THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES OF TODAY’S LGBT YOUTH

GLSEN’s biennial National School Climate Survey documents the school experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Over 7,800 LGBT middle and high school students completed the latest survey. Here’s what they reported.

SCHOOLS ARE UNSAFE AND UNWELCOMING FOR THE MAJORITY OF LGBT STUDENTS.

- 65% heard homophobic remarks like “fag” or “dyke” frequently or often
- 85% were verbally harassed in the past year
- 30% missed at least one day of school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable

MANY SCHOOLS LACK THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR LGBT STUDENTS.

- Only 56% had a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) at their school
- Only 19% were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, or events (inclusive curriculum)
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- Only 96% had at least one supportive educator, but only 56% had 11 or more
- Only 50% had a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that included both sexual orientation and gender identity/expression
- 56% of LGBT students experienced discriminatory school policies and practices.

SCHOOL CLIMATES NEGATIVELY AFFECT EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND GENERAL WELL-BEING.

Experiencing higher levels of victimization and discrimination leads to worse outcomes for LGBT students:

- LGBT students who experienced higher levels of victimization based on their sexual orientation had lower grade point averages (GPAs) than students who were less often harassed (2.8 vs. 3.3).
- LGBT students who experienced higher levels of victimization based on their gender expression were less likely to report that they planned to pursue any post-secondary education (e.g., college or trade school) than those who experienced lower levels (92% vs. 96%).
- LGBT students who experienced LGBT-related discrimination at school had lower levels of self-esteem.

LGBT-INCLUSIVE SUPPORTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SCHOOL.

Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs), supportive educators, LGBT-inclusive curricula, and comprehensive anti-bullying policies all have positive benefits for LGBT students’ success and well-being.

School climate for LGBT students has improved in the past decade, but more work still needs to be done.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

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