

LGBTQ-Inclusive School Library Programming



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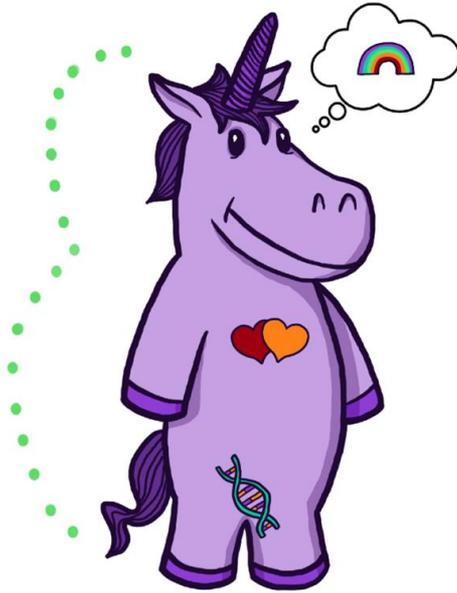
<https://tinyurl.com/yyzm5tvr>





The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore

Why is This Important?

The U.S. Context

[GLSEN National School Climate Survey, 2017](#)

[2018 LGBTQ Youth Report - Human Rights Campaign](#)

73%

OF LGBTQ YOUTH HAVE EXPERIENCED VERBAL THREATS BECAUSE OF THEIR ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED LGBTQ IDENTITY²⁷

18%

were bullied because someone thought they were LGBTQ²⁸

3 IN 10

have received physical threats due to their LGBTQ identity²⁹

50%

of transgender girls have been physically threatened³⁰

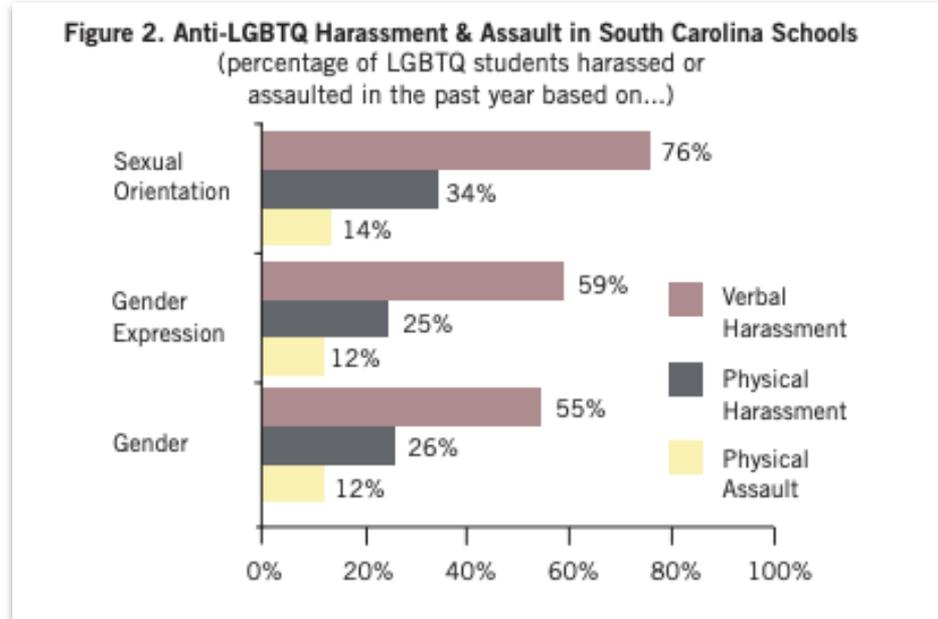
70%

HAVE BEEN BULLIED AT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION³¹

43%

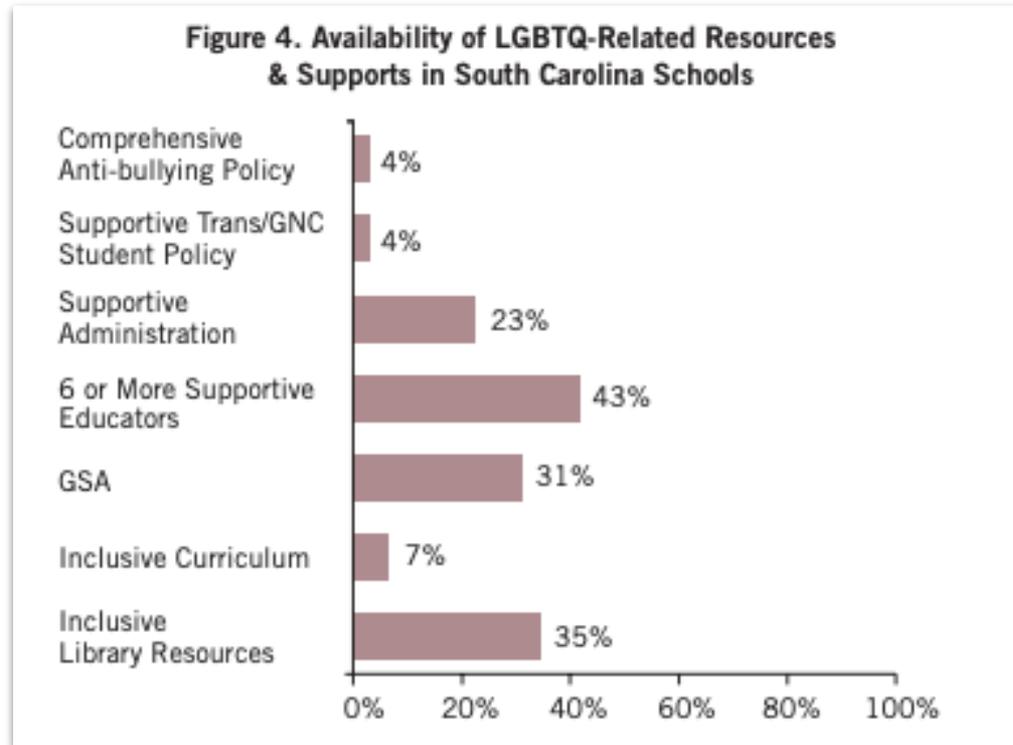
HAVE BEEN BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS³²

Physical and Verbal Harassment



Frequency of Verbal and Physical Harassment Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Expression, and Gender Experienced by LGBTQ Students in the Past School Year

Availability of LGBTQ-Related Resources



Be an ally

- Include books and resources in displays authored by and featuring LGBTQ+ people - especially when the displays are not LGBTQ+ related
- Suggest and host a LGBTQ sensitivity training or Safe Zone training
 - <http://www.welcomingschools.org/> offers training and online PD modules
- Collect and disseminate resources for teachers and students (eg. GLSEN, The Trevor Project, Gender Spectrum)
- Support your school's GSA - volunteer to be a faculty advisor, support the group with library resources, make library space available for meetings
- Call out language “that’s so gay” “you’re a sissy”



Inclusive Library Policies

- Self check-in and check-out protects student privacy
- Posted library rules about respecting everyone
- Explicitly identify the library as a safe zone
- Are internet filters keeping students from accessing information?
- Consider that students may not be out or public about their identity and sexuality

Examples of Current Programming + Practices

- Story times
 - Pride-themed
 - Drag queen
 - Including stories about LGBTQ+ parents/families (e.g., Todd Parr's *The Family Book*)
- Discussion groups
 - For LGBTQ+ picturebooks
 - For parents/guardians of LGBTQ+ children
- Bibliographies
 - Recommended LGBTQ+ picturebooks
 - Resources for LGBTQ+ parents/guardians
- Subversive activities
 - Changing pronouns of characters in a story
 - Inviting “out of the box” speakers (e.g., male nurses, female firefighters)
 - Having children write their own endings to stories based on personal experiences
- Outreach to LGBTQ+ adoption agencies
- Book talks featuring LGBTQ+ books
- Makerspaces that incorporate LGBTQ+ voices/activities
 - E.g., designing posters for Pride month

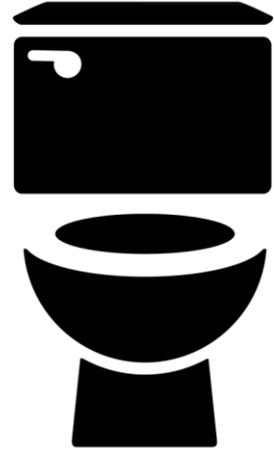
Thanks to GLBTRT members for suggestions + “Over the Rainbow and Under the Radar” by Jamie Campbell Naidoo

Collaboration

- Guidance Counselor
- Instructional specialist
- School nurse
- Speech pathologist/therapist
- Local PFLAG
- Reaching out to anti-bullying groups
- Parent Teacher Association
- Outreach and partnership with local organizations

Gender Neutral Language and Practice

- Avoid grouping students by gender
- Ask students for their pronouns/ model your own
- Avoid language like sir and ma'am
- Use “adult” instead of parent, mother, and father
- Avoid using heterosexist language in assignments, recognizing that asking students to consider family origin/tree/history includes alternative family structures
- Gender neutral bathroom signage (if applicable for your school)



Implementing the Right Pace of Change

(Adapted from Martin & Murdock, 2007)

	Red Light	Yellow Light	Green Light
Collection Development	A few books with LGBTQ secondary characters	Several LGBTQ titles with LGBTQ main characters, working to fill in gaps to make sure that gay, lesbian, and trans characters are represented	Concerted effort to buy LGBTQ books and the inclusion of those LGBTQ titles in instruction, read alouds, and reader's advisory
Programming	"Celebrate diversity" display that has at least one LGBTQ title included	Pride month display	Research projects that include LGBTQ issues and people
Atmosphere	No signage, visible inclusion of LGBTQ people/issues	Librarian is an ally. Respectful language expected and enforced	Visible support of the LGBTQ community, reaches out to parents with resources and support

Representing Queer Students in the Library

- “The job of librarians, whether serving adults, teens, children, students, parents, or others, is to make libraries **welcoming and open to all.**” *(ALA GLBTRT Advocacy Toolkit)*
- “**LGBTQ students are in our schools, classrooms, and libraries**, whether or not we know of their sexual and gender orientations. If by some chance we don’t have LGBTQ students, we can be confident that **our students know or are related to someone who identifies as LGBTQ**” *(Moorefield-Lang & Kitzie, 2018)*
- “It seems like the tendency [toward self-censorship of LGBTQ collections, programming, and services] is lots and lots of staff members are saying, ‘It’s important we do this, it’s important that we talk about it,’ says LaRue. ‘And increasingly, more and more shy administrators say, ‘Gee, we’re going to get some push back on this, let’s find a way not to do it.’” An LGBT theme becomes a summer theme instead, and staff objections are ignored. **This kind of self-censorship, or any censorship, goes against the basics tenets of librarianship.** More conversation is better than less, says LaRue, and **librarians must maintain their role despite increased opposition** in certain cases.” *(Yorio, 2018)*

Only 19.8% of LGBTQ students

were taught positive representations about LGBTQ people, history, or events in school.



18.4% had been taught negative content about LGBTQ topics.



Less than half (41%) of LGBTQ students

could find information about LGBTQ-related issues in their school library.



Only 6.7% of LGBTQ students received LGBTQ-inclusive sex education at school.

About half of LGBTQ students

(49.2%) with internet access at school could access LGBTQ-related information online via school computers.



Self Censorship and LGBTQ Materials

- School libraries (particularly in the South) are undercollecting LGBTQ materials based on award winning and well-reviewed titles (Hughes-Hassell, Overberg, & Harris, 2012)
- Librarians may self censor for fear of parent reactions, administration, community, or personal objections (Whelan, 2009)
- Can take the form of book labeling, parental permission requirements, special/restricted rooms or shelves (Hill, 2010)
- School librarians who purchase other controversial materials for their collections, still are reluctant to purchase LGBTQ titles (Garry, 2015)
- Book reviews in school library publications may be contributing to self-censorship (Spiering, 2017)

Strategies and Resources

- [Glossary of Terms](#)
- [GLSEN data](#)
 - ◆ National School Climate Survey
- [Welcoming Schools Website](#)
 - ◆ Resources
 - ◆ Professional Development
 - ◆ Lesson Plans (Understanding gender, anti-bullying, embracing family diversity etc.)
- [Stonewall Book Award](#) and [Rainbow List](#)
 - ◆ LGBTQ books
- [Human Rights Campaign: Supporting and Caring for Our Gender Expansive Youth](#)
- [Gender Spectrum](#) (Education)
- [Gender Spectrum](#) (Parenting)
- [Safe Zone Project](#)
- [School Policy Recommendations](#)

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