

# Is This the Right School for Us?

A Guide to Assessing School Climates for LGBT  
Parents of Elementary-Aged Children



# GLSEN's Mission

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The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) envisions a future in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Founded upon this vision in 1994, GLSEN has grown to be the leading national organization working to end anti-gay bias in K-12 schools. GLSEN believes that the key to ending anti-gay prejudice and hate-motivated violence is education. It's for this reason that GLSEN brings together students, educators, families and other community members of any sexual orientation or gender identity to reform America's educational system.

In addition to its three offices in New York City, Washington (DC), and San Francisco, GLSEN carries out its mission through its grassroots network chapters in 35 states across the country. To achieve this mission, GLSEN engages in community organizing, public policy change, media campaigns, and the development of educational resources to carry out three primary strategic goals:

*Make anti-LGBT bullying, harassment, and name-calling unacceptable in America's schools.*

*Engage and empower educators in creating schools where every student can fully participate in school life regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.*

*Ensure that the national education agenda to create effective schools includes LGBT issues.*

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# Introduction

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Welcome to "Is This the Right School For Us?", GLSEN's guide for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) parents of school-age children. We created this resource with the knowledge that every parent wants the same things in their child's school: good teachers who inspire their students, caring and effective administrators, a clean and well-equipped environment, and an atmosphere that is safe and conducive to learning. LGBT parents, though, have special concerns in addition to these: Will our family be accepted? Will my child be safe, or subjected to teasing and harassment? Is this a safe place where our child will feel like they belong and be able to focus on learning?

The number of children being raised by LGBT parents is substantial; the estimates range from a conservative 1.6 million to an amazing 14 million.<sup>1</sup> Understandably, finding safe, supportive schools, as well as working towards change in less-than-ideal schools, has become an issue of great importance to LGBT families. The purpose of this guide is to help you judge whether or not a school will be a good place for your family. It is geared towards parents with children in kindergarten through sixth grade, but is relevant to LGBT parents of all school-age children. If you're already in a school that you like, or you don't have a choice regarding school, don't put this resource down! You may be able to use the information here to help you think about ways to improve the school you're already attending.

You might have the good fortune of living in an area where there is a strong and active LGBT community, and where the population in general tends to be more open and accepting of LGBT families. Or, like many people across the country, you might feel isolated in an area where intolerance is the norm, and where being "out" in a school community could mean difficulties for your child, fearing for your family's comfort and safety, or possibly even losing a job or a home.

This guide seeks to empower all LGBT parents, whatever your situation, while recognizing that the climate in certain communities can pose some particularly difficult challenges as you try to assess schools while protecting yourself and your family. You might find that you are not yet ready or able to address issues such as inclusion of LGBT resources in a school library, or staff training on LGBT issues, as you search for a school. However, you may be able to use parts of this guide to gauge the climate of a school without putting yourself at risk, and to create strong relationships with teachers and administrators, which might help prevent problems in the future and provide an opening for positive change.

Best of luck to you as you search for the school where your child will flourish and your family will be valued and embraced!

<sup>1</sup>Patterson, C.J., and Friel, L.V. "Sexual Orientation and Fertility". Inferility in the Modern world: Biosocial Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 238-260.

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# I. Valuing Yourself and Your Family

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Before you commit to the challenge of finding the school that suits your family's particular needs, it is important to remind yourself of the inestimable value of that family. Because of the homophobia and transphobia so deeply rooted in our society, it is sometimes a challenge for LGBT people to feel good about themselves. The intolerance and hatred often leveled at members of the LGBT community might make you occasionally doubt your value as a person and your ability as a parent. In addition, being part of the LGBT community often means hiding that fact from others, for fear that they will harass, hurt, or reject you. As a parent, you worry about the rejection or hurt your child might face from intolerant peers and community members. The secrecy that often accompanies being LGBT can interfere with developing close bonds with people in your community.<sup>2</sup> You might feel wary of getting "too" involved with your child's school, or insecure about approaching teachers, administrators, and other "authority figures" who were less than supportive as you struggled to come to terms with yourself as a young person.

It is important to be aware of the ways in which internalized homophobia and transphobia can affect how we view ourselves and relate to others. It is equally important to affirm the worth of your family as you attempt to find a school for your child and create healthy bonds with teachers and administrators. Some things to keep in mind are:

-All families should be valued, protected, reflected and embraced by society and all its institutions, including the school communities that educate our children.<sup>3</sup>

-All children deserve to grow up nurtured by kinship networks and communities that teach them about, connect them to, and honor their unique heritage.<sup>4</sup>

-LGBT parents sometimes do not have the support of kin and community in raising our children. Homophobia and transphobia do not, though, make you any less deserving of those relationships, including those forged within a school community. Utilize and care for the friendships, family, and support systems that are available to you--you don't have to do it all alone.

-Parenting is challenging, important, and joyful work! Celebrate your commitment, consistency, and love in shaping the world of your child/children.

These are not radical notions. These are the basics that every family is entitled to. In fact, as the National PTA itself says in its 2001 "Respect for Differences Position Statement", adopted by the National PTA Board of Directors, "Every child must learn to appreciate his or her own uniqueness while learning to respect and value individuals and groups in a diverse society... Schools must eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in materials and activities. They must establish an environment in which staff and students are expected to demonstrate cooperation, acceptance, and respect for differences...The National PTA opposes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, language, religion, age, physical and academic ability, and sexual orientation." <sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>David Kelley Lesbian and Gay Community Counseling Project. "Working to Improve Self-esteem." <<http://www.fsatoronto.com/programs/fsaprograms/davekelley/selfesteem.html>>.

<sup>3</sup>Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE). "COLAGE Vision Statement." <<http://www.colage.org/about.html>>.

<sup>4</sup>Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE). "COLAGE Vision Statement." <<http://www.colage.org/about.html>>.

<sup>5</sup>National PTA. "Respect for Differences Position Statement". January 2001. <[http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/respect\\_diff/intro.asp](http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/helpchild/respect_diff/intro.asp)>.

## II. Considering Your Basic Expectations

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Before you begin looking at specific schools, it's important to know your bottom line expectations of any school community. The guidelines listed in the "Parent Bill of Rights" below should be embodied by the school you seek, as well as the school your child may already be enrolled in.

### Parent Bill Of Rights<sup>6</sup>

#### *A Healthy Learning Environment*

- Parents have the right to know that their child will be safe at school, both physically and emotionally.
- Parents have the right to know that all children will be treated fairly regardless of race, creed, national origin, economic status, age, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, and that each child will be treated as an individual.
- Parents have the right to know that the staff is experienced and trained in child development.
- Parents have the right to know that any negative or cruel behavior among students or between students and staff will not be tolerated.

#### *Clear, Courteous Communication*

- Parents have the right to be treated with courtesy by all members of the staff.
- Parents have the right to participate in meaningful parent-teacher conferences to discuss their child's school progress and welfare.
- Parents have the right to visit schools and classes.
- Parents have the right to know that they can approach a staff member with a concern, and that the staff member will listen carefully and will do everything possible to address the issue.

#### *Information on School Policies*

- Parents have the right to information on the academic requirements of the school program.
- Parents have the right to inspect their child's record and respond to any statement.
- Parents have the right to be informed of and to appeal school policies.
- Parents have the right to be informed of and to appeal administrative decisions.

#### *Information on Special Programs*

- Parents have the right to be informed of all programs in special education.
- Parents have the right to appeal the placement of their child in a special education class.
- Parents have the right to extra assistance from the school, including counseling, tutorial, and remedial programs.

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from <<http://www.jc-schools.net/tutorials/PPT-games/parents.ppt>>.

# III. Determining Your School Options

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The school options available to your family depend on where you live, what kind of transportation you can access, your financial status, and your child's academic performance. If you live in a small town, your options may be limited: you may be required to attend a particular school based on your address, and opting for a different school might require obtaining special permission, coping with longer commutes, and rearranging schedules. If, on the other hand, you live in a larger city, your address may attach your child to a nearby school, but you may also have the option of applying to a different school in another neighborhood that's accessible by public transportation.

## OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL TYPES AND SCHOOL CHOICE PLANS

**Public schools** are run by local school districts and boards of education that are overseen by departments of education at the state government level. Their faculty and staff are therefore employees of the city or town in which they are located. Public schools are funded and budgeted according to funding formulas that are determined by state governments on the basis of local property tax revenue and, in some cases, demonstrated need. Their curricula are mandated by the state, and student outcomes are measured (at least partially) by state-administered standardized tests. If you are looking for a new school for your child because of harassment in his/her current school, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act states that school districts must allow students who attend a "persistently dangerous" public school, or students who have been a victim of a violent criminal offense while on school grounds, to transfer to a safe public school within the district.<sup>7</sup>

### *Questions to Consider When Determining Your School Options*

- What is the school choice plan in my state, city and/or town? What kind of special permission might I need to obtain, or official procedures might I need to follow, in order to change schools or select a school other than my neighborhood school?
- What are my financial options? Am I able and/or willing to acquire debt in order to fund my child's education? Can I apply for scholarships and grants, and do I have the time to do that?
- How far away am I willing to send my child? Will my schedule allow me to provide transportation if necessary? How long a commute on public transportation can my child reasonably undertake?

**Charter schools** are publicly-sponsored autonomous schools. Their name comes from the institutional plan, or charter, that they must submit to the state in order to be approved for public funding. They are substantially free of direct administrative control by the government, but are held accountable for achieving certain levels of student performance and other specified outcomes. These outcomes are either monitored by the school district or the state where the charter school is located.

**Magnet schools** are public schools that offer specialized programs for students with special talents (for example: performing arts conservatory programs, advanced science and technology programs, foreign language immersion programs, internship/professional/vocational programs). Magnet schools often require some type of admissions test.

**Private or Independent schools** are run by their respective school administrations and overseen by boards of trustees. Most private schools are tuition-driven, although some also have endowments and/or receive other funding. Some private schools are boarding schools, and some are day schools; some have both options. Many private schools offer a college-preparatory curriculum, and some of them are actually affiliated with colleges and universities. Students in private schools do not take state-administered standardized tests, although many of them do take the same college entrance exams as public school students (SAT, ACT, and others administered by the Educational Testing Service).

**Parochial or Religious Schools** are private schools that are rooted in either a relationship with a religious institution and/or a particular religious philosophy. Examples may be Catholic schools, which are operated under the auspices of a particular regional diocese or religious order (Jesuit, Dominican, and so forth); "Christian" schools, which tend to be affiliated with a particular church but are nondenominational; or Jewish Day Schools, which may or may not have a relationship with a local synagogue.

<sup>7</sup>National PTA. "Parent Rights Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act." <<http://www.pta.org/ptawashington/issues/rights.asp>>.

## IV. Reflecting On Your Own Needs

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When you begin the process of selecting a school, or thinking about how to improve your current school, take some time to consider and prioritize your family's needs and the academic, social, and support needs of your child. In many cases, students have special academic needs (for example: instruction tailored to learning differences, bilingual instruction, accelerated classes) that take priority. While you don't want to pit need against need, it's important to recognize the areas in which you'd be most willing to compromise.

### Questions to Consider When Reflecting on Your Own Needs

- What are my child's academic needs? Does my child have any special academic needs that may only be addressed at a select few schools? Does my child have any academic interests that they would like the opportunity to pursue intensively?
- What are my child's social needs? What, according to my child, are my child's social needs? What kind of social interaction, both with teachers/school staff and with other students, would most benefit my child?
- What are my child's support needs? Does my child need to receive counseling at school? Does my child thrive on lots of personalized attention, or would my child prefer to attend a school that allows them to be fairly anonymous? Does my child need/want to participate in any student groups that offer peer support?
- What are my needs as a family member in the school community? What level of participation can I commit to, and what kinds of participation would I like to have? How do I wish to be treated by the school staff, other families, and other members of the school community?
- Are there any differences in my needs, my child's needs according to me, and my child's needs according to them, that need to be reconciled? Which are the needs I'm most willing to compromise? Which are the needs my child is most willing to compromise? How can we reach a decision that satisfies us both?

# V. Making Initial Contact with a School

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As we stated earlier, there are numerous issues of access that can impact the ability of families to educate themselves about the school options available to them. For those reasons, and in general, it's important to have a specific strategy once you're ready to make initial contact with a particular school, especially if it's a public school. It's easy to get passed around, to get conflicting information, or to get ignored if you happen to call at a less-than-optimal time, so make sure that you are informed and prepared.

## Tips for Making Initial Contact with a School

- Do an online search to see if the school you're investigating has its own website. If it does, you may find information there that could streamline the research process.
- If you are in a large school district, find out what the procedures are for site selection. Some districts have placement centers that you can visit to discuss options before you visit actual school sites.
- Don't call too early or too late in the day, or during the opening or closing of the school day. You're less likely to get someone on the phone during those times.
- When you call, immediately state that you are a parent/family member/guardian who would like to speak to the person who handles admissions questions and procedures. If that person is unavailable when you call, find out their name, professional title, phone number and/or e-mail address, and regular office hours.
- As a general rule, it's not a good idea to show up at a school without a scheduled appointment. Schools tend to be very busy places with a constant stream of unpredictable events, and in many schools strangers will not be allowed into the building at all without confirmation of appointment.
- When you ultimately speak to the person who handles admissions, find out what options exist for visiting the school and/or scheduling meetings with members of the school community. Does the school hold admissions tours? Can prospective parents attend PTA meetings? Can meetings with individual teachers and/or counselors be arranged? Does the school have open house nights, volunteer nights, or upcoming events that are open to families or the public?
- If you know someone in or affiliated with the school - a student, a recent graduate, a teacher or other staff member -- be sure to mention that person right away when you call. The administration will be pleased that members of the school community are acting as ambassadors and referring prospective students, and that much more inclined to speak with you.

# VI. Visiting the School: Asking Questions and Assessing Environments

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Whether you're making initial contact with a school, or beginning an initiative to improve your current school, you may wish to develop a research plan that includes a list of materials you wish to review, and a list of questions you wish to pose to school administrators, teachers, counseling and support staff, families, people in the surrounding community and students in the school. You can incorporate your findings into the GLSEN "Is This the Right School for Us?" assessment survey at the end of this document.

## Publications and Documents to Request, and What to Look For When You Read Them

### *Mission Statement/Core Values*

Does the school language/philosophy/mission statement spell out both the values that are being promoted and the behaviors that won't be tolerated?

### *Student Handbook*

Does it include language about mutual respect, diversity, and community?

### *Parent Handbook*

Whom does it recognize as a parent or guardian? What implicit or explicit expectations of parents does it convey?

### *Anti-discrimination policy*

How does the school define discrimination? Are "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression" included in the policy?

### *Anti-harassment policy*

How does the school define harassment? Does the policy include verbal as well as physical harassment? Are "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression" included in the policy?

### *School newsletter/events listing*

What is promoted in school publications that reach a broad audience? Whose accomplishments are considered noteworthy?

### *Parental/Application forms*

Is the language used on official school forms and documents inclusive of diverse identities and families? For example, do they ask for the names of the "father" and "mother", or do they say "parent/guardian"? Is gender-neutral language used?

If you can't find the answers to these questions in the written documents provided by the school, you may wish to address their absence in your in-person meetings.

## Questions to Ask When Visiting a School

If you get the chance to visit a school you are interested in, seek a meeting with both the administration (a principal or school division head) and your child's potential teachers. The administration sets the tone for the school through its policies and their implementation, and therefore it is important to understand where they stand. Teachers are the ones who actually implement the curriculum, and they may be able to describe their lessons and the school climate in a more nuanced way than the school handbook or an administrator. They can also give you insight into their teaching styles and how they incorporate students' ideas into their classes.

It's best to establish at the start of the meetings that you are there because you want to find the best school for your child, and that you see this meeting as the beginning of what you hope will be a strong partnership between you and the school to advance the learning and happiness of your child. The school staff you're dealing with may have had bad experiences with hostile parents in the past, or may be unfamiliar with LGBT issues, so that their reactions may range from wariness to discomfort. To defuse these kinds of reactions, it's important that you help them understand that your sole intention is to find the right school for your child.

The following may be questions you want to ask during meetings with school personnel:

### **Administration**

- Has the school enrolled students from families headed by LGBT people before? Using the acronym "LGBT" is a great way to gauge a person's familiarity with diverse families. If you use this phrase and the person seems flustered, store that information, but still give them the benefit of the doubt and pay close attention to their responses to the other questions you ask - don't just "write them off."
- If the school has had families headed by LGBT people before, what issues arose, and how did the school deal with them? Is it possible to talk to some of these parents? If not, is there a parents' organization? Can I attend a meeting or talk to a representative?
- Does the school have an anti-discrimination policy? Does it include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression"? How does the school define harassment? Does the policy include verbal as well as physical harassment?
- If yes, are administrators, teachers, counselors and school staff aware of the policies, and trained in how to recognize and respond to violations of the policies?
- If no, is the school considering broadening its policies to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity/expression", as well as responses to verbal harassment?
- Does the staff receive training in how to support LGBT students, students perceived to be LGBT, and students with LGBT families? If not, does the staff receive any sort of diversity training? If so, does it include LGBT issues in a substantive way?
- Are there any "out" LGBT teachers? May I meet with them?
- Does the library contain LGBT-inclusive materials? Are they easy to find and up-to-date? May students borrow them without fear of parental notification? Do the librarians know about other sources in the community for such materials?
- Is there a school dress code? Are students supported in expressing their gender identity as they see fit?
- What kind of orientation process do new students go through? What kind of orientation is there for parents/families of new students? Is family diversity addressed in those programs?

### **Teachers**

- Have you had students from families headed by LGBT people in your classes in the past? If so, what issues arose, and how did you deal with them? Is it possible to talk to LGBT parents of your former (or present) students?
- Have you had any training on LGBT issues, or diversity training that included LGBT issues in a substantive way?
- Have incidents relating to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression arisen in your classroom in the past? For example, have you witnessed students saying "that's so gay" to describe things they dislike? If so, how did you deal with this?
- Do you actively work to make sure the materials you present reflect the diversity of our society, including the existence of families with LGBT members? If not, would you be interested in help in identifying some age-appropriate resources, which you could then incorporate into your curriculum?

### **"Reading" the Responses**

In addition to the factual answers you will get during these meetings, you will also learn a great deal from things that are not said. Do the school staff you meet with seem to take this conversation in stride, or do they seem profoundly surprised or uncomfortable? What do you literally see around the school? What kinds of posters, books, and other materials are on display? Non-verbal cues and the images seen around the school can show as much about school culture as what is said in meetings and written down in policies: look for those clues as well.

## VII. Tallying It All Up and Making a Decision

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After looking at publications, taking stock of policies, and meeting with school staff, the big moment has now arrived: is this the right school for your family? One way of figuring this out might be to complete the attached assessment survey (and/or ask the school's administration to do so). GLSEN has found that schools fall into four major categories:

**Hostile:** schools in which there is active hostility towards LGBT people and issues

**Resistant:** schools in which some individuals are working towards openness and inclusiveness, but there has not been a systemic effort to address LGBT issues

**Passive:** schools which have in place the basic policies and programs that are required to create a welcoming environment for LGBT people, but do little proactive work on the subject

**Inclusive:** schools where there is an ongoing commitment to address LGBT issues and make the school a truly inclusive place that is supported by a broad majority of staff, students, and families

While the attached assessment survey does not ask every question that should or must be asked, it covers some basic issues that can help you get an objective "score" to figure out a school's position in regard to LGBT issues.

## Conclusion

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This assessment guide is designed to help you determine where the schools your child might attend stand on LGBT issues, and which one is the best option for your family. As you go through this assessment process, it is important to remember that no school is perfect -- particularly when it comes to LGBT issues. Many educators have had little or no training on LGBT issues, and have spent little time thinking about them. You may be the first person to raise these issues with them, and their responses may be uninformed. Don't be dismayed -- regardless of what you discover during this assessment process, there will undoubtedly be work that your child's school needs to do to become a truly inclusive community. In fact, what you learn during this process may provide something of a road map for willing schools as to where and how improvements might be made. All children -- but especially elementary-age children learn best when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Your engagement with school representatives during the process of choosing the right school for your child is the beginning of that partnership. As an LGBT parent, you may be bravely going where no other parent in your child's school has gone before, and paving the way for those who follow.

# Useful Resources for LGBT Parents

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## Legal Resources

### **ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project**

132 West 34th St.  
New York, NY 10036  
Phone: 212-944-9800  
Website: [www.aclu.org/issues/gay/hmgl.html](http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/hmgl.html)

### **Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)**

Phone: 800-455-GLAD or 617-426-1350  
Email: [gladlaw@glad.org](mailto:gladlaw@glad.org)  
Website: [www.glad.org](http://www.glad.org)

### **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund**

(National Headquarters)  
120 Wall Street, Suite 1500  
New York, NY 10005-3904  
Phone: 212-809-8585  
Fax: 212-809-0055  
Email: [legalhelpdesk@lambdalegal.org](mailto:legalhelpdesk@lambdalegal.org)  
Website: [www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

### **National Center for Lesbian Rights**

1663 Mission Street, Fifth Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: 415-621-0674  
Fax: 415-392-8442  
Email: [info@nclrights.org](mailto:info@nclrights.org)  
Website: [www.nclrights.org](http://www.nclrights.org)

## Family Resources

### **Children of Gays and Lesbians Everywhere (COLAGE)**

3543 18th Street #1  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
Phone: 415-861-KIDS  
Fax: 415- 225-8345  
Website: [www.colage.org](http://www.colage.org)  
Email: [colage@colage.org](mailto:colage@colage.org)

### **Family Pride Coalition**

PO Box 65327  
Washington, D.C. 20035  
Phone: 202-331-5015  
Fax: 202-331-0080  
Website: [www.familypride.org](http://www.familypride.org)  
Email: [info@familypride.org](mailto:info@familypride.org)

### **Gay parenting Page**

Website: [www.gayparentingpage.com](http://www.gayparentingpage.com)

### **Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians (PFLAG)**

1726 M Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Phone: 202-467-8180  
Fax: 202-467-8194  
Website: [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

# Survey: Is this the right school for us?

## An Assessment Survey for LGBT Parents with Elementary-Aged Children

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For each item, choose the phrase that best completes the statement for your school. Write the corresponding number on the line to the left of each item. When scoring each survey item, bear in mind that the answers are meant to reflect a continuum, not absolutes. This means that you may see aspects of a school embodied in different responses to the same question, or a school may fit between two answers. Try to select the answer that, in each case, most closely corresponds to the point along the continuum at which you see the school. You may use half scores (1.5, 2.5, etc.) if this helps you to represent the school most accurately.

### A. The school's non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies

- (1) do not include sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
- (2) include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, but with no reporting or disciplinary procedures in place.
- (3) include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, are widely disseminated within the community so that all are aware they exist, and reporting/disciplinary procedures are in place.
- (4) include sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, are widely disseminated and discussed, and both reporting/disciplinary procedures and preventive education are in place .

### B. A multicultural/diversity statement or policy

- (1) does not exist, or does exist but does not include sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
- (2) exists and may include sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, but school programming does not reflect this inclusion.
- (3) exists and includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, with some inclusive programming taking place.
- (4) Exists and includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression with regular inclusive programming in place.

### C. Curricular inclusion of LGBT themes, such as including books with representation of families with LGBT members

- (1) does not occur and is actively opposed.
- (2) is unofficially considered inappropriate and does not occur.
- (3) is not disallowed, but permission from parents/supervisors may be required due to the "sensitive" or "controversial" nature of the subject.
- (4) is encouraged and mandated with no parent notification requirements.

### D. LGBT staff members

- (1) are not formally acknowledged and receive no formal protections or benefits.
- (2) are protected by an employment non-discrimination policy, but do not receive domestic partnership benefits.
- (3) are included in non-discrimination policies, receive domestic partnership benefits and can be open and honest to peers with few repercussions.
- (4) receive domestic partnership benefits, are included in outreach/hiring practices, and benefit from an official statement protecting and affirming their right to be open and honest to colleagues and students.



**E. Books and curricular materials that include positive images of LGBT people**

- (1) are deliberately kept from classrooms and libraries.
- (2) are not present in classrooms or libraries, though those with incidental references or sub-plots are neither banned nor encouraged.
- (3) can be found in classrooms and libraries in moderate quantity and variety.
- (4) are sought out, prominently displayed, and made available to all staff and students.



**F. With regard to LGBT-themed books and resources, school librarians**

- (1) do not solicit resources and offer no assistance to requests for related materials.
- (2) may have some resources in reference sections, but do not highlight their existence.
- (3) make materials accessible and comfortably direct students/staff upon request.
- (4) prominently display materials and actively engage colleagues by referring them to appropriate materials.



**G. With regard to staff development and training, LGBT issues**

- (1) are never discussed and are considered an inappropriate topic.
- (2) may come up occasionally, with mixed reactions of support and hesitancy.
- (3) are incorporated periodically or in optional sessions, where staff members are generally receptive.
- (4) appear as a regular theme, are interwoven with explorations of race, class, gender, etc., and are openly received by staff who integrate new learning into daily practice.



**H. By the time students graduate from the school**

- (1) they have had no positive curricular exposure to LGBT people, history or issues.
- (2) they have had sporadic and inconsistent curricular exposure to LGBT people, history or issues.
- (3) they have had considerable curricular exposure to LGBT topics and understand the importance of respecting all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
- (4) they have a depth of understanding and appreciation for LGBT people and history, and feel a sense of responsibility to combat all forms of oppression in their communities, including anti-LGBT bias.



**I. LGBT-headed families are**

- (1) completely invisible or absent, feel unsafe being open about their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, and have no support resources available to them within the school community.
- (2) virtually invisible and exist within a "don't ask, don't tell" environment in which they feel uncomfortable discussing their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
- (3) moderately visible, feel safe being open, and have some support resources within the school community.
- (4) visible and fully integrated into school life and feel safe and affirmed.

**J. Heterosexist and anti-LGBT language and behavior in the school is**

- (1) rampant throughout the school both in and out of the classroom.
- (2) common in settings such as hallways and the schoolyard, but generally understood to be unacceptable in the classroom or within earshot of adults.
- (3) sometimes heard in the hallways and schoolyard, but there are few instances of intentional harassment against LGBT or gender-nonconforming students.
- (4) uncommon; respectful, inclusive language is consistently heard in classroom instruction and discussions.

**K. When anti-LGBT harassment occurs,**

- (1) interventions by staff are inconsistent, there are few consequences for offenders, and victims may be told that nothing can be done or that they need to change their behavior or reduce their visibility.
- (2) staff will intervene to stop verbal and physical abuse, but handle anti-LGBT harassment like any other type of generic misconduct (as opposed to the serious - and legally mandated-treatment afforded sexual or racial harassment).
- (3) adults will intervene decisively to discipline/counsel offenders and provide support to the victims.
- (4) the school community rallies around its LGBT members and the school is quick to intervene with consequences, victim support, and proactive education to prevent future incidents.

**Scoring Guide**

Enter your scores from the Assessment Survey in order to determine where your school stands.

<b>SCORE CARD</b>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
A. Nondiscrimination/anti-harassment policies	
B. Multicultural/diversity statements	
C. Curricular policy	
D. Staffing policies	
E. Inclusive books and curricular materials	
F. School librarian practices	
G. Staff development/training around LGBT	
H. Exposure to LGBT themes by graduation	
I. Visibility /comfort level of LGBT families	
J. Heterosexist/anti-LGBT language	
K. Response to anti-LGBT harassment	
	<b>TOTAL</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"> <b>11-17 = Hostile</b>  <b>18-27 = Resistant</b>  <b>28-37 = Passive</b>  <b>38-44 = Inclusive</b> </p>	