



# From Teasing to Torment:

## A Report on School Climate in New York



A Report from GLSEN's Research Department

# From Teasing to Torment: A Report on School Climate in New York

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The **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network** is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. Established nationally in 1995, 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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## KEY FINDINGS

### **Biased language was frequently heard in New York schools:**

- A majority of New York students reported hearing homophobic remarks, such as “that’s so gay” (90%) or derogatory terms such as “faggot” or “dyke” (70%), from students in their school.
- Negative remarks about a person’s gender expression, such as a girl acting “too much like a boy” or a boy acting “too feminine,” were frequently heard in New York schools. Nearly 60% of respondents reported hearing such remarks from other students in school.
- Intervention by school personnel when overhearing biased language from students was not as common as should be expected. Less than half of New York youth reported that teachers or other school staff frequently intervened when hearing homophobic (37%), sexist (37%) or racist (35%) remarks in school.

### **Many New York students did not feel safe in their schools:**

- Over one-third (39%) of respondents reported bullying, name calling and harassment to be serious problems in their school, and less than half (44%) reported feeling very safe at school.
- Almost half (45%) of respondents reported feeling unsafe at school because of at least one personal characteristic, such as their physical appearance or gender expression.
- Over a third (35%) of respondents reported sexual orientation or gender expression to be the characteristics most often targeted for bullying and harassment in their school.

### **Responses of faculty and other school staff to reports of harassment and assault were often inadequate:**

- A majority (60%) of students who had been harassed or assaulted in school did not report it to a teacher, principal or other school staff person.
- Among those who did report incidents of harassment or assault, almost a fifth (14%) reported that school authorities did not take appropriate action to address the situation.

### **School anti-harassment policies were lacking:**

- Less than half (41%) of New York students reported that they were protected by a school anti-harassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Almost one-third (29%) were unsure whether or not their school had a protective policy of any kind.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given that less than half of New York students reported being protected by comprehensive anti-harassment policies in their schools, state-level safe school legislation that provides specific enumerated categories, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, must be adopted.
- Given that nearly a third of New York students did not know if their school had an anti-harassment policy of any kind, school staff and administrators must ensure that students are made fully aware of any anti-harassment protections provided by their school.
- Teachers and other school staff need training to address the inconsistency in their responses when hearing students make derogatory remarks and when learning of incidents of harassment and assault in school. In addition, schools should establish and enforce “no tolerance” policies regarding the use of biased language by school staff.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2003 GLSEN conducted its third national survey of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) youth—the 2003 National School Climate Survey (NSCS), the only national survey to document the experiences of LGBT youth in school. Results from this survey revealed that school can be an unsafe and hostile environment for many students, particularly those who are LGBT. Name calling, harassment and bullying, as well as the use of derogatory language by students were common occurrences in our nation’s schools and were often not properly addressed by teachers and other school staff.<sup>1</sup> Given the limited attention paid by federal, state and local policy makers to LGBT youth, and because GLSEN’s work to make all schools safe for LGBT students is on-going, it is important to keep informed about the experiences of LGBT students in their schools. Understanding the experiences of the general school population, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, is key to meeting this challenge. GLSEN hoped to broaden the scope of its research by documenting the attitudes and experiences of all students in secondary school, particularly their attitudes toward and experiences with anti-LGBT behavior at school. For this reason, GLSEN commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct a national survey of secondary school students and teachers. Topics covered in the survey included exposure to biased language, the frequency of bullying, name calling and harassment, and students’ personal experiences with harassment and assault at school. The full report from this study, *From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America*, also includes results from a national survey of secondary school teachers, and can be found on GLSEN’s website ([www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)). The following is a report of findings based on the responses of youth who were attending schools in New York at the time of the survey. Data collection and analysis of the national survey of students and teachers was conducted by Harris Interactive. Analysis of state oversampled data in this report was conducted by GLSEN’s Research Department.

## RESULTS

A total of 210 respondents attended schools in New York State at the time of the survey. As shown in Table 1, a majority of the respondents were white and just over half were male. The vast majority (92%) were in the 9th through 12th grades. Close to 5% of students in New York identified as LGBT.<sup>2</sup> Most respondents attended public schools in urban or suburban areas (see Table 2). Of the 14% who were attending private or parochial schools, 59% were in religious-affiliated schools, primarily Catholic (see Table 2).

### Biased Language in School

#### Biased Language from Students

Hearing derogatory remarks about oneself or others contributes to a hostile school environment for students. Thus, it is important to examine the frequency and pervasiveness of biased language in school. Students were asked how frequently they heard homophobic, racist, sexist and religiously-biased remarks from other students.

#### *Homophobic Remarks*

Homophobic remarks, such as “faggot” or “dyke,” were one of the most frequent types of biased language that respondents reported hearing from other students in New York schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Kosciw, J. G. (2004). *The 2003 National School Climate Survey: The school-related experiences of our nation’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth*. New York: GLSEN.

<sup>2</sup> The category “LGBT” includes respondents who were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or “other.”

**Table 1. Demographics of New York Participants**

**Race/Ethnicity**

White	61%
Black or African American	13%
Latino/a or Hispanic	15%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%
Multiracial	5%
Other race/ethnicity	1%

**Gender**

Male	54%
Female	46%

**LGBT Status**

LGBT	5%
Non-LGBT	95%

**Grade**

7th	2%
8th	6%
9th	22%
10th	28%
11th	16%
12th	26%

**Average Age = 15.4 years**

**Table 2. School Characteristics**

**Grade Levels**

K through 12 school	12%
Middle school	6%
Upper school (e.g., middle and high school)	2%
High school	80%

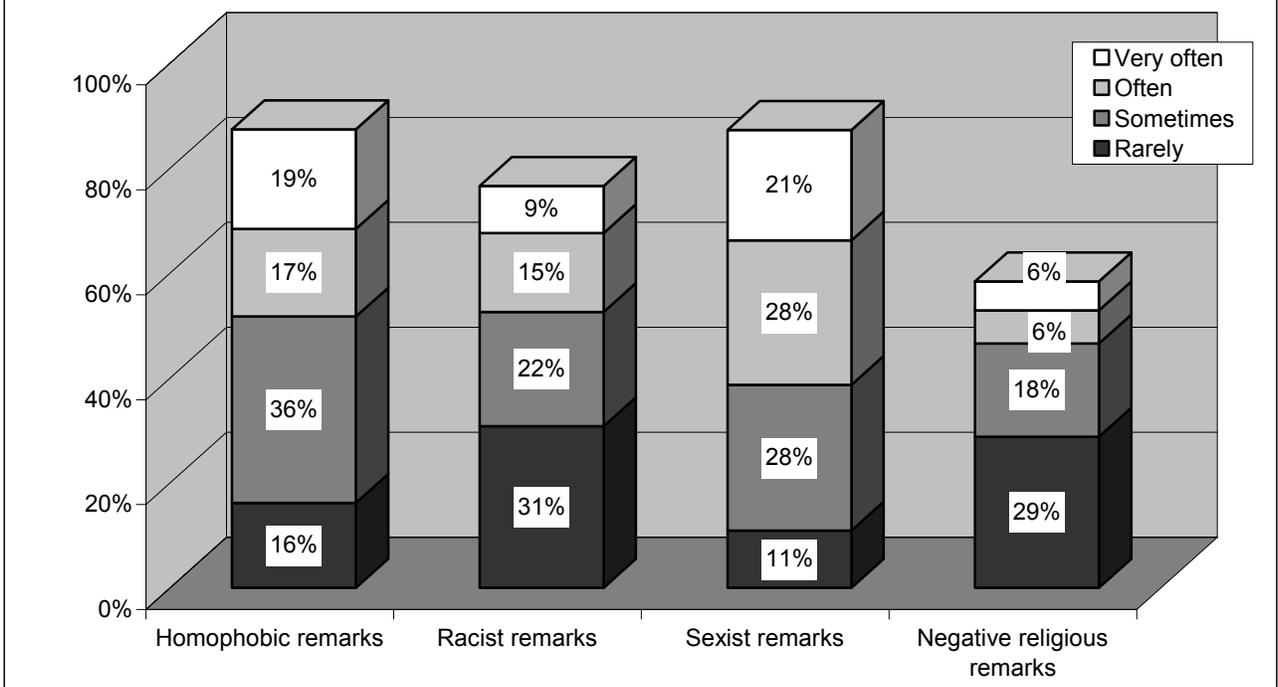
**Location**

Urban area	35%
Suburban area	45%
Small town or rural area	20%

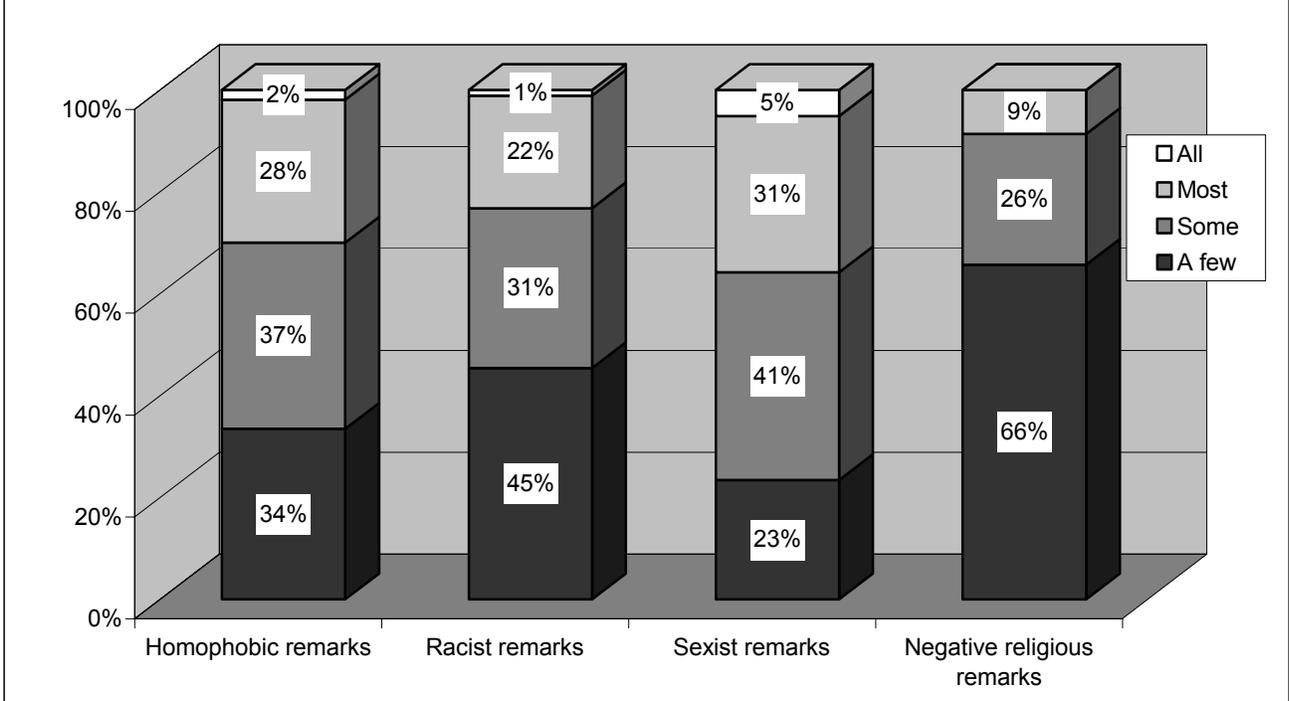
**School Type**

Public school	86%
Private or parochial school	14%
<i>Religious-affiliated</i>	<i>59%</i>

**Figure 1. Frequency of Remarks From Students**



**Figure 2. Number of Students Making Remarks**



As Figure 1 illustrates, almost three-fourths of respondents (72%) said that they heard such remarks from students at least some of the time and more than one-third (36%) reported hearing homophobic remarks even more frequently. Additionally, as shown in Figure 2, use of such language was not limited to a few students—about two-thirds (67%) of respondents reported hearing homophobic remarks from at least some of the students at school, and 30% reported hearing homophobic remarks from most or all of the students at their school.

The expressions “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” were most frequently heard by respondents. These expressions are used to indicate that something or someone valueless or “stupid.” Use of these expressions was extremely common in New York schools—nine out of ten (90%) respondents reported hearing “that’s so gay” or “you’re so gay” at least some of the time, and about two-thirds (67%) heard these expressions even more frequently (see Figure 3).

#### *Negative Remarks About Gender Expression*

Respondents were asked how often they had heard remarks about individuals’ nontraditional gender expression, such as a male student acting too “feminine,” or a female student acting “too much like a boy.”

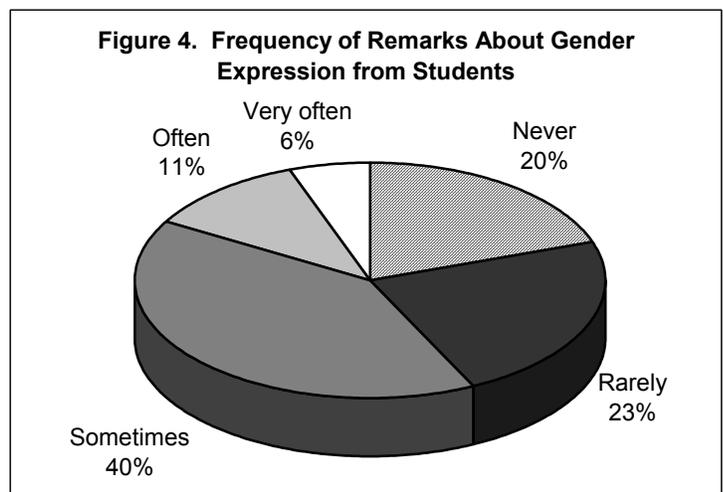
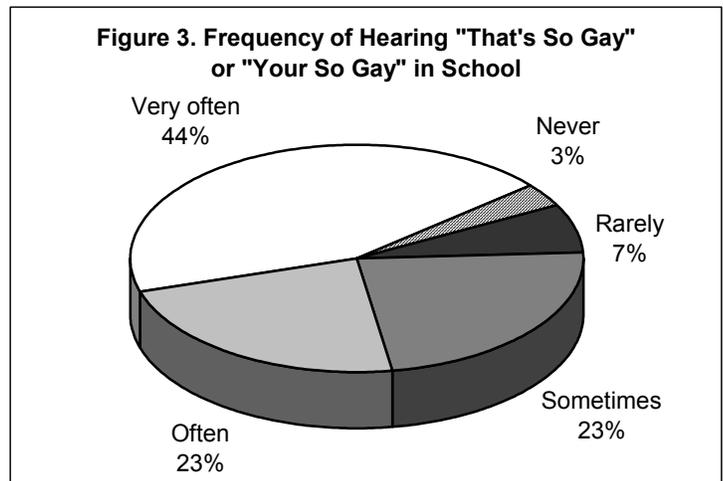
Although less common than homophobic remarks, over half of the respondents (57%) reported hearing negative comments about someone’s gender expression, and 17% reporting hearing such remarks often or very often from other students at school (see Figure 4).

#### *Sexist Remarks*

Sexist remarks, such as calling a girl a “bitch,” or saying girls are not as capable as boys, were commonly heard in New York schools. As shown in Figure 1, over three-quarters (77%) of respondents reported hearing sexist remarks from students at least some of the time, and almost half (49%) said that they heard such remarks often or very often. Additionally, 77% heard these remarks from at least some students, and over one-third (36%) reported hearing them from all or most of the students at their school (see Figure 2).

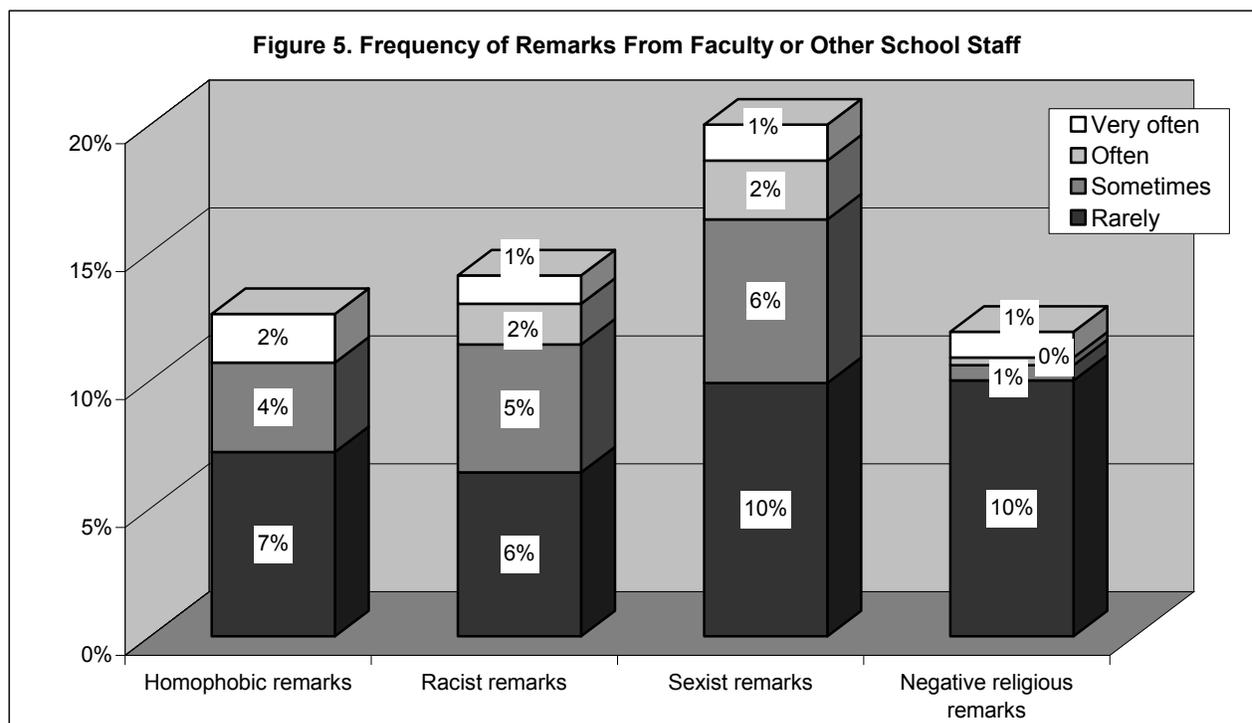
#### *Racist Remarks*

Although racist remarks were heard less frequently than homophobic or sexist remarks, these types of remarks were still common in New York schools. Nearly one-half (46%) reported hearing racist remarks from students at least some of the time, and 24% said they heard these remarks often or very often (see Figure 1). Furthermore, 54% heard racist remarks from at least some students and almost one-quarter (23%) said they heard them from most or all students at their school (see Figure 2).



## Negative Religious Remarks

Negative remarks about a person's actual or presumed religion were least commonly heard by respondents. As shown in Figure 1, three out of ten respondents reported hearing such remarks at least some of the time, and 12% heard negative religious remarks often or very often. Thirty-five percent of respondents reported hearing religious remarks from at least some students and less than 10% heard religious remarks from most of their peers (see Figure 2).

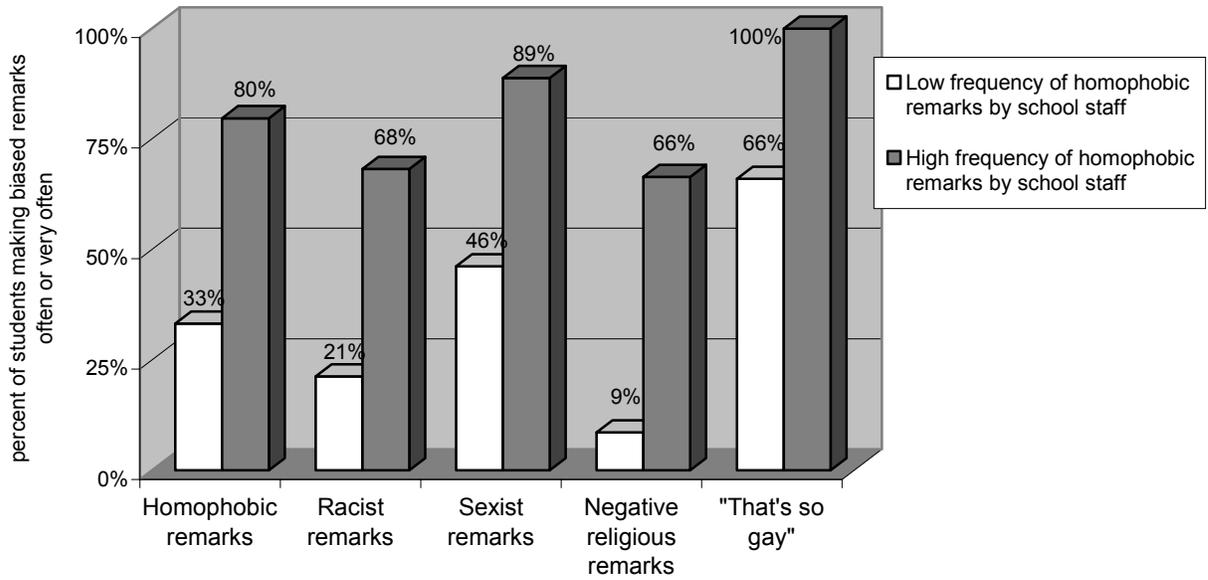


## Biased Language from Faculty and Other School Staff

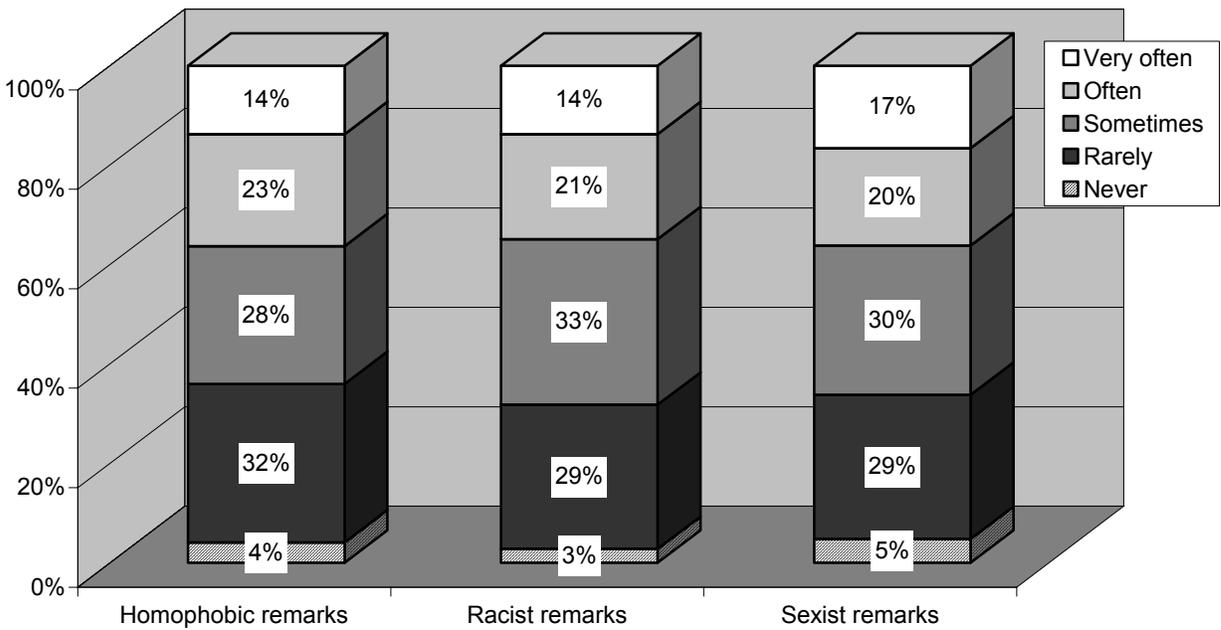
Hearing biased language from authority figures, such as a teacher or school principal, may send a message to students that use of such language in school is permissible. Although biased remarks from school authorities were not overly commonplace, given the possible impact on students any biased language coming from educators is troublesome. Accordingly, respondents were asked how often they heard homophobic, sexist, racist or negative religious remarks from faculty or other school staff. As shown in Figure 5, sexist remarks were, again, the most frequently heard biased language—about one-fifth reported hearing school personnel make sexist comments. A sizable percentage of students reported hearing racist (14%), homophobic (13%) and negative religious (12%) remarks from school personnel.

Respondents who reported that they heard homophobic remarks from school staff were more likely to report hearing students make homophobic, racist, sexist and negative religious remarks. As shown in Figure 6, among those students who reported that staff made homophobic remarks at least sometimes, a majority reported hearing frequent homophobic (80%), racist (68%), sexist (89%) and religious remarks (66%), and expressions such as “that’s so gay” (100%) from students. In contrast, respondents who rarely or never heard school staff make homophobic remarks were less likely to report hearing biased remarks from other students.

**Figure 6. Relationship Between the Frequency of Homophobic Remarks by School Staff and Students' Use of Biased Language**



**Figure 7. Frequency of Intervention by Faculty or Other School Staff**



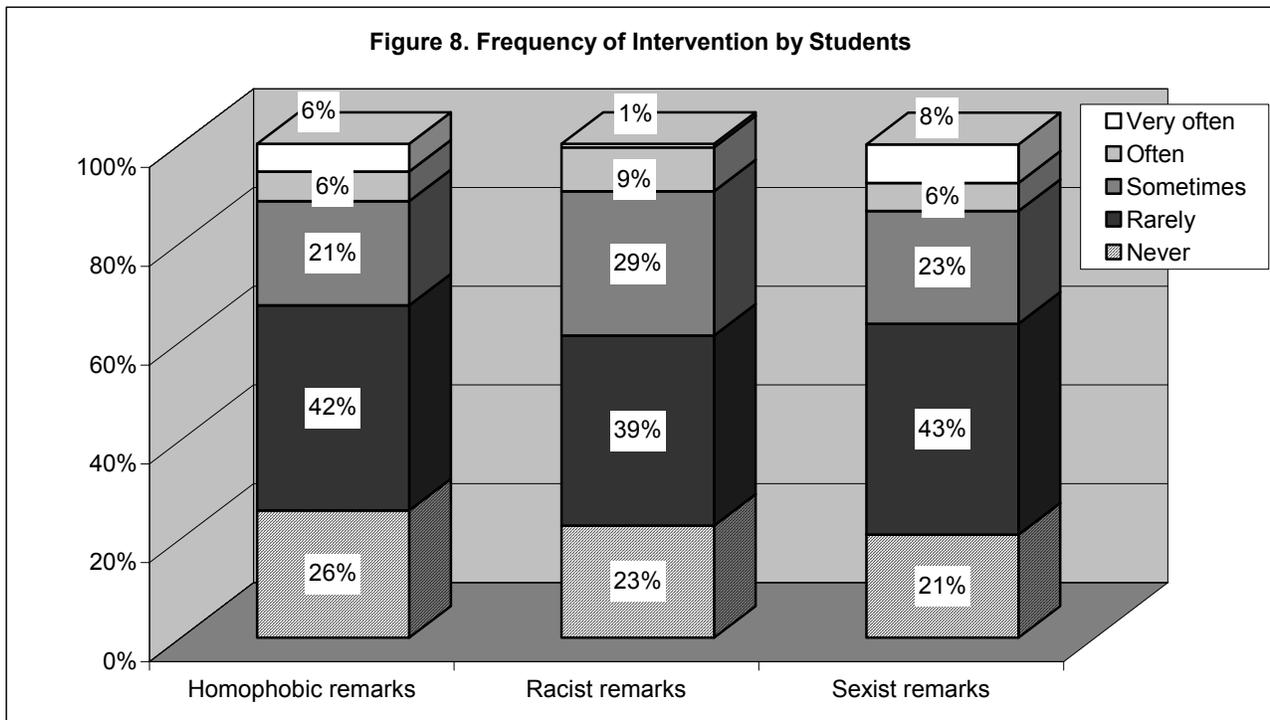
## Intervention Regarding Biased Remarks

### *Intervention by Faculty and Other School Staff*

When overhearing students make derogatory remarks at school, teachers and other school staff did not frequently correct, criticize or scold students for using this language. As shown in Figure 7, although the majority of respondents reported that school personnel intervened at least some of the time when overhearing biased remarks, only a little more than one-third reported that this happened frequently with regard to any of these types of remarks (35% for racist remarks and 37% for homophobic and sexist remarks). The lack of frequent intervention by school personnel may reinforce a belief that such language is not only tolerated but also acceptable in New York schools.

### *Intervention by Students*

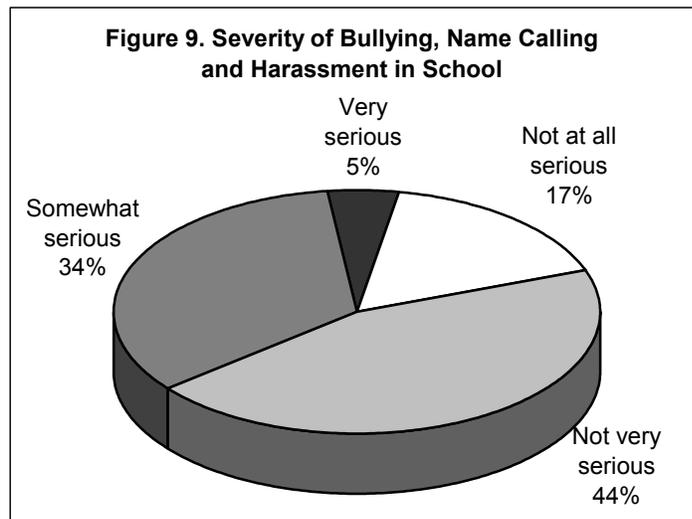
The degree to which students intervene when hearing derogatory language from their peers is another indicator of school climate. Students' own failure to intervene may be indicative of a school atmosphere in which use of such language is considered acceptable. Thus, students were asked how often other students corrected or criticized biased remarks made in school. Overall, students did not often intervene when other students used biased language. Although 33% of respondents reported that students intervened at least sometimes when hearing students make homophobic remarks (see Figure 8), only 12% of respondents reported hearing students correct other students more frequently for making such remarks. Thirty-nine percent reported that students intervened at least sometimes when hearing racist remarks (10% intervened more frequently), and 37% reported student intervention occurred at least sometimes when sexist remarks were made (14% more frequently).



## Severity of Bullying, Name Calling and Harassment in School

Survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of the severity of bullying, name calling and harassment in their schools. As shown in Figure 9, over one-third (39%) of respondents reported that these behaviors were at least somewhat serious issues troubling New York schools.

Respondents were also asked about the frequency of witnessing other students being bullied, called names or harassed in school. Bullying, name calling or harassment based on certain personal characteristics, especially physical appearance, gender expression and actual or perceived sexual orientation, were reported to occur frequently in New York schools. Most commonly reported was harassment because of physical appearance—66% of respondents reported that people at their school are harassed, bullied or called names because of their looks or body size, with 38% reporting that this occurred often or very often (see Figure 10).

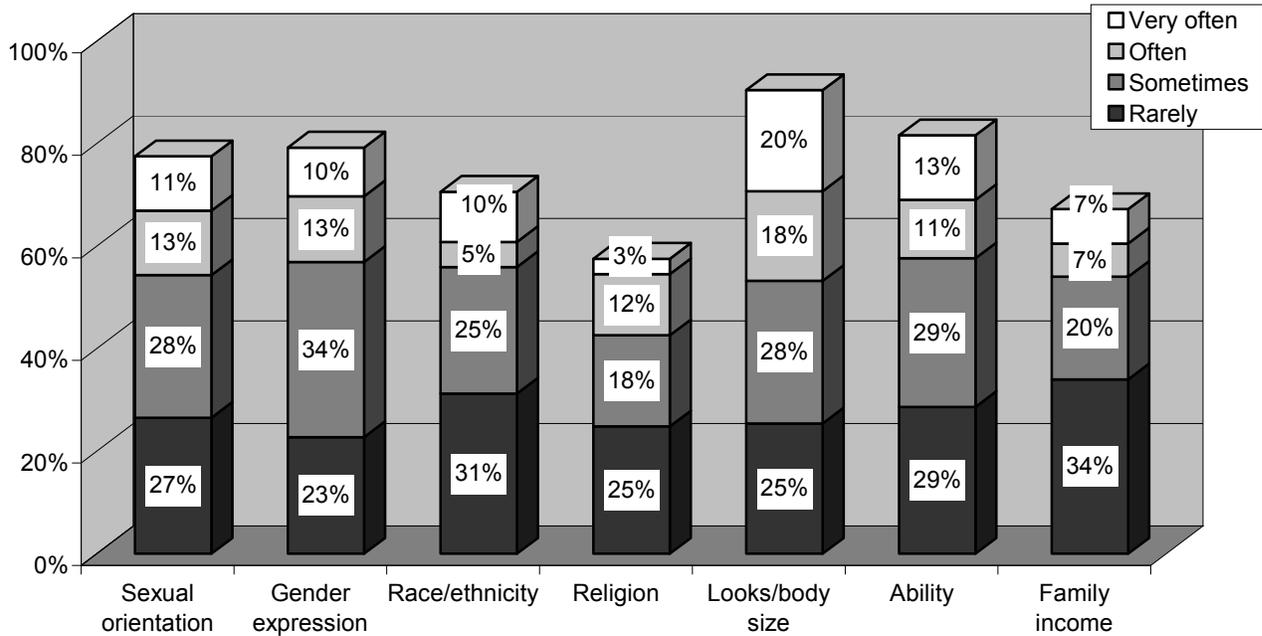


Bullying or harassment based on how a person expressed their gender, or because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation was also very common. About five out of ten (52%) respondents reported that students were the victims of such behaviors at least sometimes at school because they were (or people thought they were) lesbian, gay or bisexual. About a quarter (24%) said this occurred often or very often. Fifty-seven percent of respondents reported that students were bullied or harassed at least sometimes at school because of the way they expressed their gender and about a quarter (23%) said these behaviors occurred often or very often (see Figure 10).

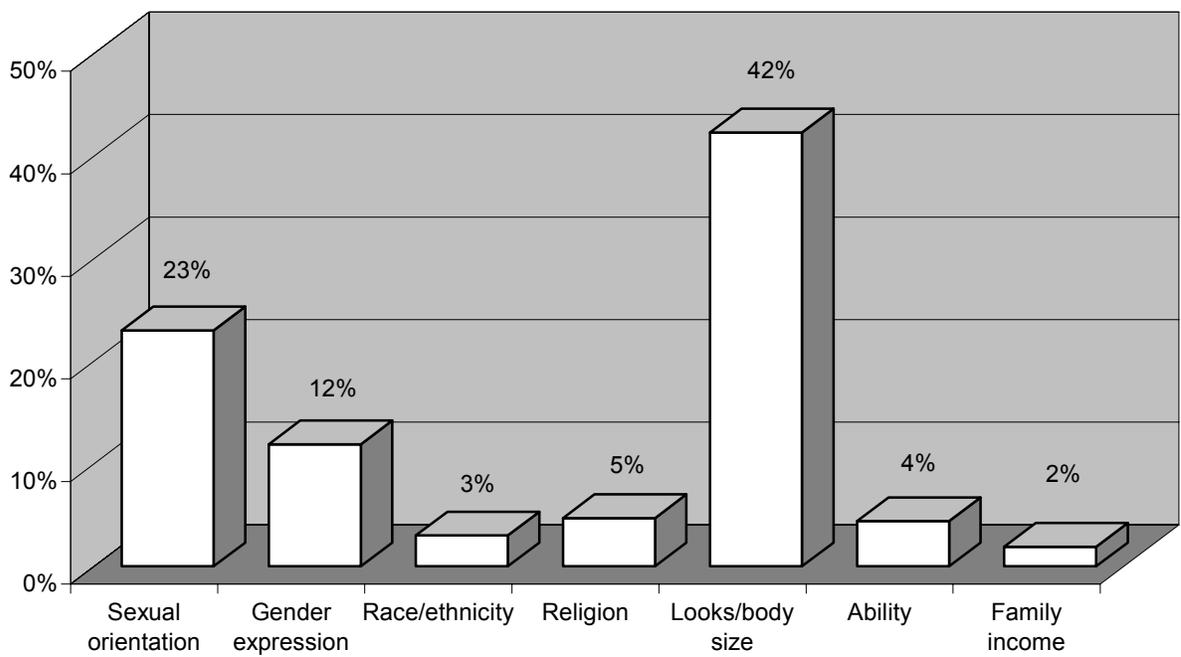
Bullying or harassment because of a person's ability at school was common as well. Fifty-three percent of respondents reported that this occurred at least some of the time at school, and about one-quarter (24%) said it happened often or very often. Bullying or harassment because of race or ethnicity was less commonly reported, yet still occurred with alarming frequency— four out of ten respondents reported that people were bullied at school at least sometimes because of their race or ethnicity (15% more frequently). Although being bullied because of actual or presumed religion or family income occurred least frequently, about one-third of respondents reported that each occurred at least sometimes in New York schools (see Figure 10).

Respondents were also asked to identify the most common reason that students were bullied, called names or harassed in school. Looks/body size and actual or perceived sexual orientation were reported to be the characteristics most often targeted in New York schools. As shown in Figure 11, 42% of respondents said looks or body size were the most common characteristics targeted for bullying and harassment at their school. Almost one-quarter of respondents reported that students were bullied, called names or harassed most often because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Twelve percent reported gender expression to be the most common reason people were bullied at their school. Less than 5% of respondents reported that students were bullied, called names or harassed most often because of their ability, religion, race or ethnicity or family income.

**Figure 10. Frequency of Bullying, Name Calling or Harassment**

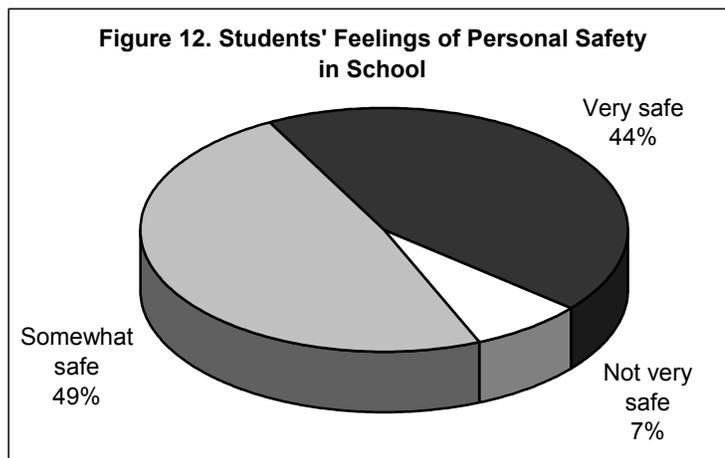


**Figure 11. Reason Students Most Often Bullied, Called Names or Harassed in School**

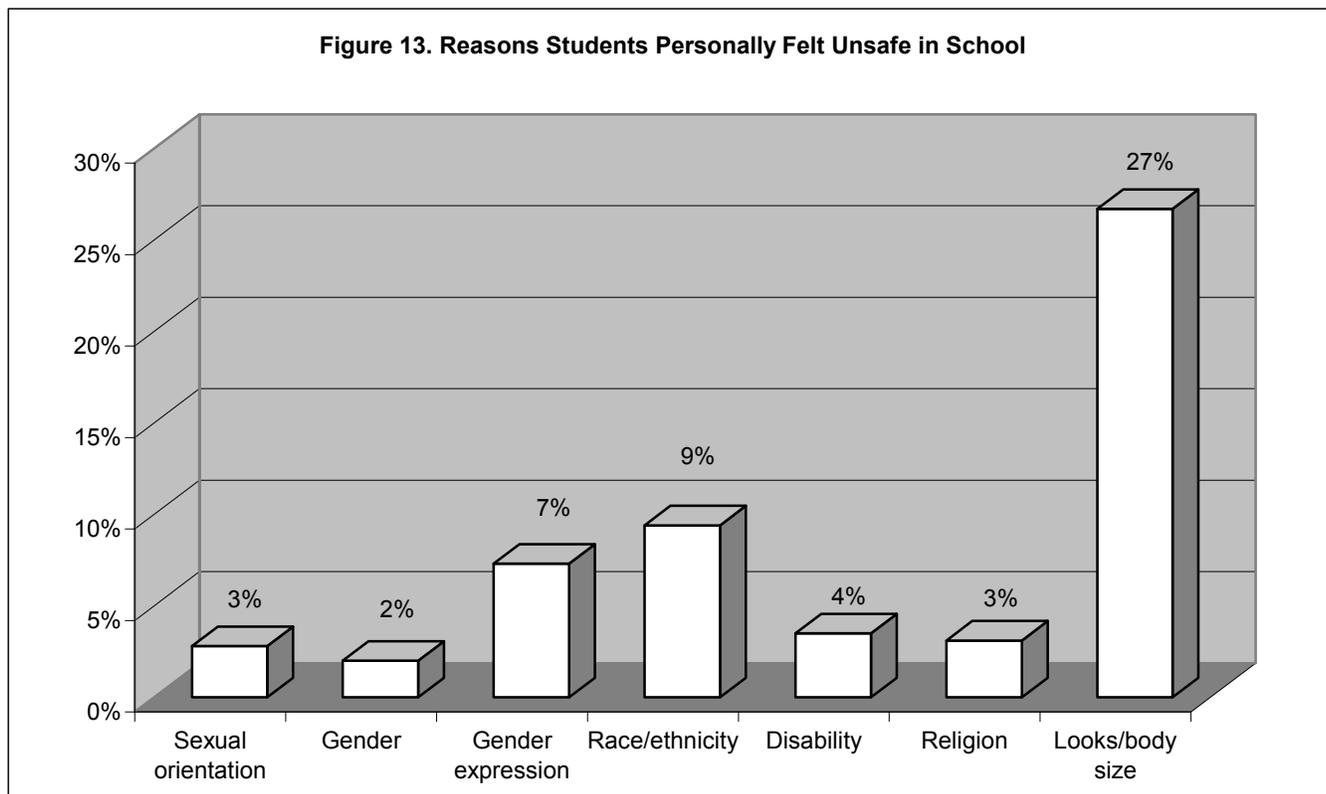


## Safety in School

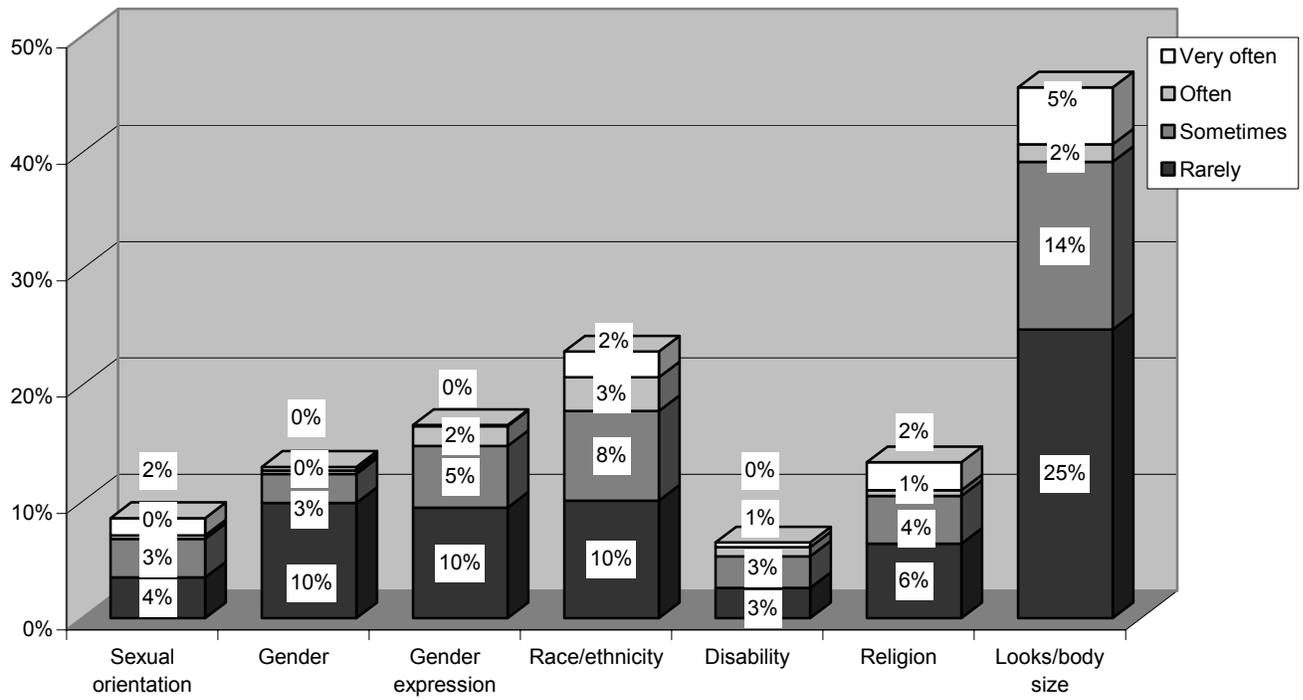
In addition to reporting the frequency of witnessing bullying, name calling and harassment experienced by other students, respondents were asked a range of questions regarding their personal safety in school and their own experiences of being verbally or physically harassed or assaulted in school. Results from this survey revealed that many New York youth did not feel completely safe at school. As shown in Figure 12, less than half of the respondents (44%) reported feeling "very safe" in school.



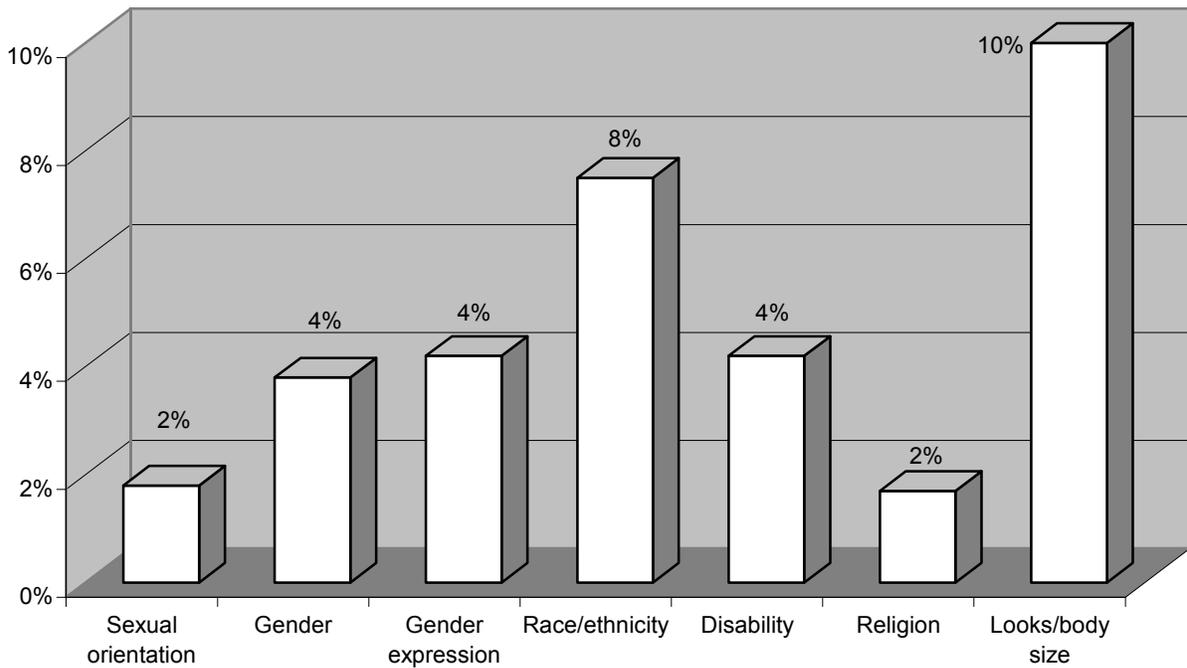
To understand the reasons why many respondents did not feel completely safe at school, survey respondents were asked whether they felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability, religion or looks/body size. Forty-five percent reported feeling unsafe because of at least one of the aforementioned characteristics. As Figure 13 illustrates, 3% of respondents reported feeling unsafe because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, and 7% for the way in which they expressed their gender. Respondents most commonly reported that they felt unsafe because of the way they looked or their body size (27%). Nine percent of respondents reported feeling unsafe because of their race or ethnicity, and 4% felt unsafe because of a disability. Gender and religion were reported least frequently as reasons for feeling unsafe at school (2% and 3%, respectively).



**Figure 14. Frequency of Students Personally Experiencing Verbal Harassment in the Past Year**



**Figure 15. Percentage of Students Personally Experiencing Physical Harassment or Assault in the Past Year**



## **Personal Experiences of Bullying, Name Calling and Harassment**

### Verbal Harassment

Survey respondents were asked how often they had experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened) in the past school year. As shown in Figure 14, verbal harassment based on physical appearance was most common—46% of respondents reported being verbally harassed at some point in school because of their looks or body size. Racially/ethnically motivated verbal harassment was also common—about one-quarter (23%) of New York students had been harassed because of their race or ethnicity. Verbal harassment based on gender or religion was not uncommon either—13% of respondents had been verbally harassed at school for each of these reasons. The largest percentage of respondents who were harassed because of their religion were Jewish or identified with no religion (27% and 26%, respectively). Nine percent of New York students reported being verbally harassed because of their sexual orientation. In addition, 17% reported being verbally harassed for the way in which they expressed their gender at school. Although respondents were more likely to report being verbally harassed because of their looks or body size than any other single characteristic, the results still indicate that verbal harassment of all types remains an unacceptable problem in New York schools.

### Physical Harassment and Assault

Survey respondents were also asked if they had been physically harassed or assaulted at school in the past year. Given the extreme nature of these forms of harassment, it is not surprising that both physical harassment (e.g., being pushed or shoved) and physical assault (e.g., being punched or kicked) were reported to occur less frequently than verbal harassment. However, such behaviors were not unheard of in New York schools. As shown in Figure 15,<sup>3</sup> looks and body size were, again, the most frequently reported reasons for such behavior—10% of respondents reported being physically harassed or assaulted in the past school year based on their physical appearance. Harassment and assault because of race or ethnicity were not uncommon occurrences—8% of respondents had been physically harassed or assaulted for this reason.

Gender expression and having an actual or perceived disability were the third most common reasons that students gave for being harassed or assaulted—4% of respondents reported being physically harassed or assaulted in the past year for these reasons. Respondents also reported being the victims of physical harassment or assault at school because of their sexual orientation (2%). It is worth noting that every characteristic had been the basis for harassment or assault in New York schools for at least some students during the past year. Regardless of how frequent any of these events were, given their severity any occurrences of physical harassment or assault in school is unacceptable.

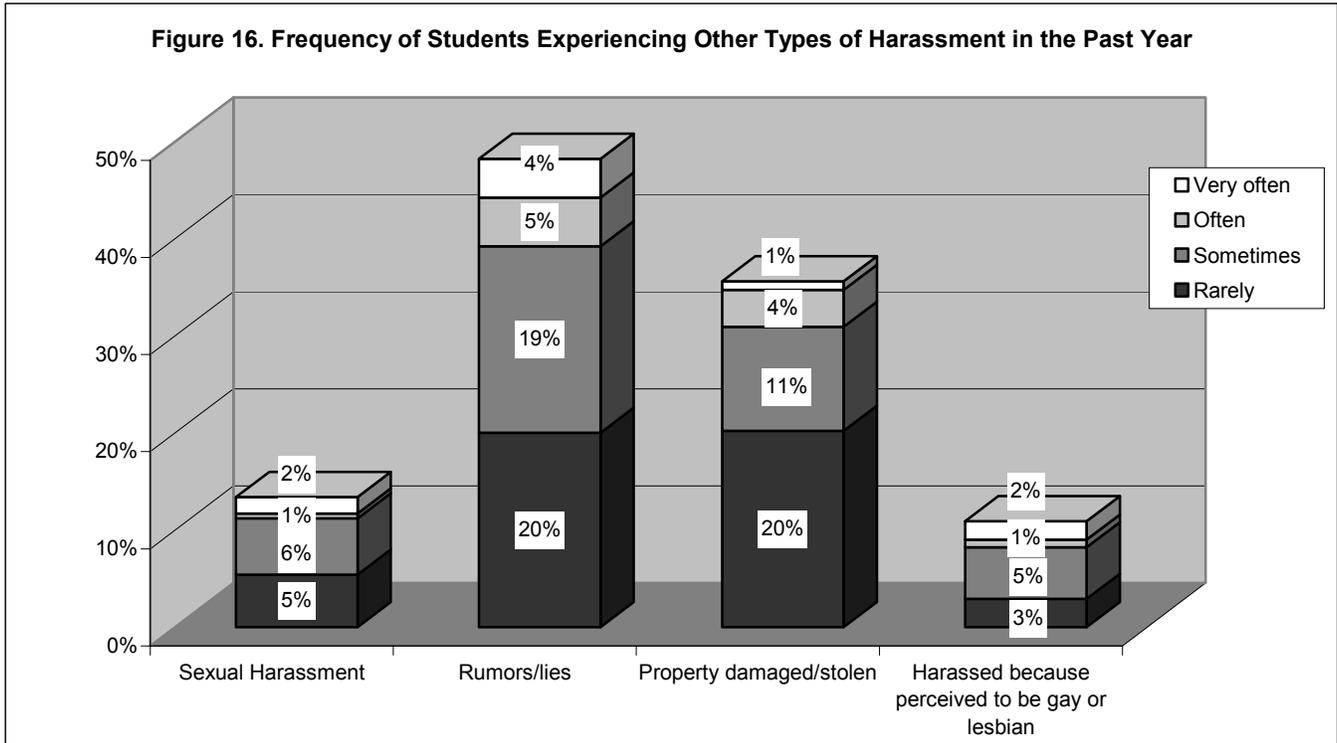
### Other Forms of Harassment in School

Figure 16 illustrates other forms of bullying and harassment in school. Unlike the previously discussed frequencies of verbal harassment and physical harassment or assault, students were not asked whether these types of harassment were specifically related to a personal characteristic. For example, students may be the target of mean rumors or lies because of their sexual orientation or religion or for no apparent reason. Of these types of harassment, students most frequently reported being the target of mean rumors or lies with over a quarter (28%) of students reporting that it had occurred at least sometimes in the past year. Almost one-fifth (16%) reported that their personal property had been damaged or stolen at least sometimes in

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<sup>3</sup> Given the low incidence of physical harassment and assault, Figure 15 represents only whether students ever experienced the particular event, i.e., those who reported “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often” or “very often.”

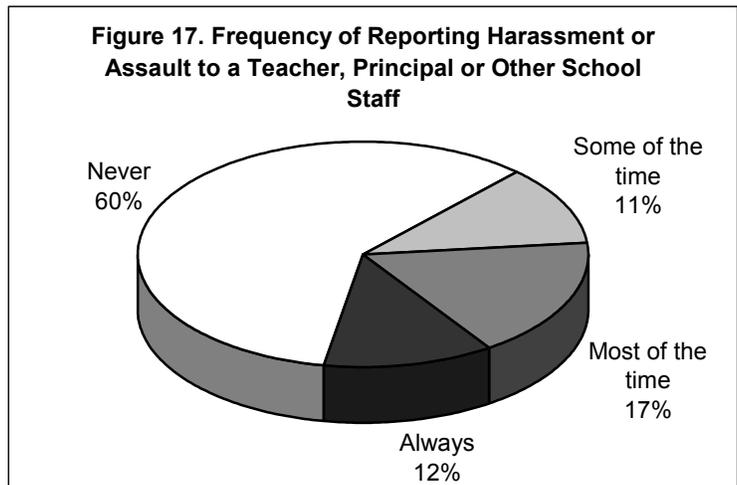
the previous year and 9% had been sexually harassed at least some of the time in school. Nearly 10% reported that they had been harassed because others thought they were gay or lesbian.



### Reporting Incidents of Harassment

When asked how often they reported incidents of harassment or assault to a teacher, principal or other school staff person, 60% of respondents who had experienced such events said that they had never reported the incident (see Figure 17).

Respondents who did not report the incident were asked why they had not done so. About a third of students (32%) felt that it was not serious enough to report (e.g., it was a joke or reporting was too much trouble). For example, a 15-year old 10<sup>th</sup> grader said that she did not think that the incident was serious enough to be reported because “people are called things like slut all of the time” at her school. This comment is troubling because it may be an indication that at least certain types of harassment are commonplace or to be expected.



The second most common reason given, by about a quarter of respondents (22%), was that they felt reporting the incident would worsen the situation in some way (e.g.; they would get a “bad reputation,” be made fun of by other students or be labeled a “narc”). Several of these students expressed concern that reporting the incident would further provoke the perpetrators:

*People would beat you up for telling.*

*[Reporting would] make the problem worse than it is. Retaliation.*

*I didn't want the person to get mad at me and try to hurt me because [I] got them in trouble.*

Another common reason given by respondents was that they handled the situation on their own rather than report the incident (13%). Several respondents who had been harassed or assaulted in the past year did not report the incident to a teacher or other school staff person because they felt that nothing would be done to address the situation. For example, one 15 year-old 10<sup>th</sup> grade student explained why she chose not to report the incident:

*I didn't think it would do anything to help my problem. My friends stick up for me, and most of the teachers seem not to care, they seem to have other things on their minds anyway. My friends who have gone to teachers, it doesn't help, if not [make] matters worse.*

For many respondents, reporting incidents of harassment or assault to a teacher or other school staff person did not elicit a helpful response. Considerably less than half (37%) of respondents who reported incidents of harassment or assault to school personnel said that some sort of immediate action was taken (e.g., the teacher reported the incident to the principal or confronted the perpetrator). Instead, these students were told to ignore the incident or were merely assured that the staff person would “look into it.”

*They talked to the student but did not 'punish' him or try to resolve it.*

*[T]old me to ignore the boys for pulling my bra—said they were being immature.*

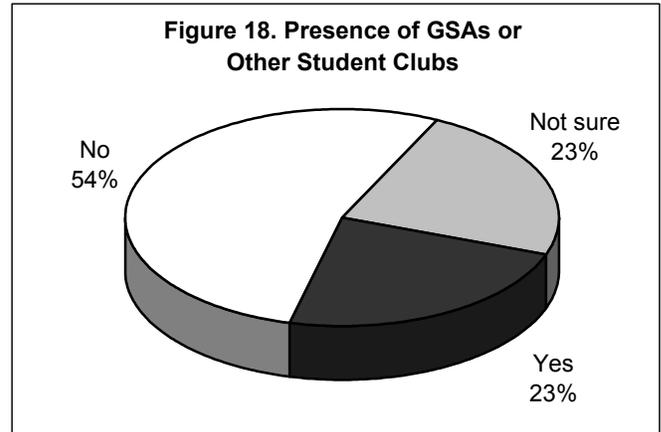
These comments from students paint a bleak picture of the climate of New York schools. Most did not report to school personnel when they have been harassed or assaulted in school, often because they believed that doing so would make their lives worse in school or that school personnel would not adequately address the problem. Furthermore, of those who did report incidents to school personnel, it was the minority of students who said that it resulted in immediate action being taken. Because students do not often report harassment to school staff, school staff may not be fully informed as to the dangers their students are facing in their schools. Yet students may not increase their level of reporting until they see teachers and other staff consistently addressing these problems when they arise. In order to break this cycle, schools must take the first step by implementing effective school policies around safety issues and trainings for school personnel on how to address these issues in school.

### **School Climate and Educational Indicators**

Truancy, school engagement, and educational aspirations may be affected by the frequency of negative experiences such as bullying, name calling or feeling unsafe at school. Nine percent of respondents reported that a friend had skipped class at least one time in the past month of school because they felt unsafe in school, and 7% reported a friend missing at least one entire day of school in the past month for this reason. In addition, 9% of respondents reported that they had skipped a class at least one time in the past month because they felt unsafe in school, and 10% had missed at least one entire school day for the same reason. Less than half (46%) of respondents reported that they liked school and respondents who felt unsafe at school were less likely to report that they liked school (18% compared to 49% of those students who felt safe).

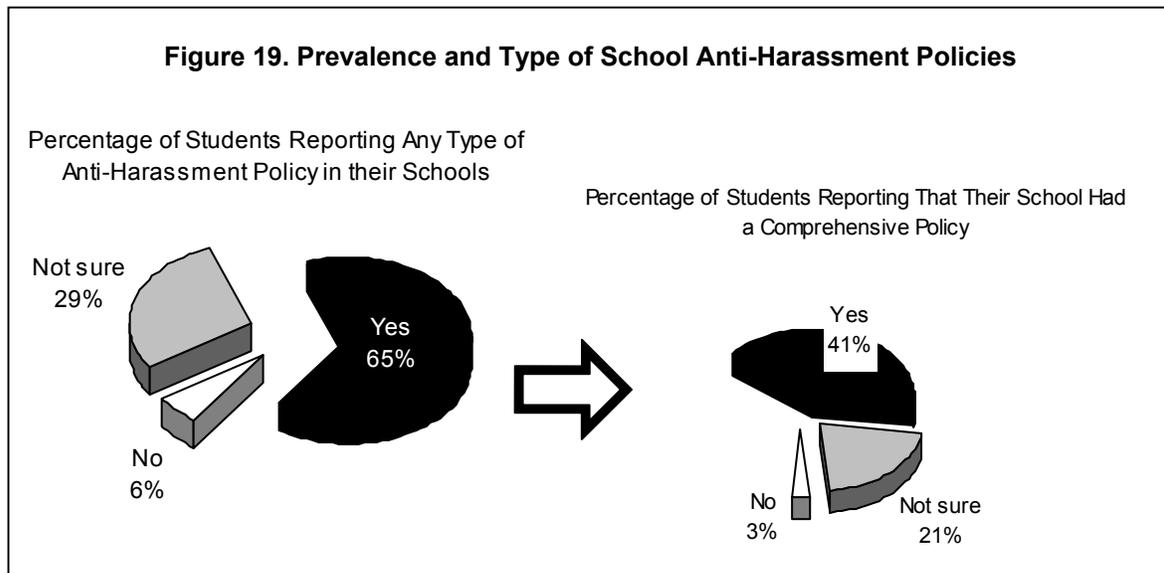
## LGBT Resources and Supports in School

Bullying, name calling and harassment because of actual or perceived sexual orientation as well as hearing homophobic remarks were reported to occur quite frequently in New York schools. Such activities may create a hostile learning environment, particularly for LGBT students. The existence of supportive resources may help lessen the negative effects of such a climate. Thus, respondents were asked about the presence of GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances) or other clubs that address LGBT student issues, and about the existence of policies for reporting incidences of harassment and assault.



As shown in Figure 18, 23% of New York respondents reported that their school had a GSA or other type of club addressing of LGBT student issues. Respondents whose school had a student club were more likely to like school (62% versus 39%). Furthermore, 100% of students whose school had a student club reported future college plans compared to 86% of those whose school did not have a supportive student club. Given these findings, it may be that having a student club that addresses LGBT student issues is an indicator of a better learning environment for all students.

As illustrated in Figure 19, the majority (65%) of respondents believed that their school had a general policy for reporting incidents of harassment and assault, and 63% of those respondents also believed that their school had a policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. Thus, less than half (41%) reported that they were protected by comprehensive school policies. It is important to note that almost one-third of students were unsure whether or not their school had any protective policy. While it is possible that these students were not aware of a policy because one did not exist, it is also possible that the students were not informed about existing policies and that these New York schools need to do a more comprehensive job of informing their students.



## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

For some New York State students, school was an unsafe place in which bullying, name calling and harassment were a regular part of their school day. Reports of verbal harassment, physical harassment and assault, particularly because of physical appearance and gender expression, were not uncommon among New York students. A majority of students reported that their peers were bullied, called names or harassed because of at their personal characteristics, especially their physical appearance, sexual orientation or nontraditional gender expression. Furthermore, a majority of students heard homophobic and sexist remarks as well as negative remarks about gender expression.

Biased language was even heard from some faculty and other school staff. Further, school personnel often failed to intervene when hearing biased remarks from students, and some school authorities did not take appropriate action when students reported incidents of harassment or assault. Experiences with harassment and bullying, hearing derogatory language in the classroom as well as in the hallways and a general lack of intervention by their peers and school staff may be key to understanding why many students did not feel completely safe at school.

The results of this study indicate that much work needs to be done in New York to insure that all students have access to a safe and supportive learning environment. Nearly a third of New York students did not know if their school had an anti-harassment policy of any kind, indicating that school staff and administrators need to do a better job ensuring that students are made fully aware of any anti-harassment protections provided by their school. Given that less than half of New York students reported being protected by comprehensive anti-harassment policies in their schools, state-level safe school legislation that provides specific enumerated categories, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, must be adopted. New York teachers and other school staff need training to address the inconsistency in their responses when hearing students make derogatory remarks and when learning of incidents of harassment and assault in school. In addition, schools should establish and enforce "no tolerance" policies regarding the use of biased language by school staff.

## **ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY**

Student interviews were conducted online by a nationally representative sample of 3,450 public and private/parochial students ages 13 to 18. Within this sample, an oversample of students was drawn from Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. Interviews averaged 15 minutes and were conducted between December 15 and December 20, 2004. Sample was drawn from the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) multimillion member online panel of cooperative respondents from over one hundred countries. Invitations for this study were emailed to a selected sample of the database identified as residing in the United States and being a student between the ages of 13 and 18. Data for the national survey were weighted to reflect the national population of children ages 13 to 18 for key demographic variables (gender, age, race and ethnicity, size of place, region, and parent's education). Demographic weights were based on U.S. Census data obtained via the March 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS). For the national survey, a post weight was applied to the student data to adjust for the twelve state oversampling so that the regional distribution reflects the nation as a whole. State-specific data, including that which is presented in this report, does not reflect this postweight.