

### Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Students



Trainer: Landon Callahan and Jeff Perrotti  
Email: [landoncallahan@outlook.com](mailto:landoncallahan@outlook.com) / [jperrotti@gmail.com](mailto:jperrotti@gmail.com)  
Phone: (617) 624-5495

Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students



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### Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students

- A collaborative effort of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth.
- Informs policy and provides training, technical assistance, and professional development to school administrators and staff on topics related to gender identity, sexual orientation, and school climate.
- Manage the Massachusetts GSA Leadership Council for middle/high school student leaders and advisors.

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### Session Objectives

- Be able to articulate and use correct LGBTQ terms and definitions,
- Understand the experiences of LGBTQ students and families,
- Review sample policy guidance and best practices as it relates to LGBTQ students, families and staff,
- Identify best practices for addressing bias-based bullying and improving school climate, and
- Be aware of the factors that promote resilience and positive outcomes for LGBTQ students.

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**All students deserve a safe,  
supportive school environment free  
of bias-based behavior.**



**All students are scanning for safety.**

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Percent of Students Who Reported Risk Behaviors and Experiences	LGBTQ Students	Non-LGBTQ Students	Relative Risk for LGBTQ Students
Bullied at school in the past year	29.8	14.1	2.1x
Skipped school in past month because felt unsafe	15.4	4.5	3.4x
Been in a physical fight at school in the past year	11.9	5.6	2.1x
Threatened or injured with weapon at school	11.8	3.3	3.6x
Bullied electronically in the past year	23.8	11.5	2.1x
Hurt self on purpose in the past year (e.g., by cutting, burning self)	37.3	12.4	3.0x
Seriously considered suicide in the past year	39.0	12.9	3.0x
Made a suicide attempt in the past year	19.9	4.5	4.4x
Can talk to parents about "things that are important to you"	69.3	82.9	0.8x
Any lifetime heroin use	4.6	1.1	4.2x
Experienced sexual contact against their will	18.8	7.3	2.6x
Homelessness	7.0	2.0	3.5x

All differences between LGBTQ and other students are statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

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**DISCUSSION**  
What do you notice?  
What are the root causes of these disparities?




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**Craig, Kimma & Family**




"Eventually we figured that we would have a gay boy, which was fine. The transgender thought, or issue, wasn't on our radar at all." ~ Craig

**Discuss:** What can we do in our classrooms, schools and the wider school community to increase conversations about the complexities of gender and family diversity?.

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"Luke said, 'You love my hair and I don't want to make you sad.' At the moment I realized that all the messages I was sending him was that it was not okay for him to be who he was."

**DISCUSSION**  
What are some unconscious and conscious ways we unnecessarily gender our classrooms and student activities?

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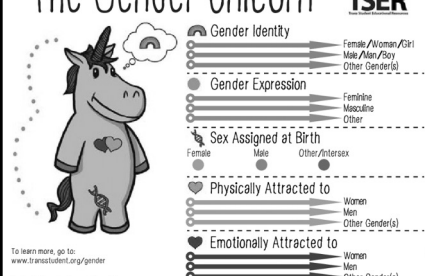
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### The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by TSER



**Gender Identity**  
Female/Woman/Girl  
Male/Man/Boy  
Other Gender(s)

**Gender Expression**  
Feminine  
Masculine  
Other

**Sex Assigned at Birth**  
Female  
Male  
Other/Intersex

**Physically Attracted to**  
Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

**Emotionally Attracted to**  
Women  
Men  
Other Gender(s)

To learn more, go to:  
[www.transstudent.org/gender](http://www.transstudent.org/gender)

Design by Landryn Pien and Anna Moore

**Questions:**

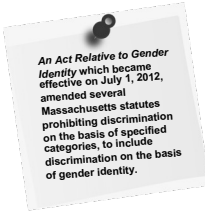
- At what age does a person begin to meaningfully recognize their gender identity?
- At what age does a person begin to meaningfully recognize their sexual orientation?

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## Best Practices & Guidance for Massachusetts Schools

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THE 189<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL COURT OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

### Chapter 76, Section 5

#### Massachusetts Student Anti-discrimination Law

No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

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## Guidance on Gender Identity

### Key Components:

- Name, Gender Marker, & Record Changes
- Bathrooms & Locker Rooms
- Confidentiality
- Athletics
- Gendered Practices



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## Stop it • Name it • Claim it

**Step One:** Stop the behavior from happening.

**Step Two:** Name the behavior that just occurred. This behavior can be words used, a gesture or a form of shunning.

**Step Three:** Claim how that action makes you feel and that you don't want it repeated. You could also express how that action might make others feel.



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## Family Acceptance

“a little change – being a *little less rejecting* and a *little more accepting* – can make an important difference in reducing a young person's risk for serious health problems, including suicide and HIV.”



Source: Family Acceptance Project, San Francisco State University



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## Supporting Parents, Guardians & Caregivers

- Tell your child or foster child about their LGBTQ identity
- Express affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is gay or transgender
- Support your child's LGBTQ identity even though you may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for your child when they are mistreated because of their LGBTQ identity
- Require that other family members respect your LGBTQ child
- Bring your child to LGBTQ organizations or events
- Talk with clergy and help your faith community to support LGBTQ people
- Connect your child with an LGBTQ adult role model to show them options for the future
- Welcome your child's LGBTQ friends & partners to your home
- Support your child's gender expression
- Believe your child can have a happy future as an LGBTQ adult

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## FAMILY ACCEPTANCE

"I've heard parents say all they want is "the best" for their children, but the best is subjective and anchored by how they know and learned the world."

-Janet Mock



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## LGBTQ Inclusive Content & Curricula



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## Principles for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Learning Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Students

Approved, March 24, 2015, Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education



**Schools, through their curricula, shall encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, including LGBTQ individuals.**

The regulations addressing the Student Anti-discrimination Law state: *All public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.* See, 603 CMR 26.05(1).

Research shows that inclusion of LGBTQ topics in curricula corresponds to all students reporting that they feel safer in school, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Curricula should reflect issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, as relevant, to be inclusive across subject areas, including, but not limited to, health, social science, language arts, and family life curricula.



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## Windows & Mirrors for ALL Students



"When teachers are there for me, when they talk about me and my experience, when they talk about my family structure, it means the world to me! I know I am safe. I know I am accepted. I know I will be ok."

- Massachusetts Student



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## Gender Inclusive Classrooms: Concepts and Lessons

### Pre K/Lower Elementary Grades(Pre K - 2)

#### Overarching concepts:

There are lots of ways that people express themselves. Isn't it great?!

- Toys are toys, hair is hair, colors are color, and clothes are clothes
- Kids can do or be or like or want anything because they are individuals with hopes and likes and desires. This is **not** because they are boys or girls!



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## Gender Inclusive Classrooms: Concepts and Lessons

### Middle Elementary Grades(2 - 4)

#### Overarching concepts:

Gender is very complex and not just about bodies. We all have a right to be ourselves.

- Gender includes a relationship between bodies, expression and identity
- Who you are is not about what others tell you, but something you determine for yourself (even when you get messages that say otherwise)
- People deserve to be treated with kindness and respect



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## Gender Inclusive Classrooms: Concepts and Lessons

### Upper Elementary Grades(4 - 6)

#### Overarching concepts:

Gender Diversity: Binary vs. Multi-dimensional Models of Gender

- Gender in Nature
- Gender in history and across cultures
- Certain types of bodies are thought of as boy and certain types as girl, but that's not true for everyone



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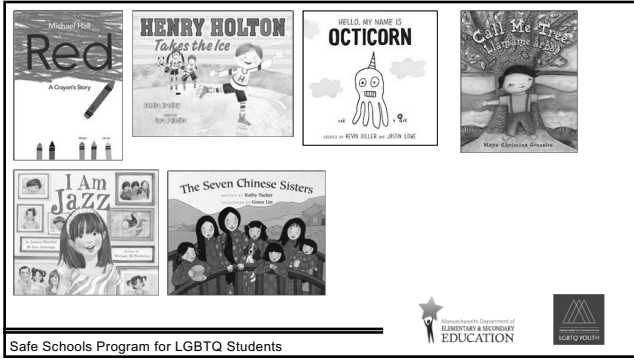
### Middle & High School Diverse Books & Online Resources

- [www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq)
- [www.WelcomingSchools.org](http://www.WelcomingSchools.org)
- [www.GenderSpectrum.org](http://www.GenderSpectrum.org)
- [www.GLSEN.org](http://www.GLSEN.org)
- [http://FamilyProject.sfsu.edu](http://http://FamilyProject.sfsu.edu)
- [ma-lgbtq.org](http://ma-lgbtq.org)
- [www.gbplflag.org](http://www.gbplflag.org)
- [www.jri.org/glass](http://www.jri.org/glass)
- [www.bagly.org/the-agly-network](http://www.bagly.org/the-agly-network)



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