

2009 National School Climate Survey: Nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT Students Experience Harassment in School

Media Contact:
Daryl Presgraves
646-388-6577
dpresgraves@glsen.org

Sep 14, 2010



Report Includes Analysis of 10 Years of Data, Finds Little Change in Victimization; Download Report on Top Right of Page

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, today marks the culmination of 10 years of pioneering research documenting the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students with the release of *The 2009 National School Climate Survey*.

The 2009 survey of 7,261 middle and high school students found that at school nearly 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school in the past year and nearly two-thirds felt unsafe because of their sexual orientation. Nearly a third of LGBT students skipped at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns.

An analysis of National School Climate Survey data over 10 years showed that since 1999 there has been a decreasing trend in the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks; however, LGBT students' experiences with more severe forms of bullying and harassment have remained relatively constant.



"In 1999, GLSEN began data collection on the school experiences of LGBT students in order to fill a critical void in our knowledge and understanding of the ways LGBT issues play out in schools. It could not be clearer that there is an urgent need for action to create safe and affirming schools for LGBT students," GLSEN Executive Director Eliza Byard said. "As our nation seems to finally be taking bullying more seriously, it is crucial that LGBT students are no longer left out of efforts to address this public health crisis."

Key Findings of the 2009 National School Climate Survey include:

Student Experiences, a Hostile School Climate and the Effects on Educational Outcomes and Psychological Well-Being:

- 84.6% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 40.1% reported being physically harassed and 18.8% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
- 63.7% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 27.2% reported being physically harassed and 12.5% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their gender expression.
- 72.4% heard homophobic remarks, such as "faggot" or "dyke," frequently or often at school.
- Nearly two-thirds (61.1%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (39.9%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.
- 29.1% of LGBT students missed a class at least once and 30.0% missed at least one day of school in the past month because of safety concerns, compared to only 8.0% and 6.7%, respectively, of a national sample of secondary school students.
- The reported grade point average of students who were more frequently harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender expression was almost half a grade lower than for students who were less often harassed (2.7 vs. 3.1).

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- //2009 National School Climate Survey: Download - Full Report, 164 pages (3 MB)
- //2009 National School Climate Survey: Download - Executive summary, 20 pages (1.28MB)
- //Arizona Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Arkansas Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //California Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Colorado Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Connecticut Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Florida Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Georgia Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Illinois Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Indiana Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Maryland Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Massachusetts Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Michigan Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Minnesota Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Missouri Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //New Jersey Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //New York Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //New York City Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //North Carolina Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Ohio Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Oregon Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Pennsylvania Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Tennessee Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Texas Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Virginia Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Washington Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //Wisconsin Research Brief NSCS 2009
- //GLSEN Research Learning Series: Fall 2010 Webinars (Free)

LOCAL CHAPTERS

Find a GLSEN chapter in your area.

--Select State--

STAY INFORMED

[your email address] **GO**

//DONATE

//REGISTER YOUR GAY-STRAIGHT ALLIANCE [GSA]

//JOIN OUR EDUCATOR NETWORK

- Increased levels of victimization were related to increased levels of depression and anxiety and decreased levels of self-esteem.
- Being out in school had positive and negative repercussions for LGBT students %96 outness was related to higher levels of victimization, but also higher levels of psychological well-being.

Positive Interventions and Support:

- Having a Gay-Straight Alliance in school was related to more positive experiences for LGBT students, including: hearing fewer homophobic remarks, less victimization because of sexual orientation and gender expression, less absenteeism because of safety concerns and a greater sense of belonging to the school community.
- The presence of supportive staff contributed to a range of positive indicators including fewer reports of missing school, fewer reports of feeling unsafe, greater academic achievement, higher educational aspirations and a greater sense of school belonging.
- Students attending schools with an anti-bullying policy that included protections based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression heard fewer homophobic remarks, experienced lower levels of victimization related to their sexual orientation, were more likely to report that staff intervened when hearing homophobic remarks and were more likely to report incidents of harassment and assault to school staff than students at schools with a general policy or no policy.
- Despite the positive benefits of these interventions, less than a half of LGBT students (44.6%) reported having a Gay-Straight Alliance at school, slightly more than half (53.4%) could identify six or more supportive educators and less than a fifth (18.2%) attended a school that had a comprehensive anti-bullying policy.

School Climate Over Time: 1999-2009

- There was a steady decline in the frequency of hearing homophobic remarks from 1999 to 2003. In recent years, between 2005 and 2009, students%92 reports of hearing these types of remarks have not decreased significantly.
- LGBT students%92 experiences of harassment and assault have remained relatively constant over time. However, there were small but significant decreases in frequencies of verbal harassment, physical harassment and physical assault from 2007 to 2009.
- There has been an increase over time in the presence of several LGBT-related resources and supports in school, specifically: Gay-Straight Alliances or other student clubs that address LGBT issues in education; school staff who were supportive of LGBT students; and LGBT-related materials in school libraries.

"A look at 10 years of National School Climate Survey data reveals some gains in the availability of resources and supportive educators, thanks in part to GLSEN's work and that of educators and advocates across the country committed to safe and affirming environments for all students," said Dr. Joseph Kosciw, GLSEN Senior Director of Research and Strategic Initiatives. "Nevertheless, it is still the minority of LGBT students who report having sufficient support in school, which may explain why we have not seen greater improvements regarding in-school victimization. Without greater leadership and commitment to addressing anti-LGBT bias and behavior, we likely have a long way to go before we see significant change."

GLSEN's biennial National School Climate Survey is the only national survey to document the experiences of students who identify as LGBT in America's secondary schools. The 2009 survey includes responses from 7,261 LGBT students between the ages of 13 and 21 from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Data collection was conducted through community-based groups, online outreach, and targeted advertising on the social networking sites Facebook and MySpace.

See also the GLSEN Research Learning Series: Fall 2010 Webinars here.

About GLSEN

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community. For information on GLSEN's research, educational resources, public policy advocacy, student organizing programs and educator training initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.



OUR SPONSORS:



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright 2003-2011 GLSEN, Inc., the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network. All rights reserved.

Engineered by Mediapolis, Inc. . Designed by BBMG