GLSEN®

The 2011 National School Climate Survey

The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools

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GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community. For more information on our educator resources, research, public policy agenda, student leadership programs, or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

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Quotes throughout are from students' responses to open-ended questions in the survey.

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PREFACE

Once upon a time I thought I would be a history professor, studying and teaching "the science of change," trying to understand how things change over time. Instead, I have a job dedicated to driving that process. If you think about it, the basic job of a non-profit leader is to take the resources and support at our disposal and organize them to solve problems and fuel progress. It's a singular and daunting task.

GLSEN's 2011 National School Climate Survey report provides us both the snapshot of a school year and a window onto the progress and process of change. For many years now, GLSEN has been dedicated to increasing the presence of critical school-based supports and resources in K–12 schools nationwide. In 2011, the level of these in-school supports continued to rise across the country. This report also gives further evidence of how these supports improve LGBT student experience, in terms of both individual well-being and educational achievement.

But this report also tells a bigger story. Its graphs and figures of change over time document the progress of a fundamental struggle—the effort to reduce the levels of bias and violence experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students in our schools. Looking back across a decade, we now can see a sustained pattern, and the beginning of a downward arc.

For more than ten years, we've dedicated ourselves to tracking change over time through GLSEN's National School Climate Survey. The payoff? The report that you are reading gives us a glimpse of history in the making. And trends now discernible in many graphs in the pages that follow serve to echo Dr. Martin Luther King and Reverend Theodore Parker:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

I have been part of this effort for long enough to know full well that change does not just happen on its own. Since joining GLSEN's staff in 2001, it has been my great privilege to meet and work with thousands of people committed to bending that arc, whether they were GLSEN staffers, GLSEN chapter leaders, student advocates, parents, educators or school staff, policymakers or legislators, government officials, private sector employees or representatives of GLSEN's hundreds of organizational partners.

That's why research has been the backbone of GLSEN's work over the years – a foundational understanding of the scope and impact of the problem, effective solutions, and the efficacy of strategies and programs designed to implement those solutions. Knowledge is power, and for more than a decade, the National School Climate Survey has given us the knowledge we and our partners have needed to advocate for change and build a better future.

Reviewing these charts, graphs, numbers, and percentages, I had one primary, overwhelming thought: We are making a difference! How often does one get to see the evidence of change in progress?

I salute my colleagues in GLSEN Research for their groundbreaking work that has helped us devise blueprints for change. And I salute my GLSEN colleagues—staff, chapters, and student leaders—and our thousands of partners for the work behind the progress documented here.

It is working. Thank you for your commitment to making history.

Eliza Byard, Ph.D.
Executive Director
GLSEN

Acknowledgements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In 1999, GLSEN identified the need for national data on the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students and launched the first National School Climate Survey (NSCS). At the time, the school experiences of LGBT youth were under-documented and nearly absent from national studies of adolescents. For more than a decade, the biennial NSCS has documented the unique challenges LGBT students face and identified interventions that can improve school climate. The survey explores the prevalence of anti-LGBT language and victimization, the effect that these experiences have on LGBT students' achievement and well-being, and the utility of interventions in lessening the negative effects of a hostile school climate and promoting a positive educational experience. The survey also examines demographic and community-level differences in LGBT students' experiences.

The NSCS remains one of the few studies to examine the school experiences of LGBT students nationally, and its results have been vital to GLSEN's understanding of the issues that LGBT students face, thereby informing our ongoing work to ensure safe and affirming schools for all.

In our 2011 survey, we examine the experiences of LGBT students with regard to indicators of negative school climate:

- hearing biased remarks, including homophobic remarks, in school;

- feeling unsafe in school because of personal characteristics, such as sexual orientation, gender expression, or race/ethnicity;

- missing classes or days of school because of safety reasons; and

- experiencing harassment and assault in school.

We also examine:

- the possible negative effects of a hostile school climate on LGBT students' academic achievement, educational aspirations, and psychological well-being;

- whether or not students report experiences of victimization to school officials or to family members and how these adults address the problem; and

- how the school experiences of LGBT students differ by personal and community characteristics.

In addition, we demonstrate the degree to which LGBT students have access to supportive resources in school, and we explore the possible benefits of these resources, including:

- Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similar clubs;

- anti-bullying/harassment school policies and laws;

- supportive school staff; and

- curricula that are inclusive of LGBT-related topics.

Given that GLSEN has more than a decade of data, we examine changes over the time on indicators of negative school climate and levels of access to LGBT-related resources in schools.

METHODS

GLSEN used two methods to obtain a representative national sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth to participate in a survey: 1) outreach through national, regional, and local organizations that provide services to or advocate on behalf of LGBT youth, and 2) targeted advertising on the social networking site Facebook. For the first method, we asked organizations to direct youth to the National School Climate Survey, which was available on GLSEN's website, through their organizations' emails, listservs, websites, and social networking sites. Additionally, a paper version of the survey was made available to local community groups/organizations with limited capacity to access the Internet. To ensure representation of transgender youth, youth of color, and youth in rural communities, we made special efforts to notify groups and organizations that work predominantly with these populations. For the second method, we posted advertisements for the survey on Facebook, targeting all users between 13 and 18 years of age who gave some indication on their profile that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

The final sample consisted of a total of 8,584 students between the ages of 13 and 20. Students were from all 50 states and the District of Columbia and from 3,224 unique school districts. About two thirds of the sample (67.9%) was White, about half (49.6%) was female, and over half identified as gay or lesbian (61.3%). Students were in grades 6 to 12, with the largest numbers in grades 10 and 11.

KEY FINDINGS

Problem: Hostile School Climate

Schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBT students, the overwhelming majority of whom hear homophobic remarks and experience harassment or assault at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression.

Biased Remarks at School

- 84.9% of students heard "gay" used in a negative way (e.g., "that's so gay") frequently or often at school, and 91.4% reported that they felt distressed because of this language.

- 71.3% heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., "dyke" or "faggot") frequently or often.

- 61.4% heard negative remarks about gender expression (not acting "masculine enough" or "feminine enough") frequently or often.

- 56.9% of students reported hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff, and 56.9% of students reported hearing negative remarks about gender expression from teachers or other school staff.

Safety and Victimization at School

- 63.5% felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation, and 43.9% because of their gender expression.

- 81.9% were verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened) in the past year because of their sexual orientation, and 63.9% because of their gender expression.

- 38.3% were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) in the past year because of their sexual orientation, and 27.1% because of their gender expression.

- 18.3% were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, injured with a weapon) in the past year because of their sexual orientation, and 12.4% because of their gender expression.

- 55.2% of LGBT students experienced electronic harassment in the past year (via text messages or postings on Facebook), often known as cyberbullying.

The high incidence of harassment and assault is exacerbated by school staff who rarely, if ever, intervene on behalf of LGBT students.

- 60.4% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff, most often believing little to no action would be taken or the situation could become worse if reported.

- 36.7% of the students who did report an incident said that school staff did nothing in response.

Problem: Absenteeism

Many LGBT students avoid classes or miss entire days of school rather than face a hostile school climate. An unsafe school environment denies these students their right to an education.

- 29.8% of students skipped a class at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

- 31.8% missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

- Students who experienced higher levels of victimization because of their sexual orientation were three times as likely to have missed school in the past month than those who experienced lower levels (57.9% vs. 19.6%).

- Students who experienced higher levels of victimization because of their gender identity were more than twice as likely to have missed school in the past month than those who experienced lower levels (53.2% vs. 20.4%).

Problem: Lowered Educational Aspirations and Academic Achievement

School safety affects student success. Experiencing victimization in school hinders LGBT students' academic success and educational aspirations.

- Students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression had lower grade point averages than students who were less often harassed (2.9 vs. 3.2).

- Students who experienced higher levels of victimization in school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression were more than twice as likely to report that they did not plan to pursue any post-secondary education (e.g., college or trade school) than those who experienced lower levels (10.7% vs. 5.1%).

Problem: Poorer Psychological Well-Being

Experiences of harassment and assault in school are related to poorer psychological well-being for LGBT students:

- Students who experienced higher levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation or gender expression had higher levels of depression than those who reported lower levels of those types of victimization.

- Students who experienced higher levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation or gender expression had lower levels of self-esteem than those who reported lower levels of those types of victimization.

Solution: Gay-Straight Alliances

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and similar student clubs can provide safe, affirming spaces and critical support for LGBT students. GSAs also contribute to creating a more welcoming school environment.

- Students with a GSA in their school heard fewer homophobic remarks, such as "faggot" or "dyke," and fewer expressions where "gay" was used in a negative way than students in schools without a GSA.

- Students with a GSA were more likely to report that school personnel intervened when hearing homophobic remarks compared to students without a GSA — 19.8% vs. 12.0% said that staff intervened "most of the time" or "always."

- Students with a GSA were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation than those without a GSA (54.9% vs. 70.6%).

- Students with a GSA experienced less victimization related to their sexual orientation and gender expression. For example, 23.0% of students with a GSA experienced higher levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation, compared to 38.5% of those without a GSA.

- Students with a GSA had a greater sense of connectedness to their school community than students without a GSA.

Yet, less than half (45.7%) of students said that their school had a GSA or similar student club.

Solution: Inclusive Curriculum

A curriculum that includes positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events (i.e., an inclusive curriculum) can promote respect for all and improve LGBT students' school experiences.

- Students in schools with an inclusive curriculum heard fewer homophobic remarks, including negative use of the word "gay," the phrase "no homo," and homophobic epithets (e.g., "fag" or "dyke"), and fewer negative comments about someone's gender expression than those without an inclusive curriculum.

- Less than half (43.4%) of students in schools with an inclusive curriculum felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation, compared to almost two thirds (67.5%) of other students.

- Less than a fifth (17.7%) of students in schools with an inclusive curriculum had missed school in the past month compared to more than a third (34.8%) of other students.

- Students in schools with an inclusive curriculum were more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBT people than other students (66.7% vs. 33.2%).

- Students in schools with an inclusive curriculum had a greater sense of connectedness to their school community than other students.

However, only a small percentage of students were taught positive representations about LGBT people, history, or events in their schools (16.8%). Furthermore, less than half (44.1%) of students reported that they could find information about LGBT-related issues in their school library, and only two in five (42.1%) with Internet access at school reported being able to access LGBT-related information online via school computers.

Solution: Supportive Educators

The presence of educators who are supportive of LGBT students can have a positive impact on the school experiences of these students, as well as their psychological well-being.

- About half (53.1 %) of students who had many (six or more) supportive staff at their school felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, compared to nearly three fourths (76.9%) of students with no supportive staff.

- Less than a quarter (21.9%) of students with many supportive staff had missed school in the past month compared to over half (51.2%) with no supportive staff.

- Students with greater numbers of supportive staff had a greater sense of being a part of their school community than other students.

- Students with many supportive staff reported higher grade point averages than other students (3.2 vs. 2.9).

- Students with a greater number of supportive staff also had higher educational aspirations—students with many supportive staff were about a third as likely to say they were not planning on attending college compared to students with no supportive educators (5.1% vs. 14.9%).

Although almost all students (95.0%) could identify at least one staff member supportive of LGBT students at their school, only about half (54.6%) could identify six or more supportive school staff.

Solution: Comprehensive Bullying/Harassment Policies and Laws

Policies and laws that explicitly address bias-based bullying and harassment can create safer learning environments for all students by reducing the prevalence of biased behaviors. Comprehensive policies and laws—those that specifically enumerate personal characteristics including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, among others—are most effective at combating anti-LGBT bullying and harassment.

- Six in ten (59.5%) students in schools with comprehensive policies heard homophobic remarks (e.g., "faggot" or "dyke") often or frequently, compared to almost three quarters of students in schools with generic, non-enumerated policies (73.3%) or no policy whatsoever (73.8%).

- Students in schools with comprehensive policies were more likely than students in schools with a generic policy or no policy to report that staff intervened when hearing homophobic remarks (28.3% vs. 12.2% vs. 8.8%) or negative remarks about gender expression (19.0% vs. 10.5% vs. 8.4%).

However, only 7.4% of students reported that their school had a comprehensive policy (i.e., that specifically included both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) and only 15.6% reported that their policy included either sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Results from the NSCS provide evidence that students who live in states with comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment laws experience less victimization because of their sexual orientation or gender expression and are more likely to have supportive resources, including a comprehensive school policy. Yet, only 15 states plus the District of Columbia have comprehensive laws that include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Changes in School Climate for LGBT Youth Over Time

Increases from past years in school resources may now be showing a positive effect on school climate for LGBT youth.

The National School Climate Survey, first conducted by GLSEN in 1999, remains the only study to consistently document the school experiences of LGBT students nationally. The 2011 NSCS marks the

first time our findings show both decreases in negative indicators of school climate (biased remarks and victimization) and continued increases in most LGBT-related school resources and supports.

Anti-LGBT Remarks

Our results indicate a general trend that, while still prevalent, homophobic remarks (e.g., "dyke" or "faggot"), are on the decline. Students in 2011 reported a lower incidence of these remarks than all prior years. The percentage of students hearing these remarks frequently or often has dropped from over 80% in 2001 to about 70% in 2011. There has also been a small but consistent decline in the frequency of expressions such as "that's so gay" since 2001. However, there has been little change over time in the incidence of hearing negative remarks about gender expression.

Harassment and Assault

Between 2001 to 2009, LGBT students' reports of harassment and assault remained relatively constant. In 2011, however, we saw a significant decrease in victimization based on sexual orientation. Changes in harassment and assault based on gender expression were similar to those for sexual orientation – verbal harassment was lower in 2011 than in all prior years, and physical harassment and assault were lower in 2011 than in 2009 and 2007.

Gay-Straight Alliances

In 2011, we saw small increases from previous years in the percentage of students who reported having a GSA at school. The percentage of LGBT students with a GSA in their school was statistically higher in 2011 than all previous years except for 2003.

Curricular Resources

The percentage of students with access to LGBT-related Internet resources through their school computers showed a continued increase in 2011, and the percentage of students reporting positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events in their curriculum was significantly higher in 2011 than all prior survey years except for 2003. In contrast, the percentage of students who had LGBT-related resources in their school library peaked in 2009 and decreased slightly in 2011. There have been no changes over time in the percentage of students reporting inclusion of LGBT-related content in their textbooks.

Supportive Educators

There was a continued trend in 2011 of an increasing number of supportive school staff over the past decade, including a small but statistically significant increase from 2009 to 2011.

Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies

In 2011, we saw a large increase in the percentage of students reporting any type of anti-bullying/harassment policy at their school. However, there was no increase in the percentage of students reporting that their school had a comprehensive policy, i.e., one that included protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Demographic and School Characteristic Differences in LGBT Students' Experiences

LGBT students are a diverse population, and although they may share some experiences related to school climate, their experiences may also vary by both students' personal characteristics and those of their school. In the full 2011 National School Climate Survey report, we examine differences in students' experiences based on race/ethnicity, gender, school level, school type (public, religious, private non-religious), region, and locale. Major findings regarding these differences are highlighted below.

Gender Identity and Expression

Compared to other LGBT students, transgender students faced the most hostile school climates whereas female non-transgender students were least likely to experience anti-LGBT victimization. In addition, gender nonconforming students experienced more negative experiences at school compared to students whose gender expression adhered to traditional gender norms.

- Transgender students were most likely to feel unsafe at school, with 80.0% of transgender students reporting that they felt unsafe at school because of their gender expression.

- Female students in our survey reported lower frequencies of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression and were less likely to feel unsafe at school.

- Gender nonconforming students reported higher levels of victimization and feeling unsafe at school. For example, 58.7% of gender nonconforming students experienced verbal harassment in the past year because of their gender expression, compared to 29.0% of their peers

Region

LGBT students attending schools in the Northeast and the West reported lower frequencies of victimization and hearing homophobic remarks and had greater access to resources and support than students in the South and Midwest.

- Students in the Northeast and the West reported hearing "gay" used in a negative way less frequently than students in the South and the Midwest.

- Overall, LGBT students from schools in the Northeast and the West reported significantly lower levels of victimization than students from schools in the South and the Midwest.

- In general, students in the Northeast were most likely to report having LGBT-related resources at school, such as inclusive curricula and supportive school personnel, followed by students in the West. Students in the South were least likely to have access to these resources and supports.

Locale

LGBT students in rural areas and small towns were less safe in school than students in urban and suburban areas. They also had fewer LGBT-related resources or supports in school.

- Students in rural/small town schools reported the highest frequency of hearing anti-LGBT language at school. For example, 53.8% of rural/small town students reported hearing homophobic remarks such as "fag" or "dyke" frequently, compared to 41.4% of suburban students and 39.0% of urban students.

- Students in rural/small town schools experienced higher levels victimization in school based on sexual orientation and gender expression.

- Students in rural/small town schools were least likely to have LGBT-related school resources or supports, particularly Gay-Straight Alliances and supportive school personnel.

School Level

On all of the indicators of school climate in the survey, middle school students fared worse than high school students and had fewer LGBT-related resources and supports.

- Students in middle school reported higher frequencies of victimization on sexual orientation and gender expression than students in high school. For example, about a third (35.5%) of middle school students experienced regular physical harassment (sometimes, often, or frequently) based on their sexual orientation, compared to less than a quarter (21.4%) of high school students.

- Although middle school students were less likely to have access to every resource and support about which we asked, the disparity between middle and high school students was greatest for Gay-Straight Alliances (6.3% for middle school students vs. 52.6% for high school students).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that there is an urgent need for action to create safe and affirming schools for LGBT students. Results from the 2011 National School Climate Survey demonstrate the ways in which school-based support — such as supportive staff, anti-bullying/harassment policies, LGBT-inclusive curricular resources, and GSAs — can positively affect LGBT students' school experiences. Furthermore, results show how comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment state laws can positively affect school climate for these students. Therefore, we recommend the following measures:

- Advocate for comprehensive bullying/harassment legislation at the state and federal levels that specifically enumerates sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected categories alongside others such as race, religion, and disability;

- Adopt and implement comprehensive bullying/harassment policies that specifically enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in individual schools and districts, with clear and effective systems for reporting and addressing incidents that students experience;

- Ensure that school policies and practices, such as those related to dress codes and school dances, do not discriminate against LGBT students;

- Support student clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances, that provide support for LGBT students and address LGBT issues in education;

- Provide training for school staff to improve rates of intervention and increase the number of supportive teachers and other staff available to students; and

- Increase student access to appropriate and accurate information regarding LGBT people, history, and events through inclusive curricula and library and Internet resources.

Taken together, such measures can move us toward a future in which all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

INTRODUCTION
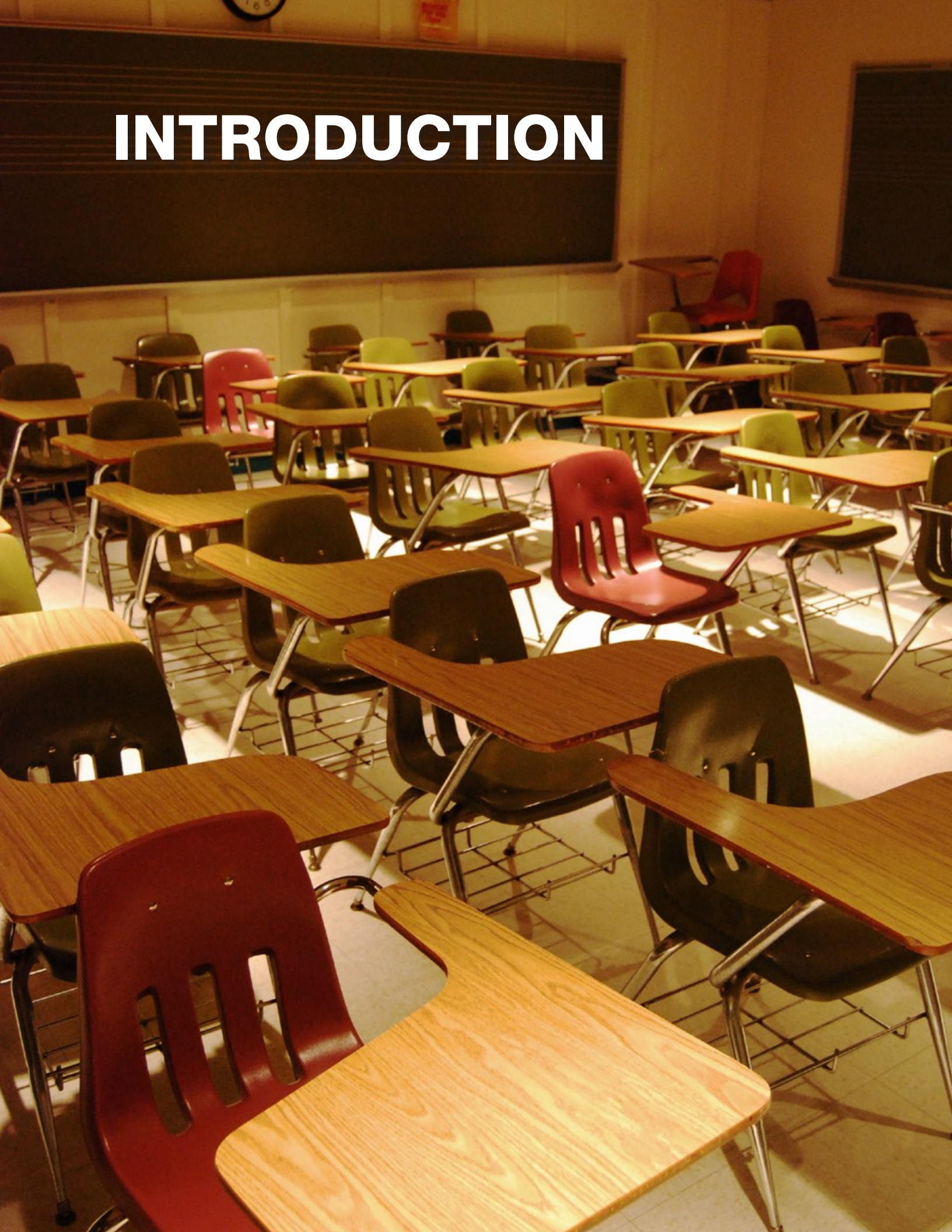
For more than 20 years, GLSEN has worked to ensure safe schools for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. In 2010, with the release of the 2009 installment of our National School Climate Survey (NSCS), GLSEN marked 10 years of research documenting the school experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth: the prevalence of anti-LGBT language and victimization, the effect that these experiences have on LGBT students' academic achievement, and the utility of interventions to both lessen the negative effects of a hostile climate and promote a positive educational experience. The results of the survey have been vital to GLSEN's understanding of the issues that LGBT students face, thereby informing our ongoing work to ensure safe and affirming schools for all.

Since the release of our 2009 NSCS report (October, 2010), there has been increased attention by the federal government to the experiences of LGBT youth in schools. The U.S. Department of Education released two guidance letters (i.e., "dear colleague" letters) that provided instructions on assisting LGBT students.[1] Russlynn Ali, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, provided guidance on schools' responsibilities for responding to harassment or bullying, including how Title IX, which prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex, can provide some protection to LGBT students. Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, issued a letter that delineated how Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) can have an important role in creating safer schools and how the rights of students to form GSAs and other student groups are protected under the Equal Access Act.

There have also been several high profile national events, since our 2009 NSCS survey, hosted by the U.S. government that have highlighted the need to address safety issues for LGBT students. Starting in 2010, the U.S. Department of Education has hosted the annual Federal Partners in Bullying Summit to engage representatives from federal agencies, national organizations, and community members to discuss and share progress on anti-bullying efforts across the United State and have included attention to the experiences of LGBT youth as well as GLSEN's research and programs. In 2010, President and First Lady Obama held the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. As part of this conference, a series of white papers were released including one specifically on bullying and the LGBT community.[2] In this paper, Dr. Dorothy Espelage summarizes research on the incidence of bullying among LGBT youth, including GLSEN's previous NSCS research. She also highlights the four key strategies that GLSEN recommends for creating safer school environments for LGBT students: Gay-Straight Alliances, LGBT-inclusive curriculum, supportive educators, and comprehensive anti-bullying policies. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Education hosted its first-ever LGBT Youth Summit highlighting the administration's commitment to ensuring equal access to education for LGBT students. Earlier this year, the White House partnered with the Departments of Justice and Education in holding the White House LGBT Conference on Safe Schools & Communities, which further highlighted the need for efforts to ensure safe and affirming schools for LGBT students. In addition to focusing on issues core to GLSEN's mission, these national events also featured the work of GLSEN staff, chapter, and student leaders.

Providing further guidance to educators, advocates, and policymakers, several governmental institutions issued or commissioned reports that included examination of the experiences of LGBT students. The U.S. Department of Education, Program and Policy Studies Service, issued a report examining state-level anti-bullying laws and policies, including an analysis of which laws provide explicit protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.[3] The U.S. General Accounting Office issued a report, at the request of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, that examined the prevalence and effects of school bullying, and the steps certain states and locales are taking to address school bullying, and identified key federal agencies' coordination efforts to address school bullying. The report revealed that federal surveys of youth fail to provide much insight into the experiences of LGBT youth — none collected demographic information on sexual orientation or gender identity, and only one asked about bullying based on actual or perceived sexual orientation.[4] The Institute of Medicine (IOM) produced a report at the request of the National Institutes of Health that examined the current state of knowledge about the health of LGBT people, and that identified research gaps this area.[5] IOM's report summarized past literature on LGBT youth and demonstrated the potential for greater health disparities between LGBT and non-LGBT youth. The report concluded that research on

the health of LGBT adolescents is limited and that more research is especially needed that explores demographic intersections of LGBT youth's identity and examines appropriate interventions for LGBT youth to prevent further health disparities.

Although the national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a biennial survey of youth health risk behavior by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), does not yet include any questions about sexual orientation or gender identity, some of the state- and local-level YRBS surveys include questions about sexual orientation and/or the sex of sexual contacts (i.e., same-sex only, opposite sex only, or both sexes). In 2011, the CDC released a report that summarized results from YRBSs conducted during 2001 and 2009 in the seven states and six large urban school districts that included these questions.[6] The authors found that sexual minority students (those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual or report same-sex sexual behavior) were disproportionately more likely to engage in a wide range of health-risk behaviors. For example, they found that LGB students were much more likely to have been in a physical fight on school property than heterosexual students across most of the YRBS sites that asked those questions—median of 19.1% for gay and lesbian students and median of 15.7% for bisexual students compared to median of 10.5% among heterosexual students. The authors concluded, in part, that school health policies and practices should be developed to address these health-risk disparities for sexual minority youth and that more state and local survey assessing health-risk behaviors and health outcomes among students should include questions about sexual orientation and same-sex sexual behavior.

Even with this increased attention to LGBT student issues by the federal government and with the calls for more research, GLSEN's National School Climate Survey remains one of a few studies to focus on the school experiences of LGB students nationally, and the only national study to focus on transgender student experiences.

There have been other notable additions to the knowledge base on bullying and harassment of LGBT students since our 2009 NSCS report. Several recent research articles have furthered our understanding of how LGBT and non-LGBT secondary students differ in their educational experiences. Using a Midwestern population-based

sample of secondary school students, Robinson and Espelage found that LGBTQ students have a higher likelihood of negative educational outcomes, such as victimization and absenteeism, particularly in middle school and suggest that incorporating material about sexual orientation and gender identity in bullying prevention programs may contribute to safer environments and more positive outcomes for LGBTQ.[7] Using the same sample, Poteat and colleagues found that parental support did not off-set the negative effects of victimization on mental health for LGBTQ youth but did for non-LGBTQ youth, and the authors highlight the need for counselors to work with parents of all youth on ways to provide support to those who experience homophobic victimization.[8] Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Himmelstein and Bruckner demonstrated how nonheterosexual youth, especially girls, experienced harsher disciplinary treatment from school administrators than their heterosexual peers and that this was not a result of greater engagement in illegal or disruptive behaviors.[9]

Several recent research contributions by Toomey and colleagues have furthered our understanding of the role that GSAs play in the school experiences of LGBT students.[10] One study with a sample of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer students in California found that participation in GSA-related social justice activities was positively associated with school belongingness and achievement but less so at high levels of school victimization. In another study, they found that retrospective reports of GSA involvement were related to positive well-being in a sample of LGBT young adults.

As many of the federal reports had noted and highlighted, there continues to be a paucity of research on the experiences of transgender students. Since our last report, there have been a few key additions to this small body of literature. The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) released findings from the first national survey on discrimination of transgender adults and found that transgender individuals reported retrospectively high rates of harassment, assault, and sexual violence when they had attended K–12 schools—from both other students and school staff.[11] The NCTE and NGLTF report also examined demographic differences in transgender individuals' past school experiences and found, for example,

that multiracial transgender people reported the highest rates of in-school harassment. McGuire and colleagues used quantitative and focus group data to understand the issues that transgender students encounter in school environments and found that school harassment due to transgender identity was pervasive and students reported greater connections to school personnel when the school took action related to the harassment.[12] With a small sample of transgender youth in New York City, Grossman and colleagues examined gender development and stressful life experiences related to their gender identity but also examined coping and resiliency among the youth.[13] In a qualitative study of 13 transgender youth of color in the southeastern U.S., Singh also explored youth resilience, their ability to "bounce back" from challenging experiences as transgender youth of color and discuss how advocacy for transgender youth of color should include "more depth in attention to gender identity and expression and valuing of these youth, in addition to also acknowledging the deleterious effects of racism on these youths' lives and racism's unique intersection with transprejudice for them."[14]

GLSEN's NSCS remains vital for our continued advocacy for safe and affirming school environments for LGBT students as there remains little information about LGBT student experiences on a national level. Understanding that LGBT youth may experience other forms of bias and victimization in school—not only because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression—we include questions about other forms of bias in school, such as that based on race/ethnicity, religion, and disability. In addition to documenting indicators of hostile school climate (e.g., frequency of biased remarks, experiences of harassment and assault, and feeling unsafe), the NSCS examines the negative effects of a hostile school climate on LGBT students' educational outcomes and psychological well-being. We explore the diverse nature of LGBT students' experiences and report how these differ by students' personal and community characteristics. We also examine whether or not students report experiences of victimization to school officials or to family members and how these adults address the problem.

While it is important to document experiences of victimization in school and their negative impact on the lives of LGBT youth, the NSCS has also allowed us to understand what factors can lead to safer and healthier learning environments for LGBT students. The NSCS includes questions about the availability of resources and supports for students in their schools, such as supportive student clubs (e.g., GSAs), curricular resources that are inclusive of LGBT issues, supportive teachers or other school staff, and anti-bullying policies that include explicit protections for LGBT students. Furthermore, it examines the utility of these resources, exploring how school-based resources and supports can improve the quality of school life for LGBT students.

GLSEN's survey has continually expanded and adapted to better capture the picture of what is occurring in schools today. In our 2011 survey, we added a question about students' own gender expression, thus deepening our understanding of the role that gender nonconformity may play in their school experience. We also added a question asking students to describe ways they felt their schools discriminate against LGBT people. Thus, in this current report, we share our greater understanding of the policies, practices, and experience that may make LGBT students feel less a part of the school community.

Given that we now have more than a decade of data from the NSCS, we examine changes over the past 10 years on both indicators of negative school climate and levels of access to LGBT-related resources in schools. As with all the past reports, we hope that the 2011 NSCS will provide useful information to advocates, educators, and policymakers that will enhance their efforts to create safe and affirming schools for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

METHODS AND SAMPLE

Participants in this survey completed a survey about their experiences in school, including hearing biased remarks; feeling safe, being harassed, and feeling comfortable at school; and academic experiences, attitudes about school, and involvement in school. Youth were eligible to participate in the survey if they were at least 13 years of age, attended a K–12 school in the United States during the 2010–11 school year, and identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or a sexual orientation other than heterosexual (e.g., queer, questioning) or identified as transgender or as having a gender identity other than male, female, or transgender (e.g., genderqueer). Data collection occurred between April and August 2011.

The survey was available online through GLSEN's website. Notices and announcements were sent through GLSEN's email and chapter networks as well as through national, regional, and local organizations that provide services to or advocate on behalf of LGBT youth. National and regional organizations posted notices about the survey on listservs, websites, and social networking websites (e.g., TrevorSpace). Local community groups serving LGBT youth notified their participants about the online survey via email, social networking, and flyers. In addition, a paper version of the survey was made available to local community groups with limited capacity to access the Internet (resulting in 139 completed paper surveys). To ensure

representation of transgender youth, youth of color, and youth in rural communities, special outreach efforts were made to notify groups and organizations that work predominantly with these populations about the survey.

Contacting participants only through LGBT youth-serving groups and organizations would have limited our ability to reach LGBT students who were not connected to LGBT communities in some way. Thus, in order to broaden our reach to LGBT students who may not have had such connections, we conducted targeted advertising on Facebook. Notices about the survey were shown to users between 13 and 18 years of age who gave some indication on their profile that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

The final sample consisted of a total of 8,584 students between the ages of 13 and 20. Students came from all 50 states and the District of Columbia and from 3,224 unique school districts. Table 1 presents participants' demographic characteristics, and Table 2 shows the characteristics of the schools attended by participants. About two thirds of the sample (67.9%) was White, about half (49.6%) was female, and over half identified as gay or lesbian (61.3%). Students were in grades 6 to 12, with the largest numbers in grades 10 and 11.

Table 1. Characteristics of Survey Participants

Race and Ethnicity*			Gender**		
White or European American	67.9%	n=5781	Female	49.6%	n=4237
Hispanic or Latino, any race	14.7%	n=1255	Male	35.2%	n=3005
African American or Black	3.7%	n=316	Transgender	8.3%	n=705
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.4%	n=206	Other Gender	7.0%	n=594
Middle Eastern or Arab American, any race	1.2%	n=102	(e.g., genderqueer, androgynous)		
Native American, American Indian or Alaska Native	0.6%	n=55	**Grade in School**		
			6th	0.2%	n=13
Multi-Racial	9.2%	n=787	7th	2.9%	n=250
Sexual Orientation			8th	8.9%	n=762
			9th	18.1%	n=1543
Gay or Lesbian	61.3%	n=5246	10th	24.5%	n=2087
Bisexual	27.2%	n=2326	11th	24.5%	n=2091
Queer	2.7%	n=232	12th	20.8%	n=1775
Other Sexual Orientation (e.g., pansexual)	5.2%	n=445	**Average Age = 16.0 years**		
Questioning or Unsure	3.7%	n=313			

* Participants who selected more than one category were coded as "Multiracial," with the exception of participants who selected "Hispanic or Latino" or "Middle Eastern or Arab American."

**"Female" includes participants who selected only female as their gender, and "Male" includes participants who selected only male. The category "Transgender" includes participants who selected transgender, male-to-female, or female-to-male as their gender, including those who selected more than one of these categories. Participants who selected both male and female were categorized as "Other Gender."

Table 2. Characteristics of Participants' Schools

Grade Levels			School Type		
K through 12 School	5.7%	n=487	Public School	90.3%	n=7524
Elementary School	0.0%	n=3	Charter	4.0%	n=299
Lower School (elementary and middle grades)	0.6%	n=54	Magnet	7.7%	n=583
Middle School	8.6%	n=736	Religious-Affiliated School	3.7%	n=310
Upper School (middle and high grades)	7.2%	n=617	Other Independent or Private School	6.0%	n=499
High School	77.7%	n=6619	**Region**		
Community Type			Northeast	21.4%	n=1815
			South	30.1%	n=2550
Urban	28.6%	n=2446	Midwest	24.2%	n=2050
Suburban	42.0%	n=3587	West	24.4%	n=2065
Rural or Small Town	29.4%	n=2517			

PART 1:
INDICATORS OF
SCHOOL CLIMATE

Exposure to Biased Language

Key Findings

- Nearly three quarters of LGBT students heard homophobic or sexist remarks often or frequently at school.

- More than 8 in 10 students heard the word "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently at school.

- More than half of students heard homophobic remarks from school personnel.

- Less than a fifth of students reported that school personnel frequently intervened when hearing homophobic remarks or negative remarks about gender expression.

- 4 out of 10 students heard their peers at school make racist remarks often or frequently at school.

- Remarks about students not acting "masculine enough" were more common than remarks about students not acting "feminine enough."

GLSEN strives to make schools safe and affirming for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race or ethnicity, or any other characteristic that may be the basis for harassment. Keeping classrooms and hallways free of homophobic, sexist, and other types of biased language is one aspect of creating a more positive school climate for students. The 2011 survey, like our previous surveys, asked students about the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks (such as "faggot" and "dyke"), racist remarks (such as "nigger" or "spic"), and sexist remarks (such as someone being called "bitch" in a negative way or talk about girls being inferior to boys) while at school. Since our 2003 survey, we have also asked students about the frequency of hearing negative remarks about the way in which someone expressed their gender at school (such as comments about a female student not acting "feminine enough"). Students were also asked about the frequency of hearing biased remarks from school staff. In addition to asking about the frequency of hearing remarks, students were asked whether anyone intervened when hearing this type of language used in school.

Homophobic Remarks

Homophobic remarks were one of the most commonly heard types of biased language in school.[15] As shown in Figure 1.1, nearly three-quarters (71.3%) of students reported hearing students make derogatory remarks, such as "dyke" or "faggot," often or frequently in school. Further, we asked students who heard homophobic remarks

in school how pervasive this behavior was among the student population. As shown in Figure 1.2, more than a third of students (38.8%) reported that these types of remarks were made by most of their peers. More than half (56.9%) of students reported ever hearing homophobic remarks from their teachers or other school staff (see Figure 1.6).

We also asked students about the frequency of hearing the word "gay" used in a negative way in school, such as in the expression "that's so gay" or "you're so gay." Use of these expressions was even more prevalent than other homophobic remarks like "fag" or "dyke"—84.9% of students heard "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently at school (see also Figure 1.1). These expressions are often used to mean that something or someone is stupid or worthless and, thus, may be dismissed as innocuous by school authorities and students in comparison to overtly derogatory remarks such as "faggot." However, many LGBT students did not view these expressions as innocuous—91.4% reported that hearing "gay" used in a negative manner caused them to feel bothered or distressed to some degree (see Figure 1.3).

"No homo" is a relatively recent phrase and often employed at the end of a statement in order to rid it of a homosexual connotation. For instance, some might use the phrase after compliments, as in "I like your jeans—no homo." This phrase propagates the notion that it is unacceptable to have a same-sex attraction. In the 2011 survey, we asked students about the frequency of hearing this expression in school. This expression was

Figure 1.1 Frequency of Hearing Biased Language from Students
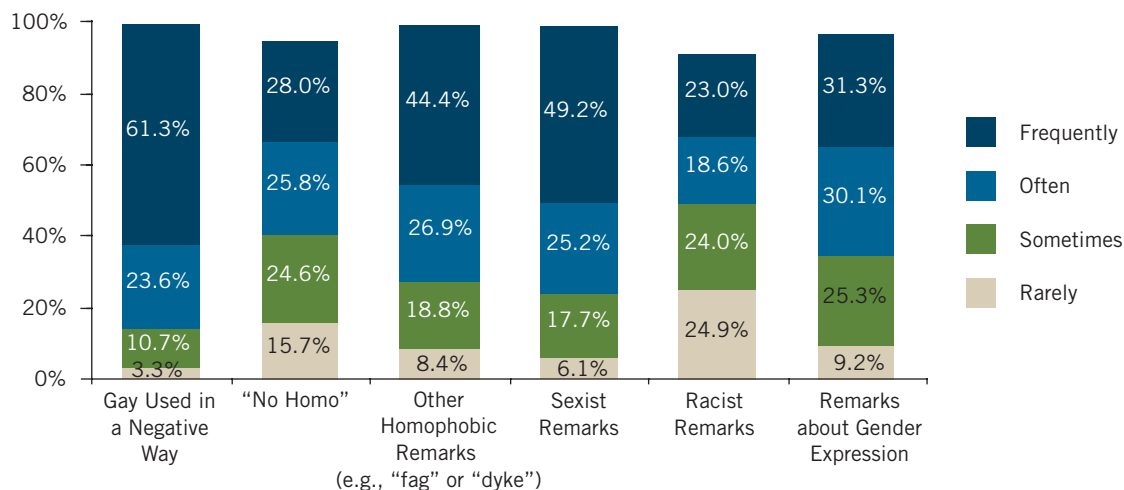
less common than other types of homophobic remarks—slightly more than half (53.8%) of students heard "no homo" used often or frequently at school (see Figure 1.1). As with the expression "that's so gay," some may believe that saying "no homo" is not meant to be offensive to LGBT people, yet over three quarters (84.8%) of LGBT students reported that hearing "no homo" caused them to feel bothered or distressed to some degree (see Figure 1.4).

Sexist Remarks

Sexist remarks, such as calling someone a "bitch" in a negative manner, comments about girls being inferior to boys, or comments about girls' bodies were also commonly heard in school. Nearly three-quarters (74.4%) of students heard sexist remarks from other students frequently or often (see Figure

1.1). In addition, four in ten (40.7%) said they heard such comments from most of their peers (see Figure 1.2). Over half (59.1%) of students also reported that school personnel made sexist remarks while in school (see Figure 1.6).

Racist Remarks

Hearing racist remarks, such as "spic" or "nigger," in school was not uncommon. As shown in Figure 1.1, more than a third (41.6%) reported hearing racist remarks from other students often or frequently in school. Over one fifth (22.7%) of students reported that these types of remarks were made by most of their peers (see Figure 1.2). In addition, almost a third (31.1%) of students reported hearing racist remarks from faculty or other school personnel while in school (see Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.2 Number of Students Making Biased Remarks
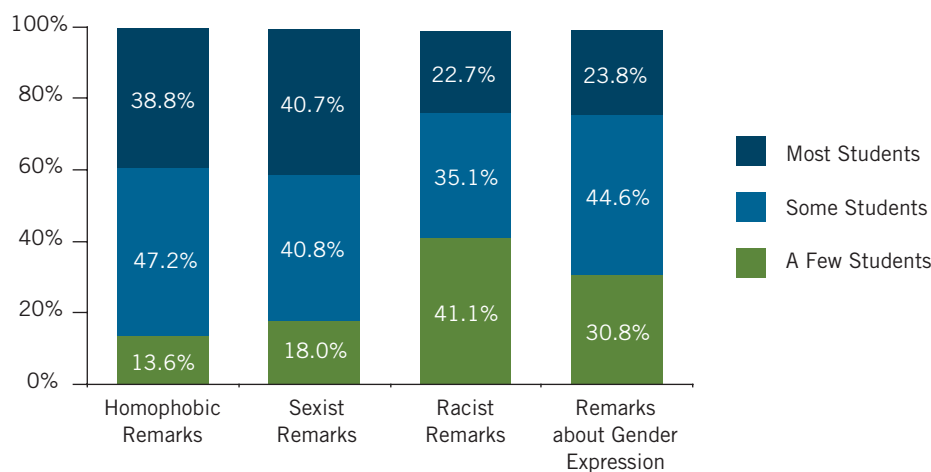
Figure 1.3 Degree that Students Were Bothered or Distressed as a Result of Hearing "Gay" Used in a Derogatory Way

Not At All 13.4%
Extremely 25.8%
A Little 28.7%
Pretty Much 31.2%
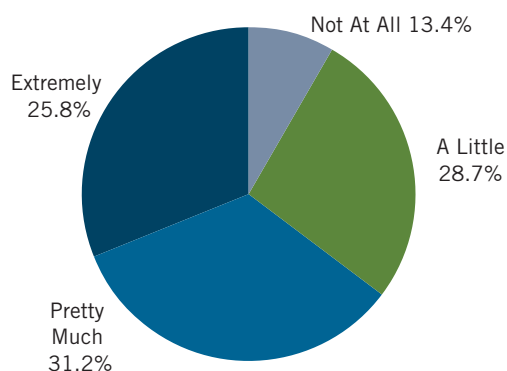
Figure 1.4 Degree that Students Were Bothered or Distressed as a Result of Hearing "No Homo" Used in a Derogatory Way

Not at All 15.2%
Extremely 23.4%
A Little 32.5%
Pretty Much 28.9%
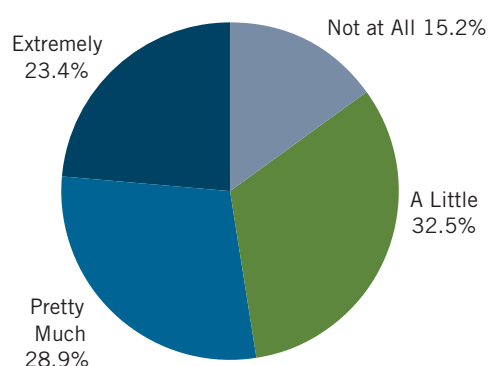
"People frequently call others 'fags' and 'homos.' Anything bad is 'so gay.' They say all of this in front of me, and it really starts to sting."

Negative Remarks about Gender Expression

Our society upholds norms for what is considered an appropriate expression of one's gender. Those who express themselves in a manner considered to be atypical may experience criticism, harassment, and sometimes violence. Thus, we asked students two separate questions about hearing comments related to a student's gender expression—one question asked how often they heard remarks about someone not acting "masculine" enough, and another question asked how often they heard comments about someone not acting "feminine" enough. Findings from this survey demonstrate that negative remarks about someone's gender expression were pervasive in schools. Overall, 61.4% of students reported hearing either type of remark about someone's gender often or frequently at school (see Figure 1.1). Remarks about students not acting "masculine" enough were more common than remarks about students not acting "feminine" enough.[16] Over half of students (55.7%) had often or frequently heard negative comments about students' "masculinity," compared to more than a third (38.0%) who heard comments as often about students' "femininity" (see Figure 1.5). Almost a quarter (23.8%) of students reported that most of their peers made negative remarks about someone's gender expression (see Figure 1.2). Over half (56.9%) of students heard teachers or other staff make negative comments about a student's gender expression at school (see Figure 1.6).

Intervention in Biased Remarks

Intervention by School Staff. In addition to the frequency of hearing biased language in school, students were asked how often such remarks were made in the presence of teachers or other school staff. Students in our survey reported that their peers were more likely to make homophobic remarks when school personnel were present than they were to make other types of biased remarks.[17] As shown in Figure 1.7, more students said that school staff were present all or most of the time when homophobic remarks were made (36.8%) than when sexist remarks, racist remarks, or remarks about someone's gender expression were made (31.5%, 24.6%, and 26.2%, respectively). These findings may indicate that homophobic remarks are more acceptable in the school culture, given the student population was reportedly less likely to restrict their use of such remarks in front of school staff, relative to other types of biased language.

When school staff were present, the use of biased and derogatory language by students remained largely unchallenged. As shown in Figure 1.8, less than a fifth of the students reported that school personnel frequently intervened ("most of the time" or "always") when homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression were made in their presence (15.4% and 11.3%, respectively). School staff were much more likely to intervene when students used sexist and racist language—33.5% said that staff frequently intervened when hearing sexist language and 54.7% intervened as often when hearing racist remarks.[18]

Figure 1.5 Frequency of Hearing Remarks About Students' Gender Expression
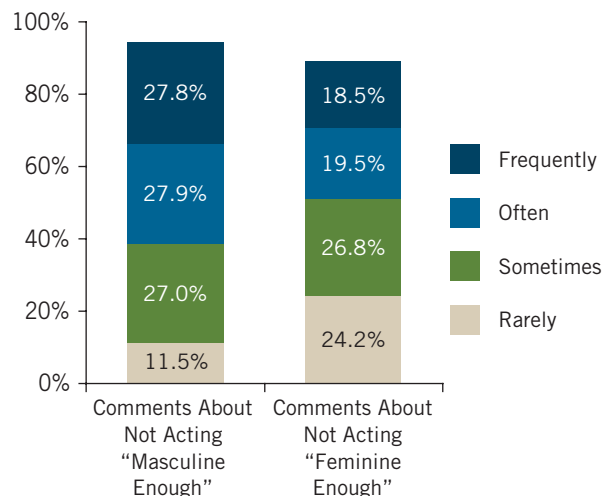
Figure 1.6 Frequency of Hearing Biased Language from Teachers or Other School Staff

Legend:
- Frequently
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely

	Homophobic Remarks	Sexist Remarks	Racist Remarks	Remarks about Gender Expression
Frequently	1.0%	2.1%	0.5%	2.6%
Often	3.1%	5.5%	1.1%	6.1%
Sometimes	15.5%	19.5%	6.3%	19.8%
Rarely	37.3%	32.0%	23.2%	28.4%
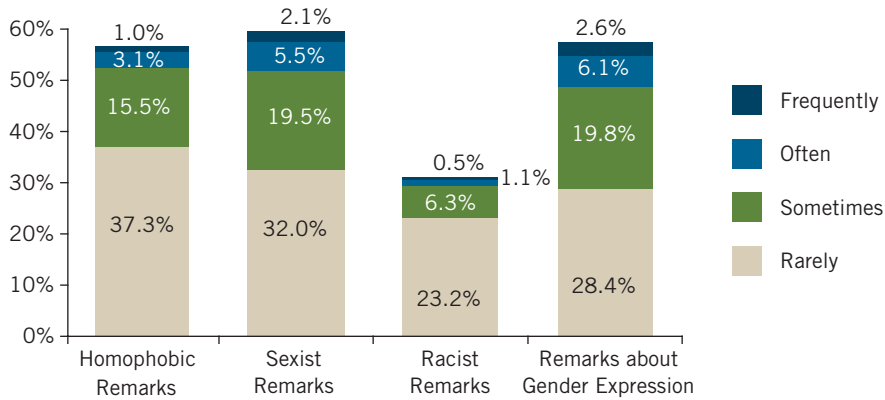
Figure 1.7 Presence of School Staff When Biased Remarks Were Made

Legend:
- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

	Homophobic Remarks	Sexist Remarks	Racist Remarks	Remarks about Gender Expression
Always	5.7%	5.9%	5.9%	4.6%
Most of the time	31.1%	25.6%	18.7%	21.6%
Some of the time	48.4%	53.4%	49.8%	50.4%
Never	14.7%	15.1%	25.6%	23.3%
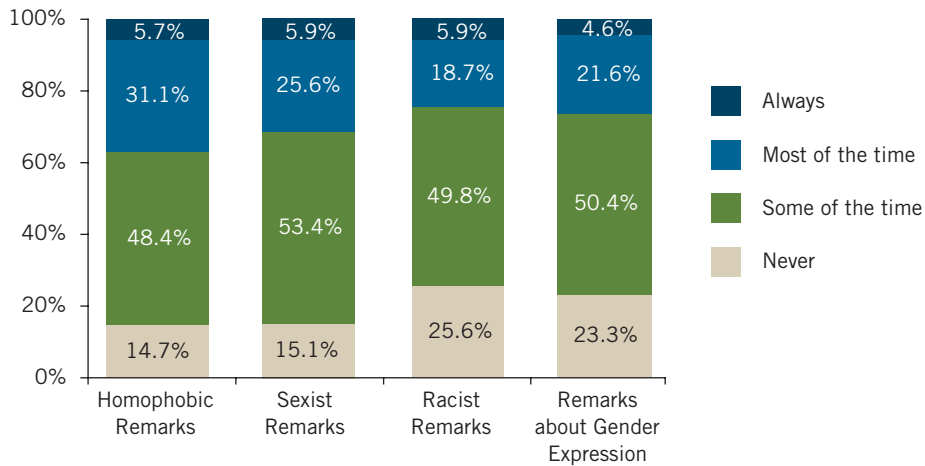
Figure 1.8 Frequency of Intervention by Teachers or Other School Staff When Biased Remarks Were Made

Legend:
- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Never

	Homophobic Remarks	Sexist Remarks	Racist Remarks	Remarks about Gender Expression
Always	3.6%	9.9%	22.0%	2.3%
Most of the time	11.8%	23.6%	32.7%	9.0%
Some of the time	42.0%	45.4%	33.7%	39.8%
Never	42.5%	21.1%	11.7%	48.9%
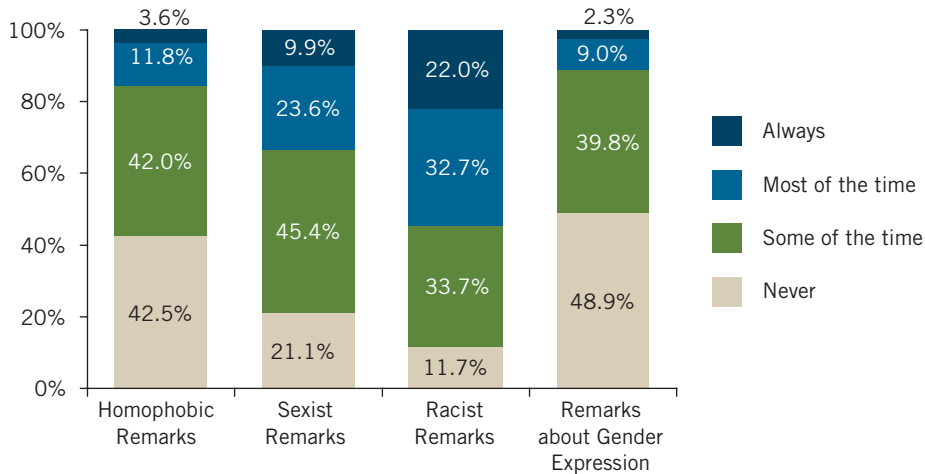
Infrequent intervention by school authorities when hearing biased language in school may send a message to students that such language is tolerated. Furthermore, school staff may themselves be modeling poor behavior and legitimizing the use of homophobic language given that a majority of students reported hearing school staff make homophobic remarks. The fact that so many students reported biased remarks being made in the presence of school personnel would seem to support these points.

Intervention by Students. One would expect teachers and school staff to bear the responsibility for addressing problems of biased language in school. However, students may at times intervene when hearing biased language as well, especially given that school personnel are often not present during such times. The willingness of students to intervene may be another indicator of school climate. As shown in Figure 1.9, few students reported that their peers intervened always or most of the time when hearing homophobic remarks (6.1%) or negative comments about someone's gender expression (6.2%). Although intervention by students when hearing racist or sexist remarks was also uncommon, students were most likely to report that their peers intervened when hearing these types of remarks.[19] Almost a fifth of students reported that other students intervened most of the time or always when hearing racist remarks (18.5%) or sexist remarks (16.3%).

Figure 1.9 Frequency of Intervention by Students When Biased Remarks Were Made

	Homophobic Remarks	Sexist Remarks	Racist Remarks	Remarks about Gender Expression
Always	0.9%	2.8%	4.1%	1.1%
Most of the time	5.2%	13.5%	14.4%	5.1%
Some of the time	39.1%	44.5%	40.2%	39.8%
Never	54.8%	39.1%	41.4%	54.0%
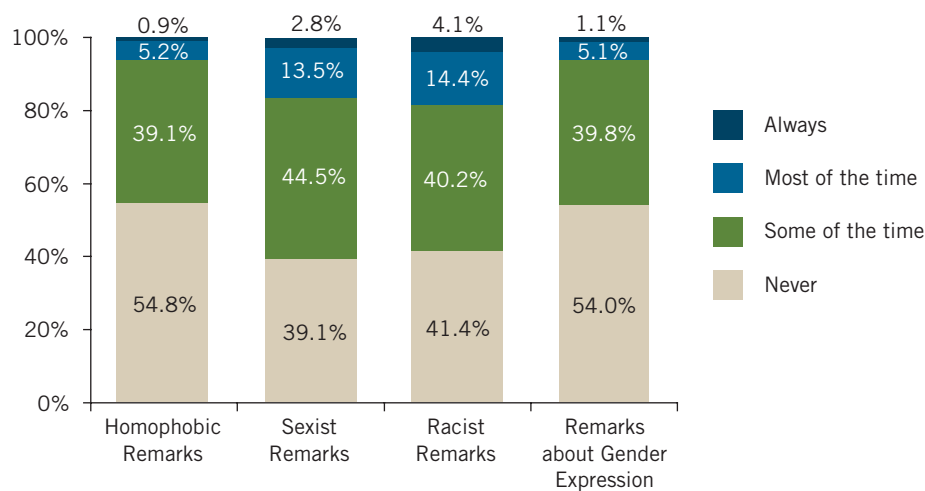
School Safety

Key Findings

- 6 in 10 LGBT students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; 4 in 10 reported feeling unsafe at school because of how they expressed their gender.

- Nearly one third of students missed classes or entire days of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.

- LGBT students reported most commonly avoiding school bathrooms and locker rooms because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable in those spaces.

Overall Safety at School

For LGBT youth, school can be an unsafe place for a variety of reasons. Students in our survey were asked whether they ever felt unsafe at school during the past year because of a personal characteristic, including: sexual orientation, gender, gender expression (i.e., how traditionally "masculine" or "feminine" they were in appearance or behavior), and actual or perceived race or ethnicity, disability, or religion. Over two-thirds of LGBT students (71.1%) felt unsafe at school in the past year because of at least one of these personal characteristics. As shown in Figure 1.10, LGBT students most commonly felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and gender expression:

- 6 in 10 students (63.5%) reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation; and
- 4 in 10 students (43.9%) felt unsafe because of how they expressed their gender.

Almost a fifth (16.3%) of students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their religion, and students who identified their religion as something other than a Christian denomination (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Hindu) or who said they did not have a religion were more likely to feel unsafe at school for this reason.[20] Sizable percentages of LGBT students reported feeling unsafe because of their race/ethnicity (8.1%) or gender (12.5%; see also Figure 1.10). In addition, 6.2% of students felt unsafe at school in the past year because of an actual or perceived disability.

More than one tenth (14.9%) of survey participants reported feeling unsafe at school for other reasons not included in the listed characteristics and were asked to describe why they felt unsafe. Of these additional responses, the most common reason related to aspects of physical appearance, such as body weight (22.6% of those who felt unsafe for a reason not listed, or 3.4% of all students in the survey). Other students said they felt unsafe because of mental health issues (e.g., "social anxiety") or because of their personality or political views.

In the 2011 National School Climate Survey, we also asked students if there were particular spaces at school that they avoided specifically because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. As shown in Figure 1.11, school locker rooms and bathrooms were most commonly avoided, with a little more than a third of students avoiding each of these spaces because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (39.0% and 38.8%, respectively). Nearly one third of LGBT students said that they avoided Physical Education (P.E.) or gym classes (32.5%), and more than one fifth avoided school athletic fields or facilities (22.8%) or the school cafeteria or lunchroom (20.5%) because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. In addition, school buses (15.3%), school hallways (14.8%), and areas outside of school buildings (11.0%), such as parking lots or athletic fields, were identified as unsafe spaces by many LGBT students. In addition, 5.9% of students reported that also they felt unsafe or uncomfortable somewhere else in school. Among students who indicated a space not listed, 42.8% (2.5% of all survey participants) mentioned

Figure 1.10 Percentage of Students Who Felt Unsafe at School

"Do you feel unsafe at school because of..."

Category	Percentage
Sexual Orientation	63.5%
Gender Expression	43.9%
Religion	16.3%
Gender	12.5%
Race or Ethnicity	8.1%
Disability	6.2%
Other Reasons	14.9%
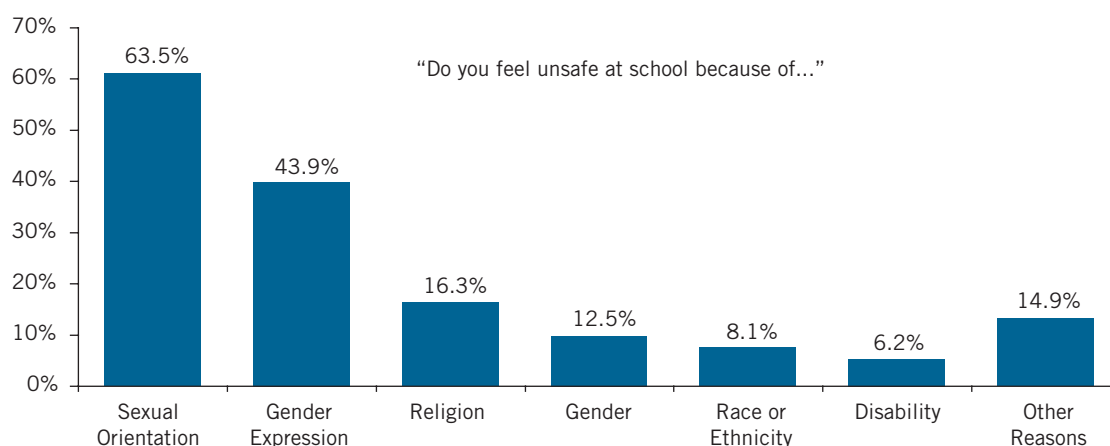
classrooms in general or specific classes (e.g., math class) as spaces they avoided. More than a tenth of students (12.4% of those who indicated a space not listed, or 0.7% of all survey participants) mentioned avoiding spaces where certain groups of students frequented (e.g., "gathering places of homophobes near and around school"). Other responses included avoiding certain offices (e.g., "the main office") or specific places at school like the library or stairwells.

Feeling unsafe or uncomfortable at school can negatively affect the ability of students to thrive and succeed academically, particularly if it results in avoiding classes or missing entire days of school. When asked about absenteeism, nearly one third of LGBT students reported skipping a class at least once in the past month (29.8%) or missing at least one entire day of school in the past month (31.8%) because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (see Figures 1.12 and 1.13).

Figure 1.11 Percentage of Students Who Avoided Spaces at School Because They Felt Unsafe or Uncomfortable

- Locker Rooms: 39.0%
- Bathrooms: 38.8%
- Cafeteria or Lunch Room: 20.5%
- Hallways: 14.8%
- School Athletic Fields or Facilities: 22.8%
- School Buses: 15.3%
- Physical Education (P.E.) or Gym Class: 32.5%
- School Grounds (e.g., parking lots): 11.0%
- Other Spaces: 5.9%
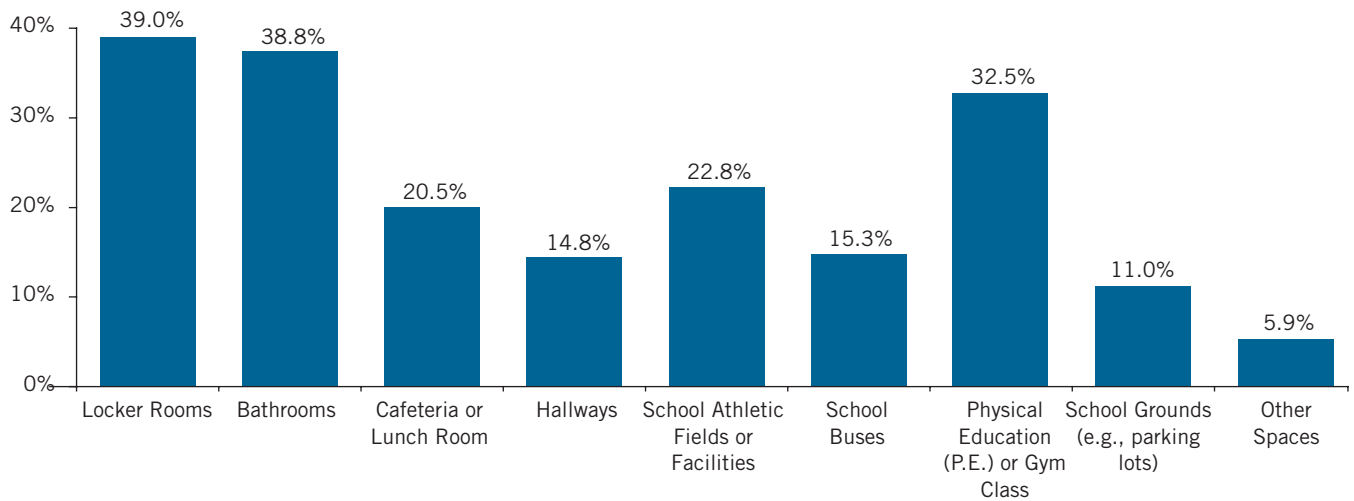
Figure 1.12 Frequency of Missing Classes in the Past Month Because of Feeling Unsafe or Uncomfortable

- 6 or More Times 5.6%
- 4 or 5 Times 3.7%
- 2 or 3 Times 11.3%
- 1 Time 9.2%
- 0 Times 70.3%
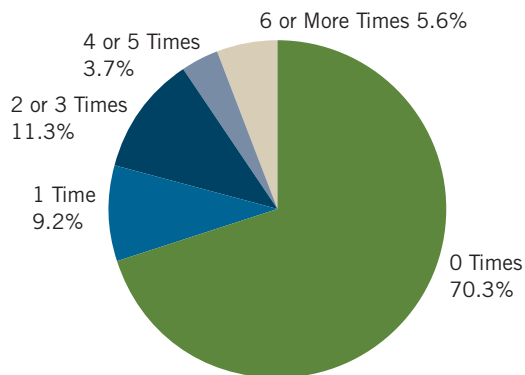
Figure 1.13 Frequency of Missing Days of School in the Past Month Because of Feeling Unsafe or Uncomfortable
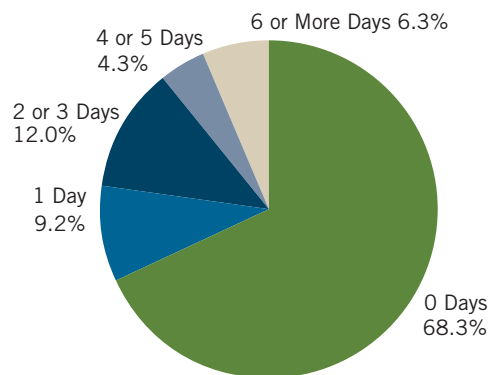
- 6 or More Days 6.3%
- 4 or 5 Days 4.3%
- 2 or 3 Days 12.0%
- 1 Day 9.2%
- 0 Days 68.3%

Experiences of Harassment and Assault at School

Key Findings

- Sexual orientation and gender expression were the most common reasons LGBT students were harassed or assaulted at school.

- More than 80% of students reported being verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened) at school because of their sexual orientation; nearly two thirds were verbally harassed because of their gender expression.

- 4 in 10 students reported being physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) at school because of their sexual orientation.

- 1 in 5 five students reported being physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon) at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender.

- Relational aggression (i.e., being deliberately excluded by peers or mean rumors being spread) was reported by the vast majority of students.

- More than half of the students reported experiencing some form of electronic harassment ("cyberbullying") in the past year.

We asked survey participants how often ("never," "rarely," "sometimes," "often," or "frequently") they had been verbally harassed, physically harassed, or physically assaulted at school during the past year specifically because of a personal characteristic, including sexual orientation, gender, gender expression (e.g., not acting "masculine" or "feminine" enough), and actual or perceived race or ethnicity, disability, or religion.

Verbal Harassment

Students in our survey were asked how often in the past year they had been verbally harassed (e.g., being called names or threatened) at school specifically because of personal characteristics. An overwhelming majority (92.3%) reported being verbally harassed at some point in the past year, and 48.9% experienced high frequencies (often or frequently) of verbal harassment. LGBT students most commonly reported experiencing verbal harassment at school because of their sexual orientation or how they expressed their gender (see Figure 1.14):[21]

- The vast majority of LGBT students (81.9%) had been verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation; a third (33.8%) experienced this harassment often or frequently; and

- Almost two thirds of LGBT students (63.9%) were verbally harassed at school because of their gender expression; a quarter (24.6%) reported being harassed for this reason often or frequently.

Although not as commonly reported, many LGBT students were harassed in school because of their gender—almost half (47.0%) had been verbally harassed in the past year for this reason; about a tenth (10.3%) often or frequently. In addition, as shown in Figure 1.14, sizable percentages of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed at school because of their actual or perceived religion (38.5%), race or ethnicity (29.8%), or a disability (17.4%).

Physical Harassment

With regard to physical harassment, almost half (44.7%) of LGBT students had been physically harassed (e.g., shoved or pushed) at some point at school during the past year. Their experiences of physical harassment followed a pattern similar to verbal harassment—students most commonly reported being physically harassed at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression (see Figure 1.15):[22]

- 38.3% of LGBT students had been physically harassed at school because of their sexual orientation, and 11.2% reported that this harassment occurred often or frequently; and

- A little more than a quarter (27.1%) had been physically harassed at school because of their gender expression, and 7.9% experienced this often or frequently.

With regard to other personal characteristics, about a fifth (18.3%) had been physically harassed because of their gender, a tenth because of their actual or perceived religion (9.7%), 8% because of their race/ethnicity, and 6.2% because of an actual or perceived disability (see also Figure 1.15).

Figure 1.14 Frequency of Verbal Harassment in the Past School Year
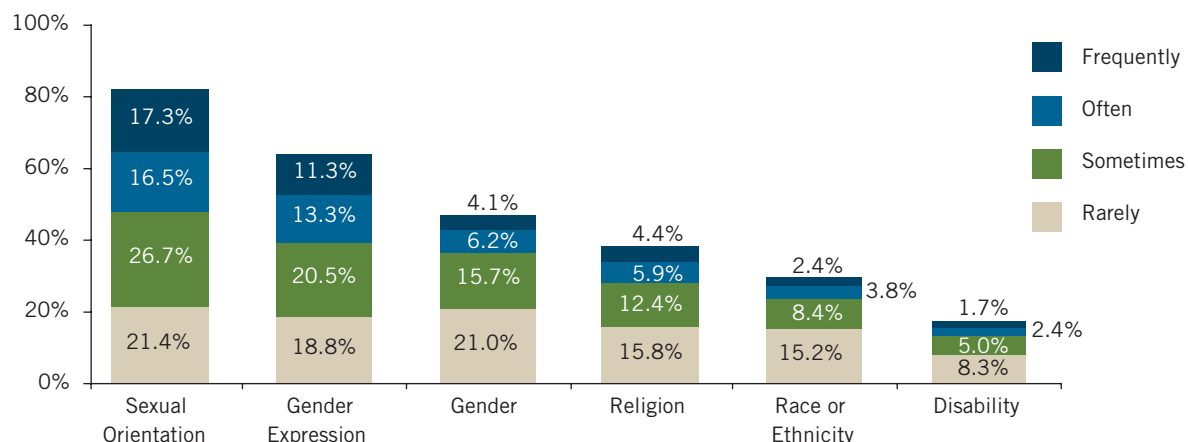
Physical Assault

LGBT students were less likely to report experiencing physical assault (e.g., punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon) at school than verbal or physical harassment, which is not surprising given the more severe nature of assault. Nonetheless, 21.2% of students in our survey were assaulted at school during the past year, again most commonly because of their sexual orientation, gender expression, or gender (see Figure 1.16):

- 18.3% of LGBT students were assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation;

- 12.4% were assaulted at school because of how they expressed their gender; and

- 7.7% of students were assaulted at school because of their gender.

Physical assault based on actual or perceived religion (4.3%), race/ethnicity (3.3%) or disability (2.9%) was less commonly reported (see also Figure 1.16).[23]

Experiences of Other Types of Harassment and Negative Events

LGBT students may be harassed or experience other negative events at school for reasons that are not clearly related to sexual orientation or another personal characteristic. In our survey, we also asked students how often they experienced these other types of events in the past year, such as being sexually harassed or deliberately excluded by their peers.

Figure 1.15 Frequency of Physical Harassment in the Past School Year
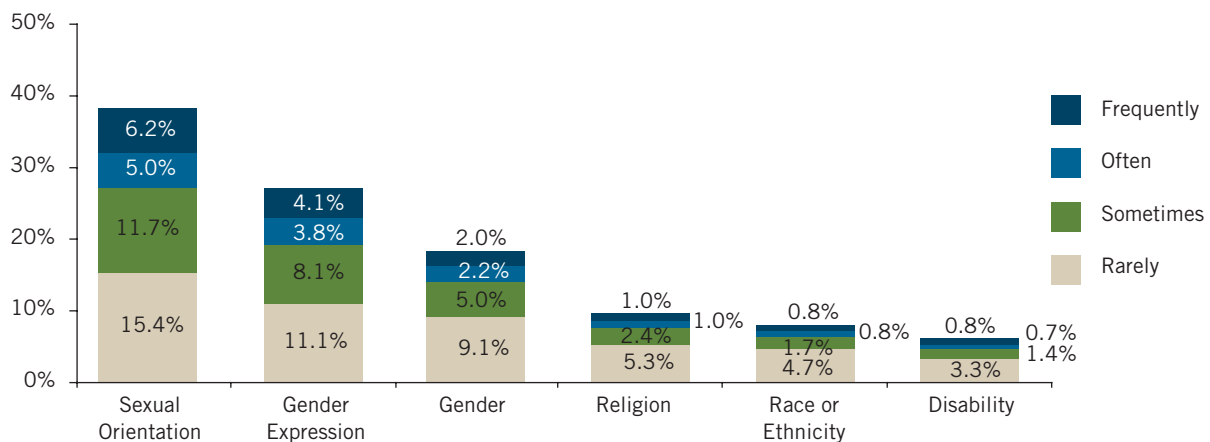
Figure 1.16 Frequency of Physical Assault in the Past School Year
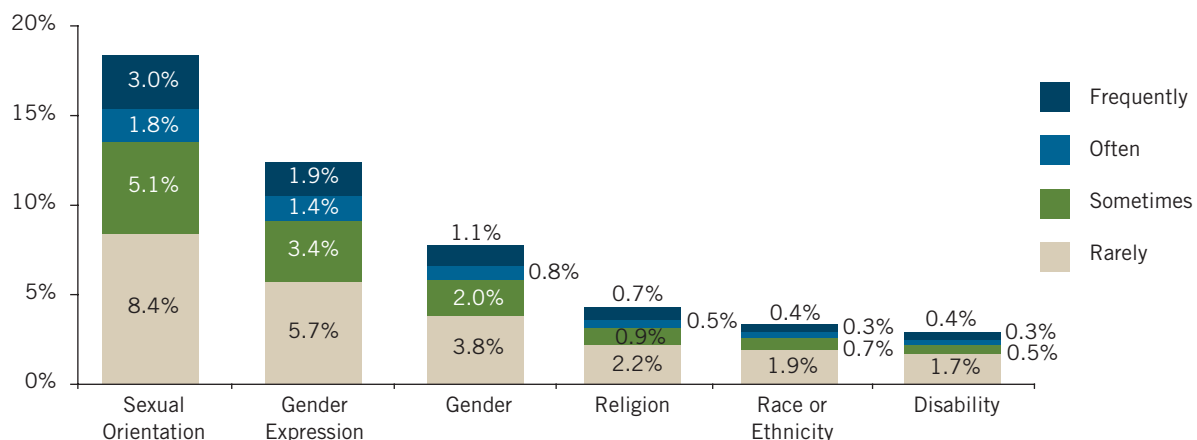
"Bullying in our school is mostly verbal, but it hurts just as much as any physical pain... Teachers rarely do anything about it."

Sexual Harassment. Harassment experienced by LGBT students in school is often sexual in nature, particularly harassment experienced by lesbian and bisexual young women and by transgender youth.[24] Survey participants were asked how often they had experienced sexually harassment at school, such as unwanted touching or sexual remarks directed at them. As shown in Figure 1.17, about two thirds (64.4%) of LGBT students had been sexually harassed at school, and nearly a fifth (18.7 %) reported that such events occurred often or frequently.

Relational Aggression. Research on school-based bullying and harassment often focuses on physical or overt acts of aggressive behavior; however, it is also important to examine relational forms of aggression that can damage peer relationships, such as spreading rumors or excluding students from peer activities. We asked participants how often they experience two common forms of relational aggression: being purposefully excluded by peers and being the target of mean rumors or lies. As illustrated in Figure 1.17, the vast majority

of LGBT students (89.5%) in our survey reported that they had felt deliberately excluded or "left out" by other students, and nearly half (49.1%) experienced this often or frequently. Most (84.0%) had mean rumors or lies told about them at school, and over a third (39.7%) experienced this often or frequently.

Property Theft or Damage at School. Having one's personal property damaged or stolen is yet another dimension of a hostile school climate for students. Almost half (47.7%) of LGBT students reported that their property had been stolen or purposefully damaged by other students at school in the past year, and about tenth (10.8%) said that such events had occurred often or frequently (see Figure 1.17).

Electronic Harassment or "Cyberbullying." Electronic harassment (often called "cyberbullying") is using an electronic medium, such as a cell phone or Internet communications, to threaten or harm others. In recent years there has been much attention given to this type of harassment, as access to the Internet, cellular phones, and other electronic forms of communication has increased for many youth.[25] When asked how often they were harassed or threatened by students at their school via electronic mediums (e.g., text messages, emails, instant messages, or postings on Internet sites such as Facebook), a little more than half (55.2%) of LGBT students reported experiencing this type of harassment in the past year. Almost a fifth (17.5%) had experienced it often or frequently (see also Figure 1.17).

Figure 1.17 Frequency of Other Types of Harassment in School in the Past Year
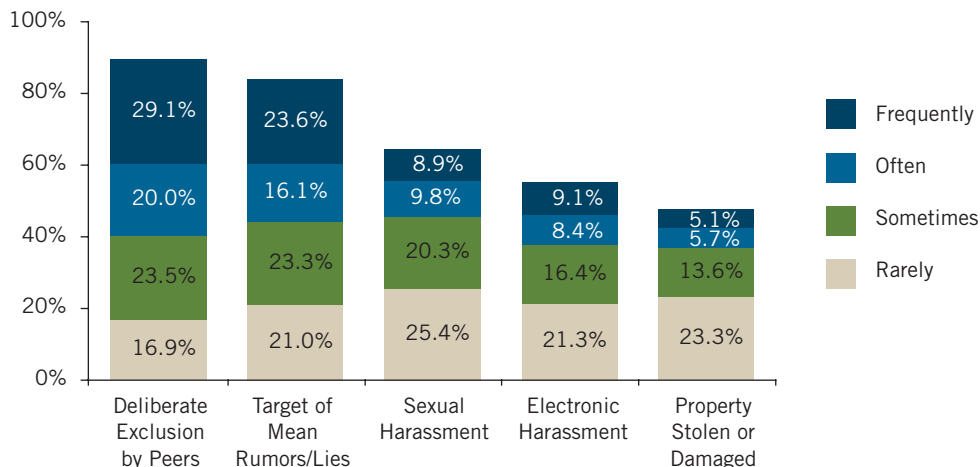
Reporting of School-Based Harassment and Assault

Key Findings

- The majority of LGBT students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident(s) to either school staff or a family member.

- Among students who did not report being harassed or assaulted to school staff, the most common reasons given for not reporting were doubts that staff would effectively address the situation or fears that reporting would make the situation worse in some way.

- Only a third of students who reported incidents of victimization to school personnel said that staff effectively addressed the problem. In fact, when asked to describe how staff responded to reported incidents of victimization, students most commonly said that staff did nothing.

In our survey, we asked those students who had experienced harassment or assault in the past school year how often they had reported the incidents to school staff. As shown in Figure 1.18, the majority of these students never reported incidents to staff (60.4%), and few students indicated that they regularly reported incidents of harassment or assault (13.7% reporting "most of the time" or "always" to staff).

Given that family members may be able to advocate on behalf of the student with school personnel, we also asked students if they reported harassment or assault to a family member (i.e., to their parent or guardian or to another family member), and less than half of the students said that they had told a family member (see also Figure 1.18). Students who had reported incidents to a family member were asked how often a family member had talked to school staff about the incident, and about half (51.9%) said that the family member had ever addressed the issue with school staff (see Figure 1.19).

Reasons for Not Reporting Harassment or Assault

Reporting incidents of harassment and assault to school staff may be an intimidating task for students. In addition, there is no guarantee that reporting incidents to school personnel will result in effective intervention. Students who did not tell school personnel about their experiences with harassment or assault were asked why they did not do so (see Table 1.1). The most common themes among these responses were: 1) they doubted that

staff would effectively address the situation; 2) they feared making the situation worse; 3) they were concerned about staff person's reaction; 4) they viewed their experience as too minor to report; 5) they reported other ways of dealing with being victimized in school, such as choosing to handle the situation on their own; and 6) they experienced obstacles to reporting.

Doubted that Effective Intervention Would Occur. As shown in Table 1.1, the most common reason students did not report harassment was because they doubted school staff intervention would be effective or worthwhile (37.9%). A quarter (25.7%) of students believed that either nothing or nothing effective would be done to address the situation even if they had reported it.

> *They wouldn't have done anything, and the teachers that would've wanted to help…what could they have done to help? (Female student, 10th grade, TX)*

> *They wouldn't do anything because it's part of the school's environment. People in my town actually think it's funny when someone harasses and assaults people for being different. If you're different it's seen as your fault for whatever happens to you. (Transgender student, 9th grade, TX)*

A number of students specifically expressed doubt that they would be taken seriously or believed by teachers or other school staff if they were to report incidents of victimization:

Figure 1.18 Frequency of Reporting Incidents of Harassment and Assault
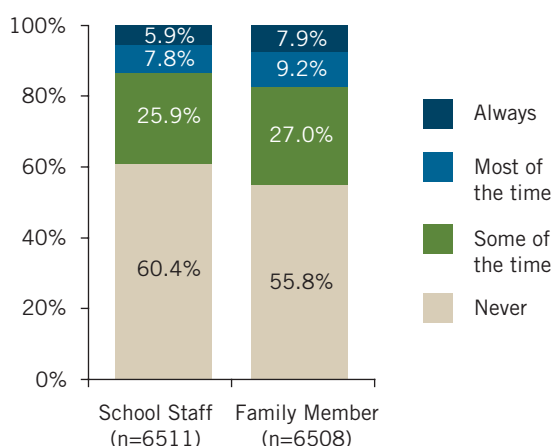
Figure 1.19 Frequency of Intervention by Students' Family Members (n=2867)
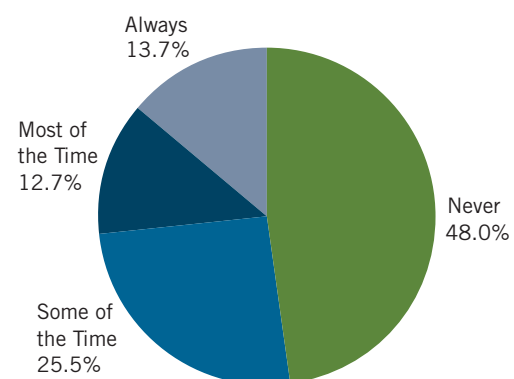
No one would take my complaints seriously; there would be no point in telling a teacher, "someone in the hallway called me a faggot and pushed me." (Male student, 12th grade, OH)

The staff doesn't take harassment seriously. I come from a small town in Illinois where the mindset is to just suck it up and try to fit in. (Student with "other" gender identity, 12th grade, IL)

More than a tenth (12.2%) of students who doubted that effective intervention would occur felt it was "not worth it" or pointless to report. For most of them, these feelings were a result of previous, unsuccessful experiences of reporting harassment:

[Because of] the lack of action [for] a [prior] complaint. If they won't do anything the first few times, why would they bother for the later times? (Female student, 11th grade, AZ)

Table 1.1 Reasons Students Did Not Report Incidents of Harassment or Assault to School Staff (n=5581)		
	students reporting specific response	
	%	number
Doubted that Effective Intervention Would Occur	**37.9%**	**(n=2114)**
Believed nothing would be done to address the situation	25.7%	(n=1433)
Reporting was not worth it (e.g., pointless, reporting hasn't been effective in the past)	12.2%	(n=681)
Feared Making the Situation Worse	**28.7%**	**(n=1598)**
Afraid of the situation getting worse/making it worse	13.8%	(n=769)
Concerns about retaliation	6.0%	(n=333)
Did not want to be a "snitch" or "tattle-tale"	4.5%	(n=253)
Confidentiality issues (e.g., fear of being "outed")	4.4%	(n=243)
Concerned About Staff Members' Reactions	**15.5%**	**(n=872)**
Students felt too embarrassed/uncomfortable/ashamed	6.7%	(n=376)
Teachers or other school staff are homophobic	2.6%	(n=146)
Feared being judged or treated differently	2.1%	(n=117)
Teachers participate in harassment	<1%	(n=34)
Concerned that teachers would not understand	<1%	(n=33)
Did not trust staff member	<1%	(n=40)
Uncertain about staff reaction	<1%	(n=7)
Perceived Harassment to be a Minor Problem	**19.5%**	**(n=1089)**
Not a big deal/Not serious enough	18.6%	(n=1039)
Accustomed to it (e.g., harassment is part of life)	<1%	(n=50)
Students Addressed Matters on Their Own	**7.9%**	**(n=439)**
Experienced Barriers to Reporting (e.g., lack of evidence)	**2.4%**	**(n=134)**
Other Reasons for Not Reporting (e.g., unspecified fear, concerned about getting in trouble)	**7.5%**	**(n=418)**

"Teachers don't do anything about it. [The] PE teacher just told me to 'man up' and the other students will leave me alone. The English teacher just told me to stay away from them and the principal wouldn't even talk to me."

Feared Making the Situation Worse. More than one quarter of students (28.7%) mentioned fears that reporting incidents of harassment and assault to school personnel would exacerbate the situation, as depicted in Table 1.1. Of these students, more than one tenth (13.8%) generally mentioned that the reporting process itself could make the situation worse. These students feared what would happen if they told a staff person, and thus, they did not want to deal with the consequences of reporting. Several of these students did not want to draw attention to themselves or to "start trouble":

Because I didn't want to cause even more trouble with the bully… (Male student, 10th grade, CT)

I don't want anyone to hate me if I were to get them in trouble. High school is tough enough. I don't need everyone in it against me. (Female student, 11th grade, FL)

Some students (6.0%) expressed explicit safety concerns, such as a fear of retaliation, often in the form of physical violence:

Because those people that did harass me threatened to either make my life hell (which they were already doing) or to kill me. (Student with "other" gender identity, 8th grade, ID)

I was afraid of telling because if I would have told I most likely would have been jumped/beat up after school so I never did. I didn't want to be hurt. (Male student, 11th grade, CA)

A smaller number of students (4.5%) wanted to avoid being labeled a "snitch" or "tattle-tale" because the accompanying peer disapproval and added harassment would make the situation worse:

I was afraid of being singled out even more amongst my peers for being a 'tattle tale.' That would have led to mare harassment and

I couldn't have dealt with that… (Female student, 10th grade, WV)

I was scared… People always threatened me by saying "Snitches get stitches." Or you'd get bullied even worse for being a nark. (Female student, 11th grade, VA)

Other students (4.4%) did not report incidents of harassment or assault to school authorities due to concerns about confidentiality. Specifically, many of these students were concerned with coming out to school personnel and about potentially being "outed" to family members or the school community:

Sometimes I was afraid that the teachers would not want to do anything about it because I am gay, or, because I did not want to tell them why I was being harassed (because of my sexuality). (Female student, 8th grade, LA)

Concerned about Staff Members' Reactions. More than a tenth (15.5%) of students expressed concerns about how teachers would react to them because of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression if they reported the harassment or assault. Of these students, some (6.7%) expressed feeling too uncomfortable or embarrassed to report the incident. The majority of students in this group simply said, "it is embarrassing" and "too uncomfortable [to report]." A few students provided lengthier answers, describing discomfort discussing issues related to their sexual orientation and gender identity:

Teachers and staff are not educated when it comes to a transgender student and therefore do nothing about it, and most of the time they also question my gender and make me embarrassed, and everyone thinks I'm a freak of nature. (Transgender student, 11th grade, IL)

I am bisexual and I am very self-conscious, so I do not feel comfortable sharing that with school staff or teachers. (Female student, 10th grade, CA)

A number of students (2.6%) were deterred from reporting victimization because they thought that school personnel were homophobic and therefore would not be helpful. Students mentioned not only teachers but also school administrators who were homophobic. Among these responses, some students reported a general sense that staff were homophobic but some also specifically mentioned past negative experiences:

I am aware [that] some teachers and staff do not like LBGTs, so I do not feel safe saying anything about me being bullied about it or anything else. (Student with "other" gender identity, 11th grade, GA)

Our school is very insensitive towards harassment issues towards GLBTIQ youth. I once tried to talk to our principal about the homophobic language rampant in our schools but he said he couldn't help because it would be too controversial. (Female student, 11th grade, MN)

A smaller number of students (2.1%) expressed concerns that they would be judged or treated differently by school personnel if they were to report incidents of harassment and assault:

Most teachers at my school are men. They say I set myself up because I dress in guys clothes (I'm female) so it's my fault. They say I'm too sensitive about it or that I need to stop wearing rainbow items. (Female student, 11th grade, MA)

I didn't want the administration to make assumptions about my sexuality and then judge me on that. I already get enough judgment from students. (Male student, 12th grade, DE)

A number of students (about 1%) reported that school staff were actually perpetrators of harassment, potentially leaving students to feel there is no recourse for incidents of victimization:

I'm harassed because I'm gay and very open with it, and everyone assumes that since everyone knows that, it's fair game to tease me,

including the teachers. (Female student, 11th grade, GA)

I feel that their beliefs may cloud their judgment; it was once a teacher (sub) who harassed my friend and me on [the] Day of Silence. (Female student, 11th grade, NV)

These responses are particularly disturbing and underscore the considerably negative school climate many LGBT students experience. Victimization by teachers, especially when witnessed by other students, can cause additional harm by sending a message in the classroom or school community that harassment is acceptable. Harassment of students by teachers also serves as a reminder that safer schools efforts must address all members of the school community and not just the student body.

Students also reported being concerned about school staff not understanding the situation and a slightly smaller number expressed concerns about trusting school personnel:

They obviously don't understand because they don't call me by the right name or pronouns. (Student with "other" gender identity, 9th grade, WA)

I didn't trust the teachers/staff. (Male student, 8th grade, MI).

A handful of students simply mentioned being uncertain about staff reaction as a concern for not always reporting incidents of harassment and assault:

I just felt scared, alone, and if I told them what would they think? (Male student, 9th grade, CT)

This response illustrates the importance of school personnel taking steps that let students know they will not tolerate anti-LGBT harassment and that

"It would mean that they'd notify my parents, and I don't want them finding out I'm trans."

they are supportive of LGBT students. If school staff send the message that they will respond to incidents of victimization, students may be more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault. In order to create safer school environments for LGBT students, it is crucial that teachers, social workers, and all other school personnel receive adequate training and support about how to effectively address the victimization that so many of these youth experience.

Perceived Harassment to be a Minor Problem. About a fifth of students (18.6%) explained that they did not report incidents of victimization to school personnel because they considered it to not be serious enough to them, or because they had grown accustomed to being bullied:

> I just brushed it off. It's not a big deal. Life will always have bullies. (Male, 8th grade, CT)

> It wasn't going to get physical or anything, so there wouldn't be any point in reporting it. (Female student, 9th grade, CA)

> You tend to get used to it when you live in the Bible belt. (Female student, 10th grade, OK)

Because we lack specific details about the actual incidents of victimization, we cannot examine whether only those events that were truly minor were perceived as "not a big deal." We did find that students who reported that the harassment they experienced was "not a big deal" did have lower levels of victimization overall than other students.[26] Nevertheless, these students did experience victimization in school, and for some, the victimization included physical assault—arguably a "big deal" under any circumstances.[27]

Additional Ways Students Dealt With Being Victimized in School. We found that almost one tenth (7.9%) of students said that they handled incidents of harassment or assault themselves. Many respondents simply stated that they "took care of it," and some emphasized their self-reliance in handling the situation:

> I dealt with it myself. I did not want to worry others, so I took care of it. (Transgender student, 11th grade, CA)

> I decided to resolve the manner myself by confronting the individual. (Male student, 12th grade, MA)

A few students reported that when it comes to dealing with incidents of harassment and assault, they simply ignored the incident or tried not to allow it to bother them:

> I mostly ignored the remarks and after a while I didn't hear them anymore. (Male student, 10th grade, NJ)

> I thought it was always best to just ignore it—if the bullies don't get a reaction, maybe they'd stop. (Female student, 8th grade, TX)

It is possible that some students are truly not bothered by the harassment they experience. It is also possible that appearing unaffected is a coping mechanism used by students to protect themselves from feeling victimized. Further research is needed to explore the reasons why some students are able to ignore harassment, and why this response may be more appealing than reporting the harassment. It is also important to learn about the possible effects ignoring the harassment may have on a student's psychological well-being.

A handful of students specifically mentioned resorting to physical retaliation to deal with victimization. For example, a female student in 11th grade from Washington said: "I handled it myself sometimes. Physically unfortunately." Although it is troubling that any student would resort to physical retaliation to deal with victimization, the number of students who indicated doing so was quite small.

Obstacles Encountered in Reporting Harassment or Assault. A small percentage of students (2.4%) cited obstacles that prevented them from reporting incidents of harassment and assault, such as not having proof or evidence of being victimized. Often, these responses dealt with not being able to identify the attackers:

> Generally I don't report an issue because I don't know the person who made a derogatory comment. (Transgender student, 10th grade, NH)

"Sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression are not protected by the school's anti-harassment policies, so they wouldn't do anything."

I didn't know the person/people who harassed me or even what they looked like because I tried not to make eye contact while walking past, so [that] they wouldn't harass me further. So even if I had said anything, nothing really could have been done... (Student with "other" gender identity, 11th grade, FL)

Some students mentioned that not having a policy that protects students based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression served as a barrier to reporting incidents of harassment:

It happens every day. It wears on the mind, and it's very hard for there to be any punishment for the student since there's no policy for sexual orientation or gender identity at our school. (Male student, 11th grade, IN)

These responses highlight the potential consequences of school harassment/assault policies that do not enumerate sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Some students who have been victimized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression may not report incidents of assault or harassment because they believe that, without a formal process in place, nothing will be done to ameliorate the situation. Adopting and enforcing school policies that specifically prohibit harassment and assault based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression could reduce barriers to reporting anti-LGBT harassment.

In order to create a safe learning environment for all students, schools should work toward appropriately and effectively responding to incidents of victimization. Nearly all of the reasons given by students for not reporting victimization could be addressed through more intentional policies and practices. School staff should respond to each incident brought to their attention, as well as inform victims of the action that was taken. Training all members of the school community to be sensitive to LGBT student issues and effectively responding to bullying and harassment could increase the likelihood of reporting by students who are harassed or assaulted at school. Such efforts could, in turn, improve school climate for all students.

Students' Reports on the Nature of School Staff's Responses to Harassment and Assault

Although most students did not report incidents of harassment and assault to school personnel, more than a third (39.6%) of the students in the survey had done so (see Figure 1.18). In order to examine staff members' responses to incidents of harassment and assault, we asked students who had reported incidents to describe how the staff member handled the incident (see Table 1.2). The most common responses of staff were: 1) did nothing in response; 2) talked to the perpetrator about the incident; 3) disciplined the perpetrator; and 4) filed a report of the incident or referred it to another staff person.

Did Nothing. The most common (29.8%) response from students was that school personnel did nothing to address incidents of harassment or assault:

They did nothing. That's why I stopped even going to the office and trying to tell them what someone did. They act like it was no big deal. "Boys being boys" or "Girls being girls," they would say. (Female student, 10th grade, IA)

Several students (3.1%) reported that staff told them to ignore incidents of harassment or assault:

They minimized the incident and told me that nothing could be done and that I should ignore it. (Male student, 11th grade, OR)

They said ignore them which is hard because the coach doesn't do anything so I'm terrified of gym. (Male student, 8th grade, FL)

A smaller number of students (1.4%) indicated that staff simply ignored their complaint:

Depending on the teacher, either they did something or they ignored it altogether. 90% ignored it. (Female student, 12th grade, CA)

They usually just ignore it or say that they will speak to the student or students involved and yet it keeps happening. (Female student, 11th grade, NC)

As discussed in the previous section, one of the reasons that students did not report incidents was a concern that staff would blame them because of their sexual orientation or gender expression. Results from these open-ended responses from students corroborate that notion: some students (2.4%) were blamed for the victimization that they experienced because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or expression:

[They] said I should drop out and get my GED or "be less gay." (Male student, 12th grade, IN)

They talked to the people that were doing it.... it never helped. Then eventually the assistant principal was like, "I can't help you, you chose what you want to be. We can't help you because you chose to be this." (Female student, 9th grade, SC)

Other students reported that nothing was done because a staff person did not witness the incident:

[School staff] told me I needed more proof, multiple witnesses or a log of multiple events before they would do anything/believe me. (Male student, 12th grade, MI)

Table 1.2 School Staff Members' Responses to Students' Reports of Harassment or Assault (n=2321)		
	students reporting specific response	
	%	**number**
Did Nothing	**36.7%**	**(n=876)**
Nothing/no action taken	29.8%	(n=692)
Told to ignore it	3.1%	(n=73)
Staff ignored them/it	1.4%	(n=32)
The reporting student was blamed	2.4%	(n=79)
Talked to Perpetrator/Told Perpetrator to Stop	**25.0%**	**(n=576)**
Disciplined the Perpetrator (e.g., detention, suspension)	**14.5%**	**(n=337)**
Filed a Report of the Incident or Referred it to Another Staff Person	**11.2%**	**(n=259)**
Took Another Type of Action (e.g., contacted parents, non-specific action - "took care of the situation")	**6.9%**	**(n=160)**
Promised to Look Into or Address the Situation	**8.4%**	**(n=195)**
Offered Support	**4.5%**	**(n=104)**
Encouraged/Required the Reporting Student and Perpetrator to Talk to Each Other (e.g., peer mediation)	**1.6%**	**(n=36)**
Separated the Reporting Student and Perpetrator	**3.7%**	**(n=86)**
Investigated the Incident	**0.4%**	**(n=10)**
Disciplined the Reporting Student	**1.2%**	**(n=20)**
Attempted to Educate Student(s)	**0.8%**	**(n=19)**
Other Responses	**5.0%**	**(n=115)**

Spoke to the Perpetrator. One quarter of students (25.0%) reported that staff responded to reports of harassment by talking to the perpetrator and, in some cases, ordering the perpetrator to stop the behavior. Some of these students also commented on the outcome of the intervention. Although some students reported that this intervention put a stop to the harassment, others said that the intervention was ineffective because the harassment either continued or became worse:

> She called the students harassing me down to the office and talked with them. It didn't change a thing. In fact, it made things worse. (Female student, 9th grade, PA)

> They called the other students down and tried to get to the bottom of it. It sometimes made it worse though. (Female student, 10th grade, FL)

Disciplined the Perpetrator. Less than one fifth of students (14.5%) who reported incidents to school staff said that the perpetrator was officially disciplined. The most common types of discipline mentioned were detention, suspension, and forced apology (i.e., making the perpetrator apologize to the victim). Other forms of discipline mentioned included formal warnings, threats of more serious punishment, sending the perpetrator to the principal's office, police involvement, and, in some cases, expulsion:

> The police got involved and the student was first suspended, then an investigation ensued, and then the day the student who had been harassing me got back from their suspension, they were expelled from school. (Female student, 10th grade, CA)

It is important to note that some students who said that staff had disciplined the perpetrator did not always report that the disciplinary action was helpful. A number of students explicitly stated that disciplinary actions were ineffective:

> The child got suspended but the bullying and harassment got worse to the point where I quit reporting it. (Female student, 9th grade, AR)

This response illustrates the need for further investigation into the factors associated with effective staff intervention, as not all attempts at discipline are associated with improved outcomes for victimized students.

"They did nothing. Even though the kid emotionally traumatized me, and gave me a 6 inch scar on my arm, they did nothing."

Disciplined the Reporting Student. Some students (1.2%) reported that they were punished by school staff when they reported incidents of harassment or assault:

> I actually got in trouble for reporting it once. They told me I was starting drama. All I did was tell them that a kid called me a "fag", [and] I called him ignorant. (Student with "other" gender identity, 11th grade, ME)

Promised to Look Into or Address the Situation. About one in ten students (8.4%) indicated that staff said they would investigate or handle the matter. Several of these students said that the staff person failed to follow through with these promises:

> He said he'd take care of it and that he would contact the people's parents. He never did. (Female student, 10th grade, TX)

> They said that they would handle those responsible and that it wouldn't happen again. As far as I'm aware, no one was called into the office or confronted in any way. (Female student, 11th grade, AK)

Attempted to Educate Students. In some cases, educators used reports of harassment as a teaching opportunity, choosing to educate the perpetrators or the broader student body about bullying or prejudice. A few students (0.8%) reported that school personnel attempted to provide education about issues such as homophobia:

> The teacher I told requested that we have a video on discriminative behaviors towards sexuality. The video was played within class and things gradually got better because more teachers became active in defending others. (Male student, 12th grade, AL)

My teacher took the initiative to speak to the class, and spoke to our principal for permission to put up posters for equality. Many students tore them down, but that was expected. (Male student, 12th grade, TN)

By addressing bias-based bullying and harassment in an open forum such as a classroom or assembly, school staff may send a message to students that behavior motivated by prejudice is unacceptable and that dialogue about such behavior is important. A few students, however, reported that attempts to educate students about incidents of harassment or assault were poorly executed and, therefore, ineffective:

The teacher in charge of harassment as well as the Principal created a "Kindness campaign" board, which was a total blowout. [We] had a kindness week that did nothing, did NOT directly address the students even though it was on a large scale. (Student with "other" gender identity, 11th grade, CT)

Filed a Report of the Incident or Referred it to Another Staff Person. One in ten students (11.2%) who reported incidents of harassment and assault to staff indicated that the staff person filed an incident report or referred the incident to someone else, usually a guidance counselor or a higher authority (administrator, principal, or, in a few cases, the police). Although most students did not report whether there were further actions as a result of a report or a referral, several specifically commented that staff did not follow-up:

[The teacher] told a higher-up staff member who didn't do anything. (Male student, 10th grade, MA)

Offered Support. Several students (4.5%) indicated that when notified of an incident of harassment or assault, staff members provided some form of support, such as offering advice on how to handle incidents or providing comfort to the reporting student:

The teacher put a positive outlook to things and helped me get through the moment. They made me realize what was important at the time. (Male student, 11th grade, PA)

A few students commented that, although staff offered comfort, they did not attempt to take action against the perpetrator or address the specific incident of harassment or assault:

The teacher was very supportive, but when attempts were made to contact administrators, the admin did little to nothing (too much hassle, other things to do, etc). (Female student, 12th grade, CA)

Failing to intervene when harassment is reported, blaming students for their own victimization, and failing to appropriately address the situation are unacceptable and potentially harmful to students who experience victimization. The failure to follow through with action after making a commitment to a student to address an instance of bullying may be worse than doing nothing at all, as it may erode a student's trust in school staff. As discussed above, many of the students who did not report incidents of harassment or assault to school authorities feared exactly these negative outcomes. Thus, staff members who do not address reports of student victimization may not only fail to help the student who is victimized, but also discourage other students from reporting when they are harassed or assaulted at school.

Effectiveness of Staff Responses to Victimization

Students in our survey who said that they had reported incidents of victimization to school staff were also asked how effective staff members were in addressing the problem. As shown in Figure 1.20, only one third (37.2%) of students believed that staff responded effectively to their reports of victimization. Students were more likely to report that staff members' responses were effective when the staff spoke with the perpetrator about the

"She [school staff member] made it known to the other student and talked me through the hurt it caused me."

incident, took disciplinary action, filed a report or made a referral, or offered support.[28] Students were least likely to report that response was effective when staff did nothing to address the incident, blamed the reporting student for the incident, or only promised to look into the matter.[29]

School personnel are charged with providing a safe learning environment for all students. In this survey, the most common reason for not reporting harassment or assault was the belief that nothing would be done. Even when students reported incidents of victimization, the most common staff response mentioned was doing nothing. By not effectively addressing harassment and assault, students who are victimized are denied an adequate opportunity to learn. It is particularly troubling that some students were told by school staff that, because of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, they somehow brought the problem upon themselves. This type of

response may exacerbate an already hostile school climate for LGBT students and deter them from reporting future incidents of harassment or assault.

When students reported incidents of harassment or assault to staff members, the interventions had varying degrees of effectiveness. Given we do not know the circumstances of each instance of harassment or assault, it is difficult to understand why certain staff responses (e.g., talking to the perpetrator) were effective and while others were ineffective. School- or district-wide educator trainings on issues related to LGBT students and bias-based bullying and harassment may help to equip educators with tools for effectively intervening in instances of bullying. In addition, such trainings may help educators become more aware of the experiences of LGBT students, including incidents of harassment and bullying, which could play a vital role in improving their school experience.

Figure 1.20 Effectiveness of Reporting Incidents of Victimization to a Teacher or Other Staff Person (n=2557)

Very Effective 12.1%

Somewhat Effective 25.1%

Not at All Effective 44.1%

Somewhat Ineffective 18.7%
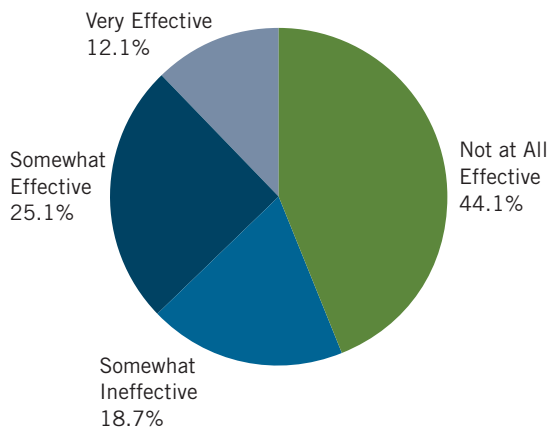
Effects of a Hostile School Climate

Key Findings

- LGBT students who experienced high levels of in-school victimization based on their sexual orientation or gender expression:

  - Had lower grade point averages (GPAs) than other students;

  - Were less likely than other students to plan to pursue any post-secondary education;

  - Were about three times as likely to have missed school in the past month because of safety concerns;

  - Were less likely to feel a sense of belonging to their school community; and

  - Had lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of depression.

- LGBT students who were out to their peers and school staff reported higher levels of victimization based on their sexual identity and gender expression, but also higher school belonging and self-esteem.

In-school victimization experienced by LGBT students can hinder their academic success and educational aspirations. It may also undermine their sense of belonging to their school community. In addition, being harassed or assaulted at school may have a negative impact on students' mental health and self-esteem.

To this end, we examined whether students' reports of in-school victimization were related to their academic achievement, educational aspirations, absenteeism, sense of school belonging, and psychological well-being.

Educational Aspirations and Academic Achievement

In order to examine the relationship between school safety and academic success, we asked students about their academic achievement and their aspirations with regard to post-secondary education. Only 6.9% of students indicated that they did not plan to pursue any type of post-secondary education (i.e, that they only planned to obtain a high school diploma, did not plan to finish high school, or were unsure of their plans). Half of students (49.6%) reported that they planned to pursue a graduate degree (e.g., Master's degree, PhD, or MD), and another 32.7% said that they planned to obtain a college degree (e.g., Bachelor's degree) (see Figure 1.21). It is important to note that the 2011 NSCS only included students who were in school during the 2010–2011 school year. Thus, the percentage of LGBT students not pursuing post-secondary education would be higher with the inclusion of students who had already dropped out of high school.

In-school victimization was related to students' future education plans. As illustrated in Figure 1.22, LGBT students who reported higher severities of victimization[30] because of their sexual orientation or gender expression were twice as likely as other students to report that they did not plan to pursue post-secondary education (college, vocational-technical, or trade school).[31] For example, 10.7% of students who experienced a higher severity of victimization because of their sexual orientation did not plan to go to college or to vocational or trade school, compared to 5.1% of those who had experienced less severe victimization.

A higher severity of victimization was also related to lower academic achievement among LGBT students. As shown in Figure 1.23, the reported grade point average (GPA) for students who were more severely victimized because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was significantly lower than for students who were less often harassed or assaulted (3.2 vs. 2.9 for both).[32]

Absenteeism

School-based victimization may impinge on a student's right to an education. Students who are regularly harassed or assaulted in school may attempt to avoid these hurtful experiences by not attending school and, accordingly, may be more likely to miss school than students who do not experience such victimization. We found that experiences of harassment and assault were, in fact, related to missing days of school.[33] As shown in Figure 1.24, students were about three times as likely to have missed school in the past

Figure 1.21 Educational Aspirations of Students

- Graduate Degree — 49.6%
- College Degree — 32.7%
- Some College/Associate's Degree — 10.8%
- High School Diploma — 3.2%
- Does Not Plan to Finish High School — 1.0%
- Not Sure About Plans — 2.7%

Figure 1.22 Educational Aspirations and Severity of Victimization

Percentage of Students Not Planning to Pursue Post-Secondary Education

Sexual Orientation: Lower Victimization 5.1%, Higher Victimization 10.7%
Gender Expression: Lower Victimization 5.6%, Higher Victimization 9.3%
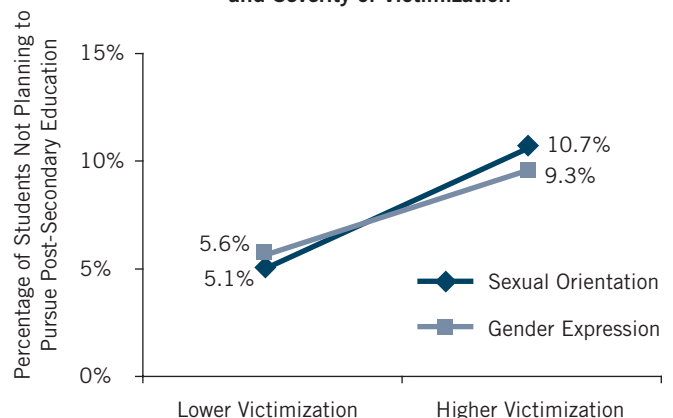
month if they had experienced higher severities of victimization related to their sexual orientation (57.9% versus 19.6%) or how they expressed their gender (53.2% vs. 20.4%).

Sense of School Belonging

The degree to which students feel accepted by and a part of their school community is another important indicator of school climate and is related to a number of educational outcomes. For example, having a greater sense of belonging to one's school is related to greater academic motivation and effort as well as higher academic achievement.[46] Students who experience harassment and assault at school may feel excluded and disconnected from their school community.

In order to examine LGBT students' sense of belonging to their school community, survey participants were given a series of statements about feeling like a part of their school and were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements.[47] As illustrated in Figure 1.25, students who experienced a higher severity of victimization based on sexual orientation or gender expression had lower levels of school belonging than students who experienced less severe victimization in school. [48]

"I stopped going to school four months before graduation because I couldn't handle the bullying anymore. I will not get to attend my senior prom and...throw my graduation cap in the air."

Figure 1.23 Academic Achievement and Severity of Victimization
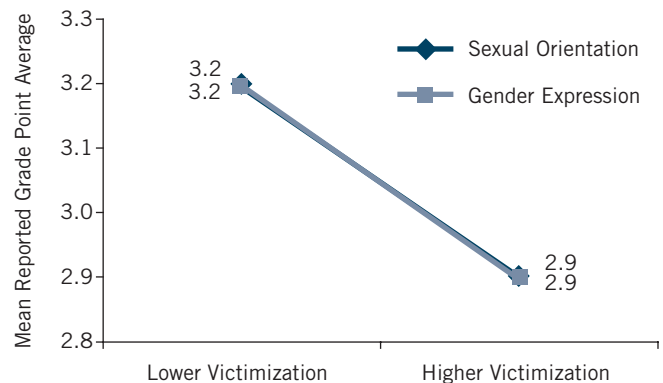
Figure 1.24 Missing School Because of Safety Concerns and Severity of Victimization
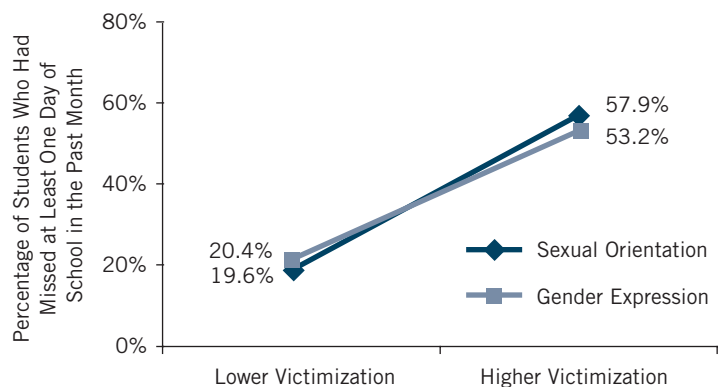
Figure 1.25 School Belonging and Severity of Victimization
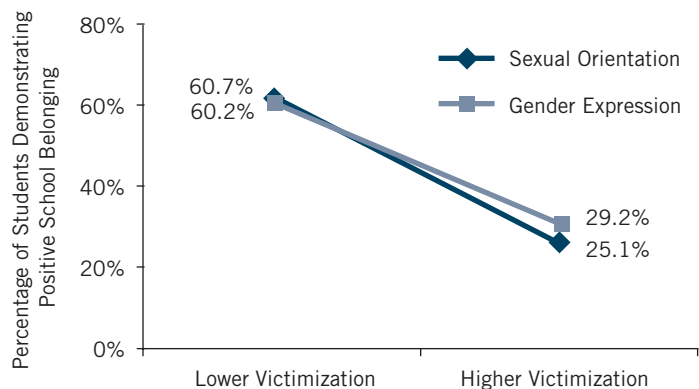
Insight on Being Out in School

Being able to express one's identity is an important aspect of adolescent development. Youth who feel like they can express themselves freely are more apt to feel that they are an important part of their school. For LGBT adolescents specifically, being open about being LGBT may not only enhance feelings of school belonging, but also contribute to positive well-being.[34,35] Unfortunately, being open about one's sexual orientation or gender identity may also make LGBT students more explicit targets for victimization, and many LGBT students may feel that they cannot publicly acknowledge or embrace their LGBT identity as a result. In our survey, we found that outness in school was related to higher levels of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression, but also that it was related to higher self-esteem, lower depression, and higher levels of attachment to school. Thus, it is important for schools to provide safe and affirming environments for LGBT students by responding to bullying and harassment, and by adopting LGBT-inclusive policies and practices.

Outness in School
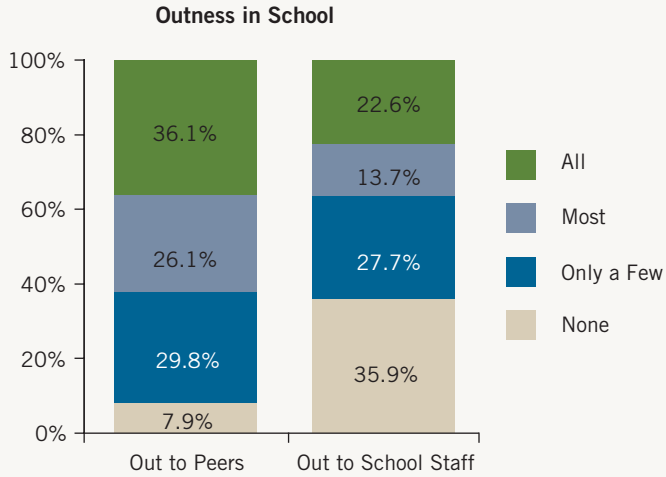
In our survey, students were asked about how out or open they are about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in school. Students were more likely to be out to other students than to school staff. The majority of students (62.2%) were out to most or all of their peers, whereas only 36.3% were out to most or all of the staff in their schools.[36]

| Outness | ⟶ | In-School Victimization |

LGBT students who were out to their peers or school staff experienced higher levels of victimization[37] based on their sexual orientation than students who were not out to their peers or school staff.[38] LGBT students also experienced higher levels of victimization based on their gender expression when they were out at school, though the effect was not as strong as the effect for victimization based on sexual orientation.[39]
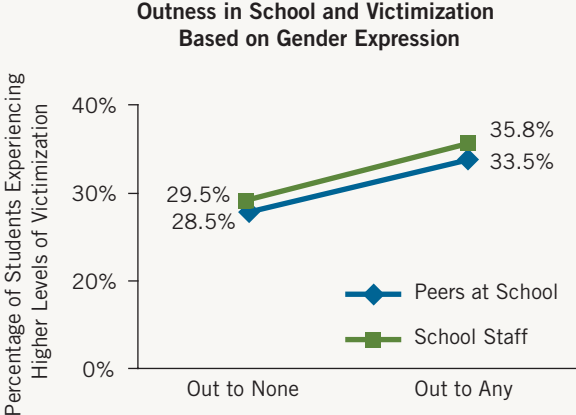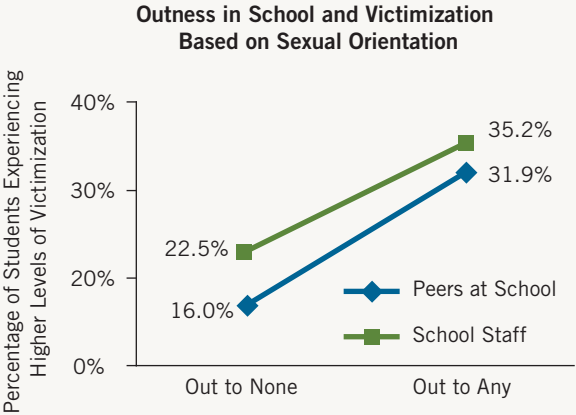
Outness ➡ Psychological Well-Being

Fortunately, students who were out to their peers and/or school staff reported better psychological well-being.

Outness in School and Self-Esteem

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Positive Self-Esteem

- Peers at School
- School Staff

Out to None: 42.6%, 41.5%
Out to Any: 54.6%, 51.1%
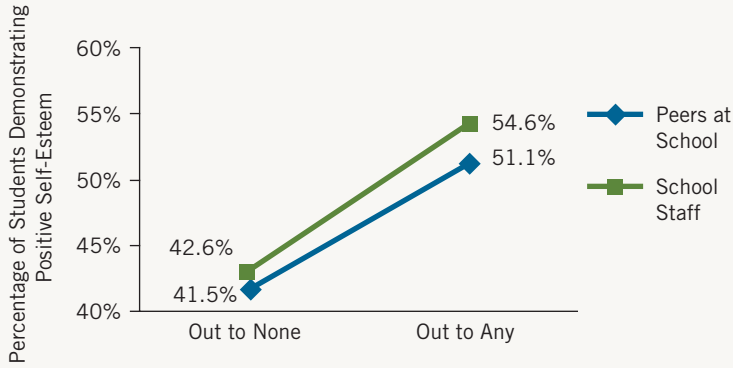
LGBT students who were out to their peers or school staff reported higher levels of self-esteem[40] than students who were not out at school.[41]

Outness in School and Depression

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Higher Levels of Depression

Out to None: 53.1%, 52.2%
Out to Any: 47.7%, 45.9%
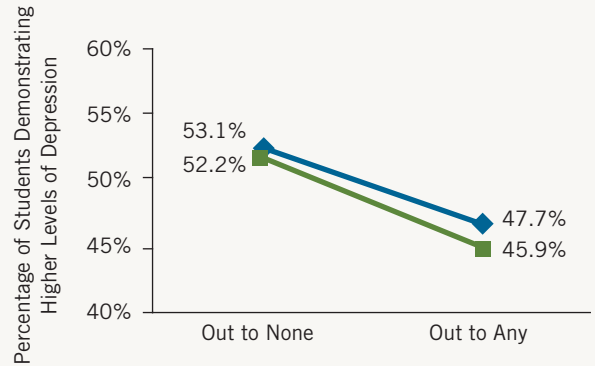
LGBT students who were out to their peers or school staff also reported lower levels of depression[42] than students who were not out at school.[43]

Outness ➡ School Belonging

In addition, LGBT students who were out to other students and/or school staff demonstrated higher levels of school belonging[44] than students who were not out.[45]

Outness in School and School Belonging

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Positive School Belonging

Out to None: 42.1%, 40.5%
Out to Any: 54.1%, 50.6%

- Peers at School
- School Staff
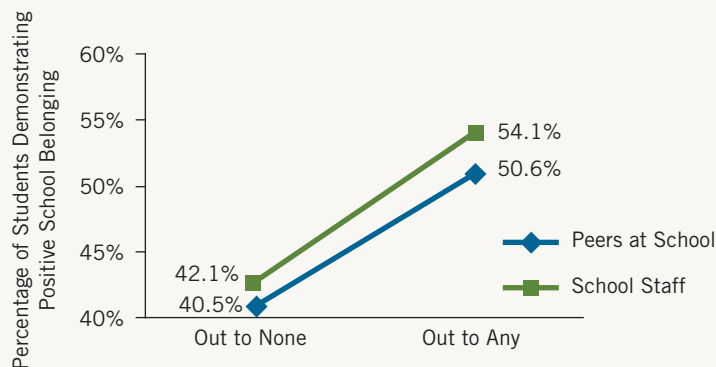
Psychological Well-Being

Previous research has shown that experiences of victimization in school can negatively affect well-being for students in general.[49] Given their increased likelihood for experiencing a negative school climate, it is especially important to examine this relationship for LGBT students.

As shown in Figure 1.26, LGBT students who reported more severe victimization regarding their sexual orientation or gender expression had lower levels of self-esteem[50] than those who reported lower severities of these types of victimization.[51] In addition, as shown in Figure 1.27, we found that higher severities of victimization were related to higher levels of depression.[52,53]

Figure 1.26 Self-Esteem and Severity of Victimization

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Positive Self-Esteem

- 56.8%
- 56.1%
- 39.1%
- 35.5%

Lower Victimization — Higher Victimization

Sexual Orientation
Gender Expression
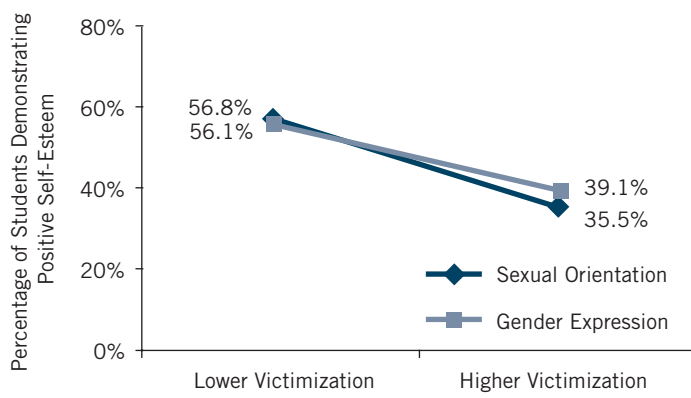
Figure 1.27 Depression and Severity of Victimization

Percentage of Students Demonstrating Higher Levels of Depression

- 71.1%
- 67.7%
- 37.7%
- 37.6%

Lower Victimization — Higher Victimization

Sexual Orientation
Gender Expression
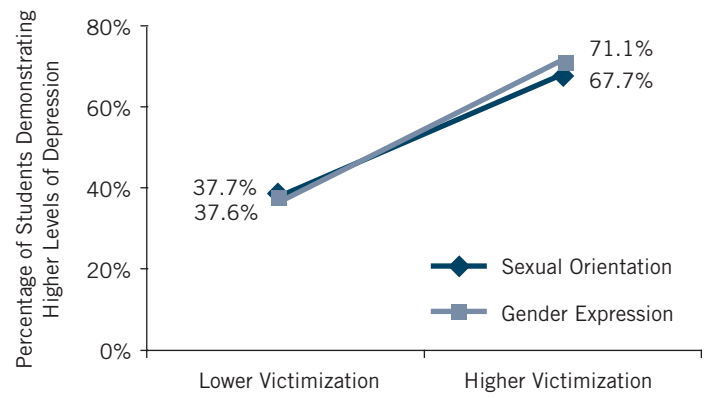
School-Based Resources and Supports

Key Findings

- Less than half of LGBT students attended a school that had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or similar student club that addressed LGBT issues in education.

- Most students did not have access to information about LGBT-related topics in their school library, through the Internet on school computers, or in their textbooks or other assigned readings.

- Less than 2 out of 10 students were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events in their classes.

- Almost all students could identify at least one school staff member whom they believed was supportive of LGBT students in their school.

- Less than a third of students reported that their school administration was supportive of LGBT students.

- Few students reported that their school had a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that specifically included protections based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression.

Display for GLBT History Month and GLSEN's Ally Week, a week of action encouraging people to be allies against anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment at school, Madison High School, Madison, NJ.

The availability of resources and supports in school for LGBT students is another dimension of school climate. We asked students about several resources that may help to promote a safer climate and more positive school experiences for students: student clubs that address issues for LGBT students (such as Gay-Straight Alliances or GSAs), school personnel who are supportive of LGBT students, LGBT-inclusive curricular materials, and school policies for addressing incidents of harassment and assault.

Supportive Students Clubs

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) can provide LGBT students with a safe and affirming space within a school environment that they may otherwise experience as hostile. As shown in Table 1.3, almost half (45.7%) of LGBT students in our survey said that their school had a GSA or similar student club at school. In addition to the presence of a GSA at a school, students' level of involvement with a GSA is important to consider as participation may be related to a number of positive outcomes, such as academic achievement and greater school engagement.[54] Among students with a GSA, almost two thirds (62.3%) said that they attended club meetings at least sometimes, and 32.8% had participated as a leader or an officer in their club (see also Table 1.3). While most LGBT students report participating in their GSA, not all do. There is some research that

suggests that experiences of harassment and discrimination may motivate students to attend,[55] and that some groups of students do not perceive their schools' GSAs as inclusive and/or confidential environments,[56] but more research is needed in this area. Nevertheless, GSA leaders and advisors should assess potential barriers to GSA attendance at their school, and take steps to ensure that GSA meetings are accessible to a diverse range of LGBT students.

Even though the Equal Access Act[57] requires public schools to allow GSAs to exist alongside other non-curricular student clubs, opponents have continued attempts to restrict the existence of or access to these clubs. One tactic has been attempting to require students to have parental permission to participate in school-based student clubs. For this reason, we were interested in whether requiring students to obtain permission to participate in a GSA would limit student access to these clubs. We asked students who indicated that their school had a GSA or similar club whether or not their school required parental permission to participate in any school clubs. Less than a tenth (6.4%) of LGBT students reported that their school had this requirement and, as shown in Table 1.4, a majority of these students also reported that they had permission from a parent to participate in a GSA. However, of those students in schools where parental permission was required almost half (41.4%) did not have permission.

Requiring students to obtain parental permission could restrict access to GSAs for some LGBT students, particularly those who are not out about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to their parents. LGBT students who were out to their parents were more likely to have permission to attend GSA meetings.[58] Almost three quarters (71.6%) of students who were out to at least one parent or guardian had permission to participate in their GSA, compared to less than a third (28.4%) of students who were not out to their parents. Fortunately, of the small number of students attending schools that require parental permission, the majority were able to obtain it. Nevertheless, there are some students for whom needing permission to attend GSA meetings may hinder their access to an important school resource.

Table 1.3 Gay-Straight Alliance Availability and Participation	
Have a GSA at School (n=8552)	
Yes	45.7%
No	54.3%
Frequency of Attending Meetings (n=3891)	
Never	26.9%
Rarely	10.9%
Sometimes	10.0%
Often	8.6%
Frequently	43.7%
Acted as a Leader or Officer (n=3887)	
Yes	32.8%
No	67.2%

Insight on LGBT Students and Extracurricular Activities

One element of students' school experience is their participation in and level of involvement with extracurricular activities, such as athletics, arts, and student government. For students in general, prior research has shown that participation in these types of school activities is positively linked to academic achievement and psychological well-being.[59] Yet students who experience frequent harassment at school may choose not to spend additional time at school and may be less likely to be involved in optional school activities like extracurricular clubs. These students may not gain the same benefits from extracurricular participation as students who experience less frequent harassment.

In order to understand the level of school participation of LGBT students, we asked students about their involvement in a variety of school activities. The table below shows the percentage of LGBT students who reported participating in various school activities and the percentage of students who also reported acting as leaders or officers for each activity. Students were most likely to be involved in subject-matter clubs (41.7%) and arts-related activities, with nearly half participating in band, orchestra, chorus, or choir (45.6%) and about a third participating in a school play or musical (34.4%).

Activity	Participate	Leader/Officer
Band, orchestra, chorus, or choir	45.6%	14.4%
Academic clubs (e.g., Art, Computer, Foreign Language, Debate)	41.7%	10.0%
School play or musical	34.4%	11.0%
Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA)	33.1%	14.9%
Hobby clubs (e.g., photography, chess)	24.1%	5.4%
Interscholastic sports (competition with teams from other schools)	23.2%	5.4%
National Honor Society (NHS) or other academic honor society	21.3%	3.5%
School newspaper, magazine, yearbook, or annual	19.6%	5.8%
Clubs addressing issues of human rights, tolerance, and diversity, (besides a GSA) such as Amnesty International or a Diversity Club	15.8%	4.9%
Service organizations (e.g., Key Club, Big Brother, Big Sister)	15.0%	3.8%
Intramural sports (competition between teams in your school)	13.4%	1.9%
Student government	11.9%	4.8%
Vocational education clubs (e.g., DECA, SkillsUSA, VICA, FFA, FHA)	7.3%	2.0%
Ethnic or cultural clubs (i.e., ASPIRA, Asian Cultural Society, African American Student Union)	6.5%	1.5%
Cheerleaders, pep club, or majorettes	5.3%	1.7%
Junior Achievement	3.4%	0.6%

Inclusive Curricular Resources

LGBT student experiences may also be shaped by inclusion of LGBT-related information in the curriculum. Learning about LGBT historical events and positive role models may enhance their engagement with the school community and provide valuable information about the LGBT community.

Students in our survey were asked whether they had been exposed to positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events in lessons at school and the vast majority (83.2%) were not (see Figure 1.28). Among students who had been taught about LGBT-related topics in class, History/Social Studies, English and Health were the classes most often mentioned as being inclusive of these topics (see Table 1.5).

"This year in my U.S. History class, my teacher used a textbook [that] actually did mention LGBT rights during the civil rights movement of the 60s, along with Harvey Milk, Stonewall Riots, etc.— that made me happy!"

We also asked students about their ability to access information about LGBT issues that teachers may not be covering in class, such as additional reading materials featuring information about LGBT issues. LGBT-related curricular resources were not available for most LGBT students in our survey.

As Figure 1.29 illustrates, less than half (44.1%) reported that they could find information about LGBT-related issues, such as LGBT communities and history, in their school library. In addition, only two in five (42.1%) students with Internet access at school reported being able to access LGBT-related information via school computers. Furthermore, less than a fifth (17.7%) reported that LGBT-related topics were included in textbooks or other assigned class readings.

Supportive School Personnel

Supportive teachers, principals, and other school staff serve as another important resource for LGBT students. Being able to speak with a caring adult in school may have a significant positive impact on the school experiences for students, particularly for those who feel marginalized or experience harassment. In our survey, almost all students (95.0%) could identify at least one school staff member whom they believed was supportive of LGBT students at their school, and more than half (54.6%) could identify six or more supportive school staff (see Figure 1.30).

As the leaders of the school, school administrators may play a particularly important role in the school experiences of LGBT youth. They may serve not only as caring adults to whom the youth can turn, but they also set the tone of the school and determine specific policies and programs that may affect the school's climate. Approximately one in three students (31.6%) reported that their school administration (e.g. principal, vice-principal) was supportive of LGBT students, and about a third (32.2%) said their administration was unsupportive (see Figure 1.31).

Table 1.4 Parental Permission Requirements Among Students with a GSA (Base: All students with a GSA or similar student club, n=3839)	
School does not require parental permission	93.6%
School requires parental permission	6.4%
Do you have parental permission? (Base: Students in schools where parental permission required, n=246)	
No	41.4%
Yes	58.6%

The presence of LGBT school personnel who are out or open at school about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity may provide another source of support for LGBT students. In addition, the number of out LGBT personnel may provide a visible sign of a more supportive and accepting school climate. Yet less than half (41.2%) of students said they could identify any openly LGBT personnel at their school (see Figure 1.32).

To understand whether certain types of educators were more likely to be seen as supportive, we asked LGBT students how comfortable they would feel talking one-on-one with various school personnel about LGBT-related issues. As shown in Figure 1.33, students reported that they would feel most comfortable talking with school-based mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, social workers, or psychologists) and teachers: 54.6% would be somewhat or very comfortable talking about LGBT issues with a mental health staff member and 50.7% would be somewhat or very comfortable talking with a teacher (see Figure 1.33). Slightly fewer students in our survey said they would feel comfortable talking one-one-one with a principal or vice principal, school nurse, school librarian, athletics coach/Physical Education (P.E.) teacher, or school safety officer about these issues (see also Figure 1.33).[71]

Figure 1.28 Taught Positive Representations of LGBT-Related Topics in any Classes

No 83.2%

Yes 16.8%
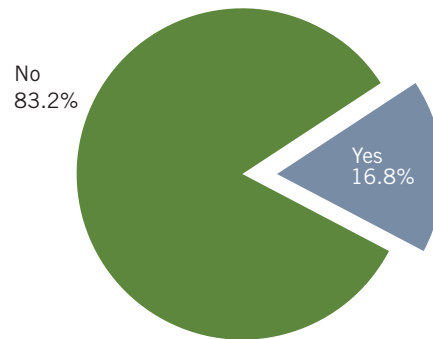
Figure 1.29 Availability of LGBT-Related Curricular Resources in School

Resource	Percentage
LGBT-Inclusive Curricula	16.8%
Textbooks or Other Assigned Readings	17.7%
Internet Access	42.1%
Library Resources	44.1%
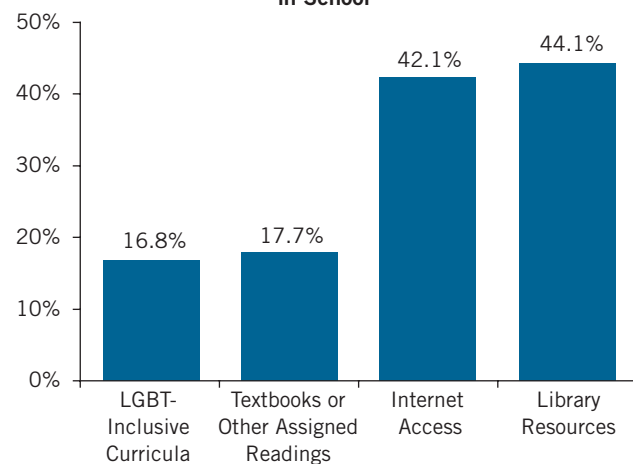
Table 1.5 Taught Positive Representations of LGBT-Related Topics in Class		
Classes	% of Students Taught LGBT-Related Topics (n=1419)	% of all Students in Survey (n=8574)
History or Social Studies	54.3%	9.0%
Science	9.4%	1.6%
Health	24.5%	4.1%
Gym or Physical Education	3.7%	0.6%
English	44.5%	7.4%
Foreign Language	11.0%	1.8%
Music	8.5%	1.4%
Math	3.8%	0.6%
Art	13.2%	2.2%
Sociology	7.8%	1.3%
Psychology	13.5%	2.2%
Other Class (e.g., Drama, Philosophy)	19.5%	3.2%

Insight on Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs may contribute to a negative school climate for LGBT students because they assume universal heterosexuality and emphasize that physically intimate relationships are harmful outside the context of marriage,[60] an option unavailable to same-sex couples in all but a few states. Typically, abstinence-only programs do not mention non-heterosexual relationships or transgender people, and some curricula disparage LGBT people and relationships.[61] We found, in fact, that students at schools with abstinence-only programs were less likely to report that their health classes included positive representations of LGBT people than students learning other sexual health curricula (2.3% vs. 7.1%).[62] Even though research has documented that many of these programs contain misleading and medically inaccurate information,[63] and evaluations have demonstrated their negative impact on youth sexual health outcomes,[64] abstinence only-programs are not uncommon in U.S. health classes.[65] We asked students if their school used such curricula when providing sexuality education and examined the possible impact of abstinence-only programs on school climate for LGBT students.

Prevalence of Abstinence-Only and LGBT-Inclusive Health Curricula. We found that most students received sexuality education (84.8%). Of those students who had learned about human sexuality in class, a third (33.3%) reported having an abstinence-only curriculum, less than half (44.9%) had a sexuality curricula other than abstinence-only, and 21.8% were unsure what kind of sexuality education they had received.

Abstinence-Only Curricula and Anti-LGBT Bias at School. Students in schools with abstinence-only programs reported more negative experiences at school than students with other types of sexuality education (see the section on LGBT-Related Resources and Supports for more information on inclusive curricula).

Abstinence-Only Curricula and Anti-LGBT Remarks
(percentage of students who heard remarks "often" or "frequently") (n=5644)

Legend:
- Abstinence-Only Curricula
- Other Sexual Health Curricula

"Gay" Used in a Negative Way: 88.7% (Abstinence-Only), 80.7% (Other Sexual Health)
Other Homophobic Remarks: 75.9% (Abstinence-Only), 66.6% (Other Sexual Health)
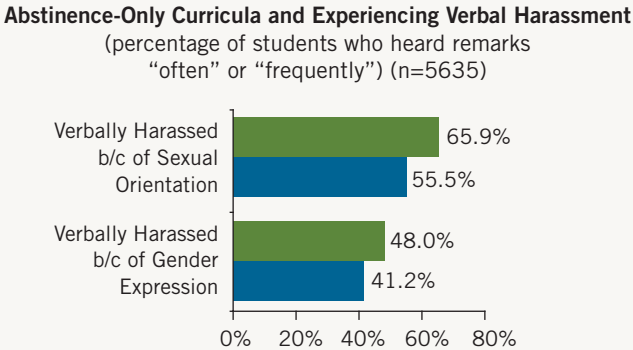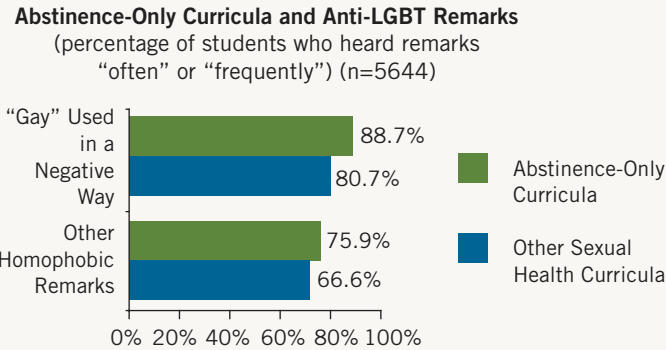
LGBT students in schools with abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula were more likely to hear homophobic remarks like "fag" or "dyke" and expressions using "gay" in a negative way at very high rates.[66]

Abstinence-Only Curricula and Experiencing Verbal Harassment
(percentage of students who heard remarks "often" or "frequently") (n=5635)

Verbally Harassed b/c of Sexual Orientation: 65.9% (Abstinence-Only), 55.5% (Other Sexual Health)
Verbally Harassed b/c of Gender Expression: 48.0% (Abstinence-Only), 41.2% (Other Sexual Health)

A greater percentage of LGBT students regularly experienced verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity in schools with abstinence-only curricula.[67]

Abstinence-Only Curricula and School Communities. By excluding or even disparaging LGBT people and relationships, abstinence-only curricula may reinforce anti-LGBT behavior by students. Students in schools with abstinence-only curricula were less likely to say that their peers were "somewhat" or "very" accepting of LGBT students (33.8% vs. 45.3%).[68] Students in schools with abstinence-only programs also reported feeling less-connected to their school communities.[69]

While current federal guidelines encourage funded abstinence-only programs to "consider the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth and how their programs will be inclusive of and nonstigmatizing toward such participants,"[70] these curricula are not required to do so. Our findings suggest that these programs may not be acting on this suggestion for inclusivity, and instead may be contributing to negative school experiences for LGBT youth. Efforts to replace abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula should take steps to avoid assuming universal heterosexuality and affirm healthy LGBT relationships and families.

In addition to comfort level, students were asked how frequently in the past school year they had engaged in positive or helpful conversations with school personnel about LGBT-related issues. The majority reported that they never had these conversations with most school staff members, with the exception of teachers. Three in five (59.8%) LGBT students spoke with a teacher about LGBT issues (see Figure 1.34).[72] Given that students reported relatively high levels of comfort talking to teachers about LGBT issues, it is not surprising that they were more likely to speak with teachers than other school staff. Furthermore, students spend more time with teachers than other types of school staff and therefore may have more opportunity for a discussion on any topic. This also might explain, in part, why students reported fewer positive conversations with principals, vice/assistant principals or other school personnel: students may have less daily interaction with these non-teaching school staff, and therefore less

"I feel I was lucky enough to have staff that are understanding and respectful of LGBTQ teens, because even though some of the students aren't... I knew I would always have a few teachers to talk and share with. LGBTQ teens need that. They need to know that they're safe."

opportunity to have conversations about LGBT topics. For example, students felt most comfortable speaking to mental health staff (see Figure 1.34), yet had fewer conversations with these staff than teachers, perhaps because students interact with teachers more often than with mental health staff. However, since students report low levels of comfort (see Figure 1.34) for most of the staff members they do not speak to, it may also be that these staff members are less likely to signal willingness to support LGBT students.

Figure 1.30 Number of Teachers and Other School Staff Who are Supportive of LGBT Students

None 5.0%
One 5.4%
Between 2 and 5 35.0%
Between 6 and 10 21.3%
More than 10 33.3%

Figure 1.31 Supportiveness of School Administration of LGBT Students

Very Unsupportive 13.9%
Very Supportive 13.2%
Somewhat Supportive 18.4%
Somewhat Unsupportive 18.3%
Neutral 36.1%
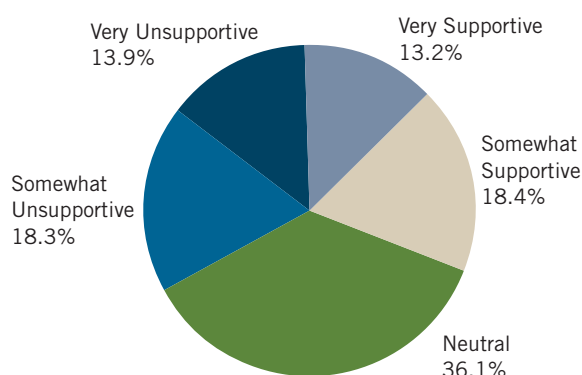
Figure 1.32 Number of Openly LGBT Teachers or Other School Staff

Between 6 and 10 2.2%
More than 10 0.8%
Between 2 and 5 19.5%
None 58.8%
One 18.6%
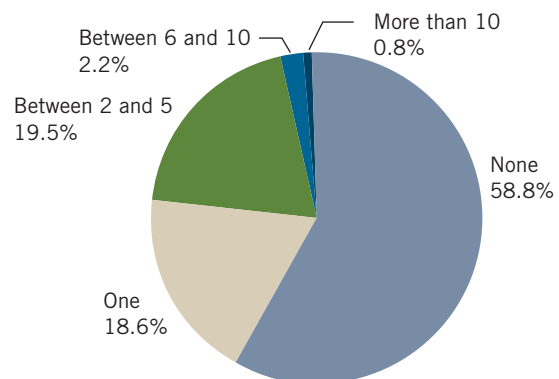
Insight on School Athletics

Research has shown that sports and physical activity can contribute positively to students' physical health, self-esteem, and sense of connectedness to their school. In addition, participating on an athletic team may provide academic benefits – both directly through school policies requiring athletes to maintain minimum GPA's and indirectly by strengthening students' identification with their school communities.[73] Yet, some research suggests that LGBT students may be less likely than their non-LGBT peers to attend Physical Education (P.E.) classes or play on a sports team.[74] In fact, we found that LGBT students in our survey commonly avoided spaces like school locker rooms and P.E. classes because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, and very few felt comfortable talking to their P.E. teachers and coaches about LGBT issues (see the Experiences of Harassment and Assault and Supportive School Personnel section of this report). To further our understanding, we examined their participation and experiences of harassment and assault in school athletic activities.

LGBT Student Participation in Athletics. Three quarters (73.0%) of LGBT students said that they took a P.E. or gym class at school in the past year, about a quarter (23.2%) of LGBT students participated in interscholastic sports, and 13.4% participated in intramural athletics (see the Insight on LGBT Students and Extracurricular Activities of this report). We examined how LGBT high school students' interscholastic sports participation compared to the general population of student athletes using national data for high school participation and total high school enrollment.[75] We estimated that LGBT high school students are about half as likely to play interscholastic sports as their peers (23.2% vs. 47.8%).[76]

Experiences of Harassment and Assault in School Athletics. As shown in the figure, many LGBT students were harassed or assaulted while playing on sports teams or attending P.E. classes. More than half of LGBT students were bullied or harassed in their P.E. class because of their sexual orientation or gender expression and over a quarter reported being harassed or assaulted while playing on a school sports team.

Experiences of Bullying, Harassment, or Assault on School Sports Teams and in P.E. Class

Bar chart. While Playing on a School Sports Team (n=2386): Based on Sexual Orientation 27.8%, Based on Gender Expression 29.4%. In P.E. Class (n=6166): Based on Sexual Orientation 52.8%, Based on Gender Expression 51.0%.
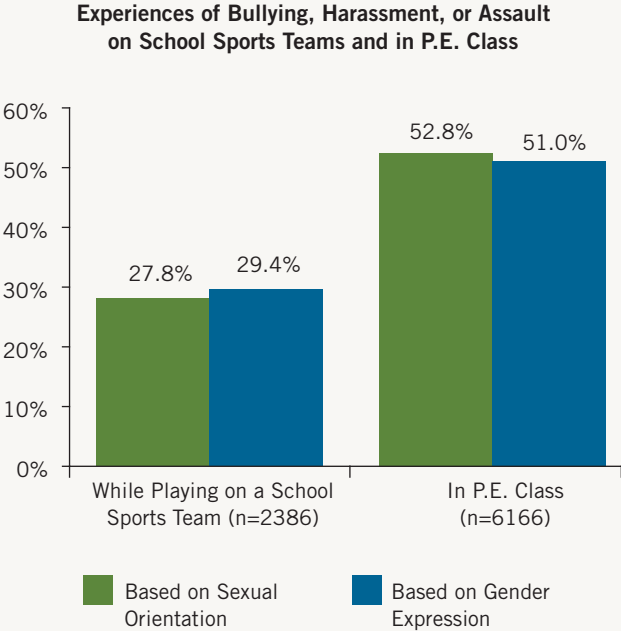
Given that victimization can affect a student's connection to the school community, this may be one explanation for the disparities in athletics participation by LGBT students. Further, these findings highlight the importance of directing efforts toward athletics programs in safe schools efforts to ensure that LGBT youth may fully enjoy the benefits of participation in school-based physical education and sports. School athletics programs should incorporate policies and procedures for ensuring safe and affirming environments for LGBT athletes, such as prohibiting anti-LGBT name-calling or chants by spectators at games, providing professional development on LGBT issues for P.E. teachers and coaches, and allowing students to participate on teams consistent with their gender identity.[77] Resources for coaches, athletes, parents, and administrators interested in supporting LGBT student athletes are available at sports.glsen.org.

Figure 1.33 Comfort Talking with School Personnel about LGBT Issues
(percentage of students reporting that they would be
"somewhat comfortable" or "very comfortable")

Personnel	Percentage
School-Based Mental Health Professional	54.6%
Teacher	50.7%
Principal	28.4%
School Nurse	28.0%
Librarian/Other Resource Staff	27.5%
Vice/Assistant Principal	26.8%
School Safety, Resource or Security Officer	24.8%
Athletics Coach or P.E. Teacher	20.6%
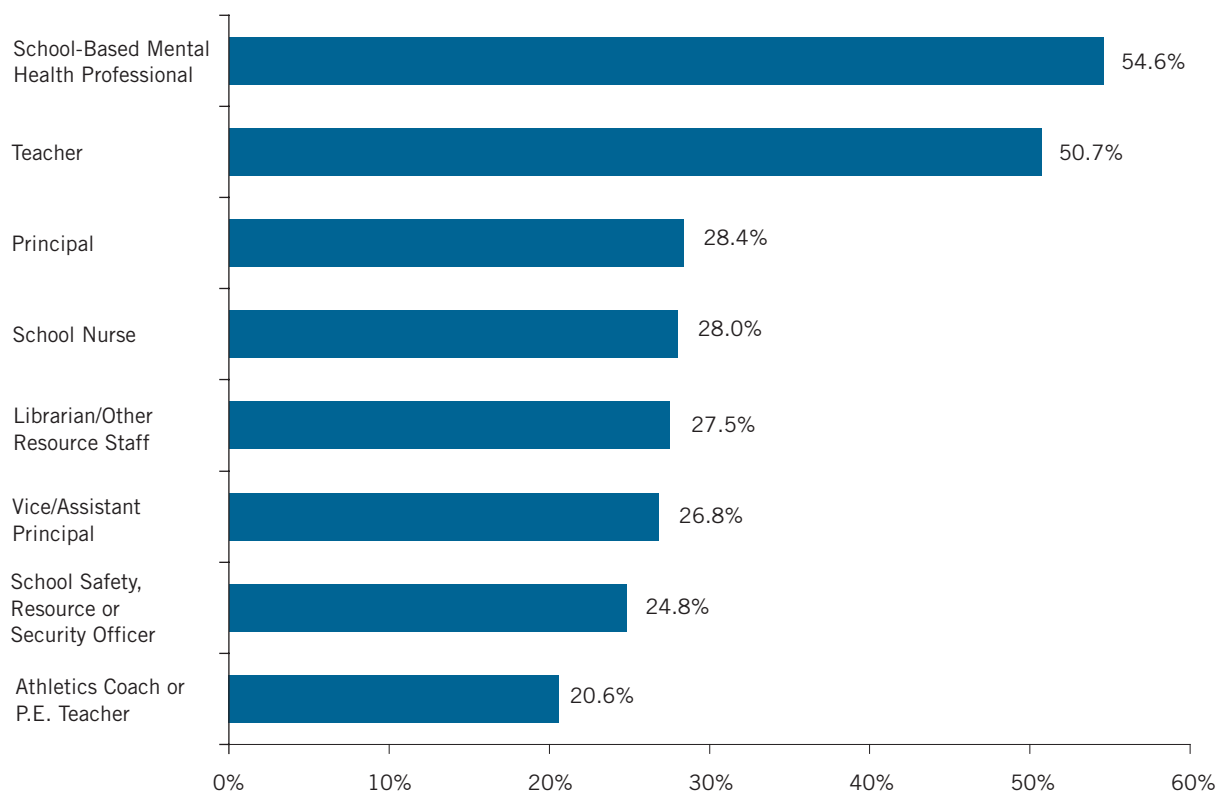
School Policies for Addressing Bullying, Harassment, and Assault

School policies that address in-school bullying, harassment, and assault are powerful tools for creating school environments where students feel safe. These types of policies can explicitly state protection based on personal characteristics, such as sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, among others. A "comprehensive" policy is one that explicitly enumerates protections based on personal characteristics, including both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. When a school has and enforces a comprehensive policy, especially one which also includes procedures for reporting incidents to school authorities, it can send a message that bullying, harassment, and assault are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It can also send a message that student safety, including the safety of LGBT students, is taken seriously by school administrators. "Partially enumerated" policies explicitly mention sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, but not both, and

may not provide the same level of protection for LGBT students. "Generic" anti-bullying or anti-harassment school policies do not enumerate sexual orientation or gender identity/expression as protected categories or specify the various types of behaviors that are unacceptable. Comprehensive school policies may also provide students with greater protection against victimization because they make clear the various forms of bullying, harassment, and assault that will not be tolerated.

Students were asked whether their school had a policy about in-school bullying, harassment, or assault, and if that policy explicitly included sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. As shown in Table 1.6, one in five (20.3%) students reported that their school did not have a policy or that they did not know if their school had a policy. Although a majority reported that their school had a policy, less than a tenth (7.4%) of students in our survey reported that their school had a comprehensive policy that specifically mentioned both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (see also Table 1.6).

Table 1.6 Students' Reports Regarding School Bullying, Harassment, and Assault Policies (n=8543)		
No Policy[a]		20.3%
Any Policy		79.7%
Generic (enumerates neither sexual orientation nor gender identity/expression)[b]		56.8%
Partially Enumerated		15.6%
Sexual orientation only	14.0%	
Gender identity/expression only	1.6%	
Comprehensive (enumerates both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression)		7.4%

[a] Includes students who indicated that they did not know if there was a policy or not.
[b] Includes students who indicated that they did not know if the policy included specific enumeration.

Figure 1.34 Frequency of Students Talking to Staff about LGBT Issues
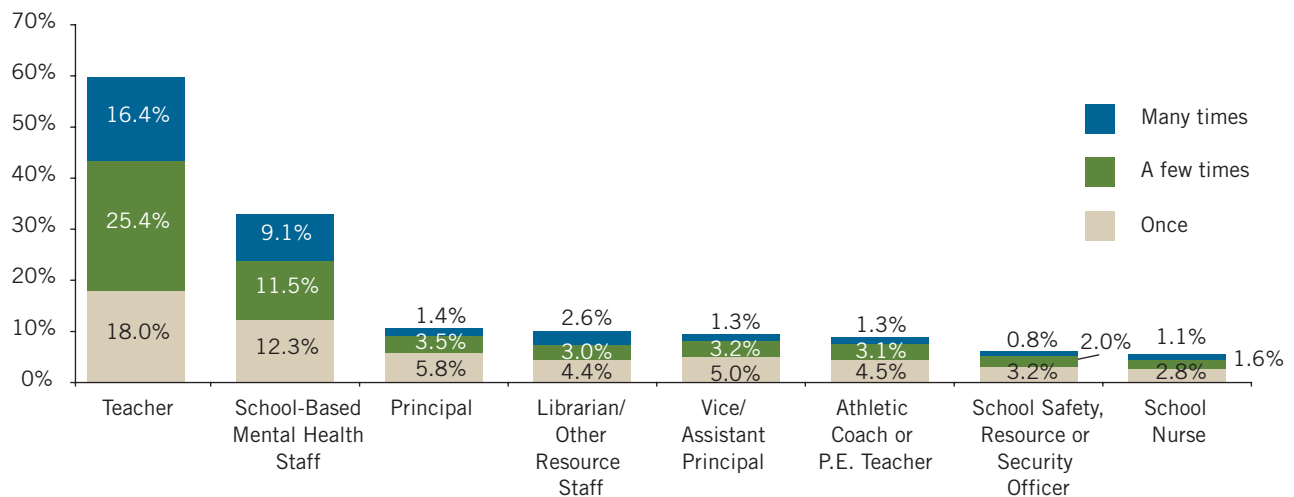
"I feel as if the school tries to seem like a safe place, but... The anti-bullying policy doesn't say a thing about LGBT youth... It leaves me somewhat apprehensive that [reporting] will get turned right back on me."

Insight on LGBT Community Groups or Programs

Although the 1984 Equal Access Act protects the right of U.S. public school students to create Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or similar student clubs at school, many students still face challenges from school staff and administration in establishing them. As seen in the LGBT-Related Resources and Supports in School section of this report, less than half of LGBT students in our survey said that their schools had a GSA. Community-based groups or programs for LGBT youth can be an additional source of support for LGBT students, and may serve a critical function for LGBT students who lack other LGBT-related supports at school. Thus, we examined the availability of LGBT community groups or programs in relation to the availability of and participation in GSAs in schools.

Participation in LGBT Youth Community Group/Program

No Group or Not Aware of Group or Program 58.4%

Never Attends 18.2%

Rarely Attends 6.9%

Sometimes Attends 7.4%

Often Attends 3.6%

Frequently Attends 5.5%
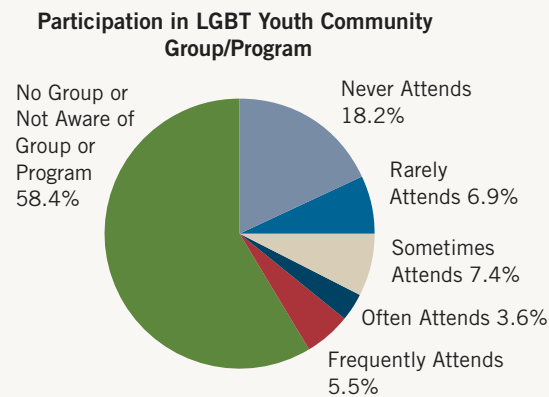
More than half of the LGBT youth in our survey (58.4%) reported that they did not have or were unaware of an LGBT youth group or program in their local community. However, not all youth across the U.S. had the same access to these groups/programs. In the South and Midwest, a third of youth (32.2% and 39.8%, respectively) had access to a program or group, compared to about half the youth in the West and Northeast (50.4% and 46.5%, respectively).[78] In addition, youth in urban areas were more likely to have access to a program or group than youth in suburban or small town/rural areas (51.1% vs. 43.5%, and 29.5%, respectively).[79]

Simply having an LGBT community group or program does not mean than LGBT youth are able to attend. Nearly half of the youth who have a group or program in their area said that they never attended (43.8% of the youth who have a program, 18.2% of the entire sample). Many reasons may explain why youth do not attend even when they have access to a group or program: some youth may not have reliable transportation to the group, and others might not feel comfortable attending. Students who were not out to their parents or peers reported lower levels of community group/program attendance than students who were out.[80]

Unfortunately, many LGBT youth who do not have the benefit of a GSA at school also do not have the benefit of an LGBT community group or program: 70.8% of LGBT youth who did not have access to a GSA also lacked access to a community group.[81] Conversely, more than half of students (56.4%) who had access to a GSA also had access to a community group. In addition to being more likely to have a community program/group, students who had a GSA attended LGBT community groups/programs more often than students who did not have a GSA.[82]

It is important that all LGBT youth have a place where they feel safe and accepted. Both LGBT community groups/programs and GSAs provide opportunities for necessary adult and peer support. Unfortunately, our findings point to potential barriers in accessing these resources. LGBT students who are not out to their parents or members of the school community are less likely to attend community programs than students who are out. Moreover, attitudes in the community that inhibit the formation of GSAs may prevent community programs or groups from forming as well. Thus, community and school advocates for LGBT issues should consider ways to make these resources more accessible to LGBT youth, including those who may not be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

LGBT Community Program/Group and GSA Access

Does Not Have a GSA: 70.8%, 29.2%
Has a GSA: 43.6%, 56.4%

Does Not Have a Community Program/Group

Has a Community Program/Group
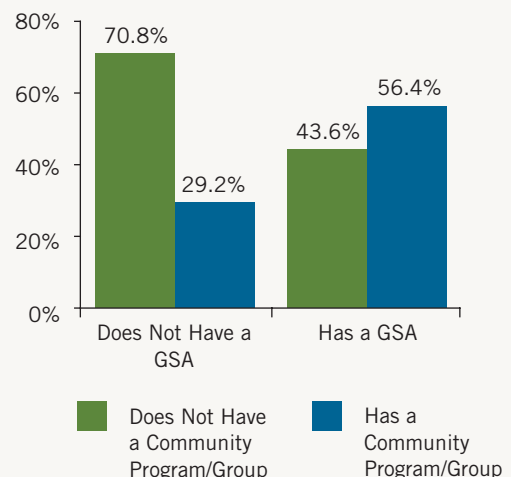
Utility of School Resources and Supports

Key Findings

LGBT students experienced a safer, more positive school environment when:

- Their school had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or similar student club;

- They were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events through their school curriculum;

- They had supportive school staff who frequently intervened in biased remarks and effectively responded to reports of harassment and assault;

- Their school had an anti-bullying/harassment policy that specifically included protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression; and

- Their school was in a state with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment law that specifically included protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

School-based resources, such as supportive student clubs (including GSAs), LGBT-inclusive curricula, supportive school personnel, and enumerated policies for reporting harassment and assault, may help create a more positive school environment for LGBT and non-LGBT students. These institutional supports provide formalized processes and structures for addressing LGBT-related issues in schools, which may, in turn, foster better school outcomes for students. In this section, we examine the relationship between school-based institutional supports and school climate, academic achievement, and educational aspirations.

Supportive Student Clubs

Student clubs that address issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression provide a safe space for LGBT students to meet and socialize, and can also contribute to safer and more inclusive schools in general.

School Safety and Absenteeism. LGBT students who attended schools with a GSA:

- Heard homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression less frequently than LGBT students in schools without a GSA (see Figure 1.35)[83];
- Were less likely to feel unsafe because of their sexual orientation (54.9% vs. 70.6% of students without a GSA) (Figure 1.36); and
- Experienced less severe victimization related to their sexual orientation or gender expression. For example, 4 in 10 students (38.5%) in schools without GSAs experienced higher severities of victimization based on sexual orientation, compared to 2 in 10 students (23.0%) in schools with a GSA (see Figure 1.37).[84]

Perhaps, in part, because of the positive effect of GSAs on school climate, having a GSA may also have a positive effect on an LGBT student's relationship with school: students with a GSA reported higher levels of school belonging[85] and were much less likely to have missed school in the past month because of feeling unsafe (24.4% compared to 38.3% without a GSA) (Figure 1.36).[86]

Students' Connections to School Staff. Given that GSAs typically include at least one faculty advisor, the presence of a GSA may make it easier for LGBT students to identify a supportive school staff person. Indeed, students in schools with a GSA were more likely to be able to identify supportive staff members than students in schools without a GSA (72.7% could identify 6 or more staff members in schools with a GSA, compared to only 39.4% in schools without a GSA), as seen in Figure 1.38.[87] The ability to identify supportive teachers may explain, in part, why students with access to a GSA were somewhat more likely than students without a GSA to report bullying incidents to school staff "most of the time" or "always" (14.9% vs. 12.9%).[88] In addition, teachers in schools with GSAs intervened in incidents of harassment nearly twice as frequently as teachers in schools without a GSA (19.8% of teachers in schools with GSAs intervened most of the time or always, compared to 12.0% of teachers in schools without GSAs).[89]

"Due to the formation of the GSA about four months ago, the overall LGBTQ-acceptance has steadily risen. A lot of people aren't educated enough."

Figure 1.35 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Frequency of Hearing Biased Remarks

Percentage of Students Hearing Remarks "Often" or "Frequently"

	"Gay" Used in a Negative Way	"No Homo"	Other Homophobic Remarks	Negative Remarks Regarding Gender Expression
School Does Not Have a GSA	89.3%	58.3%	77.5%	65.0%
School Has a GSA	80.3%	48.7%	64.5%	57.5%
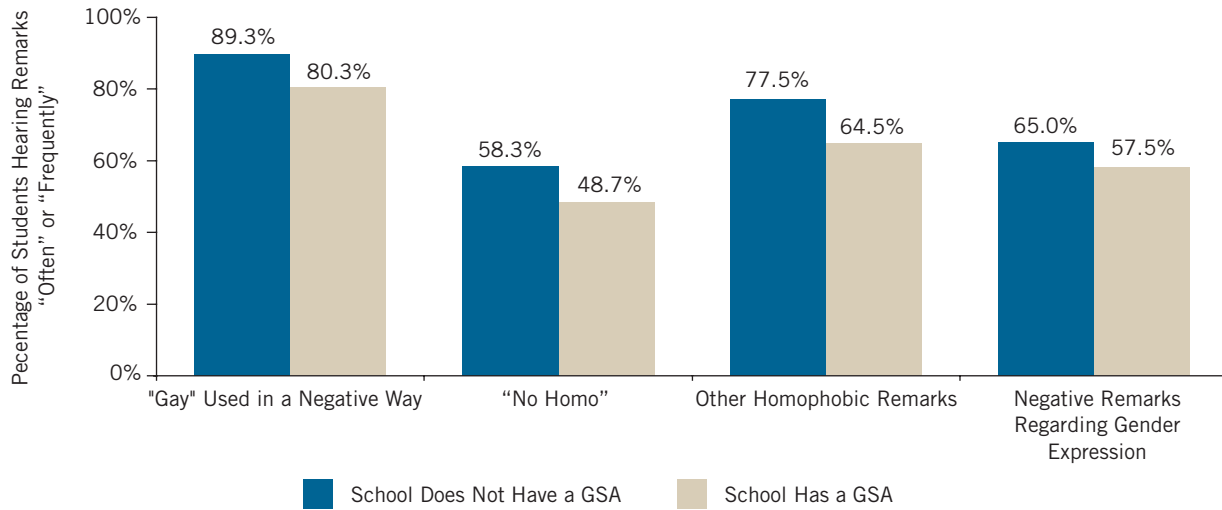
Figure 1.36 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Feelings of Safety and Missing School

	Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation	Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression	Missed at Least One Day of School in the Past Month
School Does Not Have a GSA	70.6%	46.5%	38.3%
School Has a GSA	54.9%	38.1%	24.4%
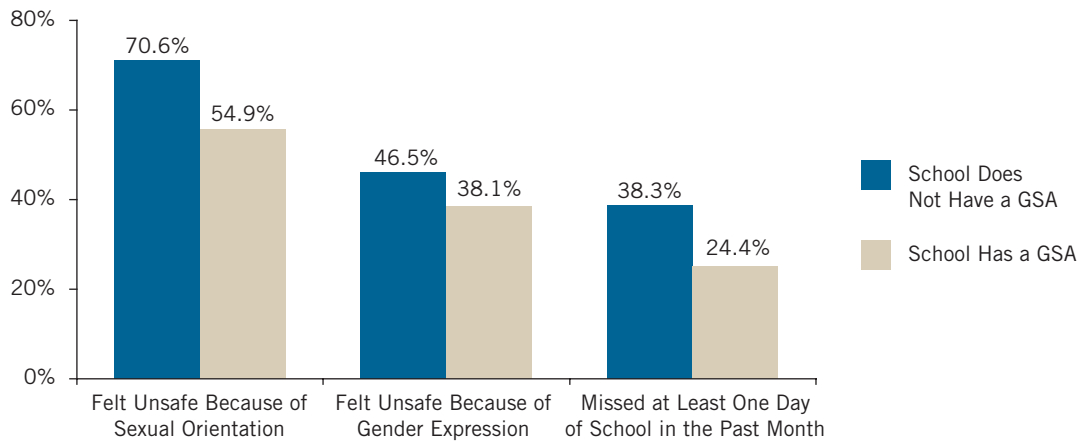
Figure 1.37 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Victimization

Percentage of Students Experiencing Higher Severities of Victimization

	Victimization Because of Sexual Orientation	Victimization Because of Gender Expression
School Does Not Have GSA	38.5%	40.0%
School Has GSA	23.0%	26.5%
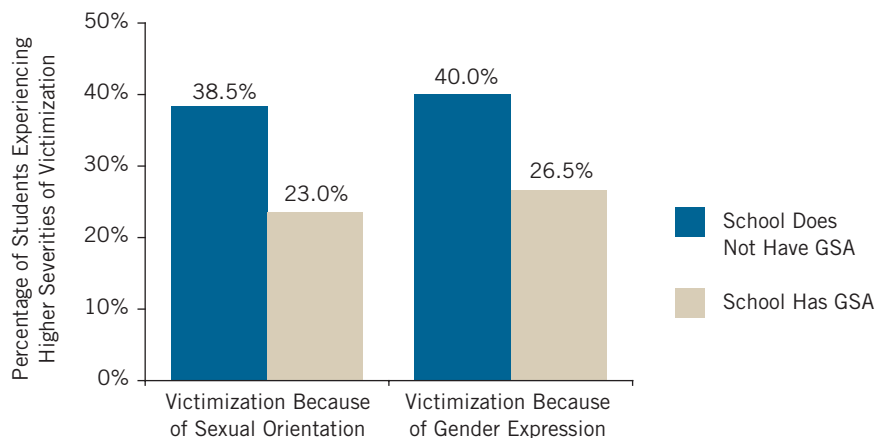
Inclusive Curriculum

Many experts in multicultural education believe that a curriculum that is inclusive of diverse groups—including culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation—instills a belief in the intrinsic worth of all individuals and in the value of a diverse society.[90] Including LGBT-related issues in the curriculum may make LGBT students feel like more valued members of the school community, and it may also promote more positive feelings about LGBT issues and persons among their peers, thereby resulting in a more positive school climate for all students.[91]

School Safety. Among the LGBT students in our survey, attending a school that included positive representations of LGBT topics in the curriculum

was related to a less hostile school climate. LGBT students in schools with an inclusive curriculum:

- Heard homophobic remarks less frequently. For instance, 88.0% of students in schools without an inclusive curriculum reported hearing "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently, compared to 71.6% of students in schools with an inclusive curriculum (see Figure 1.39);

- Heard negative remarks about gender expression less frequently. Two thirds of students (63.6%) in schools without an inclusive curriculum heard negative remarks about gender expression often or frequently, compared to 51.8% of students in schools with an inclusive curriculum) (see also Figure 1.39)[92];

- Felt safer. Two thirds of students (67.5%) in schools without an inclusive curriculum had felt unsafe in the past month due to their sexual orientation, compared to only 43.4% in schools with an inclusive curriculum (see Figure 1.40); and

- Reported less severe victimization. As shown in Figure 1.41, twice as many students in schools without an inclusive curriculum experienced higher severities of victimization, compared to students in schools with an inclusive curriculum (34.3% vs. 16.3% for victimization based on sexual orientation; 36.4% vs. 21.2% for victimization based on gender expression).[93]

Figure 1.38 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Number of Supportive School Staff
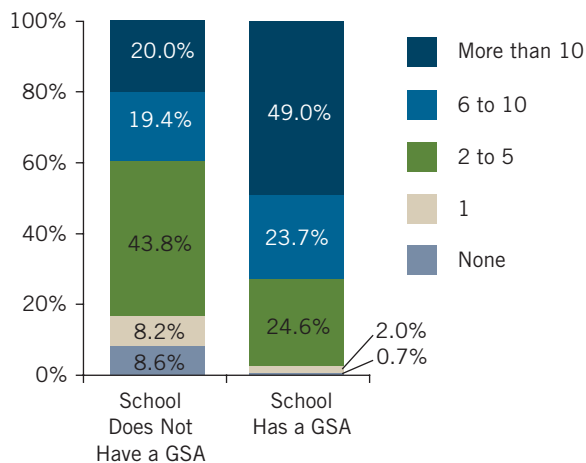
Figure 1.39 Inclusive Curriculum and Frequency of Hearing Biased Remarks
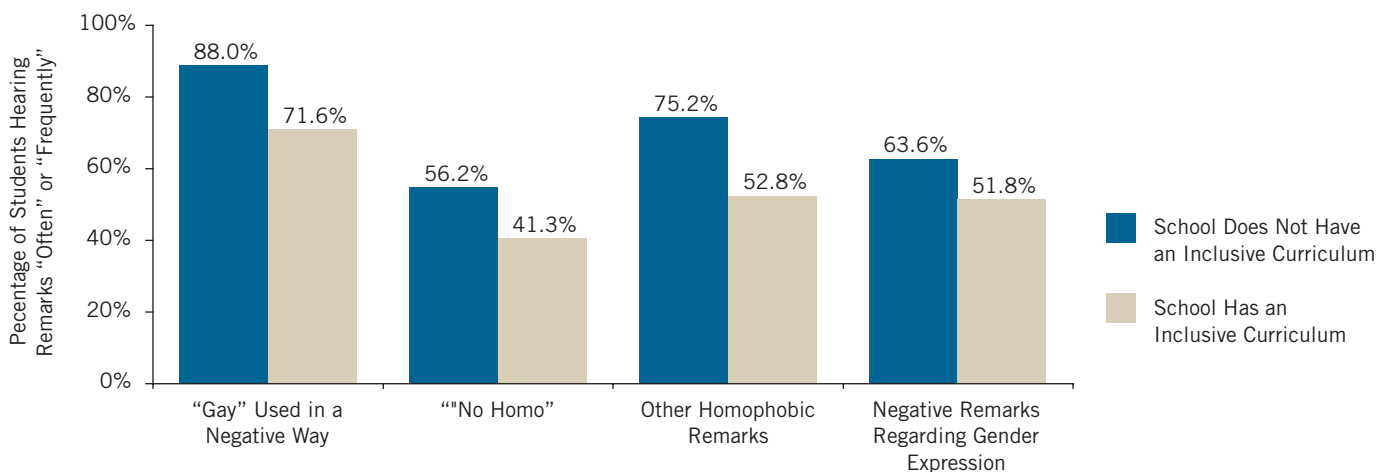
"My English teacher discussed LGBT issues often in class (in a positive light) and it felt really good to know that she was open and accepting, and if I had any major issues then I could go to her."

Absenteeism. As we saw with having a GSA, an inclusive curriculum may not only increase feelings of safety but also enhance a student's relationship with school. Students in schools with an inclusive curriculum reported higher levels of school belonging[94] and were only half as likely to report having missed school due to feeling unsafe (17.7% vs. 34.8%), perhaps because of feeling safer and more a part of their schools (see Figure 1.40).[95]

Students' Connections to School Staff. When educators include LGBT-related content in their curriculum, they may also be sending a message that they are open to discussing LGBT-related issues with their students. As depicted in Figure 1.42, students in schools with an inclusive curriculum were more likely to have had a positive or helpful conversation with a teacher about LGBT issues (84.4% vs. 55.2%). They were also much

Figure 1.40 Inclusive Curriculum and Feelings of Safety and Missing School
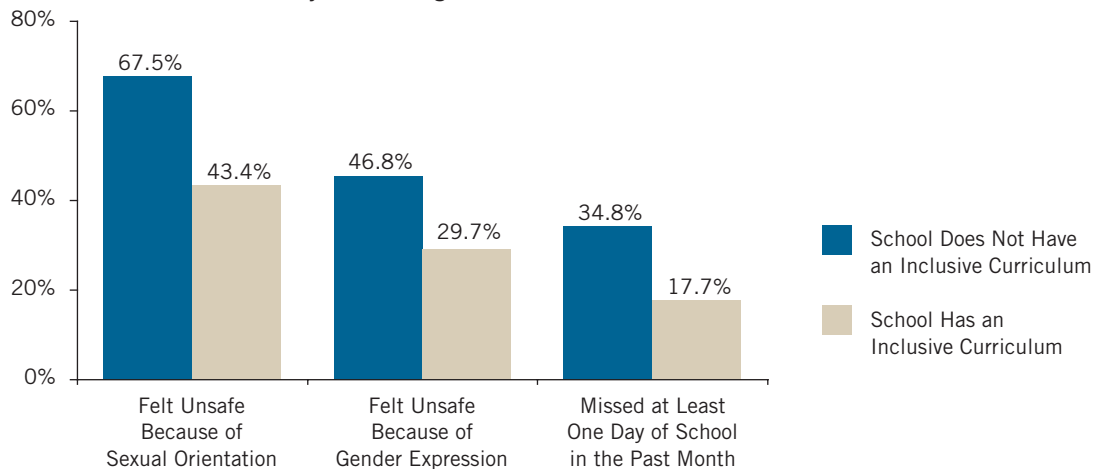
Figure 1.41 Inclusive Curriculum and Victimization
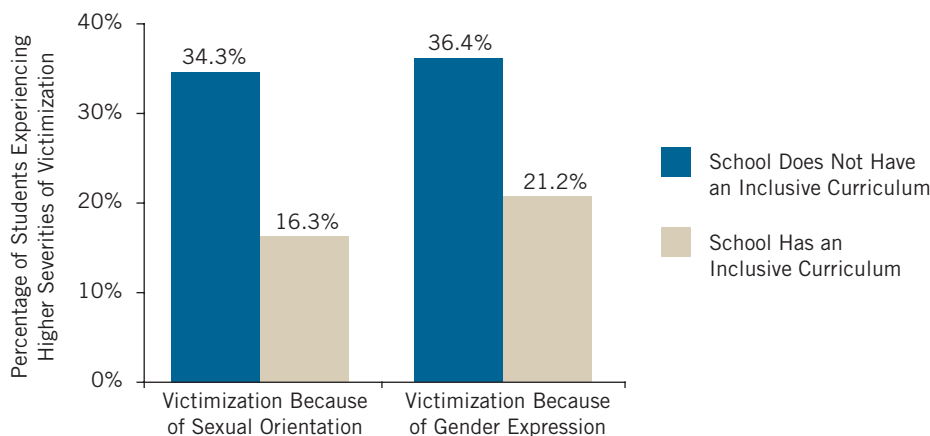
more likely to say they felt comfortable discussing these issues with their teachers than students in schools without an inclusive curriculum (72.8% vs. 47.0%).[96] In addition, by taking steps to include positive portrayals of LGBT topics in the curriculum, school staff may model a proactive and supportive stance toward LGBT issues throughout the school. Thus, an LGBT-inclusive curriculum may encourage students to speak up when they encounter biased language and bullying. Although overall rates of students' intervention in homophobic remarks was low, students in schools with an inclusive curriculum reported that other students were twice as likely to intervene as students in schools without an inclusive curriculum (11.0% vs. 4.7%).[97]

Figure 1.42 Inclusive Curriculum and Talking with Teachers About LGBT Issues

- School Does Not Have an Inclusive Curriculum
- School Has an Inclusive Curriculum
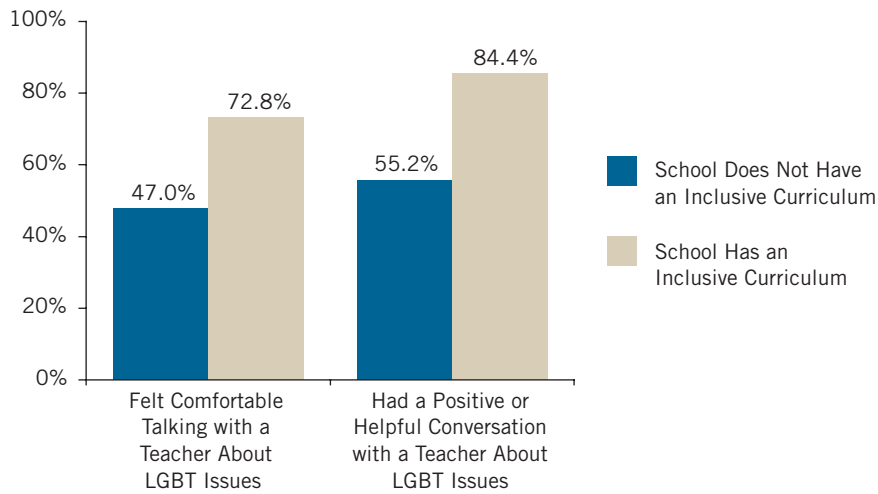
Insight on Peer Acceptance of LGBT People

Attending a school where the general student body is accepting of LGBT people may have a positive effect on the experiences of LGBT youth because it signals to LGBT youth that they are welcomed, respected, and valued members of their school community. We asked students how accepting they believed their peers were of LGBT people. Around 4 in 10 students (39.8%) said their peers were very or somewhat accepting of LGBT people; a similar number (37.1%) said their peers were not at all or not very accepting of LGBT students.

LGBT-Related Resources Promote Peer Acceptance. Peer acceptance may also be associated with institutional resources supportive of LGBT students and LGBT issues. For instance, Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) and similar clubs often serve as spaces where LGBT students and allies can socialize and support one another. In addition, GSAs can allow for students to work together to improve the school climate for LGBT students, such as organizing school-wide events, including the National Day of Silence. The inclusion of positive portrayals of LGBT topics in the classroom can help educate the general student body about LGBT issues and may help promote respect and understanding of LGBT people. Such activities may help to cultivate greater respect and acceptance of LGBT people among the student body, which in turn can foster a more positive school climate for LGBT students. Students who attended schools with a GSA and an LGBT-inclusive curriculum were much more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBT people.[98,99]

"In general, how accepting do you think students at your school are of LGBT people?"

Very Accepting 10.8%
Not At All Accepting 6.8%
Not Very Accepting 30.3%
Somewhat Accepting 28.0%
Neutral 24.1%
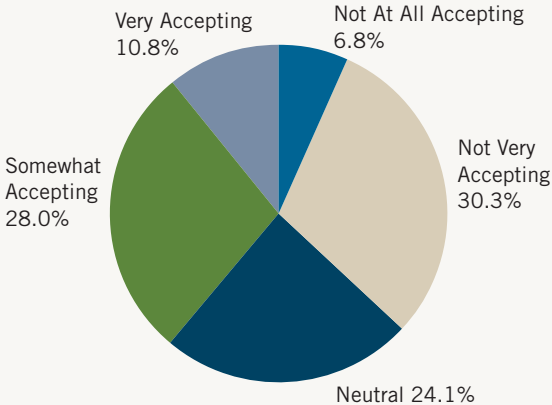
Peer Acceptance Promotes Greater Comfort in School. Attending a school in which one's peers are accepting may allow LGBT students to feel more comfortable being themselves at school. LGBT students who believed that their peers were accepting of LGBT people were more likely to be out to other students at school about their sexual orientation or gender identity: 70.1% of students in accepting schools were out to most or all of their peers, compared to only 57.2% of students who attended schools where their peers were not accepting of LGBT students.[100]

Having accepting peers at school was also related to a greater sense of belonging to the school community.[101]

These results suggest that LGBT-inclusive institutional supports, such as GSAs and inclusive curricula, may help students become more accepting of LGBT people and, by extension, more accepting of their LGBT classmates. Educating students to respect all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, is a key component of creating safer and more affirming schools for LGBT youth. In turn, this climate of greater acceptance is associated with LGBT students being able to express themselves and having a greater sense of belonging to the school community.

School Supports and Peer Acceptance of LGBT People
(percentage of students reporting that their peers were somewhat or very accepting)

GSA — Not Present 29.7%, Present 49.7%
Inclusive Currculum — Not Present 33.2%, Present 66.7%

Not Present | Present

Supportive School Personnel

Having supportive teachers and school staff can have a positive effect on the educational experiences of any student, increasing student motivation to learn and positive engagement in school.[102] Given that LGBT students often feel unsafe in school, having access to school personnel who provide support to LGBT students may be critical for creating better learning environments for LGBT students. In this report, we examined the relationships between the presence of supportive staff and several indicators of school climate, finding that the presence of school staff supportive of LGBT students is one critical piece in improving the school climate.

School Safety and Absenteeism. Having staff supportive of LGBT students was directly related to feeling safer in school and missing fewer days of school. As shown in Figure 1.43, students with many (six or more) supportive staff at their schools were much less likely to feel unsafe due to their sexual orientation (53.1% vs. 76.9%) or gender expression (36.0% vs. 53.8%), and half as likely to miss at least one day of school in the past month (21.9% vs. 51.2%).[103,104] As we saw with having a GSA and an inclusive curriculum, having supportive school personnel may not only increase feelings of safety but also enhance a student's relationship with school. Students with many supportive staff members expressed higher levels of school belonging, which is also, in turn, a predictor of positive academic outcomes.[105, 106]

Achievement and Aspirations. Given that the presence of supportive educators is related to feeling safer in school and to lower absenteeism, it stands to reason that supportive teachers would be related to a number of other factors associated with educational outcomes. Students with many supportive staff:

- Were much more likely to say they planned to attend college or other post-secondary schooling after graduation: 14.9% of students with no supportive staff said they did not plan to pursue post-secondary education, compared to only 5.1% of students with 6 or more supportive educators (see Figure 1.44)[107]; and
- Reported receiving higher grades than other students: the mean GPA for students who had no supportive staff members in their schools was substantially lower than for students who had 6 or more supportive staff members in their schools (2.9 vs. 3.2) (see Figure 1.45).[108]

Responses to Biased Remarks and Victimization. School staff members serve a vital role in ensuring a safe learning environment for all students. One of the most important actions they can take is to respond to biased language and bias-based victimization, which signals to students and other members of the school community that such behavior and language are inappropriate and unacceptable. When staff members intervened in homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression, students were less likely to feel unsafe and less likely to have missed school for

Figure 1.43 Supportive School Staff and Feelings of Safety and Missing School

Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation

Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression

Missed at Least One Day of School Because of Safety Concerns
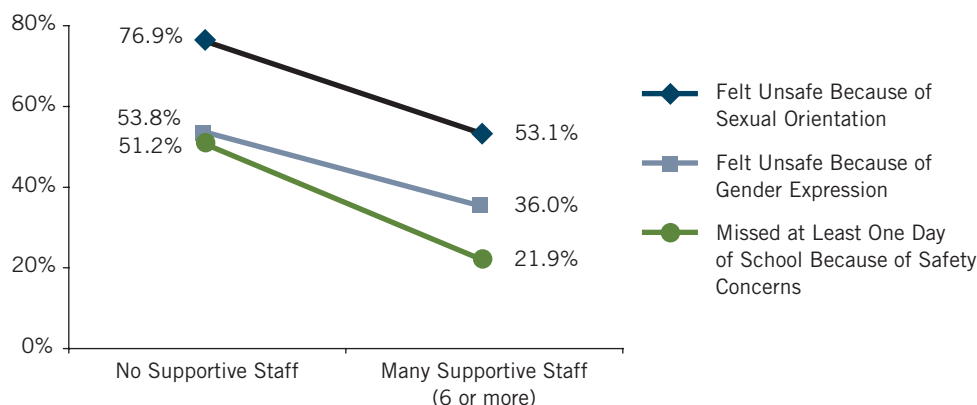
safety reasons.[109] As shown in Figure 1.46, 70.8% of students in schools where staff never intervened or only intervened some of the time in homophobic remarks said they had felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation or gender expression, compared to 51.2% of students in schools where staff intervened most or all of the time. One in three (35.9%) students in schools where school staff only sometimes or never intervened in homophobic language had missed school due to feeling unsafe, compared to only 19.2% of students in schools where staff members intervened most or all of the time (Figure 1.47).[110]

It is important for teachers to respond to biased remarks and harassment, but it also important that they do so effectively. Students who continually report harassment to school authorities and repeatedly find that nothing is done to improve

the situation may feel as though they have no other choice but to stop attending school. Clear and appropriate actions on the part of school staff regarding harassment and assault can improve the school environment for LGBT youth and may also serve to deter future acts of victimization. For example, as shown in Figure 1.48, students in schools where staff responded effectively were less likely to report higher severities of victimization based on their sexual orientation than students in schools where staff responded ineffectively (32.9% versus 59.7%).[111] These lower levels of victimization may also be related to feeling safer in school: when students believed that staff effectively addressed harassment and assault, they were less likely to feel unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression[112] and less likely to miss school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable.[113]

Figure 1.44 Supportive School Staff and Educational Aspirations
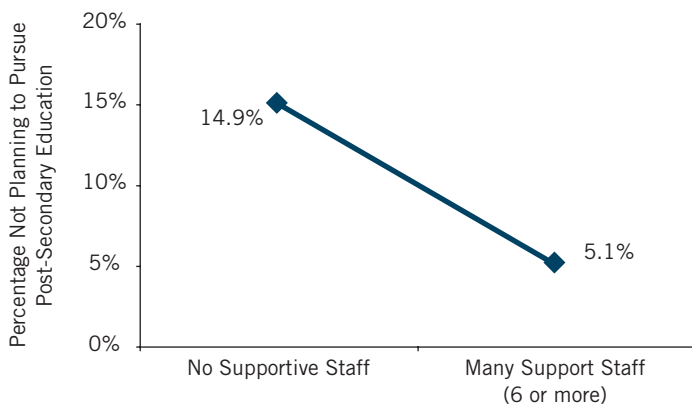
Figure 1.45 Supportive School Staff and Academic Achievement
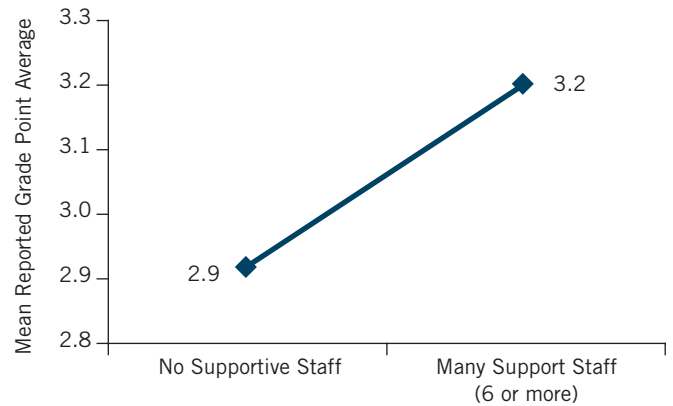
Figure 1.46 Staff Intervention in Biased Remarks and Feelings of Safety in School
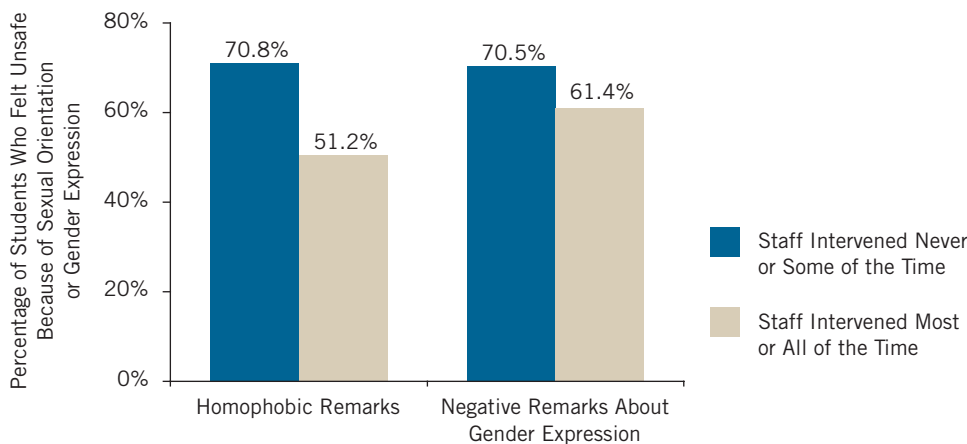
**Figure 1.47 Staff Intervention in Biased Remarks and
Missing School Due to Feeling Unsafe**

Percentage of Students Who Had Missed at Least One Day of School in the Past Month

- 35.9% Homophobic Remarks — Staff Intervened Never or Some of the Time
- 19.2% Homophobic Remarks — Staff Intervened Most or All of the Time
- 35.8% Negative Remarks About Gender Expression — Staff Intervened Never or Some of the Time
- 27.8% Negative Remarks About Gender Expression — Staff Intervened Most or All of the Time

Staff Intervened Never or Some of the Time

Staff Intervened Most or All of the Time

**Figure 1.48 Effectiveness of Reporting to School Staff
and Experiences of Victimization**

Percentage of Students Experiencing Higher Severities of Victimization

- 59.7% Victimization Because of Sexual Orientation — Reporting Was Not at All Effective or Somewhat Ineffective
- 32.9% Victimization Because of Sexual Orientation — Reporting Was Somewhat or Very Effective
- 56.7% Victimization Because of Gender Expression — Reporting Was Not at All Effective or Somewhat Ineffective
- 35.8% Victimization Because of Gender Expression — Reporting Was Somewhat or Very Effective

Reporting Was Not at All Effective or Somewhat Ineffective

Reporting Was Somewhat or Very Effective

Insight on Safe Space Stickers and Posters

Supportive teachers and other school staff members serve an important function in the lives of LGBT youth, helping them feel safer in school as well as promoting their sense of school belonging, psychological well-being, and academic performance. Safe Space stickers and posters (shown to the right) are part of GLSEN's Safe Space Kit, a resource aimed at making learning environments more positive for LGBT students. These posters and stickers are intended to provide visible evidence of staff members who are supportive of LGBT students and who can be turned to in instances of bullying.

In order to assess how widely the resource has been distributed, as well as gauge its success in identifying supportive school personnel, we asked students if they had seen the sticker or poster in their school. One fifth of students (19.3%) in this survey had spotted at least one Safe Space sticker or poster at their school; 78.5% had not seen a sticker or poster, and 2.2% were not sure whether they had.

Safe Space stickers and posters were strongly associated with LGBT students being able to identify supportive teachers at their schools.[114] For instance, 81.0% of students in schools with a Safe Space Sticker were able to identify 6 or more supportive teachers in their schools, compared to only 48.2% of students in schools where students had not seen a Safe Space sticker or poster. Moreover, almost all students (>99%) who said they had seen a Safe Space sticker or poster were able to identify at least one supportive staff member.

In addition, Safe Space stickers and posters were associated with more positive attitudes toward school staff. Students who had seen a Safe Space sticker or poster in their school were more likely to feel comfortable talking with teachers about LGBT issues – 64.9% vs. 47.6% of those who had not seen a sticker or poster.[115] In addition, students were more likely to have had a positive or helpful conversation with a teacher about LGBT issues in the past year if they also reported seeing a Safe Space sticker or poster in school: 75.1% vs. 56.3% of students in schools without a sticker or poster.

Many school staff members serve as GSA advisors or incorporate LGBT-related issues into their classes, but for staff members who do not fulfill these roles, Safe Space materials offer a demonstrable way to show support for LGBT students. Furthermore, because curricula and teacher practices may be unfamiliar or unknown to students, Safe Space stickers and posters provide a common and simple way to demonstrate support for LGBT students. Continued efforts to distribute the Safe Space Kit and associated resources may provide these benefits to more students.

Safe Space Stickers/Posters and Supportive School Staff

Number of Supportive Staff
- 6 or More
- 1 to 5
- None

Seen a Safe Space Sticker/Poster	6 or More	1 to 5	None
No	48.2%	45.7%	6.0%
Yes	81.0%	18.5%	0.4%
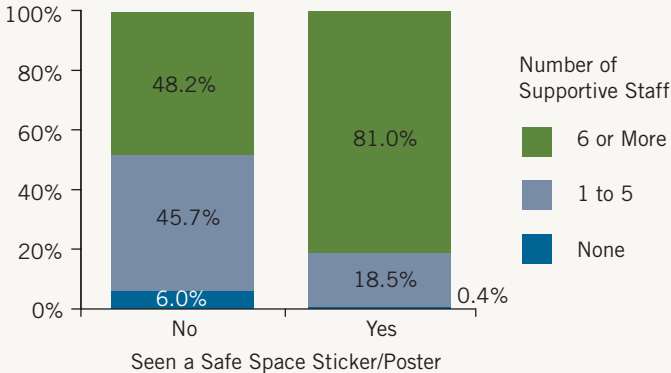
Safe Space Stickers/Posters and Talking with Teachers About LGBT Issues

Had Seen a Safe Space Sticker or Poster
- No
- Yes

	No	Yes
Felt Comfortable Talking with a Teacher About LGBT Issues	47.6%	64.9%
Had a Positive or Helpful Conversation with a Teacher About LGBT Issues	56.3%	75.1%
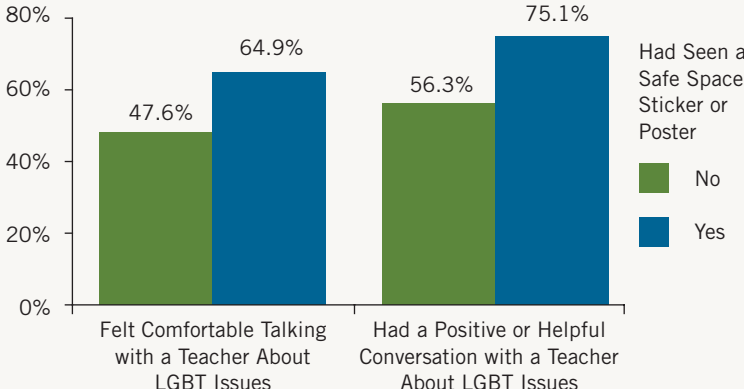
School Policies for Addressing Bullying, Harassment, and Assault

GLSEN believes that all students should have access to a safe learning environment, regardless of a student's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies are one resource believed to contribute toward this goal, as they explicitly state protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, thereby providing LGBT students with a greater degree of protection against LGBT-based victimization and associated negative experiences than more generic anti-bullying/harassment policies (i.e., policies that do not explicitly state protection based on personal characteristics, such as sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) or partially enumerated policies (i.e., policies that explicitly mention sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, but not both). Comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies may also provide school staff with the guidance needed to appropriately intervene when students use biased language and when students report incidents of harassment and assault.

School Safety. Students who attended schools with comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies reported hearing these biased remarks less frequently than students in schools with no policy, a generic policy, or only a partially enumerated policy.[116] In general, the lowest rates of biased language were heard in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partially enumerated policies (Figure 1.49). For example, 73.9% of students in schools with a comprehensive policy heard phrases like "that's

so gay" often or frequently, compared to 80.4% of students in schools with partially enumerated policies, 86.8% in schools with generic policies, and 87.3% in schools with no policy.[117]

Students in schools with comprehensive and partially enumerated policies did not differ from one another in the frequency of hearing "no homo" or negative remarks regarding gender expression. It may be that more frequently used words like "gay", "fag", and "dyke" are more clearly linked as being discriminatory towards LGBT people and, thus, more clearly addressed through comprehensive policies. Phrases like "no homo," on the other hand, may be seen as more innocuous and thus less clearly addressed even through comprehensive policies.

In most instances, not having a policy was not different from having a generic policy in terms of the frequency of hearing biased remarks. Together, these findings suggest that for policies to have the strongest possible impact on the school climate, they should specifically enumerate protection based on students' sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

LGBT students in schools with a comprehensive policy also experienced significantly lower severities of victimization related to their sexual orientation and gender expression, compared to students in schools with no policy and students in schools with a generic policy.[118] For example, as shown in Figure 1.50, 25.1% of students in schools with a comprehensive policy reported experiencing elevated severities of victimization because of their gender expression, compared

Figure 1.49 School Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies and Frequency of Hearing Biased Remarks
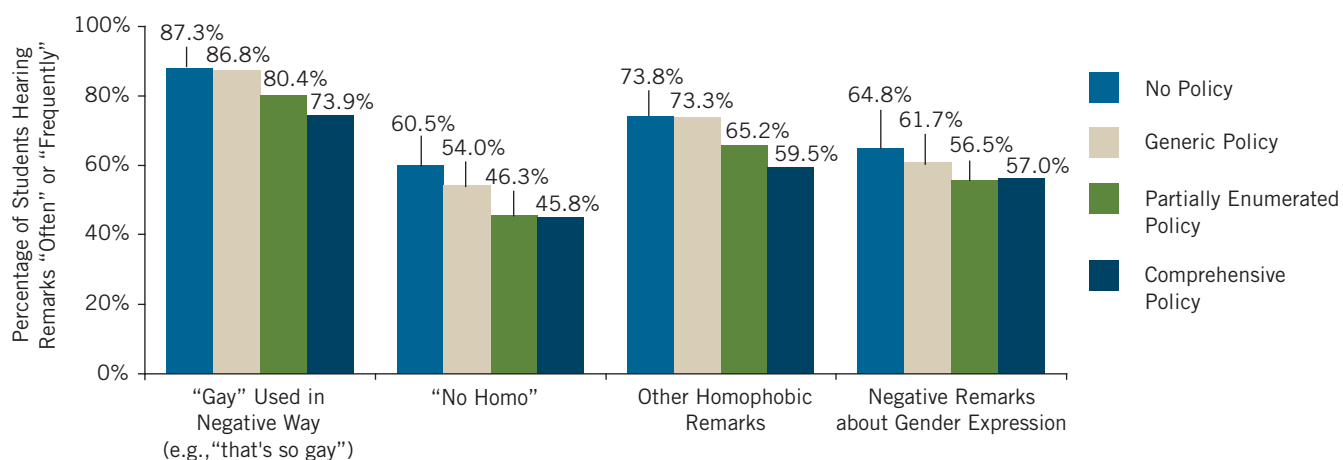
to 33.9% of students in schools with a generic policy and 37.8% of students in schools with no policy. Schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies did not differ from one another, however, on levels of victimization. Given that the majority of partially enumerated policies include sexual orientation and not gender identity, it is not surprising that there were no differences in victimization based on sexual orientation between partially and fully enumerated policies. It is more surprising that the inclusion of gender identity in bullying/harassment policies may not have affected the incidence of victimization based on gender expression.

"I've been lucky. I've grown up in a very accepting community. My school district has a very strict no-bullying policy, and nearly every single classroom has a minimum of one poster reminding all students that homophobic remarks will not be tolerated, or proclaiming the classroom a 'safe place.'"

Responses to Biased Remarks and Victimization. School anti-bullying/harassment policies provide guidance to educators in addressing incidents of harassment and biased remarks. Overall, students reported that school staff members rarely, if ever, intervene. Nevertheless, students were much more likely to say that staff intervened most of the time or frequently in schools with comprehensive policies than in schools with partially enumerated policies, generic policies, or no policy.[119] For instance, 28.3% of students in schools with comprehensive polices said teachers intervened most of the time when homophobic remarks were made, compared to 19.2% in schools with partially enumerated policies, 12.2% in schools with a generic policy, and 8.8% of schools with no policy (Figure 1.51). Similarly, students in schools with

comprehensive policies were most likely to say that reporting to school staff was effective or very effective (55.8%, compared to 42.0% or fewer of students in schools with partially enumerated, generic, or no policies) (see Figure 1.52).[120]

Students' Reporting of Victimization. Policies not only provide guidance to staff in addressing bullying and harassment, but may also signal to students that their experiences of victimization will be addressed. Comprehensive school policies were, in fact, associated with increased student reporting of incidents to school staff, as well as increased effectiveness of response when they did report incidents to schools staff. Although LGBT students did not commonly report incidents of victimization, those in schools with a comprehensive policy were twice as likely as students in other schools to say that they reported incidents of victimization most of the time or always to school staff: 25.8% of students in schools with comprehensive policies said they always reported incidents of victimization, compared to 13.8% or fewer of students in schools with partially enumerated policies, generic policies, or no policies (see Figure 1.52).[121]

Collectively, these findings suggest that comprehensive policies are more effective than other types of policies in promoting a safe school environment for LGBT students. They may be most effective in messaging to teachers and other school staff that responding to LGBT-based harassment is expected and vital. According to the students in our survey, school personnel intervened most often and most effectively when the school had a comprehensive policy. When school staff members respond effectively, it may also encourage students to report incidents of harassment: those who said that staff intervention was effective were, in fact, more likely to regularly report incidents of harassment to school staff. In addition, comprehensive policies may be effective in curtailing biased language among students—students in schools with comprehensive policies reported the lowest incidence of homophobic remarks. Thus, comprehensive policies may signal to all members of the school community that, in addition to anti-LGBT victimization, anti-LGBT remarks are not tolerated.

Figure 1.50 School Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies and Experiences of Victimization

Percentage of Students Experiencing Higher Severities of Victimization

- No Policy
- Generic Policy
- Partially Enumerated Policy
- Comprehensive Policy

Victimization Because of Sexual Orientation
36.0% / 31.9% / 23.2% / 21.7%

Victimization Because of Gender Expression
37.8% / 33.9% / 27.9% / 25.1%
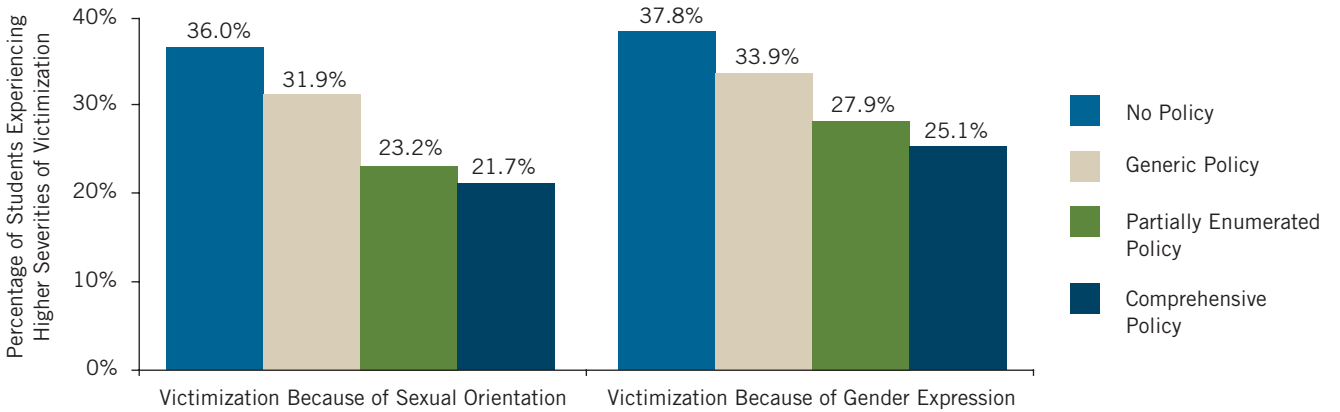
Figure 1.51 School Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies and Staff Intervention in Biased Remarks

Percentage of Students Reporting That Staff Intervened "Most of the Time" or "Always"

- No Policy
- Generic Policy
- Partially Enumerated Policy
- Comprehensive Policy

Intervention in Homophobic Remarks
8.8% / 12.2% / 19.2% / 28.3%

Intervention in Negative Remarks About Gender Expression
8.4% / 10.5% / 10.6% / 19.0%
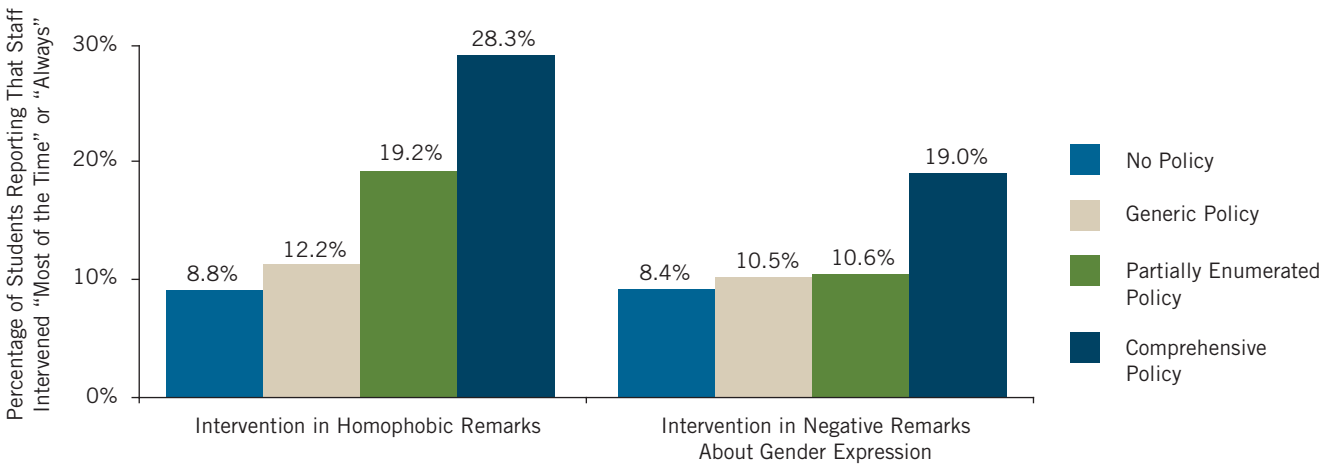
Figure 1.52 School Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies and Reporting Incidents and Effectiveness

- No Policy
- Generic Policy
- Partially Enumerated Policy
- Comprehensive Policy

Reporting Victimization to School Staff "Most of the Time" or "Always"
10.2% / 13.6% / 13.8% / 25.8%

Reporting to School Staff Was "Somewhat Effective" or "Very Effective"
28.6% / 36.1% / 42.0% / 55.8%
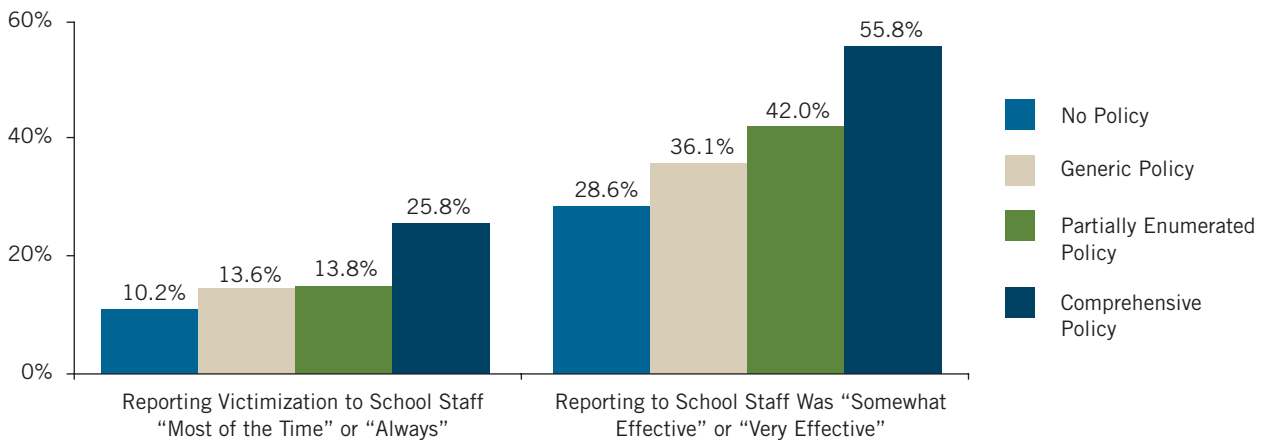
Insight on State Bullying Laws

Along with school-level safe school policies, state-level laws that specifically address bullying and harassment in schools may add further protections regarding student safety. Currently, 15 states, as well as the District of Columbia, prohibit bullying or harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (i.e., comprehensive laws).[122] Thirty-three states currently have statewide "anti-bullying" laws that do not enumerate protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (i.e., generic laws). Only two states have no anti-bullying laws at all.[123] For students who are or are perceived to be LGBT, the added protection from an anti-bullying law may result only when sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression are explicitly included among other enumerated categories of protection, such as race/ethnicity, gender, or religion. Thus, we examined whether there were differences by type of law in the frequency of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, students' reporting of victimization to school staff, their assessment of the effectiveness of staff intervention regarding victimization, and the availability of LGBT-related resources.

Students who lived in states with comprehensive anti-bullying policies reported less hostile school climates and more positive LGBT-related resources in school. In that so few states remain that have no anti-bullying/harassment legislation, safe school advocates and education leaders may need to turn their attention to how effectively state laws are implemented—for example, examining how effective the laws are in ensuring comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies at the district level, and understanding the key factors that facilitate local adoption of state laws (e.g., having a model policy for districts to use).

LGBT students from states with comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment laws reported lower levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation and gender identity/expression than students from states with generic laws and states with no laws. Yet, students did not differ by policy type on the likelihood of reporting.[124]

LGBT students from states with comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment laws were more likely to report having a comprehensive school or district policy as well as a greater number of supportive school staff.[125]

Although there were no differences by state law in the frequency of reporting victimization, there were differences in how effective staff intervention was perceived. LGBT students from states with comprehensive laws were more likely to find staff intervention effective compared to others.

Victimization by Type of State Anti-Bullying Law

Mean of Weighted Victimization Score
(accounting for covariates)

■ Comprehensive Law   ■ Generic Law   ■ No Law

School Supports by Type of State Anti-Bullying Law

Comprehensive School/District Policy: 11.3% / 5.2% / 7.4%

Supportive Staff (6 or more): 59.0% / 54.8% / 49.7%

Effectiveness of Staff Intervention in Victimization (Very or Somewhat Effective): 40.6% / 37.4% / 33.6%

Percentage of Student Reports
(based on estimated marginal means)

Discriminatory School Policies and Practices

Key Findings

- More than one fifth of students said that their schools or school personnel discriminate against LGBT people through formal or informal policies and practices.

- Students commonly said that their schools discriminated against LGBT relationships through rules about public displays of affection (PDA) and policies against same sex/gender couples at school functions.

- Students also said that they were prevented from discussing LGBT issues in the school setting, even as staff and students were allowed to use biased language.

- Students also expressed feeling invisible in the school setting, since their classes rarely included LGBT-related curricular content, and school policies against harassment/bullying did not specifically protect them.

Hearing homophobic and negative remarks about gender expression in the hallways and directly experiencing victimization from other students are overt contributions to a hostile climate for LGBT students. In contrast, school-based resources—GSAs, supportive staff, inclusive curricula, and inclusive policies—are associated with less victimization and more welcoming school climates, as reported in the Utility of School Resources and Supports section of this report. Nevertheless, schools and school personnel may make use of less overt policies and practices—which may in fact be more systemic—that can contribute to negative experiences for LGBT students and make them feel less a part of the school community. For this reason, in the 2011 National School Climate Survey, we asked students to describe ways they felt their schools discriminate against LGBT people. More than one in five (21.6%) students described ways that their schools or school personnel discriminate against LGBT people, including through formal or official school or district-level policies, as well as through unwritten or informal school or district-level policies and practices by school personnel.

Policies and Practices that Discriminate Against LGBT Relationships

Some of the most common forms of discrimination mentioned by students were policies or practices that reinforce male-female couples as the norm (30.9% of students who responded to the question—see Table 1.7). By maintaining different standards for same-gender/sex couples, LGBT students may feel that they are not accepted in their school environment. In addition, events that are meant to encourage school participation and school belonging, like school dances, may have the opposite effect on LGBT students. Many students remarked that same-gender/sex couples were not allowed to attend school dances together, or were penalized for doing so, such as being ineligible for "couple discounts":

> It is cheaper to buy two Prom tickets as a couple ($90 for couple, $60 for single), but same sex partners are not allowed to buy tickets as a couple. (Female student, 9th grade, CT)

Many respondents also said that only heterosexual pairings were eligible for distinctions like "Prom Couple" or "Homecoming King and Queen."

Students wrote that other school activities, such as "matchmaking fundraisers" and Valentine's Day events, typically acknowledged heterosexual relationships:

> The seniors fill out what's called a "who's who" which picks people for funny categories (like "Most school spirit" and "Most likely to sleep through graduation"). This year, the school board took away the "Cutest couple" because the whole school vowed to vote for a lesbian couple. They replaced it with an "Always seen together" category, but it had two selections that had to be a boy and a girl. (Male student, 12th grade, OH)

> A 'matchmaker' survey that was handed out before the winter ball to match up single teens with possible dates did not ask sexual preference; I was matched with boys even though I am a lesbian. (Female student, 9th grade, WA)

When LGBT students were permitted to attend school functions (such as dances) with a same-gender date, they were often required to go through extra steps, such as speak with a principal and sign a form declaring their relationship, or have a parent express approval or knowledge of the arrangement:

> We must have our parents/guardians sign a consent form if we want to bring a member of the same sex to prom as our date and get the "couples discount." (Female student, 11th grade, NM)

Many students also said that public display of affection (PDA) was only addressed when it involved two persons of the same gender, or that it was punished more severely when two same-gender students were involved. LGBT students commonly said that teachers would yell at them or physically break them up, whereas opposite-gender/sex couples were granted much more leniency in displays of affection.

Furthermore, some students in our survey reported that they had received detention or suspension for PDA when their non-LGBT counterparts had not been punished or had received much milder punishments:

> It's not written anywhere, but when a security guard or administrator sees two guys or two

girls hold hands or kissing and such, they usually get yelled at to move away from each other, whereas straight couples aren't bothered. (Female student, 11th grade, FL)

If a heterosexual couple holds hands in the hallway, they are ignored. If a homosexual couple (or even two girls/two guys who are just friends) holds hands in the hallway, they are reprimanded and given detention. (Other gender student, 9th grade, NM)

Finally, a small but concerning number of students reported that school personnel had revealed their sexuality to their parents, often as the result of disciplinary action for engaging in PDA:

If there is PDA in the hallway, a heterosexual couple will be told to go back to class but a homosexual couple will be suspended and parents notified of their actions. Many parents don't even know about their child until the school tells them that they are gay. (Female student, 12th grade, NC)

Table 1.7 Discriminatory Policies and Practices Reported by Students (n=1853)		
	students reporting specific response	
	%	number
Policies and Practices that Discriminate Against LGBT Relationships	**30.9%**	**(n=572)**
Rules Regarding Dances and School Functions	20.3%	(n=376)
Enforcement of Public Displays of Affection	11.9%	(n=221)
Violations of Student Privacy	0.9%	(n=17)
Policies and Practices that Reinforce Gender Boundaries around Dress	**14.1%**	**(n=262)**
Policies and Practices that Segregate School Activities Based on Gender	**4.7%**	**(n=87)**
Policies and Practices that Particularly Affect Transgender Students	**9.3%**	**(n=172)**
Gender-Segregated Locker Rooms and Gyms	5.6%	(n=103)
Use of Gendered Pronouns and Legal Sex	0.6%	(n=11)
Policies and Practices that Limit Discussion of LGBT Issues	**20.6%**	**(n=381)**
Suppression of GSA Efforts	7.9%	(n=146)
Restrictions on LGBT-Related Self Expression	12.7%	(n=236)
Limits on Discussion of LGBT Issues in the Class and School Activities	1.8%	(n=34)
Suppression of Staff Support for LGBT Students/Issues	0.8%	(n=14)
Staff Practices that Promote Negative Attitudes toward LGBT People	**19.8%**	**(n=367)**
Use of Biased Language	12.8%	(n=237)
Anti-LGBT Content in Classes	2.9%	(n=54)
Non-Intervention in Biased Language and Victimization	9.6%	(n=178)
Differential Enforcement toward LGBT Students	1.1%	(n=20)
Absence of Supportive Policies and Practices	**11.7%**	**(n=216)**
Lack of LGBT Curricular Content	5.4%	(n=100)
Lack of LGBT-Related School Resources	1.6%	(n=30)
Non-Inclusion in Bullying and Harassment Policies	5.2%	(n=97)
Other Discriminatory Experiences in Schools	**4.2%**	**(n=77)**

Note: Reported percentages are based on the number of respondents to this question.

"The only time males are allowed to wear 'female clothes' is if they are trying to be 'funny'. Those displays come off to me as sexist, homophobic, and transphobic."

Thus, some school personnel may divulge personal information to families that an LGBT student is not yet ready or equipped to discuss. Divulging this information to parents may put some LGBT students at risk, as LGBT youth may be heightened risk for being forced to leave their home compared to non-LGBT youth.[126,127] Accordingly, it is disconcerting that school personnel potentially risk the safety and well-being of LGBT youth by reporting students' LGBT identity to their parents.

Policies and Practices that Reinforce Gender Boundaries around Dress

A sizeable number of students (14.1% of those who responded to the question) also felt limited by policies and practices that sought to restrict or prescribe gender identity, gender roles, and gender expression. Students commonly mentioned gender-specific dress codes, such that male students were not allowed to wear "feminine" clothing, and to a slightly lesser extent, female students were not allowed to wear "masculine" clothing.

Rules about appropriate dress emerged in everyday school settings, where males were discouraged from wearing jewelry, makeup, and clothes typically worn by women, and women from wearing pants (if skirts or dresses were otherwise required). Many transgender students said that these rules often forced them to present themselves as someone they were not:

> The school code says that students are free to dress in whatever manner they please to express themselves. In the next sentence, however, it goes on to say that it must fall within "standard of society." This particular phrase is vague, but the way it is used to often discriminatory. They have used this part of the code to send kids home for choosing to wear clothing typically exclusive to the opposite sex. (Transgender student, 12th grade, IL)

> Boys can't wear makeup and girls clothing, and girls are constantly being scolded by teachers for dressing more like men. We are told on an almost regular basis that we can't dress in a way that doesn't reflect our physical gender. (Transgender student, 8th grade, AZ)

Gender-specific dress codes were also enforced at official school functions like dances, at which males could not wear dresses and females could not wear tuxedos, and graduation, at which different colored robes were specified by gender (i.e., male color and female color):

> Females that attend school dances at my high school are not allowed to wear anything other than dresses. A friend of mine was not permitted into a school dances because she was wearing a suit. (Female student, 9th grade, WV)

Many students also noted that, regardless of their current gender identity/expression, students whose legal sex (i.e., sex was male according to school documents) were ineligible for distinctions like "Homecoming/Prom Queen," and students whose legal sex was female were ineligible to run for "Homecoming/Prom King." These policies/practices posed obvious problems for transgender students, and also reinforced the emphasis on couples composed of one male and one female referenced above:

> I asked if students of the male sex but female gender or vice versa could run for homecoming/prom court, and the Dean of Student Activities said they would have to run under the student's sex, not gender. (Transgender student, 12th grade, IL)

Some students described school functions in which students were permitted to wear clothes typically worn by the opposite gender, but that these functions disparaged nonconforming gender expression:

It is a tradition of my school to host an event called "The Senior Year Powder Puff Football Game." During this event, cheerleaders swap roles with the football players, and vice versa. The cheerleaders play a full four quarter game, and a select group of football players (the jokesters, and most brazen) put on drag and perform a sexually suggestive half-time show. However instead of encouraging acceptance and individuality, the "football game" and "half-time show" make a mockery of transgendered people and people who do not fit their expected gender roles. The students and their teacher sponsors present the concept as nothing more than an outlandish joke, and the only role those people can fill in society is that of a quick guffaw. (Male student, 10th grade, AZ)

Policies and Practices that Segregate School Activities Based on Gender

Students also reported that their schools restricted participation in courses, sports, or other school activities according to gender (4.7% of students who described discriminatory policies or practices). For instance, some students had been told that cheerleading and dance were permitted only for girls. Others had been segregated on the basis of gender during activities like graduation:

Many activities, including graduation, separate students. The boys do this, girls do this. I know a few trans students who refuse to come to school those days, so they don't have to confront the gender-based activity. (Female student, 12th grade, MD)

I am a transgender student, so the way teachers often say "girls can't play with boys in P.E.," "You're a girl, so you have to read a girl part in the play," and other things like that, despite the fact that I insist I am male, feels insulting to me, as though they are forcing me to be someone I am not. (Transgender student, 8th grade, LA)

Some students also reported that school personnel promoted gender segregation by academic subjects. Many times, these restrictions imposed a double standard on boys and girls and curtailed opportunities even for students whose gender expression could be considered more traditional:

If guys take classes that may be feminine, such as textiles or floral design, the teachers will not accept guys into the class, but if it is a guy class, such as woodshop or metal working, girls are very easily accepted, no questions asked. (Male student, 10th grade, MT)

Policies and Practices that Particularly Affect Transgender Students

Gender restrictions also emerged as an issue for transgender students and students with other genders in policies/practices regarding restrooms and locker rooms and in formal recognition in class and official documents (10.0% of those who responded to the question). Some students said that they were only permitted to use the bathrooms or locker rooms of their legal sex, which sometimes exposed them to danger from other students or personal discomfort. In addition, schools sometimes maintained rigid policies for sharing rooms on overnight trips or in boarding schools, which posed problems for transgender students:

Male/female locker rooms made for a difficult time. A trans friend of mine (female to male) was not allowed to use the male locker rooms. Before this incident, no one knew he was biologically female. He got made fun of mercilessly. (Female student, 12th grade, NH)

There are no integrated gym classes and if one is uncomfortable with being in a specific locker room, they are still made to change in the locker room of their assigned sex. (Transgender student, 11th grade, CO)

In addition, some transgender students said that they felt discriminated against by school forms and documents that provided only binary gender options, or by the refusal of school personnel to address them by their preferred pronouns or names:

There is no way for trans students to register their preferred name in the records, such as for attendance. (Transgender student, 12th grade, WI)

Some teachers refuse to call trans students by their preferred names/pronouns. (Other gender student, 12th grade, MI)

Policies and Practices that Limit Discussion of LGBT Issues

Students also said that school policies and practices curtailed personal expression around LGBT topics and issues (20.6% of those who reported discriminatory policies and practices). For instance, many students said that the school administration had prevented or strongly opposed the development of a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or otherwise supportive group for LGBT students:

> Several students attempted to start a Gay/ Straight Alliance at my school and weren't allowed to, despite the existence of other social or political clubs, such as a Pro-Life club. When pressed, the school board insisted that the school either allow the GSA to be instated or to disband all non-academic clubs; the school elected to disband all non-academic clubs rather than allow the GSA. (Female student, 12th grade, LA)

These restrictions often resulted in a double standard for LGBT students compared to non-LGBT students. Even when GSAs were permitted, their activities were often strongly restricted. Many students said that they were prevented from hanging posters or making announcements over the school PA system that advertised the GSA or LGBT-related events, such as the Day of Silence:

> They refuse to let the GSA use the intercom to announce club meeting changes or school-wide events like Day of Silence, while every other club can. We also can't put up posters. (Transgender student, 10th grade, CA)

> We are not allowed to have posters up for our Gay Straight Alliance because the word "gay"

"They refuse to acknowledge the GSA as a 'real' club. They do not pay the stipend to our advisor as they do for other clubs."

is considered "offensive." We also were not allowed to talk openly about National Day of Silence (on school announcements or in class before the day). (Transgender student, 10th grade, AZ)

Similarly, many students said that they were restricted from displaying or discussing LGBT-related issues in the school setting, often because school personnel believed that discussing these issues would be disruptive and potentially make the student population feel uncomfortable:

> My high school recently got rid of the Day of Silence—the only LGBT event in our school. They believed allowing the Day of Silence would have started "trouble." Though, in the past, nothing bad has ever happened during this event. (Male student, 12th grade, FL)

> Both principals have stated to one girl that she couldn't wear her rainbow bracelets or anything LGBT oriented because it caused a distraction. (Male student, 12th grade, TN)

In religious and/or private schools, this restriction was sometimes accompanied by the threat of expulsion:

> "Homosexual activity" is considered an expulsionable offense. That includes simply being gay or coming out. Needless to say, I wasn't "out." (Male student, 12th grade, GA)

A few students indicated that they had been restricted from speaking in class about LGBT issues, or from focusing assignments on LGBT-related topics, such as writing about the history of the LGBT rights movement or a personal reflection on their coming out experience:

> This year I was in a college prep English class, and our assignment was to pick a topic and write a report on. The topic I chose pertained to "gay" related issues, so my school told me the paper was too controversial. This meant I would either have to re-write the paper or drop the class. (Male student, 12th grade, LA)

Some students also mentioned that they were restricted from school activities, such as sports teams, simply because their presence as an LGBT person would be seen as disruptive:

A very talented football player was asked to leave the team because his sexuality made other students "uncomfortable." (Other gender student, 10th grade, NY)

I can't join some sports because they say it's not appropriate for me. They also say that the other students on the team wouldn't want a gay student to play on the team and mess things up. (Male student, 9th grade, CA)

Some students mentioned how the practice of restricting potentially "disruptive" messages was not consistently enforced, revealing a double-standard for LGBT and non-LGBT students:

One specific thing I remember is people can wear hustler and playboy shirts that clearly advertise nudity, while I can't be allowed to wear a shirt that says "Can't think straight" with a rainbow, or "I'm not a lesbian but my girlfriend is" to school. (Female student, 8th grade, MT)

Some students reported that these restrictions were also applied to teachers. A few students reported that teachers were discouraged from supporting LGBT issues at school; some had been fired or threatened with the loss of their jobs for supporting LGBT activities at school:

Teachers are not allowed to discuss LGTBQ topics, inside or outside of school, or defend LGTBQ students' rights, and will be fired if they do so. (Female student, 11th grade, WI)

We had a band director who was a lesbian. She was not blatant with her sexuality, but many of the parents didn't want their children exposed to 'it.' So my principal and superintendent asked her to leave. It was clearly about discrimination. (Female student, 11th grade, MS)

Staff Practices That Promote Negative Attitudes toward LGBT People

LGBT students also described feeling discriminated against because teachers and school personnel personally promoted negative attitudes toward LGBT people, or because they otherwise permitted negative attitudes about LGBT people to be promoted throughout the school (19.6% of students who responded to the question). Some

students said that school staff directly promoted negative attitudes toward LGBT people through their language or behavior:

The school principal leads the students to believe that their masculinity defines their worth as a man. He shows this by making sexist remarks, and by saying things that relate to sexual orientation. (Male student, 11th grade, TX)

Many of my teachers have spoken about how they are "disgusted" by homosexuals and all of the students around me agree, which sometimes makes me ashamed, uncomfortable, and angry. (Male student, 11th grade, AL)

Athletics will not accept gay or lesbian students on varsity regardless of ability. It isn't a written or official policy but the coaches enforce it. (Female student, 12th grade, MN)

At times, discriminatory language or lessons occurred in more formal contexts, such as the school curriculum. For instance, students reported that courses sometimes featured anti-LGBT content, such as emphasizing marriage between only a man and a woman in government and religion courses, or referencing homosexuality only when discussing sexually transmitted infections (STIs):

The psych class holds a debate of whether homosexuality is Nature/ Nurture, which gave kids an open forum to basically bash homosexuality, which was during the week of National Wear Purple Day. I went home and cried that day. (Male student, 12th grade, MA)

In Biology, the spread of AIDS is synonymous with the gay community and is taught in such a manner. (Male student, 9th grade, TX)

Some students also said that they felt discriminated against when teachers, school administration, and other school staff failed to respond to incidents of harassment or biased language among students. By virtue of not intervening, students felt that school staff implicitly promoted anti-LGBT behaviors and ideas:

Many groups of people "gay bash" LGBT students at my school and nobody does anything about it. It's really sad, and I've tried to get it to stop, but nothing works. Everybody

makes excuses for them, saying that it's okay because of their religion and other things. (Male student, 10th grade, WA)

It isn't so much a policy, but more a practice, I guess. It's an unwillingness exhibited by teachers to get involved in harassment and bullying over sexuality/gender identity, as if it isn't a legitimate cause. They hear things like "faggot" yelled across their classroom, look up, and look back down. (Female student, 9th grade, AZ)

In some cases, LGBT students said they were assumed to hold more blame and/or punished more severely than non-LGBT students in response to instances of bullying, or were themselves blamed as the cause for homophobic remarks:

When it comes to a student's sexual orientation, our school officials blame the [victimized] student for bullying and move them away from the spot where they were bullied rather than face the bullies. (Female student, 10th grade, IA)

Even though there is a code against it, kids who are bullied for whatever reasons are never helped, especially if it's for an LGBT reason,

"When two guys are fighting and touching each other in a class, the teacher will insinuate one of them has a crush on the other. I guess this is like, punishment through humiliation? But it makes me feel like being gay is something to feel ashamed of."

and they often get in trouble soon after and are accused of something they may or may not have done. (Female student, 11th grade, NM)

Absence of Supportive Policies and Practices

In the Utility of School Resources and Supports section, we learned about the positive effects of school-based LGBT-related resources. LGBT students also described the negative effects when these resources were not available, and suggested that the absence of resources could be discriminatory as well (11.3% of students who responded to the question).

As mentioned above, LGBT students reported feeling discriminated against when they were taught negative things about LGBT people, but they also expressed feeling discriminated against when their courses were devoid of LGBT-related curricular content. For instance, health and sex education classes often only presented information on heterosexual sex, and courses such as history and literature failed to include any information on LGBT figures or scholarship:

Everything is treated from a heteronormative point of view. You don't learn anything about LGBT rights or important figures and events in the gay rights movement. Health classes hardly address the concerns of LGBT students. Everyone is assumed to be straight and the health curriculum is taught from that standpoint. I think that gay students should have greater access to information about safe sex and other issues that might affect them, and not have to feel like it's a huge bother to the school. Because my school's health program ignores the gay students, I have been pretty clueless about safe sex. I had to find information on my own on the internet because non-straight students are ignored. (Female student, 12th grade, NM)

In addition, a few students reported that that textbooks and other curricular resources failed to include LGBT-related information, or that access to such information was restricted. LGBT-related websites were blocked through school computers, even those of LGBT community or national organizations, such as GLSEN or PFLAG. Other students said that their libraries contained no LGBT-related books, and that this was sometimes done intentionally:

There is no LGBT material allowed in the library. There were two books in there last year and the school board had them banned and removed. (Female student, 12th grade, NJ)

A friend and I were doing a report on equal rights and we wanted to do some research on the school computer but we couldn't access anything with the word gay or homosexual in it. (Female student, 11th grade, NM)

Many students also said that their schools' official bullying policies failed to recognize sexual orientation and gender expression, sometimes intentionally, and that they perceived this absence to be discriminatory:

The school does not have any policies or practices that support LGBT students. The school is not open about this subject and does nothing to improve the condition. (Male student, 10th grade, NM)

The Discrimination and Bullying policy doesn't state sexual orientation, and when we ask why, their answer is because 'it's not important, we don't have gays in our school district and nobody gets harassed about it here.' (Female student, 11th grade, WI)

Finally, a few students noted that school personnel were either unwilling or unprepared to deal with the needs of LGBT students, perhaps suggesting that teacher training and development failed to include LGBT-related issues:

It's mostly about one transgender friend that I have who's not getting the support he needs from some members of the administration. It's not like we really expected him to, though. (Other gender student, 11th grade, AL)

There are many policies and practices that discriminate, but one that particularly bugs me is that the counselors are not skilled in handling LGBT students. (Male student, 8th grade, CA)

"I asked my health teacher a question about gender identity and he said he was sorry, but the county doesn't allow him to tell us about homo/bisexuality."

Other Discriminatory Experiences in Schools

Students described other ways they experienced discrimination at school as well (4.2% of students who responded to the question). Some students mentioned that their experiences at school were also influenced by traditions and institutions in ways that reminded them of their marginalization in broader society.

The flag salute says justice for all. Then why can't we choose who to marry? (Male student, 11th grade, Washington)

The pledge is put over the loud speaker and there is no way that "liberty and justice" is as easy to obtain when you are LGBTQ. (Male student, 11th grade, Colorado)

Several students specifically mentioned that they felt discriminated against because they were excluded from blood drives:

My school has several blood drives per year, in which participants receive a reward. I am legally not allowed to participate because of the MSM [men who have sex with men] blood ban, yet the school does not change its policy. This has been brought to the attention of administration, and they do nothing. (Male student, 12th grade, NC)

LGBT students also experienced negative interactions with students who were members of religious clubs, and sometimes with political-oriented clubs, in the school setting:

We have many religious groups and clubs that strictly teach that being a homosexual student is morally wrong. (Male student, 11th grade, IN)

> The Religion Club has a huge number of Christian students involved, and the leaders preach against the LGBT community. (Female student, 12th grade, MI)

> The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the only religion-oriented activity at the school, holds meetings in the auditorium before 8 AM, and I've personally listened outside the door to hear them discuss homosexuality as being "demeaning to mankind." (Other gender student, 9th grade, TN)

Although students do not give up their First Amendment rights when they enter school, school personnel do have the ability to restrict certain types of speech that could disrupt schools' educational mission, including that which could be considered harassment. Discerning what is protected or disruptive may be difficult for educators, and the responses from the students in our survey point to a possible inconsistent application of First Amendment rights to the detriment of LGBT students' experience. Educators may defer to free speech protections when biased comments are made on the basis of religion because religious speech is so widely understood to be protected. At the same time, educators may restrict the mention of LGBT issues because the topic is more likely to be deemed disruptive.

Together, these accounts suggest that LGBT students face discrimination in a range of ways throughout the school setting. Often, policies and practices appear to target LGBT students specifically. LGBT relationships are more stringently opposed than non-LGBT relationships, and LGBT students are restricted from violating dress codes built on strict boundaries around gender expression. Other privileges commonly afforded to students, such as participation in students groups, are often curtailed for LGBT students as well. Although school personnel sometimes attempt to avoid discussing or addressing LGBT-related issues in schools, LGBT students recognize that these policies and practices expose them to continued victimization from other students, disparaging remarks from teachers, and biased curricular content. In addition, they render LGBT students and LGBT-related issues invisible, further weakening LGBT students' capacity to be regarded as full members of the school community.

PART 2: DEMOGRAPHIC AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTIC DIFFERENCES

Demographic Comparisons in Safety and Victimization

Key Findings

- African American/Black and Asian/Pacific Islander LGBT students were less likely than other groups to report feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.

- Transgender students were more likely than other students to experience harassment and assault based on their gender expression.

- Gender nonconforming students were more victimized, felt less safe, and missed more days of school due to feeling unsafe than students whose gender expression conformed to traditional norms.

LGBT students are a diverse population, and although they may share some experiences related to school climate, such as safety concerns related to their sexual orientation and gender expression, these experiences may also vary by students' personal characteristics. For this reason, we examined whether LGBT students' sense of safety and experiences of harassment and assault related to sexual orientation and gender expression differed by race or ethnicity and gender identity. Although we would expect that students' own experiences of safety and harassment might vary by these demographic characteristics, we would not expect the availability of school-based LGBT-related resources (e.g., presence of GSAs or bullying/ harassment policies) to differ by students' personal characteristics, above and beyond the difference in the types of schools they attend. Thus, we did not examine relationships between student demographics and the availability of school-based resources.

Comparisons by Race and Ethnicity

We examined potential differences in LGBT students' experiences of safety and victimization at school based on sexual orientation or gender expression across racial/ethnic groups (White or European American, Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, and multiracial).[128] Across groups, sizable percentages of students reported feeling unsafe and being harassed at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression. For example, as shown in Figure 2.2, more than half of each group reported experiencing

high frequencies (sometimes or greater) of verbal harassment based on sexual orientation in the past year at school. However, Black/African American and Asian/Pacific Islander were somewhat less likely than other groups to report having had these experiences.[129,130]

Specifically, Black/African American LGBT students in our survey were less likely to have:

- Felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression than Hispanic/ Latino, White/ European American, and multiracial students (see Figure 2.1);
- Experienced verbal harassment, physical harassment, or physical assault at school because of their sexual orientation than multiracial students and White/European American students (see Figure 2.2); and
- Experienced verbal or physical harassment because of their gender expression than multiracial students (see Figure 2.3).

Asian/Pacific Islander LGBT students were less likely to have:

- Felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation than Hispanic/Latino, White/ European American, or multiracial students (see also Figure 2.1); and
- Experienced verbal harassment, physical harassment, or physical assault based on sexual orientation or gender expression than Hispanic/Latino, White/European American, or multiracial students (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3).

Figure 2.1 Sense of Safety at School by Race or Ethnicity
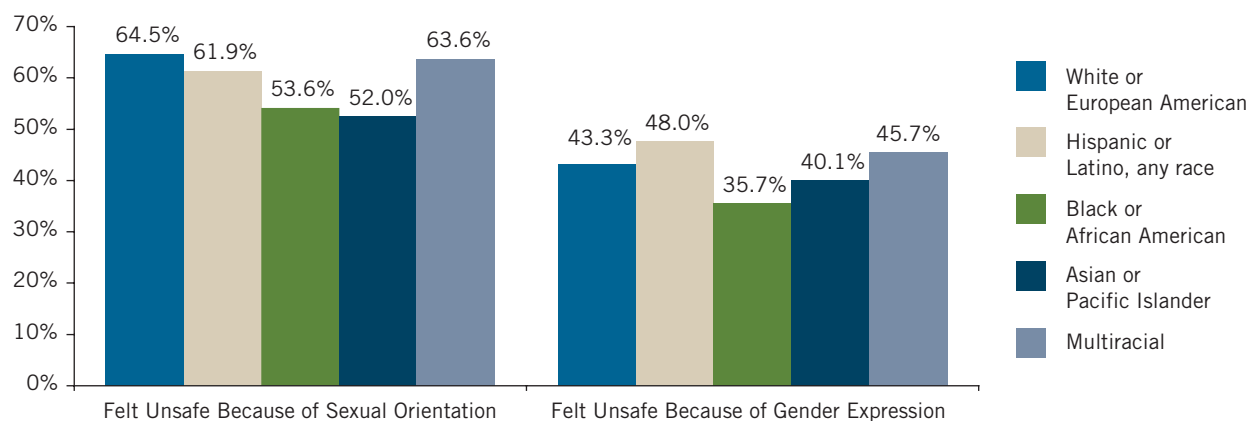
It is important to note that despite these differences by racial/ethnic identity, significant numbers of LGBT students reported hostile school experiences related to their sexual orientation and gender expression, regardless of their race or ethnicity. These findings are consistent with results from prior GLSEN National School Climate Surveys, where we have found that Black/African American and Asian/Pacific Islander LGBT students experienced lower levels of anti-LGBT victimization in school. Yet, we cannot know from our data what factors underlie the differences found here. It may be that racial/ethnic differences are partly a function of the varying characteristics of schools that youth attend. These differences may be related to how race/ethnicity manifests itself within the school's social network or to other issues with peers, such as how out students are about their LGBT identity. Further research is needed that examines why there are these racial/ethnic differences in LGBT youth's experiences.

Figure 2.2 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation by Race or Ethnicity
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")
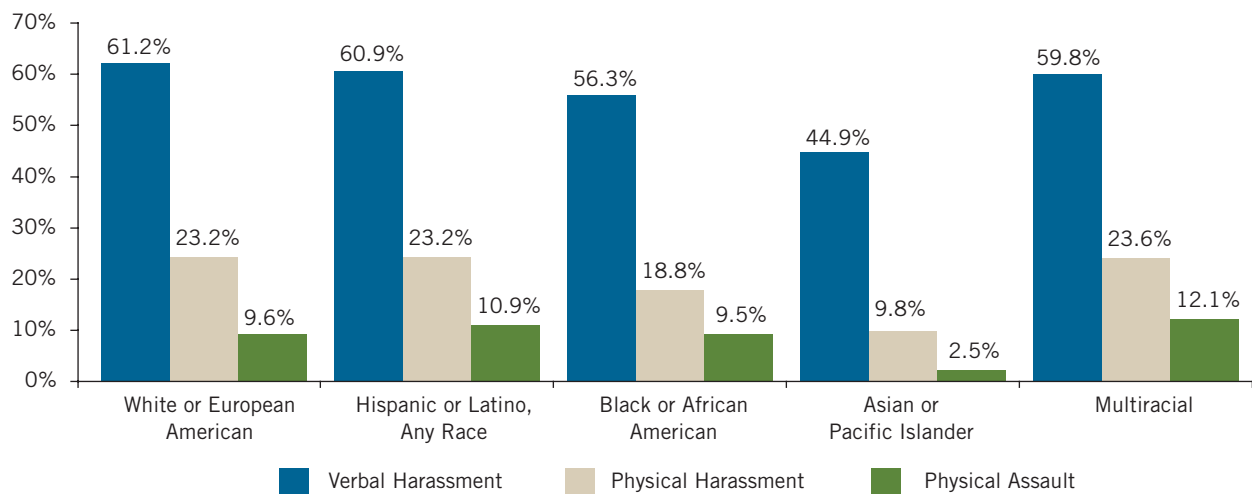
Figure 2.3 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Gender Expression by Race or Ethnicity
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")
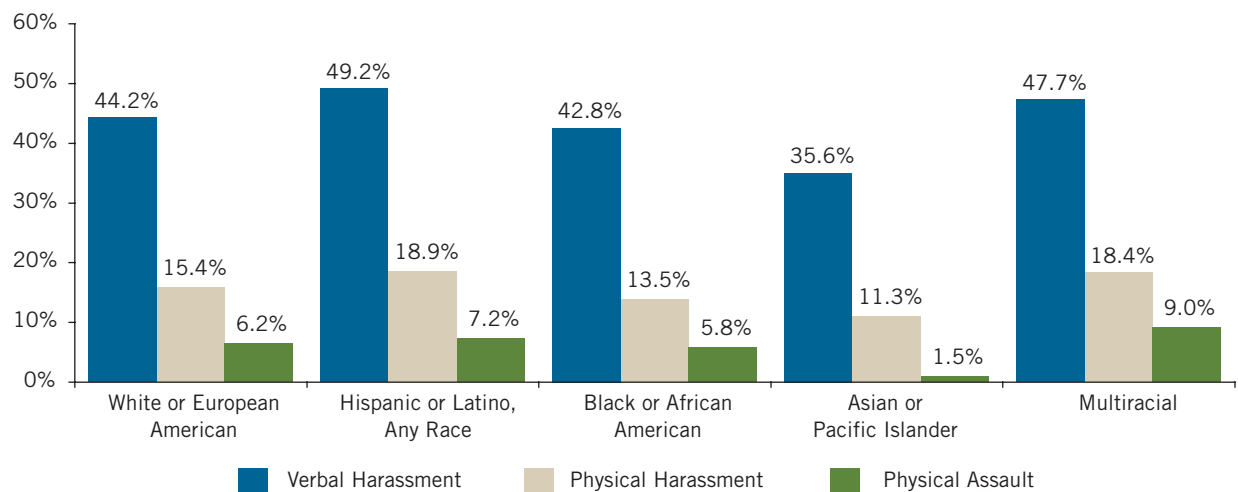
Comparisons by Gender Identity

We also examined potential differences in LGBT students' experiences of safety and victimization by gender identity (female, male, transgender,[131] and other gender identities). Across all gender groups, many students reported feeling unsafe and experiencing high frequencies of harassment or assault at school related to their sexual orientation or gender expression ("Sometimes," "Often," or "Frequently"). For example, more than half of students across groups felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation (see Figure 2.4). However, there were some significant differences between groups.[132,133]

Overall, female students in our survey were less likely to experience anti-LGBT victimization at school. Specifically, compared to male students, transgender students, and students who identified as other genders:

- Female students were less likely to have felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation or gender expression (see Figure 2.4); and
- Female students were less likely to have experienced verbal harassment, physical harassment, or physical assault based on sexual orientation or gender expression than all other students (see Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

"[Bullies] harassed me about being gay even though I wasn't out, and they told me things like I didn't act 'like a guy' enough... Once I figured out my sexuality though, I started to stick up for myself more often, and I started to talk to my guidance counselor."

Transgender students, however, were generally more likely than all other students to have negative experiences at school. Specifically, compared to other students:

- Transgender students were more likely to have felt unsafe because of their gender expression (see Figure 2.4); and
- Transgender students were more likely to have experienced verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault at school because of their gender expression (see Figure 2.6).

Students with other gender identities (e.g., genderqueer) were also more likely to have felt unsafe and to have experienced harassment and assault because of their gender expression than male or female students. Yet, they were less likely to experience harassment because of their sexual orientation than male students (see also Figures 2.5 and 2.6).

Overall, we found that among the LGBT students in our sample, female students had the least negative experiences at school, whereas transgender students had the most negative experiences in school. These findings are consistent with findings from previous installments of our National School Climate Survey. The differences between female students and all other groups were more pronounced with regard to safety and victimization based on gender expression than victimization based on sexual orientation. It is possible that our society allows for more fluidity of gender expression for females, particularly when compared to males—it is often considered more acceptable for a girl to dress or behave in ways deemed "masculine" than for a boy to dress or behave in a "feminine" manner.[134] Our findings also highlight that while safety is a concern for many LGBT students regardless of their gender identity, transgender youth may face additional challenges at school.

These findings regarding the demographic differences in LGBT students' school experiences highlight the importance of examining the experiences of various subpopulations within the larger population of LGBT students.

Figure 2.4 Sense of Safety at School by Gender Identity

Legend:
- Female (non-transgender)
- Male (non-transgender)
- Other Gender
- Transgender

Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation: 59.9%, 66.9%, 67.9%, 67.1%
Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression: 34.8%, 44.8%, 60.0%, 80.0%
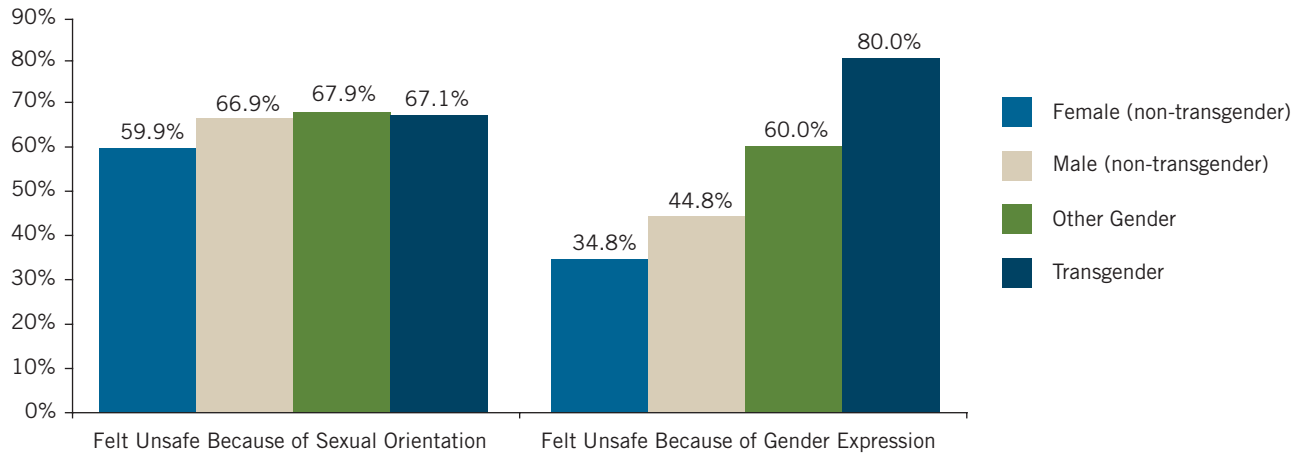
Figure 2.5 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation by Gender Identity
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Female (non-transgender): Verbal Harassment 54.2%, Physical Harassment 18.3%, Physical Assault 7.9%
Male (non-transgender): Verbal Harassment 68.0%, Physical Harassment 28.1%, Physical Assault 11.3%
Other Gender: Verbal Harassment 61.9%, Physical Harassment 23.5%, Physical Assault 11.7%
Transgender: Verbal Harassment 65.1%, Physical Harassment 28.2%, Physical Assault 14.3%

Legend: Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment, Physical Assault
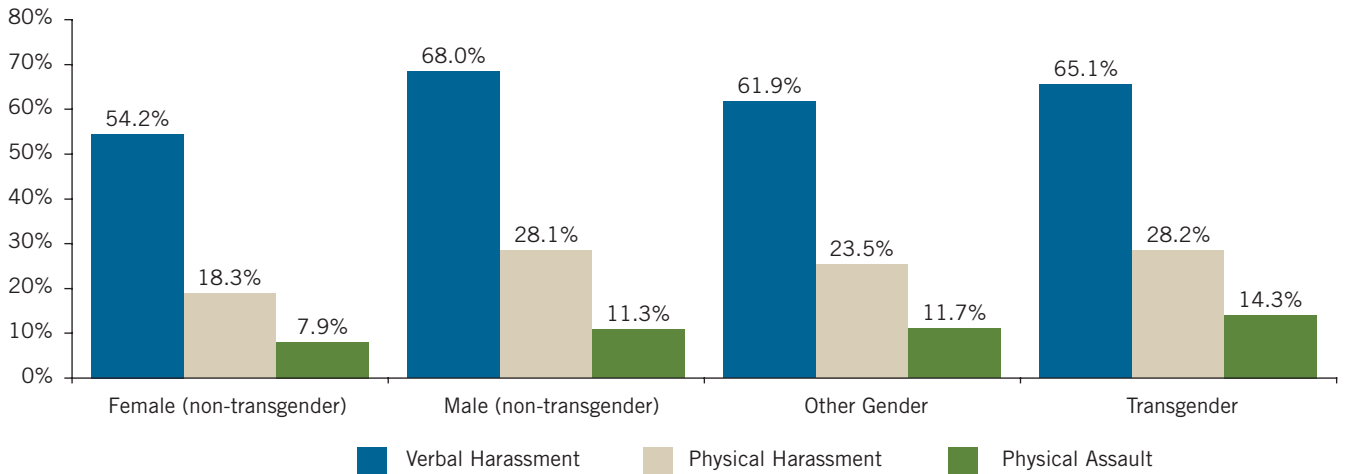
Figure 2.6 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Gender Expression by Gender Identity
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Female (non-transgender): Verbal Harassment 37.1%, Physical Harassment 12.1%, Physical Assault 4.9%
Male (non-transgender): Verbal Harassment 46.6%, Physical Harassment 17.3%, Physical Assault 6.6%
Other Gender: Verbal Harassment 58.7%, Physical Harassment 18.9%, Physical Assault 7.4%
Transgender: Verbal Harassment 75.4%, Physical Harassment 32.1%, Physical Assault 16.8%

Legend: Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment, Physical Assault
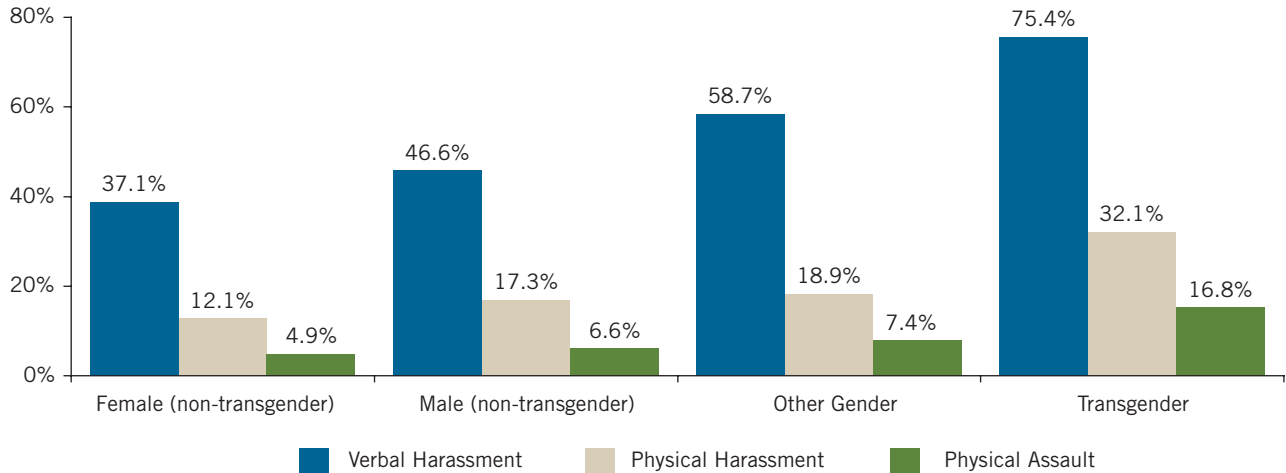
Insight on Gender Nonconformity Among LGBT Students

LGBT students in our survey commonly reported hearing negative remarks about students' gender expression (how masculine or feminine someone appears to be) as well as having been personally victimized based on their gender expression (see the Indicators of School Climate section of this report). To better understand the role gender expression plays in LGBT students' school experiences, we asked students in the survey about how they expressed their gender at school. Most LGBT students selected a response on the continuum from very masculine to very feminine, although a small portion of students (2.6%) selected the option "none of these." [135]

Differences in Gender Expression Among LGBT Students. LGBT students varied in their gender expression, with a majority of students exhibiting a gender expression that conformed to traditional notions (e.g., a male student whose gender expression was masculine). Female, non-transgender students were more likely to report a gender expression that conformed with their gender identity than their male, non-transgender peers. Male and female transgender students[136] were more likely than non-transgender students to select a gender expression traditionally aligned with their gender identity (e.g., transgender male-to-female students were more feminine than non-transgender female students).[137] In contrast, students with other gender identities and transgender students who did not also identify as solely male or female ("transgender other")[138] were more likely than other students to describe their gender expression as "equally masculine and feminine."[139]

Gender Expression by Gender Identity
(of students who selected an option on the
masculine/feminine continuum, n=8256)

Gender Identity	Very Masculine	More Masculine, Somewhat Feminine	Equally Masculine and Feminine	More Feminine, Somewhat Masculine	Very Feminine
Female (non-transgender)	2.1%	18.5%	22.2%	43.4%	13.9%
Male (non-transgender)	4.0%	33.3%	26.6%	29.0%	7.1%
Transgender Male-to-Female	3.7%	15.9%	16.8%	30.8%	32.7%
Transgender Female-to-Male	22.1%	55.6%	15.0%	6.1%	1.3%
Transgender Other	7.5%	39.9%	31.8%	16.8%	4.0%
Other Gender Identity	5.3%	29.3%	31.6%	29.1%	4.7%

Gender Nonconformity and School Experiences of LGBT Students. Whereas LGBT students as a whole face high levels of harassment and assault, a growing body of local research indicates that gender nonconforming LGBT youth may be at an elevated risk for victimization.[140] Therefore, with this national survey, we examined differences in LGBT students' experiences based on their gender nonconformity and found that LGBT students who were gender nonconforming[141] did experience a more hostile school climate than their peers.

Experiences of Victimization by Gender Nonconformity
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently," based on
marginal means controlling for transgender status, n=7249)

Gender nonconforming LGBT students experienced higher rates of victimization.[142]

Verbal Harassment 68.8% / 51.9%
Physical Harassment 29.2% / 15.9%
Physical Assault 12.1% / 6.8%
Victimization Based on Sexual Orientation

Verbal Harassment 58.7% / 29.0%
Physical Harassment 21.8% / 9.3%
Physical Assault 8.9% / 4.0%
Victimization Based on Gender Expression

■ GNC (Gender Nonconforming)   ■ Not GNC
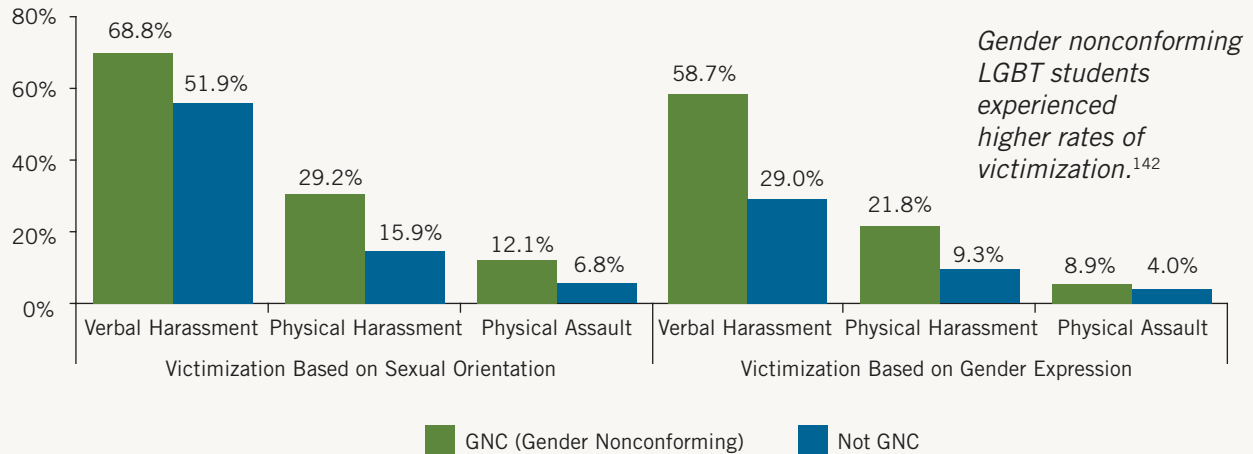
Feelings of Safety and Missing School by Gender Nonconformity
(percentage based on marginal means, controlling for transgender status)

Gender nonconforming LGBT students felt less safe in school and were more likely to have missed school.[143]

Felt Unsafe Because of Sexual Orientation (n=7483) 69.7% / 56.9%
Felt Unsafe Because of Gender Expression (n=7483) 56.9% / 27.4%
Missed at Least One Day of School Because of Safety Concerns (n=7493) 34.5% / 28.4%
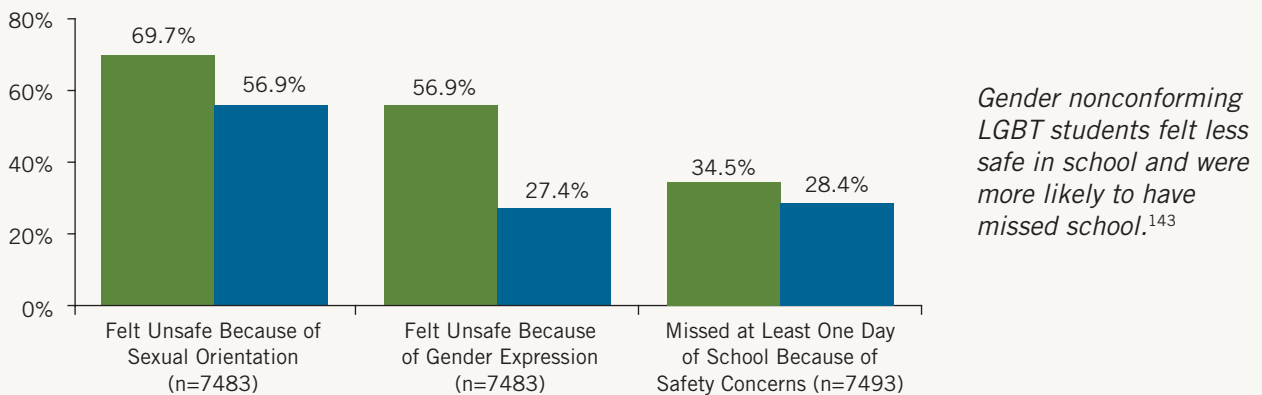
Students who were gender nonconforming not only experienced higher rates of victimization based on gender expression, but also higher rates of victimization based on sexual orientation. Also, even LGBT students whose gender expression conformed to traditional norms experienced gender expression-based victimization. It may be that non-traditional gender expression makes one a more visible target for various types of anti-LGBT harassment. It may also be that some students direct gender expression-based harassment toward any student they believe to be LGBT, regardless of their actual gender expression.

Schools may often reinforce conformity to traditional gender norms through formal policies or everyday practices of school staff, such as through dress codes (see the Discriminatory School Policies and Practices section of this report). Such practices can send the message that non-traditional gender expression is unacceptable, which may further stigmatize some LGBT students. Schools should examine their policies and practices to ensure that they are not discriminatory towards students who are gender nonconforming. Furthermore, safe school advocates should ensure that their efforts to improve school climate for LGBT students explicitly address issues of gender expression and gender nonconformity, in addition to those of sexual orientation. For example, anti-bullying laws and policies should enumerate gender expression and gender identity along with sexual orientation.

Comparisons of Biased Language, Victimization, and School Resources and Supports by School Characteristics

Key Findings

- Compared to high school students, LGBT students in middle school were more likely to experience harassment and assault based on sexual orientation or gender expression, and less likely to have access to LGBT-related resources and supports.

- Students in non-religious private schools were less likely to hear homophobic remarks and negative remarks about someone's gender expression than students in public or religious schools. Students in non-religious private schools were also less likely to be harassed or assaulted based on sexual orientation or gender expression, and more likely to have access to LGBT-related resources and supports.

- Students from schools in the South and Midwest and from schools in small towns or rural areas were most likely to hear homophobic remarks and negative remarks about someone's gender expression. They were also more likely to be harassed or assaulted based on sexual orientation or gender expression.

- Students from schools in the South, the Midwest, and small towns or rural areas were least likely to have access to LGBT-related resources and supports.

Just as LGBT students' school experiences may vary by certain personal demographic characteristics, their experiences may also vary based on the characteristics of their schools. For instance, certain types of schools might be more or less accepting of LGBT students or may be more or less likely to have important LGBT-related resources and supports. Therefore, we examined students' reports of hearing biased language, experiences of victimization, and the availability of LGBT-related resources and supports by school level, school type, geographic region, and locale.

Comparisons by School Level

Research on school safety among the general student population finds that middle schools have higher levels of bullying and harassment than high schools.[144] Therefore, in order to determine if the same pattern held true for LGBT students, we examined differences in biased language, experiences of victimization, and availability of resources and supports based on school level.[145] On all of the indicators of school climate, middle school students fared worse than high school students—middle schools students experienced more biased language and direct victimization and had fewer LGBT-related resources and supports.

Biased Language in School. Middle school students heard all types of homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression more often than high school students (see Figure 2.7).[146] For example, the majority (52.9%) of middle school students reported hearing other type of homophobic remarks, such as "fag" and "dyke," frequently at school, compared to 44.0% of high school students.

Experiences of Victimization. Compared to high school students, middle school students experienced higher levels of all types of victimization (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault) based on sexual orientation and gender expression (see Figure 2.8).[147] For example, over a third (35.5%) of middle school students experienced physical harassment based on their sexual orientation sometimes, often, or frequently, compared to less than a quarter (21.4%) of high school students (see also Figure 2.8).

School Resources and Supports. Students in middle schools were less likely than students in high schools to have access to all LGBT-related resources and supports at school (see Figure 2.9).[148]

Figure 2.7 Biased Remarks by School Level
(percentage of students hearing remarks "frequently")

THE 2011 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY
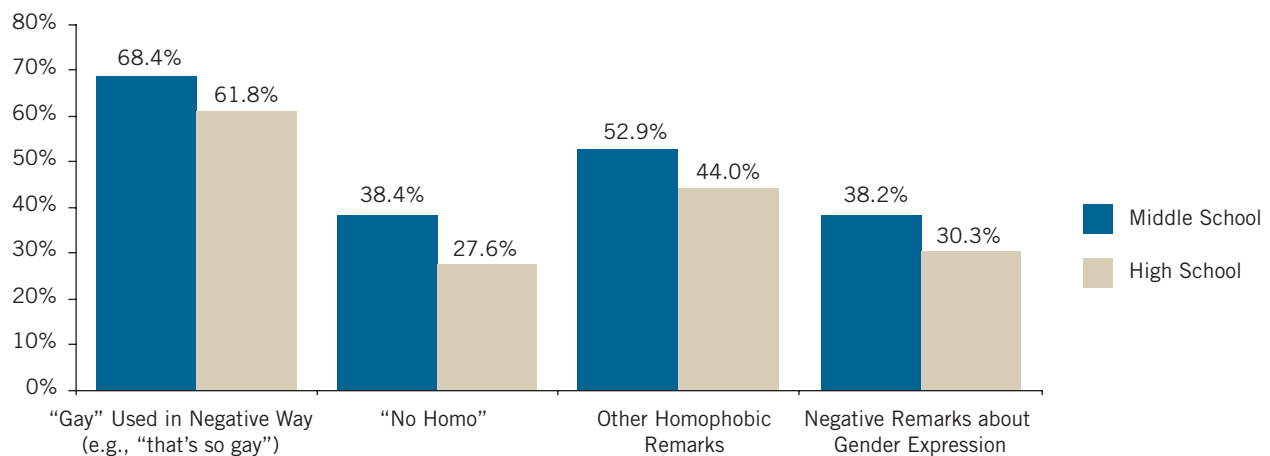
Although middle school students were less likely to have access to each of the resources and supports, the disparity between middle and high school students was greatest for GSAs (6.3% for middle school students vs. 52.6% for high school students). It may be that high schools have, in general, more extracurricular clubs than middle schools. Another possible explanation for this disparity is that GSAs, like other non-curricular clubs, are student-initiated, whereas the other assessed LGBT-related resources and supports rely specifically on institutional or staff support. It may be that middle school students have fewer opportunities to start clubs or even participate in clubs (i.e., fewer clubs overall). It may also be that developmentally, high school students are more prepared to initiate and sustain a school club. This might be particularly important when facing administration or community opposition to starting a GSA; high school students may have a greater capacity to effectively respond to this opposition than middle school students. Given the benefits GSAs may provide to LGBT students, it may be particularly important for safe school advocates to devote resources to helping middle school students start and sustain GSAs.

Overall, our findings suggest that LGBT students in middle schools face more hostile school climates than LGBT students in high schools, which is similar to research on school violence in

"The beginning of the year was rocky, but this year has been good. Yeah, it has ups and downs, but it's a lot better than middle school."

the general population of students.[149] In addition to general developmental trends about school violence, it may also be that adolescents become more accepting of LGBT people and less tolerant of anti-LGBT harassment as they grow older.[150] Further, not only did middle school students experience more victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression than those in high school, they were much less likely to report that their schools had resources and supports that can help to create a safer and more affirming environment. Given the higher incidence of victimization of LGBT students in middle schools, school districts should devote a greater portion of resources to combating anti-LGBT bias in the younger grades.

Figure 2.8 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression by School Level
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Figure 2.9 LGBT-Related Resources and Supports by School Level

Staff & Administration

Supportive Administration (somewhat or very)
- Middle School: 20.1%
- High School: 33.4%

Many Supportive School Staff (6 or more)
- Middle School: 35.7%
- High School: 58.3%

Curricular Resources

Internet Access
- Middle School: 19.8%
- High School: 44.0%

Library Resources
- Middle School: 23.3%
- High School: 47.3%

Textbooks/ Assigned Readings
- Middle School: 4.1%
- High School: 18.9%

Inclusive Curriculum
- Middle School: 8.2%
- High School: 17.2%

Other Resources

Comprehensive Policy
- Middle School: 5.2%
- High School: 7.9%

Gay-Straight Alliance
- Middle School: 6.3%
- High School: 52.6%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%

Middle School   High School

Comparisons by School Type

As with the general population of students in the United States. most of the LGBT students in our sample attended public schools. Nevertheless, we wanted to examine whether students' experiences with biased language, victimization, and the availability LGBT-related resources and supports varied based on the type of school they attended—public, religious, or private non-religious schools.

Biased Language in School. Overall, students in private schools were least likely to hear biased language, whereas students in public schools were most likely to hear this type of language (see Figure 2.10).[151] Specifically:

- Private school students heard the word "gay" in a negative way and other types of homophobic language (i.e. "fag," "dyke") less often than students in religious schools. There were no significant differences between private and religious school students regarding the expression "no homo" or negative remarks about gender expression;

- Private school students heard all types of homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression less often than public school students; and

Figure 2.10 Biased Remarks by School Type
(percentage of students hearing remarks "frequently")

Figure 2.11 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression by School Type
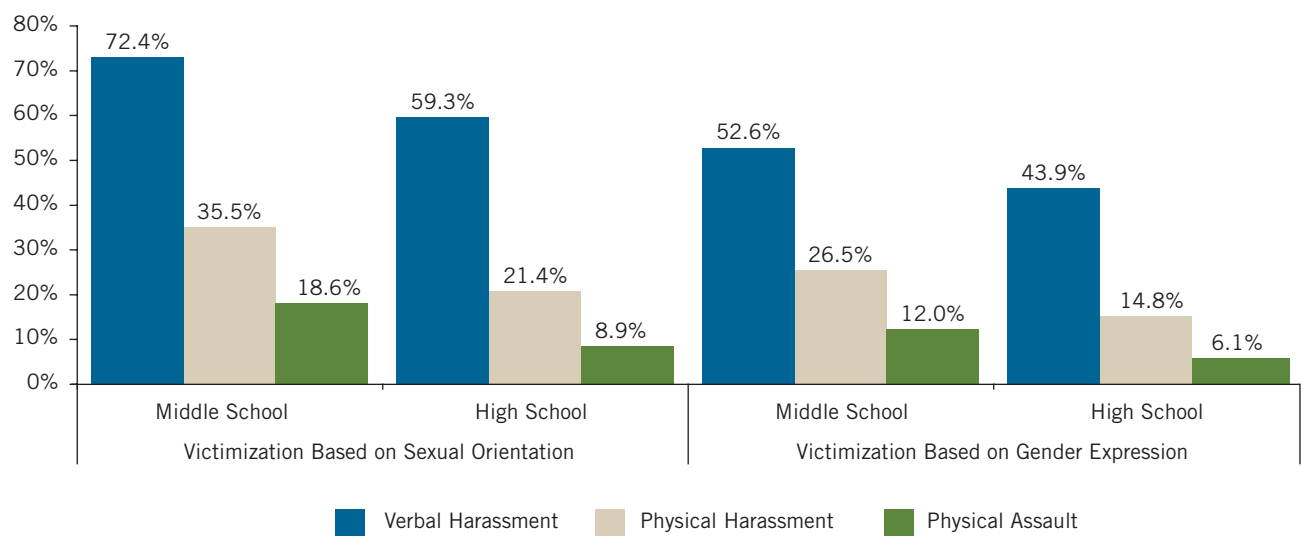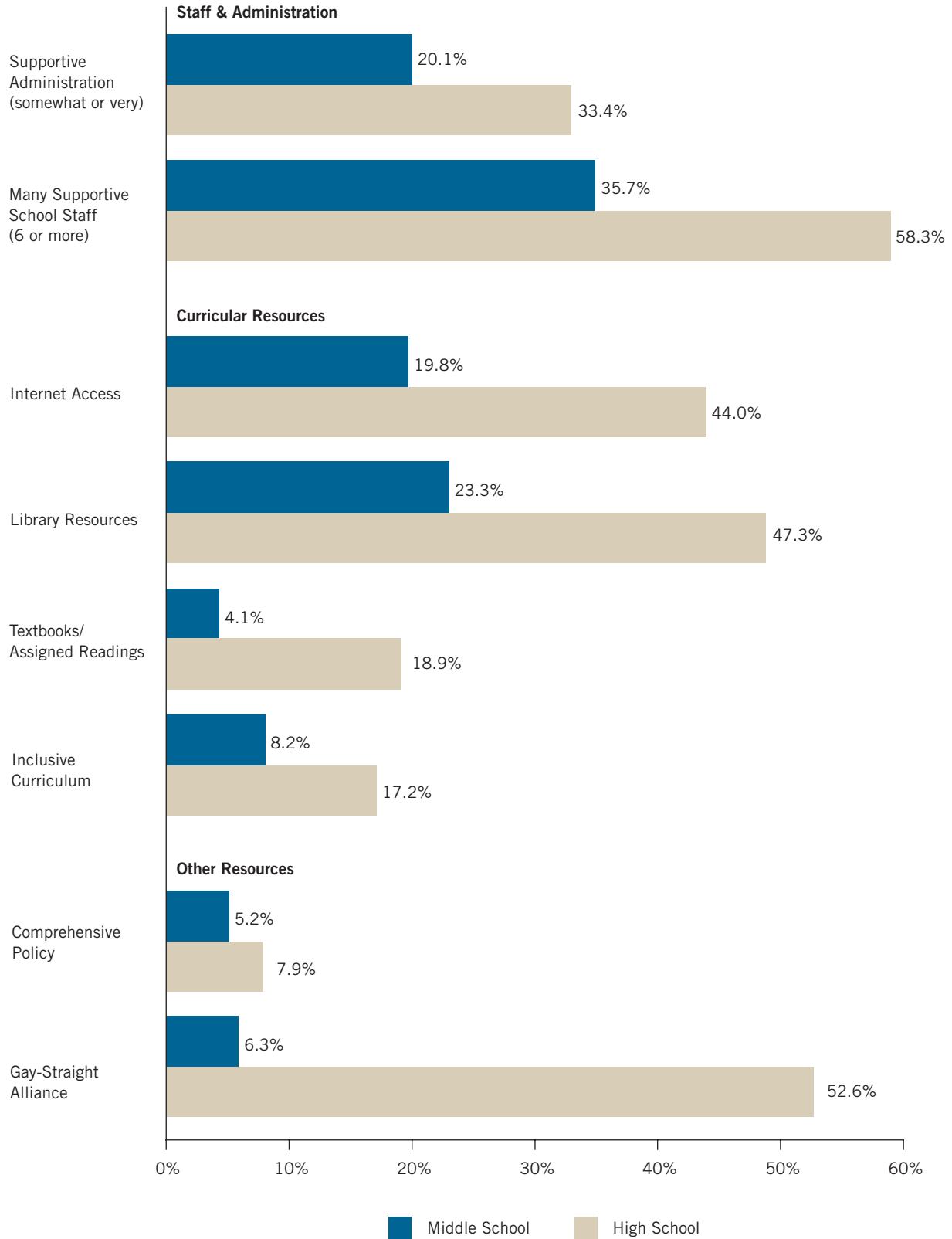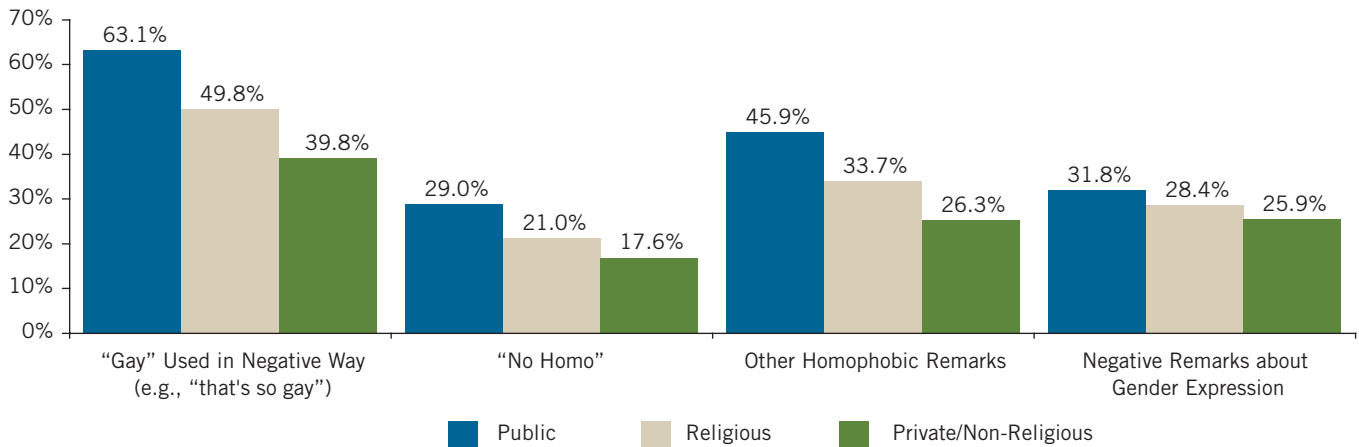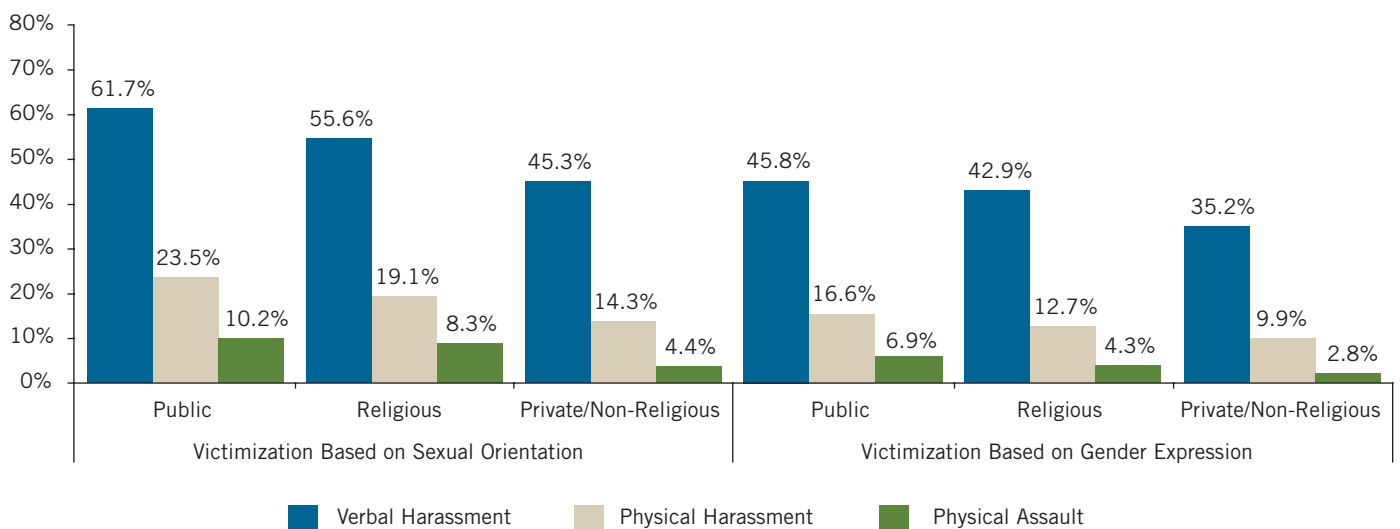(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

- Public school students were more likely than religious school students to hear all types of homophobic remarks. They were not significantly different with regard to remarks about gender expression.

Experiences of Victimization. Similar to reports of biased language, students in private schools reported the lowest levels of victimization, while students in public schools reported the highest levels (see Figure 2.11).[152] Specifically:

- Private school students experienced less verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on sexual orientation and based on gender expression than public school students;

- Private school students experienced less verbal harassment based on sexual orientation than religious school students, although there were no differences regarding victimization based on gender expression; and

- Public school students experienced less verbal harassment based on sexual orientation than religious school students, but did not significantly differ on any other type of victimization.

School Resources and Supports. There were significant differences in the availability of LGBT-related resources and supports by school type. Overall, students in private schools were most likely to have access to LGBT-related resources and supports (see Figure 2.12).[153] Specifically, compared to students in other schools:

- Students in private schools were more likely to have a GSA or similar club in their school;

- Students in private schools were more likely to have curriculum that included positive information about LGBT people, history, or events;

- Students in private schools were more likely to have access to LGBT-related information through the Internet using their school computers;

- Students in private schools were more likely to have school staff and school administrations who were supportive of LGBT students; and

- Students in private schools were more likely likely to have textbooks or assigned readings that contained LGBT-related information than students in public schools and marginally more likely than students in religious schools.

In contrast to the greater availability of resources and supports for students in private schools, as also shown in Figure 2.12, students in religious-affiliated schools were less likely to have access to a number of LGBT-resources and supports. The greatest differences between religious and public schools were regarding availability of GSAs, supportive staff, and supportive administration. It is interesting to note that religious schools were not significantly different from public schools in regards to most LGBT-related curricular resources. The one exception is having LGBT-related information in their school libraries; students in religious schools were less likely to report having this type of information available in their libraries. However, given that religious schools tend to have fewer resources and less funding than public schools,[154] the difference in LGBT-related library resources may be due to religious schools having fewer library resources in general.

We found that private schools were more positive environments for LGBT youth than public schools or religious schools. Not only were private school students less likely to hear anti-LGBT language and less likely to be victimized, but they also had greater access to LGBT-related resources and supports. Whereas LGBT students in religious schools were least likely to have these supports, they did not face the most hostile school climates (students in public schools reported greater frequencies of biased remarks and verbal harassment). Perhaps students in religious schools face stricter codes of conduct and/or harsher discipline for violating school rules, resulting in decreased rates of all types of undesirable behaviors. In addition, unlike public schools, both religious schools and private schools can select who attends their school and can more easily expel disruptive students compared to public schools.

Figure 2.12 LGBT-Related Resources and Supports by School Type

Staff & Administration

Supportive Administration (somewhat or very)
- Public: 31.4%
- Private/Non-Religious: 50.8%
- Religious: 22.1%

Many Supportive School Staff (6 or more)
- Public: 54.2%
- Private/Non-Religious: 68.4%
- Religious: 42.3%

Curricular Resources

Internet Access
- Public: 41.0%
- Private/Non-Religious: 62.9%
- Religious: 44.6%

Library Resources
- Public: 47.8%
- Private/Non-Religious: 51.1%
- Religious: 33.9%

Textbooks/Assigned Readings
- Public: 16.9%
- Private/Non-Religious: 27.1%
- Religious: 21.0%

Inclusive Curriculum
- Public: 15.7%
- Private/Non-Religious: 33.1%
- Religious: 15.9%

Other Resources

Comprehensive Policy
- Public: 7.4%
- Private/Non-Religious: 9.6%
- Religious: 1.9%

Gay-Straight Alliance
- Public: 46.5%
- Private/Non-Religious: 55.7%
- Religious: 10.3%

Legend: Public — Private/Non-Religious — Religious

Comparisons by Region

The United States is a large country, rich with geographic diversity. In order to best target education and advocacy efforts, it would be helpful to understand the specific array of experiences of LGBT students in schools in these various areas of the country. Therefore, we also examined whether there were differences in students' experiences with biased language, victimization, and access to LGBT-related school resources and supports based on region of the country—Northeast, South, Midwest, or West.[155]

Biased Language in School. In general, LGBT students attending schools in the Northeast and the West reported lower frequencies of hearing homophobic remarks than students attending schools in the South and Midwest (see Figure 2.13). For example, as shown in Figure 2.13, fewer than 60% of students in the Northeast and the West reported hearing "gay" used in a negative way "frequently" (56.9%, 59.0%, respectively), compared to more than 60% of students in the South and the Midwest (65.4%, 62.7%, respectively). Regarding hearing negative remarks about gender expression, students in the South heard these remarks more often than students in all other regions.[156]

Experiences of Victimization. Overall, LGBT students from schools in the Northeast and the West reported significantly lower levels of victimization than students from schools in the South and the Midwest (see Figures 2.14 and 2.15).[157] Specifically, we found the following regional differences:

• Students in the South experienced more verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on sexual orientation than students in the Northeast and the West;

• Students in the Midwest experienced more verbal harassment, physical harassment and assault based on sexual orientation than students in the Northeast, but did not differ from those in the West;

• Students in the Northeast experienced less verbal and physical harassment based on gender expression than students in all other regions, and less physical assault based on

gender expression than students in the South and Midwest; and

• There were no differences in experiences of victimization between students in the South and students in the Midwest.

School Resources and Supports. In general, students in the Northeast were most likely to report having LGBT-related resources at school followed by students in the West.[158] Students attending schools in the South were least likely to have access to these resources and supports (see Figure 2.16). Specifically, compared to students in the other regions:
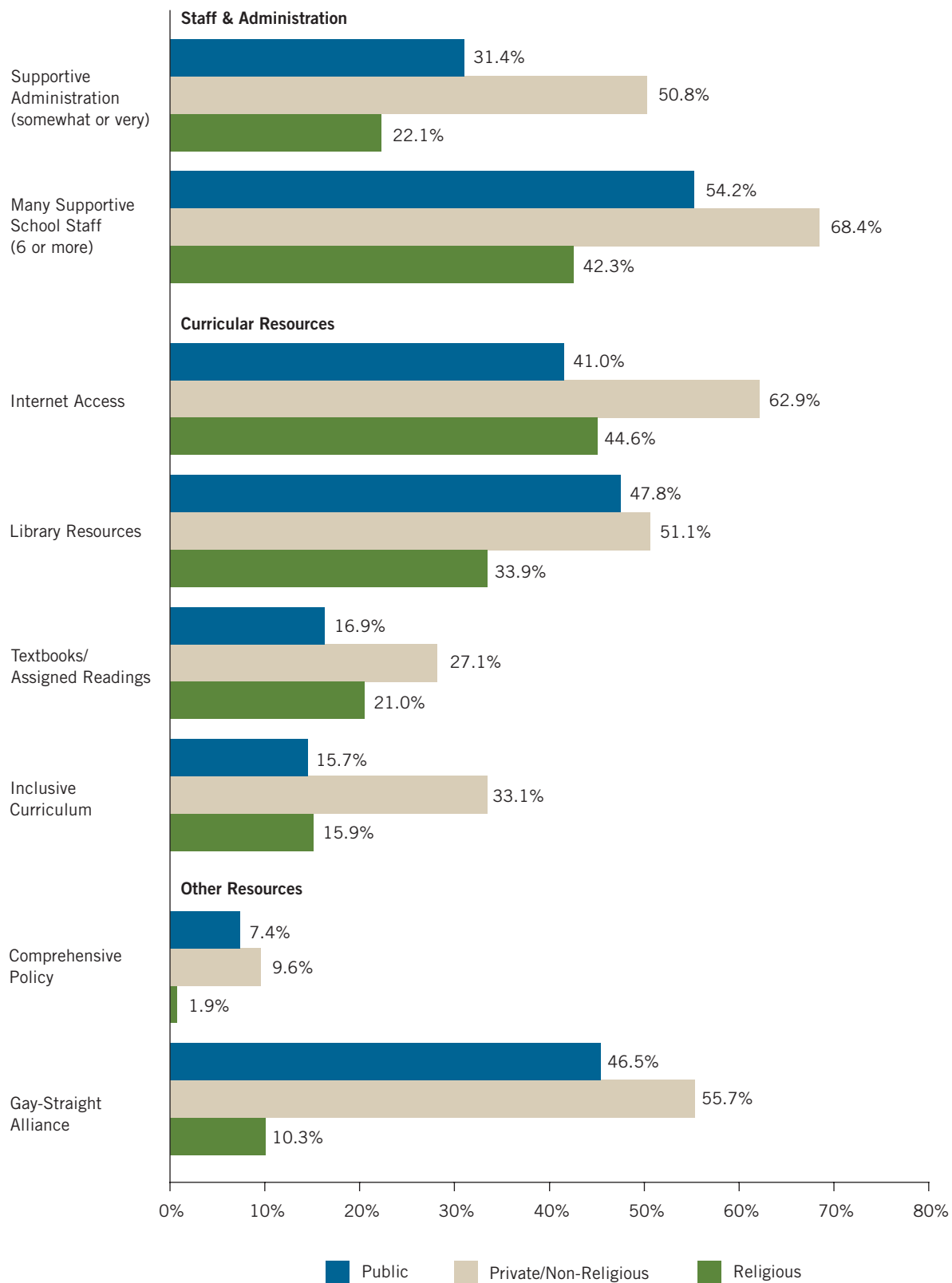
• Students in the South were less likely to have a GSA or other student club that addressed LGBT issues;

• Students in the South were less likely to have a curriculum that included positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events, and to have textbooks or assigned readings that contained LGBT-related information;

• Students in the South were less likely to have access to LGBT-related information in their school library or through the Internet using school computers;

• Students in the South were less likely to have a comprehensive bullying/harassment policy at their school; and

• Students in the South were less likely to have a school staff supportive of LGBT students and a supportive school administration.

Students in the Midwest were also less likely to have certain LGBT-related supports in their schools than students in the Northeast and West. Specifically:

• Students in the Midwest were less likely to have a GSA or other student club that addressed LGBT issues than students in the Northeast and the West;

• Students in the Midwest were less likely to have a comprehensive bullying/harassment policy at their school than students in the Northeast and the West;

Figure 2.13 Biased Remarks by Region
(percentage of students hearing remarks "frequently")

Legend: Northeast, South, Midwest, West

	"Gay" Used in Negative Way (e.g.,"that's so gay")	"No Homo"	Other Homophobic Remarks	Negative Remarks about Gender Expression
Northeast	56.9%	21.4%	40.5%	28.6%
South	65.4%	36.4%	48.9%	34.3%
Midwest	62.7%	24.9%	46.0%	31.0%
West	59.0%	26.3%	41.1%	30.1%
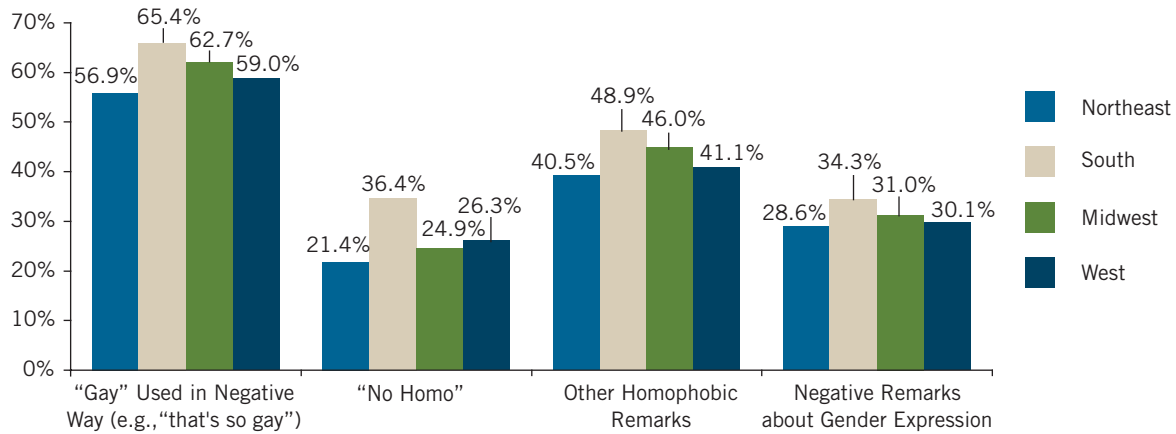
Figure 2.14 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation by Region
(percentage of students experiencing event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Legend: Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment, Physical Assault

	Verbal Harassment	Physical Harassment	Physical Assault
Northeast	53.0%	16.4%	8.1%
South	66.6%	27.1%	11.3%
Midwest	62.3%	24.6%	10.7%
West	57.9%	21.7%	9.0%
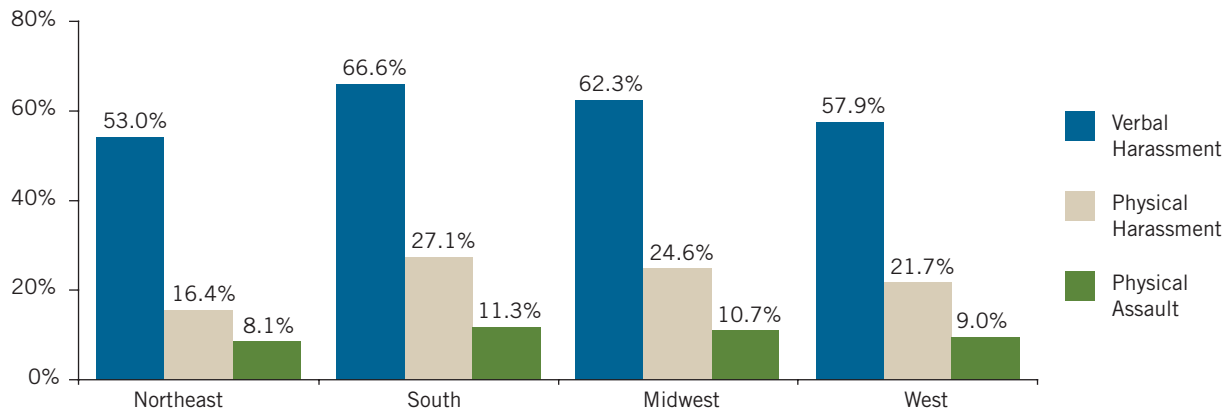
Figure 2.15 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Gender Expression by Region
(percentage of students experiencing event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Legend: Verbal Harassment, Physical Harassment, Physical Assault

	Verbal Harassment	Physical Harassment	Physical Assault
Northeast	40.0%	11.3%	5.3%
South	48.9%	17.9%	7.6%
Midwest	45.8%	17.4%	7.4%
West	44.2%	16.7%	5.8%
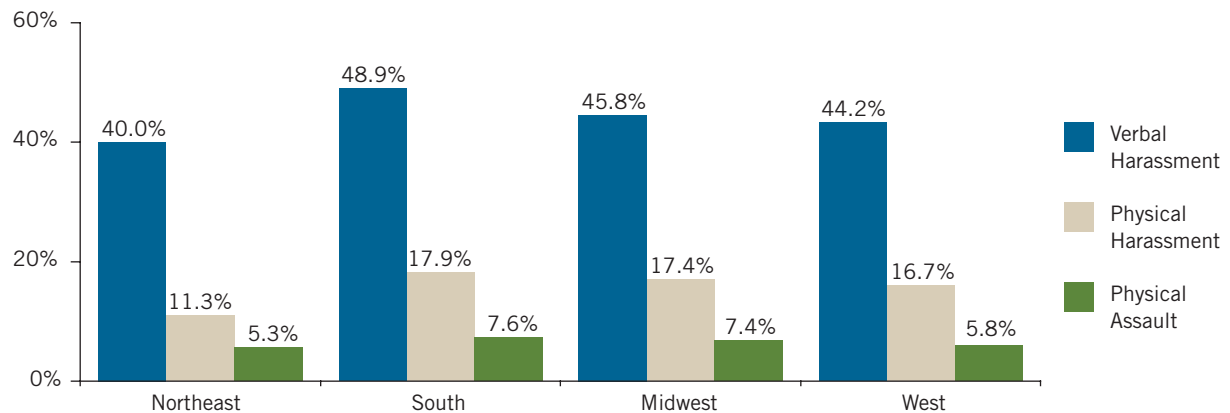
Figure 2.16 LGBT-Related Resources and Supports by Region

Staff & Administration

Supportive Administration (somewhat or very)
- Northeast: 43.2%
- South: 22.0%
- Midwest: 30.4%
- West: 37.0%

Many Supportive School Staff (6 or more)
- Northeast: 66.8%
- South: 44.0%
- Midwest: 52.8%
- West: 58.8%

Curricular Resources

Internet Access
- Northeast: 51.1%
- South: 32.1%
- Midwest: 45.9%
- West: 42.7%

Library Resources
- Northeast: 49.6%
- South: 38.0%
- Midwest: 46.8%
- West: 44.3%

Textbooks/Assigned Readings
- Northeast: 22.1%
- South: 13.9%
- Midwest: 18.6%
- West: 17.4%

Inclusive Curriculum
- Northeast: 24.7%
- South: 9.8%
- Midwest: 15.6%
- West: 19.6%

Other Resources

Comprehensive Policy
- Northeast: 9.6%
- South: 4.6%
- Midwest: 6.8%
- West: 9.3%

Gay-Straight Alliance
- Northeast: 61.2%
- South: 26.8%
- Midwest: 40.0%
- West: 61.0%

Legend: Northeast | South | Midwest | West

- Students in the Midwest were less likely to have school staff supportive of LGBT students and a supportive school administration than students in the Northeast and the West; and

- Students in the Midwest were less likely to have access to LGBT-related information in their school library or through the Internet using school computers, and to have textbooks or assigned readings that contained LGBT-related information than students in the Northeast.

Although the differences were not as vast, students in the Northeast were also more likely than students in the West to have most LGBT-related resources. However, students in these two regions did not differ in the likelihood of having a GSA or other student club and having a comprehensive bullying/harassment policy.

There were clear regional differences in LGBT students' school experiences. Compared to students in the Northeast and the West, students in the South and Midwest had more negative school climates, including more frequent anti-LGBT language and higher levels of victimization, particularly regarding homophobic language and victimization based on sexual orientation. Southern and Midwestern students also had less access to LGBT-related resources and supports, particularly GSAs and supportive school staff.

Although schools in all regions must continue to improve school climate for LGBT students, these regional findings highlight that much more needs to be done in the South and Midwest specifically to ensure that LGBT students are safe at school. Education leaders and safe school advocates must focus specific efforts on schools in these regions. Further, it is also important to consider how to establish these critical LGBT-related resources and supports in these schools where LGBT students may be most at-risk for harassment and assault.

Comparisons by Locale

Some research suggests that schools in certain communities may be more unsafe for LGBT students. In general, students in schools in urban areas may face higher levels of violence.[159] However, some evidence suggests that rural areas may be more hostile toward LGBT people.[160] Therefore, we examined whether there were differences among the students in our survey

"High school isn't easy for anyone, but growing up in a small town like mine, where everyone is homophobic because some of their friends are, or because their dad says gay isn't the way, it gets really hard."

based on the type of community in which their schools were located—urban areas, suburban areas, or rural/small town areas.

Biased Language in School. With regard to biased language in school, there were significant differences across locales in students' reports of hearing homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression.[161] As shown in Figure 2.17, students in rural/small town schools reported the highest frequency of hearing:

- The word "gay" used in a negative way;

- Other homophobic remarks (e.g., "fag" or "dyke"); and

- Negative remarks about gender expression.

Students rural/small town schools were less likely to hear the expression "no homo" than students in urban schools. Given that the phrase originated as part of the hip-hop culture in New York City,[162] it is likely that it may not be common vernacular in small town and rural areas, and that the locale differences we found in hearing this phrase may not be indicative of locale differences in homophobia.

Students in urban schools were also less likely than students in suburban schools to hear the word "gay" used in a negative way as well as other homophobic remarks. There were, however, no significant differences between LGBT students in urban and suburban schools in the frequency of hearing the phrase "no homo" or negative remarks about gender expression.

Figure 2.17 Biased Remarks by Locale
(percentage of students hearing remarks "frequently")

Legend:
- Urban
- Suburban
- Small Town/Rural

"Gay" Used in Negative Way (e.g., "that's so gay"): Urban 56.3%, Suburban 59.9%, Small Town/Rural 68.2%
"No Homo": Urban 29.9%, Suburban 27.3%, Small Town/Rural 27.1%
Other Homophobic Remarks: Urban 39.0%, Suburban 41.4%, Small Town/Rural 53.8%
Negative Remarks about Gender Expression: Urban 29.7%, Suburban 29.7%, Small Town/Rural 35.3%
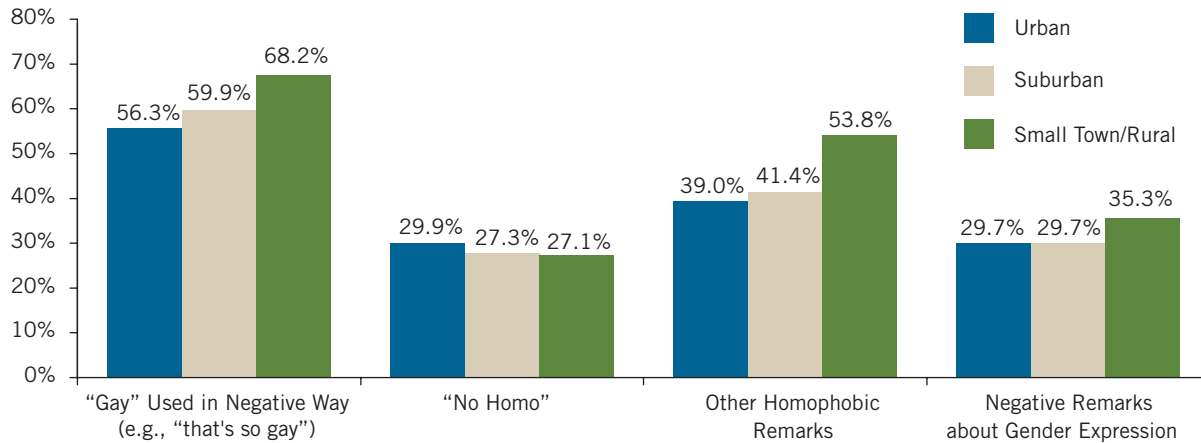
Figure 2.18 Experiences of Harassment and Assault Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression by Locale
(percentage of students who experienced event "sometimes," "often," or "frequently")

Victimization Based on Sexual Orientation:
- Urban: Verbal Harassment 55.9%, Physical Harassment 21.1%, Physical Assault 9.2%
- Suburban: Verbal Harassment 58.1%, Physical Harassment 20.4%, Physical Assault 8.8%
- Small Town/Rural: Verbal Harassment 68.5%, Physical Harassment 28.3%, Physical Assault 12.1%

Victimization Based on Gender Expression:
- Urban: Verbal Harassment 43.7%, Physical Harassment 15.8%, Physical Assault 6.3%
- Suburban: Verbal Harassment 42.3%, Physical Harassment 14.3%, Physical Assault 5.9%
- Small Town/Rural: Verbal Harassment 50.4%, Physical Harassment 18.9%, Physical Assault 8.0%

Legend:
- Verbal Harassment
- Physical Harassment
- Physical Assault

Experiences of Victimization. As shown in Figure 2.18, LGBT students in schools in rural/small town areas experienced higher levels of victimization than students in other types of communities.[163] Specifically, compared to students in schools in urban and suburban areas:

- Students in rural/small town schools experienced higher levels of all types of victimization (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault) based on sexual orientation; and

- Students in rural/small town schools experienced higher levels of verbal and physical harassment based on gender expression.

Students in urban schools and suburban schools did not differ in their levels of reported victimization.

Figure 2.19 LGBT-Related Resources and Supports by Locale

Staff & Administration

Supportive Administration (somewhat or very)
- Urban: 36.5%
- Suburban: 34.5%
- Small Town/Rural: 24.8%

Many Supportive School Staff (6 or more)
- Urban: 60.7%
- Suburban: 59.8%
- Small Town/Rural: 41.3%

Curricular Resources

Internet Access
- Urban: 44.0%
- Suburban: 43.5%
- Small Town/Rural: 38.4%

Library Resources
- Urban: 45.4%
- Suburban: 43.9%
- Small Town/Rural: 43.3%

Textbooks/Assigned Readings
- Urban: 19.3%
- Suburban: 19.8%
- Small Town/Rural: 13.0%

Inclusive Curriculum
- Urban: 20.0%
- Suburban: 18.5%
- Small Town/Rural: 11.4%

Other Resources

Comprehensive Policy
- Urban: 9.3%
- Suburban: 7.4%
- Small Town/Rural: 5.3%

Gay-Straight Alliance
- Urban: 52.4%
- Suburban: 54.2%
- Small Town/Rural: 26.9%

Legend: Urban, Suburban, Small Town/Rural

School Resources and Supports. Overall, as shown in Figure 2.19, LGBT students in rural/small town schools were least likely to have LGBT-related resources or supports, with the greatest disparities in availability of GSAs, supportive staff, and supportive administration. [164] There were differences in the presence of comprehensive policies and most curricular resources (excluding LGBT-related information in the school library), but they were relatively small and, across locales, only a minority of students reported having these resources.

Research on in-school victimization in the general population of students has frequently found that urban schools are the most unsafe.[165] Yet our findings show that for LGBT students, schools in rural areas and small towns were the most unsafe. Students in rural/small town schools experienced the highest levels of anti-LGBT language and victimization based on sexual orientation or gender expression and were least likely to have LGBT-related resources and supports in school, particularly GSAs, supportive staff, and a supportive administration. Given the positive impact of these resources and supports, specific efforts should be made to increase these resources in rural/small town schools. Further research may be needed to better understand the obstacles to implementing these valuable resources in these areas so that safe school advocates can develop effective strategies increasing resources for LGBT students in rural/small town schools.

PART 3: INDICATORS OF HOSTILE SCHOOL CLIMATE OVER TIME: BIASED REMARKS, VICTIMIZATION, AND RESOURCES

Key Findings

- Since 2001, there has been a decrease in the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks at school. There has been no overall change in the frequency of hearing negative remarks about someone's gender expression.

- The frequency of harassment and assault based on sexual orientation and gender expression was significantly lower in 2011 than in previous years.

- There has been an increase over time in the presence of several LGBT-related resources and supports in school, specifically:

    - Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) or other student clubs that address LGBT issues in education;

    - School staff who were supportive of LGBT students;

    - Access to LGBT-related Internet resources through school computers; and

    - Positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events in the curriculum

- There has been an increase in the presence of school anti-bullying/harassment policies over time, but no change in the presence of comprehensive school anti-bullying/harassment policies that include specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

GLSEN strives to make schools safe for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, race or ethnicity, or any other characteristic that may be the basis for harassment. Given that the National School Climate Survey is the only study that has continually assessed the school experiences of LGBT students, it is vital that we examine changes over time in the education landscape for this population. In this section, we examine whether there have been changes over the past decade, from 2001 to the 2011 survey, on indicators of a hostile school climate, such as hearing homophobic remarks and experiences of harassment and assault, and on the availability of positive resources for LGBT students in their schools, such as supportive teachers, Gay-Straight Alliances, and positive curricular resources.

Anti-LGBT Remarks Over Time

Language continuously evolves, perhaps especially among youth. Since we began conducting the NSCS, we have seen new types of homophobic language emerge, and we have modified our survey accordingly. In 2001, we assessed only the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks, including remarks like "fag" or "dyke" but also expressions such as "that's so gay" to mean something bad or valueless. In 2003, we began asking students questions about hearing negative remarks about gender expression, such as someone acting not "feminine enough" or "masculine enough." And since 2009, we have asked students about hearing "no homo."

Our results indicate a general trend that homophobic remarks are on the decline.[166] Students in 2011 reported a lower incidence of these remarks than all prior years.[167] For example, the percentage of students hearing these remarks frequently or often has dropped from over 80% in 2001 to about 70% in 2011. Expressions such as "that's so gay" have remained the most common form of biased language heard by LGBT students in school. However, as shown in Figure 3.1, there has been a small but consistent decline in frequency of this language since 2001.[168] There has been little change over time in the incidence of hearing negative remarks about gender expression.[169] Overall, as Figure 3.1 illustrates, the general trend in change over the years is more pronounced for homophobic remarks like "fag" or "dyke" than for other types of anti-LGBT remarks.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the pervasiveness of anti-LGBT language in school among the student population. The number of students who reported that homophobic remarks were used pervasively by the student body has declined slightly since 2005.[170] For example, less than 40% of students in 2011 said that homophobic remarks were made by most or all of the students in their school, compared to about 45% of students in 2005. There were few changes over time, however, in the pervasiveness of negative remarks about gender expression.[171]

As shown in Figure 3.3, there have also been very small fluctuations over the past several years in the frequency with which students report hearing biased remarks from faculty or staff in school.[172] Most notably, with regard to homophobic remarks, the percentage of students in 2011 who reported hearing such remarks from any school personnel was lower than in 2009 and 2007 (56.6% vs. 60.0% and 63.6%, respectively), but slightly higher than in 2005 (55.2%). With regard to hearing negative remarks about gender expression from school staff, there has also been a small, downward trend in frequency since we first started asking about it in 2003 (see also Figure 3.3).

In our 2001 survey, we began asking students how frequently people in their school intervened when hearing homophobic remarks. Figure 3.4 shows, again, that level of intervention by both faculty/staff and by students has been relatively stable over time.[173] However, although there were no changes in intervention between 2011 and 2009, intervention by staff and students was slightly lower in 2009 and 2011 than in 2007.

In 2003, we began asking students about intervention in negative remarks about gender expression. As Figure 3.5 illustrates, the rates of intervention in negative remarks about gender expression have also been relatively low and stable across years.[174] Nevertheless, there was a more pronounced downward trend in intervention by both students and staff in these remarks compared to homophobic remarks. In sum, it appears that members of the school community are not intervening at increasing rates in anti-LGBT remarks, and if anything, they may be intervening less.

Figure 3.1 Biased Language by Students Over Time

Legend:
- "That's so gay"
- Other Homophobic Remarks (e.g., "fag" or "dyke")
- Negative Remarks about Gender Expression
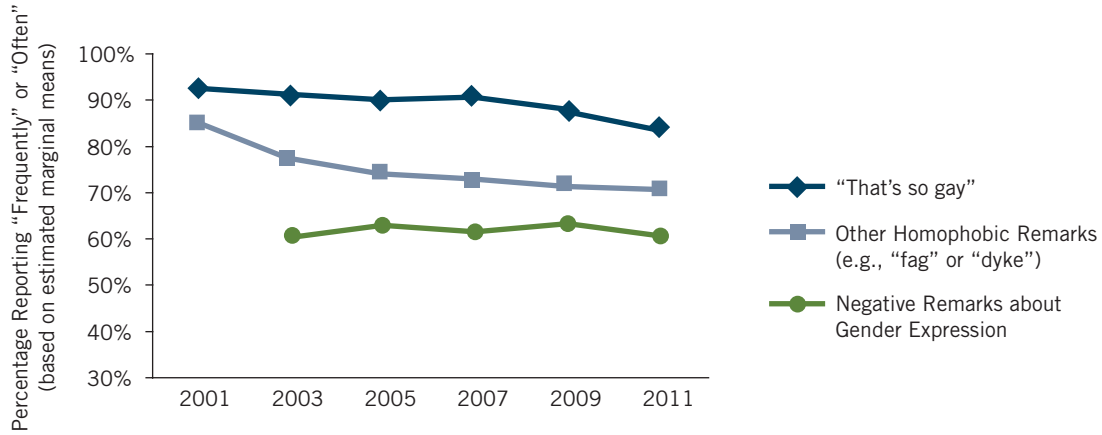
Figure 3.2 Number of Students Using Biased Language Over Time
(percentage reporting ever hearing remarks)
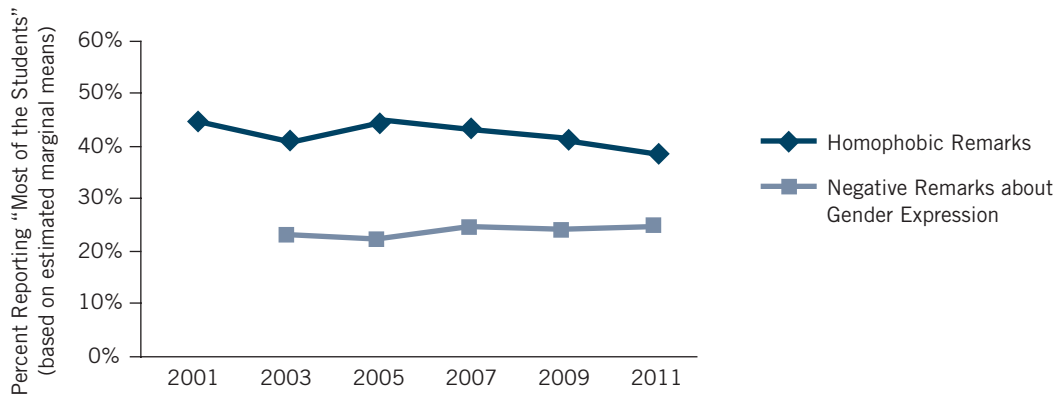

Legend:
- Homophobic Remarks
- Negative Remarks about Gender Expression

Figure 3.3 Biased Language by School Staff Over Time
(percentage reporting ever hearing remarks)

Legend:
- Homophobic Remarks
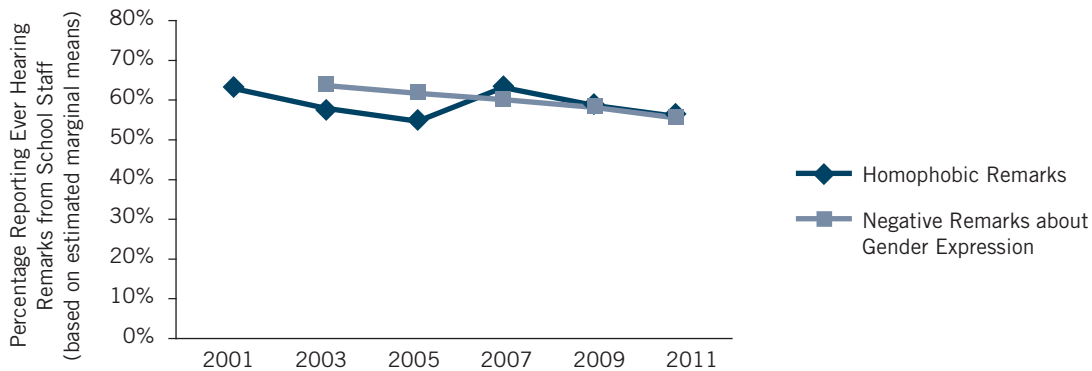- Negative Remarks about Gender Expression

Figure 3.4 Intervention Regarding Homophobic Remarks Over Time
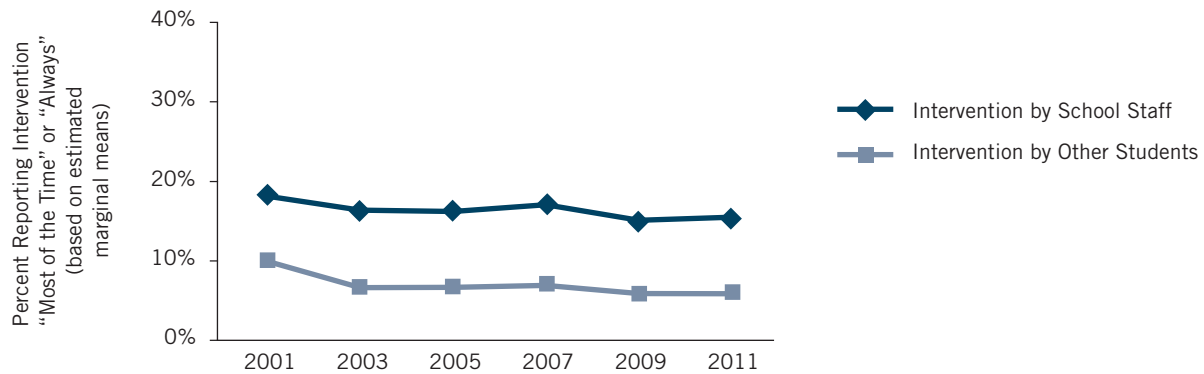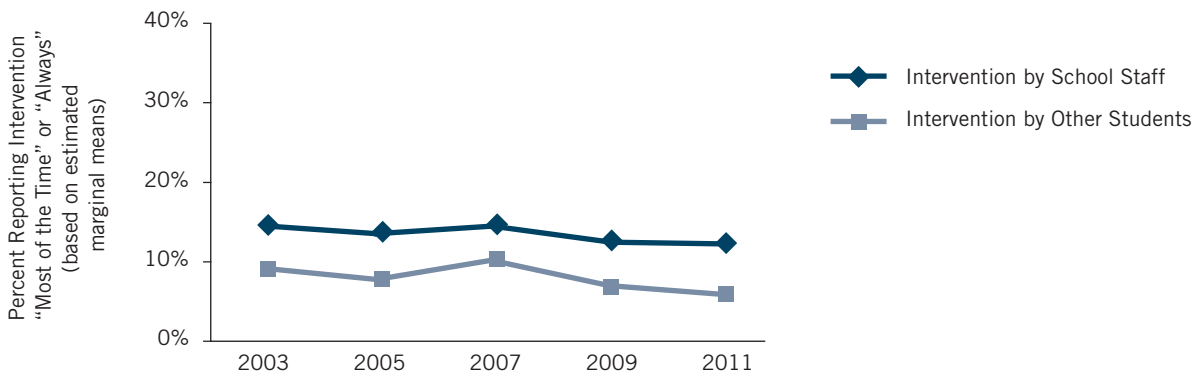(percentage reporting ever hearing remarks)

**Figure 3.5 Intervention Regarding Negative Remarks
about Gender Expression Over Time**
(percentage reporting ever hearing remarks)

Experiences of Harassment and Assault Over Time

To gain some understanding of whether there have been changes in school climate for LGBT students in middle and high schools, we examined the incidence of harassment and assault over that past 10 years. Between 2001 to 2009, LGBT students' reports of harassment and assault remained relatively constant. In 2011, however, we saw a significant decrease in victimization based on sexual orientation. As shown in Figure 3.6, the percentage of LGBT students who reported that they were frequently or often harassed or assaulted because of their sexual orientation was significantly lower in 2011 than in 2009 and 2007, and the incidence of verbal harassment reached its lowest point since 2001.[175] As shown in Figure 3.7, changes in harassment and assault based on gender expression are similar to those for sexual orientation—verbal harassment was lower in 2011

than in all prior years, and physical harassment and assault were lower in 2011 than in 2009 and 2007.[176]

LGBT-Related Resources Over Time

In 2001, we began asking LGBT students in the NSCS about the availability of LGBT-related resources in school, such as Gay-Straight Alliances and curricular resources. Since 2001, there have continued to be significant increases in many LGBT-related resources.

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs). In 2011, we saw small increases from previous years in the percentage of students having a GSA at school.[177] As shown in Figure 3.8, the percentage of LGBT students reporting that they have a GSA in their school was statistically higher than all previous years except for 2003.

Supportive School Personnel. We also found an increase from prior years in the number of teachers or school staff who were supportive of LGBT students. Figure 3.9 shows the percentage of students reporting any supportive faculty/staff (from 2001 to 2011) and the percentage of students reporting a high number of supportive faculty/staff (from 2003 to 2011).[178] There was a continued trend of an increasing number of supportive school staff over the past decade, including a small but statistically significant increase from 2009 to 2011.

Curricular Resources. There were several substantial changes in the availability of LGBT-related curricular resources in 2011 from prior years (see Figure 3.10). The percentage of students with access to LGBT-related Internet resources through their school computers showed a continued increase in 2011 from previous years. There have been no changes over time in the percentage of students reporting inclusion of

LGBT-related content in their textbooks. However, the percentage of students reporting positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events in their curriculum was significantly higher in 2011 than all prior survey years except for 2003. In contrast, the percentage of students who had LGBT-related resources in their school library peaked in 2009 and decreased slightly in 2011.[179]

Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies. In 2011, we saw a large increase in the percentage of students reporting any type of anti-bullying/harassment policy at their school or district (see Figure 3.11). However, the majority of policies continue to be generic policies that do not enumerate protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. In fact, there was not a significant change across years in the percentage of students reporting that their school had a comprehensive policy, i.e., one that included protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. There was, however, a small but significant

Figure 3.6 Frequency of Victimization Based on Sexual Orientation Over Time
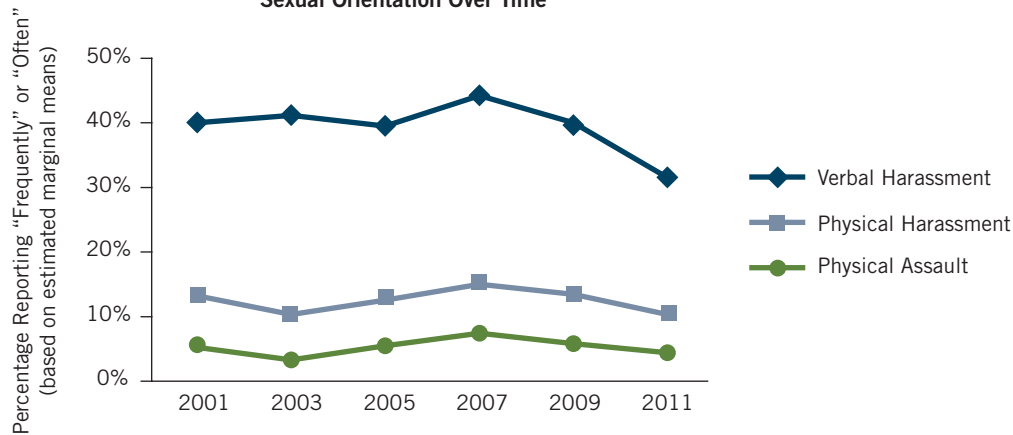

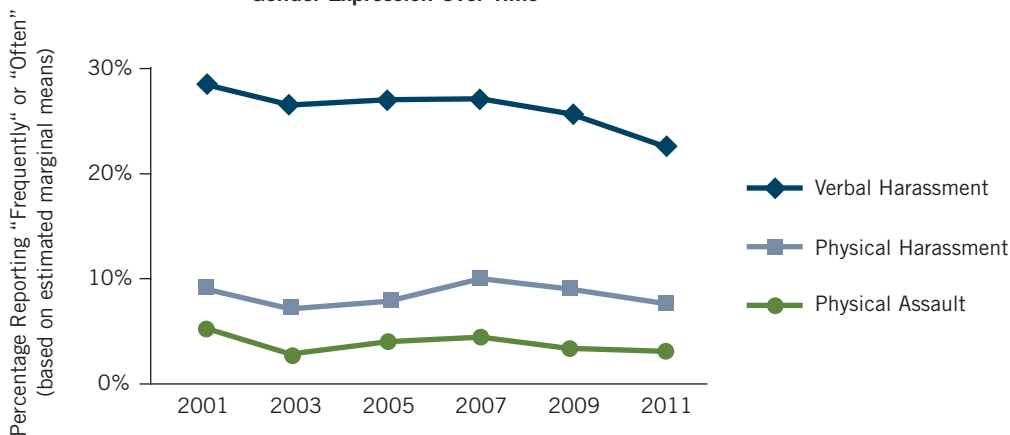Figure 3.7 Frequency of Victimization Based on Gender Expression Over Time

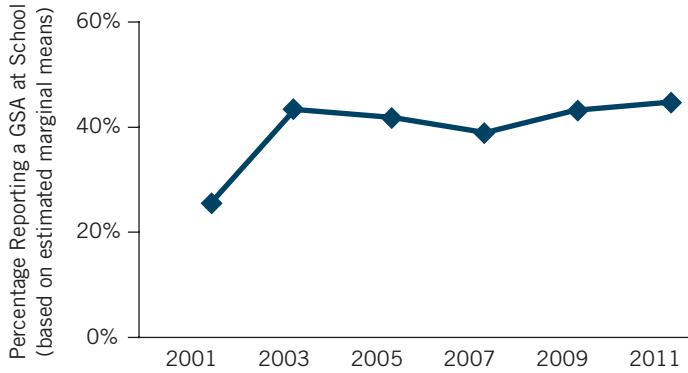**Figure 3.8 Availability of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) Over Time**

Figure 3.9 Availability of Supportive School Staff Over Time
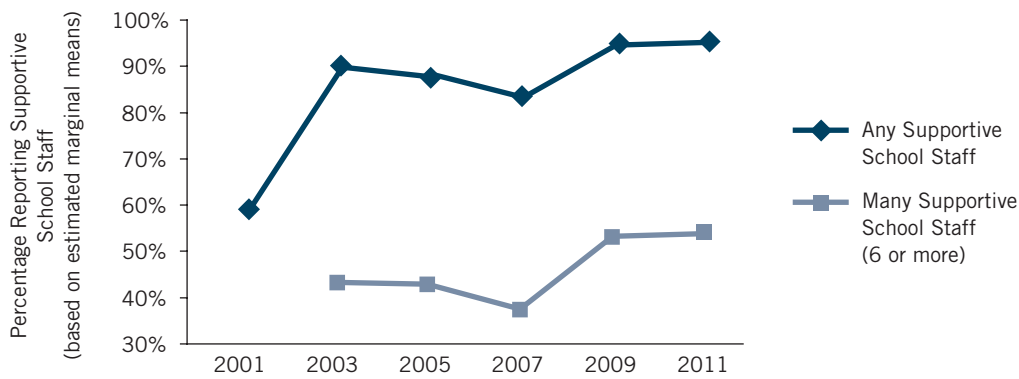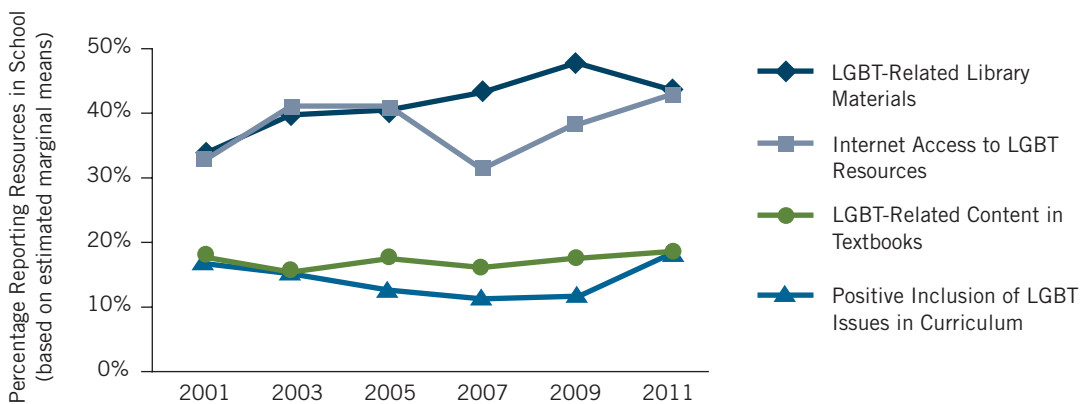

**Figure 3.10 Availability of Curricular Resources Over Time**

increase in the percentage of students reporting a partially enumerated policy (i.e., protections based on either sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, but not both).[180]

Overall, we found increases in the availability of school resources in 2011 that had not shown increases in prior years, e.g., school policies and positive curricular inclusion. In addition, we continued to see increases in some of the more common supports, e.g. supportive school staff and GSAs. Although the availability of LGBT-related library materials was slightly lower in 2011, the overall trend since 2001 is in a positive direction. The inclusion of LGBT-related content in textbooks appears intractable — it is not only uncommon but also unchanged in the past decade. It may be that this finding is, in part, related to the slow pace at which schools update textbooks with newer editions, due to such factors as cost. Yet, it is more probable that even the most current editions fail to include positive and meaningful information about LGBT people, history, and events. In 2011, California's Fair, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Education Act was passed to ensure that LGBT contributions are included in California social science education materials, and it also prohibits

the adoption of textbooks and other instructional materials that discriminate against LGBT people. The FAIR Education Act is the first of its kind, and GLSEN research suggests that these new education standards will be beneficial for LGBT students in California[181]. Given that California is a large market for the textbook industry, it will be important to see if and how LGBT-inclusion in textbooks changes over the next few years.

Considering all of the differences across time — in remarks, victimization, and LGBT-related supports — 2011 marks the first time that our findings show both decreases in negative indicators of school climate (biased remarks and victimization) and continued increases in most LGBT-related school supports. In contrast, in our 2009 report, we saw few changes over time in negative indicators yet increases over time in supports. Given that increased resources are related to more positive school climates (see Utility of School Resources and Supports in this report), our findings in 2011 may indicate that the increases from past years in school resources may now be showing a positive effect on school environment for LGBT youth.
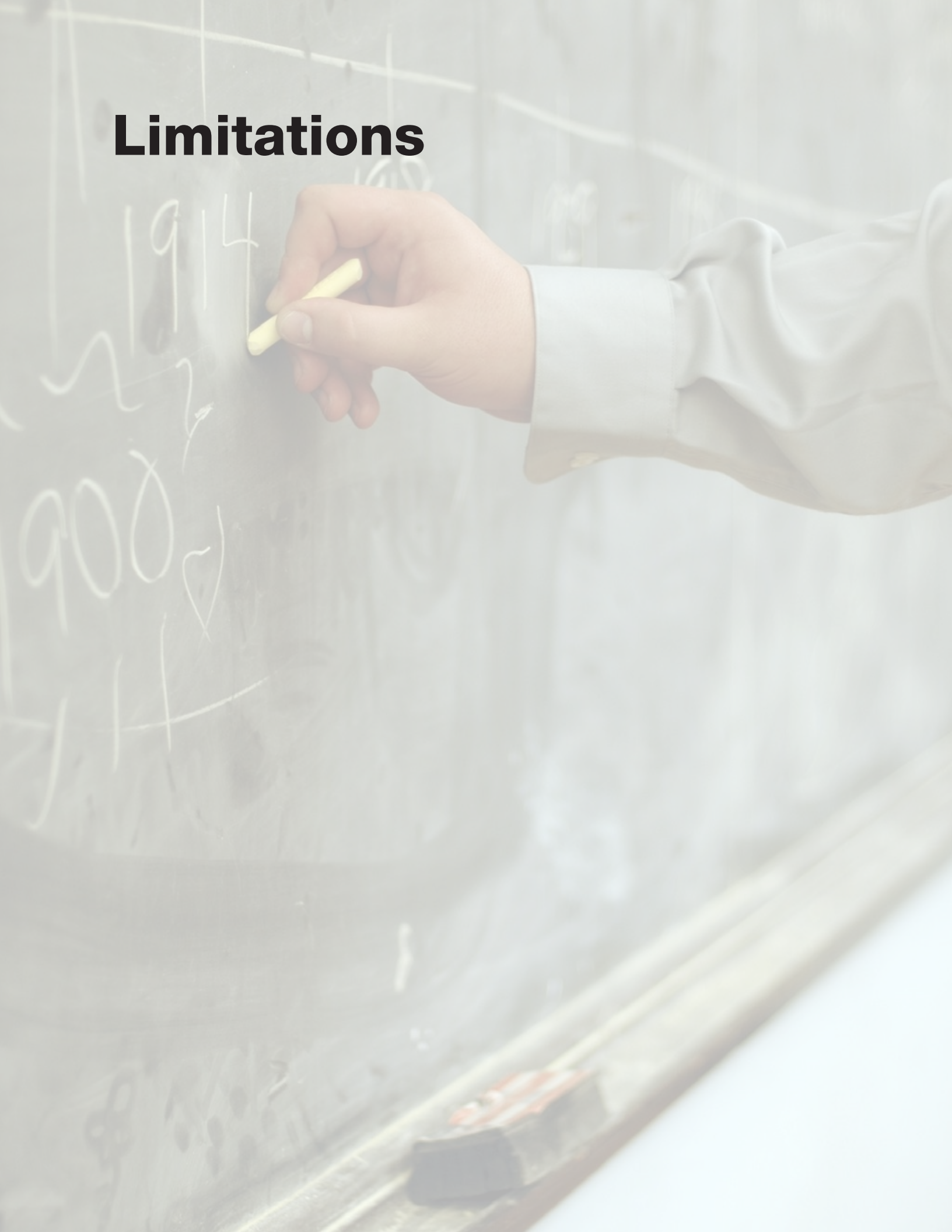
Figure 3.11 Prevalence of School Anti-Bullying/Harassment Policies Over Time
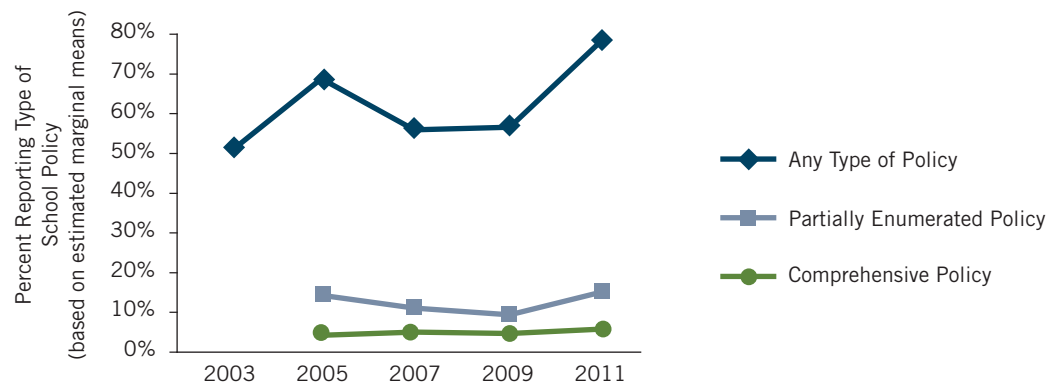
DISCUSSION

Limitations

The methods used for our survey resulted in a nationally representative sample of LGBT students. However, it is important to note that our sample is representative only of youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and have some connection to the LGBT community (either through their local youth organization or through the Internet), and/or have a Facebook page. As discussed in the Methods and Sample section, in addition to announcing the survey through LGBT community groups, LGBT youth-oriented social media, and youth advocacy organizations, we conducted targeted advertising on the social networking site Facebook in order to broaden our reach and obtain a more representative sample. Advertising on Facebook allowed LGBT students who did not necessarily have any connection to the LGBT community to participate in the survey and resulted in a higher level of participation from previously hard-to-reach populations than in years prior to 2007 when we did not utilize this method. However, the social networking advertisements for the survey were sent only to youth who gave some indication that they were LGBT on their Facebook profile.[182] LGBT youth who were not comfortable identifying as LGBT in this manner would not have received the advertisement about the survey and may be somewhat underrepresented in the survey sample. Thus, LGBT youth who are perhaps the most isolated — those without connection to the LGBT community and access to online resources and supports and who are not comfortable identifying as LGBT in their Facebook profile — may be underrepresented in the survey sample.

We also cannot make determinations from our data about the experiences of youth who might be engaging in same-sex sexual activity or experiencing same-sex attractions but who do not identify themselves as LGB. These youth may be more isolated, unaware of supports for LGBT youth, or, even if aware, uncomfortable using such supports. Similarly, youth whose gender identity is not the same as their sex assigned at birth, but who do not identify as transgender, may also be more isolated and without the same access to resources as the youth in our survey. In order to assess the school experiences of these youth — both those that engage in same-sex activity or experience same-sex attraction and those whose assigned sex and gender identity do not match, but who do not identify as LGBT — large-scale population-based studies, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), should include

questions about youth's sexual behavior and sexual attraction and questions that explicitly assess both assigned birth sex and current gender identity.[183] In addition, large-scale surveys should include questions about youth's sexual orientation and provide opportunities for youth to identify as transgender, so that differences between LGBT and non-LGBT youth can be examined.

Another possible limitation to the survey is related to the sample's racial/ethnic composition — the percentage of youth of color was lower than the general population of secondary school students. This discrepancy may be related to different methods for measuring race/ethnicity, as we allow for students in our survey to select multiple options for their race/ethnicity, and code students who selected two or more racial categories as being multiracial.[184] In contrast, most national youth surveys restrict students to selecting only one racial category, and do not provide a multiracial response option.[185] When forced to select one response, students with both White and another racial background may be more likely to select a non-White identity, particularly when "multiracial" is not an option.[186] This may result in a higher percentage of students of color from specific racial groups being identified in other surveys and a higher percentage of students being identified as multiracial in our survey (e.g., a student who is African American/Black and White might select African American/Black in a survey where they only can select one option, whereas in our survey that student might select both racial identities and then become coded as multiracial). This difference in method may account for some of the discrepancy regarding percentages of specific racial groups (e.g., African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander) between our sample and the general population of secondary school students. Although it is possible that LGBT youth of color were somewhat underrepresented in our sample, because there are no national statistics on the demographic breakdown of LGBT-identified youth, we cannot know how our sample compares to other population-based studies. Nevertheless, our participant outreach methods have resulted in increased representation of youth of color over the years.

It is also important to note that our survey only reflects the experiences of LGBT students who were in school during the 2010–2011 school year. Although our sample does include a small

number of students who had left school at some point during the 2010-2011 school year, it does not reflect the experiences of LGBT youth who may have already dropped out in prior school years. The experiences of these youth may likely differ from those students who remained in school, particularly with regard to hostile school climate or access to supportive resources.

Lastly, the data from our survey is cross-sectional (i.e., the data were collected at one point in time), which means that we cannot determine causality. For example, although we can say that there was a relationship between the number of supportive staff and students' sense of belonging at school, we cannot say that one predicts the other.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2011 National School Climate Survey, as in our previous surveys, shows that schools are often unsafe learning environments for LGBT students. Hearing biased or derogatory language at school, especially homophobic remarks and negative remarks about gender expression, was a common occurrence. However, teachers and other school authorities did not often intervene when homophobic or negative remarks about gender expression were made in their presence, and students' use of such language remained largely unchallenged. More than two thirds of the students in our survey reported feeling unsafe at school because of at least one personal characteristic, with sexual orientation and gender

"I was asked to speak on a panel in front of the entire faculty and staff, coming out and advocating the need of safe schools. I am entirely comfortable with myself and my sexuality. High school has been awesome."

expression being the most commonly reported characteristics. Students also frequently reported avoiding spaces in their schools that they perceived as being unsafe, especially bathrooms, locker rooms, and physical education classes. The vast majority of students reported that they had been verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation, and almost two thirds had been harassed because of their gender expression. In addition, many students reported experiencing incidents of physical harassment and assault related to their sexual orientation or gender expression, as well as incidents of sexual harassment, deliberate property damage, and cyberbullying.

Results from our survey also demonstrate the serious consequences that anti-LGBT harassment and assault can have on LGBT students' academic success and their general well-being. LGBT students who experienced frequent harassment and assault reported missing more days of school, having

lower GPAs, and lower educational aspirations than students who were victimized less often. In addition, students who experienced higher levels of harassment and assault had lower levels of school belonging and poorer psychological well-being.

Although our results suggest that school climate remains dire for many LGBT students, they also highlight the important role that institutional supports can play in making schools safer for these students. Steps that schools take to improve school climate are also an investment in better educational outcomes and healthy youth development. For instance, supportive educators positively influenced students' sense of school belonging, academic performance, educational aspirations, and feelings of safety. Students attending schools that had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) or a similar student club reported hearing fewer homophobic remarks, were less likely to feel unsafe and miss school for safety reasons, and reported a greater sense of belonging to their school community. Students who reported that their classroom curriculum included positive representations of LGBT issues were much less likely to miss school, had a greater sense of school belonging, and reported less harassment related to their sexual orientation and gender expression. Unfortunately, these resources and supports were often not available to LGBT students. Although a majority of students did report having at least one supportive teacher or other staff person in school, less than half had a GSA, LGBT-related materials in the school library, or could access LGBT–related resources via school computers. Other resources, such as inclusive curricula and LGBT-inclusive textbooks and readings, were even less common. Furthermore, students from certain types of schools, such as middle schools or religious-affiliated private schools; from certain locales, such as small towns or rural areas; and from certain regions, such as the South and the Midwest, were less likely than other students to report having supportive resources in their schools. These findings clearly indicate the importance of advocating for the inclusion of these resources in schools to ensure positive learning environments for LGBT students in all schools--environments in which students can receive a high quality education, graduate, and continue on to further education.

Findings from the 2011 survey indicate that comprehensive school bullying/harassment policies can result in concrete improvements in school climate for LGBT students. Students in schools with bullying/harassment policies that included sexual orientation and gender identity/expression reported a lower incidence of hearing homophobic language and verbal harassment based on sexual orientation. In addition, in schools with comprehensive policies, teachers and other school staff were more likely to intervene when hearing homophobic remarks and students were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault to school authorities. Unfortunately, students attending schools with comprehensive policies remained in the minority. Although a majority of students said that their school had some type of bullying/harassment policy, few said that it was a comprehensive policy that explicitly stated protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Along with school-level policies, state-level laws that specifically address bullying and harassment in schools can add further protections regarding student safety. Most states have now passed some type of anti-bullying or safe schools law, and 15 states and the District of Columbia now enumerate specific protections for LGBT students. However, results from our survey indicate that it is states with enumerated laws — laws that include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression — afford the safest school environments for LGBT students. Safe schools

"Please help make all schools safer so people don't have to feel uncomfortable like I did. I'm graduating, but I don't want anyone else to feel like I did because of their sexual orientation/gender identity."

advocates and education leaders may now need to turn their attention to how states implement programmatic components (e.g., teacher training) of their law, and examine how local districts are implementing policies, procedures, or programs, if any, that might improve school climate for LGBT students.

We have seen continued increases in the availability of certain LGBT-related resources since our last report– specifically, GSAs, school staff supportive of LGBT students, access to LGBT-related Internet resources, and LGBT-inclusive curricula. Rates of students hearing homophobic epithets have declined steadily over the past decade, and the pervasiveness of these remarks in the school environment was lower in 2011 than any time since 2005. In addition, for the first time since we began conducting the National School Climate Survey, we have observed a downward trend in harassment due to sexual orientation and gender expression. This may be a result, in part, from resources that exist in some schools having had sufficient time to take hold and produce benefits in the school environment. Nevertheless, it is still the minority of students who have these resources available to them, with the exception of having any supportive school staff person. In addition, although more and more students report that their schools have anti-bullying/harassment policies, few report that the policies specifically include protections based sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. The results of the National School Climate Survey over the past decade demonstrate that great strides have been made in providing LGBT students with school supports, yet also show that more work is needed to create safer and more affirming learning environments for LGBT students.

Recommendations

It is clear that there is an urgent need for action to create safer and more inclusive schools for LGBT students. There are steps that concerned stakeholders can take to remedy the situation. Results from the 2011 National School Climate Survey demonstrate the ways in which the presence of comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment legislation, school bullying/harassment policies, and other school-based resources and supports can positively affect LGBT students' school experiences. Therefore, we recommend the following measures:

- Advocate for comprehensive anti-bullying/safe schools legislation at the state and federal level that specifically enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as protected categories alongside others such as race, religion, and disability;

- Adopt and implement comprehensive bullying/harassment policies that specifically enumerate sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in individual schools and districts, with clear and effective systems for reporting and addressing incidents that students experience;

- Ensure that school policies and practices, such as those related to dress codes and school dances, do not discriminate against LGBT students;

- Support student clubs, such as Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), that provide support for LGBT students and address LGBT issues in education;

- Provide training for school staff to improve rates of intervention and increase the number of supportive teachers and other staff available to students; and

- Increase student access to appropriate and accurate information regarding LGBT people, history, and events through inclusive curricula and library and Internet resources.

Taken together, such measures can move us towards a future in which all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Notes

1   Ali, R. (2010). *Dear colleague letter: Harassment and bullying.* Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf.

   Duncan, A. (2011). *Key policy letters from the Education Secretary and Deputy Secretary.* Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/110607.html.

2   Espelage, D. L. (2011). *Bullying & the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) community.* White Paper for the White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, Washington, D.C.

3   U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (2011). *Analysis of state bullying laws and policies.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

4   United States Government Accountability Office. (2012). School bullying: Extent of legal protections for vulnerable groups needs to be more fully assessed. Washington, D.C.: GAO.

5   IOM (Institute of Medicine). 2011. *The health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people: Building a foundation for better understanding.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

6   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, and health-risk behaviors among students in grades 9–12: Youth risk behavior surveillance, selected sites, United States, 2001–2009 *MMWR* (Vol. 60). Atlanta, GA.

7   Espelage, D. & Robinson, J. (2011). Inequities in educational and psychological outcomes between LGBTQ and straight students in middle and high school. *Educational Researcher*, 40(7), 315–330.

8   Poteat, V. P., Mereish, E. H., Giovanni, C. D., & Koenig, B. W. (2011). The effects of general and homophobic victimization on adolescents' psychosocial and educational concerns: The Importance of intersecting identities and parent support. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(4), 597–609.

9   Himmelstein, K. E. W., & Brückner, H. (2011). Criminal-justice and school sanctions against nonheterosexual youth: A national longitudinal study. *Pediatrics*, 127(1), 49–57.

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   Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., Diaz, R. M., & Russell, S. T. (2011). High school gay–straight alliances (GSAs) and young adult well-being: An examination of GSA presence, participation, and perceived effectiveness. *Applied Developmental Science*, 15(4), 175–185.

11   Grant, J. M., Mottet, L. A., Tanis, J., Harrison, J., Herman, J. L., & Keisling, M. (2011). *Injustice At Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey.* Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

12   McGuire, J. K., Anderson, C. R., Toomey, R. B., & Russell, S. T. (2010). School climate for transgender youth: A mixed method investigation of student experiences and school responses. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 39(10), 1175–1188.

13   Grossman, A. H., D'Augelli, A. R., & Frank, J. A. (2011). Aspects of psychological resilience among transgender youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 8(2), 103–115.

14   Singh, A. A. (2012). Transgender youth of color and resilience: Negotiating oppression and finding support. *Sex Roles*, 1–13. (quote from p. 11)

15   Because of the large sample size and the multiple analyses conducted for this report, we use the more restrictive $p<.01$ in determinations of statistical significance for our analyses, unless otherwise indicated. Mean differences in the frequencies across types of biased remarks were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance, and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.52, F(5, 8454)=1831.70, $p<.001$. Resulting univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

16   Mean differences in the frequencies between types of biased remarks based on gender expression were examined using a repeated measures t-test and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The effect was significant, t(8517)=39.74, $p<.001$.

17   Mean differences in the frequencies between types of biased remarks made in the presence of school staff were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.12, F(3, 7392)=319.32, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

18   Mean differences in the frequencies of teacher intervention across types of remarks were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.55, F(3, 4145)=1690.20, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

19   Mean differences in the frequencies of student intervention across types of remarks were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.17, F(3, 7372)=511.00, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

20   A chi-square test was conducted to compare percentages of students who felt unsafe based on religion by their religious-affiliation: χ^2 =570.09, df=11, $p<.001$, Cramer's V=.26.

21   Mean differences in the frequencies of verbal harassment across types were examined using repeated measures multiple analysis of variance: Pillai's Trace=.56, F(5, 8156)=2108.35, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

22   Mean differences in the frequencies of physical harassment across types were examined using repeated measures multiple analysis of variance: Pillai's Trace=.26, F(5, 8248)=586.25, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

23   Mean differences in the frequencies of physical assault across types were examined using repeated measures multiple analysis of variance: Pillai's Trace=.12, F(5, 8292)=223.32, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

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   Greytak, E. A., Kosciw, J. G., & Diaz, E. M. (2009). *Harsh realities: The experiences of transgender youth in our nation's schools.* New York: Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network.

25   Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2012). Trends in youth Internet victimization: Findings from three Youth Internet Safety Surveys 2000–2010. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 50, 179–186.

26   To test differences across groups, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with six weighted victimization variables (based on sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, race/ethnicity, religion and disability) as dependent variables. The independent variable was dichotomized, with "not a big deal" coded as 1 and other responses coded as 0. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.01, F(6, 7756)=18.33, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.01$.

27   A small percentage (0.7%) of students who reported that the victimization they experienced was "not a big deal" also reported that they had been physically assaulted.

28   To compare differences between groups, chi-square tests were performed looking at type of school staff response by whether it was effective or ineffective: talked to perpetrator - χ^2 =1468.78, df=2, p=<.001, ϕ=.41; disciplined - χ^2 =1146.10, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=.37; report/referral - χ^2 =839.58, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=.31; support - χ^2 =398.66, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=.22.

29   To compare differences between groups, chi-square tests were performed looking at type of school staff response by whether it was effective or ineffective: did nothing - χ^2=2694.37, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=-.56; blamed reporting student - χ^2=285.16, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=-.18; promised to 'look into it' - χ^2=610.19, df=2, $p<.001$, ϕ=-.27.

30   High and low levels of victimization are indicated by a cutoff at the mean score of victimization: students above the mean were characterized as "Experiencing High Levels of Victimization."

31   To test differences in educational aspirations by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with educational aspirations as the dependent variable, and severity

of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=86.081$, $p<0.001$, effect size .011. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7866)=38.832$, $p<0.001$, effect size .005.

32 To test differences in GPA by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with GPA as the dependent variable, and severity of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=250.207$, $p<0.001$, effect size .050. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7866)=199.830$, $p<0.001$, effect size .025.

33 To test differences in missing school by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with missing school as the dependent variable, and severity of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=1375.337$, $p<0.001$, effect size .146. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7866)=983.319$, $p<0.001$, effect size .111.

34 Russell, S.T., & Van Campen, K. (2011). Diversity and inclusion in youth development: What we can learn from marginalized young people. *Journal of Youth Development*, 6(3), 95–108.

35 Rotheram-Borus, M.J. & Langabeer, K.A. (2001). Developmental trajectories of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youths. In A.R. D'Augelli & C.J. Peterson (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities and youth* (pp. 97–128). New York: Oxford University Press.

36 Based on paired sample comparison tests of the percentage of students who said they were out to peers and school staff. Students were more likely to report being out to peers than to school staff (t=56.494, $p<.001$).

37 High and low levels of victimization are indicated by a cutoff at the mean score of victimization: students above the mean were characterized as "Experiencing High Levels of Victimization."

38 To test differences in victimization based on sexual orientation by outness, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with victimization based on sexual orientation as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: $F(1, 7912)=57.016$, $p<0.001$, effect size .007. The main effect for outness to school staff was significant: $F(1, 7908)=153.132$, $p<0.001$, effect size .019.

39 To test differences in victimization based on gender expression by outness, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with victimization based on gender expression as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was marginally significant: $F(1, 7912)=4.231$, $p<0.05$, effect size .001. The main effect for outness to school staff was significant: $F(1, 7908)=52.009$, $p<0.001$, effect size .007.

40 Self-esteem was measured using 10 4-point Likert-type items, such as "I am able to do things as well as most people." Positive and negative self-esteem are indicated by a cutoff at the score indicating neither positive nor negative feelings about oneself: students above this cutoff were characterized as "Demonstrating Positive Self-Esteem."

41 To test differences in self-esteem by outness, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with self-esteem as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: $F(1, 7912)=22.501$, $p<0.001$, effect size .003. The main effect for outness to school staff was significant: $F(1, 7908)=139.710$, $p<0.001$, effect size .017.

42 Depression was measured using the 20-item Likert-type CES-D depression scale (Eaton et al., 2004), which includes such items as "During the past week, I felt hopeful about the future."

Eaton, W. W., Muntaner, C., Smith, C., Tien, A., & Ybarra, M. (2004). Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale: Review and revision (CESD and CESD-R) (pp. 363–377). In M. E. Maruish (Ed.), *The use of psychological testing for treatment planning and outcomes assessment*. 3rd Ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

43 To test differences in depression by outness, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with depression as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: $F(1, 7912)=11.478$, $p<0.001$, effect size .001. The main effect for outness to school staff was significant: $F(1, 7908)=50.754$, $p<0.001$, effect size .006. Higher levels of depression in the chart reflect a mean split of the depression variable.

44 School belonging was measured using 18 4-point Likert-type items, such as "Other students in my school take my opinions seriously." Positive and negative school belonging are indicated by a cutoff at the score indicating neither positive nor negative attitudes about one's belonging in school: students above this cutoff were characterized as "Demonstrating Positive School Belonging."

45 To test differences in school belonging by outness, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with school belonging as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: $F(1, 7912)=44.770$, $p<0.001$, effect size .006. The main effect for outness to school staff was significant: $F(1, 7908)=181.125$, $p<0.001$, effect size .022.

46 Goodenow, C. & Grady, K.E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60–71.

Murdock, T. B. & Bolch, M. B. (2005). Risk and protective factors for poor school adjustment in lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) high school youth: Variable and person-centered analyses. *Psychology in the Schools*, 42(5), 159–172.

Roeser, R.W., Midgley, C. & Urdan, T.C. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 88, 408–422.

47 A measure for the psychological sense of school membership was developed for use with adolescents by Carol Goodenow: Goodenow, C. (1993). The Psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools*, 30(1), 79–90.

The measure includes 18 4-point Likert-type items, such as "Other students in my school take my opinions seriously." Positive and negative school belonging are indicated by a cutoff at the score indicating neither positive nor negative attitudes about one's belonging in school: students above this cutoff were characterized as "Demonstrating Positive School Belonging."

48 To test differences in school belonging by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with school belonging as the dependent variable, and severity of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=1504.226$, $p<0.001$, effect size .157. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7866)=1074.525$, $p<0.001$, effect size .120.

49 Gruber, J. E. & Fineran, S. (2008). Comparing the impact of bullying and sexual harassment victimization on the mental and physical health of adolescents. *Sex Roles*, 59, 1–13.

Salmon, G. James, A. Cassidy, E. L. & Javaloyes, M. A. (2000). Bullying a review: Presentations to an adolescent psychiatric service and within a school for emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 5, 563–579.

Kaltiala-Heino, R., Rimpela, M., Rantanen, P. & Rimpela, A. (2000). Bullying at school – an indicator of adolescents at risk for mental disorders. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 661–674.

50 Self-esteem was measured using the 10-item Likert-type Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1989), which includes such items as "I am able to do things as well as most people." Positive and negative self-esteem are indicated by a cutoff at the score indicating neither positive nor negative feelings about oneself: students above this cutoff were characterized as "Demonstrating Positive Self-Esteem."

Rosenberg, M. (1989). *Society and the adolescent self-image* (Revised ed.) Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

51 To test differences in self-esteem by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with self-esteem as the dependent variable, and severity of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=445.671$, $p<0.001$, effect size .052. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7866)=292.117$, $p<0.001$, effect size .036.

52 Depression was measured by the CES-D. See endnote 42.

53 To test differences in depression by severity of victimization, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with depression as the dependent variable, and severity of victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression as the independent variables. The main effect for victimization based on sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 8057)=1198.888$, $p<0.001$, effect size .130. The main effect for victimization based on gender expression was significant: $F(1, 8766)=959.632$, $p<0.001$, effect size .109.

54 Darling, N., Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, R. (2005). Participation in school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37(1), 51–76.

Fredericks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Is extracurricular participation associated with beneficial outcomes? Concurrent and longitudinal relations. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(4), 698–713.

Peck, S. C., Roeser, R. W., Zarrett, N., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). Exploring the roles of extracurricular activity quantity and quality in the educational resilience of vulnerable adolescents: Variable and pattern-centered approaches. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(1), 135–155.

55 Miceli, M. (2005). *Standing out, standing together: The social and political impact of gay-straight alliances.* New York: Routledge.

Sweat, J. W. (2004). *Crossing boundaries: Identity and activism in Gay-Straight Alliances.* University of California, Davis.

56 Griffin, P., Lee, C., Waugh, J., & Beyer, C. (2004). Describing roles that gay-straight alliances play in schools: From individual support to school change. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1(3), 7–22.

McCready, L. (2004). Some challenges facing queer youth programs in urban high schools: Racial segregation and de-normalizing whiteness. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, 1(3), 37–51.

57 Passed in 1984, the federal Equal Access Act, 20 U.S.C. § 4071(a), states that any public secondary school receiving federal funding that provides a meeting place during non-instructional time for any voluntary, student-initiated club is required to provide the same meeting facilities to all non-curriculum related clubs no matter what their "religious, political, philosophical or other" beliefs or discussions may be. This law protects students' rights to form and attend GSAs as long as there are other extracurricular clubs on campus. If a school does not permit other extracurricular clubs to meet, however, it does not have to permit a GSA. For more information see the GLSEN resource: "The Equal Access Act: What Does it Mean?" by David Buckel, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, available at http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/139.html.

58 To compare differences based on parental permission and outness, a Chi-square test was performed: $\chi^2 =15.60$, $df=1$, $p<.01$, $\phi=.25$.

59 Darling, N., Caldwell, L. L., & Smith, R. (2005). Participation in school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37(1), 51–76.

Fredericks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2006). Is extracurricular participation associated with beneficial outcomes? Concurrent and longitudinal relations. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(4), 698–713.

Peck, S. C., Roeser, R. W., Zarrett, N., & Eccles, J. S. (2008). Exploring the roles of extracurricular activity quantity and quality in the educational resilience of vulnerable adolescents: Variable- and pattern-centered approaches. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(1), 135–155.

60 Family and Youth Services Bureau. (2012). *Fact sheet: Title V State Abstinence Education Grant Program*. Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/programs/tpp/sap-facts.htm.

61 Community Action Kit. (2011). *Pride or prejudice: How fear-based abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula present sexual orientation*. Retrieved 3 July 2012 from http://www.communityactionkit.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&PageID=1095&varuniqueuserid=89293082686&stopRedirect=1

Heitel Yakush, J. (2007) *Legalized discrimination: The rise of the marriage-promotion industry and how federally funded programs discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth and families*. Washington, D.C., Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

62 To compare LGBT-inclusive health classes by abstinence-only vs. other sexuality curricula, a Chi-square test was performed: $\chi=231.29$, $df=6$, $p<.001$, $\phi=.17$.

63 U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform – Minority Staff Special Investigations Division. (December 2004). *The Content of Federally Funded Only Education Programs*, prepared for Rep. Henry A. Waxman.

64 Santelli J., Ott, M., Lyon, M., Roger, J., Summer, D., & Schleifer, R. (2006) Abstinence and abstinence-only education: A review of US policies and programs. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(1), 72–81.

Trenholm, C., Devaney, B., Fortson, K., Quay, L., Wheeler, J., & Clark, M. (2007). Impacts of four Title V, Section 510 abstinence education programs: Final report. Trenton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

65 Family and Youth Services Bureau. (2012). *Fact sheet: Title V State Abstinence Education Grant Program*. Washington, D.C.: Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/programs/tpp/sap-facts.htm. SIECUS. (2011). Fact sheet: End funding for the failed Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program; Support comprehensive sex education. Washington, D.C.: SIECUS.

66 To test differences in hearing remarks based on sexuality curricula, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with hearing "that's so gay" and other homophobic remarks as dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.02, $F(2, 5630)=48.31$, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.001$ and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

67 To test differences in verbal harassment based on sexuality curricula, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with verbal harassment based on sexual orientation and gender expression as dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.01, $F(2, 5538)=37.24$, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.001$ and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

68 To test differences based on sexuality curricula, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the number of supportive school staff and peer acceptance as dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.04, $F(2, 5584)=116.93$, $p<.001$. Univariate effects were considered at $p<.001$ and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

69 To compare sense of school belonging by abstinence-only vs. other sexuality curricula, an independent sample t-test was performed. Means were significantly different: $t(5624)=8.62$, $p<.001$.

70 Title V State Abstinence Education Grant Program HHS-2010-ACF-ACYF-AEGP-0123 (2010).

71 Mean differences in comfort level talking to school staff across type of school staff member were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.51, $F(7, 8019)=1211.28$, $p<.001$. Univariate analyses were considered significant at a $p<.01$.

72 Mean differences in talking to school staff across type of school staff member were examined using repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance and percentages are shown for illustrative purposes. The multivariate effect was significant, Pillai's Trace=.52, $F(7, 8155)=1260.18$, $p<.001$. Univariate analyses were considered significant at a $p<.01$.

73 Marsh, H. W., &Kleitman, S. (2002). Extracurricular school activities: The good, the bad, and the nonlinear. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(4), 464–514.

Marsh, H.W. &Kleitman, S. (2003). School athletic participation: Mostly gain with little pain. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 25(2), 205–228.

Nelson, M. C. & Gordon-Larsen, P. (2006). Physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns are associated with selected adolescent health risk behaviors. *Pediatrics*, 117(4), 1281–1290.

Ortega, F. B., Ruiz, J. R., Castillo, M. J., &Sjöström, M. (2008). Physical fitness in childhood and adolescence: A powerful marker of health. *International Journal of Obesity*, 32, 1–11.

74   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Sexual identity, sex of sexual contacts, and health-risk behaviors among students in grades 9–12: Youth risk behavior surveillance, selected sites, United States, 2001–2009. *MMWR* (Vol. 60). Atlanta, GA.

75   National Federation of State High School Associations. (2011). *2010–11 High School Athletics Participation Survey Results*. Indianapolis, IN: NFHS.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2010 (NCES 2011-015), Chapter 1.

To determine the rate of sports participation in the general population of high school students, we used the total number of high school interscholastic athletes from the *High School Athletics Participation Survey* and National Center for Education Statistics projected estimates of the total public and private high school enrollment for fall 2010. Data for middle school athletics participation and intramural sports participation were not available.

76   We compared our general high school student population sports participation estimate (see Endnote 75) with interscholastic sports participation by LGBT high school students in our sample using a Chi-square test. Results were significant: χ^2 =1799.77, df=1, p<.001.

77   Changing the Game: The GLSEN Sports Project. (2011). *School athletic climate checklist*. New York: GLSEN.

Griffin, P., & Carroll, H. J. (2010). *On the team: Equal opportunity for transgender student athletes*. San Francisco, CA: National Center for Lesbian Rights and Women's Sports Foundation.

78   To test differences in access to an LGBT community group/program by region, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with access to a group/program as the dependent variable, and region as the independent variable. The main effect for region was significant: F(3, 8441)=60.901, p<0.001. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students in the South had the least access, followed by students in the Midwest, followed by students in the Northeast and West.

79   To test differences in access to an LGBT community group/program by locale, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with access to a group/program as the dependent variable, and locale as the independent variable. The main effect for region was significant: F(2, 8122)=120.472, p<0.001. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students in rural/small town areas had the least access, followed by students in suburban areas, followed by students in urban areas.

80   To test differences in LGBT community program/group attendance by outness, three analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with group/program attendance as the dependent variable, and outness to peers or school staff or parents as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: F(1, 3520)=22.128, p<0.001, effect size .006. The main effect for outness to parents was significant: F(1, 3518)=87.889, p<0.001, effect size .024.

81   To test differences in LGBT community program/group access by GSA access, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with group/program access as the dependent variable, and GSA access as the independent variable. The main effect for outness to peers was significant: F(1, 8525)=695.592, p<0.001, effect size .075.

82   To test differences in LGBT community program/group attendance by GSA access, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with group/program attendance as the dependent variable, and GSA access as the independent variable. The main effect for GSA access was significant: F(1, 3549)=27.102, p<0.001, effect size .008.

83   To test differences in hearing biased remarks by presence of a GSA, four analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and frequency of hearing biased remarks as the dependent variables. The main effect for GSA presence in hearing "gay" used in a negative way was significant: F(1, 7866)=168.580, p<0.001, effect size .021. The main effect for GSA presence in hearing "no homo" was significant: F(1, 7866)=90.435, p<0.001, effect size .011. The main effect for GSA presence in hearing other negative remarks was significant: F(1, 7866)=221.463, p<0.001, effect size .027. The main effect for GSA presence in hearing negative remarks re: gender expression was significant: F(1, 7866)=49.493, p<0.001, effect size .006.

84   To test differences in victimization based on sexual orientation and gender expression by presence of a GSA, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and victimization due to sexual orientation and gender expression as the dependent variables. The main effect for GSA presence in victimization due to sexual orientation was significant: F(1, 7866)=287.469, p<0.001, effect size .035. The main effect for GSA presence in victimization due to gender expression was significant: F(1, 7866)=171.603, p<0.001, effect size .021.

85   To test differences in school belonging and presence of a GSA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and school belonging as the dependent variable. The main effect for GSA presence in school belonging was significant: F(1, 7866)=480.430, p<0.001, effect size .058.

86   To test differences in feeling unsafe and missing school by presence of a GSA, three analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and frequency of feeling unsafe or missing school as the dependent variables. The main effect for GSA presence in feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation was significant: F(1, 7866)=214.629, p<0.001, effect size .027. The main effect for GSA presence in feeling unsafe due to gender expression was significant: F(1, 7866)=86.964, p<0.001, effect size .011. The main effect for GSA presence in missing school in the past month was significant: F(1, 7866)=176.610, p<0.001, effect size .022.

87   To test differences in number of supportive school staff by presence of a GSA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and number of supportive staff as the dependent variable. The main effect for GSA presence in number of supportive staff was significant: F(1, 7866)=1274.577, p<0.001, effect size .139.

88   To test differences in reporting to school staff by presence of a GSA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and frequency of reporting to school staff as the dependent variable. The main effect for GSA presence in students reporting "most of the time" or "always" was significant: F(1, 6499)=5.153, p<0.05, effect size .001.

89   To test differences in staff intervention by presence of a GSA, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with GSA presence as the independent variable, and frequency of staff intervention as the dependent variables. The main effect for GSA presence in staff intervention in homophobic remarks was significant: F(1, 5671)=121.917, p<0.001, effect size .021. The main effect for GSA presence in staff intervention in negative remarks about gender expression was significant: F(1, 5671)=7.591, p<0.01, effect size .001.

90   *Definition of multicultural education*. (2003). National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME).

91   Style, E. (1996). Curriculum as window & mirror. Social Science Record, 33(2), 21–28.

92   To test differences in hearing biased remarks by presence of an inclusive curriculum, four analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with inclusive curriculum presence as the independent variable, and frequency of hearing biased remarks as the dependent variables. The main effect for inclusive curriculum presence in hearing "gay" used in a negative way was significant: F(1, 7817)=262.543, p<0.001, effect size .032. The main effect for inclusive curriculum presence in hearing "no homo" was significant: F(1, 7817)=149.712, p<0.001, effect size .019. The main effect for inclusive curriculum presence in hearing other negative remarks was significant: F(1, 7817)=367.308, p<0.001, effect size .045. The main effect for inclusive curriculum presence in hearing negative remarks re: gender expression was significant: F(1, 7817)=82.363, p<0.001, effect size .010

93   To test differences in victimization by presence of an inclusive curriculm, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with inclusive curriculum as the independent variable, and victimization

due to sexual orientation and gender expression as the dependent variables. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in victimization due to sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 7817)=204.921$, $p<0.001$, effect size .026. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in victimization due to gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7817)=115.790$, $p<0.001$, effect size .015.

94   School belonging was measured using 18 4-point Likert-type items, such as "Other students in my school take my opinions seriously." Positive and negative school belonging are indicated by a cutoff at the score indicating neither positive nor negative attitudes about one's belonging in school: students above this cutoff were characterized as "Demonstrating Positive School Belonging."

95   To test differences in feeling unsafe and missing school by presence of an inclusive curriculum, three analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with inclusive curriculum as the independent variable, and frequency of feeling unsafe and missing school as the dependent variables. The main effect for an inclusive curriculum in feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 7817)=278.939$, $p<0.001$, effect size .034. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in feeling unsafe due to gender expression was significant: $F(1, 7817)=133.023$, $p<0.001$, effect size .017. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in missing school in the past month was significant: $F(1, 7817)=150.141$, $p<0.001$, effect size .019.

96   To test differences in talking to school staff about LGBT issues by presence of an inclusive curriculum, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with inclusive curriculum presence as the independent variable, and talking to school staff and feeling comfortable talking to school staff about LGBT issues as the dependent variables. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in having a positive or helpful conversation about LGBT issues was significant: $F(1, 7817)=406.210$, $p<0.001$, effect size .049. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in feeling comfortable talking with a staff member about LGBT issues was significant: $F(1, 7817)=300.141$, $p<0.001$, effect size .037.

97   To test differences in intervention by presence of an inclusive curriculum, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with inclusive curriculum presence as the independent variable, and frequency of students and staff intervention as the dependent variables. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in staff intervention in homophobic remarks was significant: $F(1, 7239)=267.685$, $p<0.001$, effect size .036. The main effect for inclusive curriculum in student intervention in homophobic remarks was significant: $F(1, 7239)=69.813$, $p<0.001$, effect size .010.

98   To test differences in peer acceptance by presence of a GSA, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with peer acceptance as the dependent variable, and presence of a GSA as the independent variable. The main effect for GSA was significant: $F(1, 8531)=593.050$, $p<0.001$, effect size .065.

99   To test differences in peer acceptance by presence of an inclusive curriculum, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with peer acceptance as the dependent variable, and presence of an inclusive curriculum as the independent variable. The main effect for inclusive curriculum was significant: $F(1, 8520)=779.089$, $p<0.001$, effect size .084.

100 To test differences in outness to peers by how accepting one's peers are, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with outness to peers as the dependent variable, and accepting/supportive peers as the independent variable. The main effect for peer acceptance on outness was significant: $F(1, 8364)=142.506$, $p<0.001$, effect size .017.

101 To test differences in school belonging by how accepting one's peers are, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with school belonging as the dependent variable, and accepting/supportive peers as the independent variable. The main effect for peer acceptance on school belonging was significant: $F(1, 8364)=2478.732$, $p<0.001$, effect size .229.

102 Birch, S.H. & Ladd, G.W. (1997).The teacher-child relationship and children's early school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology*, 35(1), 61–79.

   Klem, A.M., & Connell, J.P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74(7), 262–273.

Wentzel, K.R. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived pedagogical caring. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(3), 411–419.

103 To test differences in feeling unsafe at school by number of supportive staff, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with feeling unsafe as the dependent variable, and number of supportive staff as the independent variable. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant in feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation: $F(2, 7553)=230.556$, $p<0.001$, effect size .058. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with 6 or more supportive teachers felt less unsafe due to their sexual orientation than students with no supportive teachers. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant in feeling unsafe due to gender expression: $F(2, 7553)=118.575$, $p<0.001$, effect size .030. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with 6 or more supportive teachers felt less unsafe due to their gender expression than students with no supportive teachers.

104 To test differences in missing school by number of supportive staff, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with missing school as the dependent variable, and number of supportive staff as the independent variable. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant in missing school: $F(2, 7553)=227.284$, $p<0.001$, effect size .057. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with 6 or more supportive teachers were less likely to miss school than students with no supportive teachers.

105 Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60–71.

106 To test differences in school belonging by number of supportive staff, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with school belonging as the dependent variable, and number of supportive staff as the independent variable. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant in school belonging: $F(2, 8333)=1058.931$, $p<0.001$, effect size .203. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with successively more supportive teachers had higher school belonging than students with fewer supportive teachers.

107 To test differences in educational aspirations by number of supportive staff, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with post-secondary educational aspirations as the dependent variable, and number of supportive staff as the independent variable. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant in post-secondary educational aspirations: $F(2, 8333)=39.201$, $p<0.001$, effect size .009. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with successively more supportive teachers had higher post-secondary educational aspirations than students with fewer supportive teachers.

108 To test differences in GPA by number of supportive staff, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with GPA as the dependent variable, and number of supportive staff as the independent variable. The main effect for number of supportive staff was significant for GPA: $F(2, 8333)=44.777$, $p<0.001$, effect size .011. Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that students with successively more supportive teachers had higher GPAs than students with fewer supportive teachers.

109 To test differences in feeling unsafe by frequency of teacher intervention, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation or gender expression as the dependent variables, and frequency of teacher intervention as the independent variable. The main effect for teacher intervention on feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 7133)=153.539$, $p<0.001$, effect size .021. The main effect for teacher intervention on feeling unsafe due to gender expression was significant: $F(1, 6148)=21.041$, $p<0.001$, effect size .003.

110 To test differences in missing school by frequency of teacher intervention, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with missing school due to feeling unsafe as the dependent variable, and frequency of staff intervention as the independent variable. The main effect for staff intervention in homophobic language was significant: $F(1, 7133)=117.445$, $p<0.001$, effect size .016. The main effect for staff intervention in negative remarks about gender expression was significant: $F(1, 6148)=17.510$, $p<0.001$, effect size .003.

111 To test differences in victimization by effectiveness of staff intervention, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with effectiveness of staff intervention as the independent variable, and victimization due to sexual orientation and gender expression as the dependent variables. The main effect for effectiveness of intervention on victimization due to sexual orientation was significant: $F(1, 2434)=204.022$, $p<0.001$, effect size .077. The main effect for effectiveness of intervention on victimization due to gender expression was significant: $F(1, 2434)=130.184$, $p<0.001$, effect size .051.

112 To test differences in feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation or gender expression by effectiveness of staff intervention, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with feeling unsafe due to sexual orientation or gender expression as the dependent variable, and effectiveness of staff intervention as the independent variable. The main effect for staff intervention in feeling unsafe was significant: $F(1, 2434)=129.881$, $p<0.001$, effect size .051.

113 To test differences in missing school due to feeling unsafe by effectiveness of staff intervention, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with missing school due to feeling unsafe as the dependent variable, and effectiveness of staff intervention as the independent variable. The main effect for staff intervention in missing school was significant: $F(1, 2434)=154.981$, $p<0.001$, effect size .060.

114 The positive effect of Safe Space stickers was observed even after accounting for the presence of GSAs, which are also often associated with the presence of supportive educators. To test differences in number of supportive school staff by presence of a Safe Space sticker, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted, with Safe Space sticker presence as the independent variable, number of supportive staff as the dependent variable, and presence of a GSA as a covariate. The main effect for a Safe Space sticker presence on the number of supportive staff was significant: $F(1, 8375)=209.426$, $p<0.001$, effect size .024.

115 To test differences in talking to school staff about LGBT issues by presence of a Safe Space sticker, two analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) were conducted, with Safe Space sticker as the independent variable, talking to teachers and feeling comfortable talking to teachers about LGBT issues as the dependent variables, and presence of a GSA as a covariate. The main effect for presence of a Safe Space sticker in having had a positive or helpful conversation about LGBT issues was significant: $F(1, 8375)=171.636$, $p<0.001$, effect size .020. The main effect for presence of a Safe Space sticker in feeling comfortable talking with a staff member about LGBT issues was significant: $F(1, 8375)=137.164$, $p<0.001$, effect size .016.

116 To test differences in biased language by type of school policy, four analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with frequency of hearing biased language as the dependent variable and policy type as the independent variable. The main effect of policy type on hearing "gay" in a negative way was significant: $F(3, 8151)=34.494$, $p<0.001$, effect size .013. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that "gay" was heard negatively least frequently in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with a generic policy and schools with no policy. Schools with no policy and a generic policy were no different from one another. The main effect of policy type on hearing "no homo" was significant: $F(3, 8151)=30.701$, $p<0.001$, effect size .011. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that "no homo" was heard least frequently in schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with generic policies, followed by schools with no policy. The main effect of policy type on hearing other homophobic remarks was significant: $F(3, 8151)=37.192$, $p<0.001$, effect size .014. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that other homophobic language was heard least frequently in schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with a generic policy and schools with no policy. Schools with no policy and a generic policy were no different from one another. The main effect of policy type on hearing negative remarks re: gender exression was significant: $F(3, 8151)=12.089$, $p<0.001$, effect size .004. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that negative remarks re: gender expression were heard least frequently in schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with a generic policy, followed by schools with no policy.

117 Based on Bonferroni post-hoc tests referenced above. Comprehensive policies differed from partially enumerated policies at the $p<.10$ level. Comprehensive policies differed from generic policies and no policies at the $p<.001$ level.

118 To test differences in rates of victimization by type of school policy, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with frequency of victimization as the dependent variable and policy type as the independent variable. The main effect of policy type on rates of victimization due to sexual orientation was significant: $F(3, 8151)=31.730$, $p<0.001$, effect size .012. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that students were least victimized because of their sexual orientation in schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with a generic policy, followed by schools with no policy. The main effect of policy type on victimization due to gender expression was significant: $F(3, 8151)=20.919$, $p<0.001$, effect size .008. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that students were least victimized because of their gender expression in schools with comprehensive policies and schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with generic policies, followed by schools with no policy.

119 To test differences in rates of staff intervention in biased language by type of school policy, two analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted, with frequency of intervention as the dependent variable and policy type as the independent variable. The main effect of policy type on rates of intervention in homophobic language was significant: $F(3, 5661)=52.798$, $p<0.001$, effect size .027. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that teachers intervened most frequently in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partially enumerated policies, followed by schools with a generic policy, followed by schools with no policy. The main effect of policy type on staff intervention in negative remarks re: gender expression was significant: $F(3, 5661)=25.228$, $p<0.001$, effect size .013. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that staff intervened most frequently in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partially enumerated policies and schools with generic policies, followed by schools with no policy.

120 To test differences in effectiveness of staff intervention by type of school policy, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with effectiveness staff of intervention as the dependent variable and policy type as the independent variable. The main effect of policy type on effectiveness of intervention was significant: $F(3, 2565)=22.069$, $p<0.001$, effect size .025. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that staff intervention was most effective in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partly enumerated policies and schools with a generic policy, followed by schools with no policy.

121 To test differences in rates of student reporting of incidents by type of school policy, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with frequency of student reporting as the dependent variable and policy type as the independent variable. The main effect of policy type on rates of reporting was significant: $F(3, 6492)=24.679$, $p<0.001$, effect size .011. Post-hoc Bonferroni tests indicated that students reported most frequently in schools with comprehensive policies, followed by schools with partly enumerated policies and schools with a generic policy, followed by schools with no policy.

122 States that currently include protection based on sexual orientation and gender identity (i.e., with comprehensive laws) are: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington (as well as the District of Columbia). For the purposes of these state analyses, we only considered states that had laws in effect at least one year prior to the 2010–2011 school year, when the survey was conducted: California, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington. At the time of publication of this report, only Hawaii and Montana had no anti-bullying law.

123 Prior to the 2010–2011 school year, states with generic laws were: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Prior to the 2010–2011 school year, states with no anti-bullying laws were: Alabama, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, New York, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

124 To examine differences in frequency of victimization, we conducted a series of ordinary least squares regressions, regressing the two weighted victimization scores for sexual orientation and gender expression onto two dummy coded variables to account for the three types of state laws (with comprehensive law as the reference group). To account for differences within groups based on state education characteristics, we used as covariates key state-level educational characteristics (expenditure-per-pupil, student-teacher ratio, support personnel-student ratio, and total student enrollment), with errors adjusted for intra-group correlations (i.e., by state). The two state law variables contributed a significant amount of variance in both types of victimization, even after accounting for state-level educational characteristics. The coefficients indicate that generic laws and no laws were associated with higher levels of victimization.

125 To examine differences in availability of LGBT-related supports in school (i.e., the number of supportive school staff, the presence of school or district anti-bullying policy, and effective staff intervention regarding victimization), we conducted a series of ordinary least squares regressions, as we did to examine differences in victimization. The two state law variables explained a significant amount of variance in the likelihood of having each of the supports, even after accounting for state-level educational characteristics. The coefficients indicate that generic laws and no laws were associated with lower levels of supports.

126 Ryan, C., & Futterman, D. (1998). *Lesbian and gay youth: Care and counseling*. New York: Columbia University Press.

127 Ryan, C. Rivers, I. (2003). Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: Victimization and its correlates in the USA and UK. *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 5(2), 103–119.

128 Given the relatively small sample sizes of Middle Eastern/Arab American and Native American/American Indian LGBT students and LGBT students with "other" races/ethnicities, we did not include these three groups in the comparisons of school experiences by race or ethnicity.

129 To compare feeling unsafe by race/ethnicity, chi-square tests were conducted. Unsafe because of sexual orientation: χ^2=28.04, df=4, p<.001, Cramer's V=.06. Unsafe because of gender expression: χ^2=16.67, df=4, p<.01, Cramer's V=.05.

130 To compare experiences of harassment and assault by race/ethnicity, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables as dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.01, F(24, 32344)=4.12, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered.

131 For the purposes of readability, throughout this report (with the exception of Figures), the terms "male" and "female" refer to male and female students who are not transgender. We recognize that some transgender students identify as female and some as male (see Table 1 for breakdown of transgender identities in the survey sample), however, in this report we do not examine differences between subgroups of transgender students (i.e., transgender male and transgender female) and examine the group of transgender students as a whole.

132 To compare feeling unsafe by gender identity, chi-square tests were conducted. Unsafe because of sexual orientation: χ^2=46.31, df=3, p<.001, Cramer's V=.07. Unsafe because of gender expression: χ^2=572.18, df=3, p<.001, Cramer's V=.26.

133 To compare experiences of harassment and assault by gender identity, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables as dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.11, F(18, 24594)=50.54 p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

134 Kimmel, M. (2004). Masculinity as homophobia: fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In P. F. Murphy (Ed.), *Feminism and masculinities* (pp. 182–199): New York: Oxford University Press.

135 Students who selected the option "none of these" were given the opportunity to describe how they expressed their gender and many of them indicated that it varied depending on context (where they are or who they are with), their mood (e.g., "I like to float back and forth"), or that it differed by appearance or behavior (e.g., "I dress like a boy, but act like a girl"). Some others explained that they were just individuals and did not view themselves as masculine or feminine, e.g. "Neither definingly feminine nor definingly masculine. Just different from everyone else."

136 Students who, in response to the gender identity question, selected "female-to-male" were classified as male transgender students. Students who selected "male-to-female" were classified as female transgender students. For the purposes of this insight, we did not classify students who selected "transgender" and "female" but did not select "male-to-female" as female transgender students because we did not know how to interpret their response. It is possible that they selected "female" to signify their sex assigned at birth and not their current gender identity. The same would apply for students who selected "transgender" and "male" but did not select "female-to-male."

137 To compare level of gender conformity by gender identity, a one-way analysis of variances was conducted: F(3,7541)=195.58, p<.001.

138 For the purposes of this insight, transgender students who did not identify as solely male-to-female or female-to-male were categorized as "transgender other." This included students who, in response to the gender identity question, selected: "transgender" and "male"; "transgender" and "female"; only "transgender" (with no accompanying gender identity); and "transgender" and multiple responses (e.g. "male" and "female" or "male-to-female" and "female-to-male").

139 To compare gender expression by gender identity, a chi-square test was conducted: χ^2=871.97, df=15, p<.001, Cramer's V=.19

140 Friedman, M. S., Koeske, G. F., Silvestre, A. J., Korr, W. S., & Sites, E. W. (2006). The impact of gender-role nonconforming behavior, bullying, and social support on suicidality among gay male youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(5), 621–623.

Grossman, A. H., D'Augelli, A. R., Salter, N., & Hubbard, S. (2005). Comparing gender expression, gender nonconformity, and parents' responses of female-to-male and male-to-female transgender youth: Implications for counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 1(1), 41–59.

Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., Diaz, R. M., Card, N. A., & Russell, S. A. (2010). Gender-nonconforming lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: School victimization and youth adult psychosocial adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 46(6), 1580–1589.

141 A measure of gender nonconformity was constructed for non-transgender males and females and for transgender male-to-female and female-to-male students by comparing their gender identity (male or female) to their reported level of femininity or masculinity. Female-identified students who reported their gender expression as anything other than "very" or "more" "feminine" were considered gender nonconforming, whereas male-identified students who reported their gender expression as anything other than "very" or "more" "masculine" were considered gender nonconforming. Gender nonconformity was not calculated for other types of transgender students, i.e., students with multiple gender identities (e.g., those who selected "male" and "female" or "male-to-female" and "female-to-male"), students who selected only "transgender" as their gender identity, or students who selected "transgender" and "male" or "transgender" and "female." Gender nonconformity was also not calculated for students with gender identities other than male, female, or transgender (e.g., "genderqueer"). All of these groups of students were excluded from analyses regarding gender nonconformity because their gender identity was outside the traditional binary of male/female, and therefore, it was not possible to calculate conformity based on gender expression. In addition, students who selected "none of these" for their gender expression were excluded in analyses regarding gender nonconformity.

142 To compare experiences of victimization by gender nonconformity, a multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables as dependent variables and transgender status (yes/no) as a covariate. We controlled for transgender status to account for the fact that measures of gender nonconformity for transgender youth may function somewhat differently than they do for non-transgender youth. In one sense, all transgender youth could be classified as gender nonconforming, in that their gender identity does not conform to societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. However, most assessments of gender nonconformity, including the one used here, are derived through comparisons of students' gender expression to their current gender identity, resulting in a sizable portion of transgender students who would not be classified as gender nonconforming

(i.e., transgender male-to-female student with a feminine gender expression – 61.7% of the male-to-female students in our survey, or a transgender female-to-male student with a masculine gender expression – 75.7% of the female-to-male students in our survey). This illustrates the complexity of assessing, and defining, gender expression and gender nonconformity among transgender people. Multivariate results for the analysis of differences in victimization by gender nonconformity were significant: Pillai's Trace=.11, F(6, 7241)=150.00, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

143 To compare feeling unsafe by gender nonconformity, a multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted with feeling unsafe at school because of sexual orientation and feeling unsafe at school because of gender expression as the dependent variables and transgender status (yes/no) as a covariate (see Endnote above for the rationale for inclusion of transgender status as a covariate). Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.09, F(2, 7413)=376.10, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01. To compare days of missing school in past month because feel unsafe or uncomfortable, an analysis of covariance was conducted with missing school as the dependent variable and transgender status (yes/no) as a covariate (see Endnote above for the rationale for inclusion of transgender status as a covariate). Results were significant: F(2, 7490)=34.49, p<.001. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

144 Harris Interactive, & GLSEN. (2005). *From teasing to torment: School climate in America, A survey of teachers and students*. New York: Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., S., P. R., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(16), 2094–2100.

Robers, S., Zhang, J., & Truman, J. (2012). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011 (NCES 2012-002/NCJ 236021)*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

145 Only students who attended middle or high schools were included in this analysis. Students who attended elementary schools, K–12 schools, lower schools, upper schools, or another type of school were excluded.

146 To test differences between middle and high schools, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the biased remarks variables (the three homophobic remarks variables and the negative remarks about gender expression variable) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.005, F(4, 7302)=9.20, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered.

147 To test differences between middle and high schools, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on both sexual orientation and gender expression) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.02, F(6, 7072)=17.41, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

148 To compare differences between middle and high school, a series of independent sample t-tests were conducted with each resource and support variable as the dependent variable. The results of these analyses were significant – GSAs: t(1552)=42.75, p<.001; supportive staff: t(7260)=13.53, p<.001; supportiveness of administration: t(7244)=8.34, p<.001; comprehensive policy: t(986)=3.04 p<.01 inclusive curriculum: t(1072)=8.16, p<.001; textbooks/other assigned readings: t(1472)=16.87, p<.001; library resources: t(975)=14.33, p<.001; access to Internet: t(1001)=15.16, p<.001. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

149 Robers, S., Zhang, J., & Truman, J. (2012). *Indicators of school crime and safety: 2011 (NCES 2012-002/NCJ 236021)*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

150 Horn, S. S. & Nucci, L. (2003). The multidimensionality of adolescents' beliefs about and attitudes toward gay and lesbian peers in school. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 36(2), 136–147.

151 To test difference across school type, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the biased remarks variables (the three homophobic remarks variables and the negative remarks about gender expression variable) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.04, F(8, 16544)=42.41, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered.

152 To test difference across school type, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on both sexual orientation and gender expression) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.01, F(12, 16010)=7.41, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

153 To compare differences across school type, a series of one-way analyses of variances were conducted with each resource and support variable as the dependent variable. The results of these analyses were significant at p<.001 – GSAs: F(2,8318)=91.20; supportive staff: F(2,8234)=47.33; supportiveness of administration: F(2,8222)=74.54; comprehensive policy: F(2,8318)=8.63; inclusive curriculum: F(2,8312)=50.94; textbooks/ other assigned readings: F(2,8305)=18.17; library resources: F(2,8309)=3.85; access to Internet: F(2,8291)=46.21. Post hoc comparisons were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

154 Strizek, G.A., Pittsonberger, J.L., Riordan, K.E., Lyter, D.M., & Orlofsky, G.F. (2006). *Characteristics of schools, districts, teachers, principals, and school libraries in the United States: 2003–04 Schools and Staffing Survey (NCES 2006-313 Revised)*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

155 Students were placed into region based on the state they were from – Northeast: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, DC; South: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia; Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Wyoming; West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington.

156 To test difference across region, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the biased remarks variables (the three homophobic remarks variables and the negative remarks about gender expression variable) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.03, F(12, 25509)=21.85, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

157 To test difference across region, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on both sexual orientation and gender expression) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.02, F(18, 24672)=8.43, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

158 To compare differences across region, a series of one-way analysis of variances were conducted with each resource and support variable as the dependent variable. The results of these analyses were significant at p<.001 – GSAs: F(3, 8542)=283.66; supportive staff: F(3, 8541)=104.23; supportiveness of administration: F(3, 8431)=116.59; comprehensive policy: F(3,8533)=18.76; inclusive curriculum: F(3, 8530)=62.53; library resources: F(3, 8529)=22.74; access to Internet: F(3, 8510)=61.20; textbooks/ other assigned readings: F(3, 8525)=16.99. Post hoc comparisons were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

159 Robers, S., Zhang, J., & Truman, J. (2012). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011 (NCES 2012-002/NCJ 236021)*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC

160 Herek, G. M. (2002). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward bisexual men and women in the United States. *Journal of Sex Research*, 39(4), 264–274.

Klawitter, M., *Antidiscrimination policies for sexual orientation, in New Research on LGBT Employment Discrimination* 2011: The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

161 To test difference across locale, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the biased remarks variables (the three homophobic remarks variables and the negative remarks about gender expression variable) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.03, $F(8, 16970)$=36.43, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered.

162 Weiner, Jonah (2009-08-06). "Does this purple mink make me look gay? The rise of no homo and the changing face of hip-hop homophobia". Slate. http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/music_box/2009/08/does_this_purple_mink_make_me_look_gay.html

163 To test difference across school locale, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted with the six harassment and assault variables (verbal harassment, physical harassment, and physical assault based on both sexual orientation and gender expression) as the dependent variables. Multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.02, $F(12, 16416)$=13.88, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01 and effect sizes were also considered. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

164 To compare differences across locale, a series of one-way analysis of variances were conducted with each resource and support variable as the dependent variable. The results of these analyses were significant at p<.001 – GSAs: $F(2,8526)$=269.19; supportive staff: $F(2,8439)$=135.96; supportiveness of administration: $F(2,8417)$=68.52; comprehensive policy: $F(2,8518)$=14.43; inclusive curriculum: $F(2,8514)$=38.39; access to Internet: $F(2,8494)$=10.55; textbooks/other assigned readings: $F(2,8509)$=27.00. There were no locale differences in library resources, p>.01. Post hoc comparisons were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

165 Robers, S., Zhang, J., & Truman, J. (2012). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011 (NCES 2012-002/NCJ 236021)*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

166 To test differences across years in use of anti-LGBT language and intervention in the use of this language, a series of one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed. Given certain demographic differences among the samples, we controlled for participation in a community group or program for LGBT youth ("youth group"), age, racial/ethnic group, gender, sexual orientation, and method of taking the survey (paper vs. Internet version). These individual-level covariates were chosen based on preliminary analysis that examined what locational and school characteristics and personal demographics were most predictive of survey year membership.

167 To test differences across years in the use of homophobic remarks, an ANCOVA was performed, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. The main effect for survey year was significant, indicating mean differences across years: $F(5,25078)$=17.47, p<.001, Post-hoc group comparisons among years indicated 2011 was significantly lower than all years (p<.001) except for 2007 from which it was marginally significant (p<.05). Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

168 To test differences across years in the use of expressions like "that's so gay," an ANCOVA was performed, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. The main effect for survey year was significant, indicating mean differences across years: $F(5,25091)$=43.29, p<.001. Post-hoc group comparisons among years indicated 2011 was lower than all other years (p<.001). Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

169 To test differences across years in the use of negative remarks about gender expression from students, an ANCOVA was performed, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. The mean of the two gender expression variables was computed to test across years. The main effect for survey year was significant, indicating mean differences across years: $F(4,24242)$= 3.98, p<.01. Post-hoc group comparisons indicate a significant decrease from 2009 to 2011. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

170 To test differences across years in the number of students in school who make homophobic remarks, an ANCOVA was performed, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. The main effect for survey year was significant: $F(5,24921)$=8.27, p<.001. Post-hoc group comparisons indicated that the mean for 2011 was lower than for all other years but 2003. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

171 To test differences across years in the number of students in school who make negative remarks about gender expression, an ANCOVA was performed, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years as well as the frequency of hearing these remarks. The main effect for survey year was significant: $F(4,23264)$=5.24, p<.001. Post-hoc group comparisons indicated that the mean in 2011 was significantly lower only than those in 2003 and 2005. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

172 To test differences across years in the frequency of hearing biased remarks from school staff, two ANCOVAs were performed controlling for demographic and method differences with the two dependent variables: frequency of hearing homophobic remarks and frequency of hearing negative remarks about gender expression from school staff. Regarding homophobic remarks, the main effect for survey year was significant: $F(5,25060)$=17.80, p<.001. Post-hoc group comparisons indicated that the mean in 2011 was significantly lower than those in 2009, 2007 and 2001. Regarding remarks about gender expression, the main effect for survey year was significant: $F(4,24102)$=13.49, p<.001. Post-hoc group comparisons indicated that the mean in 2011 was significantly lower only than those in 2007 and 2003. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

173 Mean differences in intervention re: homophobic remarks were examined using analysis of covariance, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. Regarding student intervention, the main effect for survey year was significant: $F(5,24993)$=9.74, p<001. The means for 2011 and 2009 were significantly lower than all prior years. For staff intervention, the univariate F for survey year was also significant: $F(5,21967)$=5.60, p<001. The mean was significantly lower in 2011 and 2009 than in 2007. However, the effect size for both effects was quite small (partial η^2 = .002 for student intervention; partial η^2 = .001 for staff intervention). Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

174 Mean differences in intervention re: negative remarks about gender expression was examined using analysis of covariance, controlling for demographic and method differences across the survey years. Regarding student intervention, the main effect for survey year was significant: $F(4,23242)$=34.77, p<001. The mean for 2011 was significantly lower than all prior years. Regarding staff intervention, the main effect for survey year was significant: $F(4,18342)$=9.14, p<001. However, the mean for 2011 was significantly different only from 2007. However, the effect size for both effects was small (partial η^2 = .006 for student intervention; partial 2 = .002 for staff intervention). Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

175 To test differences across years in the experiences of victimization based on sexual orientation, a multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted with the three harassment/assault based on sexual orientation variables as dependent variables. In order to account for differences in sampling methods across years, youth group participation, age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and survey method were used as covariates. The multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.012, $F(15, 74517)$=19.98, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

176 To test differences across years in the experiences of victimization based on gender expression, a multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted with the three harassment/assault based on gender expression variables as dependent variables. In order to account for differences in sampling methods across years, youth group participation, age, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and survey method were used as covariates. The multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.004, $F(15, 72990)$=6.99, p<.001. Univariate effects were considered at p<.01. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

177 To test differences across years, an analysis of covariance was conducted with the GSA variable as the dependent variable. In order to account for differences in sampling methods across years, youth group participation, age, race/ethnicity, and survey method were used as covariates. The univariate effect for survey year was significant: $F(5, 25073)$=9.06, p<.001. Post-hoc group

comparisons were considered at $p<.01$. The percentage in 2011 was higher than all prior years except for 2003. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

178 In 2001, students were asked a question about whether there were any supportive school personnel in their school. In 2003 and beyond, we asked a Likert-type question about the number of supportive school personnel. In order to include 2001 in the analyses, we created a comparable dichotomous variable for the other survey years. To test differences across all years, an analysis of covariance was conducted with the dichotomous variable as the dependent variable. In order to account for differences in sampling methods across years, youth group participation, age, race/ethnicity, and survey method were used as covariates. The univariate effect for survey year was significant: $F(5, 24797)=323.32$, $p<.001$. The percentage in 2011 was greater than in all previous years. To test differences in the number of supportive school personnel (in 2003 and beyond), we tested the mean difference on the full variable. The univariate effect for survey year was significant: $F(4, 23964)=209.63$, $p<.001$. Post-hoc group comparisons were considered at $p<.01$. The number of supportive school personnel was higher in 2011 than in all prior years. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

179 To test differences across years in curricular resources, a multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted with four dependent variables (inclusion of LGBT-related topics in textbooks, Internet access to LGBT-related information/resources through school computers, positive curricular representations of LGBT topics, LGBT-related library materials). In order to account for differences in sampling methods across years, youth group participation, age, race/ethnicity, and survey method were used as covariates. The multivariate results were significant: Pillai's Trace=.016, $F(20,99364)=19.52$ $p<.001$. Univariate effects indicated significant difference across years for all four resources. Post-hoc comparisons by survey year were considered at $p<.01$. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

180 To test differences across years in the percentage of students reporting a school harassment/assault policy, three ANCOVAs were performed controlling for demographic and method differences with the three dependent variables: any type of policy, partially enumerated policy, and fully enumerated policy. The main effect for survey year for any type of policy was significant, indicating mean differences across years: $F(4,24221)=328.33$, $p<.001$. The main effect for survey year for having a partially enumerated policy was also statistically significant $F(3,23370)=23.45$, $p<.001$. The main effect for survey year for having a fully enumerated policy was not statistically significant. Post-hoc group comparisons among years were considered at $p<.01$ for both analyses. Percentages are shown for illustrative purposes.

181 GLSEN (2012). *Teaching Respect: LGBT-Inclusive Curriculum and School Climate, a GLSEN Research Brief*. New York, GLSEN.

182 A variety of strategies were used to target LGBT adolescents via Facebook ads: ads were sent to 13 to 18 year-olds who indicated on their profile that they were a female seeking other females or a male seeking other males; ads were also shown to 13 to 18 year-olds who used the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender somewhere in their profile. In order to be included in the final sample, respondents had to have identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender, or as a sexual orientation or gender that would fall under the LGBT "umbrella" (e.g., queer, genderqueer).

183 The YRBS includes items assessing sexual orientation/identity and same-sex behavior in their optional bank of questions that are available for local states and districts to use on their YRBS if they choose. Yet, most states and localities do not include these items and the national YRBS does not include them.

184 Hispanic/Latino and Middle Eastern/Arab American categories were considered ethnicities as opposed to races, and thus students selecting either of those categories were coded as such, regardless of race (e.g., student selecting "African-American" and "Latino/a" were coded as "Latino/a").

185 Aud, S., Fox, M., & KewalRamani, A. (2010). *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups* (NCES 2010-015). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

186 Herman, M. (2004). Forced to choose: Some determinants of racial identification in multiracial adolescents. *Child Development*, 75(3), 730–748.

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