Policy and Practice Recommendations to Promote Safe Schools for LGBTQ Youth

Research points to four key strategies for promoting safe and supportive school climates for LGBTQ youth: Inclusive and enumerated policies, school personnel support and training, student-led clubs (e.g., gender and sexuality alliances), and access to LGBTQ-related resources and curricula.[1,2] Here's how you can implement each of these strategies in your community.

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Policy and practice recommendations to promote safe schools for LGBTQ youth

1 ### Inclusive and Enumerated Policies

- **Policymakers** at the state and school district levels should enact inclusive and enumerated educational laws and policies
- **School personnel** should establish local policies in school districts, schools, and classrooms
- **School personnel, parents, and students** should:
  o Learn about policies in their school and school district
  o Raise awareness of the need for inclusive and enumerated policies
  o Advocate for local and state policy change

2 ### School personnel support and training

- **Schools of education at colleges and universities** should integrate education about LGBTQ issues and the needs of LGBTQ students into teacher education
- **Professional education associations** should offer continuing education and professional development about LGBTQ issues and the needs of LGBTQ students
- **School personnel** should:
  o Intervene in discriminatory bullying
  o Seek out resources to support LGBTQ students
  o Participate in trainings to better understand LGBTQ students
- **Parents** should support efforts by schools and school districts to provide LGBTQ-focused professional development and training to school personnel
- **Students** can advocate for, and participate in, LGBTQ-focused professional development for their teachers and other school personnel

Student-led clubs (e.g., gender and sexuality alliances)

- **Professional education associations** should raise awareness of GSAs and other student organizations that support LGBTQ and other marginalized students and provide training and support to school personnel.
3
- **School personnel** should:
  o Identify and eliminate barriers to the formation and operation of

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GSAs, and treat them like any other student organization or club
- o Seek training on how to support GSAs
- o Provide resources and support to GSAs and other student organizations
- **Students** can advocate for, start, and participate in GSAs in their schools

④ Access to LGBTQ-related resources and curricula

- **Policymakers and school administrators** shoud work to ensure that LGBTQ people and history are included in school curricula through state laws, educational guidelines, and school district policies, as well as professional development for school personnel for inclusive curriculum
- **School personnel** should:
  - o Be a resource for LGBTQ youth
  - o Ensure that libraries have resources for LGBTQ youth
  - o Request and attend safe zone trainings
  - o Promote visibility and inclusion through visual materials (posters), in public settings (school assemblies), and in classroom curricula
  - o Appeal to school administrators for LGBTQ-inclusive classroom curricula
- **Students** can request that LGBTQ resources be made available at school

References:

1. Russell, S. T., Bishop, M. D., Saba, V. C., James, I., & Ioverno, S. (2021). Promoting school safety for LGBTQ and all students. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *8*(2), 160–166. https://doi.org/10.1177/23727322211031938

2. Russell, S. T., & Horn, S. S. (2017). *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Schooling: The Nexus of Research, Practice, and Policy*. Oxford University Press.

Suggested Citation:

Bishop, M.D., Gonzales, R., & Russell, S.T. (2023). LGBTQ-Supportive School Policy and Practice Recommendations. Austin, TX: The Stories and Numbers Project.