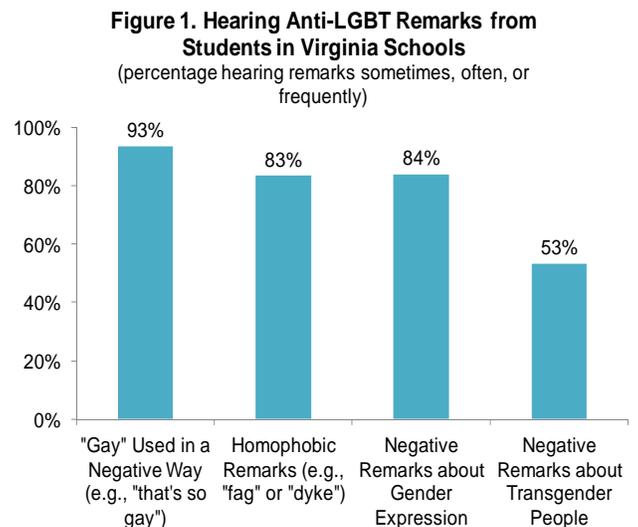


## 2013 STATE SNAPSHOT

Findings from the GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey demonstrate that Virginia schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBT students in Virginia 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.

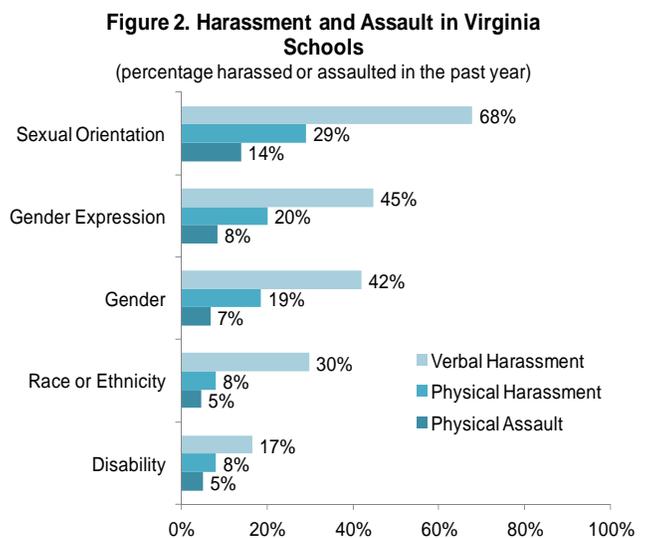
**FACT: The vast majority of LGBT students in Virginia regularly heard anti-LGBT remarks.**

- More than 9 in 10 heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”) and more than 8 in 10 heard other homophobic remarks (e.g., “fag” or “dyke”) at school regularly (i.e. sometimes, often, or frequently; see Figure 1).
- More than 8 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).
- More than 5 in 10 regularly heard negative remarks about transgender people (see Figure 1).
- Students also heard biased language from school staff. 26% regularly heard school staff make negative remarks about someone’s gender expression and 15% regularly heard staff make homophobic remarks.



**FACT: Most LGBT students in Virginia 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): nearly 7 in 10 based on their sexual orientation and more than 4 in 10 based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).
- Many also experienced physical harassment and physical assault: for example, 3 in 10 were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation and nearly 1 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: 84% felt deliberately excluded or “left out” by peers; 72% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 57% were sexually harassed; 41% experienced electronic harassment or “cyberbullying”; and 37% had property (e.g., car, clothing, or books) deliberately damaged and/or stolen.

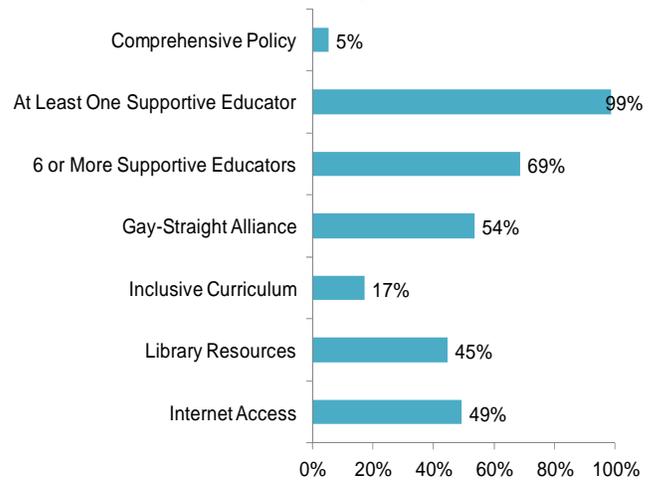


- 59% of students who were harassed or assaulted in school *never* reported it to school staff, and 54% *never* told a family member about the incident. Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only 26% said that reporting resulted in effective intervention by staff.

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

- Only 5% 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 69% could identify many (6 or more) supportive school staff (see Figure 3).
- Many did not have LGBT-inclusive curricular resources: only 17% were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events, and fewer than half (45%) did not have access to a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student club that provides a safe and affirming space for LGBT students (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Availability of LGBT-Related Resources and Supports in Virginia 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 *2013 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 Virginia 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 Virginia 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 Virginia will have the opportunity to learn and succeed in school, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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

To get involved in a GLSEN chapter in Virginia, visit [www.glsen.org/chapters](http://www.glsen.org/chapters) or contact [chapterinfo@glsen.org](mailto:chapterinfo@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 2013, GLSEN conducted the eighth National School Climate Survey (NSCS), a biennial survey of the experiences of LGBT youth in U.S. secondary schools. The national sample consisted of 7,898 LGBT students from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A total of 240 respondents were attending schools in Virginia. The majority of the Virginia sample was White/European American (70%), 11% multi-racial, 8% Hispanic/Latino, 6% African American/Black, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 2% Middle Eastern/Arab American or other. The gender composition was 51% cisgender female, 28% cisgender male, 8% transgender, 7% genderqueer, and 6% some other gender (e.g., genderfluid). Most (90%) attended public schools. The school community makeup was 48% suburban, 30% rural/small town, and 22% urban. The results reported for Virginia have a margin of error of +/-6.

For the full 2013 National School Climate Survey report or for any other GLSEN research, go to [www.glsen.org/research](http://www.glsen.org/research). Follow @GLSENResearch on Twitter.