

STATE INCLUSIVE CURRICULAR STANDARDS

LGBTQ INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM: TIPS TO ADVANCE IN YOUR STATE AND COMMUNITY

GLSEN supports statewide curricular standards that are inclusive of LGBTQ communities, persons with disabilities, communities of color, and all marginalized communities in alignment with its core mission. GLSEN advances policies that make schools safer for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex, race, color, national origin, disability, and religion. Inclusive curricular standards that support creation of inclusive curriculum at the local level can help strengthen educational attainment and health outcomes for LGBTQ students who see their full identities reflected in the classroom.ⁱ

This resource addresses the key questions and unique roles of statewide curricular standards, the positive impacts of inclusive curriculum, and supports that effectively implement policies in your schools. Starting out it is important to understand two terms often used interchangeably by advocates, yet their definitions demonstrate the differences.

- **Curricular Standards:** Curricular standards are the learning goals for what students learn in school. Standards are not a curriculum. Local communities and educators choose their own curriculum, which is a detailed plan for lessons on a particular topic.ⁱⁱ
- **Curriculum:** A detailed plan for a series of unified lessons created by educators and local communities.ⁱⁱⁱ

SUPPORT FOR STATEWIDE INCLUSIVE CURRICULAR STANDARDS

Advocates in a growing number of states are building support for the adoption and implementation of inclusive curricular standards. In 2019, Maryland^{iv} became the sixth state to approve the addition of LGBTQ inclusive curricular standards following Illinois^v, California^{vi}, New Jersey^{vii}, Colorado^{viii}, and Oregon^{ix}. Other jurisdictions have also amended their statewide curricular standards to center the experiences of persons with disabilities and communities of color in classrooms.^x

GLSEN prioritizes three critical questions when considering support for specific public policy proposals for statewide inclusive curricular standards. First, our commitment to opposing racial oppression and promoting racial equity in order to address the needs of LGBTQ students of color will be a central factor in prioritizing support for individual legislation. The second consideration is whether educators support the legislation and its content is in alignment with infrastructure for existing state education policy. For example, we ask the question if focusing on policy at the state department of education may be the more effective route at this time. More specifically, we support state level legislation that establishes curricular standards as opposed to mandating specific curriculum at the state level. Focusing on standards allows school districts and individual schools the discretion they need to tailor implementation of state laws by selecting specific LGBTQ-integrated curriculum that best serves their students and communities. A list of key endorsement questions and contact information for the GLSEN Public Policy Office is included below.

Key Questions on Endorsing Specific Statewide Curricular Standards Legislation

1. Does the legislation establish statewide inclusive curricular standards as opposed to mandating specific curriculum?
2. Is there a clear rationale about why the changes to curricular standards are legislative or administrative considering a state's broader infrastructure for K-12 education?
3. Do educators, including classroom teachers, support the proposal? Have professional membership organizations that serve educators at the national and state levels endorsed the public policy proposal?
4. Do organizations led by communities of color, persons with disabilities, and/or other marginalized communities support the legislation?
5. Is there a plan for implementation that is in alignment with existing education policy? Does the implementation include professional development for the educators and administrators who will be developing and teaching the curriculum?
6. Is the policy proposal adequately funded?

HOW INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM IMPROVES SCHOOL CLIMATE

Inclusive curriculum benefits all students including those who are LGBTQ, especially LGBTQ students who are people of color, and/or persons with disabilities

- **LGBTQ Students:** GLSEN's research indicates that teaching LGBTQ inclusive curriculum has profound positive impacts for LGBTQ students. The 2017 National School Climate Survey found that compared to students in school without LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, LGBTQ students in schools with LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum were less likely to hear "gay" used in a negative way, were less likely to hear negative remarks about gender expression, performed better academically in school, and were more likely to plan on pursuing post-secondary education. 67.6% of LGBTQ students in schools with LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum reported that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBTQ people, as compared to 36.0% of LGBTQ students in schools without curriculum.
- **LGBTQ Students with Disabilities:** LGBTQ students who are persons with disabilities are often impacted by ableism, a system of oppression, like racism or sexism that benefits able-bodied people at the expense of people with disabilities.^{xii} In GLSEN's report, Educational Exclusion, using a national sample of U.S. LGBTQ students, researchers found that LGBTQ students with disabilities were more likely to be disciplined in school and to drop out of school than LGBTQ students without disabilities.^{xiii} Students reported they were more likely to feel unsafe at school because of an actual or perceived disability (22.0% vs. 8.2%) and because of their academic ability (30.0% vs. 20.5%).^{xvi} Research continues to demonstrate the need to expand inclusive curricular standards to encompass the experiences and address the needs of persons with disabilities.^{xv xvi}

- **LGBTQ Students of Color:** Survey responses from LGBTQ students of color continue to highlight differences in lived experiences that are due to racial oppression, compared to their peers who are white. In 2017, Black/African American students were more likely than Hispanic/Latinx, White, and Asian/South Asian/Pacific Islander students to experience out of school suspension or expulsion. American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) respondents were generally more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to experience anti-LGBTQ victimization and discrimination.^{xxiii} These and many other examples of findings in existing research suggest the need for curricular standards that are inclusive of communities of color and can help better reflect the experiences of LGBTQ students of color.^{xxix} The benefits of inclusive curriculum are increasingly of interest to educators, particularly those who work to counteract racial oppression and advance racial equity in order to strengthen outcomes in K-12 education. A recent study conducted by Stanford University suggests inclusive curriculum might help improve attendance and GPA.^{xxi} Additional studies suggest inclusive curriculum could help boost educational attainment.^{xxii} Emerging research conducted at Claremont McKenna College also found that inclusive curriculum increases educational attainment for students of color.^{xxiii}

RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT LGBTQ INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

GLSEN's Education and Youth Program Department (EYP) provides resources on implementation of LGBTQ inclusive curriculum. One way that educators can promote safer school environments is by teaching and developing lessons that avoid bias and that include positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, and events. Curriculum can serve as a mirror when it reflects individuals and their experiences back to themselves.^{xxiv} At the same time curriculum can serve as a window when it introduces and provides the opportunity to understand the experiences and perspectives of those who possess different identities.

The inclusive curriculum guide provides educators with resources on how to incorporate LGBTQ history, themes, and leaders into lesson plans. For example, GLSEN has developed history cards that feature icons and events that have greatly influenced the LGBTQ+ community in contemporary history, which feature queer and transgender people of color who have been and continue to be integral to LGBTQ advocacy.

The guide provides educators with lesson ideas linked to common core standards, suggestions for adding LGBTQ content that is coherent with existing curricula, and tips for interrupting anti-LGBTQ comments in the classroom. It also provides rationale for the importance of inclusive curriculum, along with suggestions for addressing questions or pushback.

To access programmatic resources on LGBTQ inclusive curriculum, please visit the following address:

<https://www.glsen.org/curriculum>.

For additional information or to submit a request, contact the GLSEN Public Policy Office at 202-347-7780 or publicpolicy@glsen.org, located at 1015 15th Street NW, 6th floor, Washington, DC 20005

- ⁱ GLSEN. “Inclusive Curriculum Helps LGBTQ Youth.” (New York, New York: 2017). Available at <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/Inclusive-Curriculum-Helps-LGBTQ-Youth-GLSEN-Infographic-Poster.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ Adopted from Common Core State Standards Initiative. “What are educational standards?” Available at <http://www.corestandards.org/faq/what-are-educational-standards/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid
- ^{iv} Washington Blade. “Md. school officials developing LGBT curriculum.” (August 21, 2019). Available at <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2019/08/21/md-school-officials-developing-lgbt-curriculum/>
- ^v CNN. “LGBTQ history curriculum will now be taught in Illinois schools.” (August 11, 2019). Available at <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/11/us/illinois-lgbtq-history-curriculum-trnd/index.html>
- ^{vi} The 74. “The State of LGBTQ Curriculum: Tide Is Turning as Some States Opt for Inclusion, Others Lift Outright Restrictions.” (June 11, 2019). Available at <https://www.the74million.org/the-state-of-lgbtq-curriculum-tide-is-turning-as-some-states-opt-for-inclusion-others-lift-outright-restrictions/>
- ^{vii} Ibid
- ^{viii} Ibid
- ^{ix} See Oregonian Legislation Tracker at <https://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2019/HB2023/>
- ^x Oregon Department of Education. “Senate Bill 13: Tribal History/Shared History.” Available at <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/NativeAmericanEducation/Pages/Senate-Bill-13-Tribal-HistoryShared-History.aspx>
- ^{xi} GLSEN. “2017 School Climate Survey.” (New York, New York: 2017). Available at <https://www.glsen.org/article/2017-national-school-climate-survey>
- ^{xii} GLSEN. “Challenging Ableist Language.” Available at <https://www.glsen.org/article/challenging-ableist-language>
- ^{xiii} GLSEN. “Educational Exclusion: Drop Out, Push Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline among LGBTQ Youth.” (New York, New York: 2016). Available at <https://www.glsen.org/article/drop-out-push-out-school-prison-pipeline>
- ^{xiv} Ibid
- ^{xv} H. Samy Alim, Susan Baglieri, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Django Paris, David H. Rose and Joseph Michael Valente. (2017) Responding to “Cross-Pollinating Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Universal Design for Learning: Toward an Inclusive Pedagogy That Accounts for Dis/Ability”. Harvard Educational Review 87:1, 4-25. Online publication date: 15-Mar-2017.
- ^{xvi} Kathleen A. King Thorius and Federico R. Waitoller. (2017) Strategic Coalitions Against Exclusion at the Intersection of Race and Disability—A Rejoinder. Harvard Educational Review 87:2, 251-257.
- ^{xvii} GLSEN. “2017 School Climate Survey.” (New York, New York: 2017). Available at <https://www.glsen.org/article/2017-national-school-climate-survey>
- ^{xviii} Ibid
- ^{xix} See Gay, Geneva. “Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice.” (2000), “using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective.”
- ^{xx} Johnston, E., D’Andrea, Montalbano, P., & Kirkland, D.E. (2017). Culturally Responsive Education: A Primer For Policy And Practice. New York: Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, New York University. Available at https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/pdf/CRE_Brief_2017_PrintBooklet_170817.pdf; Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools at New York University. “Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) Stories.” Available at <https://crestories.org/>
- ^{xxi} Stanford News. “Stanford study suggests academic benefits to ethnic studies courses.” (January 12, 2016). Available at <https://news.stanford.edu/2016/01/12/ethnic-studies-benefits-011216/>
- ^{xxii} Educators Writers Association. “Report: Mexican-American Studies Breed Better Academic Performance.” (January 2, 2015). Available at <https://www.ewa.org/blog-latino-ed-beat/report-mexican-american-studies-breed-better-academic-performance>
- ^{xxiii} Zaldana, Celestial J. “Multicultural Education: What is it and Does it Have Benefits?” (2010). CMC Senior Theses. Paper 64. Available at http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/64
- ^{xxiv} Bishop, Rudine Sims. (1990). “Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors.” Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6(3).