You’re Welcome Here!

Creating Welcoming and Inclusive School Environments for LGBTQ Families
What are you hoping to gain from this session?

https://padlet.com/haugr/i9zkp7lxdyhb
Outcomes

Learn strategies to ensure LGBTQ families feel welcome and become engaged in their children’s schools

Support teachers and staff with professional development related to creating welcoming and inclusive environments for LGBTQ families

Respond to parent concerns from and about LGBTQ families
Expectations for Respectful Conversations

Listen actively

Speak from your own experience

Respectfully challenge

Participate

Share your own story and experience

Gain a deeper understanding

Be aware of body language and nonverbal responses
Current Reality
Data

14 million

25%

30%

27%

15%

26%

25%

22%

14%

25%

23%

22%

20%

45%
Professional associations like the American Medical Association, American Counseling Association, National Education Association and the National Association for Multicultural Education have called for the respectful inclusion and treatment of LGBTQ children and families.
LGBTQ Families in Your School

Figure 6. %Same-sex couples with biological, adopted, or foster children under age 18 in the home
Census 2010

(Gates, 2013)
Educators agree that silence around this issue will have damaging outcomes for children...

(Burt, Galnaw, & Lesser, 2010)

Yet, there is fear around raising the issue
How can we help arm educational leaders, teachers, and staff with information and support so they can be supporters of LGBTQ families?
Professional Development
What pre service training did you receive as part of your teacher preparation courses?

What professional development have you received on this topic?

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Professional Development

When planning professional development keep the following in mind:

- A two-hour workshop is not enough
- Conduct needs assessment
- Ensure presenter has adequate knowledge
- Recognize personal biases
- Be aware of staff turnover
- Conduct annually
Professional Development

Should focus on three points:

1. Evaluation of personal and institutional beliefs and biases
2. Information about LGBTQ issues such as bullying and discrimination
3. Education about strategies, practices, and behaviors to create supportive school environments
“When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you’re not in it, there’s a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.”

-Adrienne Rich
Tips for School Personnel
Supporting Faculty
Welcoming Prospective Parents

First impressions matter

When we bring all prospective families into the conversation we allow our position to become a factor in everyone’s decision-making process.
Our Mission

Crossroads College Preparatory School strives to be an exemplary and engaging learning community committed to justice and equity.

How Do I Become Involved in My School?

**Show School Spirit.** This does not mean wearing school colors every day, but try to attend sporting events, pep rallies, school dances and plays to meet people outside of the classroom. Your high school years will be filled with fun activities, social opportunities, and other events that will create memories and new friendships.

**Discover Your Passion.** High school encourages students to pursue their interests by exploring new classes, clubs, and organizations. If your school does not offer a club that matches your interests, then talk to your principal or teachers about possibly starting a new group.

**Give Back to the Community.** Finding time to volunteer and perform community service not only helps others but is personally rewarding. Completing service hours is also a good way to add polish to your college applications. Think about ways you can raise awareness for a worthy cause or lend a hand to those in need.
Building Relationships With Same-Sex Parents

Form a personal connection
Support Parent/Teacher relations
Facilitate Parent/Teacher relations
Placement considerations
School involvement
LGBTQ Parent Affinity Group
Building Relationships With Same-Sex Parents

Events

Confidentiality

Do not “out” LGBTQ parents

Professionalism and respect

Encourage participation
The adoption and consistent enforcement of school policies is the *most recommended* action for schools to take to eliminate bullying, harassment, and discrimination of LGBTQ students and families.
The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is perhaps the most diverse school district in the world. We recognize the importance of children seeing themselves and their stories represented in their schooling.

As such, we strive to adopt curriculum and books that represents this diversity. That being said, we also encourage our teachers to supplement the curriculum with books that are particularly applicable to their specific classes. The California Department of Education underscores this directive.
When the support of children within same-sex households is open and sensitive, all children benefit. Today’s schools have the opportunities to contribute to the dignity of families by enhancing the lives of children with LGBTQ parents.
What’s the one thing that teachers say made them feel comfortable integrating gay themes into their curriculum?
Social-Behavioral Curriculum
MO SW-PBS Essential Components

- Common Philosophy & Purpose
- Leadership
- Clarifying Expected Behavior
- Teaching Expected Behavior
- Encouraging Appropriate Behavior
- Discouraging Inappropriate Behavior
- Ongoing Monitoring
- 8 Effective Classroom Practices
## Components Required to Transform School Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Intervention</th>
<th>Resources and Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>• Recognition of anti-LGBTQ school climate in public and private K-12 schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Development of language to articulate climate concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>• Personal confidence and social network to “be yourself”</td>
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<td>• Student empowerment to critique school climate among peers and teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Adults and teachers who support student concern with LGBTQ issues</td>
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<td>Curricular and co-curricular</td>
<td>• Awareness of LGBTQ issues, racism and sexism early in school career</td>
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<td>• Structured opportunities to mix student social groups</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Involvement in social change organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>• LGBTQ counseling and support groups led by informed school staff</td>
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<td>• Enhanced security and supervision of unowned spaces</td>
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<td>• Measurement and monitoring of school climate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Trained school staff held accountable for addressing LGBTQ issues</td>
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<td>• Administrative and school board commitment of material and human resources to LGBTQ issues</td>
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Adelman & Woods, 2006
Academic Curriculum
Research has found that many teachers do not implement gay themes in their multicultural education curriculum because of fear of criticism from parents and administrators, lack of professional training, and their own negative attitudes.
Reasons to Integrate LGBTQ Literature

Development of strong social identities and pride

Expansion of their cultural awareness and differences among themselves and other children/cultures

Identify stereotypes and misconceptions

Learn that unfairness and prejudice hurts others

Develop skills and strategies
Elementary Curriculum

- and tango makes three
- Best Best Colors Los Mejores Colores
- King & King
- The Family Book
- António's Card La Tarjeta de Antonio
- Molly's Family Nancy Garden
- King & King & Family
Middle and High School Curriculum
Integrate Into All Content Areas

Coverage of LGBTQ issues should be integrated throughout the curriculum, rather than relegated to an inserted box on the side of a page or only discussed during a special week or month.
It can take years to develop a fully inclusive curricula.

What is something you can do next week to make one small change?

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Parent Concerns
Powerful social forces propel the controversy around LGBTQ families and often lead to the fear and confusion that affect so many educators.
Common Parent Concerns

Talking about LGBTQ people is the same as talking about sex.

If my child is exposed to LGBTQ issues they will be confused or become gay.

My religion thinks being LGBTQ is wrong.

Are LGBTQ issues more important than my ______?

This is a distraction from academics.

What about No Promo Homo Laws?
Resistance Strategies

- Teaching resistant participants the dangers of NOT protecting LGBTQ students/families
- Remind resistant individuals that their moral obligations as educators (to enhance the well-being of ALL students) outweigh personal beliefs they have about sexual orientation, gender expression, or family constellations
When parents are presented with statistics, their attitudes change and concerns turn to empathy.
No one’s beliefs can take precedence over student and family safety and protection

(Burt, Gelnaw, & Lesser, 2010)
Schools that are safe and supportive for LGBTQ students and families are safe and supportive for ALL students and families (Oberg, 2015)
It is up to each of us to do whatever we can do. If we don’t, we inadvertently support the exclusion and harm that currently exists. What will you do?

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(Burt, Gelnaw, & Lesser, 2010)


THANK YOU

Rachel Haug
MO SW-PBS
Statewide Coach
haugr@missouri.edu
@rachelhaug_mu

Deanna Maynard
MO SW-PBS
Statewide Coach
maynarddk@missouri.edu
@deannatv