

LGBTQIA+

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES AND
EDUCATORS

EQUITY DEPARTMENT

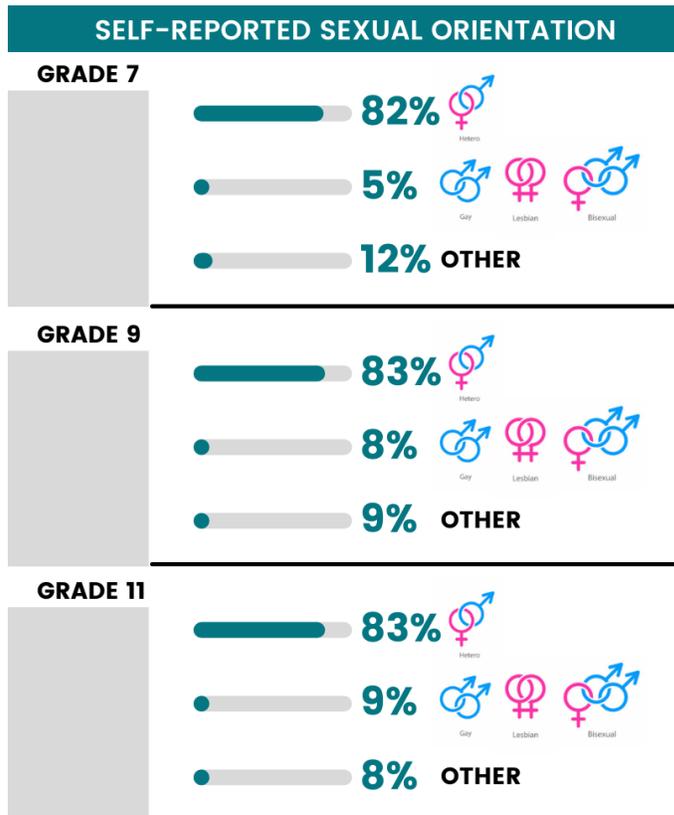


WHO WE SERVE

The San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) supports nearly 780 schools and more than 500,000 students, including the 2,020 children we educate each year through our Juvenile Court and Community Schools. SDCOE provides a variety of services for the 42 school districts, 131 charter schools, and five community college districts in the county.

SELF-REPORTED SEXUAL ORIENTATION SAN DIEGO COUNTY, 2019

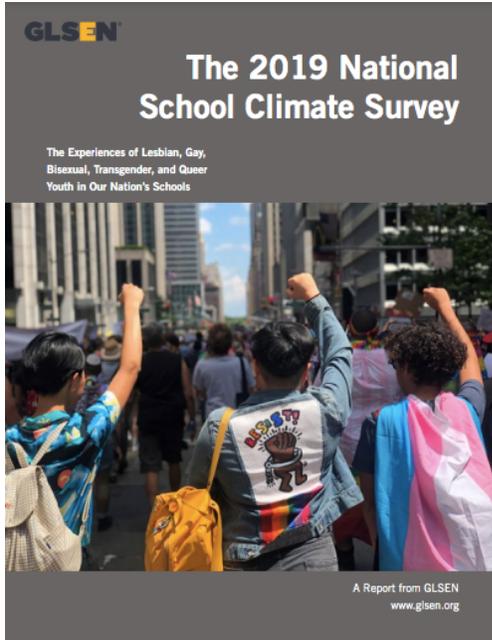
K-12 GRADES STUDENTS



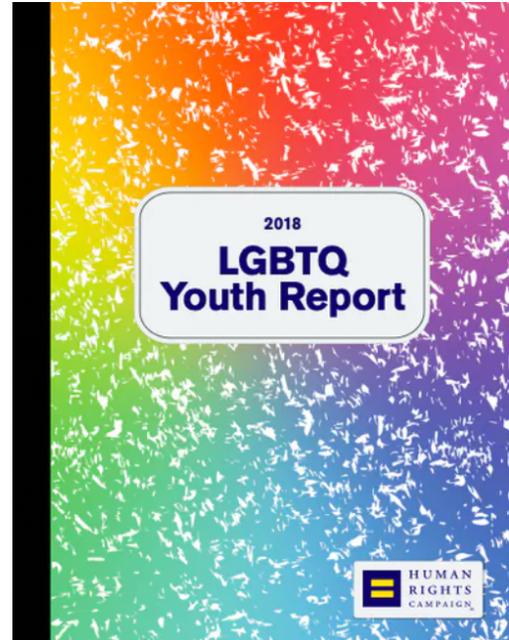
Research shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual plus (LGBTQIA+) and gender expansive youth often suffer from disparate rates of bullying and harassment, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancy. This increased risk is often the result of, and in reaction to, negative environmental stressors that LGBTQIA+ and gender non-conforming youth face in their schools, homes, and communities. Recent research also shows that youth suffering from such health risks are at greater academic risk than other youth.

Data Source: WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and Biennial State CHKS, California Department of Education (CDE) March 2019

DIG INTO THE DATA



2019 GLESEN NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY



2018 HRC LGBTQ YOUTH REPORT

2017 STATE SNAPSHOT **GLESEN®**

SCHOOL CLIMATE IN CALIFORNIA

Findings from the GLESEN 2017 National School Climate Survey demonstrate that California schools were not safe for most lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) secondary school students. In addition, many LGBTQ students in California 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 California regularly (sometimes, often, or frequently) heard anti-LGBTQ remarks (Fig. 1). Some also regularly heard school staff make homophobic remarks (13%) and negative remarks about someone's gender expression (32%).

FACT: The majority of LGBTQ students in California experienced anti-LGBTQ victimization at school (Fig. 2). They also experienced victimization at school based on religion (20%), disability (24%), and race/ethnicity (33%). Most never reported the incident to school staff (59%). Only 37% of students who reported incidents said it resulted in effective staff intervention.

Figure 1. Hearing Anti-LGBTQ Remarks from Students in California Schools (percentage of LGBTQ students hearing remarks regularly)

Gay* Used in a Negative Way (e.g., "that's so gay")	85%
Homophobic Remarks about Gender Expression	74%
Negative Remarks about Transgender People	81%
Negative Remarks about Someone's Gender Expression	61%

Figure 2. Anti-LGBTQ Harassment & Assault in California Schools (percentage of LGBTQ students harassed or assaulted in the past year based on...)

Sexual Orientation	63%
Gender Expression	56%
Gender	49%
Physical Appearance	19%
Disability	24%
Race/Ethnicity	33%
Religion	20%

FACT: Many LGBTQ students in California reported discriminatory policies or practices at their school (Fig. 3). One-half (49%) experienced at least one form of anti-LGBTQ discrimination at school during the past year.

- In California, 1 in 4 LGBTQ students (24%), and nearly 1 in 2 transgender students (46%) were unable to use the school restroom aligned with their gender. Additionally, 1 in 5 LGBTQ students (20%), and more than 2 in 5 transgender students (43%) were prevented from using their chosen name or pronouns in school.
- Nearly a quarter of LGBTQ students (22%) in California were disciplined for public displays of affection (PDA) that did not result in similar action for non-LGBTQ students.
- A small portion of LGBTQ students in California experienced other forms of school discrimination (not in Fig. 3): being unable to form a GSA (9%), being unable to wear LGBTQ-supportive apparel (9%), being prevented or discouraged from playing school sports due to an LGBTQ identity (8%), being unable to bring a same-gender date to a school dance (7%), and being disciplined at school for identifying as LGBTQ (2%).

Figure 3. Anti-LGBTQ Discrimination in California Schools (percentage of LGBTQ students that were prevented from...)

Using the Bathroom that Aligns with Gender	24%
Using the Locker Room that Aligns with Gender	23%
Expressing PDA in School	22%
Using Their Chosen Name or Gender Pronouns	20%
Hearing Content Considered Inappropriate for Their Gender	15%
Discussing LGBTQ Issues in Assignments	12%
Including LGBTQ Themes in Extracurricular Activities	11%

GLESEN
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(212) 727-0135 - glsen.org
facebook.com/glsen - twitter: @glsen

2017 GLESEN CALIFORNIA STATE REPORT

EQUALITY CALIFORNIA

A REPORT FROM EQUALITY CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE

2019 Safe & Supportive Schools Report Card



eqca.org

2019 EQUALITY CALIFORNIA'S SAFE & SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS REPORT

YOU MAY BE WONDERING...

FAQS FOR EDUCATORS AND FAMILIES

WHY IS LGBTQIA+-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM NECESSARY?*

Homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia are present in many of our schools and communities. These biases manifest themselves in many ways, from invisibility in the curriculum and school policies to active teasing, bullying, harassment, and physical violence against gender-variant children, LGBTQIA+ youth, and families that include LGBTQIA+ parents or relatives. This bias hurts all children, both those directly affected and those who learn in an atmosphere of fear and tension, afraid to explore their own lives because of worry about disapproval and rejection. Students of all ages must be given an opportunity to learn that the words “gay,” “lesbian,” and “transgender” are adjectives that should be used with respect to describe people in their community, not words used in a negative way to hurt, insult, and degrade. Students need to be encouraged to reflect on their own actions and prejudice, learn from their peers who are different from them, and support allies who stand up to prejudice and hate. Creating inclusive curriculum and establishing accepting classroom and school climates improves the educational experience for all students, families, and teachers.

ARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOO YOUNG TO BE INTRODUCED TO THIS TOPIC?*

Name-calling and using anti-gay and anti-trans slurs starts as early as kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. At a very young age, children have already been introduced to information about LGBTQIA+ people, which is often based on misinformation and negative stereotypes. When adults are silent about LGBTQIA+ people, students learn from this omission that it is acceptable to use homophobic and transphobic put-downs. These slurs are hurtful and unacceptable and they affect the lives of people in every school and community. Teachers are not introducing a new topic, they are helping young students understand bias and prejudice and learn to use respectful language. Educators are creating inclusive school communities that prevent name-calling, teasing, and bullying and provide safe learning environments for all children.

WHAT IS THE FAIR EDUCATION ACT?

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The state of California requires schools to teach about the contributions of women, people of color, and other historically underrepresented groups. On Jan. 1, 2012, the state updated these guidelines to end the exclusion of people with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people from history and social studies lessons

According to the California Safe Schools Coalition, "In schools where LGBT people are included in classroom discussions, results have been positive. The Preventing School Harassment Survey in California found that schools where the majority of youth report having learned about LGBT people in the curriculum, only 11% of students report being bullied, but that number more than doubles to 24% if the majority of students in a school say they haven't learned about LGBT people. Furthermore, the 2003 Preventing School Harassment Survey found that students who have learned about LGBT people at school were more likely to feel they have a voice at school and make positive contributions at school."

DO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS NEED TO BE NOTIFIED IF LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE OR FAMILIES ARE DISCUSSED IN THE CLASSROOM?*

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Typically, districts do not have a requirement for notifying parents and guardians for lessons about respect and diversity. In fact, many federal and state laws require schools to be proactive in addressing bias and prejudice and ensuring students' safety. Although sexual health is a critical concern of all youth populations, sexual health curriculum is separate from general classroom instruction. According to the California Healthy Youth Act (linked in the "learn more" button), "schools must affirmatively recognize different sexual orientations, be inclusive of same-sex relationships in discussions, teach about gender, gender expression, gender identity, and the harm of negative gender stereotypes, etc." However, sexual health topics are not covered in the general curriculum. The focus of LGBTQIA+-inclusive education is to create respectful and welcoming learning environments for all children by communicating that LGBTQIA+ people are part of our communities and that LGBTQIA+ discrimination is harmful to everyone. We strongly recommend involving parents and guardians as part of school-wide efforts to be more inclusive. As important members of the school community, families can help reinforce the concepts of respect at home, help answer questions, assist in classroom discussions, and be actively engaged in making the school and community safe for all children and their families.

IS TALKING ABOUT LGBTQIA+ ISSUES THE SAME AS SEX EDUCATION?*

Talking about LGBTQIA+ issues is a discussion about people and families present in our communities, a struggle for civil rights, and addressing bias-based bullying. None of these include talking about sex or human reproduction. With the rapid growth of families headed by LGBTQIA+ people and the increasing visibility of LGBTQIA+ issues in the media, children are learning about LGBTQIA+ people at an increasingly younger age. The stereotypes and misunderstandings that often develop can be prevented by incorporating LGBTQIA+ issues in the context of lessons about families, current events, literature, and civil rights.

CAN PARENTS/GUARDIANS OPT OUT THEIR CHILDREN FROM SCHOOL INSTRUCTION THAT INCLUDES LGBTQIA+-INCLUSIVE LESSONS?*



There are some topics that parents have a right to receive notice about and the right to opt their children out of. Parents should receive written notice about and may opt their children out of the following topics of instruction in public schools: comprehensive sexual health education, HIV/AIDS prevention, and surveys, tests, research, and evaluation. Programs that are designed to encourage respect and address bias are not included in California's opt-out policies. By not including all students in LGBTQIA+-inclusive lessons, schools run the risk of conveying a message that it is acceptable to engage in hurtful and disrespectful behavior when it comes to LGBTQIA+ people. Students who miss or opt out of lessons where families or identities are discussed should be prepared to do an alternative make-up assignment that covers the same content that was missed. Research tells us that all students benefit from being in environments that build strong community, offer Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) support on campus, and provide inclusive and affirming curriculum where community values around respect and understanding are addressed.

HOW DOES LGBTQIA+-INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM COMPLY WITH ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS AND STILL RESPECT THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF OUR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES?*

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LGBTQIA+-inclusive curricula encourages respect, cooperation, and understanding – values that all religions and cultures hold in common. By giving students a language to discuss these sensitive issues, families may find it easier to be proud of who they are because they are embraced for their commonalities and differences alike, rather than rejected or marginalized because of them. LGBTQIA+-inclusive curricula attempts to ensure that the diversity of opinions in school communities do not create a negative climate of insults, violence, and exclusion. Part of that work is ensuring that children can be proud of their own religious and cultural heritage without being marginalized.

HOW CAN EDUCATORS FIT THIS TOPIC INTO A FULL SCHEDULE?*

Building a safe and welcoming environment that is conducive to learning should never be viewed as a burden or as superfluous to an academic focus, but rather as an added benefit. Lessons about LGBTQIA+ people and issues can be tied to academic standards in English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and life skills. There also are many ways to integrate LGBTQIA+ content into existing curricula. By proactively helping students develop mutual respect and understanding for all, educators will find themselves spending less class time addressing behavior issues and more time teaching the required curriculum. The San Diego County Office of Education offers several professional development opportunities on how to enfold LGBTQIA+-inclusive curricula designed to create a space in which all students can learn, achieve their goals, and realize success.

For more information, please visit the San Diego County Office of Education's Equity department website at sdcoe.net/equity.

OUR SAFE PLACE

[LEARN MORE](#)


SDYS CENTRAL DROP-IN CENTER

2220 Broadway, San Diego, CA 92102

YMCA NORTH INLAND DROP-IN CENTER

1050 N. Broadway, Escondido, CA 92026

YMCA NORTH COUNTY DROP-IN CENTER

215 Barnes St., Oceanside, CA 92054

SBCS SOUTH DROP-IN CENTER

746 Ada St., Chula Vista, CA 92911

A collaborative program with San Diego Youth Services, South Bay Community Services, and the YMCA of San Diego County, with each partner providing a drop-in center and mental health services for LGBTQIA+ youth up to age 21. There are four locations throughout San Diego County. For more information, please call 619-525-9903.

HILLCREST YOUTH CENTER

Offers programming for LGBTQIA+ youth and allies, ages 14-18, with special hours on Tuesdays for youth ages 10-13 at 1807 Robinson Ave., Suite 106, in San Diego. For more information, contact the Hillcrest Youth Center coordinator at HYC@thecentersd.org or 619-692-2077, extension 122.

THE GENDER FLUID COLLECTIVE

Support for Black/People of Color LGBTQIA+ community with a focus on transgender, gender nonconforming (GNC), and nonbinary (enby) youth and adults. Contact Angelle Maua at angelle.maua@gmail.com or 858-255-0279 for more information.

TRANSFORMING FAMILY

A San Diego-based family support group which meets once a month and provides a supportive environment for families with gender diverse children and adolescents, and gives parents the chance to share their challenges, questions, and resources. Separate support groups offered for teens and a playgroup for young children.

TRANS FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Guides transgender/nonbinary youth and their families through the gender transitioning process to help make it the most positive experience possible. Family coaching, assistance with healthcare and insurance issues, help navigating the legal system, and support at schools provided.

NORTH COUNTY LGBTQ RESOURCE CENTER

The North County LGBTQ Resource Center serves the lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and questioning (LGBTQ) community of North County San Diego. The resource center supports, builds, educates, and improves the relationships of the LGBTQ community including friends and allies. Services include support groups for youth, seniors, military service members, HIV/AIDS testing and prevention, counseling, civil rights advocacy, classes, and workgroups.