will base its eligibility determination on the student's current transcript and school registration information, documentation of the student's consistent gender identification (*e.g*., affirmed written statements from student, parent/guardian, or health care provider), and any other pertinent information.

10. How do schools treat transgender students when they participate in field trips and athletic trips that require overnight accommodations?

Schools often separate students by sex when providing overnight accommodations. Some school policies provide that students must be treated consistent with their gender identity in making such assignments.

- Colorado's Boulder Valley School District issued guidelines ("Boulder Valley Guidelines") providing that when a school plans overnight accommodations for a transgender student, it should consider "the goals of maximizing the student's social integration and equal opportunity to participate in overnight activity and athletic trips, ensuring the [transgender] student's safety and comfort, and minimizing stigmatization of the student."

- The Chicago Guidelines remind school staff: "In no case should a transgender student be denied the right to participate in an overnight field trip because of the student's transgender status."

Additional Practices to Support Transgender Students

11. What can schools do to make transgender students comfortable in the classroom?

Classroom practices that do not distinguish or differentiate students based on their gender are the most inclusive for all students, including transgender students.

- The DCPS Guidance suggests that "[w]herever arbitrary gender dividers can be avoided, they should be eliminated."

- The Massachusetts Guidance states that "[a]s a general matter, schools should evaluate all gender-based policies, rules, and practices and maintain only those that have a clear and sound pedagogical purpose."

- Minneapolis Public Schools issued a policy providing that students generally should not be grouped on the basis of sex for the purpose of instruction or study, but rather on bases such as student proficiency in the area of study, student interests, or educational needs for acceleration or enrichment.

- The Maryland State Department of Education issued guidelines that include an example of eliminating gender-based sorting of students: "Old Practice: boys line up over here." New Practice: birthdays between January and June; everybody who is wearing something green, etc."

12. How do school dress codes apply to transgender students?

Dress codes that apply the same requirements regardless of gender are the most inclusive for all students and avoid unnecessarily reinforcing sex stereotypes. To the extent a school has a dress code that applies different standards to male and female students, some schools have policies that allow transgender students to dress consistent with their gender identity.

- Wisconsin's Shorewood School District issued guidelines ("Shorewood Guidelines") that allow students to dress in accordance with their gender identity and remind school personnel that they must not enforce a dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.

- The Washington State Guidelines encourage school districts to adopt gender-neutral dress codes that do not restrict a student's clothing choices on the basis of gender: "Dress codes should be based on educationally relevant considerations, apply

consistently to all students, include consistent discipline for violations, and make reasonable accommodations when the situation requires an exception."

13. How do schools address bullying and harassment of transgender students?

Unfortunately, bullying and harassment continue to be a problem facing many students, and transgender students are no exception. Some schools make clear in their nondiscrimination statements that prohibited sex discrimination includes discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Their policies also address this issue.

- The NYSED Guidance stresses the importance of protecting students from bullying and harassment because "[the] high rates experienced by transgender students correspond to adverse health and educational consequences," including higher rates of absenteeism, lower academic achievement, and stunted educational aspirations.

- The Shorewood Guidelines specify that harassment based on a student's actual or perceived transgender status or gender nonconformity is prohibited and notes that these complaints are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination, harassment, and bullying complaints.

- The DCPS Guidance provides examples of prohibited harassment that transgender students sometimes experience, including misusing an individual's preferred name or pronouns on purpose, asking personal questions about a person's body or gender transition, and disclosing private information.

14. How do school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses, and school social workers support transgender students?

School counselors can help transgender students who may experience mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress. Mental health staff may also consult with school administrators to create inclusive policies, programs, and practices that prevent bullying and harassment and ensure classrooms and schools are safe, healthy, and supportive places where all students, including transgender students, are respected and can express themselves. Schools will be in a better position to support transgender students if they communicate to all students that resources are available, and that they are competent to provide support and services to any student who has questions related to gender identity.

- The NYSED Guidance suggests that counselors can serve as a point of contact for transgender students who seek to take initial steps to assert their gender identity in school.

- The Chicago Guidelines convene a student administrative support team to determine the appropriate supports for transgender students. The team consists of the school principal, the student, adults that the student trusts, and individuals the principal determines may have a legitimate interest in the safety and healthy development of the student.

15. How do schools foster respect for transgender students among members of the broader school community?

Developing a clear policy explaining how to support transgender students can help communicate the importance the school places on creating a safe, healthy, and nondiscriminatory school climate for all students. Schools can do this by providing educational programs aimed at staff, students, families, and other community members.

- The Massachusetts Guidance informs superintendents and principals that they "need to review existing policies, handbooks, and other written materials to ensure they are updated to reflect the inclusion of gender identity in the student antidiscrimination law, and may wish to inform all members of the school community, including school personnel, students, and families of the recent change to state law and its implications for school policy and practice. This could take the form of a letter that states the school's commitment to being a supportive, inclusive environment for all students."

- The NYSED Guidance states that "school districts are encouraged to provide this guidance document and other resources, such as trainings and information sessions, to the school community including, but not limited to, parents, students, staff and residents."

16. What topics do schools address when training staff on issues related to transgender students?

Schools can reinforce commitments to providing safe, healthy, and nondiscriminatory school climates by training all school personnel about appropriate and respectful treatment of all students, including transgender students.

- The Massachusetts Guidance suggests including the following topics in faculty and staff training "key terms related to gender identity and expression; the development of gender identity; the experiences of transgender and other gender nonconforming students; risks and resilience data regarding transgender and gender nonconforming students; ways to support transgender students and to improve school climate for gender nonconforming students; [and] gender-neutral language and practices."

- The El Rancho Regulation states that the superintendent or designee "shall provide to employees, volunteers, and parents/guardians training and information regarding the district's nondiscrimination policy; what constitutes prohibited discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying; how and to whom a report of an incident should be made; and how to guard against segregating or stereotyping students when providing instruction, guidance, supervision, or other services to them. Such training and information shall include guidelines for addressing issues related to transgender and gender-nonconforming students."

17. How do schools respond to complaints about the way transgender students are treated?

School policies often provide that complaints from transgender students be handled under the same policy used to resolve other complaints of discrimination or harassment.

- The Boulder Valley Guidelines provide that "complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived transgender status or gender nonconformity are to be handled in the same manner as other discrimination or harassment complaints."

- The Anchorage Administrative Guidelines provide that "students may also use the Student Grievance Process to address any civil rights issue, including transgender issues at school."

Terminology

18. What terms are defined in current school policies on transgender students?

Understanding the needs of transgender students includes understanding relevant terminology. Most school policies define commonly used terms to assist schools in understanding key concepts relevant to transgender students. The list below is not exhaustive, and only includes examples of some of the most common terms that school policies define.

- *Gender identity* refers to a person's deeply felt internal sense of being male or female, regardless of their sex assigned at birth. (Washington State Guidelines)

- *Sex assigned at birth* refers to the sex designation, usually "male" or "female," assigned to a person when they are born. (NYSED Guidance)

- *Gender expression* refers to the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms. (Washoe County Regulation)

- *Transgender* or *trans* describes a person whose gender identity does not correspond to their assigned sex at birth. (Massachusetts Guidance)

- *Gender transition* refers to the process in which a person goes from living and identifying as one gender to living and identifying as another. (Washoe County Regulation)

- *Cisgender* describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their assigned sex at birth. (NYSED Guidance)

- *Gender nonconforming* describes people whose gender expression differs from stereotypic expectations. The terms *gender variant* or *gender atypical* are also used. Gender nonconforming individuals may identify as male, female, some combination of both, or neither. (NYSED Guidance)

- *Intersex* describes individuals born with chromosomes, hormones, genitalia and/or other sex characteristics that are not exclusively male or female as defined by the medical establishment in our society. (DCPS Guidance)

- *LGBTQ* is an acronym that stands for "lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning." (LAUSD Policy)

- *Sexual orientation* refers to a person's emotional and sexual attraction to another person based on the gender of the other person. Common terms used to describe sexual orientation include, but are not limited to, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual. Sexual orientation and gender identity are different. (LAUSD Policy)

19. How do schools account for individual preferences and the diverse ways that students describe and express their gender?

Some students may use different terms to identify themselves or describe their situations. For example, a transgender male student may identify simply as male, consistent with his gender identity. The same principles apply even if students use different terms. Some school policies directly address this question and provide additional guidance.

- The Washington State Guidelines recognize how "terminology can differ based on religion, language, race, ethnicity, age, culture and many other factors."

- Washington's Federal Way School District issued a resource guide that states: "Keep in mind that the meaning of gender conformity can vary from culture to culture, so these may not translate exactly to Western ideas of what it means to be transgender. Some of these identities include Hijra (South Asia), Fa'afafine (Samoa), Kathoey (Thailand), Travesti (South America), and Two-Spirit (Native American/First Nations)."

- The Washoe County Regulation, responding to cultural diversity within the state, offers examples of "ways in which transgender and gender nonconforming youth describe their lives and gendered experiences: trans, transsexual, transgender, male-to-female (MTF), female-to-male (FTM), bi-gender, two-spirit, trans man, and trans woman."

- The DCPS Guidance provides this advice to staff: "If you are unsure about a student's preferred name or pronouns, it is appropriate to privately and tactfully ask the student what they prefer to be called. Additionally, when speaking about a student it is rarely necessary to label them as being transgender, as they should be treated the same as the rest of their peers."

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- Anchorage School District (AK): *Administrative Guidelines: Working with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students and Employees* (2015) (on file with ED)

- Atherton High School, Jefferson County School District (KY), *Policy on School Space* (2014), www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/schools/high/atherton/SBDMDocuments/Policy%20500%20Draft-%20Los%20Angeles%20Unified%20School%20District%20Revised%20Model.pdf

- Boulder Valley School District (CO), Guidelines Regarding the Support of Students and Staff Who Are Transgender and/or Gender Nonconforming (2016), http://www.bvsd.org/policies/Policies/AC-E3.pdf

- California Interscholastic Federation, *Guidelines for Gender Identity Participation* (2015), http://static.psbin.com/m/5/0ndq7wwfgh2em9/Guidelines_for_Gender_Identity_Participation.pdf

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- El Rancho Unified School District, *Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students* (AR 5145.3) (2014), www.erusd.org/pdf/board_policies/5145_3.pdf

- Federal Way Public Schools (WA), *Working with Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students and Staff* (2014-2015), www.fwps.net/districtresources/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2013/12/FWPS_Transgender3.pdf?7a385a

- Kansas City 33 School District (MO), *Prohibition Against Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Employee and Students*) (2013), eboard.eboardsolutions.com/ePolicy/policy.aspx?PC=AC-AP(1)&Sch=228&S=228&RevNo=1.01&C=A&Z=R

- Los Angeles Unified School District (CA), *Transgender Students – Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination* (2014), notebook.lausd.net/pls/ptl/docs/PAGE/CA_LAUSD/FLDR_ORGANIZATIONS/FLDR_GENERAL_COUNSEL/BUL-6224.1%20TRANSGENDER%20POLICY,%2008-15-14%20-%20ADDED%20ED%20CODE%20221%205.PDF

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- Minneapolis Public Schools (MN), *Permissible Grouping Principles* (2014), policy.mpls.k12.mn.us/uploads/regulation_6135_a.pdf

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- Washoe County School District (NV), *Gender Identity and Gender Non-Conformity – Students* (2015), washoecountyschools.net/csi/pdf_files/5161%20Reg%20-%20Gender%20Identity%20v1.pdf

Select Federal Resources on Transgender Students

- U.S. Department of Education
    - Office for Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, *Dear Colleague Letter: Transgender Students* (May 13, 2016), www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201605-title-ix-transgender.pdf
    - Office for Civil Rights, *Resources for Transgender and Gender-Nonconforming Students*, www.ed.gov/ocr/lgbt.html
    - Office for Civil Rights, *Publications on Title IX*, www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/publications.html#TitleIX
    - Office for Civil Rights, *How to File a Discrimination Complaint*, www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/howto.html
    - National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, safesupportivelearning.ed.gov
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
    - Administration for Children and Families, *Resources for Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth*, http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/features/serving-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-questioning-youth-open-arms/resources-serving
    - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *LGBT Youth Resources*, www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth-resources.htm
    - Homelessness Resource Center, *Homeless Populations: LGBTQI2-S Youth,* http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Channel/LGBTQ-153.aspx
    - Stopbullying.gov, *Bullying and LGBT Youth*, http://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/groups/lgbt
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
    - *Community-Wide Prevention of LGBTQ Youth Homelessness* (June 2015), https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/LGBTQ-Youth-Homelessness-Prevention-Initiative-Overview.pdf

- U.S. Department of Labor
    - Office of Job Corps, *Directive: Job Corps Program Instruction Notice No. 14-31* (May 1, 2015), https://supportservices.jobcorps.gov/Program Instruction Notices/pi_14_31.pdf

>*Project 10* - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Students Support

Los Angeles Unified School District

http://notebook.lausd.net/portal/page?_pageid=33,1159973&_dad=ptl

Overview

The Los Angeles Unified School District is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of discrimination and harassment and to ensuring that every student has equal access to the District's educational programs and activities. Additionally, District policy requires that all schools and all personnel promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among students and staff.

Project 10 was established to ensure that District policies and procedures protect the rights of gender variant and transgender students. Project 10 offers technical and educational support to schools for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students. The mission of Project 10, in accordance with the District's Nondiscrimination Policy and the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000, is to ensure safe, supportive, and welcoming campuses free from discrimination and harassment for sexual minority youth.

Project 10 Brochure - English

Related District Policy & Publications

Transgender Students - Ensuring Equity and Nondiscrimination

Responding to and Reporting Hate-Motivated Incidents and Crimes - BUL-2047.0 - dated 10-10-05

Attachment A - Incident Report Form - Complaint Investigation Record

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Contact Information

For more information contact: Educational Equity Compliance Office

Phone: (213) 241-7682

Fax: (213) 241-3312

Mailing Address: Los Angeles Unified School District
Educational Equity Compliance Office - 20th Floor
333 South Beaudry Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90017

>GSA Clubs

Transforming Schools

http://gsanetwork.org/what-we-do/transforming-schools

GSA clubs are powerful tools that can transform schools – making them safer and more welcoming for LGBTQ youth, youth with LGBTQ parents, and straight allies. GSA Network helps GSA clubs become activist clubs that can educate teachers and students to improve the school climate. GSA Network teaches GSA clubs how to work with the school administration to implement school policies that prevent harassment and violence.

Establishing GSA Clubs

GSA Network supports students and teachers to Start a GSA and Run a GSA. Establishing a GSA club is the first step in transforming a school. Studies have shown how the presence of a GSA club is related to a safer school climate. Get the facts.

GSA Actions & Events

Strong, activist GSA clubs can plan actions and events on campus to build awareness about LGBTQ issues and improve the school climate. GSA Network provides resources for students to learn how.

Campaigns to Change Schools

GSA Network teaches GSAs how to launch campaigns to raise LGBTQ visibility, reduce violence, fight slurs on campus, make schools safer for transgender and gender non-conforming youth, and fight for LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum. GSA Network's 5 campaigns to Change Your School empower youth activists to create changes that will transform schools for generations to come.

WHAT WE DO

- **Overview**
- **Networking and Supporting GSAs**
- **Training Student Leaders**
- **Transforming Schools**
- **Changing Policies and Laws in California**
- **Building the National GSA Movement**

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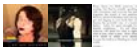

>A Few More Research Examples

Discussing Princess Boys and Pregnant Men: Teaching About Gender Diversity and Transgender Experiences Within an Elementary School Curriculum

C.L. Ryan, J.M. Patraw, & M. Bednar (2013).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 10, 83-105,
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2012.718540

Abstract

This study shares the experiences and outcomes of teaching about gender diversity in an elementary school classroom. It outlines how an urban public school teacher included discussions of transgender and gender-nonconforming people within the curriculum and documents the ways in which her students responded to those lessons. By making discussions of gender diversity a recurring theme in the curriculum, students learned to question restrictive social systems, think more inclusively about gender expression and identity, and apply this knowledge to other experiences. The students' responses to these lessons indicate that elementary school-aged children are ready for such an inclusive curriculum.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth with Disabilities: A Meta-Synthesis

T.S. Duke (2011).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 8, 1-52,
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2011.519181

Abstract

This meta-synthesis of empirical and nonempirical literature analyzed 24 journal articles and book chapters that addressed the intersection of disability, [homo]sexuality, and gender identity/ expression in P–12 schools, colleges and universities, supported living programs, and other educational and social contexts in Australia, Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The articles and chapters emphasized the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth with disabilities—culturally, linguistically, sexually, and in terms of abilities, disabilities, and related service needs—while noting that all (or certainly most) lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth with disabilities possess multiple stigmatized identities as sexual/gender minorities and young people with disabilities.

Putting the "T" in "Resource": The Benefits of LGBT-Related School Resources for Transgender Youth

E.A. Greytak, J.G. Kosciw, & M.J. Boesen
Journal of LGBT Youth, 10, 45-63.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2012.718522

Abstract

This study examines the availability and effectiveness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT)-related school resources for a national sample of transgender youth (N = 409), as compared to a national sample of LGB cisgender (non-transgender) youth (N = 6,444). All four examined resources—gay–straight alliances (GSAs), supportive educators, LGBT-inclusive curricula, and comprehensive anti-bullying/anti-harassment policies which include specific protections for LGBT students—were related to decreased absenteeism. Three of the four resources (except for comprehensive anti-bullying/anti-harassment policies) were related to lower levels of victimization. The results indicated that the resources provided benefits for transgender and cisgender LGB students alike, yet the positive effects of policies and GSAs were even stronger for transgender youth.

Urban Students' Attitudes About Sexual Minorities Across Intersections of Sex and Race/Ethnicity: Data From a Longitudinal Study

B. Gastic (2012)
Journal of LGBT Youth, 9, 42-58.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2012.627023

Abstract

This study examined the association between having a gay or lesbian friend and urban students' attitudes about sexual minorities. Results indicate that females were more likely than males to express supportive views about gays and lesbians. The contours of these sex differences were distinct by race/ethnicity. Black males and females differed more frequently in their views than did Whites or Latinos. Latino and Latina students expressed consistent views on sexual minorities with one exception: Latinas were nearly twice as likely as Latino males to say that they would remain close to a friend who came out as gay or lesbian.

Is This the Right Elementary School for My Gender Nonconforming Child?

G. Slesaransky-Poe, L. Ruzzi, C. Dimedio, & J. Stanley (2013).
Journal of LGBT Youth, 10, 29-4.
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19361653.2012.718521

Abstract

This article describes what followed after a mother wondered if the school in her neighborhood was the right elementary school for her gender nonconforming young child. It includes collective and individual narratives from four key players: the mom and teacher educator (Slesaransky-Poe), the school's guidance counselor (Ruzzi), the principal (DiMedio), and the consultant who led the initial professional development (Stanley). It documents and reflects on the work done over five years to transform a great school into a welcoming and inclusive one for gender nonconforming and transgender students.

References and Resources

>Additional References

>Agencies, Organizations, and Internet Sites

>Quick Finds

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AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND ONLINE RESOURCES RELATED TO SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS

American Psychological Association

Answers to Your Questions about Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality
http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/answers.html

This site provides answers to commonly asked question about sexual minority people as well as information for related groups and organizations.

APA Books – Gay and Lesbian Issues: Abstracts of the Psychological and Behavioral Literature, 1985-1996
http://books.apa.org/books.cfm?id=4319210

This site provides information about the above book concerning recent psychological research on issues facing gay and lesbian clients.

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE)

http://www.colage.org/

To engage, connect, and empower people to make the world a better place for children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender parents and families.

Creating Safe Schools for Lesbian and Gay Students: A resource guide for school staff

http://members.tripod.lycos.com/~twood/guide.html

This site contains information about combating homophobia and violence in schools and providing a safe learning environment for sexual minority students. It also contains links to related resources such as the "Washington State Safe Schools Report" and the "Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth."

Day of Silence

http://www.dayofsilence.org/

The Day of Silence, a project of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in collaboration with the United States Student Association (USSA), is a student-led day of action where those who support making anti-LGBT bias unacceptable in schools take a day-long vow of silence to recognize and protest the discrimination and harassment -- in effect, the silencing -- experienced by LGBT students and their allies.

Gay-Straight Alliance Network

http://www.gsanetwork.org/

Gay-Straight Alliance Network is a youth-led organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources. Through peer support, leadership development, and training, GSA Network supports young people in starting, strengthening, and sustaining GSAs

GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network

http://www.glsen.org/chapters

This site provides information about sexual minority issues and education, including sections on Student Pride, News & Events, a Resource Library, and how to get involved.

National Mentoring Center

http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/

This center is one of the preeminent national training and technical assistance providers for mentoring programs across the United States.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
http://www.pflag.org/
This site provides information for people who wish to support sexual minority people and contains information about local chapters, resources, safe schools, hate crimes, and much more.

The P.E.R.S.O.N. PROJECT: Public Education Regarding Sexual Orientation Nationally
An Activist Network Advocating for LGBT Inclusive Curricular Policies
http://www.personproject.org/
The P.E.R.S.O.N. Project is an informal, national network of organizations and individuals working to ensure that fair, accurate, and unbiased information regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and about the nature of diversity of sexual orientation is presented to America's youth as part of public school education.

Project 10
http://www.project10.org/
PROJECT 10 is the nation's first public school program dedicated to providing ON-SITE educational support services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. PROJECT 10 began in l984 at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. This web site was developed in order to give teachers, counselors and administrators assistance in providing similar services in their own schools or school districts.

Safe School Coalition
http://safeschoolscoalition.org/safe.html
Safe School Coalition serves to reduce bias-reduced bullying and violence in schools and help schools better meet the needs of sexual minority youth children with sexual minority parents/guardians locally, nationally, and internationally.

Trans Youth Links
http://members.tripod.com/~twood/transyouth.html
This site provides a number of links for transgender youth.

GLSEN's National School Climate Survey -- http://www.glsen.org/article/2013-national-school-climate-survey

GLSEN's Safe Space Kit -- http://www.glsen.org/safespace

GLSEN's Ready, Set, Respect! Elementary Toolkit -- http://www.glsen.org/readysetrespect

Nondiscrimination laws 13 states and the District of Columbia -- http://www.glsen.org/article/state-maps

A Model District Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students -- http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Trans%20Model%20Policy%202016_0.pdf

Fact Sheet on LGBT Youth Health Education Needs
http://www.thebody.com/content/whatis/art2449.html

It's Elementary, Talking About Gay Issues
http://www.newday.com/films/Its_Elementary.html
The was the first film of its kind to address anti-gay prejudice by providing adults with practical lessons on how to talk with kids about gay people.

Terrence Higgins Trust – Teaching & Information Packs, Reading List
http://www.tht.org.uk/

Quick Find On-line Clearinghouse

TOPIC: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Issues http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/p3017_02.htm

TOPIC: Hate Groups: Helping Students and Preventing Hate Crime
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/hategroups.htm