



SCHOOL CLIMATE

BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING LGBTQ STUDENTS

A Learning for Justice Guide



LEARNING
FOR JUSTICE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

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INTRODUCTION

To feel safe and to feel seen. To feel valued and capable of growth. These are simple concepts—basic pillars of student achievement and the results of good pedagogy.

For many **queer** students, these rights remain out of reach.

We recognize the complicated history of the word “queer” and that its reclamation as a positive or even neutral term of identity isn’t universally accepted. In this guide, we use *queer* as an inclusive term to refer to those who fall outside of cisgender or heterosexual identities—not as a pejorative.

According to data from GLSEN—an organization that provides resources, research and advocacy in support of queer youth—more than half of LGBTQ students feel unsafe at school. Fewer than 25 percent of those students see positive representations of queer people in their classrooms. More than half hear negative remarks about their sexuality or gender identity from school staff. And, due to these and other circumstances, LGBTQ students are more likely to miss school, see their grades suffer, and to face dire consequences outside of school, such as homelessness.

A recent survey from the Human Rights Campaign shows these problems haven’t dissipated; just a quarter of LGBTQ stu-

dents feel they can be their authentic selves at school, and only 27 percent say they always feel safe in the classroom.

Current research also offers reasons to be hopeful, but that hope is grounded in action. LGBTQ students who go to school in a fully inclusive environment—where both curriculum and schoolwide policies value their identities—experience more positive outcomes. They also experience less harassment, feel more valued by school staff and face fewer barriers to success.

We also know that an LGBTQ-inclusive school benefits *all* students. Seeing LGBTQ identities valued in the classroom, in the curriculum and in day-to-day interactions inspires empathy, understanding and respect. The overall school climate is safer. The lessons on history, literature and culture are more complete. And the dangerous expectations of constricted gender roles—from the mask of suppressed emotional expression placed on boys to the unrealistic beauty standards facing girls—can give way to a culture that values all students.

This work isn’t revolutionary. It reflects basic pedagogy and best practices.

With this guide, we hope to help school leaders ensure that all students feel safe, seen and capable of success; to ensure that the curriculum is as complete and representative as possible; to ensure that the school climate fosters open and respectful dialogue among all students and staff; and to prepare youth to engage and thrive within our diverse democracy.



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The journey toward an LGBTQ-inclusive school climate begins with simple steps recommended in each of the four key areas of this guide:

- **Policy checkup.** Review the constitutional rights of LGBTQ students and see exemplar policies addressing bathrooms, locker rooms, sports, sex education and more.
- **Classroom culture.** Learn best practices for making all students feel welcome in your classroom, including how to facilitate conversations, speak up against bullying behavior, and evaluate the ways in which your words or actions could marginalize LGBTQ students.
- **Instruction.** Discover strategies for integrating LGBTQ perspectives into your curriculum and navigating challenges that may result.
- **Family and community engagement.** Get ideas for responding to pushback from the community, as well as helping LGBTQ

students and nontraditional families feel included in school communities.

Along the way, this publication aims to offer guidance for addressing critical conversations, backlash and burning questions, such as:

- What do I do if an unaccepting family, an outside group or the community pushes back against inclusive practices?
- What do I do if my administration isn't supportive?
- What do I do if a student comes out to me?

We know educators can face cultural *and* professional barriers when implementing anti-bias policies and curriculum. But we also know the importance of protecting LGBTQ students and their rights to an education. The steps in this guide can be taken in any K-12 school in any community. Together, we can move toward a world in which LGBTQ-inclusive classrooms are no longer the exception, but the rule.

SECTION I

POLICY CHECKUP

Policies reflect a school's priorities and, like budgets, reveal as much in what they omit as in what's written on the page. It's time more LGBTQ kids see themselves on the page. School leaders who make inclusive policies a priority can set the tone for entire schools and districts.

Some policies that sound standard or fair on the surface can marginalize or discriminate against LGBTQ students. These examples point to aspects of school that can be tough for kids with queer identities—and offer ways to follow the law *and* create more equitable and inclusive policies.

KNOW YOUR STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Creating more inclusive policies begins with an understanding of students' basic rights, as determined by the law *and* by educational best practices. These rights serve as the backbone of good policymaking and equip school leaders with a legal and moral defense against backlash.

➤ **Students have a right to express their gender as they wish—regardless of their sex assigned at birth.** While students must follow basic dress codes—e.g., no profanity on T-shirts—they cannot be forced to align with gender-specific guidelines. The same is true of hair length, makeup, prom attire, jewelry, footwear, etc. Gender-specific guidelines based on a student's assigned sex violate a student's rights to freedom of expression. As

long as one student can wear an outfit without breaking rules, so can another.

➤ **Students have a right to be free from discrimination or harassment based on religious views.** LGBTQ students in public schools have equal rights to their peers, including the right to freedom from religious persecution. This means students can't be denied equal access to safety and opportunity due to someone else's religious beliefs.

➤ **Students have a right to express LGBTQ pride.** If your school's dress code allows students to wear T-shirts with slogans or pictures, it's unlawful for your school to ask a student to take off their shirt just because it endorses LGBTQ pride or makes a statement about their LGBTQ identity.

➤ **Students have a right to form Gay-Straight or Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs).** If your school permits other student clubs, it should allow students to form and publicize a GSA.

➤ **LGBTQ students have a right to attend proms, field trips and dances.** Students cannot be denied equal access to school events or school learning opportunities because of their identity. Students also have the right to take a date of any gender to school dances as long as their date satisfies all attendance eligibility rules, such as age limits.

➤ **Students have a right to access facilities and opportunities that match their gender identity.** This includes bathrooms, locker rooms and gender-specific activities.

➤ **Students have a right to be free of harassment and to have harassment treated seriously.** Public schools must treat harassment or bullying that targets LGBTQ students with the same seriousness they would use in a case of harassment against any other child. Ignoring harassment and bullying is a violation of Title IX.

➤ **LGBTQ students have a right to be “out.”** Educators can always ask students to stop disruptive speech—in the classroom during a lecture, for instance. But schools cannot tell a student not to talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity while at school.

➤ **LGBTQ students have a right not to be “outed.”** Even if people within the school know about a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity, educators cannot disclose a student’s private information without consent. Outing LGBTQ students violates their constitutional rights and has led to tragic and fatal consequences.

Schools that successfully acknowledge these rights in their policies take important steps toward providing an environment where LGBTQ students can succeed, feel supported and have access to the same opportunities as their peers.

ANTI-BULLYING/HARASSMENT POLICIES

Research shows that LGBTQ students in schools with inclusive policies are less likely to experience harassment and more likely to advocate for themselves if they do. Naming LGBTQ identities within the policy is critical to promoting physical safety in your school.

An inclusive policy:

➤ **Includes gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation** (actual or per-



ceived) as protected, immutable identities, alongside race, religion, ethnicity, disability, etc. (Unfortunately this isn’t possible in South Dakota where, as of 2018, naming protected groups in anti-bullying policies is illegal.)

➤ **Lays out a clear expectation that all incidents of bullying will be investigated seriously.**

➤ **Lays out a clear expectation that staff will intervene to stop all forms of bullying and harassment,** and report incidents when they occur.

➤ **Includes digital harassment** within the scope of potential investigation and punishment, as students often face the worst bullying from peers online. According to GLSEN, nearly half of LGBTQ students face cyberbullying—a persistent threat that cannot be ignored by schools just because it sometimes occurs “off school grounds.”

For an example of an exemplary policy, look at this excerpt from Minnesota’s model policy, recommended to schools in the state:

Bullying can be, but need not be, based on an individual’s actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, immigration status, sex, marital status, familial status, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, sexual orientation, including gender identity and expression, academic status related to student performance, disability, status with regard to public assistance, age, or any additional characteristic defined in Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 363A (commonly referred to as the Minnesota Human Rights Act). Bullying in this policy includes “cyberbullying,” as defined below.

“Cyberbullying” is bullying that occurs when an electronic device, including but not limited to a computer or cell phone, is used to transfer a sign, signal, writing, image, sound or data and includes a post to a social network, internet website or forum.

t-t.site/model-policy

➤ **Makes it clear that students and educators will be held responsible** for bullying behavior and protected from harassment.

Most importantly, these inclusive policies must be widely known. Make sure students, educators and the school community have access to the anti-bullying policy from the beginning of the year. This transparency clearly communicates the expectations to all students and educators and helps LGBTQ students feel safer and valued.

BATHROOM AND LOCKER ROOM ACCESS

Students should have access to bathrooms, locker rooms and other gender-specific spaces that best match their gender identity. Basing bathroom access on assigned sex can have dangerous ramifications for students whose gender expression does not match their assigned sex. According to a survey from UCLA’s Williams Institute, 68 percent of transgender people faced verbal harassment while in the bathroom; nearly 10 percent endured physi-

cal assault. Those who fear such harassment will often not go to the bathroom at all, risking their physical health.

Bathroom policies often ignore the identities and experiences of intersex students entirely. Biological or birth certificate criteria might force them to use facilities that do not correspond with their gender expression which, again, can violate their privacy and dissuade them from using these facilities at all.

A common pushback: “I am (or my child is) uncomfortable being in the bathroom with a transgender student.”

Be prepared to respond. Point out the difference between accommodation and discrimination. If someone is uncomfortable being in a shared space—for whatever reason—give them the option of a more private facility. Just remember that their discomfort isn’t justifiable cause to force another student to use a different bathroom or locker room. A gender-neutral or sin-

For an example of an exemplary policy, see the nondiscrimination addendum adopted by Atherton High School of Louisville, Kentucky, in 2014:

Guidelines on Accessibility for Students

[School Name] shall not discriminate on the use of school space as the basis of gender identity nor gender expression. The school shall accept the gender identity that each student asserts. There is no medical or mental health diagnosis or treatment threshold that students must meet in order to have their gender identity recognized and respected. The assertion may be evidenced by an expressed desire to be consistently recognized by their gender identity. Students ready to socially transition may initiate a process with the school administration to change their name, pronoun, attire, and access to preferred activities and facilities. Each student has a unique process for transitioning. The school shall customize support to optimize each student's integration.

t-t.site/guidelines-on-accessibility

gle-stall bathroom can be made available to any student—LGBTQ or not—who desires more privacy. If such a facility is available, make sure students know they have the option. At primary public-use bathroom locations, post a map that points to where students can find the single-stall or gender-neutral bathroom.

INCLUSIVE SPORTS POLICIES

Schools should, to the best of their ability, allow students to play on sports teams and clubs that best match their gender identity. Sometimes this will run counter to the rules of your state's high school athletics association. As of 2018, 17 **state associations*** have fully inclusive policies, allowing trans and intersex student athletes to participate with teams that correspond to their gender identity—without the requirement of hormone treatments or surgery.

*The states with fully inclusive policies are California, Nevada, Washington, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Florida, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire. Elsewhere, states have varying rules. For example, in Alaska, the state association will honor the school district's policy, inclusive or exclusive. In states like Delaware, Georgia, Illinois and New Mexico, associations require that students meet one or more of the following criteria: a legally changed birth certificate, a time period of undergoing hormone treatments and/or sex reassignment surgery. States like Iowa and North Dakota have different rules for trans boys and trans girls. And some states, such as Alabama and Kentucky, say sports participation must be determined by sex assigned at birth. Six states (Montana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina and West Virginia) have no policy at all. Transathlete.com maintains an updated list you can reference.

School leaders in states with policies that require queer students to undergo medical interventions or legal changes can advocate for more inclusive options. Often, such policies cite competitive disadvantage as the reason for instilling such rules, especially in the case of transgender and intersex girls. However, not all students have the financial or social means to pursue medical intervention—and not all transgender or intersex people want to transition medically and physically.

Schools attempting to craft a more inclusive policy for sports participation should keep the following recommendations in mind:

➤ **Students should be able to join intramural clubs and sports teams** that correspond most closely with their gender identity.

➤ **Students should have access to locker rooms** that correspond most closely with their gender identity.

➤ **Gender-neutral changing facilities, locker rooms and bathrooms can be offered to any student who feels uncomfortable changing among their peers**, but should not be *required* as the only option for trans, intersex or nonbinary students. This segregates them.

School leaders in states where there is no policy or where the policy gives power to school districts should draft and suggest inclusive policies, such as the "eligibility to participate" guidelines for a model policy spelled out by Erin E. Buzuvis, director of the Center for Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University of New Hampshire:

Eligibility to participate: A student has the right to participate in athletics in a manner consistent with the sex listed on that student's school records. A student whose gender identity is different from the sex listed on the student's registration records may participate in a manner consistent with the student's gender identity in accordance with the policy below.

Additional guidelines

The [state athletic association] endorses the following guidelines to ensure the nondiscriminatory treatment of transgender students participating in [state athletic association] activities.

1. Changing Areas, Toilets, Showers. A transgender student-athlete should be

able to use the locker room, shower and toilet facilities in accordance with the student's gender identity. Every locker room should have some private, enclosed changing areas, showers, and toilets for use by any athlete who desires them ... transgender students should not be required to use separate facilities.

2. Hotel Rooms. Transgender student-athletes generally should be assigned to share hotel rooms based on their gender identity, with a recognition that any student who needs extra privacy should be accommodated whenever possible.

t-t.site/trans-athletes

Or this example from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

Physical education is a required course in all grades. ... Where there are sex-segregated classes or athletic activities, including intramural and interscholastic athletics, all students must be allowed to participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

t-t.site/MA-guidance

➤ **Anti-bullying and harassment policies should also cover the actions of coaches and athletes**, with specific mention that bullying based on one’s gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.

➤ **Students who do not publicly identify as trans or intersex have a right to not be outed to anyone**—including peers and teammates—by their coach or school officials.

➤ **When traveling, students should be assigned hotel rooms and roommates that correspond with their gender identity**; any student who requests privacy should be accommodated while not singled out as demanding “special treatment.”

➤ **Students should not be forced to wear gendered sports uniforms that conflict with their gender identity.**

While the science behind hormones and perceived gender differences is more complicated than many people believe, the idea

of trans and intersex students (without hormone treatment) competing alongside cisgender students may generate a lot of pushback from the community. Balancing gender inclusivity and “fair play” can seem difficult, and state rules may determine that teams are ineligible if they allow such participation. In such instances, we recommend schools consider three possibilities:

They can ensure that intramural or non-sanctioned community sports are available to all students, regardless of assigned sex.

They can look for local, co-ed leagues and participate.

They can allow transgender and intersex athletes to practice, travel with the team and compete in exhibitions.

These are imperfect solutions, but schools should strive for the most inclusive option available to them, while continuing to advocate for more inclusive policies at the state or district levels.

DRESS CODES

In compliance with students’ legal rights, school dress code policies should allow for students’ free expression, including expression of their gender identities and pride in their queer identities. This means never targeting specific students’ identities with the dress code. If the gender expression or apparel worn by LGBTQ students is causing distraction, harassment or incidents of bias, this is a school climate problem—not a problem best solved by punishing LGBTQ students and suppressing their rights to free expression.

Dress codes *should*:

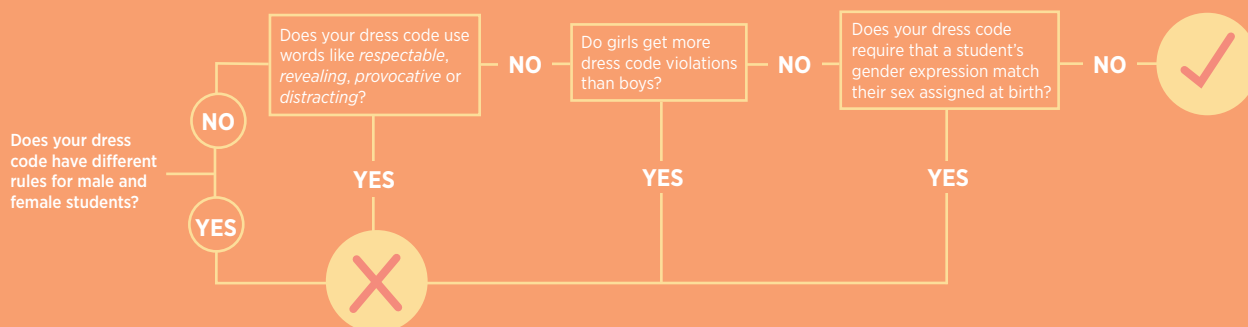
➤ **Allow exceptions that promote a safe or comfortable learning environment**, such as allowing athletic attire in P.E., tights in dance or gymnastics, or protective gear in science labs, workshops or art class.



IS MY SCHOOL DRESS CODE GENDER-INCLUSIVE?

Gendered dress codes can harm students in a variety of ways.

Use this flowchart to assess your school's dress code for gender bias.



Your dress code may seem to be targeting clothing, but it may actually be targeting students' identities. Students—regardless of gender identity or gender expression—need a clear, agreed-upon set of guidelines for how everyone should dress in a school environment. Gendered guidelines can humiliate students and even rob them of instructional time.



YOUR DRESS CODE SEEMS TO BE INCLUSIVE AND PROACTIVE.

It honors students' rights as individuals, which supports a safe learning environment. Way to go!

➤ **Prevent students from wearing attire that disrupts a safe learning environment**, such as clothes that feature hate speech or pornography, target a specific group of people, or advocate for violence or drug use.

➤ **Treat students equitably regardless of their sex assigned at birth.** Clothes that are permissible for one gender should be permissible for students of all gender identities.

➤ **Require the covering of body parts generally considered private.**

Dress codes *should not*:

➤ **Be different for boys and girls**, or force students to dress based on their sex assigned at birth.

➤ **Disallow shirts proclaiming pride in a student's LGBTQ identity** on the false

grounds that it is "distracting" or "offensive language to some."

➤ **Vary based on a student's weight, body type or appearance.**

➤ **Discriminate against headwear or hair-styles** that might correspond with a student's religious, racial or ethnic identities.

The graphic above, from "Controlling the Student Body," provides a guide for leaders who want to ensure their school's dress code is gender-inclusive.

An inclusive policy can look simple, such as the policy of Portland Public Schools.

INCLUSIVE SEX EDUCATION

Most LGBTQ students face a void when it comes to sex education—a void they often fill with inaccurate and age-inappropriate re-

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS DRESS CODE POLICY

The District Dress Code policy applies to all schools in Portland Public Schools grades PK–12, with the exception of schools with a Uniform Dress Code policy. *The responsibility for the dress and grooming of a student rests primarily with the student and his or her parents or guardians.*

Allowable Dress & Grooming

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt (or the equivalent) and shoes.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments, waistbands and bra straps excluded.
- Fabric covering all private parts must not be see-through.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible and not interfere with the line of sight to any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the student's face and ears to be visible to staff.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

Non-Allowable Dress & Grooming

- Clothing may not depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity or sexual acts.
- Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation or any other protected groups.
- Clothing, including gang identifiers, must not threaten the health or safety of any other student or staff.
- If the student's attire or grooming threatens the health or safety of any other person, then discipline for dress or grooming violations should be consistent with discipline policies for similar violations.

sources online. According to the Guttmacher Institute, only 12 states require the discussion of sexual orientation in sex ed; three of those states (Alabama, South Carolina and Texas) require that all coverage of queer sexual orientations be negative in nature.

This gap in our teaching negatively affects LGBTQ students, who, according to the CDC, are already at greater risk for intimate partner violence, sexual assault, STIs and negative feelings about their bodies. These risk factors underscore the need for inclusive sex education that positively covers LGBTQ identities. This also benefits non-LGBTQ students who otherwise may not understand their peers.

Providing comprehensive sex education is nearly impossible for educators and

Comprehensive and inclusive sex ed includes:

- Discussion of gender identities and sexual orientation—and not just as a special topic, but included throughout the coursework.
- Examples of healthy relationships, including same-sex relationships.
- Examples of diverse family constructions, including families with same-sex couples.
- Countering stereotypes about gender roles, LGBTQ identities and what it means to be a man or woman.
- Information for safe and protected sex practices for people of all identities.
- Medically accurate, myth-free and age-appropriate information on sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.
- Messaging that does not assume students' sexual orientations and gender identities, and that covers LGBTQ topics whether students in the class are "out" or not.

For more recommendations, see the National Sexuality Education Standards.

school leaders in states where so-called “No Promo Homo Laws” prohibit teachers from discussing LGBTQ topics in the classroom. (As of 2018, these states included Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama and South Carolina). Educators in these areas can advocate for changes in state law and reach out to civil rights organizations that may want to represent LGBTQ students and teachers facing this discrimination.

For educators in all states, pushing for more LGBTQ-inclusive sex ed requires a plan. Here are some tips for making sure the initiative is taken seriously:

- **Partner with community organizations.** They often have more resources and may have also identified gaps in your school and district policies.
- **Include student voices.** Encourage students to advocate for their own education, and you’ll have strong allies throughout the process.
- **Attend school board or community meetings.** Identify potential allies and possible counterarguments. Don’t forget to indicate if you’re there in an official capacity (with permission from your school) or as a private citizen.
- **Push boundaries.** If your school board can’t make changes due to state legislation, encourage members to pass a resolution calling for improved sex education. The resolution can help state-level advocates push for legislative change.

KNOWING YOUR ROLE AS AN ALLY

Following these four guidelines will put you in the best position to stand alongside your queer students:

GOOD ALLIES BEGIN WITH SELF-REFLECTION.

Being an effective LGBTQ ally requires significant self-reflection and a strong sense of one’s own relationship with gender identity and sexual orientation. Before spreading this work throughout your school, begin within.

Take time to consider these questions:

- *When did I become aware that I had a gender? When did I first become aware of my sexual orientation?*
- *What messages did I learn about sexual orientation or gender growing up?*
- *Was my sex, gender identity or expression ever in conflict with activities I wanted to participate in?*
- *Did my sexual orientation (or the fear of being perceived to have a different sexual orientation) ever keep me from participating in certain activities or social situations?*
- *Did I ever feel pressure to conform to cultural expectations related to my gender? Did I ever feel pressure to perform or hide my sexual orientation in any way?*
- *Did I ever judge others for not conforming to these cultural norms? If so, where did these beliefs or judgments originate?*
- *What messages—both implicit and explicit—do I convey to my students about sexual orientation or gender?*
- *Was there ever a time I wanted to challenge or transgress gender norms? What was the outcome and why?*

Once you've had a chance to self-reflect on your experience, take an honest self-assessment of your readiness to talk about these topics with students or colleagues.

➤ *Talking about gender or sexual orientation is challenging because...*

➤ *Talking about gender or sexual orientation is necessary because...*

➤ *Talking about gender or sexual orientation is beneficial because...*

When talking about sexual orientation with students...

- I am almost always uncomfortable.
- I am usually uncomfortable.
- I am sometimes comfortable, sometimes uncomfortable.
- I am usually comfortable.
- I am almost always comfortable.

When talking about gender identity with students...

- I am almost always uncomfortable.
- I am usually uncomfortable.
- I am sometimes comfortable, sometimes uncomfortable.
- I am usually comfortable.
- I am almost always comfortable.

If you find yourself listing a lot of challenges and leaning toward the “uncomfortable” end of the spectrum, focus on the sections from this guide titled Be Willing to Learn Essential Terms; Facilitate Conversations About Identity With Care; Challenge Gender Norms and Lead Discussions

with Courage and Care. Our publication *Let's Talk!* is a good starting point for doing this internal work before diving deeper.

GOOD ALLIES SPEAK UP AGAINST BULLYING, HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND HARASSMENT.

Chances are high that homophobic or transphobic bullying or harassment is occurring in your school.

One of the most effective things you can do is respond directly to homophobic or transphobic behavior. This includes remarking on the use of slurs and other phrases, such as “That’s so gay.” Here are four approaches you can use:

1. Interrupt. Speak up against biased remarks, every time, without exception.

2. Question. Ask simple questions to learn why the comment was made and how it can be addressed.

3. Educate. Explain why a word or phrase is hurtful or offensive and encourage the speaker to choose different language. Help students differentiate between intent and impact.

4. Echo. While one person’s voice is powerful, a collection of voices incites change.

Respond to biased or homophobic behavior as if there is an LGBTQ student in the room at all times. After all, educators can never fully grasp the extent to which students are listening or how deeply they are affected by harmful words.

For more practical advice on speaking up against biased language and intolerance from students, administrators and peers, see our guide *Speak Up at School*.

Teachers can also encourage students to respond to bullying or bias incidents as a community to promote unity, improve school climate and raise awareness. To help assess the severity of the problem, for exam-

SOURCE

Jessica Boyer,
Sexuality
Information
and Education
Council of the
United States
(SIECUS)

ple, students can gather together to conduct a survey on hurtful language used at school. Student groups can also organize an assembly or a march, observe GLSEN's Day of Silence or plan another campaign about the damaging effects of hurtful words.

GOOD ALLIES DON'T TRY TO DO THIS WORK ALONE.

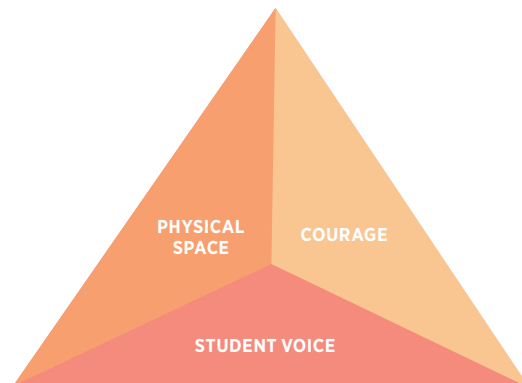
One way to preempt backlash or prevent feeling alone in this work is finding other allies in your school. Let administrators, teachers and counselors know your plans. Secure their support ahead of time. Work together to ensure content meets academic criteria and expectations. These conversations provide an entry point for building a community of support and collaboration across the school.

GOOD ALLIES FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE AND EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENT.

At the end of the day, skilled educators strive to make their schools and classrooms safer spaces so meaningful, constructive and rewarding social, emotional and academic learning can take place for everyone involved. In these spaces, students are encouraged to value their own individuality while also learning to value the unique experiences and perspectives of others.

“When I act courageously in the classroom, I express my sense of trust in my students. Trust is actually the most important quality of a safe space for an LGBTQ student.”

Peter J. Elliott, “How to Craft an Open Classroom”



AN INCLUSIVE AND EMPOWERING ENVIRONMENT

This triangle of inclusion will ensure an optimal, supportive learning environment is in place.

Point 1: Physical Space

Use visual aids such as quotation walls, posters of queer historical and literary figures, safe space stickers or other resources to serve as a consistent reminder to students that they are fully welcome.

Point 2: Student Voice

Encourage students to speak their truth. Structure discussions so that all students, introverted and extroverted alike, have equitable opportunity to share. Use a variety of storytelling methods so that all students—including LGBTQ youth—have a chance to tell their lived experiences.

Point 3: Courage

It takes courage to be an educator ally. Be willing to take risks with your students, and appreciate their bravery as they engage with the hard work of anti-bias education. It's normal to get nervous; congratulate yourself for your commitment to telling the whole truth.

WHAT DO I DO IF...

THE COMMUNITY PUSHES BACK?

Here are some basic tips if your school, your colleague or you face an organized or sizeable backlash to LGBTQ-inclusive practices. For more tips and details, read our article “Teaching From the Bulls-eye.”

➤ **Know the landscape of hate.** Be aware of local and national hate groups that actively target schools over LGBTQ-inclusive practices. For example, the Liberty Counsel has organized letter campaigns and even hassled individual teachers to pressure educators into resisting things like inclusive sex ed. The Alliance Defending Freedom is another group heavily organizing against practices such as allowing trans students to use facilities that match their gender identity. In some cases, both groups offer free legal counsel to sue the schools. Arm yourself with information so you can counter their misleading messages.

➤ **Find allies in your community.** Build relationships with local business leaders, places of worship, sports teams or organizations who support inclusivity, and who can show that support in a public, influential way.

➤ **Support the targets.** If outside groups or online communities target particular students or student groups, bring those students together and give them an opportunity to express their feelings. Let them know that you support them, even after the worst is over. Provide counseling and additional security if needed. Make sure public statements do not draw a false equivalency between the demands of hate groups and the needs of LGBTQ students.

➤ **Do not let misinformation go unchecked.** Outside groups may respond to the implementation of best practices with untrue accusations. Inform students and families of misinformation being spread in the community, and set the record straight through your usual channels of communication.

Here are some of the most common examples of “pushbacks”—and ways to respond.

“I believe being gay or transgender is a sin; schools should not promote it.”

Response: Those who advocate for inclusive school environments for LGBTQ students *are not* asking you to forfeit your religious beliefs. Nor are sexual orientation and gender identity things to be promoted; they are innate. Just as LGBTQ students should not be pressured or bullied into expressing an identity that isn’t their own, we would never ask a cisgender or straight-identifying student to hide or change their true self.

Advocates *are* asking schools to take a stand against anti-LGBTQ harassment and its damaging effects on the educational outcomes for LGBTQ students. We hope most people can agree that all students should be able to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment and can understand

For more information on anti-LGBTQ hate groups, visit t-t.site/anti-LGBTQ.

that a school serves a diverse population. School leaders must value all cultures and identities in the curricula and policies—without playing favorites.

We have the constitutional right to exercise our own religious beliefs in our lives (or to exercise none at all), *and* we are charged with a responsibility to protect the rights of others to hold religious beliefs as they choose. This is a core tenet of our democracy and a great civics lesson for us all. Public schools must strike that balance. They cannot privilege a dominant culture or religion while simultaneously denying equitable opportunity and safety to other students.

“LGBTQ students are getting special rights and preferences.”

Response: Creating a school climate that reduces anti-LGBTQ harassment and increases empathy for LGBTQ people enriches the lives of *all* students. Straight, cisgender students can still suffer or endure bullying because of strict gender norms and homophobia.

LGBTQ-inclusive curricula, practices and policies do not give additional rights to LGBTQ students. They simply fill gaps where LGBTQ students deserve the rights that their straight, cisgender peers *already have*. Straight, cisgender students already see themselves in curriculum. Straight, cisgender students already have access to bathrooms and locker rooms that match their identities and within which they can feel safe. And aspects of straight, cisgender students’ identities, such as race and gender, are already covered by anti-bullying and harassment language. Adding LGBTQ people to these spaces does not erase their peers who are already there; instead, it brings them together.

“It’s not appropriate to talk about sex in the classroom.”

Response: While there are appropriate spaces to talk about sex in schools—in sex education or health classes, for example—talking about LGBTQ issues is not the same thing as talking about sex. Like heterosexual identities, relationships or feelings, LGBTQ identities, relationships and feelings are fundamentally about love and affection between human beings. If we can talk about one identity, we can talk about others.

Gay-Straight and Gender and Sexuality Alliances are also not about sex. Rather, they provide a space for people with a common interest, be it exploring culture and identity, sparking conversations, creating a respectful community, or activism.

“If GSAs are allowed, you have to allow students to form any club with a collective purpose, like a Neo-Nazi club.”

Response: There is a distinct difference between affinity groups (which bring people of shared experiences or cultures together) and groups that promote hate, harassment and exclusion. Schools have a right to disallow clubs that contribute to a disrupted education and unsafe school environment for some students. GSAs do neither; they promote inclusion and make school climates more equitable.

PREPARE TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU HEAR MYTHS AND MISINFORMATION.

Myth: “No one is born gay.”

Facts: The American Psychological Association (APA) states that “most people experience little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation.” In 1994, the APA wrote that “homosexuality is not a matter of individual

choice” and that research “suggests that the homosexual orientation is in place very early in the life cycle, possibly even before birth.”

Myth: “Gay people can choose to become straight.”

Facts: “Reparative” therapy has been rejected by all established and reputable American medical, psychological, psychiatric and professional counseling organizations. As early as 1993, the American Academy of Pediatrics stated that “[t]herapy directed at specifically changing sexual orientation is contraindicated, since it can provoke guilt and anxiety while having little or no potential for achieving change in orientation.”

Myth: “Transgender identity is a mental illness.”

Facts: Although transgender identity is not itself an illness, transgender people may experience mental health issues because of discrimination and disapproval. But these illnesses do not cause—nor are they caused by—transgender identity. They result from social exclusion and stigma.

Myth: “Students are too young to know their gender identity or sexual orientation.”

Facts: While a child’s concept of self may change over time, this isn’t because they are changing their minds. LGBTQ youth must navigate many social barriers and norms to come to terms with and accept their queer identities. This doesn’t mean they don’t recognize their identities at an early age; often it isn’t until later in life that they feel comfortable or safe to be their authentic selves.

Children do not need to be pubescent or sexually active to “truly know” their gender identity or sexual orientation. This is an expectation we do not place on straight, cisgender students. In reality, children often know their gender as early as 2 or 3 years old. Moreover, research suggests that allowing young children to align their gender identity with expression is associated with better mental outcomes among transgender children.

SECTION II

CLASSROOM CULTURE

Creating an Inclusive Environment With Words

“Chosen Name Use Is Linked to Reduced Depressive Symptoms, Suicidal Ideation, and Suicidal Behavior Among Transgender Youth.” Russell, Stephen T. et al. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Creating an LGBTQ-inclusive classroom culture begins with a readiness to answer questions or facilitate appropriate conversation around LGBTQ issues. In order to facilitate sensitive, productive conversations with students—in class or one-on-one—consider these steps.

BE WILLING TO LEARN ESSENTIAL TERMS

Young people today have a large vocabulary with which they can articulate their identities. That vocabulary may be unfamiliar, but understanding these words can open doors for educators to become more effective allies to LGBTQ students. This means, for example, knowing the difference between **biological sex**, **gender identity** and **gender expression**; between **cisgender** and **transgender**; and between **asexual** and **pansexual**.

For a full glossary of LGBTQ terms, see page 41.

MODEL INCLUSIVE PRONOUN USE

Gender’s fluidity is expressed in the many pronouns students use across the gender spectrum. Allied educators understand the necessity of asking their students what pronouns they use—and respecting their decisions.

A study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that when the families, teachers and peers around them use their chosen names, **trans youth experience a lower risk for depression and suicidal ideation**.

You can affirm transgender and nonbinary students by taking these steps:

➤ **Use the singular “they.”** Make space within language for nonbinary genders that do not fit the strictures of “he” and “she.” Adopting use of the singular “they” disrupts the binary and affirms the fluidity of gender and the legitimacy of all gender identities.

➤ **Decentralize cisgender identity by stating your own pronouns.** Explicitly share your pronouns with name tags, in an email signature or on a pin. This normalizes the process rather than making it a big deal. Students will notice and take your lead.

➤ **Conduct pronoun check-ins.** Collective pronoun check-ins help students learn peers’ pronouns without forcing nonbinary students to come out repeatedly. You may say, “To make sure we’re referring to each other accurately, let’s go around so everyone can share their name and pronoun.” This process can help transgender and nonbinary students feel seen, not singled out.

➤ **Begin the year with a student survey that asks students about pronoun use in different situations.** This helps value students’ identities while also protecting their privacy. To ensure their own safety, students may use one pronoun with friends and teachers and another with family members. Ask something like: *What are your pronouns? Are there situations where you would want me to use different pronouns?*



“Gender does not have endpoints; it’s three-dimensional. Males float around somewhere, females float around somewhere else, and some people just don’t float at all—they swim.”

Cameron, gender-fluid teenager, *Beyond Magenta*

Practice responding to instances of *misgendering* (referring to a student by the wrong pronoun). Try out these simple suggestions. Students will take note and are likely to follow your thoughtful example.

If you misgender a student:

➔ **Apologize briefly**, correct yourself and move on. Note your error without calling attention to it.

➔ **Do not over-apologize**. This co-opts a moment that *should* be about the student, and re-centers it around your own guilt.

If you overhear a coworker or student misgender someone:

➔ **Correct in the moment**.

“The other day I saw Jess and he was saying...”

“Oh right. They were saying?”

➔ **Model the correct pronoun afterwards.**

“Yes, I remember Jess saying that. They were just telling me...”

➔ **Address it directly.**

“Yes, I definitely remember that. And Jess uses they/them pronouns. Just wanted to let you know.”

FACILITATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT IDENTITY WITH CARE

When topics of personal identity come up in the classroom, the conversation may be unpredictable. Properly facilitating those conversations means getting comfortable with discomfort; it means being aware of your own biases and conditioned beliefs; and it means relying on a consistent model of civil classroom discussion so you can handle emotional responses thoughtfully.

If you have concerns about your comfort level with facilitating these conversations, start with our publication *Let’s Talk!*—which provides you with self-assessment and strategies that will help you get there.

CHALLENGE GENDER NORMS THROUGH CLASSROOM PRACTICES

To create a classroom that is inclusive of all genders, evaluate your concrete, day-to-day classroom practices. Here are some suggestions for assessing the gender-inclusivity of your classroom:

“Heteronormativity perpetuates the closet and the closet is a hotbed for shame.”

Chris Tompkins, “Why Heteronormativity Is Harmful”

Learn more about exploring gender roles and stereotypes in the classroom with these Teaching Tolerance lessons:

- Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Stories
- Exploring Gender Stereotypes Through Role Plays
- Gender Shouldn't Limit You
- Gender Stereotyping Awareness
- What Are Gender Stereotypes?

tolerance.org/classroom-resources/lessons

➤ **Conduct a visual audit of your classroom** to examine your wall posters and other visible materials. Do they represent individuals with diverse gender expressions? Are there portrayals of nontraditional families or families with LGBTQ members?

➤ **Refer to a group of kids as students, scholars, class, friends, everybody or y'all.** Avoid the binary term “boys and girls.”

➤ **Do not separate students according to gender.** Dividing students along binary lines only enforces feelings of difference. When dividing students into teams, for partner work or to form a line, use rows, table groups or sides of the room.

➤ **In casual conversations with students, don't make assumptions based on gender** such as, “boys will be boys” or “girls love to gossip.” Never tease or joke around with students in a way that presumes cisgender identity or heterosexual orientation.

➤ **Encourage all students to try different types of activities.** Do not ask for a group of “strong boys” to help carry furniture or “artistic girls” to decorate a bulletin board. Include everyone in a wide range of classroom activities and offer equitable opportunity for participation.

WHAT DO I DO IF...

MY ADMINISTRATION ISN'T SUPPORTIVE?

Many educators are hesitant to adopt LGBTQ-inclusive curricula and practices for fear of pushback. These steps to working with your administration can help you overcome these hesitations and make sure your LGBTQ-inclusive work has a solid foundation.

1. Lay the groundwork with colleagues.

Preview new teaching material with administrators or department chairs, and tie the content back to your state curricular, AP, IB or other educational standards. Be open and direct about your support and inclusion of LGBTQ students. Having conversations about the content you plan to bring into your classroom will create a support system as you move forward with your curriculum.

2. Present facts. Be ready to offer facts and evidence about how your approach will benefit students and school climate. The data from GLSEN's National School Climate Survey is a good place to start. For instance, compared to LGBTQ students with no supportive school staff, students with many (11 or more) supportive staff members at their school were less likely to miss school because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable, had higher GPAs and were less likely to say they might not graduate high school. Administrators should find the promise of better academic outcomes and less truancy to be a compelling case.

SOURCE GLSEN's 2017 National School Climate Survey

3. Explain that an inclusive school environment benefits everyone. Conduct a school climate survey in your school. Provide examples of anti-LGBTQ behavior you have encountered in the hallways or in your classroom. Use the descriptions to show administrators why change is needed. Emphasize that inclusive curriculum can help combat gender and sexuality stereotypes that hurt everyone.

4. Provide examples. Come prepared with suggestions for how educators can serve as supportive allies for LGBTQ students and for inclusive policies and bullying prevention practices that have been implemented elsewhere with positive results. Give administrators reference material, such as this guide or resources from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and PFLAG. Seeing this work has been done elsewhere may help an administrator overcome their hesitation.

5. Plan a time to check in again in the future. Allow administrators to consider your discussion points and educate themselves further before meeting for additional conversation.

6. Document everything. Keep a record of these interactions so that your forethought and intentions cannot be misrepresented. If administrative pushback becomes hostile or threatens to deny legal rights to students, look for support among district leadership.

SECTION III

INSTRUCTION

Integrating Queer Voices into the Curriculum

It may seem like a minor adjustment for a teacher to mention a queer figure in history or analyze a queer character in a work of literature. But affirming an LGBTQ student's existence helps them feel more connected to their school work and school community.

Help forge that connection with these classroom practices.

ASSESS YOUR TEXTS

Teachers send a powerful message with the resources they choose. Students undoubtedly perceive highlighted texts as representations of what is valued and celebrated in our culture. Omission sends an equally loud message. Including the voices of LGBTQ people supports students' abilities to affirm their identities and cultivates empathy for those experiences that differ from their own.

In selecting the texts and books students will find in their curriculum or class library, educators should keep a number of questions in mind, including:

- What voices does this text include?
- Does the text include stereotypes or misrepresentations of people? How are those stereotypes or misrepresentations treated?
- Does the text accurately reflect lived experiences and cultures?
- Are certain people or groups glaringly absent or given an insubstantial role?
- Are certain questions or issues related to the topic left out/glossed over?
- Does this text promote a healthy self-concept?

➤ Does this text foster intergroup understanding?

➤ How might this text motivate, engage or enable my students?

Educators can answer these questions and more with TT's Reading Diversity tool.

tolerance.org/reading-diversity

If you find that none of your current texts include the perspectives of LGBTQ people, look for options that are relevant to your students' lives and that pair well with other texts your students will encounter. For a list of children's and young adult books featuring LGBTQ characters and themes, download **Appendix A** at tolerance.org/lgbtq-guide.

Remember: Students benefit from seeing their experiences reflected, or *mirrored*, in a text, and from empathizing with perspectives different from their own—using the reading as a *window* to better connect with and appreciate others. Students can also practice their literacy and analysis skills by determining if an author or narrator in a text echoes their own experience (mir-

The TT Perspectives Text Library offers a selection of readings that address LGBTQ experiences, including photos, cartoons, fiction stories and informational nonfiction, all accompanied by discussion questions.

tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts

ror), or illustrates the perspective of people whose identities differ from their own (window). Do not undermine this positive representation by labeling the texts as “mature” or “controversial.”

TEACH QUEER HISTORY

Integrating LGBTQ history into existing units—as opposed to doing stand-alone units—serves to normalize it, rather than presenting it as an add-on to “real” history. Here are four ways to do this in your classroom:

➤ **Capitalize on historical eras during which LGBTQ figures played a prominent role.** These include: the suffrage and women’s rights movements of the 1800s; the Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age; the Frontier West; and the civil rights and social movements of the 1960s.

➤ **Look at LGBTQ movements within the context of different social movements:** the black civil rights movement, the women’s movement, or Latinx labor and civil rights activism, for example.

➤ **Cover LGBTQ rights history by beginning with the 19th and 20th centuries,** then teaching about Daughters of Bilitis, the Mattachine Society, Stonewall and the gay rights movement of the 1970s, HIV/AIDS, and marriage equality.

➤ **Ask students to contrast the LGBTQ rights movement with other movements,** such as those of African Americans, women, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, disability rights advocates, Japanese Americans

Teach LGBTQ history with these TT lessons on LGBTQ historical figures.

- Pauli Murray: Fighting Jane and Jim Crow
- James Baldwin: Art, Sexuality and Civil Rights
- Bayard Rustin: The Fight for Civil and Gay Rights
- Lorraine Hansberry: LGBT Politics and Civil Rights
- Role of Gays and Lesbians in the Civil Rights Movement

tolerance.org/classroom-resources/lessons



James Baldwin at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom



and others. Compare the goals, strategies and support for each movement, as well as their historical efficacy in promoting civil rights.

Our podcast *Queer America* offers tips on teaching these topics and more. Listen for more ideas, and more details, from experts in the field.

To supplement these lessons, consider these recommendations from “Putting Ideas into Practice: High School Teachers Talk about Incorporating the LGBT Past,” a chapter from *Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History*:

1. Look for opportunities to inform and improve understanding of current events through this history.

2. Use historical information that confronts enduring stereotypes and narrow perceptions of what it means to be gay, bi, trans, intersex, and other identities. Highlight successful, proud or powerful figures, as well as those—from warriors to emperors to cowboys—who bucked expectations of masculinity or femininity. Allow students the space to connect historical anti-LGBTQ rhetoric with examples of the opposite.

3. Tell more than just the story of oppression. Include the histories of coherent culture, strong identity, celebration, agency and resilience.

SET GROUND RULES

Creating a classroom contract from the beginning gives your students a structure that can help prevent inappropriate comments or interruptions when you introduce LGBTQ perspectives. Here are tips for making sure those ground rules foster an LGBTQ-inclusive environment:

1. If possible, create community agreements with student input to inspire personal investment and relevance to students’ lives.

2. Open the community agreements process with discussion prompts, such as “What rules

would help you have a productive, respectful conversation?” or “When someone disagrees with you, how can you stay engaged in that conversation while still being respectful of the other person?”

3. If you suspect that LGBTQ perspectives will be new territory for some students, begin the discussion with a statement about the importance of being open to ideas that may be unfamiliar.

4. Make sure ideas of identity and difference are discussed explicitly. Make it clear that any derogatory, dismissive or purposely hurtful remark directed at any of a person’s identities or differences is never OK.

5. Post these community agreements in a visible location and refer back to them often.

LEAD DISCUSSIONS WITH COURAGE AND CARE

Broaching topics about LGBTQ people may lead to discomfort, disagreement or even dehumanizing words from students. If that worries you, we recommend reviewing the strategies in our *Let’s Talk!* guide.

But there *are* key strategies specific to LGBTQ students’ experiences that should be noted here—and employed by educator allies.

1. Never let a homophobic remark go uninterrupted. Prepare for the possibility that students will have strong reactions and make hostile or hateful comments. Intervene. Refer back to your classroom contract and explain why certain terms or phrases are inappropriate and how they can be hurtful to LGBTQ students. For strategies, refer to our *Speak Up* guide.

2. Prepare for the possibility that religion will arise as a topic. Do not send the message that a student’s religion does not matter or that they are not welcome to discuss this aspect of their identity. Rather, remind them that they cannot use their religion to justify

the harassment of another student or a violation of your classroom contract.

3. Never present LGBTQ identities as up for debate. A classroom debate on whether sexual orientation or gender identity is innate, by definition, violates a community agreement not to attack someone's identities. Similarly, do not label conversations or content about LGBTQ people or issues as "controversial," as this suggests people's identities are on the margins of acceptable conversation or that such a conversation carries risk.

RESPOND TO COMMON MYTHS WITH FACTS

Misconceptions about LGBTQ identities and communities may present roadblocks to creating an open classroom and queer-inclusive curriculum. If students derail discussion or fellow educators push back against your classroom practices by reinforcing these myths, be ready to intervene with facts. For a list of common myths and ways to respond, see the "What do I do if... the community pushes back?" section of this guide on page 19.

RESPOND TO CURRENT EVENTS AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Keep an eye out for current events or news articles that can be used for staff and classroom discussion. Educators who are allies use teachable moments to build student capacity for empathy and understanding across lines of difference. Remember: Political events or legislation that limit the rights of LGBTQ people may leave queer students and their allies feeling disappointed and threatened.

Here are some suggestions for responding to current events in a way that lets LGBTQ students know they have space to be who they are in your classroom.

1. Encourage discussion instead of silence. Unwillingness to engage in conversation about the lives of LGBTQ people validates the belief

that such experiences should be whispered about. Use political events as opportunities to encourage queer students to speak their truth and as opportunities for all students to understand the consequences of court decisions and legislation. The question "What does this mean for me and the people I know?" deserves a thoughtful, nonpartisan response.

2. Bring LGBTQ role models and public figures into your classroom. Take time to learn and teach about strong LGBTQ public officials in contemporary history, such as Mark Takano, Deborah Batts and Tammy Baldwin.

3. Take inventory of the stories and messages you share while discussing current events. Craft a positive narrative of inclusion. Many students will look to their social context for their sense of approval and belonging. As an authority figure, everything you say carries weight and influence. Even if you unintentionally model negative or biased messages, students may conclude: *My identity is abnormal. I do not matter here.*

"An intersectional approach to LGBTQ youth advocacy means taking young people like me as WHOLE people—with numerous identities, all of which need to be validated and supported."

Giovanni Blair McKenzie, HRC Foundation Youth Ambassador

"I couldn't find myself in history. No one like me seemed to have ever existed."

Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*



“Being seen—truly seen—is to feel that all parts of who I am are recognized not as compartmentalized pieces of myself, but blended truths of my identity.”

Renee Watson, *Black Like Me*

TEACH WITH INTERSECTIONALITY IN MIND

Adopting an intersectional approach means understanding that everyone has multiple identities—some visible and some invisible—and acknowledging that some people experience multiple forms of oppression. Make sure your curriculum does not present a narrow or one-sided story about the queer experience by leaving out certain aspects of multifaceted identities and groups.

Contemplate your personal teaching practice. Ask yourself questions such as:

“Does my curriculum include a diverse array of stories and combinations of identities?”

“Am I allowing for a multiplicity of narratives about what it’s like to be LGBTQ?”

“Am I highlighting the experiences of LGBTQ people of color?”

TEACH THE GAPS AND SILENCES

It is no accident that so few historical records preserve the lives of queer individuals. History does not remember what it does not value. This is particularly true of individuals who

experience intersecting oppressions, such as enslaved LGBTQ persons.

To teach the gaps and silences is to acknowledge the places LGBTQ people likely existed and to acknowledge the reasons why there is little to no record of them.

When there’s a lack of queer representation, teach the context:

➤ For the given era, **explain the laws, culture, power structures and societal values** that may account for the erasure of queer people.

➤ **Explain why queer people would not have used modern-day identifiers** such as “gay” or “transgender” and how this makes it easy for historians to ignore queer identity.

➤ When possible, **point out the exceptions.** For an LGBTQ student who has been made to believe that queerness is an aberration or a 20th century invention, evidence to the contrary is validating. From cave paintings to Ancient Egypt to indigenous American cultures and beyond, queer people have lived and even been celebrated.

SECTION IV

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Being an ally to LGBTQ students means bringing people in *and* reaching out. With these tips, we hope you can create a community within and beyond the school that helps all families feel valued and helps all students feel they have a place to be their authentic selves.

INCLUDING AND EMPOWERING ALL FAMILIES

Including families of all types in your teaching and classroom activities builds empathy and disrupts rigid ideas about what constitutes a “normal” family. For LGBTQ students who may one day desire to raise a family, this practice offers role models and representation.

Consider these steps to ensure that activities include LGBTQ students and students with LGBTQ guardians.

➤ **Start the year with a family survey, inviting families to tell you about themselves and about your student.** Let students and their guardians work together to answer questions such as, “Who is in your family?” “What’s your favorite thing to do as a family?” “What makes your family unique?” “Where does your family come from?” and “What’s your favorite holiday and how do you celebrate it?” Creating a classroom culture of respect and letting students share these answers with classmates will set the tone for the year.

➤ **Keep holidays inclusive.** It’s not uncommon to celebrate holidays like Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Valentine’s Day in the classroom. But be aware that activities and decorations surrounding these holidays can sometimes alienate LGBTQ kids and kids

with nontraditional family structures. Writing cards for Mother’s or Father’s Day? Make sure instructions include options to express gratitude to all sorts of guardians. Having kids pass out Valentine’s Day cards? Try to avoid heteronormative or binary expectations of who should give them to whom.

➤ **Incorporate all families into the curriculum and classroom community.** Introduce your students to different families by including them in assignments and guest-speaking opportunities. Have students do community- or family-based projects like oral histories, memoirs or surveys. Invite guardians to speak to your class about their culture, job or community—or invite them to read a story that means a lot to their family!

INVITING LGBTQ PEOPLE AND ALLIES INTO YOUR CLASSROOM

Even if none of your students have LGBTQ family members, you can highlight other members of the community to ensure your queer students feel seen and that all students see examples of LGBTQ-inclusion from daily life.

Local LGBTQ organizations, activists or allies can contribute to many of the conversations discussed in this guide. Make sure you aren’t presenting LGBTQ people as exhibits, as if to say, “See, they do exist!” Instead, invite them to add substance to a conversation you’re already planning to have in the classroom.

Perhaps invite guest speakers or groups on days that correspond with:

- LGBTQ History Month in October
- Local Pride parades or events





➤ Lessons relating to LGBTQ figures in literature or history

Consider asking those community members if they'd be interested in mentorship. Many queer young people have no local role models with whom they can talk about struggles and triumphs. Finding trustworthy community members who can fill that gap could help students see paths to success and acceptance. If your town has an LGBTQ community center, that's a great place to start.

WORKING WITH UNACCEPTING FAMILIES

For a variety of cultural reasons, LGBTQ students will not always find acceptance from their families or communities. For educators, this can create a conflict. On one hand, we must do what is best for the safety and well-being of the student. On the other, we must be genuine in our efforts to involve all families in that endeavor. These suggestions can help educators value a student's identity while also maintaining a relationship with an unaccepting family.

➤ **Never "out" a student to their family (or others) without their consent.** LGBTQ stu-

dents have the right to come out to others at their own pace and often have valid reasons to wait. "Out" or not, they may have witnessed homophobic or transphobic behavior at home. Telling their family about their sexual orientation or gender identity could compromise both their trust and their safety.

➤ **Meet families where they are.** Avoid finger wagging or demanding language such as, "You have to do this for your child." This may cause defensiveness or, worse, backlash. Instead, start from the assumption that each family cares deeply for their LGBTQ child and try to help them understand how nonacceptance could negatively impact the well-being of their child and their family dynamic.

➤ **Use an evidence-based approach.** Some parents will be genuinely curious or ignorant as to what it means that their child is gay, bi or gender nonconforming. They may ask questions like "How could they know?" or "What does that mean?" Others may be more hostile or dismissive. In both situations, point to research when available. Stay calm. If they are open to it, ask families what kinds of guidance

continued on page 35

WHAT DO I DO IF...

A STUDENT COMES OUT TO ME?

It's natural to want to respond appropriately if an LGBTQ student comes out or discloses the orientation of a family member. Just remember this guiding principle: Focus on the student, not yourself. Here are some general suggestions to help you act as an affirming ally when the situation occurs.

DO

➤ **Listen.** Listening is one of the most powerful, healing resources educators can offer; it's also simple and requires no pre-prepared effort. For many LGBTQ students, the most damaging or painful part of living in the closet is not feeling seen, respected, heard or understood. Having someone to talk to throughout the coming out process may be all the support the student needs to thrive authentically at school. Asking clarifying or open-ended questions such as “do you feel safe at school?” will also reassure the student that they have your attention and your ongoing concern.

➤ **Make yourself available without being a rescuer.** The student is likely to benefit from knowing they have your support, but they may not be in the midst of a crisis or desiring substantial help. Offer up your support in an open-ended manner without insisting or pushing them to take any particular action.

➤ **Respect confidentiality.** Inform the student that you will not share the information with others unless their safety would require you to do so. Allow the student to come out to others in their own way and in their own time.

➤ **Keep biases in check.** Coming out is a critical moment for youth who are still navigating their identities in the world. The student may remember your conversation for a long time to come. Do not use the time to warn them of how their identity will influence their life or to push cultural norms around sexuality or gender.

➤ **Know the resources.** Assess why the student is coming to you—if they trust you and want to involve you in their coming out process, listening may be most appropriate. But if the student is anxious or in crisis, be ready to provide a referral to a counselor, hotline, GSA or an LGBTQ community center—if the student is interested.

Note: This guidance applies if you are responding to students coming out to you. If a student discloses trauma or is considering harming themselves or others, follow your school's crisis response protocol.

➤ **Take inventory of your response.** Remember, the student who just came out to you is the same person they were ten minutes ago. If you find yourself seeing them differently, notice this and process your own reaction without allowing it to color your actions or response. Make your unwavering support evident without making the news into a big deal.

➤ **Follow the student's lead on language.** Use their terms. For instance, if a student uses the word “queer” do not tell them to use “homosexual.” Refrain from using any slurs or potentially hurtful slang.

WHAT DO I DO IF...**A STUDENT COMES OUT TO ME?****DO NOT**

- Tell the student it could be a phase.
- Tell them you “don’t care” about who they are and how they identify.
- Ask if they’ve been sexually assaulted.
- Inquire about past heterosexual experiences.
- Tell the student the information would best be kept to themselves.
- Tell them to wait to come out until they are sure.
- Inform the student they are choosing a more difficult path.
- Respond with silence, with blankness or by dismissing what the student has said.
- Question their certainty.
- Tell this information to their family, friends or coworkers. Unless the student has told you something that requires you to act as a mandatory reporter, honor their privacy at all times.

and materials they may need to feel more informed, and do the research so you can help them make the connection.

➤ **Be open about attitudes and biases.** Be honest about any preconceptions you may bring to the conversation about nonaccepting families, and ask them to do the same regarding their preconceptions about LGBTQ people. This creates an opportunity for an open and honest discussion that can eventually reach a hopeful consensus point: both parties want what is best for the child, and that may mean overcoming preconceptions.

➤ **Remind families that the school values religious identities.** LGBTQ-inclusive practices are often viewed as anti-religious. Families may feel these practices 1) promote “behavior” in their child that is against their beliefs or 2) force their child to abandon their religious beliefs. Remind them that students are entitled to religious viewpoints and that all identities—including religious identities—can be reflected in class discussion, classroom libraries or studied historical figures. But students of other identities have the same rights and are just as deserving of representation and respect.

➤ **Encourage dialogue between families.** Members of unaccepting families may feel more comfortable talking about this topic with people who share common ground. It may prove fruitful to connect such a family with another family who accepts and honors their queer child’s identity. Starting this conversation among families may help some feel as if they have a community of support—and it offers them a window into what it would look like to accept their child.

➤ **Point to resources.** If dialogue with the family isn’t going well, share options for the family to pursue. Let them know about groups like PFLAG, the Family Acceptance Project, or LGBTQ-affirming religious organizations

“Just being able to bounce ideas off of people who have both very similar and very different experiences really makes me feel more like my identity makes sense, which I struggled with for a long time.”

Simona Morales, “LGBT Students Speak Out: What It’s Like to Live in Today’s South,” *USA TODAY College*

that offer materials for parents of LGBTQ children. If you are worried for your student’s well-being beyond school hours, see if there is a local LGBTQ (or LGBTQ youth-friendly) community center nearby, and make them aware of it.

➤ **Remember that every family is different.** Some families can move faster than others. Some can change their behavior overnight; other families, from all kinds of backgrounds, may start with rejection and ambivalence and become more supportive over time.

Even the most constructive dialogue may not result in a family becoming more accepting of their child’s identity and engaged in their child’s life. Hearts and minds do not change easily. But if you follow these guidelines, students will remember that they had an active supporter who affirmed their identity, and perhaps families will remember that you treated them with respect and offered an open door for dialogue.

GSAS AND CREATING COMMUNITIES WITHIN LGBTQ affinity groups such as a Gay-Straight Alliances or Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) are proven ways to support LGBTQ student communities. These clubs aren’t about centering allies or adults. Successful GSAs are often started by students who see a

need in their school. At the least, they are faculty-led or sponsored but driven by students.

These suggestions—adapted from resources from the GSA Network—can help ensure that any GSA is successful, inclusive and student-led. Copy or print these guidelines for any faculty sponsors you know who are involved in organizing a GSA.

➤ **Follow the rules.** Reference the student handbook or school policies and learn the criteria for starting a club at your school. If you are acting in an advisory capacity, encourage students to keep track of correspondence and the dates that certain steps of the process are completed in case they are met with unnecessary delay or pushback. If they follow the rules, the club legally can't be treated differently from other clubs; student-organized clubs are protected by federal law.

➤ **Communicate with your colleagues.** Informing school leaders about the plan to start a GSA can help students find important allies who are willing to address and respond to criticism from families, other educators or outside groups. Guidance counselors, social workers and school psychologists should also be informed; they may know students who would benefit from the group or who may be looking for such a community.

➤ **Don't keep it a secret.** Advertise! Don't just rely on word-of-mouth. Use bulletin boards, flyers or announcements to let students know the option is available and how to join. For non-LGBTQ students, the very presence of public announcements and decorations can begin to normalize LGBTQ students as peers who are not relegated to the shadows.

➤ **Set standards.** Laying ground rules can help make sure all future discussions are safe, confidential and respectful. Similar to a classroom contract, the rules determined by the group can be put together and signed by all members.

➤ **Make sure the GSA is inclusive.** GSAs will go wrong if one clique of students controls the club or if students of color are left out of leadership and decision-making. Encourage leadership roles for students from various backgrounds and cultures, and encourage students to think of issues through an intersectional lens. Make sure everyone has a voice in determining the goals of the GSA. Is this a social group? A group dedicated to activism? A place for support and group therapy? If it's all three, decide how to devote time to each goal.

➤ **Be prepared to respond to pushback.** GSAs can inspire negative feedback and false equivalencies from administrators, school board members or outside groups. For common pushbacks and myths—and ways to respond—see pages 19–21.

➤ **Stay organized.** All students and advisors—current and future—benefit from good notes. Keep detailed record of the GSA's first year, taking note of what worked well and what obstacles the group faced. This will help future generations of the GSA build on successes and learn from tough times.

➤ **Ask the experts: the students.** Ask GSA members what they would like non-LGBTQ students and staff to know. This could inform goals, as well as student-led ally training in the future.

➤ **Let them lead.** Remember, ideally the GSA is a student-led organization. Provide guidance. Help the club run smoothly and equitably. But what the group becomes should be determined by the needs and wants of students. Encourage students to organize beyond meetings. Let them know it's okay to start Facebook groups, group chats or other forums that give them a space beyond school to stay organized.

I WANT MY
LGBTQ
STUDENTS

TO FEEL...

Included Valued
Safe seen Heard
Respected

You've learned the best practices—now put them into action! Download our LGBTQ instructional resources guide for access to: a **vett**ed list of books with options for every grade level and professional development; a **list of LGBTQ figures** who shaped history; and a **glossary of terminology** to increase your knowledge of LGBTQ identity and experiences.

Download this guide and additional resources today! tolerance.org/lgbtq-resources

ILLUSTRATION BY SHANNON ANDERSON





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SCHOOL CHECKLIST

How well is your school meeting the needs of your LGBTQ students?

PROM

- Gender-inclusive language is used on all event communications, including invitations.
- Event organizers are educated about students' First Amendment right to attend events with a date other than a student of the opposite sex and to wear clothing of their choice.
- At least one member of the prom committee is designated the "inclusivity planner" to ensure that every student feels welcome.

PRIVACY

- School staff are never asked or required to reveal a student's sexual orientation or gender identity without the student's permission—even to the student's family.
- My school's privacy policies explicitly assert the confidentiality of information pertaining to students' sexual orientations and gender identities.

POLICIES

- My school's anti-bullying policy includes language that specifically prohibits harassment based on gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression.
- The policy gives examples of harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The effectiveness of my school's anti-bullying program is evaluated annually using student and staff surveys.
- Administrative forms and communications use gender-neutral language (singular "they," not "he or she") and provide an opportunity for students to communicate their gender identity. Updates are made as needed.

- My school's anti-discrimination policy states support for LGBTQ teachers and school personnel.

ANTI-BULLYING

- My school has a designated anti-bullying coordinator as well as an anti-bullying task force.
- Staff members are specifically trained to prevent and respond to bullying incidents involving LGBTQ students.
- The name and contact information for my school's anti-bullying coordinator is posted in the office, on my school's website and in the student handbook.
- My school communicates effectively and often with students, parents or guardians and the community about school climate issues such as bullying.
- Staff ensure that reactions to reports of harassment do not further stigmatize students who were targeted for their real or perceived LGBTQ identities.
- Teachers and administrators are educated about common bullying myths, such as the idea that LGBTQ students are "asking for it" by expressing their sexual orientations or gender identities.
- Counseling staff is well-versed in LGBTQ issues.

SCHOOL CULTURE

- My school's dress code is inclusive of a diversity of gender expressions, including for yearbook photos.
- My school has gender-neutral restrooms or single stall bathrooms and private changing areas.

- Students can use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identity.
- My school has a GSA that combats bullying and harassment.
- Within my school culture, other staff members are unafraid to be allies to LGBTQ and gender nonconforming students.
- LGBTQ educators and staff members feel safe to be “out” at work.
- My school offers public praise or formal rewards for school staff members who promote a safe and inclusive environment—for example: an “equity leader” certificate at the end of the year.

CURRICULUM

- My school’s health and sexuality education is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The curriculum does not take a heteronormative stance toward sexuality and gender (i.e., assuming students only need to know about heterosexual feelings and safe-sex practices.)
- My school’s academic curriculum includes LGBTQ perspectives, voices, histories and current events.
- My school’s library includes books and resources about LGBTQ individuals, history, events and issues.

THE ACRONYM AND BEYOND

A Glossary of Terms

From the outside looking in, the ABCs of LGBTQ identities can feel overwhelming, academic and inaccessible. But for students deprived of representation, words matter—and can open a door toward realization. To hear yourself or see yourself described for the first time can be transformational, especially if you’ve been conditioned to see yourself as abnormal. A definition can point to a community. And a community can make a kid feel less alone.

Today’s youth, more than ever, have a large vocabulary with which they can articulate their gender expression, gender identities and sexual orientations. That vocabulary can make some feel uncomfortable. These terms often force us to confront our biases or assumptions. They ask us to consider the complexity of gender and attraction. But an understanding of these words opens a door for an educator to become an ally to LGBTQ students—capable of facilitating conversation, and more importantly, capable of listening.

Affirmed gender (*noun*): The gender by which one wishes to be known. This term is often used to replace terms like “new gender” or “chosen gender,” which imply that a person’s gender was chosen rather than simply innate.¹

Agender (*adj.*): Describes a person who does not identify with any gender identity.

Ally (*noun*): A person who does not identify as LGBTQ, but stands with and advocates for LGBTQ people.

Androgynous (*adj.*), **Androgyne** (*noun*): Used to describe someone who identifies or presents as neither distinguishably masculine or feminine.²

Aromantic (*adj.*): A romantic orientation generally characterized by not feeling romantic attraction or a desire for romance.³

Asexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction or do not have a desire for sex⁴. Many experience romantic or emotional attractions across the entire spectrum of sexual orientations.⁵ Asexuality differs from celibacy, which refers to abstaining from sex. Also *ace*, or *ace community*.⁶

Assigned sex (*noun*): The sex that is assigned to an infant at birth based on the child’s visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics. Often corresponds with a child’s *assigned gender* and *assumed gender*.⁷

Binary system (*noun*): Something that contains two opposing parts; binary systems are often assumed despite the existence of a spectrum of possibilities. Gender (man/woman) and sex (male/female) are examples of binary systems often perpetuated by our culture.⁸

Biological sex (*noun*): A medical classification that refers to anatomical, physiological, genetic or physical attributes that determine if a person is assigned male, female or intersex identity at birth. Biological sex is often confused or interchanged with the term “gender,” which encompasses personal identity and social factors, and is not necessarily determined by biological sex.⁹ See *gender*.

Bisexual, Bi (*adj.*): A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.¹⁰

Cisgender (*adj.*): Describes a person whose gender identity (*defined below*) aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cissexism (*noun*): A system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of normative social constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders—usually tied to assigned sex.¹¹

Coming out (*verb*): A lifelong process of self-acceptance and revealing one's queer identity to others. This may involve something as private as telling a single confidant or something as public as posting to social media.

Demisexual (*adj.*): Used to describe someone who feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond—often considered to be on the asexual spectrum.¹²

Gay (*adj.*): Used to describe people (often, but not exclusively, men) whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex or gender identity.¹³

Gender (*noun*): A set of social, physical, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other. Words and qualities ascribed to these traits vary across cultures.¹⁴

Gender dysphoria (*noun*): Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.¹⁵

Gender expression (*noun*): External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being masculine or feminine.¹⁶

Gender-fluid (*adj.*): A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender and whose identification and presentation may shift, whether within or outside of the male/female binary.^{17,18}

Gender identity (*noun*): One's innermost feeling of maleness, femaleness, a blend of both or neither. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.¹⁹

Gender neutral (*adj.*): Not gendered, usually operating outside the male/female binary. Can refer to language (e.g., pronouns), spaces (e.g., bathrooms) or identities.²⁰

Gender nonconforming (*adj.*): A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. Also, *gender expansive*.²¹

Genderqueer (*adj.*): Describes a person who rejects static categories of gender (i.e. the gender binary of male/female) and whose gender expression or identity falls outside of the dominant social norms of their assigned sex.²² They may identify as having aspects of both male and female identities, or neither.²³

Gender roles (*noun*): The social behaviors and expression that a culture expects from people based on their assigned sex (e.g., girls wear pink; boys don't cry; women care for home and child; men are more violent), despite a spectrum of various other possibilities.

Heteronormativity (*noun*): Coined by social critic Michael Warner, the term refers to a societal assumption of certain norms: 1) that there are two distinct sexes; 2) that male and female functions and characteristics are distinctly different; and 3) that traits such as attraction and sexual behavior correspond to anatomy. Those who do not fit these norms—be it through same-sex attrac-

tion, a non-binary gender identity or nontraditional gender expression—are therefore seen as *abnormal*, and often marginalized or pressured to conform to norms as a result.²⁴

Heterosexism (*noun*): The assumption that sexuality between people of different sexes is normal, standard, superior or universal while other sexual orientations are substandard, inferior, abnormal, marginal or invalid.²⁵

Heterosexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex.²⁶ Also *straight*.

Heterosexual/cisgender privilege

(*noun*): Refers to societal advantages that heterosexual people and cisgender people have solely because of their dominant identities. This can include things as simple as safely holding hands with a romantic partner in public or having safe access to public bathrooms. This can also include systemic privileges such as the right to legally donate blood, to adopt children without facing possible rejection because of your sexual orientation, or to play organized sports with others of the same gender identity.

Homophobia* (*noun*): A fear or hostility toward lesbian, gay and/or bisexual people, often expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence.²⁷

Intersex (*adj.*): An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female.²⁸

Latinx (*adj.*): A gender-expansive term for people of Latin American descent used to be more inclusive of all genders than the binary terms *Latino* or *Latina*.²⁹

Lesbian (*adj.*): Used to describe a woman whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women.³⁰

LGBTQ (*noun*): An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.” Less often, the Q stands for “questioning.” Acronyms like LGBTQIA also include the intersex and asexual communities, while acronyms like LGBTQ attempt to envelop an entire community of people who hold identities that are not cisgender or heterosexual.

Misgender (*verb*): To refer to someone in a way that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify, such as refusing to use a person's pronouns or name.³¹

Nonbinary (*adj.*): An umbrella term that refers to individuals who identify as neither man or woman, or as a combination of man or woman. Instead, nonbinary people exhibit a boundless range of identities that can exist beyond a spectrum between male and female.

Outing (*verb*): The inappropriate act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent.³²

Pansexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people who have the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.³³ The term *panromantic* may refer to a person who feels these emotional and romantic attractions, but identifies as asexual.

Preferred pronouns (*adj.*): The pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual personally uses and would like others to use when talking to or about that individual. Can include variations of he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/their/theirs, among others.³⁴ This term is being used less and less in LGBTQ circles, as it suggests one's gender identity is a “preference” rather than innate. *Recommended replacement*: “Your pronouns, my pronouns, their pronouns, etc.”

Queer (*adj.*): Once a pejorative term, a term reclaimed and used by some within academic circles and the LGBTQ community to describe sexual orientations and gender identities that are not exclusively heterosexual or cisgender.

Questioning (*adj.*): A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.³⁵

Same-gender loving (*adj.*): A term coined in the early 1990s by activist Cleo Manago, this term was and is used by some members of the black community who feel that terms like gay, lesbian and bisexual (and sometimes the communities therein) are Eurocentric and fail to affirm black culture, history and identity.

Sexual orientation (*noun*): An inherent or immutable emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people; oftentimes used to signify the gender identity (or identities) to which a person is most attracted.³⁶

Third gender (*noun*): A gender identity that is neither male nor female, existing outside the idea that gender represents a linear spectrum between the two. Sometimes a catchall term or category in societies, states or countries that legally recognize genders other than male and female.

Transgender (*adj.*): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.³⁷ Not all trans people undergo transition. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or something else. Also, *trans*.

Transitioning (*verb*): A process during which some people strive to more closely align their gender identity with their gender expression. This includes *socially transitioning*, during which a person may change their pronouns, the name they ask to be called or the way they dress to be socially recognized as another gender. This includes *legal transitioning*, which may involve an official name change and modified IDs and birth certificates. And this includes *physically transitioning*, during which a person may undergo medical interventions to more closely align their body to their gender identity. Transgender and nonbinary people transition in various ways to various degrees; self-identification alone is enough to validate gender identity.

Transphobia* (*noun*): The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people. This may manifest into transphobic actions, such as violence, harassment, misrepresentation or exclusion.³⁸

Transsexual (*adj.*): A less frequently used term (considered by some to be outdated or offensive) which refers to people who use medical interventions such as hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgery (GAS) or sex reassignment surgery (SRS) as part of the process of expressing their gender.³⁹ Some people who identify as transsexual do not identify as transgender and vice versa. *Only use this term if someone who specifically identifies as such asks you to.*

Two Spirit (*adj.*): An umbrella term in Native culture to describe people who have both a male and female spirit within them. This

encompasses many tribe-specific names, roles and traditions, such as the *winkte* of the Lakota and *nadleeh* of the Navajo people.⁴⁰ This term often describes Native people who performed roles and gender expression associated with both men and women. This term should be used only in the context of Native culture.

Words to avoid

Homosexual (*n.*); homosexual (*adj.*)
 Sexual preference
 Tranny/transvestite

Preferred terms

Gay man/person (*n.*); gay (*adj.*)
 Sexual orientation
 Transgender person or trans person
 (*if they so identify*)

*University of California, Davis’s LGBTQIA Resource Center offers this note on words like this: We’ve been intentionally moving away from using words like “transphobic,” “homophobic,” and “biphobic” because (1) they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears and (2) for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language is disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

DEFINITION SOURCES

Note: Not all definitions are used word-for-word, but were inspired by meanings provided by the following sources.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 PFLAG National Glossary of Terms. | 21 Human Rights Campaign |
| 2 Human Rights Campaign Glossary of Terms. | 22 Ibid. |
| 3 University of California, Davis, LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary. | 23 UC Davis |
| 4 Glossary of Terms, from the GLAAD Media Reference Guide | 24 International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences |
| 5 Asexuality.org | 25 Lambda Legal |
| 6 The Trevor Project Glossary | 26 GLAAD |
| 7 PFLAG | 27 Lambda Legal |
| 8 The Trevor Project | 28 GLAAD |
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| 10 Human Rights Campaign | 30 GLAAD |
| 11 UC Davis | 31 PFLAG |
| 12 Ibid. | 32 GLAAD |
| 13 GLAAD | 33 Human Rights Campaign |
| 14 Lambda Legal, Glossary of LGBTQ Terms | 34 PFLAG |
| 15 HRC | 35 Human Rights Campaign |
| 16 Ibid. | 36 Ibid. |
| 17 Oxford English Dictionary | 37 Ibid. |
| 18 UC Davis | 38 Ibid. |
| 19 Human Rights Campaign | 39 PFLAG |
| 20 PFLAG | 40 Tony Enos, “8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People,” <i>Indian Country Today</i> . 2017. |

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APPENDIX

BEST PRACTICES FOR SERVING LGBTQ STUDENTS

A Learning for Justice Guide



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APPENDIX A

THE LGBTQ LIBRARY

Books and Films for You and Your Classroom

This list of books and films—with options for students of all ages and reading levels—offers a good starting place for educators who need to diversify their curricula and classroom libraries. And, because adults need windows and mirrors too, the list includes professional development options that can broaden your understanding of LGBTQ history and lived experiences.

Note: This is intended as a resource, and all books were chosen for their reported value in providing diverse perspectives and representation of LGBTQ characters. But Teaching Tolerance has not read every book in this catalogue; educators should vet any chosen books carefully before using them in the classroom.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

And Tango Makes Three

by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

This true story about two penguins, Roy and Silo, at the Central Park Zoo who created a nontraditional family offers a heartwarming look at the boundless definitions of family and love.

Antonio's Card/La Tarjeta de Antonio

by Rigoberto González

This bilingual book written in English and Spanish follows Antonio, a boy searching for the words to express his love for his mother and her partner Leslie (who his classmates make fun of) on Mother's Day.

Annie's Plaid Shirt

by Stacy B. Davids

Annie's mom demands her daughter wear a dress to her uncle's wedding. But Annie is miserable and feels weird wearing dresses. So she has a better idea. This book will encourage students to consider gender norms and possibly rethink the boundaries of personal expression.

Gay & Lesbian History for Kids: The Century-Long Struggle for LGBT Rights

by Jerome Pohlen

This interactive book—complete with 21 activities for kids—highlights LGBTQ individuals who shaped world history.

Heather Has Two Mommies

by Lesléa Newman

This updated version of the 1989 book of the same name simply and beautifully illustrates the diverse range of families young readers can have and appreciate.

I Am Jazz

by Jazz Jennings and Jessica Herthel

This book—based on Jazz's real-life experience—offers a simple, clear window into the life of a transgender girl who knew her true self from a young age.

In Our Mothers' House

by Patricia Polacco

Marmee, Meema and the kids cook dinner together, laugh together and dance together. But some of the other families don't accept them—they say they are different. These two moms teach their children the true meaning of family.



FILM/DOCUMENTARY

Introducing Teddy: A Gentle Story about Gender and Friendship

by *Jessica Walton*

After a few days of feeling down, Teddy reveals to Errol that she feels more like a girl than a boy. Her fear of speaking up is quickly turned into self-confidence as Errol and his friend embrace the newly named Tilly just the way she is.

Jacob's New Dress

by *Sarah and Ian Hoffman*

Jacob loves playing dress-up, when he can be anything he wants to be. This heartwarming story speaks to the unique challenge faced by boys who don't identify with traditional gender roles.

Mommy, Mama, and Me and Daddy, Papa, and Me

by *Lesléa Newman*

These books follow toddlers who spend the day with their two moms and two dads, respectively.

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress

by *Christine Baldacchino*

Morris is a little boy who loves using his imagination. But most of all, Morris loves wearing the tangerine dress in his classroom's dress-up center. This book can help early readers understand and value peers whose gender expression may differ from cultural norms.

One of a Kind, Like Me/Único Como Yo

by *Laurin Mayeno*

Tomorrow is the school parade, and Danny knows exactly what he will be: a princess. And his family is going to help him do it. Written in English and Spanish.

Our Daughter is Getting Married

by *Gail Heath*

From Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board Member Gail Heath, this rhyming picture

book offers the perspective of supportive parents seeing their daughter marry the woman she loves.



Our Family: A Film About Family

Diversity from Not In Our Town and Our Family Coalition

This documentary features elementary students' insights about what makes a family, featuring a diverse range of answers and identities. An extensive K-5 instructional guide accompanies the film, providing ready-to-use materials such as discussion outlines and lesson plans.

Prince and Knight

by *Daniel Haack*

In this modern fairy tale, a noble prince and a brave knight come together to defeat a terrible monster and in the process find true love.

Red: A Crayon's Story

by *Michael Hall*

A blue crayon mistakenly labeled as "red" suffers an identity crisis. No matter how hard he and everyone around him tries to make him red, he can't do it. This book is about his journey to find the courage to be true to his inner self.

Sex Is a Funny Word

by *Cory Silverberg*

Less controversial than its title suggests, this comic book for kids includes children and families of all makeups, orientations and gender identities, providing an essential resource about bodies, gender and sexuality for young children that will help caregivers guide difficult conversations.

Stella Brings the Family

by *Miriam B. Schiffer*

Stella's class is having a Mother's Day celebration, but what's a girl with two daddies to do? In this sweet story, Stella finds a unique solution that illustrates the true meaning of family.

The Best Man

by *Richard Peck*

This story about small-town life, gay marriage and everyday heroes follows Archer, a boy nearing adolescence and trying to understand his male role models and adults in general. This book features a gay teacher who outs himself to combat anti-gay bullying in the school.

The Family Book

by *Todd Parr*

This book introduces readers to a diverse range of families, encouraging them to empathize with peers who may have single parents, same-sex parents, other relatives raising them or any number of supposedly “nontraditional” homes.

This Day in June

by *Gayle E. Pitman*

This book offers young readers a celebratory look at the LGBTQ community, inviting them to experience a Pride celebration. This book includes facts about LGBTQ history and culture, as well as discussion guides for parents, caregivers or educators.

Who Are You?: The Kid’s Guide to Gender Identity

by *Brook Pessin-Whedbee*

This brightly illustrated children’s book provides a straightforward introduction to gender identity for early readers, and it includes a guide for adults to help them field questions and facilitate conversation.

Worm Loves Worm

by *J.J. Austrian*

When a worm meets a special worm and they fall in love, they decide to get married. But their friends want to know: Who will wear the dress? And who will wear the tux? The answer is: It doesn’t matter. Because worm loves worm.

MIDDLE SCHOOL



A Place in the Middle: The True Meaning of Aloha

This documentary short by Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson tells the story of a school in Honolulu, Hawaii, that is demonstrating respect for and inclusion of gender-fluid students. Also suitable for high school.

Better Nate Than Ever

by *Tim Federle*

This novel follows Nate Foster, who has always dreamed of starring in a Broadway show. But he lives in Jankburg. So when he sees an open casting call, he plans a daring overnight escape to New York. This book contains a subplot about a teenager who is questioning his sexual orientation.



Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History

This Teaching Tolerance documentary chronicles one student’s ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies and offers an inspiring message of hope to those fighting harassment today. Our film kit includes a viewer’s guide with standards-aligned lesson plans and activities.

Double Exposure

by *Bridget Birdsall*

This novel follows 15-year-old Alyx, who was born intersex and, at first, raised as a boy and bullied. When she gets to start her life over in Milwaukee, she finds her place on the girls’ varsity basketball team, only to then face a rival who tries to subvert Alyx’s happiness, and her identity.

Drama

by *Raina Telgemeier*

This graphic novel focuses on Callie and the dramatic (in more ways than one) production of a middle school play. The book also happens to feature openly gay characters, worked seamlessly into the plot without their identity being a crisis point.

From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun

by *Jacqueline Woodson*

Melanin Sun is close to his mom. But when she tells him she's gay—and that her girlfriend is white—he becomes angry and scared. What will his friends think? Can his mom's girlfriend truly be family? This novel explores the intersections of family, race and sexuality through a compelling young man's voice.

Gracefully Grayson

by *Ami Polonsky*

This book offers the beautifully written perspective of Grayson, a transgender girl who feels she must keep her identity a secret. An unexpected friendship and a caring teacher's wisdom help her find courage.



Growing Up Trans

This PBS Frontline documentary offers a look at the choices families must make when the biological sex and gender identity of their child do not match. The film's website features short, topical articles that accompany the film—perfect for classroom use. Also suitable for high school.

LGBTQ+ Athletes Claim the Field: Striving for Equality

by *Kirstin Cronn-Mills and Alex Jackson Nelson*

This nonfiction book chronicles the struggles and triumphs of athletes across the LGBTQ spectrum, offering inspiration to queer student-athletes who may feel they don't fit the mold.

Lily and Dunkin

by *Donna Gephart*

This book chronicles the transformative friendship between Lily Jo McGrother and Dunkin Dorfman, a transgender girl and a boy who has bipolar disorder.

None of the Above

by *I. W. Gregorio*

This book gives voice to an identity group not often heard in young adult literature:

intersex teens. Readers explore the complexities of gender identity and growing up through Krissy, who is dealing with her androgen insensitivity syndrome diagnosis. Also suitable for high school.

Not Your Sidekick

by *C.B. Lee*

Perfect for students looking for a fun, extracurricular read, this book tells the story of Jessica Tran—a queer, Asian-American protagonist. Jessica was born to superhero parents, but has no powers herself. When she spites her parents by taking an internship, she finds herself in danger.

Pride: Celebrating Diversity and Community

by *Robin Stevenson*

This youth-friendly book celebrates the diverse and vibrant LGBTQ community, while explaining what Pride is, who celebrates it and why it came to be.

Real Talk for Teens: Jump-Start Guide to Gender Transitioning and Beyond

by *Seth Jamison Rainess*

This powerful book offers transgender teens and their families, teachers and friends suggestions for navigating transitions in a safe, healthy and inclusive way.

So Hard to Say

by *Alex Sanchez*

This novel follows Frederick, a questioning youth dealing with the attention of an interested girl while he can't stop thinking about his soccer teammate. A relatable story for adolescents trying to figure out their feelings, and a window into that process for straight students who may not understand.

The House of Hades

by *Rick Riordan*

This fourth book in the famous Percy Jackson series (Heroes of Olympus) features Nico, who comes out as gay. This represents a rare example of a widely read, popular series including an out queer character.

The House You Pass on the Way

by *Jacqueline Woodson*

This novel tells the story of 14-year-old Staggerlee—the child of a black father and white mother living in the rural South. Through her connection to her aunt, Trout, Staggerlee explores the intersections of family, race, sexuality and loneliness in a nuanced way.

The Lottery Plus One

by *Emma Donoghue*

“Once upon a time, a man from Delhi and a man from Yukon fell in love, and so did a woman from Jamaica and a Mohawk woman.” These couples co-parent seven children in a fun-filled story featuring a perfectly imperfect modern family. Also suitable for upper-elementary students.

The Misfits series

by *James Howe*

These books that inspired No Name-Calling Week follow Bobby, Joe, Addie and Skeezie, best friends experiencing middle school and bullying. These books tackle growing up gay, interracial relationships, queer identity and more.

The Other Boy

by *M. G. Hennessey*

This novel follows Shane Woods, a 12-year-old boy who loves pitching for his baseball team, working on his graphic novel and hanging out with his best friend, Josh. When his secret—that he was assigned female at birth—comes out, he finds acceptance from people he feared wouldn’t understand.

HIGH SCHOOL

Almost Perfect

by *Brian Katcher*

When Logan discovers that his love interest, Sage, is a transgender girl, he lashes out. His regret of this act—and Sage’s journey—informs a sensitive, accessible look at what it means to be a transgender teen.

As I Descended

by *Robin Talley*

A lesson on Shakespeare’s Macbeth can be made more accessible with a cross-comparison to this modern retelling, featuring school power couple Maria Lyon and Lily Boiten.

Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe

by *Benjamin Alire Sáenz*

Two Mexican-American teens—Aristotle Mendoza and Dante Quintana—are trying to grow up in El Paso, Texas, and figure out the world beyond it. For “Ari,” this includes grappling with approaching manhood, his culture and his increasing awareness of his sexuality.

Bait

by *Alex Sanchez*

When he punches a guy for looking at him funny, Diego lands in juvenile court. Only when Diego starts to open up to Mr. Vidas does he discover that the source of his anger is buried in his past.

Beautiful Music for Ugly Children

by *Kirstin Cronn-Mills*

Gabe hosts a show on 90.3 KZUK—one of the rare spaces he can be himself. In waking life, he’s forced to go by Elizabeth, faces bullying and his family will not acknowledge his identity. As he says: “Elizabeth is my A side, the song everybody knows, and Gabe is my B side, not heard as often, but just as good.”

Being Jazz: My Life as a (Transgender) Teen

by *Jazz Jennings*

In this memoir, Jazz Jennings reflects on what it’s like to be a public face for transgender youth.

Beyond Magenta: Transgender Teens Speak Out

by *Susan Kuklin*

This book contains six intimate interviews with transgender or gender-neutral young adults, offering unique insight into their

perspectives of gender, family dynamics, transitioning and more.

Boy Robot

by *Simon Curtis*

Seventeen-year-old Isaak discovers the truth about his origin: He's a government-made robot and marked for termination. In a quest to fight against a secret government organization, he finds a male love interest along the way.

Chulito: A Novel

by *Charles Rice-González*

Set against a vibrant South Bronx neighborhood and the queer youth culture of Manhattan's piers, *Chulito* is a coming-of-age, coming out love story of a tough, hip-hop-loving, young Latino man and the colorful characters who populate his block.



Deep Run

Frameline's Youth in Motion collection features many films from a diverse range of LGBTQ lived experiences. One such film is *Deep Run*, an intimate documentary featuring Cole Ray Davis's life in rural North Carolina, where his identities as a trans man and undocumented immigrant cause tension in his quest for faith, work, acceptance and love.

Fade to Black

by *Alex Flinn*

Latino and HIV-positive, Alex Crusan faces a lot of isolation and cruelty at school. But when someone shatters his windshield with a baseball bat and injures him, the school blames Alex's bully, who is given a glimpse at the pain of isolation and assumptions.

Fat Angie

by *e.E. Charlton-Trujillo*

This novel is a coming-of-age story about a teenage girl who's bullied for keeping to herself, being quiet and being obese. With the help of a girl named KC Romance, she begins to see value in herself.

Fingersmith

by *Sarah Waters*

Set in Victorian Era Britain, this thriller follows the story of Sue Trinder, an orphan who becomes a petty thief. Her complicated relationship with Maud—a wealthy woman who falls for Sue—leads to a climactic double-crossing and a stint in the asylum.

How Many Letters Are In Goodbye

by *Yvonne Cassidy*

Rhea lost her arm in a childhood accident and has since lost her mother. Experiencing homelessness in New York City, she writes letters to her late mother, exploring her fears, her secrets, and her confusion and pain around accepting her sexuality.

I Am J

by *Cris Beam*

This novel follows J, a transgender boy of Jewish and Puerto Rican descent. After he is deserted by his best friend, J decides he is done hiding his true identity from his family and friends—no matter the cost.



I Am Not Your Negro

This documentary by Raoul Peck brings the final writings of James Baldwin—a prolific and openly gay writer—to life for today's audiences.

If I Was Your Girl

by *Meredith Russo*

In this award-winning novel, Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school with a secret: At her old school, she used to be Andrew. But when she falls for Grant, she finds herself wanting to share her truth with him—and finds herself fearing the repercussions.

If You Could Be Mine

by *Sara Farizan*

Seventeen-year-old Sahar is in love with her best friend, Nasrin. But Iran is a dangerous place for two girls in love. This novel explores the intersections of cultural ex-

pectations, sexuality and gender expression as Sahar considers undergoing sex reassignment to preserve the relationship.

I'll Give You the Sun

by *Jandy Nelson*

Two twins—Noah and Jude—serve as the narrators for this book about two inseparable siblings who grow apart when puberty hits. Later, when tragedy strikes, they find themselves competing for the same boys, the same art schools and forgiveness.

Jaya and Rasa: A Love Story

by *Sonia Patel*

Seventeen-year-old trans boy Jay Mehta is Indian, born of wealth and privilege. Rasa Santos, like many in Hawaii, is of mixed ethnicity, the daughter of an absent mother. Neither have known love or family—until they meet each other.

Juliet Takes a Breath

by *Gabby Rivera*

From GLSEN Youth Programs Manager Gabby Rivera comes a story about Juliet, who is still trying to figure out the intersections of her identity as a Puerto Rican lesbian from the Bronx. In a tumultuous summer in Portland, Oregon, she discovers other writers of color, love, family, friends and self-esteem.



Kiki

This documentary follows seven characters from the Ballroom scene in New York City. These young LGBTQ youth-of-color speak about their art, homelessness, illness and prejudice at a moment when Black Lives Matter and transgender rights are in the headlines. For classroom purposes, it may be best to select clips of interviews rather than screen in full.

Labyrinth Lost

by *Zoraida Córdova*

At her Deathday celebration, Alex performs a

spell to rid herself of her bruja powers. But it backfires. Her whole family vanishes into thin air. The quest to get them back follows Alex, a bisexual protagonist, in a story steeped with Latinx-American culture and magic.



Major!

This documentary celebrates and chronicles the work of Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, an activist and veteran of the Stonewall riots in New York City. This includes her fight to speak up for trans people—especially trans women of color—who faced unfair treatment in prison. Due to subject matter and strong imagery, choosing classroom-friendly clips is recommended.



Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine

This is a documentary about Matthew Shepard, the gay young man who was tortured and murdered in one of the most notorious hate crimes in recent U.S. history. Directed by one of his close friends, the film revisits the case with never-before-seen photos, rare video footage and new revelations.

Maurice

by *E. M. Forster*

Published posthumously, Forster's novel follows Maurice from school to adulthood in early 20th century Britain. The book serves as an indictment of the legal and social codes at the time, as Maurice struggles to reconcile his feelings with his fear of being gay in a country that deems his love illegal.

Middlesex

by *Jeffrey Eugenides*

Calliope Stephanides' transition from Callie to Cal begins with the realization that he is intersex—one of the many surprises he uncovers about his family history that spans from Mount Olympus to Detroit. Winner of the 2003 Pulitzer Prize.

Money Boy

by Paul Yee

This novel follows a young immigrant in Canada who is struggling to navigate his intersecting identities of being Chinese, gay and an immigrant.

More Happy Than Not

by Adam Silvera

Struggling to cope with his father's suicide, 16-year-old Aaron Soto finds happiness and safety when he's around Thomas, who's new to the Bronx. But facing backlash—internal and external—Aaron considers a memory-altering procedure to forget his feelings.

Not Otherwise Specified

by Hannah Moskowitz

Etta struggles to mesh her identities with what seem like narrowly defined groups in her Nebraska hometown. As a black, bisexual young woman recovering from an eating disorder, she navigates issues of biphobia, race, mental health and bullying as she looks to live beyond labels that don't fit.

October Mourning: A Song for

Matthew Shepard

by Lesléa Newman

Matthew Shepard was savagely killed in 1998, becoming a martyr and face of anti-bullying and gay rights. This stunning cycle of 68 poems chronicles his final moments and pays tribute to him.

Queens of Geek

by Jen Wilde

Three friends, two love stories, one convention: This fun love letter to geek culture is all about fandom, friendship and finding the courage to be yourself.

Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World

by Sarah Prager

World history has been made by countless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer

individuals—and you've never heard of many of them. Prager's nonfiction book begins to fill that gap of knowledge with this book about forgotten but rich queer heritage.



Raising Zoey

Thirteen-year-old Zoey wants nothing more than to simply go to school, learn and be a kid. But as a transgender teen, it's not that simple. This documentary chronicles her fight—alongside the ACLU—to self-identify at school, despite the bullying and endless teasing from both students and school officials.

Saving Alex

by Alex Cooper and Joanna Brooks

"When I was fifteen, I told my Mormon parents I was gay, and that's when my nightmare began." This nonfiction, first-person narrative tells the story of Alex Cooper, who was held captive in an unlicensed conversion therapy boot camp in Utah.

Skim

by Mariko and Jillian Tamaki

This graphic novel covers a gamut of heavy teenage issues in its telling of Kimberly "Skim" Keiko Cameron's story. With her school in mourning after a recent suicide—and her mind in overdrive as she crushes on her female teacher—Skim navigates her intersectional identity, cliques and first love.

Stonewall: Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights

by Ann Bausum

This nonfiction book provides a teen friendly history of the Stonewall Riots and the national LGBTQ rights movement that followed.

Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda

by Becky Albertalli

Sixteen-year-old and not-so-openly gay Simon Spier prefers to save his drama for the school musical. But when an email falls into the wrong hands, his secret is at risk of being

thrust into the spotlight. This book inspired the major motion picture *Love, Simon*.

Sister Outsider

by *Audre Lorde*

A quintessential collection of speeches and essays on race, sexuality, gender and society, featuring the words of a woman at the forefront of contemporary feminism and understanding intersectionality. This collection features appropriate excerpts for high school students.

Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen

by *Arin Andrews*

In this memoir, Arin Andrews details the journey that led him to make the life-transforming decision to undergo gender reassignment as a high school junior. He speaks to the challenges he faced, the humiliation and anger he felt after getting kicked out of private school, and transitioning.

Symptoms of Being Human

by *Jeff Garvin*

On the advice of a therapist, Riley starts an anonymous blog to vent those pent-up feelings and tell the truth of what it's really like to be a gender-fluid teenager. But just as Riley's starting to settle in at school, the blog goes viral, and an unnamed commenter discovers Riley's real identity, threatening exposure.

Tell Me Again How a Crush Should Feel

by *Sara Farizan*

As an Iranian-American, she's different enough; if word got out that Leila liked girls, life would be twice as hard. But when Saskia shows up, Leila starts to take risks she never thought she would. This book gives students a nuanced look at issues of family, religion, sexual orientation and cultural expectations.

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas

by *Gertrude Stein*

Written under the guise of her lover's voice, Stein's book chronicles the couple's star-stud-

ded life in Paris, featuring artistic luminaries such as Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway and Henri Matisse.

The Color Purple

by *Alice Walker*

This classic Pulitzer Prize- and National Book Award-winning book tells the story of two sisters—one a missionary in Africa and the other a child wife living in the South—who keep connected across time and distance. The story features intimate portraits of a lesbian relationship and fluid sexual identities.

The Gender Quest Workbook: A Guide for Teens and Young Adults Exploring Gender Identity

by *Rylan Jay Testa, Deborah Coolhart and Jayme Peta*

This book incorporates skills, exercises and activities from evidence-based therapies to help young people address the broad range of struggles they may encounter related to gender identity, as well as explore the concepts of gender, gender identity and gender expression.

The God Box

by *Alex Sanchez*

Paul, a religious teen living in a small conservative town, meets Manuel—a young man who says he's both Christian and gay, two things that Paul didn't think could co-exist in one person. This novel offers a compassionate look at the intersections of faith and sexuality.

The Imitation Game: Alan Turing Decoded

by *Jim Ottaviani*

This biography and graphic novel tells the story of mathematician and scientist Alan Turing, whose work saved countless lives during World War II. This book details his life as an unconventional genius who was arrested and punished for being openly gay and whose work still impacts the modern world.

The Laramie Project

by Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project

This play—based on interviews conducted in Laramie, Wyoming, in the aftermath of the murder of Matthew Shephard—portrays what happens when a small town becomes the scene of a hate crime and its citizens have to reckon with the horror that has happened.

The Left Hand of Darkness

by Ursula K. Le Guin

An ambassador is sent to Winter, a world without sexual prejudice, where the inhabitants can change their gender whenever they choose. His goal is to facilitate Winter's inclusion in an intergalactic civilization. To do so he must bridge the gulf between his own views and those of the culture he encounters.

The Lost Prayers of Ricky Graves

by James Han Mattson

A heartbroken and humiliated Ricky Graves took the life of a classmate and himself. For those closest to the tormented killer, shock and grief have given way to soul searching.

The Necessary Hunger

by Nina Revoyr

Nancy Takahiro and Raina Webber are basketball rivals. But when their parents move in together, and the girls fall in love, things get complicated as Nancy and Raina navigate love in an L.A. neighborhood experiencing racial tension between Asian Americans and African Americans.

The Porcupine of Truth

by Bill Konigsberg

The author of *Openly Straight* returns with an epic road trip that forces protagonist Carson Smith to confront issues of his family history, gay history, race and religion during a summer spent in Montana.

The Price of Salt, or Carol

by Patricia Highsmith

Originally published under the author's pseudonym of Claire Morgan, this novel was revolutionary upon its release in 1952, due to exploring a lesbian relationship and offering a happy (or at least, non-tragic) ending.



The T Word

Presented by Laverne Cox, this documentary from MTV and Logo TV details the lives of seven transgender youth ranging in age from 12 to 24 and offers a call to action: a call for complete justice, respect and inclusion.



The Year We Thought About Love

This documentary celebrates the powerful work of a Boston LGBTQ youth theatre troupe as they transform their personal struggles into theater for social change and write a play about love.

Unbecoming

by Jenny Downham

In this multigenerational novel, Katie starts putting together the life story of her grandmother who has dementia. As a result, she begins to understand her mother's behavior, her sexuality, the future and her younger brother.

Under the Udala Trees

by Chinelo Okparanta

Ijeoma comes of age as her nation does. Born before independence, she is 11 when civil war breaks out in the young republic of Nigeria. When she falls in love with another girl from a different ethnic community, Ijeoma learns that she may have to hide this part of herself.

Vanilla

by Billy Merrell

This novel chronicles the twists and turns of the emotional chemistry between a high-school-age gay couple. An ingenious work of prose poetry, this story realistically captures the internal

worlds of adolescents as they inquire into gay, asexual and nonbinary identities.

We Are the Ants

by Shaun David Hutchinson

Henry has spent years being periodically abducted by aliens. Then the aliens give him an ultimatum: The world will end in 144 days, and all Henry has to do to stop it is push a big red button. In the wake of family struggles and his boyfriend's suicide, Henry decides he needs to think about it—scientifically.

Weird Girl and What's His Name

by Meagan Brothers

In rural Hawthorne, North Carolina, 17-year-olds Lula and her gay friend Rory share everything—including that feeling that they don't quite fit in. When a schism comes between them, Lula questions her own sexual orientation and identity, and runs away to find her mother—and answers.

When the Moon was Ours

by Anna-Marie McLemore

Through magical realism and metaphorical prose, this book follows the relationship between Miel, a Latina girl, and Sam, a Pakistani trans boy. The book navigates the intersections of their identities and how it forces them to interact with their world.

Will Grayson, Will Grayson

by John Green and David Levithan

Two teens with the same name meet in Chicago. With alternating narrators, this book gives both of their perspectives. Will Grayson 1 is the only straight male in the Gay Straight Alliance; Will Grayson 2 is battling depression and coming to terms with being gay. Once they meet, they change each other's lives.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Another Country

by James Baldwin

This novel spans the settings of Greenwich

Village, Harlem, France and beyond to present the intersections of gender, race and sexuality among a group of friends in the 1970s. Much of James Baldwin's catalogue serves as necessary reading for educators hoping to elevate queer voices in their curriculum and understand the intersectional perspective of queer people of color in the 20th Century, who faced discrimination and self-policing. Excerpts of Baldwin's work could be appropriate for high school students.

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza *by Gloria Anzaldúa*

Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's experience as a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist and a writer, the essays and poems in this volume profoundly challenged, and continue to challenge, how we think about identity.

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic

by Alison Bechdel

This memoir and graphic novel offers a darkly funny family tale, marked by gothic twists, a family funeral home, sexual angst and great books. This book is often challenged, but excerpts may be appropriate for high school classrooms.

Gender Diversity and LGBTQ Inclusion in K-12 Schools: A Guide to Supporting Students, Changing Lives

This collection of essays—which includes a chapter by TT Grants Coordinator Jey Ehrenhalt—offers tips for creating an LGBTQ-inclusive environment, curriculum and pedagogy at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

GSA Advisor Handbook

Published by the National Association of GSA Networks, this guide gives current and future GSA advisors tips on establishing and maintaining a strong alliance for queer students and allies.

LGBTQ Voices in Education: Changing the Culture of Schooling

Emphasizing socially just curricula, supportive school climates and transformative educational practices, this book is designed to help educators find the inspiration and support they need to become allies and advocates for queer students.

Living Out Islam: Voices of Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Muslims

by Scott Siraj al-Haq Kugle

This book documents the rarely heard voices of Muslims who live in secular democratic countries and who are gay, lesbian and transgender.

My New Gender Workbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Achieving World Peace Through Gender Anarchy and Sex Positivity

by Kate Bornstein

Using a workbook format, complete with quizzes, exercises and puzzles, Bornstein gently but firmly guides readers toward discovering their own unique gender identity.

Not Straight, Not White: Black Gay Men from the March on Washington to the AIDS Crisis

by Kevin J. Mumford

Examining the lives of both famous and little-known black gay activists—from James Baldwin and Bayard Rustin to Joseph Beam and Brother Grant-Michael Fitzgerald—Mumford analyzes the ways in which movements for social change both inspired and marginalized black gay men.

Out & Allied: An Anthology of Performance Pieces Written by LGBTQ Youth and Allies

This collection offers both student voices and action steps for facilitating dialogue within families, schools, organizations and faith-based communities about LGBTQ youth and allies.

Queer Brown Voices: Personal Narratives of Latina/o LGBT Activism

Histories of LGBTQ activism in the 1970s,

'80s, '90s and beyond often reduce the role that Latinx people played, resulting in misinformation. This book tries to counter this trend, featuring essays and oral history interviews of 14 Latinx activists.

Reading the Rainbow: LGBTQ-Inclusive Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Classroom

by Caitlin L. Ryan and Jill M.

Hermann-Wilmarth

Drawing on examples of teaching from elementary school classrooms, this timely book for practitioners explains why LGBTQ-inclusive literacy instruction is possible, relevant and necessary in grades K–5.

Readings for Diversity and Social Justice

With full sections dedicated to racism, sexism, heterosexism, transgender oppression and other topics, this bestselling, updated text remains a trusted, leading anthology of social justice issues.

Ready, Set, Respect!: GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit

This resource from GLSEN provides K–5 teachers with tips for creating a more inclusive environment and lessons aligned with Common Core States Standards.

Safe is Not Enough: Better Schools for LGBTQ Students

by Michael Sadowski

This book highlights how educators can make their schools more supportive of LGBTQ students' positive development and academic success, using examples from classrooms, schools and districts across the country.

Stepping Up!: Teachers Advocating for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Schools

by Mollie V. Blackburn, Caroline T. Clark and Ryan Schey

Building on interviews with parents, students, teachers and administrators, this book offers concrete examples of advocacy

and creating welcoming classroom climates for LGBTQ and gender diverse youth.

Stone Butch Blues

by Leslie Feinberg

This novel follows Jess Goldberg, who navigates the complexities of being transgender in the mid-20th century. Though some of the language has since become outdated, it remains a seminal work.



The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson

This documentary—with never-before-seen footage and rediscovered interviews—searches for the truth behind the mysterious 1992 death of black transgender activist and Stonewall veteran Marsha P. Johnson, a name that belongs in any survey of LGBTQ history and activism.

Trans*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability

by Jack Halberstam

Halberstam explores the recent shifts in the meaning of the gendered body and representation in a book that blends academic research with popular culture trends to imagine a more inclusive understanding of gender.

Understanding and Teaching U.S. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History

This book is designed to help university and high school teachers integrate queer history into their curriculum. The anthology includes a contextualizing of fascinating queer history, as well as detailed suggestions as to how those histories can be presented in the classroom, including assignments.

When We Rise: My Life in the Movement

by Cleve Jones

Jones chronicles the heartbreak of losing countless friends to AIDS; his co-founding of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation; his conception of the AIDS Memorial Quilt; and stories from San Francisco told from a friend of Harvey Milk and himself a hero to the LGBTQ community.

Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity

by Julia Serano

Lesbian transgender activist and biologist Julia Serano shares her experiences and observations—pre- and post-transition—to reveal the ways in which fear, suspicion and dismissiveness toward femininity shape our societal attitudes toward trans women.

For shorter, classroom-ready texts reflecting LGBTQ history and lived experiences, visit tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts and filter for Topic: Gender & Sexual Identity.

APPENDIX B

LGBTQ HISTORICAL FIGURES

The erasure of LGBTQ figures from our history books and classrooms does a disservice to students on three fronts: 1) It introduces bias into our studies, providing an incomplete and unfair portrait of our past; 2) It strips LGBTQ students of role models and precedent, leaving them to feel disconnected from past and present, and less capable of making history; and 3) It takes away possibilities for students to envision a happy, thriving adult life for themselves. Instead, they see blankness, nonexistence, conformity or invisibility—a void of potential life purpose that can increase suicide risk.

As Emery Grant—the director of community engagement at Stonewall National Museum and Archives—says, “When those students see the full spectrum of possibilities for themselves, that affirmation helps them to take their identities more seriously. It helps them and their peers to take LGBT identities more seriously.”

For educators looking for a place to start—or looking for LGBTQ figures to plug into existing curriculum—this list offers the simplest first step. This list is not exhaustive, but highlights LGBTQ people who belong in any discussion of their respective time periods.

Daayiee Abdullah (1954–)

One of two openly gay Imams in the world, a gay Muslim activist who performed same-sex weddings and led prayers for victims of AIDS when few would.

Zackie Achmat (1962–)

South African activist and filmmaker who has championed access to HIV/AIDS medication, LGBTQ-inclusive policies, and economic and racial equity.

Jane Addams (1860–1935)

Founder of the Hull House—a settlement house in Chicago—and pioneering social worker and women’s suffragist.

Alvin Ailey (1931–1989)

A pioneer of modern dance who founded the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater of New York City.

Edward Albee (1928–2016)

The author of *The Sandbox* and *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, he won two Tony Awards for Best Play and three Pulitzer Prizes for Drama.

Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.)

A king of Macedon—a Greek kingdom that stretched into parts of modern-day India and northern Africa.

Reinaldo Arenas (1943–1990)

Cuban writer who would become known as a rebel and prisoner of the Communist Cuban government led by Fidel Castro, advocating for Cubans’ freedom and other Cuban writers who had come to America until his death.

There is a difficulty in discussing historical queer figures. It can be tempting to place labels on people who—depending on their era and social norms at the time—may never have used those labels on themselves. This requires nuance and care. While it may be appropriate to discuss the queer themes in an artist’s work and author’s words, or to discuss known queer relationships and rebellions against gender norms, it’s less appropriate to put modern labels on a person posthumously or speculate beyond the evidence.

Howard Ashman (1950–1991)

Song lyricist and playwright whose best-known songs were featured in the Disney films *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Aladdin*.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626)

A pioneering figure of empiricism and the scientific method who also held influence as an important political figure and philosopher during the English Renaissance.

James Baldwin (1924–1987)

An author and essayist whose work often addressed racism, sexuality, class and inequities in the United States.

Tammy Baldwin (1962–)

Wisconsin senator and first out lesbian/LGBTQ community member elected to the U.S. Senate.

Natalie Clifford Barney (1876–1972)

American writer whose openly lesbian poetry represented some of the first well-known descriptions of same-sex attraction since Sappho. Her Paris salon attracted a Who's Who of literary figures and artists. Her life inspired the novel, *The Well of Loneliness*.

Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929)

American poet and songwriter famous for penning the words to “America the Beautiful.”

Joseph Beam (1954–1988)

An activist, poet and writer whose works provided an intimate portrait of what it meant to be a black gay man during the AIDS epidemic. His 1986 anthology “*In the Life*” collected works from black gay writers in order to promote pride and representation for people like him.

Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986)

French writer of such works as *The Second Sex* and a key figure in modern feminist thought.

Mel Boozer (1945–1987)

An activist for racial equity and LGBTQ

rights; the first black president of the Gay Activists Alliance.

Glenn Burke (1952–1995)

Major League Baseball player who is often credited for “inventing” the high five.

Lord Byron (1788–1824)

English politician and poet known for such works as “*Don Juan*” and notable figure in the Romantic movement.

Caravaggio (1571–1610)

Italian painter of the Baroque movement known for such paintings as *The Calling of Saint Matthew*.

Albert Cashier (1843–1915)

An Irish immigrant—born Jennie Irene Hodggers—and veteran of the American Civil War, serving in a regiment under General Ulysses S. Grant’s Army of the Tennessee.

Dan Choi (1981–)

A former army officer who helped co-found the organization *Knights Out* and became a leading voice in calling for the repeal of *Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell* and the right of LGBTQ military personnel to serve openly.

Roy Cohn (1927–1986)

An attorney who served as Joseph McCarthy’s chief counsel during the Red Scare and Lavender Scare in the United States post World War II.

Tim Cook (1960–)

CEO of Apple Inc. and the first Fortune 500 chief executive to identify publicly as a gay man.

Roberta Cowell (1918–2011)

A racecar driver, World War II veteran, pilot, businessperson and transgender woman.

Laverne Cox (1972–)

LGBTQ advocate and American actress and the first transgender woman to earn a Primetime Emmy nomination.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–1695)

From what we now know as Mexico, a nun, playwright and famous poet of the Latin American colonial era.

Countee Cullen (1903–1946)

American poet and key figure of the Harlem Renaissance.

Patrisse Khan-Cullors (1984–)

Queer activist and co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Chevalier d'Éon (1728–1810)

French soldier and spy who fought in the Seven Years' War.

Angela Davis (1944–)

Scholar, author and famous activist with ties to the Black Panther Party and former member of the Communist Party USA. Known for her work combating racial inequality and the prison-industrial complex.

Ellen DeGeneres (1958–)

Comedian, actress and TV host who became the first openly gay actress to play an openly gay character on network television in 1997.

Marie Equi (1872–1952)

Doctor and activist who served poor patients in the early American West. Advocated for women's suffrage and labor rights, among other human rights causes.

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

An iconic American poet who lived in Massachusetts.

Lili Elbe (1882–1931)

A transgender woman and painter whose life inspired the novel (and film), *The Danish Girl*.

Laura Esquivel (1950–)

Considered “La Madre” of the Latinx LGBTQ movement, she co-founded the Latino(a) Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGÓ), marched alongside César Chávez, and advocates for labor and immigration rights.

Barney Frank (1940–)

Represented Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1981 to 2013, championing many civil rights initiatives and chairing the House Financial Services Committee.

Frederick the Great (1712–1786)

King of Prussia during the Seven Years' War and Prussia's Enlightenment.

Alicia Garza (1981–)

Activist, writer and co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Barbara Gittings (1932–2007)

An LGBTQ activist who, among many good works, helped lead the charge to remove the stigma of classifying homosexuality as a mental illness.

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy (1940–)

The executive director for the Transgender Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project, Griffin-Gracy is a transgender activist, Stonewall Riots participant and advocate for prison reform.

Angela Weld Grimké (1880–1958)

Playwright, journalist and poet of the Harlem Renaissance. Her play, *Rachel*, was written for the NAACP in response to D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, and served to raise awareness of racial violence perpetrated against black people.

Steve Gunderson (1951–)

Outed on the House floor, Gunderson was the first openly gay representative to represent the Republican party and famously stood alone among his party in voting against the Defense of Marriage Act.

Mabel Hampton (1902–1989)

A dancer during the Harlem Renaissance and openly lesbian LGBTQ rights activist.

Lorraine Hansberry (1930–1965)

Author of *A Raisin in the Sun* and the first black woman to have a play she wrote per-

formed on Broadway, Hansberry also advocated for human rights as a journalist.

Harry Hay (1912–2002)

A gay rights pioneer—and controversial figure due to his communist views—who founded the Mattachine Society to liberate gay people from persecution and discrimination.

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

A poet, social activist and prominent figure in the Harlem Renaissance.

King James VI and I (1566–1625)

Served as King of Scotland and King of England in the 16th and 17th centuries; the namesake of the King James Bible.

Marsha P. Johnson (1945–1992)

A trans woman and activist who was on the frontlines of the Stonewall Riots in 1969.

Barbara Jordan (1936–1996)

The first black woman from a southern state elected to Congress, as well as the first black person (and woman) to serve as a keynote speaker for the Democratic National Convention.

Christine Jorgensen (1926–1989)

A singer and actress who became one of the first known people to undergo surgical sex reassignment.

Mychal Judge (1933–2001)

A Catholic priest and the New York City Fire Department’s chaplain at the time of the September 11 attacks. Judge died while administering prayers and aid in the North Tower lobby.

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954)

A Mexican artist whose work explored aspects of identity, race, class and colonialism.

Frank Kameny (1925–2011)

Astronomer, activist and gay rights lobbyist who was the first openly gay man to run for a seat in U.S. Congress. He took part in the first demonstration for gay rights outside the White House.

John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946)

Influential British economist who inspired modern macroeconomics theory known as Keynesian economics.

Josef Kohout (1915–1994)

Holocaust survivor and author of *The Men With the Pink Triangle*—perhaps the best-known testimony of the treatment of queer people by Nazi Germany.

Lady Chablis (1957–2016)

A pioneering trans woman and performer, known for her role in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

Edmonia Lewis (1844–1907)

An Oberlin College-educated, black and Native American sculptor of the Neoclassical movement who achieved international renown.

Audre Lorde (1934–1992)

A poet, civil rights activist and feminist whose philosophy on intersectional identities still influences feminist and progressive ideology today.

Phyllis Lyon (1924–) and Del Martin (1921–2008)

A lesbian couple that founded the Daughters of Bilitis—the nation’s first political organization for lesbians—and the first to have their marriage officially recognized in California.

Monica Márquez (1969–)

The first openly gay Latina justice on the Colorado Supreme Court.

Yukio Mishima (1925–1970)

Japanese writer, filmmaker, actor and nationalist. His literary influence led to a national award named in his honor. Founded a right-wing militia that attempted a coup to restore the Emperor to the status held pre-World War II.

Harvey Milk (1930–1978)

An activist and first openly gay elected official in California history, Milk was assassinated in 1978.

sinated in 1978 by a fellow San Francisco city supervisor.

Janet Mock (1983–)

Bestselling author, writer, TV host and transgender rights activist.

Pauli Murray (1910–1985)

A civil rights activist, lawyer, priest and writer, Murray fought for gender and racial equality across disciplines and set precedent that would be used by future judges to rule against school segregation and gender discrimination.

Alice Dunbar Nelson (1875–1935)

A Harlem Renaissance figure, suffragist, activist, poet and journalist who contributed to and co-edited several progressive black publications.

Jack Nichols (1938–2005)

Co-founder of the Mattachine Society of Washington (alongside Frank Kameny) and prominent gay liberation activist post-Stonewall.

Tseko Simon Nkoli (1957–1998)

An internationally celebrated South African anti-apartheid and gay rights activist.

Zazu Nova (dates unknown)

A trans woman of color in the frontlines of the resistance at the Stonewall Riots, Nova advocated for LGBTQ youth and co-founded Gay Youth to provide them a safe space.

Jean O’Leary (1948–2005)

Activist, founder of the Lesbian Feminist Liberation and co-founder of National Coming Out Day.

Ozaawindib (dates unknown)

A warrior of the Ojibwe tribe and niizh manidoowag, or two-spirited person.

“Ma” Rainey (1886–1939)

The “Mother of the Blues” and pioneering recording artist.

John Rechy (1931–)

Mexican-American writer known for the bestselling novel *City of Night*.

Alfred Redl (1864–1913)

A pioneer in espionage techniques and Austrian military officer whose sexuality may have been used as blackmail to coerce him into becoming a Russian spy.

Renée Richards (1934–)

Professional tennis player and transgender woman, she won the right to play in the 1976 US Open in a case that went to the New York Supreme Court. Later coached tennis legend Martina Navratilova.

Sally Ride (1951–2012)

An American astronaut and the first American woman in space.

Sylvia Rivera (1951–2002)

A founding member of the Gay Activists Alliance and Gay Liberation Front, Rivera was a gay and transgender activist on the frontlines of the Stonewall Riots.

Marty Robinson (1943–1992)

An activist and organizer who developed the “zap” protest in the immediate aftermath of the Stonewall Riots; a founding member of GLAAD.

V. Gene Robinson (1947–)

The only openly gay man to become a bishop in the Episcopal Church.

Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962)

A human rights activist, former United Nations official and former First Lady of the United States.

Bayard Rustin (1912–1987)

An integral figure of the civil rights movement and one of the fiercest advocates for nonviolent protest and resistance, and later in life, an openly gay advocate for LGBTQ rights.

Deborah Sampson (1760–1827)

An early Massachusetts citizen who posed as a man to fight in the American Revolutionary War.

Sappho (~630–580 BC)

A celebrated Greek lyric poet from the island of Lesbos, whose work famously depicted same-sex love.

José Julio Sarría (1922–2013)

The founder of the Imperial Court System—a large, grassroots LGBTQ rights organization—and the first openly gay man to run for public office in the United States.

Pierre Seel (1923–2005)

A gay survivor of the Holocaust who bravely testified to the horrific treatment of gay people in the concentration camps.

Barbara Smith (1946–)

An activist, leading black feminist, author and co-founder of the Combahee River Collective, an organization who pioneered use of the term “intersectionality.”

Bessie Smith (1894–1937)

Influential music artist known as the “Empress of the Blues.”

Stephen Sondheim (1930–)

An American composer whose work has majorly influenced the musical theater scene; he has won eight Tony Awards spanning five decades.

Gertrude Stein (1874–1946)

A bestselling American writer and art collector whose Paris salon became a social hotspot for modernist writers and artists.

Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben (1730–1794)

A Prussian-born American military officer, serving during the Revolutionary War as a major general of the Continental Army. Known for implementing drills and order into the Continental Army, he would later become General George Washington’s chief of staff.

Mark Takano (1960–)

Representing California’s 41st congressional district in the U.S. House of Representa-

tives, Takano is the first openly gay person of color to serve in congress.

Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Russian composer of Swan Lake and The Nutcracker.

James Tinney (1942–1988)

A scholar, minister, speechwriter and Howard University professor, Tinney founded Faith Temple, a church for black queer people, as well as the Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights.

Alan Turing (1912–1954)

A British mathematician and pioneering computer scientist whose codebreaking saved countless lives during World War II.

Jose Antonio Vargas (1981–)

An immigration rights activist, award-winning journalist and founder of the nonprofit, Define American. Born in the Philippines, Vargas is undocumented, but identifies as American.

Adela Vázquez (1958–)

A transgender activist, writer and performer from Cuba who sought asylum during a time of political uprising in 1980.

Bruce Voeller (1934–1994)

A biologist and gay rights activist who originated the term “acquired immune deficiency syndrome” (AIDS) to counter homophobic names for the disease. Co-founded and served as director for the National Gay Task Force, which organized the first meeting between openly LGBTQ leaders and the White House.

Stanisława Walasiewicz (1911–1980)

An intersex woman and track icon sometimes known as Stella Walsh, she was an Olympic gold medalist in the 100m dash.

Lillian Wald (1867–1940)

A nurse and founder of the Henry Street Settlement house in New York City, Wald was involved in the founding of the NAACP,

a suffragist, and among the first to advocate for nurses in public schools.

Alice Walker (1944–)

The first black woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for her book *The Color Purple*, Walker is also an activist who has taken on anti-war and voter registration causes.

Andy Warhol (1928–1987)

An American artist and filmmaker known for being the preeminent figure of pop art.

We'wha (1849–1896)

A Zuni lhamana, or two-spirited person, and accomplished artist who served as an ambassador of her tribe in a visit to Washington, D.C.

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)

Irish poet and playwright.

Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

An American poet, essayist and humanist known for such works as *Leaves Of Grass* and *Drum Taps*.

Tennessee Williams (1911–1983)

A 20th century American playwright and writer of such classic works as *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951)

A prominent 20th century philosopher whose work influenced future theories on the philosophy of mind and language.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)

A modernist English writer known for feminist themes and stream of consciousness writing in works such as *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Orlando*.

Mary Yu (1957–)

The Washington Supreme Court's first Latina, first Asian-American and first openly gay justice.

APPENDIX C

THE ACRONYM AND BEYOND

A Glossary of Terms

From the outside looking in, the ABCs of LGBTQ identities can feel overwhelming, academic and inaccessible. But for students deprived of representation, words matter—and can open a door toward realization. To hear yourself or see yourself described for the first time can be transformational, especially if you’ve been conditioned to see yourself as abnormal. A definition can point to a community. And a community can make a kid feel less alone.

Today’s youth, more than ever, have a large vocabulary with which they can articulate their gender expression, gender identities and sexual orientations. That vocabulary can make some feel uncomfortable. These terms often force us to confront our biases or assumptions. They ask us to consider the complexity of gender and attraction. But an understanding of these words opens a door for an educator to become an ally to LGBTQ students—capable of facilitating conversation, and more importantly, capable of listening.

Affirmed gender (*noun*): The gender by which one wishes to be known. This term is often used to replace terms like “new gender” or “chosen gender,” which imply that a person’s gender was chosen rather than simply innate.¹

Agender (*adj.*): Describes a person who does not identify with any gender identity.

Ally (*noun*): A person who does not identify as LGBTQ, but stands with and advocates for LGBTQ people.

Androgynous (*adj.*), **Androgyne** (*noun*): Used to describe someone who identifies or

presents as neither distinguishably masculine or feminine.²

Aromantic (*adj.*): A romantic orientation generally characterized by not feeling romantic attraction or a desire for romance.³

Asexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people who do not experience sexual attraction or do not have a desire for sex.⁴ Many experience romantic or emotional attractions across the entire spectrum of sexual orientations.⁵ Asexuality differs from celibacy, which refers to abstaining from sex. Also *ace*, or *ace community*.⁶

Assigned sex (*noun*): The sex that is assigned to an infant at birth based on the child’s visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics. Often corresponds with a child’s *assigned gender* and *assumed gender*.⁷

Binary system (*noun*): Something that contains two opposing parts; binary systems are often assumed despite the existence of a spectrum of possibilities. Gender (man/woman) and sex (male/female) are examples of binary systems often perpetuated by our culture.⁸

Biological sex (*noun*): A medical classification that refers to anatomical, physiological, genetic or physical attributes that determine if a person is assigned male, female or intersex identity at birth. Biological sex is often confused or interchanged with the term “gender,” which encompasses personal identity and social factors, and is not necessarily determined by biological sex.⁹ See *gender*.

Bisexual, Bi (*adj.*): A person emotionally,

romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.¹⁰

Cisgender (*adj.*): Describes a person whose gender identity (*defined below*) aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Cissexism (*noun*): A system of discrimination and exclusion that oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of normative social constructs. This system is founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders—usually tied to assigned sex.¹¹

Coming out (*verb*): A lifelong process of self-acceptance and revealing one's queer identity to others. This may involve something as private as telling a single confidant or something as public as posting to social media.

Demisexual (*adj.*): Used to describe someone who feels sexual attraction only to people with whom they have an emotional bond—often considered to be on the asexual spectrum.¹²

Gay (*adj.*): Used to describe people (often, but not exclusively, men) whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attractions are to people of the same sex.¹³

Gender (*noun*): A set of social, physical, psychological and emotional traits, often influenced by societal expectations, that classify an individual as feminine, masculine, androgynous or other. Words and qualities ascribed to these traits vary across cultures.¹⁴

Gender dysphoria (*noun*): Clinically significant distress caused when a person's assigned birth gender is not the same as the one with which they identify.¹⁵

Gender expression (*noun*): External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not

conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being masculine or feminine.¹⁶

Gender-fluid (*adj.*): A person who does not identify with a single fixed gender and whose identification and presentation may shift, whether within or outside of the male/female binary.^{17,18}

Gender identity (*noun*): One's innermost feeling of maleness, femaleness, a blend of both or neither. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.¹⁹

Gender neutral (*adj.*): Not gendered, usually operating outside the male/female binary. Can refer to language (e.g., pronouns), spaces (e.g., bathrooms) or identities.²⁰

Gender nonconforming (*adj.*): A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. Also, *gender expansive*.²¹

Genderqueer (*adj.*): Describes a person who rejects static categories of gender (i.e. the gender binary of male/female) and whose gender expression or identity falls outside of the dominant social norms of their assigned sex.²² They may identify as having aspects of both male and female identities, or neither.²³

Gender roles (*noun*): The social behaviors and expression that a culture expects from people based on their assigned sex (e.g., girls wear pink; boys don't cry; women care for home and child; men are more violent), despite a spectrum of various other possibilities.

Heteronormativity (*noun*): Coined by social critic Michael Warner, the term refers to a societal assumption of certain norms: 1) that there are two distinct sexes; 2) that male and female functions and character-

istics are distinctly different; and 3) that traits such as attraction and sexual behavior correspond to anatomy. Those who do not fit these norms—be it through same-sex attraction, a non-binary gender identity or nontraditional gender expression—are therefore seen as *abnormal*, and often marginalized or pressured to conform to norms as a result.²⁴

Heterosexism (*noun*): The assumption that sexuality between people of different sexes is normal, standard, superior or universal while other sexual orientations are substandard, inferior, abnormal, marginal or invalid.²⁵

Heterosexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex.²⁶ Also *straight*.

Heterosexual/cisgender privilege

(*noun*): Refers to societal advantages that heterosexual people and cisgender people have solely because of their dominant identities. This can include things as simple as safely holding hands with a romantic partner in public or having safe access to public bathrooms. This can also include systemic privileges such as the right to legally donate blood, to adopt children without facing possible rejection because of your sexual orientation, or to play organized sports with others of the same gender identity.

Homophobia* (*noun*): A fear or hostility toward lesbian, gay and/or bisexual people, often expressed as discrimination, harassment and violence.²⁷

Intersex (*adj.*): An umbrella term describing people born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and/or a chromosome pattern that can't be classified as typically male or female.²⁸

Latinx (*adj.*): A gender-expansive term for people of Latin American descent used to be more inclusive of all genders than the binary terms *Latino* or *Latina*.²⁹

Lesbian (*adj.*): Used to describe a woman whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to other women.³⁰

LGBTQ (*noun*): An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.” Less often, the Q stands for “questioning.” Acronyms like LGBTQIA also include the intersex, allied and asexual communities, while acronyms like LGBTQ attempt to envelop an entire community of people who hold identities that are not cisgender or heterosexual.

Misgender (*verb*): To refer to someone in a way that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify, such as refusing to use a person's preferred pronouns or name.³¹

Nonbinary (*adj.*): An umbrella term that refers to individuals who identify as neither man or woman, or as a combination of man or woman. Instead, nonbinary people exhibit a boundless range of identities that can exist beyond a spectrum between male and female.

Outing (*verb*): The inappropriate act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person's sexual orientation or gender identity without that person's consent.³²

Pansexual (*adj.*): Used to describe people who have the potential for emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to people of any gender identity, though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.³³ The term *panromantic* may refer to a person who feels these emotional and romantic attractions, but identifies as asexual.

Preferred pronouns (*adj.*): The pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual personally uses and would like others to use when talking to or about that individual. Can include variations of he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/their/theirs, among others.³⁴ This term is being used less and less in LGBTQ circles, as it suggests one's gen-

der identity is a “preference” rather than innate. *Recommended replacement:* “Your pronouns, my pronouns, their pronouns, etc.”

Queer (*adj.*): Once a pejorative term, a term reclaimed and used by some within academic circles and the LGBTQ community to describe sexual orientations and gender identities that are not exclusively heterosexual or cisgender.

Questioning (*adj.*): A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.³⁵

Same-gender loving (*adj.*): A term coined in the early 1990s by activist Cleo Manago, this term was and is used by some members of the black community who feel that terms like gay, lesbian and bisexual (and sometimes the communities therein) are Eurocentric and fail to affirm black culture, history and identity.

Sexual orientation (*noun*): An inherent or immutable emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people; oftentimes used to signify the gender identity (or identities) to which a person is most attracted.³⁶

Third gender (*noun*): A gender identity that is neither male nor female, existing outside the idea that gender represents a linear spectrum between the two. Sometimes a catchall term or category in societies, states or countries that legally recognize genders other than male and female.

Transgender (*adj.*): An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.³⁷ Not all trans people undergo transition. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual or something else. Also, *trans*.

Transitioning (*verb*): A process during which some people strive to more closely

align their gender identity with their gender expression. This includes *socially transitioning*, during which a person may change their pronouns, the name they ask to be called or the way they dress to be socially recognized as another gender. This includes *legal transitioning*, which may involve official name change and modified IDs and birth certificates. And this includes *physically transitioning*, during which a person may undergo medical interventions to more closely align their body to their gender identity. Transgender and nonbinary people transition in various ways to various degrees; self-identification alone is enough to validate gender identity.

Transphobia* (*noun*): The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people. This may manifest into transphobic actions, such as violence, harassment, misrepresentation or exclusion.³⁸

Transsexual (*adj.*): A less frequently used term (considered by some to be outdated or offensive) which refers to people who use medical interventions such as hormone therapy, gender-affirming surgery (GAS) or sex reassignment surgery (SRS) as part of the process of expressing their gender.³⁹ Some people who identify as transsexual do not identify as transgender and vice versa. *Only use this term if someone who specifically identifies as such asks you to.*

Two Spirit (*adj.*): An umbrella term in Native culture to describe people who have both a male and female spirit within them. This encompasses many tribe-specific names, roles and traditions, such as the *winkte* of the Lakota and *nadleeh* of the Navajo people.⁴⁰ This term often describes Native people who performed roles and gender expression associated with both men and women. This term should be used only in the context of Native culture.

Words to avoid

Homosexual (*n.*); homosexual (*adj.*)
Sexual preference
Tranny/transvestite

Preferred terms

Gay man/person (*n.*); gay (*adj.*)
Sexual orientation
Transgender person or trans person
(*if they so identify*)

*University of California-Davis's LGBTQIA Resource Center offers this note on words like this: We've been intentionally moving away from using words like "transphobic," "homophobic," and "biphobic" because (1) they inaccurately describe systems of oppression as irrational fears and (2) for some people, phobias are a very distressing part of their lived experience and co-opting this language is disrespectful to their experiences and perpetuates ableism.

DEFINITION SOURCES

Note: Not all definitions are used word-for-word, but were inspired by meanings provided by the following sources.

- 1 PFLAG National Glossary of Terms.
- 2 Human Rights Campaign Glossary of Terms.
- 3 University of California Davis, LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary.
- 4 Glossary of Terms, from the GLAAD Media Reference Guide
- 5 Asexuality.org
- 6 The Trevor Project Glossary
- 7 PFLAG
- 8 The Trevor Project
- 9 PFLAG
- 10 Human Rights Campaign
- 11 UC Davis
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 GLAAD
- 14 Lambda Legal, Glossary of LGBTQ Terms
- 15 HRC
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Oxford English Dictionary
- 18 UC Davis
- 19 Human Rights Campaign
- 20 PFLAG
- 21 Human Rights Campaign
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 UC Davis
- 24 International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
- 25 Lambda Legal
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- 31 PFLAG
- 32 GLAAD
- 33 Human Rights Campaign
- 34 PFLAG
- 35 Human Rights Campaign
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 PFLAG
- 40 Tony Enos, "8 Things You Should Know About Two Spirit People," Indian Country Today. 2017.

APPENDIX D

SCHOOL CHECKLIST

How well is your school meeting the needs of your LGBTQ students?

PROM

- Gender-inclusive language is used on all event communications, including invitations.
- Event organizers are educated about students' First Amendment right to attend events with a date other than a student of the opposite sex and to wear clothing of their choice.
- At least one member of the prom committee is designated the "inclusivity planner" to ensure that every student feels welcome.

PRIVACY

- School staff are never asked or required to reveal a student's sexual orientation or gender identity without the student's permission—even to the student's family.
- School privacy policies explicitly assert the confidentiality of information pertaining to students' sexual orientations and gender identities.

POLICIES

- My school's anti-bullying policy includes language that specifically prohibits harassment based on gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression.
- The policy gives examples of harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The effectiveness of my school's anti-bullying program is evaluated annually using student and staff surveys (find ours at tolerance.org/tdsi/schools-survey).

- Administrative forms and communications use gender-neutral language (singular "they," not "he or she") and provide an opportunity for students to communicate their gender identity. Updates are made as needed.
- My school's anti-discrimination policy states support for LGBTQ teachers and school personnel.

ANTI-BULLYING

- My school has a designated anti-bullying coordinator as well as an anti-bullying task force.
- Staff members are specifically trained to prevent and respond to bullying incidents involving LGBTQ students.
- The name and contact information for my school's anti-bullying coordinator is posted in the office, on my school's website and in the student handbook.
- My school communicates effectively and often with students, parents or guardians and the community about school climate issues such as bullying.
- Staff ensure that reactions to reports of harassment do not further stigmatize students who were targeted for their real or perceived LGBTQ identities.
- Teachers and administrators are educated about common bullying myths, such as the idea that LGBTQ students are "asking for it" by expressing their sexual orientations or gender identities.
- Counseling staff is well-versed in LGBTQ issues.

SCHOOL CULTURE

- My school's dress code is inclusive of a diversity of gender expressions, including for yearbook photos.
- My school has gender-neutral restrooms and/or single stall bathrooms and private changing areas.
- Students can use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their gender identity.
- My school has a GSA that combats bullying and harassment.
- Within my school culture, other staff members are unafraid to be allies to LGBTQ and gender nonconforming students.
- LGBTQ educators and staff members feel safe to be "out" at work.
- My school offers public praise or formal rewards for school staff members who promote a safe and inclusive environment—for example: an "equity leader" certificate at the end of the year.

CURRICULUM

- My school's health and sexuality education is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The curriculum does not take a heteronormative stance toward sexuality and gender (i.e., assuming students only need to know about heterosexual feelings and safe-sex practices.)
- My school's academic curriculum includes LGBTQ perspectives, voices, histories and current events.
- My school's library includes books and resources about LGBTQ individuals, history, events and issues.



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