The ‘T’ in LGBT: What YOU Can Do

What educators need to know to support gender non-conforming students.

Environment in Schools for Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) Students in Missouri

- 85% hear negative remarks about gender expression (not being “masculine” or “feminine” enough)
- 30% of students hear staff members make negative comments about gender expression.
- Based on their gender expression:
  - 63% were verbally harassed
  - 28% were physically harassed
  - 11% were physically assaulted
- Of those who were harassed, 59% don’t report it to a staff member and 50% don’t report it to a family member
- Of those who did report an incident of harassment, only 33% say the adult effectively handled it

Diagram of Sex and Gender
When a Student Comes Out to You

- Offer support but don’t assume a student needs any help.
- Be a role model of acceptance.
- Appreciate the student’s courage.
- Assure and respect confidentiality.
- Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion.
- Remember, the student has not changed.
- Validate the person's gender identity and expression.
- Remember that gender identity is separate from sexual orientation.

Support Transgender Youth

- Respect gender pronoun and name preferences
- Work with student about whether/when/how to inform parents/guardians (esp. when is wanting to be out at school)
- Work with student, family and school to address bathroom and locker room issues
- Reach out to organizations to find best practices for other issues that arise

Legal Protections for Trans Youth

- First Amendment: Protects external expressions of gender that might include
  - Taking a date to a dance regardless of either date’s biological sex
  - Running/competing for titles related to a given gender regardless of biological sex (i.e. prom king or queen)
  - Dressing in a manner that may not conform to one’s biological sex.
- Title IX: protects students from harassment based on gender stereotyping

Source: From National Center for Transgender Equality handout: Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students: Your Rights at School (April 2014)
Guidance from Missouri School Board Association

- MSBA recommends the district utilize the following guidelines related to student names:
  - The district's official record, including the student's official transcript must include the student's legal name.
  - If a parent, guardian, or student legally changes the student's name or birth certificate and provides proof of that change, the district should change the official record.
  - Unless the district is otherwise prohibited from doing so, the district should use the name that corresponds with the student's identity.
  - The district should use the student's chosen name on grade cards, diplomas, and certificates.
  - The district's records regarding gender should reflect the gender provided by the parent, guardian, or student and the record may be changed upon request.
  - The district should use the student's chosen name and refer to that student using the appropriate gender pronoun as long as the district has a way to connect the chosen name to the student information system.
  - If the student wishes to maintain their birth name and assigned sex at birth confidential, the district should also accommodate that request.

Guidance from Missouri School Board Association (con't)

- Despite some conflicting case law, MSBA recommends allowing transgender students to use the restrooms and/or locker rooms of the sex with which they identify.
  - Because the OCR and the DOJ are charged with enforcing federal civil rights laws and because districts are more likely to be successfully sued for failing to accommodate a transgender student rather than not, MSBA recommends allowing transgender students to use the restrooms and/or locker rooms of the sex with which they identify.
  - It is incumbent upon the district to ensure all students are safe and are treated fairly.
  - One option several districts have used is to allow any student who has a privacy or safety concern to use a unisex or more private bathroom such as the one in a nurse's office.
  - Because the law is not settled, MSBA encourages districts to contact their private attorney when dealing with this issue.


NASSP Position Statement

- "...climate conducive to the educational success of for transgender students remains elusive in many schools."
- Points to Title IX protections and varied legal protections from state to state
- Principals must make certain that "students from diverse backgrounds and identities are affirmed, supported, and assured equitable education opportunities and access to school and community-based support services."

From a Trans Teen

- Leon, 20 years old: “We don’t want a bunch of promises, all we want is to be comfortable and to be understood. If something is not possible then let us know that. Being understood means more to us than anything. If you don’t understand something then don’t be afraid to ask, it is better to know about something because you asked than to assume because you are afraid to ask.”

From a trans teen

- Riley, 17 years old: The most difficult was the constant pressure of being my original identity. It would help if, in class at least, the teacher asked (individually and privately) each student their preferred name/pronouns. The biggest obstacle I have had to overcome was self-denial. A lot of times I will also slip up and call myself by my original name and pronouns, which is really harming to my progress as a trans* person.

From a trans teen

- Riley, 17 years old: Labels are also a big issue. This generation is big on not being labeled, but it should be apparent to most people that a lot of people in our generation crave labels or apply labels to themselves. The thing is, labels are a personal issue. Sort of a self-confirmation deal. I needed the transgender and pansexual label for myself because I felt like a freak, like I didn’t belong. So, personally, I needed the label to confirm to myself that I’m not weird or whatever. But I don’t need anyone else to know that, or to put me into a box that I don’t want/is not me.
Letter home at Elementary

May 2, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In the interest of creating a positive and safe learning environment at Elementary, I want to share some information with you about a situation with our child. This information is being shared with parent permission.

A [birth assigned gender] student [name] has been known at school as [new name], which is [gender] and [new name]. [New name] is a student with the new, preferred name of [new name]. School procedures have been changed to allow [new name] to use the name he or she desires. If you use the former name of [birth name], please let us know.

Teachers and staff encourage students to be respectful of all students in their classes and to treat others as they would like to be treated. According to the student, they wish for [birth name] to be referred to as [new name].

If you have any questions or would like to talk with me, please call [phone number] or email [email].

Sincerely,

[Signature]
What Can We Do?

- Promote inclusive school policies
- Provide or facilitate professional development: small and large scale
- Forge community partnerships
  - LGBT youth centers
  - LGBT-inclusive (but not exclusively LGBT) youth organizations

Questions?

Andy Schuerman, Ed.S.
Park Hill South High School
816-359-5652
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Shelly Meinke, M.S., LAFT
Winnetonka High School
816-321-5717
shelly.meinke@nkcschools.org
More than 9 in 10 heard “gay” used in a negative way (e.g., “that’s so gay”) and other homophobic remarks (e.g., “fag” or “dyke”) at school regularly (i.e., sometimes, often, 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).

Nearly 7 in 10 regularly heard negative remarks about transgender people (see Figure 1).

Students also heard biased language from school staff. 30% regularly heard school staff make negative remarks about someone’s gender expression and 17% regularly heard staff make homophobic remarks.

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

The majority experienced verbal harassment (e.g., called names or threatened): 8 in 10 based on their sexual orientation and more than 6 in 10 based on the way they expressed their gender (see Figure 2).

Many also experienced physical harassment and physical assault: for example, more than 4 in 10 were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved) based on their sexual orientation and 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: 92% felt deliberately excluded or “left out” by peers; 89% had mean rumors or lies told about them; 71% were sexually harassed; 68% experienced electronic harassment or “cyberbullying”; and 46% 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 50% never told a family member about the incident. Among students who did report incidents to school authorities, only 33% said that reporting resulted in effective intervention by staff.

FACT: Most LGBT students in Missouri had been victimized at school. The majority of these incidents were not reported to adult authorities.
FACT: Many LGBT students in Missouri 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).

- More than 90% could identify at least one school staff member supportive of LGBT students, but only 57% could identify many (6 or more) supportive school staff (see Figure 3).

- Only 4 in 10 had a Gay-Straight Alliance or similar student club at their school and slightly more than 1 in 10 were taught positive representations of LGBT people, history, and events (see Figure 3).

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 Missouri 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 Missouri 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 Missouri 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 or contact glsen@glsen.org.

To get involved in a GLSEN chapter in Missouri, visit www.glsen.org/chapters or contact 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 139 respondents were attending schools in Missouri. The majority of the Missouri sample was White/European American (79%), 9% multi-racial, 5% Hispanic/Latino, 4% African American/Black, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1% Middle Eastern/Arab American or Other. The gender composition was 47% cisgender female, 31% cisgender male, 12% genderqueer, 5% some other gender (e.g., genderfluid), and 5% transgender. Most (93%) attended public schools. The school community makeup was 44% suburban, 31% rural/small town, and 25% urban. The results reported for Missouri have a margin of error of +/-8%.

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

Kansas City, Missouri and National LGBTQ-Supportive Organizations and Services

**AIDS Walk Kansas City**
816-931-0959  www.aidswalkkansascity.org/
Over 5,700 men, women and children are living with HIV/AIDS in Kansas City. Over 700 are between the ages of 13 and 24. Be Ready to help those living with HIV/AIDS in Kansas City and to support our local AIDS service organizations.

**Campfire USA – Heartland – All Inclusive Alternative to Scouting Programs**
http://campfireheartland.org/
Camp Fire USA builds caring, confident youth and future leaders. We are inclusive, welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or other aspect of diversity.

**GLSEN, Greater Kansas City chapter**
913-608-4528  glsen.org/kansascity
The Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

**Genders & Sexualities (GSA) Network**
www.gsanetwork.org/
Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network is a youth leadership organization that connects school-based Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) to each other and community resources through peer support, leadership development, and training. GSA Network supports young people in starting, strengthening, and sustaining GSAs and builds the capacity of GSAs to: create safe environments in schools for students to support each other and learn about homophobia and other oppressions, educate the school community about homophobia, gender identity, and sexual orientation issues, and fight discrimination, harassment, and violence in schools.

**Gender Spectrum**
https://www.genderspectrum.org/
As the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, the Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than one million members and supporters nationwide — all committed to making HRC’s vision a reality.

**Human Rights Campaign-Kansas City**
www.hrc.org/steering-committees/kansas-city
As the largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, the Human Rights Campaign represents a force of more than one million members and supporters nationwide — all committed to making HRC’s vision a reality.

**Kansas City Anti-Violence Project (KCAVP)**
www.kcavp.org
The Kansas City Anti-Violence Project (KCAVP) is a Missouri nonprofit corporation committed to providing domestic violence, sexual assault, and hate crimes advocacy and education to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Currently, there are no LGBT-specific domestic violence or sexual assault services in western Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, or Iowa. KCAVP was created to address this gap by providing support and services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and hate crimes in western Missouri, eastern Kansas, with a focus on the Kansas City area.

**Kansas City CARE (formerly Free Health) Clinic**
(816) 753-5144  kccareclinic.org/
The Kansas City CARE Clinic is an integral part, the net under the safety net, of the health care delivery system in the Kansas City community. As it was formed to do in 1971, the Clinic provides basic health care services at no charge to people who cannot pay for care and to those who do not have insurance available to them. The Clinic helps keep the uninsured and underinsured healthy!
Kansas City Passages – Youth Center
816-931-0334  www.kcpassages.org/site/
Passages Youth Center is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and hate-free center for 14- through 20-year-old lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Our goal is to help them grow as they explore the nature of their sexual and gender identities while having fun and meeting new friends at the same time. We provide educational information and experiences to encourage personal growth and social interaction to ease their transition into self-acceptance and to become empowered LGBTQ youth. These programs form a foundation of vital resources that provide youth with alternatives to risk-taking behavior.

Kansas City Gay Pride
www.gaypridekc.org/
Our organization consists of an eager group of volunteers from the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. Our committee members are all greatly involved in their own businesses, as well as members of other organizations within our city.

Like Me Lighthouse
816-756-7770  www.likemelighthouse.org/
To provide a safe and welcoming space where LGBT individuals and their families, friends, and straight allies can come for education, resources and to build a cohesive LGBT community in the Midwest. The Lighthouse will promote inclusion, respect and equality for the LGBT community. The Lighthouse will provide educational and social events to bring all individuals into the Lighthouse, as well as an outreach program to make the Midwest aware of the needs of the LGBT community. The LIKEME® Lighthouse will serve as a voice for the LGBT community in the Midwest.

Modern Family Alliance (formerly Midwest Alternative Family Alliance)
modernfamilyalliance.wordpress.com
The Modern Family Alliance was organized in 2002 by a small group of people in Kansas City who were concerned that local gay and lesbian parents and prospective parents needed a presence, a voice, and a way to connect with each other. MFA supports LGBT parents in the greater Kansas City area and beyond to build families and raise children in a community that is respectful, encouraging, and inclusive.

Ozanam Pathways LGBT Program (Youth Mental Health Treatment)
816-508-3797  www.ozanam.org/
Ozanam represents more than 60 years of providing the best quality services to thousands of children and families who need it most. On its main campus in South Kansas City, Ozanam has grown from a single-service boys’ home into a multi-service treatment center offering both residential and educational day treatment programs for boys and girls ages 12 to 18.

PFLAG-KC
816-765-9818  www.pflagkc.org/
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Kansas City (PFLAG-KC) is a group of parents, siblings, friends, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people who: Provide a support system for the families and friends of LGBT people to enable them to understand, accept and support their children with love and pride; Provide education for individuals and the community at large on the nature of homosexuality; and Support the full human and civil rights of LGBT people.

Perform Out KC – Creative and Musical Expression for KC LGBT Youth
www.performoutkc.org/
PerformOUTKC provides a safe, inclusive atmosphere for youth (13-20) of any and all identities, which fosters positive identity development through excellence in music performance and creative expression in the Kansas City Metro area. Explore self expression through the performing arts (Vocal and Instrumental Music, Dance, Theater, Writing, and the Visual Arts), share their life experiences and voices with the Kansas City Community through performance.
The Safe Schools Coalition is an international public-private partnership in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth, that is working to help schools – at home and all over the world – become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Street Outreach Services (SOS) at Synergy
24-hour Youth Crisis Line: 888-233-1639  www.synergyservices.org/?page=Main_Our_Services_Youth_SOS
816-741-8700
Our Street Outreach team canvases Greater Kansas City helping homeless youth, up to age 22. The team provides basic necessities like food, water, clothing, blankets and hygiene products. Transportation and case management/referral services are also provided to youth as needed. For youth that want to get off the street, the team provides a bridge to Synergy House, our youth shelter.

Suicide Awareness Survivor Support
913-681-3050  www.sass-mokan.com/
SASS unites survivors of suicide (family, friends, etc.) throughout the greater Kansas City metropolitan and surrounding areas. We believe the public must be educated about suicide. We sincerely feel that “Suicide is everyone’s business.”

Veronica’s Voice Youth Group – Kansas City
Crisis Line: 816-728-0004  www.veronicasvoice.org/
Veronica’s Voice is here to encourage, educate and empower American victims of commercial sexual exploitation of all ages to make lifestyle changes which lead to the recovery of their minds, bodies and spirits. Veronica’s Voice is Kansas City’s only advocacy and survivor-recovery program dedicated solely to victims of prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. The primary focus of Veronica’s Voice is to offer compassionate and non-judgmental support to victims through survivor-run services. Veronica’s Voice offers exploited individuals a safe place to process their experiences with others who can relate to them, allowing them to take control of their lives.

Missouri Resources
ACLU of Missouri  http://www.aclu-mo.org
Mid-Missouri  MU LGBTQ Resource Center: http://lgbtq.missouri.edu
Megan’s Rainbow: free therapeutic, expressive arts group for LGBTQ teens: contact Brian Vega at briancvega@me.com
Southeast Missouri  PROMO: https://promoonline.org/resources/southeast-region/southeast-region.html

National Resources
COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere)  www.colage.org
GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network)  www.glsen.org
Human Rights Campaign  www.hrc.org
National Center for Transgender Equality  www.transequality.org
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force  www.ngltf.org
PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)  www.pflag.org

Suicide Prevention Hotlines
The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Youth Hotline)  1-866-488-7386
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  1-800-273-8255
DeafLine Missouri  1-800-380-3323
**GLSEN RESOURCES:**


GLSEN list of resources on Transgender rights


This document presents our Model District Policy on Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students, which outlines best practices for schools to ensure that all students are safe, included and respected in school, regardless of their gender identity or expression — including transgender and gender nonconforming students.


This report documents the school experiences of 295 transgender middle and high school students and finds that these students face extremely high levels of victimization, even more so than their non-transgender lesbian, gay, and bisexual peers.

**GLSEN Position Statements**


GLSEN announcement concerning DOE's clarification that Title IX extends to Trans students


GLSEN press release concerning Title IX Guidance


GLSEN press release regarding Federal District Court for the Northern District of Texas’s ruling
# Resources on Supporting Transgender Students in Schools

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<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Spectrum. (2015, Summer). Back-to-School Toolkit. Retrieved October 7, 2016, from <a href="https://www.dropbox.com/s/dnunpuch1y8waef/Back">https://www.dropbox.com/s/dnunpuch1y8waef/Back</a> to School Toolkit.pdf?dl=0</td>
<td>This article which was published as a supplement to Gender Spectrum’s 2015 back-to-school issue. The materials are designed to set a tone that demonstrates your commitment to making sure every student’s gender is recognized and accepted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stone, C., EdD. (2015, September 1). Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students: Advocate for Best Practices</td>
<td>One of the most comprehensive guide to supporting Trans students in schools, this document was published by a coalition of social justice/civil rights organizations.</td>
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