Findings from the GLSEN 2017 National School Climate Survey demonstrate that Washington schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBTQ students in Washington did not have access to important school resources, such as an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum, and were not protected by supportive and inclusive school policies.

FACT: The vast majority of LGBTQ students in Washington regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) heard anti-LGBTQ remarks (Fig. 1). Some also regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (18%) and negative remarks about someone’s gender expression (39%).

FACT: Most LGBTQ students in Washington experienced anti-LGBTQ victimization at school (Fig. 2). They also experienced victimization at school based on religion (22%), disability (25%), and race/ethnicity (23%). Most never reported the incident to school staff (53%). Only 26% of students who reported incidents said it resulted in effective staff intervention.

**Figure 1. Hearing Anti-LGBTQ Remarks from Students in Washington Schools**

- “Gay” Used in a Negative Way (e.g., “that’s so gay”): 86%
- Homophobic Remarks (e.g., “fag,” “dyke”): 77%
- Negative Remarks about Gender Expression: 81%
- Negative Remarks about Transgender People: 69%

**Figure 2. Anti-LGBTQ Harassment & Assault in Washington Schools**

- Sexual Orientation: 63%
- Gender Expression: 53%
- Gender: 56%

**Figure 3. Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination in Washington Schools**

- Using the Locker Room that Aligns with Gender: 30%
- Using the Bathroom that Aligns with Gender: 29%
- Expressing PDA in School: 27%
- Using Their Chosen Name or Gender Pronouns: 26%
- Wearing Clothing Considered Inappropriate for Their Gender: 18%
- Including LGBTQ Themes in Extracurricular Activities: 15%
- Discussing LGBTQ Issues in Assignments: 15%
FACT: Many LGBTQ students in Washington did not have access to in-school resources and supports (Fig. 4).

- Only approximately 1 in 4 (27%) attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy that included specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. Only 1 in 4 (24%) had a policy or official guidelines to support transgender or gender nonconforming (trans/GNC) students.
- Nearly all (98%) could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBTQ students (not in Fig. 4), but fewer (70%) could identify 6 or more supportive school staff.
- Only 1 in 4 (25%) were taught positive representations of LGBTQ people, history, or events ("inclusive curriculum"). Only 12% reported receiving LGBTQ-inclusive sex education at school (not in Fig. 4).

RECOMMENDATIONS

School-based supports such as supportive and inclusive school policies, school personnel who are supportive of LGBTQ students, GSAs, and LGBTQ-inclusive curricular resources can positively affect school climate for LGBTQ students. Findings from the 2017 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 LGBTQ students in Washington 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 Washington school leaders, education policymakers, and other individuals who are obligated to provide safe learning environments for all students take the following steps:

- Implement supportive and inclusive school policies, such as comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment and supportive transgender and gender nonconforming student policies;
- Support GSAs;
- Provide professional development for school staff on LGBTQ student issues; and
- Increase student access to LGBTQ-inclusive curricular resources.

These actions can move us toward a future in which all students in Washington 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 glsen.org or contact glsen@glsen.org.
To get involved in the GLSEN Washington State chapter, visit glsen.org/chapters/washingtonstate or contact washingtonstate@chapters.glsen.org.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH In 2017, GLSEN conducted the tenth National School Climate Survey, a biennial survey of the experiences of LGBTQ youth in U.S. secondary schools. The national sample consisted of 23,001 LGBTQ students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and all 5 major U.S. territories. A total of 745 respondents were attending schools in Washington. The Washington sample was majority White (72%), 10% Hispanic/Latine, 10% Multiracial, 4% Asian/South Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Native American, 1% Black/African American, and < 1% Arab/Middle Eastern. The gender composition was 49% cisgender, 30% transgender, 13% genderqueer, and 8% another gender (e.g., questioning, genderfluid). Most (93%) attended public schools. The school community makeup was 30% rural/small town, 42% suburban, and 29% urban. The results reported for Washington had a margin of error of +/- 4%.

For the full 2017 National School Climate Survey report or for any other GLSEN research, go to glsen.org/research.

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GLSEN is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students.

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