



A CALL TO ACTION

We believe schools can be caring communities in which everyone has the opportunity to be engaged, included and respected, regardless of his or her sexual orientation or gender expression. We envision schools that are free of anti-gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender prejudice and harassment, in which all students can realize their full potential. For the well-being of youth and their communities, we call on all community members, including students, families, educators, administrators, school boards and law-makers to help realize this vision.

Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

STUDENTS

All students have the right to attend a school that is free of anti-LGBT prejudice and harassment, where they feel comfortable and supported as learners and contributors to their school community. Students of all ages must be given an opportunity to learn that the words “gay” and “lesbian” 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 should 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.

FAMILIES

All families with children have the right to be represented, discussed and welcomed in the classroom regardless of their configuration, including those with LGBT family members. Classroom activities, particularly at the elementary school level, should model the appropriate vocabulary to accurately describe different family configurations. School communications to families should be inclusive of all family types and should not assume that all children live with two married, heterosexual parents.

EDUCATORS

All teachers have the right, and the responsibility, to weave respectful, age-appropriate messages about LGBT people and issues into their lessons and classrooms. Educators should not need to seek approval or have parental consent to discuss LGBT people and issues in the classroom in age-appropriate ways, unless the discussion involves actual sexual practices. At each grade level, instruction should communicate that LGBT people are part of the community and that anti-LGBT discrimination and harassment is harmful to everyone. Teachers of all subjects must be supported and encouraged to combine core curriculum with activities that address bias and build a positive school climate.

ADMINISTRATORS

All school administrators have the right, and the responsibility, to establish positive school environments that are safe, welcoming and promote the healthy development of everyone in the school community. Teachers, families and students look to school leaders to convey the importance of safe and inclusive learning environments. By creating awareness, implementing programs and providing leadership, administrators can ensure that schools are safe for *all* students and families, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression. School personnel at all grade levels must be given the skills and support to interrupt anti-LGBT harassment, and to engage in dialogue with students about how and why such harassment is harmful to everyone in the school community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All school boards have the right, and the responsibility, to develop and fund initiatives to address prejudice and harassment. School boards must be representative of their entire community and thus need

to support programs that make school climates safer and more inclusive. If school boards are to increase academic achievement and ensure the safety of all their students and employees, they must be proactive about responding to anti-LGBT bias and harassment. School board members must put the well-being of children above politics.

CURRICULUM DIRECTORS

Curriculum leaders should help teachers understand where lessons about LGBT people and issues can be included appropriately in the context of existing curriculum guidelines for each grade level, kindergarten through twelve. There are age-appropriate ways to be inclusive in lessons about families, communities, history, literature, current events, art, music, theater, even mathematics and science.

LAWMAKERS

All state and local officials have the responsibility to enact and support legislation that protects students from harassment based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender expression. All students have a federal constitutional right to equal protection under the law. This means that schools have a duty to protect all students—including LGBT students—from harassment. Yet, anti-LGBT bias is present in classrooms and hallways across the country because educators lack local legal support to address prejudice. To date, only ten states have comprehensive anti-bullying laws that protect students on the basis of sexual orientation, and only five states have laws that protect on the basis of gender expression. Every state must provide students with this protection.