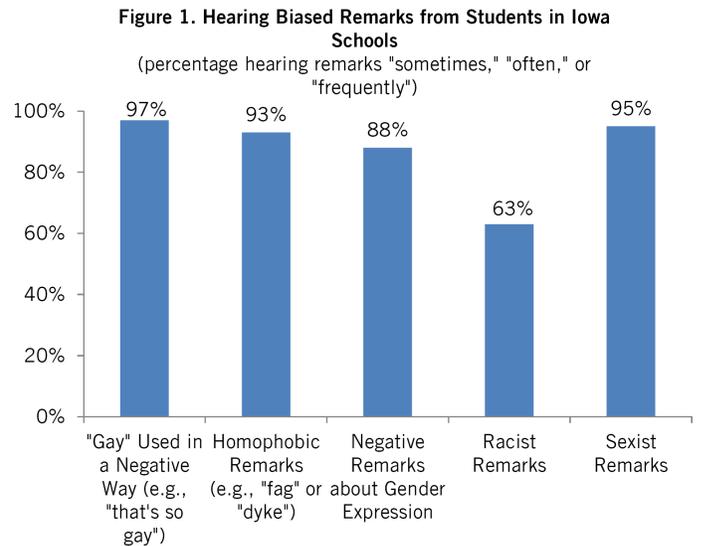


## 2011 STATE SNAPSHOT

Findings from the GLSEN *2011 National School Climate Survey* demonstrate that Iowa schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBT students in Iowa did not have access to important school resources, such as having Gay-Straight Alliances, or similar student clubs, and were not protected by comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment school policies.

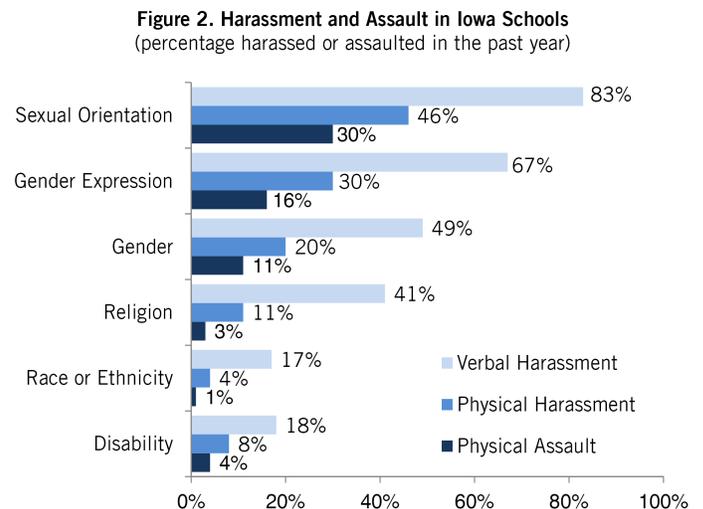
**FACT: The vast majority of LGBT students in Iowa regularly heard homophobic remarks, sexist remarks, and negative remarks about gender expression.**

- Almost all heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”) and 9 in 10 heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., “fag” or “dyke”) regularly at school (see Figure 1).
- Nearly 9 in 10 regularly heard other students in their school make negative remarks about how someone expressed their gender, such as comments about someone not acting “feminine” or “masculine” enough (see Figure 1).
- Students also heard biased language from school staff. 36% regularly heard staff make negative remarks about someone’s gender expression, and 24% regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks.



**FACT: Most LGBT students in Iowa had been victimized at school. Many of these incidents were not reported to adult authorities.**

- The majority experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened): 8 in 10 based on their sexual orientation and nearly 7 in 10 based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).
- Many also experienced physical harassment and physical assault: nearly 5 in 10 were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation and nearly 2 in 10 were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked or injured with a weapon) based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).
- Students also reported high levels of other forms of harassment at school: 95% felt deliberately excluded or “left out” by peers; 88% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 72% were sexually harassed; 63% experienced electronic harassment or “cyberbullying”; and 57% had property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) deliberately damaged and/or stolen.

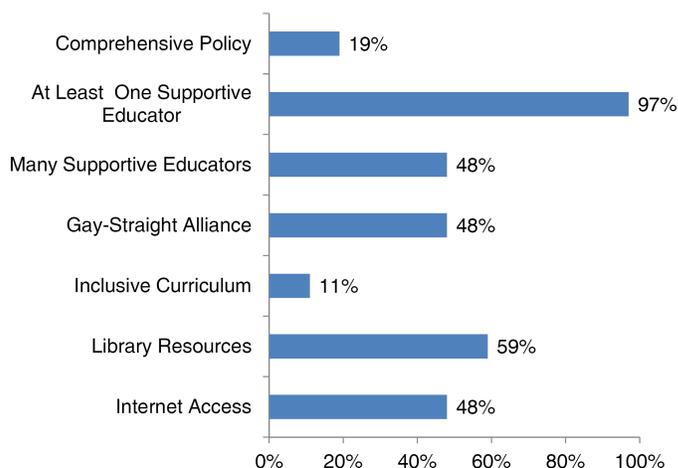


- 41% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school *never* reported it to school staff, and 44% *never* told a family member about the incident. Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only 29% said that reporting resulted in effective intervention by staff.

**FACT: LGBT students in Iowa most often did not have access to in-school resources and supports.**

- Only 19% attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression (see Figure 3).
- Nearly all could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBT students, but only 48% could identify many (6 or more) supportive school staff (see Figure 3).
- Less than half had a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student club at their school (see Figure 3).
- Only 1 in 10 was taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Availability of LGBT-Related Resources and Supports in Iowa Schools



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

School-based supports such as comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policies, school personnel who are supportive of LGBT students, Gay-Straight Alliances and LGBT-inclusive curricular resources can positively affect school climate for LGBT students. Findings from the *2011 National School Climate Survey* demonstrate that students attending schools with these resources and supports report more positive school experiences, including lower victimization and absenteeism and higher academic achievement.

Given the high percentages of LGBT students in Iowa who experience harassment at school and the limited access to key resources and supports that can have a positive effect on their school experiences, it is critical that Iowa school leaders, education policymakers and other individuals who are obligated to provide safe learning environments for all students take the following steps:

- Implement comprehensive school anti-bullying/harassment policies;
- Support Gay-Straight Alliances;
- Provide professional development for school staff on LGBT student issues; and
- Increase student access to LGBT-inclusive curricular resources.

These actions can move us toward a future in which all students in Iowa will have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

To learn more about GLSEN and to get involved, visit [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org) or contact [glsen@glsen.org](mailto:glsen@glsen.org).

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

**ABOUT THE RESEARCH**

In 2011, GLSEN conducted the seventh National School Climate Survey (NSCS), a biennial survey of the experiences of LGBT youth in U.S. secondary schools. The national sample consisted of 8,584 LGBT students from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A total of 115 respondents were attending schools in Iowa. The majority of the sample was White (86%), 7% Hispanic/Latino, 3% multi-racial, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% African American/Black, and 1% Middle Eastern/Arab American. The gender composition was 52% female, 31% male, 9% some other gender (e.g., genderqueer), and 8% transgender. Most (98%) attended public schools. The school community makeup was 69% rural/small town, 26% urban, and 5% suburban. The results reported for Iowa have a margin of error of +/-9%.

For the national NSCS report or for any other GLSEN research, go to [www.glsen.org/research](http://www.glsen.org/research). Follow @GLSENResearch on Twitter.