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ABSTRACT

This booklet discusses issues facing sexual minority students. An introduction presents the National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP's) position statement on gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. Section 1 highlights: "Violence, Homophobia, and Prejudice" (e.g., anti-gay harassment in schools documented, violence prevention, and a guide for schools); "School/Psychological Issues, Suicide, and Health" (e.g., the impact of hate crime victimization, young gay males at higher suicide risk, and a bill of rights for lesbian and gay students); "Coming Out" (coming out young, landmark survey shows gay youth coming out earlier than ever, and coming out can reduce sexual prejudice); and "Sexual Minority Teachers and Staff" (extra help for homosexual teachers, lesbian teacher can proceed with harassment suit, and tips to help teachers come out). Section 2 examines interventions for assisting sexual minority students, including "Working With and Understanding the Needs of Sexual Minority Students" (NASP position statement on homosexual students' needs and improving the school experience); "School Policy and Educational Issues" (tips for administrators and treating all students equally); and "School Programs and Gay-Straight Alliances" (e.g., gay-straight clubs formed by public school students and a student guide to gay-straight alliances). (Contains 69 references.) (SM)

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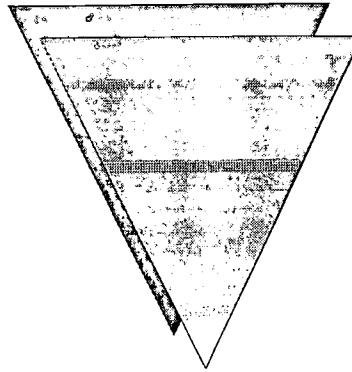
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Sexual Minority Students

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*The Center is co-directed by Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor and operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project, Dept. of Psychology, UCLA.

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Support comes in part from the Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health.



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UCLA CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS*

Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology at UCLA, our center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs.

MISSION: *To improve outcomes for young people by enhancing policies, programs, and practices relevant to mental health in schools.*

Through collaboration, the center will

- enhance practitioner roles, functions and competence
- interface with systemic reform movements to strengthen mental health in schools
- assist localities in building and maintaining their own infrastructure for training, support, and continuing education that fosters integration of mental health in schools

Consultation Cadre

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Policy Analyses

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*In 1996, two national training and technical assistance centers focused on mental health in schools were established with partial support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health. As indicated, one center is located at UCLA; the other is at the University of Maryland at Baltimore and can be contacted toll free at 1-(888) 706-0980.





What is the Center's Clearinghouse?

The scope of the Center's Clearinghouse reflects the School Mental Health Project's mission -- to enhance the ability of schools and their surrounding communities to address mental health and psychosocial barriers to student learning and promote healthy development. Those of you working so hard to address these concerns need ready access to resource materials. The Center's Clearinghouse is your link to specialized resources, materials, and information. The staff supplements, compiles, and disseminates resources on topics fundamental to our mission. As we identify what is available across the country, we are building systems to connect you with a wide variety of resources. Whether your focus is on an individual, a family, a classroom, a school, or a school system, we intend to be of service to you. Our evolving catalogue is available on request; and available for searching from our website.

What kinds of resources, materials, and information are available?

We can provide or direct you to a variety of resources, materials, and information that we have categorized under three areas of concern:

- Specific psychosocial problems
- Programs and processes
- System and policy concerns

Among the various ways we package resources are our *Introductory Packets*, *Resource Aid Packets*, *special reports*, *guidebooks*, and *continuing education units*. These encompass overview discussions of major topics, descriptions of model programs, references to publications, access information to other relevant centers, organizations, advocacy groups, and Internet links, and specific tools that can guide and assist with training activity and student/family interventions (such as outlines, checklists, instruments, and other resources that can be copied and used as information handouts and aids for practice).

Accessing the Clearinghouse

- E-mail us at **smhp@ucla.edu**
- FAX us at (310) 206-8716
- Phone (310) 825-3634
- Write School Mental Health Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, Dept. of Psychology, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1563

Check out recent additions to the Clearinghouse on our Web site
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

All materials from the Center's Clearinghouse are available for order for a minimal fee to cover the cost of copying, handling, and postage. Most materials are available for free downloading from our website.

If you know of something we should have in the clearinghouse, let us know.

We realize that each individual and organization requesting technical assistance has unique and special informational needs. To accommodate this diversity, we are developing samplers to provide immediate information on a variety of resources and how to access them.

In compiling samplers, we conduct a search of agencies, organizations, the Internet, relevant programs, and library resources. Then, we select a sample of diverse resources – including resources that are themselves links to other resources and information. We also provide information on how to access other knowledgeable individuals who are ready to offer assistance. All resources listed are relatively easy to access through libraries, by phone, or over the Internet. If you are not yet connected to the Internet, hopefully you have access through work, a local library, or a friend.

We hope that the attached sampler is sufficient to meet your needs. However, should you require further help, please let us know. And should you know of something you think we should add, let us know this as well.



Sexual Minority Students

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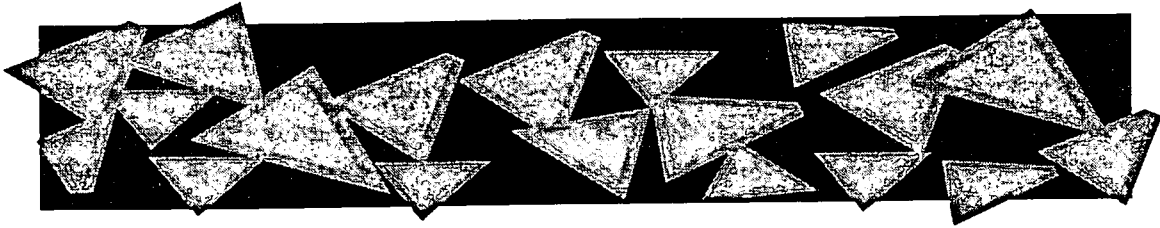
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Excerpt from:

NASP Position Statements: Position Statement on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth

National Association of School Psychologists

http://www.naspweb.org/information/position_paper.html

Position Statement on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth

Youth who become aware of a minority sexual orientation within themselves during childhood or adolescence are at greater risk for a number of dangerous or harmful situations or activities. The most prominent risks include suicide, physical and verbal harassment, exposure to the HIV virus, and substance abuse. In addition, these youth are often rejected, emotionally and physically, by their families and may become homeless as a result of the disclosure of their sexual orientation. Society's attitudes and behaviors toward these youth render them invisible. As a result, this group suffers from a lack of resources to deal with the problems caused by the internalized sense of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth who also have disabilities or are members of other minority groups have additional barriers to receiving appropriate education and mental health care within the school system and society as a whole.

The National Association of School Psychologists supports equal access to education and mental health services for sexual minority youth within public and private schools. This can be accomplished through: 1) education of students and staff, 2) direct counseling with students who are experiencing difficulties within themselves or with others due to actual or perceived minority sexual orientation, 3) advocacy for such youth within the school and the community settings, 4) support of research on evaluations of interventions and programs designed to address the needs of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in schools, and 5) support of programs for HIV prevention directed at gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.

Violence and intimidation directed at sexual minority youth, whether aimed at an individual through direct harassment or at the entire group through antigay statements or biases, violate the right of these students to receive equal educational opportunities. NASP believes that school psychologists are ethically obligated to ensure that these students have an equal opportunity for the development of their personal identity in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, violence, and abuse. To achieve this goal, efforts must be made through education and advocacy for these youth to reduce discrimination and harassment against sexual minority youth by both students and staff.

Issues Facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff



□ Violence, Homophobia, and Prejudice

- Anti-Gay Harassment in Schools Documented
- Incidence of Anti-Gay Harassment
- Gay and Lesbian Youth at Risk
- Come Out Against Homophobia!
- Violence Prevention
- Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools



*Excerpts from: Oasis Magazine:
News and Events, 1996
<http://www.oasismag.com/Issues/9612/news-schools2.html>*

News - December 1996

Anti-gay harassment in schools documented

A ground-breaking student survey finds that 8% of all students and 34% of gay/lesbian/bisexual students have suffered anti-gay harassment at school.

3RD ANNUAL SAFE SCHOOLS COALITION ANTI-VIOLENCE REPORT documents suicide, drug use and school performance impacts of anti-gay school violence on heterosexual and homosexual students.

STUDENT SURVEY finds that 9% of high school students consider themselves gay, lesbian, bisexual or not sure of their sexual orientation.

For every gay, lesbian or bisexual youth who reported being the target of anti-gay school harassment, 4 heterosexual youth reported harassment or violence for being perceived as gay or lesbian.

1995-96 show significant increase in parents reporting harassment of their children, and Safe Schools Coalition calls for anti-violence education at the elementary level.

SAFE SCHOOLS ANTI-VIOLENCE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT THIRD ANNUAL REPORT The Safe Schools Coalition, a statewide coalition of youth and education organizations released its third report of ongoing statewide research examining anti-gay sexual harassment and violence in Washington schools this morning. Coalition members spoke of the devastating effect this harassment has on students in elementary, middle and high schools, and called for prevention and education starting as early as elementary school.

Beth Reis, educator consultant with the Seattle/King County Department of Public Health and principal investigator with the Safe Schools Anti-Violence Project, described the nature of this school harassment, based on in-depth interviews the Project has conducted with targeted students, school employees and parents regarding a total of 77 incidents. Reis said, These are a small fraction of all the incidents in Washington State schools, but they give us an accurate portrait of the nature of the problem. Incidents have been reported from 54 schools and have come from 25 different districts in seven different counties.

Reis cited that among the 77 cases reported have been seven gang rape incidents in which a total of nine children and teens were raped. In only one case were school authorities and police informed of the rape, but in many cases school personnel were aware of the harassment that preceded the rape.

There were fifteen other physical assaults with four of the assaulted children and teens treated in emergency rooms and one hospitalized. In twelve other physical and sexual assaults, students were spit at, things were thrown at them and, in some cases their clothing was pulled down or off. Thirty other cases of on-going verbal harassment have involved repeated public humiliation, vandalism, graffiti or the issuing of death threats.

Reis said that one incident was reported by a concerned mother who attended a pep rally at her child's school. The entertainment included a slapstick re-enactment of a gay-bashing. Many teachers, along with students, laughed and applauded. Reis said, However, we are encouraged that the parent who reported this incident is among a growing number of adults calling the Safe Schools Project to express their concern about the safety of children and teens.

This year the Safe Schools Project is also reporting on a large scale quantitative study conducted for the Reis said, This comprehensive survey administered to over 8,400 high school students confirmed what we have been finding in the Safe Schools Project reports.

One of the 99 items asked students their sexual preference/orientation. Five percent described themselves as Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual. About another four percent said they were not sure of their sexual orientation. The other ninety-one percent called themselves heterosexual. 34% of the students describing themselves as Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual reported being harassed based on their sexual orientation. These students were 3 times as likely than their heterosexual peers to have been injured in a fight requiring medical attention, they were twice as likely as heterosexual youth to report having seriously considered suicide, and 75% more likely to report feeling unsafe at school.

6% of heterosexual students report experiencing anti-gay harassment at school, and they also show significantly higher risk for assault, suicidal thoughts, and diminished school performance than heterosexual youth who have not been harassed. According to Reis, because there are so many more straight youth to begin with, this amounts to about four heterosexual youth bullied in this way for every gay youth.

Reis said, These are both landmark studies. We have never before had this level of evidence or depth of understanding about the problem of anti-gay sexual harassment and violence in schools. Now we know that harassment and assault is widespread, that it not just urban, that it starts in elementary school, that everybody is vulnerable . . . We know that those who are sexual minorities, or who are attacked because someone thinks they are sexual minorities, are at dramatically increased risk of missing school out of fear, of abusing alcohol or other drugs, and of considering or attempting suicide.

Tawney Collins-Feay, co-president of the Seattle chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and the mother of a gay son, said the harassment and violence reported today is the truth of too many children's stories. The bright, hopeful, innocent faces that they start out with become clouded with anxiety and fear as they start to realize that the names, the jokes, the mocking, might apply to them. She said, The difference for our gay children is that this is an officially sanctioned cruelty. Not from every classroom, but from too many: not on every playground, but on too many; not from every pulpit, but from too many -- we see the hopeful innocence fade into a self-hatred that is as fatal as it is inevitable. She asked that learning in an atmosphere of dignity and safety be the birthright for all children.

Tom Page, co-chair of the Safe Schools research team and a member of the King County Children and Family Commission, introduced film clips from *It's Elementary*, a film made by Academy Award-winner Deborah Chasnoff. According to Chasnoff, Most adults probably don't see why school should teach young children about gay people, and they can't imagine how teachers could possibly present this subject in an age-appropriate way. We made this film to explore what does happen when experienced teachers talk about lesbians and gay men with their students.

In past years, the Safe Schools Coalition has recommended policy changes, staff training, and equitable discipline of offenders as ways to prevent anti-gay harassment in schools. This year their recommendations go further. Page said, In light of these research findings, we are now asking schools to teach about prejudice, to dispel stereotypes and to provide accurate information about gay and lesbian people. *It's Elementary* shows this can be done. The children need our help.

The Safe Schools Coalition works to make Washington schools safe for families, educators and children of all gender identities and sexual orientations. They are online at <http://members.tripod.com/~clavtolv/safe>

Excerpts from:
Protection of Les/Gay Students
http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_stud.htm

Incidence of Anti-Gay Harassment

A study of schools in the state of Washington revealed some fascinating statistics. The *Safe Schools Anti-Violence Project* issued their third annual report in late 1996. It included the results of a survey of over 8,400 students:

- 95% of the students described themselves as heterosexual; 5% has homosexual or bisexual, and 4% has uncertain.
- Among the gay/lesbian/bisexual students:
 - 34% has been harassed because of their sexual orientation
 - they were 3 times as likely to have been injured in a fight requiring medical attention than their heterosexual contemporaries
 - they were twice as likely to have seriously considered suicide
 - they were 75% more likely to report feeling unsafe at school
- 6% of heterosexual youth reported being the victim of homophobic harassment.

Excerpts from:
National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Stats and Facts: Who's at Risk
<http://www.dropoutprevention.org/2levelpages/statistics/WhosAtRisk/5lvlstatswhogaylesb.htm>

Gay and Lesbian Youth At Risk
by Patricia Cloud Duttweiler

The Journal of At-Risk Issues, Winter/Spring 1997, Volume 3, Number 2

Jamie Nabozny dropped out of school in the 11th grade after suffering from repeated humiliation and physical attacks. After one especially degrading incident, Jamie complained to the principal. Jamie was told, "Well, you know, Jamie, boys will be boys. And if you're going to be so openly gay, you have to expect that kind of stuff."

On November 19, 1996, Jamie Nabozny won the first ever federal court judgment (for nearly one million dollars) against school administrators for failing to provide equal protection for a gay student suffering from violence within the school (Price, 1996). The following facts and references (with the exception of the Price reference) came from a publication, *Just the facts on gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and schools*, of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN), 122 W. 26th Street, Suite 1100, New York, NY 10001 (212-727-0135).

- 53% of students reported hearing homophobic comments made by school staff (Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth, 1993).
- 80% of prospective teachers reported negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people (Sears, 1992).
- 66% of guidance counselors harbored negative feelings toward gay and lesbian people (Sears, 1992)
- 34% of self-identified gay or bisexual teenagers are the targets of anti-gay harassment or violence at or on their way to school (Price, 1996).
- "Homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims [of hate crimes]" (U.S. Department of Justice, 1987).
- 80% of gay and lesbian youth reported feeling severe social isolation (Hetrick & Damien, 1987).
- 30% of gay and bisexual adolescent males attempt suicide at least once (Remafedi, 1991).
- Gay and lesbian youth represent 30% of all completed teen suicides (Gibson, 1989).

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Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. (1993). Making schools safe for gay and lesbian youth.

Sears, J. (1992). Educators, homosexuality, and homosexual students: Are personal feelings related to professional beliefs? In K. Harbeck, ed., *Coming out of the classroom closet*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

U.S. Department of Justice. (1987). *The response of the criminal justice system to bias crime: An exploratory view*.

Excerpts from:
Statistics about Homophobia
National Organization of Women
<http://www.now.org/issues/lgb/stats.html>

COME OUT AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA!

Did You Know?

- Students who describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are five times more likely to miss school because of feeling unsafe. 28% are forced to drop out. --National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, "Anti-Gay/Lesbian Victimization," New York, 1984.
- The vast majority of victims of anti-lesbian/gay violence - possibly more than 80% - never report the incident, often due to fear of being "outed." --New York Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project Annual Report, 1996.
- 85% of teachers oppose integrating lesbian, gay and bisexual themes in their curricula. --"Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth: Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth." 1993.
- Due to sexual orientation discrimination, lesbians earn up to 14% less than their heterosexual female peers with similar jobs, education, age and residence, according to a study by the University of Maryland. --Badgett, M.V. Lee, "The Wage Effects of Sexual Orientation Discrimination," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, July 1995.
- 42% of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual. --Orion Center, Survey of Street Youth, Seattle, WA: Orion Center, 1986.
- More than 84% of Americans oppose employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. -- Survey Conducted by *Newsweek*, January 1997.
- 75% of people committing hate crimes are under age 30 - one in three are under 18 - and some of the most pervasive anti-gay violence occurs in schools. --New York Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Report, 1996.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are at a four times higher risk for suicide than their straight peers. --Gibson P., LCSW, "Gay Male and Lesbian Youth Suicide," Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1989.
- A survey of 191 employers revealed that 18% would fire, 27% would refuse to hire and 26% would refuse to promote a person they perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. --Schatz and O'Hanlan, "Anti-Gay Discrimination in Medicine: Results of a National Survey of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Physicians." San Francisco, 1994.

National Organization for Women, 1000 16th Street, NW #700, Washington DC 20036, (202) 331-0066 <http://www.now.org/issues/lgb/>



Excerpts from:
GLSEN BlackBoard On-Line
<http://www.glstn.org/pages/section/library/reference/009.article>

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

A look at how anti-gay prejudice and school violence contribute to making schools unsafe for gay and lesbian students. Includes strategies for violence and conflict intervention.

PART OF A BIGGER PROBLEM: VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Nationally, approximately three million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near school campuses annually. This, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, equates to nearly 16,000 incidents per school day, or one incident every six seconds. Anti-gay violence is simply one part of the overall problem of violence in schools.

According to a Massachusetts Department of Education survey of 2000 students, more than one-third of the state's high school males carry weapons. Seven percent of girls report arming themselves with guns, knives or other weapons. In addition to the startling number of students carrying weapons to school, 40% of students report that they have been in physical fights. These problems are not exclusive to inner city schools. Robert Munnely, Reading Schools superintendent told the Boston Globe, "We are seeing in suburbia the same phenomenon as in the city. For whatever reason...kids feel the need to protect themselves and they have the knives for personal protection. It is not good and we are concerned."

Schools are becoming more and more violent and gays and lesbians are disproportionately victims of violent incidents. The U.S. Department of Justice reported that "The most frequent victims of hate violence today are blacks, Hispanics, Southeast Asians, Jews, and gays and lesbians. Homosexuals are probably the most frequent victims."

Many schools across the Commonwealth are beginning to develop violence prevention/conflict resolution strategies to insure the safety and well-being of their students. Addressing anti-gay violence and prejudice is an important part of any school's overall plan to combat violence. After all, homophobia makes schools unsafe for all students, not only those who are gay and lesbian.

Anti-gay prejudice and homophobia can make any student who defies the narrowly defined gender-roles a target for violence and harassment. Randy Driskell, a senior at Wareham High School, stated, "Being anything but a cool jock is socially unacceptable." Boys who do not fit this stereotype are open to harassment. Randy stated that because he was different, he was called "Queer and Faggot." Girls who are athletic, strong-minded, independent, may risk being labeled as lesbians or "dykes." Anti-gay prejudice imposes restrictive gender-roles on both boys and girls and the punishment for stepping outside these boundaries can be threats and/or acts of violence and harassment.

This section will look at the ways in which homophobia can contribute to violence in schools and the role prejudice can play in conflicts in schools. The section concludes with outlines for workshop trainings you can use to make your school safer for all students.

ANTI-GAY PREJUDICE CONTRIBUTES TO VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

There are many factors that contribute to the overall problem of violence in schools. For example, sexism can lead a boy to think its permissible to hit his girlfriend in the face when she tells him she doesn't want to date him anymore. Racism can lead to conflicts between students who don't want "those" kids moving into their schools. Homophobia is yet another factor that can cause explosions. It is at the root of violence and harassment inflicted upon young gays and lesbians. Homophobia can contribute to violence in three different ways:

- * People may become violent towards gays or lesbians or anyone whom they perceive to be gay or lesbian.
- * Gays and lesbians may become violent to selves (suicide).
- * Gays and lesbians may become violent in response to homophobia.

PEOPLE MAY BECOME VIOLENT TOWARDS GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENTS.

The impact of homophobic violence on gays and lesbians is staggering. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force surveyed 2000 gays and lesbians and found that over 90% had experienced some form of victimization on account of their perceived or actual sexual orientation and one in five gay males and one in ten lesbians said that they had been 'punched, hit, kicked, or beaten.' (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Survey, 1984). Schools are not immune from anti-gay attacks. Steven Obuchowski, an 18 year old, testified that "each year the hatred towards me grew and escalated from just simple name-calling in elementary school to having persons in high school threaten to beat me up, being pushed and dragged around on the ground, having my hands slammed in lockers, and a number of other daily tortures." Concord-Carlisle's Gay/Straight Alliance surveyed 849 students in their school and found that more than half of the students reported that physical harassment occurred yearly to students who are gay or lesbian. Anti-gay violence can manifest in numerous ways, from physical assaults to verbal harassment. The Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth distributed a survey to all students at Lincoln-Sudbury High School in February of 1993. They found that 97.5% of the students heard anti-gay comments in school. At Concord-Carlisle, 36% of students said that verbal harassment based on sexual orientation occurred at the high school on a daily basis. How does homophobia incite violence? Homophobia can be exhibited in numerous ways but invariably it denigrates homosexuals as being in some fundamental way, lesser human beings. Homophobia categorizes gays and lesbians as perverted, unnatural, evil and in doing so, establishes them as a group worthy of fear, even hate.

Ten years ago, Jim Baines was 15-years-old the day he joined a group of friends harassing, and eventually killing a gay man. Now, he travels to schools with state police officers raising the issue of hate crimes, but he said that in high school, he and his friends targeted gays "Because they were homosexuals, because we thought they were much different than us and that we could get away [with assaulting them] because it was accepted. I considered this person different than I, less than I..."

GAYS AND LESBIANS MAY BECOME VIOLENT TO THEMSELVES.

It is difficult to grow up in this society and not internalize at least a few homophobic myths and assumptions. Without accurate information and supportive people to turn to, young gays and lesbians may give credence to the pejorative stereotypes homophobia manufactures about people like themselves. Clearly, this can lead to profound feelings of self-loathing as Lee Fearnside, a lesbian teen, testified at the Governor's Commission Hearings: "I couldn't and still can't think of a single positive image of lesbians in our mainstream society. I am forced to rely on negative stereotypes for role models. How could I identify with these images and maintain a shred of self-respect? This initiated a downward spiral of self-hatred and anger motivated by homophobia. I hated myself for being what seemed to be everyone's worst nightmare: a Homosexual."

This sort of self-hate leads an alarmingly high percentage of gay and lesbian youth to inflict violence upon themselves through suicide attempts, drug and alcohol abuse or other high-risk behaviors. As Mark Ayers, a gay man, testified, "I began to realize I was gay at about age 12 or 13 when I became aware of my attraction to the other boys in my class. I attended parochial school and was well-versed in the "sinful" nature of homosexuality. I was so scared and confused; I tried desperately to bury my feelings...The biggest cost of my denial of my sexuality was a deep entanglement with addiction. It was a journey that got progressively worse and nearly killed me."

Not surprisingly, students who are harassed and attacked for their actual or perceived sexual orientation also suffer from feelings of low self-esteem. The hatred others inflict upon them is often mirrored in acts of self-hate. In 1988, Joyce Hunter surveyed 500 gay and lesbian youth. Forty-one percent of these young people reported that they had experienced violent attacks, many at the hands of classmates. Suicidal ideation was found among 44% of these young people.

GAYS AND LESBIANS MAY BECOME VIOLENT IN RESPONSE TO HOMOPHOBIA.

In some cases, students who are feel anxious about their own sexuality may lash out at other students whom they perceive to be gay or lesbian. Instead of turning self-hate into self-inflicted violence, they attack others who are like them. This sort of violence is representative of their desire to externalize their homophobia, to put their feelings of self-loathing on some outward source. These students may also believe that committing acts of anti-gay violence will prove to their school and even to themselves that they can't possibly be gay. A few gay and lesbian students

may also attack straight students who taunt or harass them. Lashing out in self-defense or anger, they become violent in response to homophobia.

THE ROLE OF PREJUDICE IN CONFLICTS

Anti-Gay prejudice can incite and escalate conflicts in two different ways:

- * Prejudice can serve as the root of the conflict.
- * Prejudicial epithets can be hurled during a disagreement.

PREJUDICE AS THE ROOT OF THE CONFLICT

Prejudice can be the reason conflict occurs. For example, the irrational hatred of gays and lesbians leads students to attack other students simply because they are lesbian or gay or are perceived to be lesbian or gay.

Chris Muther, a twenty-three year old, said that his best friend (who eventually ended up committing suicide) and he were "were called queer and faggot and a host of other homophobic slurs. We were also used as punching bags for our classmates just for being different."

Anti-gay prejudice can make schools unsafe not only for gay and lesbian students, but also for heterosexual students. Chris Collins, an Amherst student, testified at the Governor's Commission Hearings that one of his best friends was suspected of being gay, even though he was actually straight. Chris stated, "Based on the suspicion, and only on that suspicion, he was beaten up every day at school. He was unable to attend classes many days. Sometimes he would go to school, only to be beaten up during lunch or during study hall. Ultimately, his parents transferred him to another school for his own protection."

PREJUDICIAL EPITHETS THROWN IN DURING A DISAGREEMENT.

Conflicts can escalate when students throw in prejudicial comments or epithets during a disagreement. The insults may have little or nothing to do with the disagreement, but taunting someone by calling them a "fag" or a "dyke" can enflame tempers. Children of elementary school age commonly insult each other using epithets rooted in anti-gay prejudice, terms like "fag" or "dyke." Even though they may not know what the words mean, children learn early on that they can be used to hurt someone.

SPECTRUM OF ANTI-GAY VIOLENCE

Homophobic violence can be manifested in numerous ways. Students report that they have experienced a spectrum of violence that includes everything from shunning to repeated physical attacks. The continuum could be envisioned as:

- * Shunning/ostracizing
- * verbal insults/name calling
- * threats of violence
- * single acts of violence
- * repeated attacks

Gay and lesbian students may be shunned or ostracized by other students. Rosanna Orfield, a student at Cambridge Rindge and Latin said, "My friend came out...She called me the night after it happened. She said she had been at a party and had accidentally revealed [her sexual orientation] to someone...The next day the rest of the school knew. Some of her friends ignored her; some people talked behind her back. Everywhere she went, she was treated differently by people although she was the same person."

Many other students ostracize themselves from their friends and families because they are afraid that someone will discover that they are homosexual or that like Rosanna's friend, they will accidentally let something revealing slip out and then become targets of abuse or harassment. Devin Beringer said, "I was always an outcast at school...I ostracized myself from the rest of the world because I felt as if I could trust no one, not even my parents. The pressure of feeling so alone manifested in fits of manic depression, hysterical outbreaks, and eventually, suicidal tendencies." Stevie Wilson graduated from Framingham High School and testified at the Public Hearings. He said,

"I go back [to Framingham High] and there are so many gay youth there and they're just so closeted because of the fear of being beat up, the fear of being rejected and all of that."

Students who are shunned because they are gay and lesbian and those who remain closeted and hide their true feelings are at a greater risk of attempting suicide, having poor school performance, and/or dropping out. Matthew Flynn, 18, testified that "During junior high and in my freshman year of high school, I was very depressed. Feeling alone and isolated from the rest of the world, I managed to fail three of my five majors that year." Although they may have no physical scars, the violence inflicted upon students who are shunned and ostracized is no less real, and no less damaging to their psyches. Similarly, many students are profoundly hurt by being targeted by anti-gay harassment and slurs.

A survey conducted by the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY) and the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth which was distributed at seven community-based gay and lesbian youth groups and eight Gay/Straight Alliances in Massachusetts, found that 43% of students often hear anti-gay or anti-lesbian remarks at their high school, 51% sometimes hear these remarks, and only 6% said they never hear these sorts of remarks. A student at Concord-Carlisle reported that he's regularly called a "freak" because he's gay. These sorts of remarks can make students feel the same way as Randy Driskell, a senior at Wareham High School, did after he was harassed and abused for being gay. "Through the last few years I had become conditioned into believing gay is wrong. After three years of conditioning, I forgot all the things my mother taught me [about feeling good about myself and liking myself]. I lost respect for myself and wanted to die."

Sometimes teachers and school personnel are verbally abusive to gay and lesbian students as well. The BAGLY survey found that more than half the students reported that they heard teachers in their high school make anti-gay and anti-lesbian remarks. Arthur Lipkin, a former teacher at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, said, "I was standing at one end of a fairly quiet corridor and at the other end two male students were wrestling, just horsing around I think. I saw the school security person approach these two boys...To get the two kids to stop fooling around she bellowed at them, 'Break it up, you homos!' The corridor echoed with her words and I was horrified." Anti-gay slurs and harassment demeans a student's sense of self and their sense of self-worth. In fact, the insult is so profound that students who are not gay or lesbian, students who might just be horsing around in the hallway, can be threatened into conformity simply by being called homosexual.

Sometimes gay and lesbian students are victimized not by actual violence, but simply the threat of attack. Zoe Hart, a senior at Lincoln Sudbury testified at the Governor's Commission Hearings that "Last year at my high school, there was an incident which shocked everyone. Two female students were standing in the hall with their arms around each other. Students began to encircle them and yell profanities, until a group of about thirty kids surrounded them."

A few gay and lesbian students are physically assaulted once because of their sexual orientation, but far more are routinely victimized for being homosexual. Guy Smith, a 22 year old Brandeis student, said, "From fifth and sixth grade, before I even knew what being gay was or what the word meant, I was widely hated by students and ignored by the teachers and administration...I was regularly beaten up in the halls by upper school students." Guy's experience is far too common. Lesbian and gay students are routinely subjected to a spectrum of violence, and they are not the only ones being hurt by homophobic violence. Homophobia contributes to the overall problem of violence in schools, impacting on the lives of all students. It incites violence, it escalates conflicts, it forces students to deny who they are and what they want to be for fear of being labeled, harassed, or attacked. Schools must begin to address anti-gay violence and harassment. The following are various violence prevention models schools can adopt to better insure the safety of all students.

TYPES OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION MODELS

The following are four different models schools can use to implement violence prevention work:

- * Workshops
- * Teacher training in Conflict Resolution/Violence Prevention
- * Mediation Programs
- * Teacher Training in Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues

WORKSHOPS

Conflict resolution/Violence prevention facilitator leads a workshop for teachers and students in diversity training and conflict resolution. These workshops teaches a large number of students basic skills. The workshops focus on:

- * How we see the world, our assumptions and mis-assumptions about race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.;
- * The role of prejudice in inciting conflict and violence;
- * How conflicts escalate.
- * Strategies for conflict resolution.

TEACHER TRAINING USING VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Conflict resolution/Violence prevention facilitator holds a training seminar for teachers to teach them concepts and activities they can do with their students. It would include discussion of the following:

- * Context of violence;
- * Information about conflict;
- * How conflicts escalate;
- * Ways to de-escalate conflict;
- * Roles prejudice plays in conflict;
- * Seeing the world through different lenses/perspectives;
- * Next steps to a more peaceful school.

MEDIATION PROGRAMS

A select number of teachers and students are trained to mediate disputes and resolve conflicts that occur within the school. Mediators will be equipped with the skills and information to respond to immediately to acts of harassment and violence, intervene in disputes and resolve conflicts, and increase school- wide understanding and tolerance. This program reaches a small number of people and gives them a good amount of training.

TEACHER TRAINING IN GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL ISSUES

Teacher training workshop(s) are held to increase awareness of issues facing gay, lesbian and bisexual students. Workshops could be held on each of the following topics, or could include a combination of the following:

- * Gay and Lesbian Issues for Schools
- * Homophobia 101
- * Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution Training

The following sections detail the content for each of these workshops.

WORKSHOP ON GAY AND LESBIAN ISSUES FOR SCHOOLS

This workshop would include discussion of the following:

- * Issues affecting gay and lesbian students;
- * Introduction to the Massachusetts Department of Education Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students;
- * Strategies for implementing the recommendations in your own school.
- * Drafting of a work-plan for implementation of recommendations.

HOMOPHOBIA 101 WORKSHOP

This workshop would serve as an introduction to homophobia and Heterosexism. It would include discussion of the following:

- * What is homophobia? What is Heterosexism? Definitions and origins of homophobia;
- * How homophobia impacts on gays and lesbians;
- * How homophobia impacts on heterosexuals;
- * Strategies for reducing homophobia in schools and society.

WORKSHOP ON VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This workshop is designed to introduce participants to the basic strategies of Violence Prevention and Conflict Resolution. It would include discussion of the following:

- * Context of violence;
- * Information about conflict;
- * How conflicts escalate;
- * Ways to de-escalate conflict;
- * Roles prejudice plays in conflict;
- * Seeing the world through different lenses/perspectives;
- * Next steps to a more peaceful school.

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Excerpts from:

Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools – January 1999

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Harassment/>

see website for appendices and Part II: Step-by-Step Guidance

Part I: The Fundamentals

A Comprehensive Approach to Eliminating Harassment and Hate Crime

To establish an educational environment free from discrimination and harassment will ordinarily require more than just punishing individual instances of misconduct. Students will benefit most from stopping harassment from happening at all. Therefore, an effective anti-harassment program must incorporate the kinds of strategies that will prevent harassment, not merely increase the chance of punishment. While building a strong program often starts with developing and enforcing written policies and procedures, all of a school district's programs and activities should support its anti-harassment efforts. The school's instructional program, calendar of events, extracurricular activities, professional development efforts, and parent involvement initiatives are key to establishing an environment in which respect for diversity can flourish.

Successful prevention strategies depend on the coordinated efforts of all school employees, including individuals responsible for administration, curriculum, instruction, discipline, counseling, public relations, and personnel. Parents, students, law enforcement agencies, and other community organizations also play an important role. Schools should consider developing action plans both at the district level and at individual school sites that specify the steps each segment of the school community will take to implement a comprehensive anti-harassment program.

By designing and implementing a comprehensive approach, schools can establish the framework for a safe environment conducive to learning for all students. The key components are as follows.

Develop written policies that prohibit unlawful harassment

At a minimum, a school's governing authority should adopt and disseminate written policies that:

- Set forth the school's commitment to protect students from harassment and violence and to maintain a nondiscriminatory environment
- Identify the types of harassment prohibited by the policy and give examples
- Require staff to report harassment that they learn about
- Explain how to report harassment and to whom to report it
- Describe the various steps the school will take to respond to reported incidents
- Include formal complaint procedures
- Prohibit retaliation against persons who report harassment or participate in related proceedings
- Ensure that all members of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities

Student codes of conduct and personnel policies should also be examined to ensure that they contain rules of behavior, offense categories, and disciplinary procedures to address violations of the district's anti-harassment policies appropriately.

Identify and respond to all incidents of harassment and violence

All staff and administrators should be taught to accurately and sensitively advise students and parents reporting harassment of the relevant school policies and the options for stopping the harassment. In all instances, students and parents reporting harassment should be told how to file a formal complaint. Reporting procedures should be easy to use and well publicized. At least one employee should be formally designated and trained to receive complaints. The names and positions of the persons designated should be made known to all members of the school community.

Steps in a comprehensive approach

- Board members, district administrators, and the superintendent recognize the urgency of the problem of unlawful harassment and hate crime, identify people and agencies that can help them develop effective prevention and response strategies, and compile a library of useful materials
- School officials select personnel to work on creating an effective anti-harassment program in consultation with parents, students, and community groups
- Compliance coordinators are appointed and trained
- School personnel assess the school climate to determine the prevalence and types of harassment that may exist and the potential for hate-motivated violence
- School district adopts a written anti-harassment policy or reviews and revises existing policies for accuracy, clarity and legal compliance; the policy is clearly communicated to all members of the school community; and school personnel and students are held accountable for their actions
- School district develops a formal grievance procedure and takes steps to make sure it is working properly
- Instructional personnel use or supplement the district's curriculum and pedagogical strategies to foster respect and appreciation for diversity
- School sites institute, improve, or expand age appropriate student activities to prevent or reduce prejudice and conflict
- School district and individual school sites institute specific measures to respond immediately and effectively when harassment occurs to stop the harassment and prevent recurrence
- School officials flexibly apply response mechanisms to both the victim and the perpetrator, taking into account the parties' ages and the context of the behavior
- School personnel continually monitor the school climate and promptly address problems that could lead to harassment or violence or that indicate that harassment could be occurring
- Appropriate school officials become familiar with pertinent civil and criminal laws at the state, local, and federal levels, so that they are able to recognize possible civil rights violations, hate crimes and other criminal acts
- Schools develop guidelines and procedures for collaboration with law enforcement officials, make appropriate referrals to outside agencies, and designate liaison personnel
- Crisis intervention plans are in place to minimize the possibility of violence or disruption of the educational process
- District-level personnel and individual school sites form continuing partnerships with parents and the community to prevent hate crimes and harassing behaviors

- Staff training and professional development programs support the district's anti-harassment efforts
- All harassment incidents are carefully documented and incidents are reported to outside authorities as required
- District regularly assesses the effectiveness of its anti-harassment efforts

Require all staff to report to a designated school official, who has authority to take corrective action, any harassment that students report to them or that the employees observe. School personnel should not overlook incidents that, viewed alone, may not rise to the level of unlawful harassment. Consistent enforcement of all disciplinary rules and meaningful interventions by staff to teach appropriate behavior will tend to discourage more severe misconduct and to help achieve an atmosphere of respect and courtesy. Consider all available resources to address instances of inappropriate behavior, including increased parental involvement.

A repertoire of options that consider the nature of the conduct and the age and identity of the perpetrator and target of harassment are needed to respond to incidents of varying levels of severity, persistence, and pervasiveness. Top school officials or a designated coordinator may wish to screen all allegations of harassment to make sure that an appropriate course of action will be taken.

In responding to incidents of harassment, schools should pay close attention to the possibility that harassers and their friends and associates may attempt to retaliate against persons who report harassment. Retaliation or reprisals can include threats, bribes, unfair treatment or grades and further harassment such as ridicule, pranks, taunting, bullying, and organized ostracism.

Recognize that students may be harassed, not only because of their own race, sex, ethnicity or other characteristics, but also because of their association with individuals who are members of a targeted group.

Effective mechanisms to respond to incidents of harassment

- Immediate investigation of all reported incidents to determine whether the alleged harassment occurred, determine the scope and severity of the behavior, identify the perpetrators, evaluate the harm to the victims, and determine the appropriate corrective action
- Immediate referral to law enforcement authorities when the acts in question are violent or criminal in nature
- Fortright announcements by school authorities condemning the harassment and promising appropriate corrective action when the incidents are well known or of public concern
- Punishment, as appropriate, of harassers who violate provisions of the school's student disciplinary code, such as provisions against sexual and racial harassment, obscene language, vandalism, other property damage, physical assault, threats and intimidation, etc.
- Disciplinary action, as appropriate, against employees who violate the school's policies against sexual, racial, and other types of harassment
- Ongoing remedial actions intended to prevent recurrence, such as increasing adult supervision of an activity in which incidents have occurred and close monitoring of the victim's security
- Emotional and psychological support as needed by the harassment victim
- Informal procedures for resolution, such as peer mediation or counseling, when informal resolution is voluntarily selected by the parties, the harassment victim has full knowledge of the right to pursue the formal complaint process, and the school determines that informal resolution is appropriate for the incident in question

- Teaching students who engage in harassing conduct more acceptable behavior, especially where the students are very young or the conduct was not intended to be harmful

Provide formal complaint procedures

A formal complaint process is necessary in addition to the various other mechanisms that districts should use to address all incidents of harassment. The district should provide formal complaint procedures that ensure students and their parents a means of obtaining corrective action, if they prefer to file an official complaint or are dissatisfied with the district's response to alleged harassment.

Federal laws prohibiting sex and disability discrimination require prompt and equitable complaint procedures that incorporate due process standards. Such procedures are also recommended to address complaints of race and national origin discrimination, and other types of discrimination addressed by a district's policy. The term "grievance procedures" is also used to refer to formal complaint procedures, and this Guide uses the terms interchangeably.

Formal complaint procedures should include:

- Notice to students, parents, and employees of the process, including how and where complaints can be filed
- An opportunity for a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation, including the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence
- Confidentiality of the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses, to the extent possible in the particular case
- Notification to the complainant of the outcome of the complaint consistent with any legally required privacy restrictions
- Effective remedies when discrimination is found

Create a school climate that supports racial, cultural, and other forms of diversity

There is a growing consensus among educators that the best way to protect students from harassment is to establish a secure environment that expects appropriate behavior and promotes tolerance, sensitivity to others' views, and cooperative interactions among students. Effective anti-harassment programs therefore endeavor to provide students with a curriculum, teaching methods, and school activities that discourage stereotypes and respond to the concerns of students of different races and cultural backgrounds.

MAKE EXPECTATIONS CLEAR. The district should regularly communicate its policies against harassment to all members of the school community, including students, staff, parents, and school visitors, and make it clear that the policies will be enforced. Take steps to make sure that students are able to identify harassment, understand its causes and effects, and feel comfortable reporting instances of harassment.

MONITOR THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND DOCUMENT ALL INCIDENTS.

The school environment and activities should be regularly monitored to ensure that harassment is not occurring. All instances of alleged or suspected harassment, whether or not substantiated, should be documented. Documentation should include all disciplinary incidents in which race, national origin, sex, disability, or other subjects of district concern are a factor.

IDENTIFY STUDENT AND PARENT CONCERNS. Without an effort to identify student and parent concerns, school officials may not realize the extent of harassment that occurs in their schools. To identify areas needing attention, school officials should seek out information about underlying conflicts and tensions among students, both in school and in the community. Areas of concern could include possible antipathy toward recent immigrants, pervasive racial stereotypes, frequent sexual harassment, and any inequities in treatment by school personnel as perceived by students and parents. Such information can be obtained via a voluntary survey or through public

meetings. Maintain contact with students and parents to identify potential "trouble spots" for attention before harassment occurs.

STAFF TRAINING. A school district should provide sufficient training to enable employees to take an active part in the district's efforts to prevent and address harassment.

In-service training and professional development opportunities should be geared to:

- Assist teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals to recognize harassment and prejudice and to apply techniques for on-the-spot intervention
- Deepen the understanding of teachers and other employees of diverse cultural attitudes and behaviors; racial, ethnic, and sex based stereotypes; and the types of problems faced by students at school and in the community
- Enable teachers to use specific prejudice reduction curricula, materials, and techniques in the classroom
- Increase employees' sensitivity to the phenomena of racial, sexual, and disability harassment and the emotional, psychological, and educational damage that may result
- Inform teachers and other employees of expected behavior to prevent charges of harassment and suggest ways to improve communication skills to avoid unintended offense
- Ensure that all employees appropriately advise students and parents who report harassment of their options for obtaining help
- Enable administrators, compliance coordinators, complaint managers, complaint investigators, and school disciplinarians to properly perform their duties as designated by district policies

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODS. Successful anti-harassment efforts generally provide opportunities for students to overcome ignorance, mistrust, and biases. Age appropriate prejudice reduction and sexual respect concepts can be included in social studies, literature, and other classes.

Examples of teaching strategies that can help to reduce prejudice include modeling unbiased behavior, improving students' critical thinking skills, helping students to develop empathy, and encouraging cooperative learning. Numerous curriculum materials are available with little or no charge. For examples of prejudice reduction programs and related materials, see *Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities* and the *Annual Report on School Safety* published by the U.S. Department of Education in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice and other publications cited in Appendix E of this Guide.

STUDENT ACTIVITY AND MEDIATION PROGRAMS. Student activities, such as leadership clubs, that encourage students of different backgrounds and both sexes to work together on shared projects can contribute to intergroup understanding. Many schools use trained student mediators to resolve personal conflicts that could lead to harassment. In some schools, student volunteers are trained to discuss diversity issues with their peers or younger students in the classroom.

APPOINTMENT OF COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR. Federal regulations require the appointment of individual employees to coordinate the district's efforts to comply with laws against sex and disability discrimination. Appointment of individuals to coordinate efforts to eliminate discrimination based on race, national origin, and other grounds covered by the district's policy is also recommended.

The duties of compliance coordinators (also termed "equity coordinators") might include:

- Maintaining and analyzing documentation of all harassment incidents

- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the district's efforts to correct and prevent harassment and proposing improvements
- Regularly assessing the adequacy of training for staff, administrators, students, and parents and proposing improvements
- Advising and assisting other personnel to properly handle complaints and reports of harassment
- Ensuring that top district officials are informed about harassment incidents and the adequacy of the school's response

The names, positions, addresses and telephone numbers of the compliance coordinator(s) should appear in all publications and postings of district policies and complaint procedures.

Federal statutes related to hate crimes

Federal law prohibits the intentional use of force or threat of force against a person because of his or her race, color, religion, or national origin for the purpose of interfering with the person's enrollment or attendance in any public school or college. Federal law also allows more severe penalties when persons convicted of federal crimes were motivated by bias against the "actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation of any person."

Work with law enforcement agencies to address and prevent hate crimes and civil rights violations

DEFINITION OF HATE CRIME. Depending on the jurisdiction, hate or bias crimes involve criminal acts in which the victims are selected based on characteristics such as race, national origin, ethnicity, sex/gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Bias crimes include both attacks on persons and on property. Typical hate crimes include threatening phone calls, hate mail, physical assault, threats of harm or violence, arson, vandalism, cross burnings, destruction of religious symbols, bombings and bomb threats. School officials should find out the specific definition of bias crimes established by their state and local governments. There is no bright line between hate crime and noncriminal harassment, and some incidents may include elements of both. For a summary of state hate crime laws, compiled by the Anti-Defamation League, see Appendix C [pdf format].

No school district or community is immune from the damage that can be done by bias crime, and such crimes can happen even in schools with excellent reputations. Bias crimes that occur in school can create or exacerbate tensions that contribute to community-wide conflicts and civil disturbances. Bias offenses committed outside of school may quickly affect the school climate and relationships among students. Therefore, schools also need to be aware of incidents in the community and become involved in preventing and addressing them.

REFERRALS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES. School officials should contact law enforcement officials when hate crimes are committed or suspected on school property or in connection with off-site school activities. School officials should also contact law enforcement officials when they become aware of any criminal behavior that endangers the life or safety of students or other persons, whether or not the behavior occurs on school property or in school activities.

School officials should consider developing guidelines for referral of less serious incidents to appropriate authorities. Circumstances that may be considered in determining whether a referral is appropriate or necessary include the nature and seriousness of the conduct, whether a pattern of biased conduct is evident, and the risk that the conduct poses to the health, safety, or well-being of students, employees, and the public. For example, school officials should tell law enforcement officials about apparently less serious instances of harassment if these could lead to violent retaliation or serious confrontations outside of school.

Schools are encouraged to establish ongoing lines of communication with law enforcement agencies. Also, schools that have on-site security personnel should involve them in efforts to address and prevent hate crimes.

PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE. School officials should balance the need to preserve the physical evidence of hate crimes for investigation and the need to minimize the exposure of students to harmful messages. In addition to violating the school's disciplinary code or anti-harassment policies, certain kinds of graffiti may also be of interest to law enforcement agencies. Some law enforcement authorities recommend that evidence of graffiti be preserved for investigation when the graffiti is repetitive or persistent, is located in places of high visibility, identifies particular targets, identifies the perpetrator, contains incitements to violence, threats or intimidation, and/or targets particular groups. Use methods to reduce exposure to the offense which do not destroy the physical evidence, such as covering or concealing it. Photographing all instances of hate-motivated or harassing graffiti is a good practice, and, if a criminal violation is involved, the physical evidence should be preserved until the police approve removal.

Assist victim to pursue law enforcement options

Schools should encourage student victims to notify the police or file criminal charges, where appropriate. Whether or not a student intends to file charges, the school should make its own law enforcement referral. Notification to the police by the student or the school does not relieve the school district of its obligation to investigate, make findings, and remedy the harassment insofar as school-related conduct is involved. To avoid compromising a criminal prosecution, schools should coordinate their activities with law enforcement authorities. Persons injured by harassment should be told about all methods of obtaining corrective action. These include the school's internal complaint procedures, criminal charges, and complaints with governmental and non-governmental agencies that address civil rights violations in schools.

CRISIS INTERVENTION PLANS. Crisis intervention plans should include methods of rumor control, media contacts, close and continuing communications with students, parents, and the community, and liaison with law enforcement agencies and experts in crisis management. For information on crisis avoidance and response strategies for schools and communities, see *Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools*, available at www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

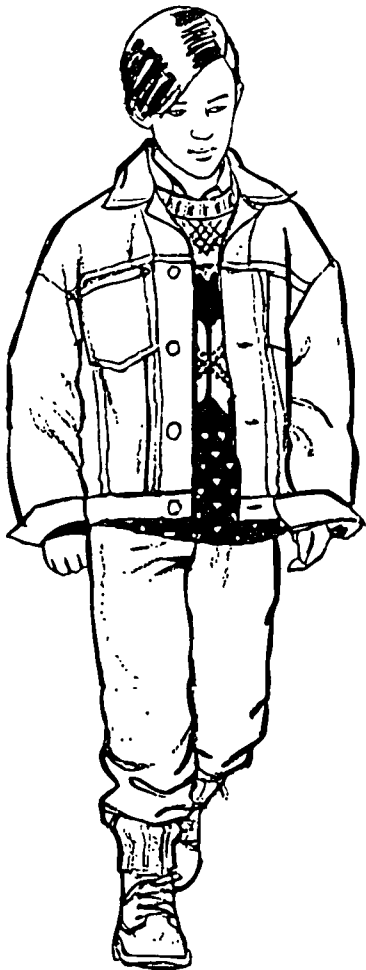
OCR ENFORCEMENT. School officials should inform members of the school community of the role of outside agencies in protecting students' civil rights. OCR investigates and resolves discrimination complaints, including complaints that schools have allowed or condoned sexual, racial or disability harassment. The vast majority of meritorious complaints filed with OCR are satisfactorily resolved through an agreement with the school district. If, however, resolution of such a complaint does not occur, OCR can bring an administrative hearing to suspend or terminate federal funds to a school district that refuses to correct discrimination. OCR can also refer such complaints to the United States Department of Justice, which can initiate a lawsuit to secure remedial action.

STATE AND LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS AND EDUCATION LAWS. Acts of harassment may also violate state or local civil rights, anti-discrimination, or education laws. In addition to harassment based on race, national origin, sex, and disability, which is specifically covered by federal law and many state laws, some states have laws that prohibit harassment based on religion and sexual orientation. In some states, such as Massachusetts, the state attorney general is authorized to bring civil suits to enjoin future criminal and certain types of noncriminal civil rights violations with criminal sanctions for noncompliance. Some states have also enacted laws spelling out the steps that schools must take to prevent or address harassment. We strongly recommend that school districts contact the attorney general of their state, the state department of education, and county and municipal officials to determine what state and local requirements apply and what state and local remedies are available.

Issues Facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff

□ Social/Psychological Issues, Suicide and Health

- Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network Pamphlet
- The Impact of Hate Crime Victimization
- Young Gay Males At Higher Suicide Risk
- Sexual and Contraceptive Behavior Among U.S. Teens – Gay and Lesbian Youth
- A Bill of Rights for Lesbian and Gay Students



Excerpts from:

The Website of the National Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
<http://www.glsen.org/pages/sections/news/natlnews/2000/08aug/23.article>

The national Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and a coalition of psychologists, doctors and teachers recently distributed a booklet emphasizing the rights of gay and lesbian students to every school superintendent in the U.S.

Among its points:

Sexual orientation develops across a person's lifetime.

- ❖ The experience of gay, lesbian and bisexual teen-agers is often one of isolation, fear of stigmatization and lack of peer or familial support.
- ❖ Gay, lesbian and bisexual youths have few opportunities for observing positive modeling by adults due to general cultural bias that makes such adults largely invisible.
- ❖ Homosexuality is not a mental disorder and there is no need for a "cure" -- all major health professional organizations have supported the American Psychiatric Association in its declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973.
- ❖ A school district must protect students from anti-gay harassment just as it protects students from other harassment.
- ❖ *Because of the religious nature of "transformational ministry" (which discourages homosexuality), endorsement or promotion of such ministry by officials or employees of a public school district in a school-related context could raise constitutional problems.

For more information about the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, contact the Tucson chapter at 743-4800, or access its Web site at members.aol.com/Stormal/personal.

Excerpts from:
University of California, Davis, Department of Psychology
Sexual Orientation, Science, Education, and Policy
<http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/>

The Impact of Hate Crime Victimization

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Department of Psychology
University of California, Davis



This is a brief summary of preliminary findings from a study of the psychological impact of hate crimes based on sexual orientation, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. With my colleagues, Dr. Jeanine Cogan and Dr. Roy Gillis, I am currently completing a report on these data for publication in a professional journal.

Background. The purpose of the study was to assess the mental health consequences of hate crimes based on sexual orientation. Nearly 2300 gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals from the greater Sacramento (CA) area participated in the research between 1993 and 1996. The sample included roughly equal numbers of men and women, with a median age of 34 years. Research participants completed an extensive questionnaire that included items about their experiences with crime, their attitudes and beliefs about a wide variety of topics, their community involvement, and their psychological well-being. In addition, approximately one-fifth of them were interviewed at length about their experiences. *Unless otherwise indicated, this summary focuses on respondents who reported a crime against their person (physical assault, rape, robbery) within the previous 5 years.*

Principal Findings. Hate crimes based on sexual orientation appear to have more serious psychological effects on lesbians and gay men than do other crimes.

- **Level of distress.** Lesbian and gay survivors of hate crimes showed significantly more signs of psychological distress — including depression, stress, and anger — than did lesbian and gay survivors of comparable non-bias-motivated crimes.
- **Reasons for heightened distress.** Much of the distress that we observed among hate crime survivors may result from a heightened sense of personal danger and vulnerability that becomes associated with their identity as a gay man or lesbian. Previous research has shown that all crime victims are likely to feel more vulnerable after their experience and to perceive the world as more dangerous, unpredictable, and hostile. The present data suggest that hate crime victims, in addition, often link this sense of vulnerability and powerlessness to their gay or lesbian identity. This association can be psychologically harmful because sexual orientation is such an important part of the self-concept.
- **Duration of distress.** The negative effects of hate crimes may be longer lasting than those of other crimes. Hate crime victims continued to have higher levels of depression, stress, and anger for as long as 5 years after their victimization occurred. In contrast, crime-related psychological problems dropped substantially among survivors of non-bias crimes within approximately two years after the crime.

Other Findings. Consistent with data from other studies, the research shows that hate crime victimization is a serious problem for gay men and lesbians in the Sacramento area.

- **Prevalence.** Nearly one-fifth of the women and more than one-fourth of the men in the study had experienced a crime or attempted crime based on their sexual orientation at some time in their life.

One woman in eight had been victimized in the previous five years; one man in six had been a hate crime victim in that period. The types of victimization included assaults, rapes, robberies, thefts, and vandalism.

- **Reporting to Police.** Hate crimes were less likely than other crimes to be reported to the police. Only one-third of the victims of hate crimes reported the incident to law enforcement authorities, compared to 57% of the victims of random crimes.
- **Other Harassment and Discrimination.** Hate crimes based on sexual orientation occur against a backdrop of ongoing harassment. In the year prior to the survey, more than half of the respondents had been the target of antigay verbal abuse. Nearly one-fifth had been threatened with antigay violence, chased, or both. 16% of the respondents had been the targets of antigay employment discrimination in the previous year — either in hiring, firing, promotion, or treatment in the workplace.

Applying the Findings to Other Groups. Because comparable studies have not been conducted with other groups, caution must be exercised in trying to generalize from these findings to other victims of hate crimes. However, it is reasonable to expect that victims of hate crimes based on race, ethnicity, religion, or another comparable characteristic may also experience heightened psychological distress because the incident represents a serious attack on a fundamental aspect of the victim's personal identity. At the same time, the experiences of other hate crime victims are likely to differ from those of gay men and lesbians in various ways, simply because each status (race, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) is associated with different kinds of life experiences for the individual and historical experiences for the affected community.

Policy Implications. These findings indicate that hate crimes have a more serious impact on the victim than do other crimes. That impact may be qualitatively different from the aftermath of other crimes because it affects core aspects of the victim's identity and community affiliation. Thus, it is appropriate for legislation and public policy to treat hate crimes as a special case of criminal victimization, one that requires special strategies for prevention, prosecution, and victim services.

Implications for Future Research. This is the most extensive empirical study of antigay hate crimes to date. It may also be the most extensive study ever conducted of the mental health consequences of any kind of hate crime. Additional research is needed in this field to address the following goals:

- Replicate and extend the findings from this study with other samples in different regions of the United States.
- Replicate the findings with hate crime victims from other minority groups.
- Identify appropriate clinical interventions for alleviating the short- and long-term impact of hate crimes for survivors and their loved ones, and assess the efficacy of those interventions.
- Identify the ways in which the mere threat of hate crime victimization affects the well-being of entire communities.
- Identify ways in which services to hate crime victims can be improved through training of law enforcement personnel, health care professionals, mental health professionals, and social service providers.
- Identify appropriate interventions for preventing hate crimes by targeting potential perpetrators, especially school-age youth and young adults, who appear to be the most common perpetrators of hate crimes against strangers in public settings.

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Excerpts from:
PersonalMD.com
<http://www.personalmd.com/news/a1998020510.shtml>

Young Gay Males At Higher Suicide Risk

NEW YORK (Reuters) -- Homosexual or bisexual adolescent boys are over seven times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual male peers, according to a study published this week in the American Journal of Public Health.

"Bisexuality/homosexuality is a risk factor for attempted suicide in male adolescents," according to Dr. Gary Remafedi and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health in Minneapolis.

The study findings are based on data gleaned from a 1987 survey of over 36,000 Minnesota 7th- to 12th-grade public high school students, a group which the researchers say "closely resembled the demographic composition of the Minnesota student body."

Survey questionnaires focused on, among other things, each student's self-identification with a particular sexual orientation. A total of 212 boys and 182 girls identified themselves as either bisexual or "mostly/100% homosexual."

The Minneapolis researchers asked that subset of students to complete another questionnaire that included questions focusing on previous attempts at suicide (if any), as well as current levels of suicidal thoughts and/or intentions. Their answers were compared with those of a group of 336 adolescents who labeled themselves as "mostly/100% heterosexual."

The report found that adolescent "male bisexuality/homosexuality was associated with a greater than sevenfold increased odds of a suicide attempt," compared with adolescent male heterosexuality. The researchers also found more than triple the incidence of suicidal intentions among male gay or bisexual teens, compared with their straight peers.

However, "bisexuality/homosexuality was not significantly associated with suicide risk in young women," the researchers report.

This gender disparity seems to confirm that "suicide risk among homosexual students was not attributable to homosexuality per se." Instead, they believe that peer pressure, troubles with gender nonconformity, and family dysfunction may exact a much heavier toll on young gay men compared with lesbian teens.

Randall Cole, coordinator of communications for the Hetrick-Martin Institute, a New York City-based support and advocacy center for gay, bisexual and transgendered youth, said the results of the Minnesota study come as "no surprise" to those who work with troubled gay adolescents. "Social intolerance of their sexual orientation puts gay and lesbian youth at much greater risk of suicide, substance abuse, isolation, and other high-risk situations," Cole said.

SOURCE: American Journal of Public Health (1998;88(1):57-60)


Excerpts from:
Fact Sheet: Sexual and Contraceptive Behavior Among U.S. Teens
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. (6/93)

Gay and Lesbian Youth

- ◆ The mean age of awareness of same-sex attraction occurred at age 14 for gay men. It occurred between ages 16-19 for lesbians.
- ◆ One in four gay or bisexual teen men are forced out of the parental home prematurely due to issues surrounding sexual orientation. Up to half of those forced from parental homes resort to prostitution in order to support themselves, thereby dramatically increasing their risk of HIV infection.
- ◆ The mean annual number of sexual partners for gay and bisexual men between 15 and 19 was seven, with one-third of these being anonymous partners. One-half of respondents had heterosexual experiences during the previous year, averaging 5.6 different women partners each.
- ◆ Most gay, lesbian, and bisexual teens hide their sexual orientation from their family and friends. This strategy of deception distorts almost all of the relationships they develop and creates a sense of extreme isolation.
- ◆ Sixty percent of young adult cases of AIDS are among men who have had sex with men. Because HIV has an average incubation period of 10.5 years before the onset of AIDS, this statistic indicates that these young people were infected as teenagers.

Excerpts from:
Project 10
<http://www.project10.org/Blorites.html>

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR LESBIAN AND GAY STUDENTS

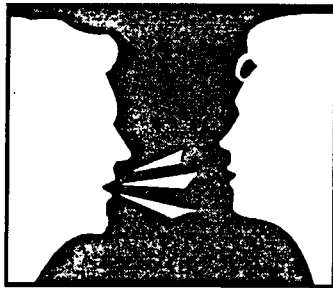
- 
1. The right to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment; where education, not survival, is the priority.
 2. The right to attend schools where respect and dignity for all is a standard set by the Board's of Education and enforced by every school administrator.
 3. The right to have access to accurate information about themselves, free of negative Judgment and delivered by adults who not only inform them, but affirm them.
 4. The right to positive role models, both in person and in the curriculum.
 5. The right to be included in all support programs that exist to help teenagers deal with the difficulties of adolescence.
 6. The right to legislators who guarantee and fight for their constitutional freedoms, rather than ones who reinforce hate and prejudice.
 7. The right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination.

First published in the Friends of Project 10, Inc. Summer Update, 1990. Author, Dr. Virginia Uribe

Issues Facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff

□ Coming Out

- Coming Out Young -- At A Cost - Poll Shows Gay High School Students Still Face Taunts, and Worse
- Landmark Survey Shows Gay Youth Coming Out Earlier Than Ever
- Coming Out Can Reduce Sexual Prejudice



Excerpts from:

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network Blackboard, 8/23/00

<http://www.glsen.org/pages/sections/news/natlnews/2000/08aug/23.article>

Coming Out Young -- At A Cost - Poll Shows Gay High School Students Still Face Taunts, and Worse

Arizona Daily Star

P. O. Box 26887, Tucson, AZ, 85726

(Fax 602-573-4141) (E-MAIL: letters@azstarnet.com)

(<http://www.azstarnet.com/>)

By Stephanie Innes

Gay and lesbian youths are coming out at younger ages, but not without cost.

Hallway and schoolyard taunts at gays were reported by more than 85 percent of the 616 Tucson students, gays and heterosexuals, polled in a newly released survey taken at two high schools this year.

One-third of the students rated their school as unsafe for homosexuals.

"It is a risk to come out early, but at the same time, when kids choose to come out, they are not having to live a life of secrecy. It's a balancing act," said psychologist Jean Baker, who sits on the Arizona Psychological Association's Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues Committee.

Pollsters from the local chapter of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network are not naming the schools where the surveys were conducted because they do not wish to single them out. Similar polls will be conducted at other Tucson high schools this year, said Alan Storm, co-chair of the network's Tucson chapter.

"One of the most surprising things is that students still hear anti-gay slurs from faculty and staff. That certainly is not expected," Storm said.

Seventeen percent of the students in the local survey said they had heard faculty or staffers make derogatory comments about homosexuals.

"Not all of the teachers are accepting. I did have a teacher talk to me about changing my sexuality," said Amanda Taylor, 18, a senior at Canyon del Oro High School and a member of its year-old Gay-Straight Alliance, a campus club.

When Mike Pollack, 21, was a teen-ager attending Project PASS in Tucson, only one area high school -- Tucson High -- had a gay-straight alliance.

But a growing acceptance of gay people in mainstream society during the late 1990s led many students to ask their schools to sanction gay-straight alliances.

Five Tucson-area high schools had such clubs as of last semester: Tucson, Amphitheater, Canyon del Oro, Desert View and University.

"The appearance of gay-straight alliances on campuses has been an incredible asset to youths for feeling empowered and safer," said Pollack, coordinator of QueerVoice, a youth advocacy group affiliated with the Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation.

"But being out opens them up to violence and harassment. And it happens all the time."

Pollack, who came out at 15, will be one of six panelists speaking at a local forum tomorrow night about coming-out issues in Tucson-area schools. The forum will be hosted by Wingspan, Tucson's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community center.

Canyon Del Oro student Taylor, who came out as a lesbian to her friends and family when she was in middle school, began lobbying CDO administrators for a gay-straight alliance when she was a freshman. The school approved the club at the end of her sophomore year.

Bill Maginnis, a computer repair technician at Canyon del Oro and a faculty adviser to its Gay-Straight Alliance, said the group's meeting announcements are often torn down, and some teachers don't read club notices to their classes.

School officials weren't the only challenge Taylor faced as a lesbian at CDO. Other students have sometimes been unkind.

"It doesn't happen anymore, really. Kids don't seem to care. But my freshman year was different. They called me faggot, and I had some rocks thrown at me when I was on campus going to class," she said.

In one instance, Taylor and her girlfriend were holding hands at school, she said, and a male student spat on them.

But she said the Gay-Straight Alliance has helped increase acceptance of homosexuals at her school. For example, the group has handed out pink triangles to teachers for display in their classrooms to indicate a gay-friendly learning environment and a willingness to discuss gay and lesbian issues.

"A lot of the teachers have put them up," Taylor said.

While she said she never worries about her safety at school, Taylor thinks that gay, lesbian and bisexual students at her school still face challenges.

"With the students, if there are problems it's usually with guys."

The Tucson survey said hallways and the cafeteria were the most common places for hearing anti-gay remarks from other students. Sixty-five percent of the polled students reported harassment or homophobic remarks in the gym or on the athletic field.

The local poll was conducted on the heels of the national Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's survey of anti-gay bigotry in U.S. schools last October. The national poll, which surveyed only gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youths, suggested that homophobia is still rampant in schools.

Eighty percent of the 496 youths from 32 states who responded to the national survey reported severe social isolation and 19 percent reported suffering physical attacks based on their sexual orientation.

Reassurance is important, say members of the Tucson High gay-straight alliance, called Arcus.

Ben Healy, 15, a sophomore who joined the group last year, said one male acquaintance, upon learning Healy is gay, stopped talking to him last year.

Casey Condit, a 17-year-old senior at Tucson High, credits Arcus with making the school safer for gay kids. This week, on the first day of school, she was heartened to see two different couples -- one male, the other female -- walking on campus and holding hands.

"Of course there's still fear. You still hear words like 'dyke' and 'fag' thrown around when there are gay couples walking together," said Condit, who came out when she was 14.

"I think I feel more comfortable now because I'm a senior. I'm sure there are freshmen who are terrified," she said. "When I was a freshman I had a girlfriend who was thrown down the stairs and cornered. Personally, I've been lucky."

Condit said it helps that Tucson High is a magnet school for arts students -- creative people are often more open-minded, she said. And another positive for her school is that it's just down the street from Wingspan.

Arcus began publishing a newsletter last year about its members, including personal stories.

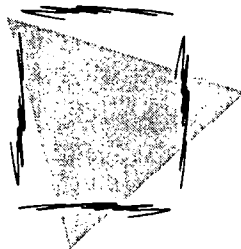
"We got a lot of good feedback, but we also saw more graffiti about Arcus -- words I don't want to use. But basically it said, 'We don't want gay people at our school,'" said Erin Durban, a 17-year-old senior who is president of Arcus this year.

Excerpts from:
Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
<http://www.glaad.org/org/publications/lines/index.html?record=1059>

March 9, 1998

LANDMARK SURVEY SHOWS GAY YOUTH COMING OUT EARLIER THAN EVER

According to a survey of over 2,000 young people completed by !OutProud!, the National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth, and Oasis Magazine, youth on average first realize their sexual orientation at age 12 and are telling friends and family for the first time by age 16. Typically, the survey found, they tell their best friend first and the response is overwhelmingly positive. However, 63% reported that one or more times they been "verbally insulted because they are, or were thought to be, queer." Also, a shocking 68% have seriously thought about committing suicide, and 40% of those who had depended on support found on the Internet for someone to talk to. In regards to the future, 78% see themselves eventually in a committed relationship and over 50% hope to have children and marry someone of the same gender. "Never before have we had such a window into the lives of queer and questioning youth," said !Out Proud! Executive Director Christopher Kryzan, adding the survey "will help us understand, for they first time, who they are, how they live, and of what they hope and dream." The survey can be found online at <http://www.oasismag.com/survey/>.



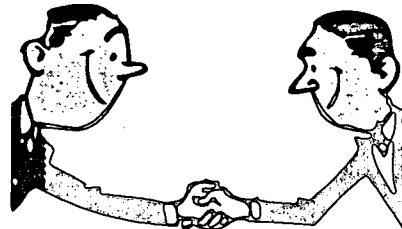
Excerpts from:

*University of California, Davis, Department of Psychology
Sexual Orientation, Science, Education, and Policy
<http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/comeout1.html>*

Coming Out Can Reduce Sexual Prejudice

Heterosexuals With Personal Contact Have More Positive Feelings toward Lesbians and Gay Men

A new study indicates that lesbians and gay men who come out of the closet to their heterosexual friends and family members help to create more positive attitudes toward homosexuality.



"Heterosexuals with a gay friend or relative have significantly more favorable attitudes toward lesbians and gay men as a group," said Dr. Gregory Herek, a research psychologist at the University of California at Davis and principal investigator for the national opinion survey, published in the April, 1996, issue of *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.

With co-author Dr. John Capitanio, Herek reported that simply having personal contact with a lesbian or gay man does not necessarily affect heterosexuals' feelings about gays and lesbians. Rather, heterosexuals tend to hold favorable attitudes if they know two or more gay people, if those people are close friends or immediate family members, and if there has been open discussion about the friend or relative's sexual orientation.

Past studies — including a paper that Herek published with Eric Glunt in *The Journal of Sex Research* in 1993 — have shown a relationship between heterosexuals' attitudes and their contact experiences. The new study, however, is the first to probe the specific conditions under which contact appears to change attitudes.

Open Discussion Is Important

"Direct disclosure of one's homosexuality — talking about it openly — appears to play an important role in changing attitudes," said Herek. By directly discussing her or his sexual orientation, Herek suggested, a lesbian or gay man can help a heterosexual loved one to reach a better understanding of homosexuality and what it means to be gay. She or he can answer questions and break down stereotypes.

At the same time, open discussion can preserve and even strengthen the relationship.

"Coming out is a highly intimate disclosure," noted Herek. In many situations, he said, revealing such information can strengthen a relationship, provided that gay men and lesbians do it in a sensitive way.

Herek suggested that lesbians and gay men who are preparing to come out to a heterosexual friend or family member think carefully about the best way to break the news.

"When they first recognize their own sexual orientation, most lesbians and gay men need some time to get used to it," noted Herek. The same is true for heterosexual friends or family members, he said.

"For heterosexuals, finding out that a loved one is gay may be a big surprise. It forces them to change their expectations. They need time, information, and understanding."

Cause and Effect Relationship Works Both Ways

Herek stressed that the study's design does not permit a definite conclusion that having contact causes heterosexuals to change their attitudes.

Indeed, the survey indicated that a cause-and-effect relationship between contact and attitudes works in both directions. According to Herek, when lesbians and gay men have a choice, they are more likely to disclose their sexual orientation to members of groups that are generally tolerant of homosexuality. These groups include women, liberals, and the college educated.

But while gay men and lesbians tend to come out to people whom they expect to respond positively, Herek also observed that heterosexuals who have had past contact hold more favorable attitudes regardless of their sex, political beliefs, schooling, or other background characteristics. Moreover, those with contact appear to develop even more favorable attitudes over time, Herek said.

Herek noted that the benefits of coming out were apparent for virtually all the demographic groups that he and Dr. Capitanio examined. "Whether we looked at the attitudes of men, the highly religious, the elderly, or practically any other group, those reporting personal contact expressed more favorable attitudes toward gay people than did those without contact," said Herek.

"The only group for which the difference between those with and without contact was small," said Herek, "was African American respondents." He explained, however, that many of the Black survey respondents who knew a gay person reported that their contact had been with a distant relative or acquaintance. Those with a close friend who was gay generally had positive feelings toward gay people, which is consistent with the other survey respondents, he said.

Coming Out Is Risky

Despite the study's findings that disclosure promotes attitude change, Herek warned that coming out also carries risks. Many heterosexual Americans hold strongly negative feelings toward homosexuality, he noted.

The study found, for example, that two-thirds of the U.S. public feels that homosexuality is wrong, 60% feel that it is disgusting, and only about one-fourth believe that it is a natural expression of sexuality. These attitudes are strongest among heterosexuals who say that they do not know anyone who is lesbian or gay — about two-thirds of U.S. heterosexual adults, according to Herek.

"Many gay men and lesbians meet with rejection, discrimination, and even violence when they come out," Herek noted. Job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is legal in most states, he said, and antigay hate crimes are common throughout the United States.

Other Findings

Among the survey's other findings were that heterosexuals are twice as likely to know gay men as lesbians, that most heterosexuals reporting contact know two or more gay persons, and that the most common form of contact is with an acquaintance or casual friend. About 4% of the relationships reported were with an immediate family member, such as a child or sibling, according to Herek. About one-fifth were with a close friend, and more than half were with acquaintances.

The survey's findings are consistent with an established social psychological principle that, under the right conditions, contact between members of majority and minority groups can reduce prejudice against the minority group. This "contact hypothesis" has been used to explain changes in attitudes toward racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, according to Herek. The new study indicates that it applies to heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay people as well.

The study consisted of two national telephone surveys between 1990 and 1992. 538 adults were interviewed in the first survey, and approximately 70% of them were reinterviewed for the second survey. The margin of error due to sampling is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

For more details, see:

Herek, G.M., & Capitano, J.P. (1996). "Some of my best friends": Intergroup contact, concealable stigma, and heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and lesbians. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 22(4), 412-424.

Herek, G.M. (1997). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Does coming out make a difference? In M. Duberman (Ed.), *A queer world: The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies reader* (pp. 331-344). New York: New York University Press.

Issues Facing Sexual Minority Students and Staff

□ Sexual Minority Teachers and Staff

- A Little Extra Help for Lesbian and Gay Teachers
- Lesbian Teacher Can Go Ahead With Harass Suit
- Tips for Coming Out of the Classroom Closet if You're Gay (for teachers)



Excerpts from:

The ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project, and the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
<http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/hmgl.html>

A Little Extra Help for Lesbian and Gay Teachers

A federal court in Utah recently delivered a significant victory for gay and lesbian teachers.

In *Weaver v. Nebo School District*, a federal judge ruled that a school district cannot prevent a gay or lesbian teacher from being “out” in her life outside the classroom. The court said school districts cannot discriminate against teachers on the basis of sexual orientation even if parents in the district strongly disapprove of lesbians and gay men. The decision comes from the lowest of three levels of federal courts and so other courts are not legally required to follow it. But it is an extremely positive and thoughtful decision about the constitutional rights of gay and lesbian teachers. We are alerting you to it to advocate on behalf of teachers (or any public employee) who suffer discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

What happened to Ms. Weaver could have happened to any gay teacher.

Ms. Weaver was a psychology and physical education teacher at Spanish Fork High School in the Nebo School District for 19 years and the girl’s volleyball coach since 1979. She and her husband divorced and when Ms. Weaver later moved in with her girlfriend, rumors began to fly around the small town. Shortly thereafter, one of Ms. Weaver’s team members asked her if she was gay, and Ms. Weaver said yes. Several parents called the school to complain, some even demanding her removal.

In response, the school district refused to allow Ms. Weaver to coach volleyball any more. The district also sent Ms. Weaver a letter which forbade her from saying anything to students, staff members, or parents regarding her “homosexual orientation or lifestyle,” even away from school. One spokesperson for the group of complaining parents backhandedly underscored the importance of this “gag order” when he told the school board at a meeting to discuss the Weaver case:

“A teacher leaves an eternal legacy of influence. The only reason a teacher would want to have a discussion out of class is to have influence. It would be tragic if that influence was to teach values opposed to those taught by parents.”

We sued the school district in federal court. The judge, in a well-reasoned opinion, decided that both the “gag order” and the termination as volleyball coach were unconstitutional.

The ruling on the gag order represents the first time any court has said that a lesbian teacher should be able to be “out” about her sexuality outside of school, even to students, without fear of losing her job.

School authorities, the judge said, cannot require a teacher to live in the closet in order to keep her position. This ruling was not about what Ms. Weaver was allowed to say in the classroom or during school-sponsored activities (so-called “curricular speech”). Ms. Weaver never wanted to

talk about her personal life in class. What concerned both Ms. Weaver and the court was the district attorney's attempt to limit what she could say outside curricular activities.

The court pointed out that no heterosexual teacher had ever been required to be silent about her life in the way the school was requiring Ms. Weaver to. The court made it clear that the same rules must apply to both. The courts said that the restrictions the district put on Ms. Weaver could mean, for example, that Ms. Weaver would have to hide her sexual orientation in the supermarket (were she to run into a parent there), at dinner with a friend (if the friend were one of Ms. Weaver's colleagues at the school), or even in her own home or yard (while speaking to her children who are students in the district). The court's decision significantly affirms the importance of any teacher being able to live his or her personal life freely.

The court's decision on the coaching job dismissed the district's claim that it was just doing what the parents wanted it to do. The courts explained that the negative reactions some parents expressed about Ms. Weaver's sexual orientation could not be a legitimate excuse for discrimination. "The private antipathy of some members of a community cannot validate state discrimination," said the court, relying on a principle that courts have rarely applied to anti-gay actions. If you want to read the judge's decision, it can be found in volume 29 of the Federal Supplement, Second Series, at page 1279 (29 F. Supp. 2d 1279 (D. Utah 1998)).

Government employers such as school districts cannot act against individual employees on the basis of community animosity, stereotyped assumptions or prejudice.

Given this great outcome, we are hopeful that Ms. Weaver's struggle will make it easier for teachers and other public employees to stand up to sexual orientation discrimination. Please call us if you have questions about his case or its legal implications, or if you or anyone you know needs our help.

ACLU Lesbian & Gay Rights Project
125 Broad Street, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10004-2400
(212) 549-2627, lgbthiv@aclu.org, <http://www.aclu.org/>

The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
121 West 27th Street, Suite 804, New York, NY 10001
(212) 727-0135, glsen@glsen.org, <http://www.glsen.org/>

Excerpts from:

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, Blackboard

<http://www.glsen.org/pages/sections/news/natlnews/2000/08aug/10.article>

Thursday, August 10, 2000

Lesbian Teacher Can Go Ahead With Harass Suit

San Francisco Examiner

By Bob Egelko of the Examiner staff

A lesbian teacher who said she had been harassed and denied a promotion by her Southern California district because of her sexual orientation will get her day in court.

The state Supreme Court unanimously denied review Wednesday of a lower-court ruling reinstating a suit by Dawn Murray, an award-winning biology teacher, against the Oceanside Unified School District in San Diego County.

The appellate ruling said the state law that has prohibited job discrimination against gays and lesbians since 1992 also prohibited workplace harassment based on sexual orientation. Anti-harassment protection was made explicit by a new law that took effect this year, but the court said the former law also banned harassment as a type of discrimination.

Murray, hired in 1983, said in her suit that she had been subjected to insults, sexually suggestive remarks and rumor-mongering by fellow employees, starting in September 1993. When she complained to an administrator, she said, she was told she would face discipline if she pressed the issue.

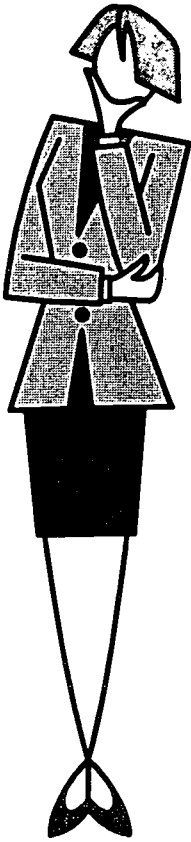
She said administrators had brushed off her complaints about obscene graffiti painted outside her classroom three times between December 1994 and February 1996. She said her lesbianism, which wasn't known to all her colleagues, had been disclosed at a 1995 teachers' meeting by an administrator, who ignored expressions of hostility from the audience.

Murray also said the district had discriminated against her by failing to promote her to student activities director in 1993, failing to give proper recognition to a statewide teaching award she had received in 1995, and unfairly canceling a class and disciplining her based on unfounded complaints by a parent and a fellow teacher.

A San Diego Superior Court judge dismissed all of the suit except the complaint about the promotion, saying the anti-discrimination law then in effect did not cover harassment. The 4th District Court of Appeal disagreed this April, ruling that harassment so severe that it caused an "abusive working environment" was a form of discrimination, whether based on sex, race or sexual orientation.

Murray now works for a teachers' union but is scheduled to return to Oceanside High School in the fall, said her attorney, Myron Quon of the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. He said he hoped the ruling would prompt the district to settle the case. District lawyer Daniel Shinoff declined comment.

TIPS FOR COMING OUT OF THE
CLASSROOM CLOSET
IF YOU'RE GAY
(for teachers)



Coming out to students is a very personal decision. However, more and more people are doing it, and therefore these are some suggestions on how to do it based on the experiences of openly gay and lesbian teachers.

1. Be sure that your state is not a state where sodomy laws are still on the books.
2. Be sure that non-discrimination policies are in effect for your school district.
3. Be appropriate in the way that you disclose your sexual orientation.
 - It might be in the form of a matter-of-fact response to a question posed by a student
 - It might be in the form of a lesson on prejudice or an incident of name-calling.
 - It might be in the context of a discussion of current events such as the discovery of a possible gene for the cause of homosexuality, or a social issue such as gays in the military.
- It might be in the form of your participation in some community event.
- It might be in a way that hasn't even been mentioned here, but always it should be casual, restrained, and with you, not the students, in charge of the discussion.
4. Be careful not to allow the conversation to drift into the area of sex. Sometimes students will try to do that, but mostly they will ask questions like "When did you know you were gay," "What did your parents think, " or "Have you ever been afraid of losing your job?"

You can decide how much Information you want to give them, and what is appropriate for YOU.

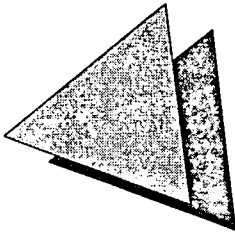
DON'T EVEN THINK OF COMING OUT UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO FACE WHATEVER CONSEQUENCES MIGHT OCCUR, SUCH AS CRITICISM FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES OR DISAPPROVAL FROM THE PRINCIPAL. GENERALLY THE STUDENTS ARE OKAY WITH IT. THAT ISN'T ALWAYS TRUE FOR ADULTS. BE SURE YOU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND HOW TO EXERCISE THEM.

Interventions for Assisting Sexual Minority Students

- **Working With and Understanding the Needs of Sexual Minority Students**
 - NASP Position Statement on Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth
 - Improving the School Experience for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students



Excerpts from:
National Association of School Psychologists Position Statements
http://www.naspweb.org/information/position_paper.html



Position Statement Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youth

Creating Safe Schools for Sexual Minority Youth

Schools must maintain campuses that are safe and conducive to learning for all students. NASP believes that efforts to create safe schools for sexual minority youth should include but not limited to education of all students and staff, direct intervention with victims and perpetrators of harassment and discrimination of those at risk, and promoting societal and familial attitudes and behaviors that affirm the dignity and rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth.

Education of students and staff. Because many gay, lesbian, and bisexual students choose not to reveal their sexual orientation for fear of harassment, other students and staff are often not aware of their presence. Staff and students who are aware and supportive may fear openly speaking out for sexual minority youth because of the possibility of being discriminated against themselves. Even among those who are aware of the existence of sexual minority youth in their school, many maintain misconceptions regarding these youth and may be unsure how to address their needs. NASP supports educating students and staff regarding the existence and needs of sexual minority youth through inservice training on the risks experienced by these youth, research relevant to these youth, and appropriate ways of addressing harassment and discrimination directed toward any student. In addition, issues pertaining to sexual orientation can be infused in the curriculum, such as presenting theories regarding the development of sexual orientation in a science class, reading works of famous gay, lesbian, or bisexual authors in a literature class, or discussing the gay rights movement in historical context with other civil rights movements in a social studies class. Sexual minority youth must also be educated to reduce unsafe behavior such as substance abuse and exposure to HIV. In addition, educating these youth can reduce the isolation they often feel as a result of perceiving themselves as invisible or as misunderstood.

Direct intervention with victims and perpetrators of harassment and discrimination. As with any instance of school violence, harassment and discrimination against sexual minority youth should be addressed both through applying consequences and educating the perpetrator and by supporting and protecting the victim. Both goals can be achieved through nonjudgmental counseling for students who have been victims of such harassment or who are questioning their sexual orientation and may become targets of harassment in the future by disclosing their status as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Counseling and education should also be provided to the perpetrator to help prevent future episodes of harassment. Because school staff may, knowingly or unknowingly, discriminate against sexual minority youth, NASP believes that education and support for sexual minority youth must occur at all levels of schooling. This education should include students, teachers, support staff, and administrators and should stress that discrimination and harassment must be addressed regardless of the status of the perpetrator.

Promoting societal and familial attitudes and behaviors that affirm the dignity and rights within educational environments of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. By educating students and staff, school psychologists can help change negative or indifferent attitudes toward sexual minority youth. However, a much more powerful agent of change may be the example of the school psychologist who refuses to allow slurs or discrimination to occur and who is willing to provide services to all students regardless of sexual orientation or other minority status. Within their own schools and in society as a whole, school psychologists can promote attitudes that affirm the dignity and rights of sexual minority youth by removing biases from their own practice . They can also point out the actions or statements of other school staff who discriminate or neglect the needs of sexual minority youth and attempt to address these issues in a fair way. In particular, school policies should mandate fair treatment of all students and equal access to educational and mental health services within the schools. School psychologists can provide expert opinions and research-based information to assure that such policies are in place and enforced. Finally, school psychologists can encourage local, state, and national organizations to disseminate information to parents and other groups that need to be aware of the issues related to gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth in the schools.

Role of the School Psychologist

Because they work directly with students as well as staff and administrators, school psychologists are uniquely positioned to affect policies and practices within the schools. They can also teach by example. School psychologists can explicitly inform students that they are available to all students regardless of sexual orientation. In counseling sessions, they can be mindful that not every student is heterosexual and that sexual minority status can affect self-esteem and peer relationships. School psychologists can address issues of sexual orientation in inservice sessions as well. In presenting material on sexual harassment or discrimination, for example, they can take care to include examples and information involving sexual minority youth. School psychologists are also in a position to educate students on a number of issues related to high risk behaviors that are especially frequent among gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth, targeting both the school population in general and sexual minority youth in particular.

Summary

NASP recognizes that students who are of a minority sexual orientation, or are perceived to be, are at risk of a number of dangerous and destructive behaviors as well as harassment, discrimination, and low self-esteem. A successful program to address these issues educates both those who discriminate and those who are discriminated against because of sexual orientation. This education can occur on a number of levels: intervention with individual students, schoolwide inservice training, and modeling behaviors attitudes and behaviors by school psychologists in daily interactions with all students and staff. Any program designed to address the needs of sexual minority youth should also include efforts to educate parents and the community through involvement with other organizations committed to equal opportunity for education and mental health services for all youth. Schools can only be truly safe when every student, regardless of sexual orientation, is assured of access to an education without fear of harassment or violence.

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Adopted by the NASP Delegate Assembly, April 10, 1999

Excerpts from:

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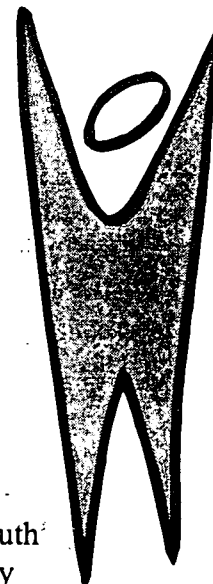
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Author: Schwartz, Wendy

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**Improving the School Experience for Gay, Lesbian, and
Bisexual Students.
ERIC Digest No. 101.**



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Interest in meeting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth is growing, largely as a result of three general trends: (1) acknowledgment by educators that all identifiable groups of students need support unique to their situation; (2) the increasing number of students declaring their homosexuality; and (3) increasing victimization of lesbians and gays. Among the supporting arguments is that educators have a social responsibility to provide an environment that supports the ability of all students--including lesbians and gays--to learn and that is free from physical and psychological abuse (Sears, 1987).

Lesbian and gay student initiatives to date have been in urban areas, where these students feel most free to be visible and to request services, and where opposition to support is least likely. Also, cities have gay and lesbian service organizations for adults that include youth programs or that lobby boards of education to implement programs.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Studies have shown that gay and lesbian students are far more likely to have been abused or otherwise victimized, abuse substances, prostitute themselves, attempt suicide, and be homeless, than straight youth (Uribe & Harbeck, 1992). Many fear violence and harassment from their peers, and constant anxiety inhibits their ability to learn. Some try to make themselves invisible in school so their homosexuality will not be detected, and as a result, limit their learning experiences. Even gay students without such severe problems have a more difficult adolescence than straight students because they feel even more confined by the pressure to conform, and believe that an essential part of them is being dismissed, despised or deleted from school life (Khayatt, 1994).

Although these factors may cause poor school performance and high dropout rates, lesbian and gay students "are perhaps the most underserved students in the entire educational

system...discrimination often interfere[s] with their personal and academic development" (Uribe, 1994, p. 112).

Homophobia also negatively affects straight students' education in ways that transcend simply the effects of hating. Fear of being considered gay can drive them to embrace narrowly defined and limiting sex roles. The decision about whether to participate in sports--real guys must; real girls won't--is a prime example (Grayson, 1987).

OPPOSITION TO EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Many policy makers oppose presenting homosexuality in a positive way, or even mentioning it at all, in school. Locally, groups have been quite effective in stopping school efforts to teach positively about homosexuality, or even to provide information about it. The most publicized example is the successful campaign against the New York City Rainbow Curriculum for elementary grades. Around the country, an increasing number of school board candidates are emphasizing their opposition to education on homosexuality in their campaigns.

POLICIES

Laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination against specific groups not only provide penalties for violators, but also dignify the existence of those groups and suggest that the climate is not sympathetic to people who express bigotry in even legally protected ways. There have been some government initiatives to protect the rights of lesbian and gay students (and sometimes teachers) in particular, a sampling of which is provided below. Some school districts and schools have developed specific policies, but local antidiscrimination legislation and policies that protect gays overall also protect gay students.

At the Federal level, activity has largely consisted of court decisions, which have generally been narrow, and apply only to districts in which the court is located. An early decision in Rhode Island (*Fricke v. Lynch*, 1980) can be considered one of the most radical: it allowed two men to attend their senior prom as a couple (Dutile, 1986).

A Wisconsin law, the first statewide legislation of its kind, mandates that every public school district adopt and disseminate a policy prohibiting bias, stereotyping, and harassment. Nevertheless, state support for lesbian and gay students has been limited to workshops for counselors and distribution of a pamphlet describing the policy and materials from private organizations.

Massachusetts has established the only statewide Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. Its first report reviewed the lives of Massachusetts lesbian and gay adolescents and presented a comprehensive set of recommendations that became the basis of the Massachusetts Department of Education's Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, which includes workshops for school people and students (Governor's Commission, 1993).

One of the seven Los Angeles Unified School District commissions is devoted to gay and lesbian education. It makes recommendations to the Board of Education on meeting the needs of lesbian and gay students.

PROGRAMS

Urban schools around the country have implemented many different types of programs both to help lesbian and gay students feel included and respected and to educate other students about homosexuality and the achievements of gays throughout history.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Groups help lesbian and gay students, both those who are out and those who do not publicly acknowledge their orientation, overcome their fear and isolation, and encourage them to remain in school (Lipkin, 1992). Their services include counseling, peer support, health information (including safer sex), and referrals. Since some teens are estranged from their families, housing and legal services may also be provided. Some groups work with families and do antibias training with teachers. Groups can be funded by the government and/or private sources, and work city-wide (e.g., Hetrick-Martin Institute, New York; Project 10, Los Angeles; University of Minnesota Youth and AIDS Project, St. Paul) or in a single school (Project 10 East, Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge). The Bridges Project is a national network of groups serving lesbian and gay youth.

CURRICULUM

Like all efforts to increase the multiculturalism in curricula, infusing information about homosexuality can be done in several ways, as appropriate for grade level (Hart & Parmeter, 1992): portraying lesbians, gays, and bisexuals matter-of-factly; using neutral language to describe lesbians and gays; identifying lesbians and gays of accomplishment; gay and lesbian literature courses; and gay studies courses.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

School staff is crucial to establishing and maintaining a climate where lesbian and gay students feel safe and able to learn. Staff, therefore, may receive training that includes: basic information and about homosexuality and the needs of gay students, crisis intervention and violence prevention strategies, and appropriate responses to expressions of homophobia.

Several gay service organizations offer staff development activities and materials. The National Education Association (NEA) offers its members (especially those unfamiliar with homosexuality) two workshops for dealing sensitively with colleagues and students. NEA also responds to requests from its locals with referrals on materials, speakers, and additional trainers.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS

One school especially for lesbian and gay students has been in operation nearly a decade: the

Harvey Milk High School in New York City, a joint project of the Board of Education and Hetrick-Martin. Its purpose is to provide a supportive environment for students who were on the verge of dropping out of traditional school. Another high school, the EAGLES Center in Los Angeles, has been operating for two years (Project 10 Handbook, 1993).

OTHER EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Districts and schools that want to provide a supportive environment for lesbian and gay students and educate straight students about homosexuality, without necessarily implementing a full-scale program and without adding significantly to their budgets, can choose from the following list of suggestions:

- Include gays and lesbians in non-discrimination policies, and expressions of homophobia on the list of prohibited behaviors in the school policy manual.
- Offer support and protection for teachers who come out so lesbian and gay students can have role models and a source of support.
- Give organizations of lesbian and gay students the same privileges as other groups, and allow same-sex couples to attend events.
- Create an atmosphere where students can feel free to reject sex stereotyped roles.
- Provide anti-bias and violence prevention training that includes self-protection strategies.
- Include books on homosexuality, both informational and fiction, in the library.

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RESOURCES

Bridges Project of the American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Gay and Lesbian High School Curriculum and Staff Development Project, Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 210 Longfellow Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Hetrick-Martin Institute, 2 Astor Place, New York, NY 10003.

Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, 320 W. Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

National Education Association, Human and Civil Rights Division, 1201 16 St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Project 10, 7850 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046.

Project 10 East, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Sex Equity Program, Equity and Multicultural Education Section, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, PO Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707.

University of Minnesota Youth and AIDS Project, Wingspan, 100 N. Oxford St., St. Paul, MN 55104.

Interventions for Assisting Sexual Minority Students



- **School Policy and Educational Issues**
 - Tips for Administrators
 - We are all Equal

TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Because of the current high visibility of gay and lesbian issues, administrators will at some time probably have to face a variety of related situations. Examples include:

- Teachers and/or students coming out of the closet
- Discussions of gay and lesbian issues in classrooms
- Staff/students wanting to put up a display case around gay and lesbian issues
- Teachers putting up a poster in their classrooms Counselors/teachers putting up hotline numbers including those of gay and lesbian community centers
- Requests for speakers representing the gay and lesbian community
- Protests against ROTC programs or military recruiters on campus
- Instances of harassment against gay/lesbian teachers and students
- Same-sex couples wanting to go to the prom
- Lesbian or gay parents

The suggestions that follow have been drawn from real life scenarios and hopefully will be helpful.

- Administrators should have a firm policy of nondiscrimination at their school site.
- Harassment against gay/lesbian teachers or students should not be tolerated; whether it is between students, students and teachers or among teachers themselves.
- Disclosing one's sexual orientation is a right that most teachers and students have if they choose to exercise it. Administration should respect this right, and protect both staff and students from a hostile environment to the extent that they can.
- Court cases have generally upheld the right of same sex couples to attend school dances as long as their behavior is not disruptive. The conventional wisdom is "*don't make a big issue out of it*".
- *Discussing gay and lesbian issues in a classroom is not* the same as having a lesson on sex or reproduction as some people charge. Teachers should be careful that the classroom discussion does not lapse into sexually explicit conversation.
- If a parent complaint should arise, ask them to put their complaint in writing, specifically stating their objections and the reasons for them. The administrator can then, calmly but firmly, review the complaint in view of the suggestions mentioned above.

THE RIGHTS OF LESBIAN AND GAY STUDENTS

Q. Does the right of association under the Constitution extend to lesbian and gay student organizations at state-supported colleges and universities?

A. Yes

Q. Does freedom of association for gay students and gay student organizations extend to public high schools?

A. Yes. High school students, like college students, have a presumptive right to freedom of association and freedom of speech that is protected under the Constitution. Students have a right to exercise their freedom of expression on any issue, however controversial, so long as their expression does not "materially and substantially" disrupt the work and discipline of the school.

Q. If a high school allows non-curricular clubs, must it also allow a lesbian and gay rights group?

A. Yes, In addition to the constitutionally based free speech claim that such a group would have, a federal law passed in 1984 prohibits a public high school that already allows non curriculum related student groups to meet on school premises from discriminating against other students who wish to have meetings based on the "religious, political, philosophical or other content" of their speech.

Q. Can a public high school forbid participation by openly gay students in general student activities?

A. Presumptively not, although the law is undeveloped. A federal district court judge ruled that a gay male student in Rhode Island was entitled to take another male to the school prom as his date. The court accepted his argument that the proposed conduct constituted "symbolic speech" under the First Amendment and ordered the principal to permit the student and his date to attend. In reaching this decision, the court upheld the principle that lesbian and gay students are entitled to the same benefits and access to student activities as other students.

(Source: ACLU Handbook, Third Edition, c 1992)

Excerpts from:
Getting Real Online
<http://www.gettingreal.asn.au/teach/supporting.htm>



WE ARE ALL EQUAL

Schools have an obligation to make sure that they support all students equally. There are a number of ways we can make sure that schools in our communities extend this support to same sex attracted young people who attend them.

This can range from the responsibility of governments to investigate the conditions for same sex attracted students and staff through public hearings that allow the needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered young people, their families and school staff to be heard - to the establishment of school based support groups aimed at young people themselves.

Other strategies include the development of policies that protect same sex attracted students and staff from harassment, violence and discrimination. Schools should also investigate the extension of partnership benefits to homosexual employees on par with heterosexual staff

Schools can also provide personnel training for all staff on violence prevention, suicide prevention and specifically the needs and problems faced by same sex attracted youth. Schools can also investigate the provision of safe environments in schools for minority groups. This could be augmented by the establishment of support groups for same sex attracted young people. In the United States this has included the development of Gay-Straight Alliances, where heterosexual and homosexual students come together to celebrate diversity.

While most schools provide counseling and social work services to students, it is important that these services be relevant to same sex attracted youth, and that students know that it is safe to discuss sexual orientation with counseling staff.

Schools can support this free flow of information by ensuring that school and community libraries are encouraged to develop and maintain a collection of books, videos, journals, magazines, posters and other information on sexuality issues. Schools can augment this by including accurate, honest and age-appropriate information on gay, bisexual, transgendered and lesbian issues across the curriculum. This can include the use of same sex attracted guest speakers across school programs. These people can provide positive role models to students, as can gay, lesbian and bisexual staff.

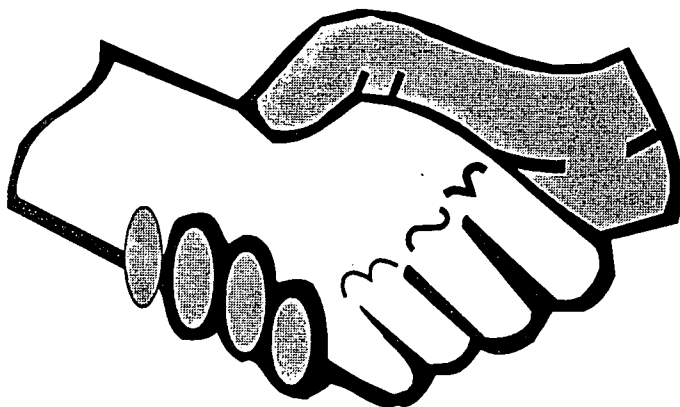
Most importantly, teachers can become allies to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth. They can do this by attending queer community and cultural events and displaying posters which provide positive messages.

Staff can also use their role in the school to interrupt homophobic jokes and comments by both staff and students. They can reorient their own language and avoid generalizations about same sex attracted people. This can include using inclusive, affirming, or gender-neutral language when talking about sexuality in class. Teachers should also remember to think about the way their language affects the young people who may be questioning their sexuality in their classes.

Interventions for Assisting Sexual Minority Students

□ School Programs and Gay-Straight Alliances

- Project 10
- Gay/Straight Clubs Formed by Public School Students: Why School Officials Need to Treat Them Equally
- Gay/Straight Alliances: A Student Guide



Excerpts from:
Project 10: Support Services to Gay, Lesbian and Questioning Youth
<http://www.project10.org/>

PROJECT 10 BACKGROUND

Lesbian and gay youth are an underserved minority within the educational system. Because their existence is less visible than those minorities based on skin color, national heritage or religion, they are often ignored. In addition, their status as a stigmatized group places them at considerable risk within the institutional homophobia of the educational system. A major study of the ten largest school districts in the United States, undertaken by Dr. Virginia Uribe in 1986, offered compelling evidence that lesbian/gay teenagers are treated as invisible or as objects of hate and bigotry within the schools. The net result of this unchallenged discrimination is that the dropout rate for lesbian/gay teenagers is disproportionately high in comparison to their statistical incidence in the general population.

PROJECT 10

PROJECT 10 is an on-site counseling program organized in 1984 in response to the unmet needs of adolescent lesbian/gays in the educational system. Begun at Fairfax High School, a campus within the Los Angeles Unified School District, PROJECT 10 has become a model program for Los Angeles and other school districts. The focus of the model is education, reduction of verbal and physical abuse, suicide prevention and accurate AIDS information,

PROJECT 10 is committed to keeping students in school, off drugs and sexually responsible. Studies have long documented the correlation between low self-esteem and high-risk behavior. Thus, PROJECT 10 attempts to improve self-esteem among lesbian/gay youth by providing accurate information and non-judgmental counseling on issues of sexual orientation. PROJECT 10 also is of benefit to the non-gay population in that the program furthers one of the missions of public education, which is to teach children how to live peacefully in an increasingly diverse society.

PROJECT 10 is often characterized, incorrectly, as a lesbian/gay program. As a result, discussions of PROJECT 10 often become discussions of homosexuality. PROJECT 10 is best described as a dropout prevention program, and the methods involved in its implementation are much the same as other dropout prevention programs. The only difference is in the target group, lesbian/gay youth, a group that has been traditionally underserved by the educational system.

Services of PROJECT 10 include workshops and training sessions for administrators and staff personnel, informal drop-in counseling for students at Fairfax and other school sites, outreach to parents and significant others, liaison with peer counseling, substance abuse and suicide prevention programs, and coordination with health education programs that encourage sexual responsibility and risk-reduction behavior among lesbian/gay and bisexual youth.

THE PROJECT 10 MODEL

1. A district resource center.
2. A coordinator for the program.
3. On-going workshops to train counselors, teachers and other staff members on the issues of institutional homophobia and the special needs of lesbian and gay youth.
4. Development of trained on-site school teams to whom students can go for information and support.
5. Assistance to librarians in developing fiction and non-fiction materials on gay/ lesbian subjects.
6. Enforcement of non-discrimination clauses, anti-slur resolutions, and codes of behavior with regard to name-calling.
7. Advocacy for lesbian and gay student rights through commissions, task forces, PTA's and community outreach programs.
8. Networking with community agencies, parents, educational organizations and teacher's unions.

Excerpts from:
Lesbian & Gay Rights: American Civil Liberties Union Freedom Network
<http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/equalacc.html>

Gay/Straight Clubs Formed by Public School Students:

Why School Officials Need to Treat Them Equally

Lawyers at the American Civil Liberties Union Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights developed this document along with other concerned citizens fighting bans on gay/straight alliances in Utah and in Glendale, California. We encourage you to use this document if faced with similar proposals in your community. For further help, contact any one of the above organizations.

I. SCHOOLS SHOULD BE SETTING AN EXAMPLE OF RESPECT FOR THE CONSTITUTION AND OUR NATION'S LAWS.

One reason we have public schools is to teach young people how to become good citizens. Part of that teaching centers on respect for and appreciation of the United States Constitution. The legal requirement that school officials not discriminate against any non-curriculum related student club because of the message or subject matter of that club reinforces for students one of our most cherished and important constitutional principles -- government may not interfere with freedom of speech or association simply because the content of a group's or individual's expression is controversial or unpopular.

The First Amendment and the federal Equal Access Act (20 U.S.C. §§4071-4074) establish this requirement of equal treatment for all non-curriculum related clubs. A secondary school that provides a meeting place during non-instructional time for any voluntary, student-initiated club is required by law to provide the same meeting facilities for all non-curriculum related groups.

The school is thus facilitating an "open forum" for student group activities. As the Equal Access Act itself emphasizes, schools do not endorse the views or activities of any of the groups they allow to meet on campus; instead, they create a forum for the students to discuss the issues the students choose.

Banning certain clubs because students' views are unconventional or unpopular guts the very point of the First Amendment and the Equal Access Act. The Constitution and this federal statute would not be needed if only majority, well-established views were allowed to be heard.

By honoring the core principles of the Constitution and the Equal Access Act, schools set an example of respect for the law and for freedom of expression.

II. SCHOOLS SHOULD PROMOTE STUDENT CLUBS AS PART OF DEVELOPING FUTURE GOOD CITIZENS AND HEALTHY MEMBERS OF OUR SOCIETY.

Student clubs are a valuable part of teenagers' junior high and high school experiences. By creating a forum for voluntary, student-initiated clubs that meet on school grounds when classes are not in session, school officials give teenagers the opportunity to learn how to create and run an organization, how to plan political, social, cultural, religious, or recreational activities, and how to get along and interact productively with one another.

Abolishing all non-curriculum related student clubs just because a club with a controversial political or religious perspective has been established would be a tragedy for and disservice to all students.

III. GAY/STRAIGHT STUDENT CLUBS BENEFIT THE STUDENTS WHO FORM THEM AND THE STUDENTS WHO LATER BECOME MEMBERS.

Gay/straight alliances and similar student groups that teenagers form to address sexual orientation issues should be treated just like any other student-initiated groups. As with other groups, meetings at school during non-instructional times provide a safe, central place for students with similar concerns and interests to gather.

By junior high and high school, students are becoming aware of their own sexuality. They are also aware of sexual orientation issues, both in the political sphere and more personally. Sexual orientation is daily made an issue: by school activities, such as dances and other social events; by cultural influences, such as television; and by more informal interactions that presume heterosexuality and a growing interest of teenagers in those of a different sex. Thus, gay/straight alliances do not introduce sexual orientation concerns to students -- instead, they provide helpful forums for students to discuss already-developing personal and political concerns with one another.

Schools should not ban these helpful forums for discussion. Doing so takes a difficult adolescent experience and introduces more fear and confusion.

IV. GAY/STRAIGHT STUDENT CLUBS ALSO BENEFIT THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

Anti-gay harassment and violence are particularly prevalent in schools and among teenagers. Hearings on the issue have occurred in Kansas, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Texas. Perhaps the most common way today for young people to disparage one another is to call a peer a "faggot" or a "dyke." A disproportionate amount of the widespread physical violence against gay men and lesbians, of all ages, is committed by teenage boys.

Gay/straight alliances help combat an atmosphere of verbal and physical harassment by explicitly condemning the bigotry as an organized group of students, or by simply providing an opportunity for the discussion of different student perspectives on such anti-gay incidents.

Students talking to fellow students is a particularly effective way of making young people aware of the harms caused by discrimination and violence.

V. SCHOOLS SHOULD ADDRESS ANTI-GAY ABUSE BY DISCIPLINING THE ABUSERS, NOT BY BANNING MEETINGS BY THOSE WHO ARE ABUSED.

When acts of anti-gay harassment, particularly physical violence, occur in the schools, administrators should respond promptly to take action against the perpetrators and to support the students who have been harassed. Providing a safe, welcoming school environment for all students is one of the core responsibilities of public school officials.

Incidents of, or the potential for, anti-gay violence do not provide a reason for forbidding gay/straight alliances or similar groups. Such a "blame the victim" argument is often made by those who do not want to face up to the ugly bigotry of gay harassment and do not want to take appropriate action against victimizers.

Voluntary gay/straight alliances among students are part of the solution, not part of the problem of anti-gay violence. If schools treat the alliances as the problem, they are teaching all students that might makes right, and that the school's lessons about respecting others are not meant to be taken seriously.

VI. GAY AND LESBIAN TEENS SUFFER BECAUSE OF ANTI-GAY PREJUDICE, NOT BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE.

Teen years are a stressful time of rapid development into adulthood. That passage can be especially stressful for young people beginning to realize their gay, lesbian or bisexual orientation, because they face anti-gay prejudice. If youth wondering about their sexual orientation or coming to terms with a gay or bisexual orientation are isolated from supportive peers and adults, those youth will often suffer from lack of self-esteem and self-worth and may tend toward self-destructive behavior, including drug use and suicide. Isolated gay youth have a hard time concentrating on their education, leading many to drop out.

Such problems develop not because homosexuality or bisexuality is a pathology – for these are merely normal variations in human sexual orientation. Rather, isolated youth dealing with sexual orientation issues internalize the prevailing anti-gay sentiments in schools and in society and, based on little information, often judge themselves extremely harshly.

Student groups help diminish feelings of isolation and help build self-esteem for their members. Student-initiated group discussions, social events, and political organizing are a safe and healthy means of working through what for many is otherwise a difficult and alienating time.

VII. GAY-RELATED CLUBS DO NOT PROMOTE SEX, NOR DO THEY FOSTER ADOLESCENT SEXUALITY ANY MORE THAN HETEROSEXUALLY-ORIENTED TEENAGE ACTIVITIES DO.

Contrary to the wholly unsubstantiated arguments of opponents, gay/straight alliances do not cause young people to become involved in sexual activity earlier than they otherwise would, or to "choose" a sexual orientation that would otherwise not be their orientation.

A student club focusing on sexual orientation issues no more causes sexual activity than do student clubs such as a glee club, a math club, or a Young Republican club. All clubs, and many other circumstances, bring teenagers together to meet and get to know one another, sometimes leading to dating and other appropriate adolescent socializing. That is far from, however, bringing about sexual intercourse before a young person is ready. If schools sponsor athletic exhibitions, cheerleading, dances and proms without concerns about promoting sex, it is difficult to see how allowing a gay-straight student alliance to meet for discussions would promote sex.

Any decision about actually beginning to be sexually active is made by each individual, based on many highly personal factors. Rather than playing a harmful role, gay/straight alliances and similar groups dedicated to learning about sexual orientation assist youth in making intelligent choices about their present and future behavior. If students can talk openly about and feel good about their identity, they will be less likely to feel that they have to discover their identity in an uninformed and clandestine manner, which may involve risky sexual behavior. Instead, they will be informed and secure enough to make good decisions, which may include abstinence.

VIII. SCHOOLS DO NOT CREATE HETEROSEXUAL OR HOMOSEXUAL STUDENT IDENTITIES.

There is no empirical support for the notion, advanced by some who oppose the open and truthful discussion of sexuality, that some adolescents are "waverers" and can be influenced during their teenage years to adopt a heterosexual, rather than a gay or bisexual orientation. While adolescents only gradually come to realize their sexual nature and their sexual orientation, and may go through a period of not being sure of their personal make-up, this gradual realization of an aspect of their identity certainly does not mean that sexual orientation is open to manipulation by the policies of school officials. Sexual orientation is a very deep-seated personal characteristic that appears to be fixed by early childhood and determined by the complex interaction of genetic, biological, psychological, and environmental forces. Even if manipulation were possible, moreover, a government plan to change such a central aspect of individuals' personalities would be an unprecedented, Orwellian interference with individual liberty.

IX. NO PARTICULAR SEXUAL ORIENTATION CAN BE EQUATED WITH CRIMINALIZED SEXUAL ACTS.

No particular sexual orientation can be equated with particular sexual acts that are criminalized in some states and often referred to under the catch-all term: "sodomy." Sodomy, typically defined to include oral and anal sex, describes conduct in which adults of all sexual orientations may engage; indeed, studies show that virtually all Americans, whether gay or straight, participate in one or both of those sexual behaviors during their adult years. By contrast, sexual orientation concerns the gender of the sexual partners one is attracted to. One's orientation can be felt, acknowledged and discussed without any sexual behavior, whether sodomy or otherwise, taking place.

Thus, discouraging the open discussion of homosexuality or bisexuality among teenagers cannot be justified with some sweeping reference to "criminality" or "criminal behavior," as those who would discourage gay/straight alliances and similar groups attempt to do.

X. GAY/STRAIGHT STUDENT CLUBS ARE NOT THE ONLY STUDENT GROUPS THAT MIGHT ADDRESS HOMOSEXUALITY OR SEXUALITY IN GENERAL.

Gay/straight alliances are not the only student clubs that discuss issues related to sexual orientation or sexuality more generally. Religious clubs may discuss their religious perspective on gay men and lesbians, which might be supportive or antagonistic. Political clubs may discuss the current debates about same-sex marriage, or gays in the military, again from a positive or negative perspective. The science club may delve into the scientific research around the origins of sexual orientation. All contribute to a vibrant "open forum" of safe, after-school activity.

The proper role for school officials, as mandated by the First Amendment and the Equal Access Act, is to remain neutral in this student-initiated debate, investigation and discussion. Schools cannot deem a perspective of some students' "dangerous" and ban those students' views to "protect" young people. The notion of silencing dangerous ideas is incompatible with our free political system. Though teachers and others of course must look out for students' physical well-being, that protective role cannot extend to policing the content of student-to-student communication.

XI. SCHOOLS RETAIN ALL CONTROL OVER THE CURRICULUM AT THE SAME TIME AS THEY ENCOURAGE AND MAINTAIN AN OPEN FORUM FOR STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS.

Student-initiated groups that meet on school grounds during non-instructional time are separate and distinct from the curriculum. The groups at issue are not school-sponsored or -endorsed; they represent only the interests and views of the students involved.

School boards, officials and teachers, on the other hand, remain free to design and implement a curriculum that they determine best meets students' educational needs. Neither the federal Equal Access Act nor gay/straight alliances interfere in any way with schools' ability to focus the content of the curriculum as they see fit.

For further help, contact the following:

American Civil Liberties Union:

ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project
132 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036

ACLU of Northern California
1663 Mission Street, Suite 460, San Francisco, CA 94103

ACLU of Utah
9 Exchange Place, Suite 715, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.:

National Headquarters
666 Broadway, Suite 1200, New York, NY 10012

Midwest Regional Office
17 East Monroe, Suite 212, Chicago, IL 60603

Western Regional Office
6030 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA 90036

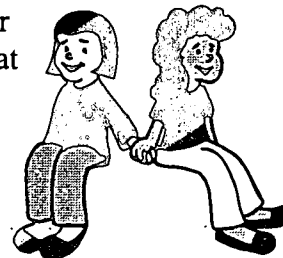
National Center for Lesbian Rights:

870 Market Street, Suite 570, San Francisco, CA 94102

Excerpts from:
Massachusetts Department of Education
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lss/GSA/default.htm>

10 Easy Steps to Starting a Gay/Straight Alliance in Your School

Here's a step-by-step plan for starting a Gay/Straight Alliance in your school. This is not a rigid schedule. Some of these steps can happen at the same time. Be flexible, but be sure you plan carefully and thoroughly.



Step One: Follow Guidelines

Establish a Gay/Straight Alliance in the same way as you would establish any other group or club at your school. In your Student Handbook, there should be a section detailing the procedure for forming a club or group. Follow those guidelines. In some schools, this may mean that you have to get written permission from an administrator. In other schools, this may mean that you simply have to put up flyers announcing the first meeting and find a faculty member to act as your group advisor. Schools sometimes have rules about where and when you can post flyers, make announcements or set up information tables. Learn what the policy is at your school.

Step Two: Enlist the Support of Your Administration

It is important to inform the school administration about your plans to establish a Gay/Straight Alliance. Having an administrator on your side can be very useful. They can help you to arrange Days of Awareness, speakers for school assemblies, teacher trainings and other events. They can work as liaisons to the community and school committee. Explain why you want to form a Gay/Straight Alliance by doing the following:

- Set up a meeting with your principal, superintendent and other students, teachers and community representatives.
- Offer copies of the Federal Equal Access Act and the State Anti-discrimination Law. (The Safe Schools Program can provide you with copies.)
- Offer them a copy of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth Education Report.
- Encourage them to speak with other administrators who work at schools that have formed Gay/Straight Alliances. (See Appendix for names and numbers.)
- Ask if they would like to speak with a representative from the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students.
- Encourage them to speak with P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) members from your town.

Step Three: Find a Faculty Advisor

Some Gay/Straight Alliances have advisors who are teachers, others have faculty advisors who are guidance counselors, nurses or librarians. Just like student members of a group, the faculty advisors don't have to be gay identified to be part of the group. Many existing groups have

straight allies as advisors. How do you pick a faculty advisor? Ask a teacher or staff member whom you think would be receptive.

You can encourage them to be your advisor by doing the following:

- Explain to them what issues the group might address and why you think the group would be an important addition to your school.
- Offer them a copy of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth Education Report, this Resource Guide, phone numbers and names of faculty advisors at other schools (listed in the Appendix), and the phone number for the Department of Education Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students, (617) 338-3300 ext. 389.

Step Four: Inform Guidance Counselors and School Social Workers about the Group

Guidance staff may know students that you don't know who would be interested in attending meetings. They may be able to encourage students who are dealing with these issues to attend the group, whether they are questioning their own sexuality, know someone who is gay or lesbian, or are interested in issues affecting gays and lesbians. It can be useful to invite school social workers and guidance counselors to come to meetings to help facilitate discussions about difficult issues like "talking to your parents about homosexuality," "coming out to friends and family" or "supporting a friend or relative who is gay." The meetings may also bring up issues that students will want to discuss in greater detail with a supportive adult.

Step Five: Pick a Meeting Place

If possible, find a classroom or spot in your school that is off the beaten track. At first, students may feel a little nervous or uncomfortable about attending a meeting. They may feel worried that others will harass them or make assumptions about their sexual orientation if they join the group. It is important to acknowledge that being gay or being perceived to be gay or even being a supportive straight ally can put someone at risk for harassment. Try to find a meeting spot that gives members a sense of security and privacy. Some groups meet in rooms that require anyone who's interested in what's happening inside to walk into the room. This makes it impossible for students to hang around outside, spying on the meetings. Some groups have met off-campus because they thought it would be safer. However, you should check your school policies about off-campus meetings.

Nellie Zupanic, from Newtonville, said that her group meets at lunch time. "It's a good time because most people are around and free then." She also added, "It's a good idea to make it as clear as possible that straight people are also welcome at meetings to reduce the assumptions that are made, if for no other reason."

Step Six: Advertise

Advertising the formation of the group is one of the first important steps you can take to fight discrimination in your school. For some students, seeing the words Gay or Lesbian on a poster can be the first time they feel that there are other people like them in their world. Some of these

students may be questioning their own sexual orientation, or someone close to them may be gay. These students may never even attend a meeting, but seeing the posters may give them a great deal of comfort knowing there are other people in their school addressing these issues, or that there are other people who feel the same way as they do.

The posters can also spark campus-wide discussions. Traditionally there has been silence around issues of sexual orientation. Fear, ignorance and misinformation can make discussing homosexuality a frightening experience. Putting up posters can be the springboard to beginning conversations. The posters may give people a reason to bring up their own feelings, questions or thoughts about homosexuality. Of course, not all these feelings will be positive or supportive. However, breaking the silence is often the first step a school takes in educating people about these issues and addressing the myths and the questions people have about homosexuality.

Don't be discouraged if the posters are defaced or torn down.

Almost all groups have had this experience. Keep putting them back up. The longer you persist, the less often they will be defaced. Josh Bennett-Johnson, a student in the Concord-Carlisle alliance SPECTRUM, reported he was "in the lunch room and a guy started taking down one of our posters. We said 'Don't do that. Leave it there.' And he did." Pauline Pease, another student from SPECTRUM, said, "At first the posters were shredded and torn down. But now I haven't seen any ripped down and every time I walk by this one poster I put up months ago, I'm amazed it's still there."

Noah Rubin, a student from Concord Academy, said that they put up a poster that said "One in Ten People is Gay" and someone came along and scribbled anonymously, "That means 90% of us are normal." The group made an announcement: "We cannot deal with people that don't have the guts to sign their names." No more homophobic graffiti like that has been encountered since.

What to include in your posters:

- State the meeting time and location.
- Describe what the group does, what meetings are like.
- Highlight that Everyone is Welcome!
- Keep the posters positive.

Donna Georges from Amesbury High School recommends using, "language [on the posters] that is encouraging and supportive."

Brookline High School's Gay/Straight Alliance recommends putting up posters in as many places as possible so if they get torn down, there are still some up. Also, go back and replace the ones that disappear. One Gay/Straight Alliance assumed the monitoring of posters as their group's first activity. You might also want to put some posters in a safe place. Boston Latin used grant money from their Safe Schools mini-grant to buy a glass case that couldn't be broken into. They put posters and announcements about the group in the case.

Step Seven: Get Snacks

Providing food at your meeting is a great idea. Food gives people something to do with their hands. It is a good icebreaker. It gives them something they can share with each other. It can give people an excuse to come to meetings: "I was hungry, so I just thought I'd stop by and get a handful of cheese curls...." Food also makes meetings fun. People can take turns bringing food and this makes meetings more communal.

Step Eight: Hold Your Meeting

Now that you have a faculty advisor, food, a meeting spot and posters advertising your group, you're ready to actually hold the meeting. Some groups begin with a discussion about why they feel having such a group is important. You may want to conduct group-building exercises or see a movie.

(For additional ideas see the Top 10 List of Suggestions for Awesome Meetings.)

Step Nine: Establish Ground Rules

Some ground rules that other groups have established include:

- No one will make any assumptions about members' sexual orientations.
- Confidentiality will be maintained. It may be hard or impossible to ensure that people don't talk about things brought up in the group, but names or identities should never be revealed.
- You must be respectful of each other, but you don't have to be politically correct all the time.
- Respect each other and realize that everyone is learning about the issue. It's okay to say something that may sound homophobic. Learn why it is problematic.
- Faculty advisors participate on an equal basis with students. Faculty may help encourage discussion or participation, but they are not there to teach or lead the group. They are there as participants.

Step Ten: Plan for the Future

You may want to write out an outline of goals that you would like to work towards for the future. A group in Worcester made an assessment plan and an action plan. The former included various ways to assess the climate of their school and determine what work needed to be accomplished in the future. The latter was a list of goals for their future, which led to community building activities like going to the Gay Pride Parade and to a movie.

References and Resources

- References
- Agencies, Organizations, and Internet Sites
- Consultation Cadre
- A Few Other Related Documents in our Clearinghouse



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School Policy and Educational Issues

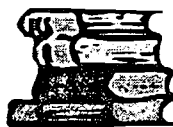
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AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND ONLINE RESOURCES RELATED TO SEXUAL MINORITY STUDENTS

Books and Other Educational Resources



Be Yourself: Questions and Answers for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth

http://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/org/glb/brochure_be_yourself.html

This site contains a brochure developed by Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc. (PFLAG) with information and support for sexual minority youth.

Equity Resources @ Queen's Faculty of Education – Homophobia Report

http://educ.queensu.ca/~equity/books/homophobia_report.html

This page has been established to provide education students and educators easy access to the equity resources available within the Faculty of Education: the Education Library, the Teacher Resource Centre, and the Aboriginal Education Resource Centre. The books and audio/visual materials that have been included within this database address issues of racism, aboriginal issues, classism, gender equity, homophobia, and harassment/violence in schools, and suggests for teachers both short and long-term interventions.

Just the Facts about Sexual Orientation & Youth: A Primer for Principals, Educators & School Personnel

<http://www.glsen.org/pages/sections/news/alerts/rep.html>

This booklet of information for educators can be downloaded directly from the GLSEN website.

National Youth Advocacy Coalition – Resources/Bibliography

<http://www.nyacyouth.org/resources-biblio.html>

The mission of National Youth Advocacy Coalition is to advocate for and with young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well being.

Preventing Youth Hate Crime: A Manual for Schools and Communities

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crs/pubs/prevyouthatecrim.htm>

This site contains a manual for addressing hate crimes in schools and provides methods and resources for preventing such violence.

Terrence Higgins Trust – Teaching & Information Packs, Reading List

http://www.tht.org.uk/gaymen/homophobia/info_teacher_schools.htm

Terrence Higgins Trust is Europe's leading HIV/AIDS charity. We deliver health promotion campaigns and direct support to people who are at risk or living with HIV across the UK, especially people from the African community and gay men and the people close to them. Our services are in demand now more than ever.

Youth Books from Amazon & CompaqPLUS

<http://www.ziplink.net/~glen/compaqplus/books/youth.html>

Agencies and Organizations

About.com – The Human Internet

<http://gaylesissues.about.com/newsissues/gaylesissues/cs/youth/index.htm>

This site offers information about gay and lesbian issues in general and issues of sexual minority youth in particular. "Sexuality and orientation don't neatly wait for us until we're of "legal" age. Here are thoughts and resources for the younger set."



American Psychological Association

Answers to Your Questions about Sexual Orientation and Homosexuality

<http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/answers.html>

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

APA Books – Gay and Lesbian Issues: Abstracts of the Psychological and Behavioral Literature, 1985-1996

<http://www.apa.org/books/4319210t.html>

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

APA Guidelines for Psychotherapy with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Clients

<http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/guidelines.html>

This site contains 16 guidelines for psychotherapy with sexual minority clients and covers topics such as “Attitudes Toward Homosexuality and Bisexuality,” “Relationships and Families,” “Issues of Diversity,” and “Education.”

APA Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns

<http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc>

This site is the home page for the APA’s Public Interest Directorate on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns. It provides links to the office, the Committee for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns, other APA Divisions, State Psychological Associations, Policy and Advocacy, and Publications and Other Resources.

APA Monitor Online – “Healthy Schools” project hoped to ease discrimination

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug99/as5.html>

This site contains an article about the collaborative efforts of APA and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a Healthy Schools Project for Lesbian and Gay Students.

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

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

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

Gaygate

<http://www.gaygate.com/orgs2.shtml>

This site provides a list of national organizations for sexual minority people, as well as information about current news and events related to sexual minority issues.

Getting Real Association

<http://www.gettingreal.asn.au/teach/default.htm>

This site provides information about sexual minority youth in schools and steps schools can take to be supportive of all students.

GLSEN: The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network

<http://www.glsen.org/>

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

OutProud!

<http://www.outproud.org/>

This site provides information about OutProud, The National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Youth. It contains information about advocacy, resources, and support. OutProud is also intended to provide outreach and support to sexual minority teens by helping them find local sources of friendship and support.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)

<http://www.pflag.org/>

This site provides information for people who wish to support sexual minority people and contains information about local chapters, resources, safe schools, hate crimes, and much more.

The P.E.R.S.O.N. PROJECT: Public Education Regarding Sexual Orientation Nationally
An Activist Network Advocating for LGBT Inclusive Curricular Policies

<http://www.youth.org/loco/PERSONProject/>

The P.E.R.S.O.N. Project is an informal, national network of organizations and individuals working to ensure that fair, accurate, and unbiased information regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and about the nature of diversity of sexual orientation is presented to America's youth as part of public school education.

Project 10

<http://www.project10.org/>

PROJECT 10 is the nation's first public school program dedicated to providing ON-SITE educational support services to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. PROJECT 10 began in 1984 at Fairfax High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. This web site was developed in order to give teachers, counselors and administrators assistance in providing similar services in their own schools or school districts.

Trans Youth Links

<http://members.tripod.com/~twood/transyouth.html>

This site provides a number of links for transgender youth.

Turn Out! -- Groups

<http://www.turnleft.com/out/groups.html>

This section provides a listing of national organizations related to general sexual minority concerns.

<http://www.turnleft.com/out/issues.html#youth>

This section provides a listing of organizations and websites specifically related to sexual minority youth and schools.

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Consultation Cadre Contacts

Professionals across the country volunteer to network with others to share what they know. Some cadre members run programs, many work directly with youngsters in a variety of settings and focus on a wide range of psychosocial problems. Others are ready to share their expertise on policy, funding, and major system concerns. The group encompasses professionals working in schools, agencies, community organizations, resource centers, clinics and health centers, teaching hospitals, universities and so forth.

People ask how we screen Cadre members. We don't! It's not our role to endorse anyone. We think it's wonderful that so many professionals want to help their colleagues, and our role is to facilitate the networking. If you are willing to offer informal consultation at no charge to colleagues trying to improve systems, programs, and services for addressing barriers to learning, let us know. Our list is growing each day; the following are those currently on file related to this topic. Note: the list is alphabetized by Region and State as an aid in finding a nearby resource.

EAST

Delaware

R. Blaine Morris
Counselor
Middletown Adolescent Health Project
Middletown High School
122 Silver Lake Road
Middletown, DE 19709
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Fax: 302/378-5760

Deanna Mears Pandya
Mental Health Counselor
VNA Wellness Center
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Newark, DE 19702
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Fax: 302/369-1503

New York

Martin Fisher
Chief Division of Adolescent Medicine
North Shore University Hospital
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Phone: 516/773-7669
Fax: 516/773-7675

CENTRAL STATES

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Tech. Teen Clinic of Health Net Inc.
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Phone: 317/226-3929
Fax: 317/226-3504

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SOUTH EAST

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State School Health
Consultant
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Fax: 615/532-8478
Email: jqward@aol.com

Virginia

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NEA Health Information Network
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Fax: 703/739-4070
Email: AOddoneNEAHIN@cs.com

SOUTH WEST

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Michael Pines
Consultant
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L.A. County. Office of Ed.
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Downey, CA 90242-2890
Phone: 562/940-1683
Fax: 562/940-1877
Email: pines_michael@lacoed.edu

Some other Relevant Materials that are in our Center Clearinghouse

We invite those of you who have other materials to share

The mission of the Center is to improve outcomes for young people by enhancing policies, programs, and practices relevant to mental health in schools.

Under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project in the Department of Psychology, our Center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. Specific attention is given to policies and strategies that can counter fragmentation and enhance collaboration between school and community programs.

A partial list...

Buendia Productions (1993). Psychotherapy with gay and lesbian clients.

5 new videos, providing the most comprehensive and up to date production on gay and lesbian issues.

How to obtain it: Buendia Productions, P.O. Box 1869, Santa Ana, CA 92702, Phone: 800/513-1092.

Harbeck, KM (1991). Coming out of the classroom closet.

This book helps educators break their silence and assist teens who are distressed about their sexual preference. It reports on research that documents greater social support and legal protections for gay and lesbian educators.

How to obtain it: Harrington Park Press, 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY 13904-1580.

Friends of Project 10, Inc (1993). Addressing lesbian and gay issues in our schools.

This handbook constitutes a resource directory for teachers, guidance counselors, parents, and school-based adolescent care providers. It provides case examples, discusses families, adolescent sexuality, minority issues, intervention and counseling; and addresses homophobia.

How to obtain it: Friends of Project 10, Inc., 7850 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046, Phone: 213/651-5200 or 818/577-4553.

The Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth (1993). Making schools safer for gay and lesbian youth: Breaking the silence in schools and in families.

In this report, the Commission addresses the problems faced by gay and lesbian adolescents in schools and makes a series of recommendations directly to schools about how to make Massachusetts school environments safe for gay and lesbian students and how to help these young people realized their educational potential.

How to obtain it: The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5023, Phone: 617/388-3300.

Uribe, V (1988). Project Ten – Gay and lesbian outreach brochure.

Project 10 is a counseling program that offers emotional support, information, resources and referral to young people who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual or who want information on the subject of sexual orientation or gay and lesbian issues. This file has a brochure and a handbook.

How to obtain it: Virginia Uribe, coordinator, Project 10 program, Phone: 213/651-5200.

Weiss, CH (1996). Nothing as practical as good theory.

This book chapter explores theory-based evaluation of comprehensive community initiatives for children and families.

How to obtain it: Connel, JB, Kubesch, AC, Schorr, L, and Weiss, CH (1995). New approaches to evaluating community initiatives: Concepts, methods & contexts. Washington DC: The Aspen Institute. Phone for free brochure: 212/697-1261.

To maintain a broad perspective of the reforms needed to address barriers to learning, we organize our thinking and materials around the following three categories:

Systemic Concerns

- Policy issues related to mental health in schools
- Mechanisms and procedures for program/service coordination
 - Collaborative Teams
 - School-community service linkages
 - Cross disciplinary training and interprofessional education
- Comprehensive, integrated programmatic approaches (as contrasted with fragmented, categorical, specialist oriented services)
- Issues related to working in rural, urban, and suburban areas
- Restructuring school support service
 - Systemic change strategies
 - Involving stakeholders in decisions
 - Staffing patterns
 - Financing
 - Evaluation, Quality Assurance
 - Legal Issues
- Professional standards

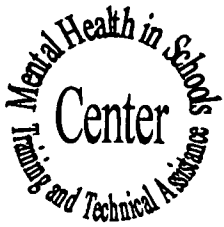
Programs and Process Concerns

- Clustering activities into a cohesive, programmatic approach
 - Support for transitions
 - Mental health education to enhance healthy development & prevent problems
 - Parent/home involvement
 - Enhancing classrooms to reduce referrals (including prereferral interventions)
 - Use of volunteers/trainees
 - Outreach to community
 - Crisis response
 - Crisis and violence prevention (including safe schools)
- Staff capacity building & support
 - Cultural competence
 - Minimizing burnout
- Interventions for student and family assistance
 - Screening/Assessment
 - Enhancing triage & ref. processes
 - Least Intervention Needed
 - Short-term student counseling
 - Family counseling and support
 - Case monitoring/management
 - Confidentiality
 - Record keeping and reporting
 - School-based Clinics

Psychosocial Problems

- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Depression/suicide
- Grief
- Dropout prevention
- Gangs
- School adjustment (including newcomer acculturation)
- Pregnancy prevention/support
- Eating problems (anorexia, bulim.)
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Gender and sexuality
- Self-esteem
- Relationship problems
- Anxiety
- Disabilities
- Reactions to chronic illness
- Learning, attention & behavior problems

Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA
Howard Adelman & Linda Taylor, Co-Directors



The *Center for Mental Health in Schools* operates under the auspices of the School Mental Health Project at UCLA.* It is one of two *national centers* concerned with mental health in schools that are funded in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Office of Adolescent Health.

The UCLA Center approaches mental health and psychosocial concerns from the broad perspective of addressing barriers to learning and promoting healthy development. In particular, it focuses on comprehensive, multifaceted models and practices to deal with the many external and internal barriers that interfere with development, learning, and teaching. Specific attention is given policies and strategies that can counter marginalization and fragmentation of essential interventions and enhance collaboration between school and community programs. In this respect, a major emphasis is on enhancing the interface between efforts to address barriers to learning and prevailing approaches to school and community reforms.

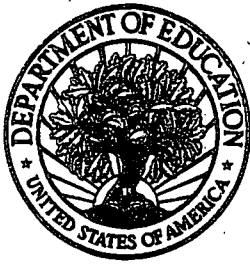


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