

CONCLUSION

THE RESULTS FROM THIS 2001 National School Climate Survey echo the findings from our 1999 survey: for many of our nation's LGBT youth, school can be an unsafe and even dangerous place. School is where homophobic remarks can be frequently heard, often by faculty and staff. The majority of the youth in our survey reported being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation or their gender expression and a large number of youth reported experiencing incidents of physical harassment, physical assault and sexual harassment. The findings from this survey also demonstrate that transgender students feel particularly vulnerable at school.

GLSEN's 2001 National School Climate Survey has also documented that certain schools are providing resources that can improve the quality of life for LGBT students. Some of the youth reported that their schools have gay-straight alliances and that LGBT people, history and events are being mentioned in classroom curricula. Nevertheless, the number of youth reporting such resources is far outweighed by the number of youth reporting acts of harassment or victimization. Perhaps most importantly, our results document that more work needs to be done to make all of our nation's schools safe for all students.

The complete survey may be obtained either by calling GLSEN's Research Dept. at (212) 727-0135 or by visiting the News section of www.glsen.org.

The 2001 National School Climate Survey

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students
and their Experiences in Schools

ABOUT GLSEN

GLSEN is the largest national network of parents, students, educators and others working to end anti-LGBT bias in K-12 schools. Established nationally in 1995, the chapter-based organization has emerged as a leading voice for safety and equality in America's systems of education.

GLSEN'S VISION

GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.



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INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

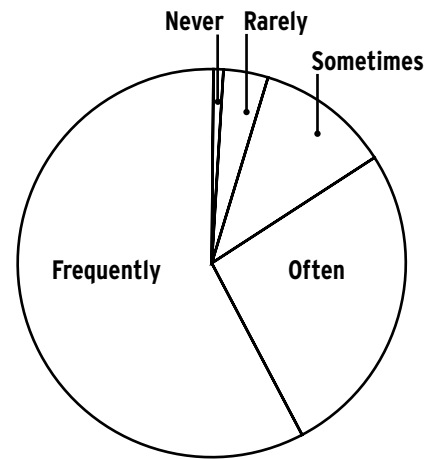
FIRST CONDUCTED IN 1999, the National School Climate Survey is the only national survey to document the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students in America's high schools. It examines the prevalence of school-based harassment and victimization, the frequency with which LGBT students hear homophobic language, and the factors that contribute to or detract from an overall feeling of comfort and safety.

In 2001, GLSEN nearly doubled the sample of the original study. This year, a total of 904 LGBT youth from 48 states and the District of Columbia completed the survey. In order to create a more representative sample of all LGBT youth in schools, GLSEN employed two methods of obtaining participants. In the first, youth were accessed through community based groups

or service organizations serving LGBT youth, which were randomly selected from a list of over 200 such groups nationwide. Each group was then invited to participate and surveys were subsequently sent for youth to complete. The National School Climate Survey was also made available on the Internet via GLSEN's website. Notices about the online survey were posted on LGBT youth-oriented listservs and electronic bulletin boards, and were emailed to GLSEN chapters and youth advocacy organizations. Data collection through community-based groups occurred from the end of May to the middle of August 2001. Data collection through the online version occurred from June to the middle of August 2001.

Additional information about methodology and demographics, as well as full results, are available online at www.glsen.org.

How often have you heard homophobic remarks (such as "faggot," "dyke" or "queer")?



GENDER EXPRESSION

refers to all of the external characteristics & behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine.

KEY FINDINGS

HOMOPHOBIC REMARKS

As in 1999, the overwhelming majority of LGBT students reported hearing homophobic remarks; faculty and staff contributed to the problem either by making homophobic comments themselves or failing to intervene when they heard students making them.

- 84.3% of LGBT students reported hearing homophobic remarks, such as "faggot" or "dyke," frequently or often
- 90.8% reported hearing the expression "that's so gay," or "you're so gay," frequently or often
- 23.6% reported hearing homophobic remarks from faculty or school staff at least some of the time
- 81.8% reported that faculty or staff never intervened or intervened only some of the time when present when homophobic remarks were made

HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

The study showed that verbal, sexual and physical harassment are common experiences for LGBT students. For LGBT youth of color, and for female students, this abuse is often compounded by racism and sexism.

In the past year:

- 83.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed (name calling, threats, etc.) because of their sexual orientation
- 48.3% of LGBT students of color reported being verbally harassed because of both their sexual orientation and their race/ethnicity
- 65.4% of LGBT students reported being sexually harassed (sexual comments, inappropriately touched, etc.)
- 74.2% of lesbian and bisexual young women reported being sexually harassed
- 73.7% of transgender students reported being sexually harassed
- 41.9% of LGBT students reported being physically harassed (being shoved, pushed, etc.) because of their sexual orientation
- 21.1% of LGBT students reported being physically assaulted (being punched, kicked, injured with a weapon) because of their sexual orientation
- 31.3% of LGBT students reported experiencing physical harassment based on their gender expression
- 13.7% of LGBT students reported experiencing physical assault based on their gender expression

FEELING SAFE IN SCHOOL

The majority of LGBT students reported feeling unsafe at school, and they were likely to skip class or even days of school out of fear for personal safety. Transgender students were the least likely to feel their school communities were places of safety.

- 68.6% of LGBT students reported feeling unsafe in their school because of their sexual orientation
- 89.5% of transgender students reported feeling unsafe based on their gender expression
- 31.8% of LGBT students had skipped a class at least once in the past month because they felt unsafe based on sexual orientation
- 30.9% had missed at least one entire day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe based on sexual orientation

LGBT students attending public, private and parochial schools felt varying degrees of safety based on sexual orientation:

- 70.4% of public school students reported feeling unsafe
- 65% of private religious school students reported feeling unsafe
- 51.2% of private secular school students reported feeling unsafe

Similarly, LGBT students from urban, suburban and rural schools felt varying degrees of safety based on sexual orientation:

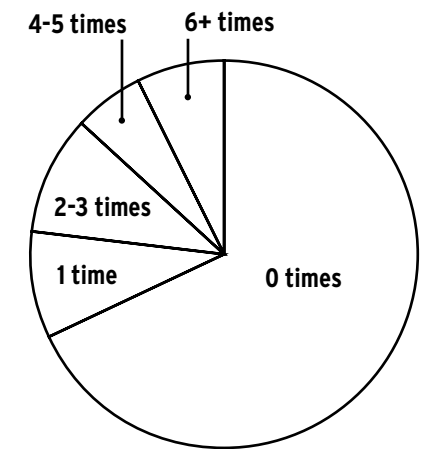
- 62.2% of students from urban schools reported feeling unsafe
- 70.7% of students from suburban schools reported feeling unsafe
- 75.9% of students from rural schools reported feeling unsafe

LGBT RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS IN SCHOOL

Many schools fail to recognize the abuse faced by LGBT students. As a result, resources and supportive personnel are rare. Yet, where available, a statistically significant number of LGBT students felt a greater sense of belonging at school.

- 80.6% of students reported that there were no positive portrayals of LGBT people, history or events in any of their classes
- 38.1% of students who said they had positive portrayals of LGBT people, history or events in their classes were more likely to feel they belonged in the school than those who did not (38.1% versus 29.0%)
- 39.7% of students reported that there were no teachers or school personnel who were supportive of LGBT students at their school
- Students who said that they had a supportive faculty or staff were more likely to feel they belonged in their school than those who did not (35.1% versus 25.6%)
- 31.1% of students reported that their schools had a gay-straight alliance (GSA) or another type of club that addresses LGBT student issues
- Students who said their schools had GSAs were less likely to feel unsafe in their schools than those who did not (62.9% versus 72%)

How many times have you skipped class because of feeling uncomfortable or unsafe in the past month?



GENDER IDENTITY is a person's internal sense of gender.