Addressing the Needs of LGBTQ+ Students: A Foundational Overview

Land Acknowledgement

We want to respectfully acknowledge the Menominee, Fox, Anishinaabe, Peoria, Chippewa (also known as Ojibway/Ojibwe), Sioux, Mississauga, Odawa, Miami, Potawatomi, and other Native peoples, who have stewarded the land upon which we stand throughout the generations.
Michigan Department of Education’s LGBTQ+ Students Project—An Overview

1. **Trainings—In-Person & Online**
   - A Silent Crisis: Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students (introductory)
   - Planning for Action: Next Steps in Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students (advanced)
   - Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students: A Training of Facilitators and Leaders (TOFL) to Build the Capacity of Michigan Schools

2. **Technical Assistance & Drop-In Support**
   - Professional development, school-wide improvements, district planning, providing supports for individual students/families, legal compliance

3. **State Board of Education Statement & Guidance on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for LGBTQ Students**

4. **Resource Guide**
   - A Silent Crisis: Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for LGBTQ+ Students

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**Who Are You?**

Take a moment to introduce yourself in the chat box!

1. What is your name?
2. If you feel comfortable sharing, what are your pronouns? Feel free to add them to your Zoom name!
   - he/him/his;
   - she/her/hers;
   - they/them/theirs;
   - or something else?
3. Where did you grow up?
4. On a scale of cat, how are you feeling today?
Group Agreements

- Wherever you are at is okay
- No one knows everything, together we know a lot
- Make room for discomfort
- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Delay distractions

Some things to reflect on:
- Our own experience, identities, privileges, biases, etc. shape our perceptions and actions
- Take note of resistance
- Be conscious of intent vs. impact – no matter your intent, you're responsible for the impact
- Let’s dismantle systems of oppression, not each other – For example, calling someone “in” is a courteous gesture of trust and respect
- Take care of each other! Praise, lift up, celebrate, love!

Adapted with gratitude from Claudia Alick CALLING UP, and the facilitation of Keryl McCord, Lisa Q. Mount, and Andrew Roblyer

Agenda

- Welcome, Intros and Setting the Stage
- Language & Terminology
- Through the Eyes of Young People—What’s the Data Say?
- Law & Policy Update
- Strategies & Next Steps
- Bringing Closure
Understanding Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression
Unpacking the Alphabet

**Sex Assigned at Birth**
The designation of “female”, “intersex” or “male” on an infant’s birth certificate. Typically determined by visible genitalia, which may or may not correspond with chromosomes, hormones, and/or sexual and reproductive anatomy.

**Gender Identity**
A person’s strong internal sense or knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the sex they were assigned at birth.


**Gender Expression**
Relates to how a person presents their gender to self and others through clothing, hairstyle, mannerisms, etc.

*fluid*, *femme*, *femme*, *butch*, masculine presenting, *queer*, *studd*, gender normative, gender fluid, gender neutral, gender non-binary, etc.

**Sexual Orientation / Attractiveness**
A person’s experience of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to others.

*asexual*, *sexual*, *lesbian*, *straight*, *gay*, *bisexual*, *queer*, questioning, *demisexual*, *demi-romantic*, *aromantic*, *skullosexual*, etc.

created by: Autumn Jay Campbell, she/her/hers (c) 2023

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Through the Eyes of LGBTQ+ Young People

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*We're a guy first or a girl first?*  

*TIk Tok* blocked my last video criticizing this 😞
Through the Eyes of LGBTQ+ Young People

What to Expect

In general, kids have a sense of their gender identity between the ages of 3-5 years.

In general, kids have a sense of their attractionality/sexual orientation between the ages of 10-12 years.
Let's Discuss!

Take a moment to reflect on your immediate reactions to what we just discussed. What do you want to remember?
What LGBTQ+ Students Say Through Data

In an Average Michigan Classroom...

Nearly 13% of Michigan public high school students identify as LGBT

- 12% of students identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB).
- 1.7% of students identify as transgender.
- LGBT students are just as racially/ethnically diverse as the general student population

Source: Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019
LGBT Students at Greater Risk

Compared to their heterosexual & cisgender peers, LGBT students are X times more likely to...

- Threatened or injured with a weapon at school: 2.9x
- Bullied at school or online: 1.9x

As a result, LGBT students are X times more likely to...

- Skip school because they felt unsafe: 2.7x
- Get Ds & Fs: 1.5x

Sources: Michigan YRBS 2017 and 2019 combined.

Additional Considerations for LGBT Students

LGBT students are X times more likely to...

- Engage in self-harm behaviors (e.g., cutting): 3.2x
- Have experienced trauma (i.e., 4+ Adverse Childhood Experiences-ACEs): 2.4x

Michigan LGBT students are 2.0x more likely to have been pushed or kicked out of their home due to family rejection—1 in 8 (12%) LGBT and nearly 1 in 5 (18%) transgender students.

Studies show that up to 45% of homeless youth are LGBT.

23% of Michigan LGBT high school students attempted suicide in the last 12 months. That’s about 13,500 students and is 4.6x higher than their non-LGBT peers.

Sources: Michigan YRBS 2017 and 2019 combined; The Williams Institute
Harmful School Practices Faced by Transgender Students in Michigan

1 in 4 prevented from using their name or pronoun*
1 in 3 prevented from using the bathroom aligned with gender identity*
Nearly 1 in 5 prevented from wearing clothing considered “inappropriate” for their gender


Through the Eyes of LGBTQ+ Young People—Pronouns
When school is unsafe, LGBTQ+ students experience...

- **Missing School**
  - Students experiencing harassment often skip school to avoid victimization

- **School Pushout**
  - Missing school can result in a student being pushed out due to school disciplinary or criminal sanctions for truancy

- **Dropout**
  - May occur as a result of poor academic achievement, or disengaging with school due to the days missed

Impact of One Affirming Space

LGBTQ youth who reported having at least one LGBTQ-affirming space had 35% reduced odds of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year.

Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having at least one gender-affirming space had 25% reduced odds of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year.

Sources: Trevor Project, Research Brief: LGBTQ & Gender-Affirming Spaces, December 3, 2020

Promoting Resiliency

Profile of Resilient Youth

- Social Competence
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Autonomy
- Sense of Purpose and Future

Key Protective Factors

- Caring and support
- High expectations
- Youth participation/connectedness

These factors are important in three areas—school, family, and community

Source: Education Leadership and American Psychological Association
Let’s Discuss!

What’s one thing that is either resonating with you right now, or is a question you are still holding?
Strategies & Next Steps

Keys to Success for LGBTQ+ Students

- Comprehensive anti-bullying, anti-harassment, nondiscrimination policies
- Teachers & staff who are supportive of LGBTQ+ students
- Student groups like GSAs
- LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula

Inclusive, Enumerated Policies

“By focusing on individual students, we risk ‘blaming the victims’ or trying to ‘fix’ them or their problems, rather than focusing efforts on policies and practices that will create positive overall school climates.”

School Staff Support and Professional Development

These trainings have increased my overall awareness and challenged some biases I didn’t know I had about supporting LGBTQ+ students. Since attending these trainings, our school has committed to further professional development for staff and started re-looking at policies to include more inclusive practices, making all students feel safe and supported. There is a monumental shift happening in how we support our LGBTQ+ students. These students now have caring adult support to listen and help advocate for their needs and their rights. That gift alone can be life changing.

-Kayla, School Counselor
Gender & Sexuality Alliances

Student groups like GSAs

SOCIAL
A Social GSA is a club that focuses mostly on creating a fun and safe place for students, on and off campus, to meet other LGBTQIA+ students, make friends, and celebrate being LGBTQIA+ people.

SUPPORT
A Support GSA is a club that focuses mostly on creating a safe space for LGBTQIA+ students to talk about their feelings, experiences, and issues they are facing at home, at school, and in their everyday lives.

ACTIVIST
An Activist GSA is a club that focuses mostly on educating students, teachers, parents, and community members to create a safer and more accepting school. LGBTIQA+ students should be challenging school rules and policies, training staff and students, and helping to end harassment and discrimination.

WHERE WILL YOUR GSA FIT ON THIS DIAGRAM?

Windows, Mirrors & Sliding Glass Doors

LGBTQ+ inclusive curricula

“When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.”
State Board of Education LGBTQ Guidance: Overall Recommendations

1. Adopt, implement, and enforce inclusive policies
2. Provide professional development opportunities
3. Support formation of GSAs
4. Provide family engagement and support
5. Encourage respect throughout educational culture
6. Provide information in school libraries
7. Collect and review data
8. Designate building-level staff

State Board of Education LGBTQ Guidance: Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students

1. Student identity
2. Names and pronouns
3. Student records
4. Privacy and confidentiality regarding disclosures
5. Gender-segregated activities and facilities
   • Restrooms
   • Locker rooms and changing facilities
   • Physical education classes and intramural sports
   • Interscholastic sports
   • Gender-based activities or practices
6. Dress code
What is one commitment you are willing to make as a result of this webinar?
On behalf of all of us at the Michigan Department of Education’s LGBTQ Students Project, thank you for your participation!

If you have any questions or want to follow up in any way, please email us at kim@rootsofchange.us