

GLSEN's Educator Advisory Council's Guide for Rising Up & Taking Action for Day of (No) Silence 2024

An Action Guide for Educators in Supportive School Communities



This year, GLSEN's Day of Silence takes place Friday April 12, 2024. With more than 800 anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced last year, we must rise up and take action. GLSEN's Day of (No) Silence is a student-led demonstration where LGBTQ+ students and their allies protest the discrimination of LGBTQ+ people in schools.

Protest comes with risks. Effective advocacy requires assessing these risks to ensure principled solidarity. We aim to equip educators for context-specific action. This action guide was created by GLSEN's Educator Advisory Council (EAC), a group of educators leading LGBTQ+ inclusion work in communities across the country. The unique experiences of EAC members teaching in both LGBTQ+ supportive and hostile climates have shaped the guidance offered here.

The actions highlighted are centered around **GLSEN's Four Supports**: *Supportive Educators, Comprehensive Policies, Inclusive Learning, and Student-led Organizations*. When these Four Supports are in place, LGBTQ+ students experience less harassment and discrimination, do better in school, and experience a better school climate (GLSEN 2022).

Be a Supportive Educator

LGBTQ+ affirming educators, including you, are a crucial support for changing outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth. Your presence is life-changing and often life-saving in schools. At this time, there is an organized effort to erase LGBTQ+ people from public life, teach falsehoods about our nation and our people, and dismantle both education and democracy. With these high stakes, your commitment to education justice is critical.

- **Sign up** for Day of (No) Silence updates and resources!
- Connect with LGBTQ+ supportive educators in your area on GLSEN's secure digital platform: Educator Spaces. Email educators@glSEN.org for details.
- Ask your school leadership to schedule Professional Development opportunities to learn more about LGBTQ+ inclusion. Consider booking GLSEN's **Intentional Inclusion!**
- Make your support clear! Consider decorating your classroom, office, and library with trans flags or other symbols of LGBTQ+ affirmation and joy. Ask students what name they go by and their pronouns. Create a classroom culture ensuring the humanity and dignity of every student is honored.

Incorporate Inclusive Learning

An inclusive curriculum serves as both a mirror and window: reflecting individuals' experiences back to themselves and introducing the experiences of those who possess different identities. And yet, inclusive learning is more than representation — it is fundamentally about teaching the truth about our history, our world, and our people.

- Read books from GLSEN's **Rainbow Library** & utilize our curricular resources.
- For student-choice reading lists, include books featuring LGBTQ+ characters. When designing student-selected research topics on historical figures, list LGBTQ+ advocates, thinkers, and artists. Take care to include LGBTQ+ folks with differing intersecting identities!
- Incorporate inclusive images and characters in your students' learning materials such as slide decks, worksheets, and word problems.

Support Student-led Clubs & Advocacy

Opportunities for LGBTQ+ students to engage in leadership development are critical for ensuring that LGBTQ+ youth have equitable access to the fullness of their learning environments. Additionally, LGBTQ+ student leadership fosters the empowerment of the next generation of advocates, organizers, and visionaries.

- If your school already has a GSA, ask student leaders how you can support their group. Help them make an action plan to engage with Day of (No) Silence. If your school doesn't have a GSA, consider becoming a sponsor. Check out more [tips here](#) on supporting student-led GSAs!
- Plan a letter-writing lesson where students write to local state legislators, principals, or other school leaders to ask them to support LGBTQ+ students.
- Celebrate queer joy — make noise, march in a parade, host a dance party – plan this celebration alongside student leadership!

Champion Comprehensive Policies

At schools with policies that explicitly protect students based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion, LGBTQ students report experiencing less bullying and feeling safer overall. They also report that teachers are more likely to intervene when bullying occurs (GLSEN, 2022). Inclusive policies reduce the likelihood that an LGBTQ+ person's rights are violated, and make clear what someone can do to remedy the situation if there is a violation.

- Testify before your school board or state legislature in support of inclusive policies. Leverage your network! Find supportive families, organizers, community organizations who can fiercely advocate for inclusive policies in your school. Resources from [School Board School](#) and your state's [Equality Federation member organization](#) can help you get started!
- Send a message to Congress via GLSEN's [Action Center](#)! Ask your principals, superintendents, and state legislators to take action to ensure that every member of your school community is valued and respected.
- Form a task force to review and advocate for LGBTQ+ inclusion. Work towards becoming an anti-racist school, center the needs of disabled students, and use an intersectional framework to support students holding multiple oppressed identities. Read about the [New Haven LGBTQ+ Youth Task Force](#) as an example!