



## Ensuring a Safe & Inclusive School Environment for LGBTQ Students

September 20, 2017



# Webinar Facilitators



**Noelle Terefe Haile**

Center for Education Equity at MAEC



**Pamela MacDougall**

WestEd

# CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY (CEE)

**CEE** is a project of MAEC, Inc., in partnership with WestEd and the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

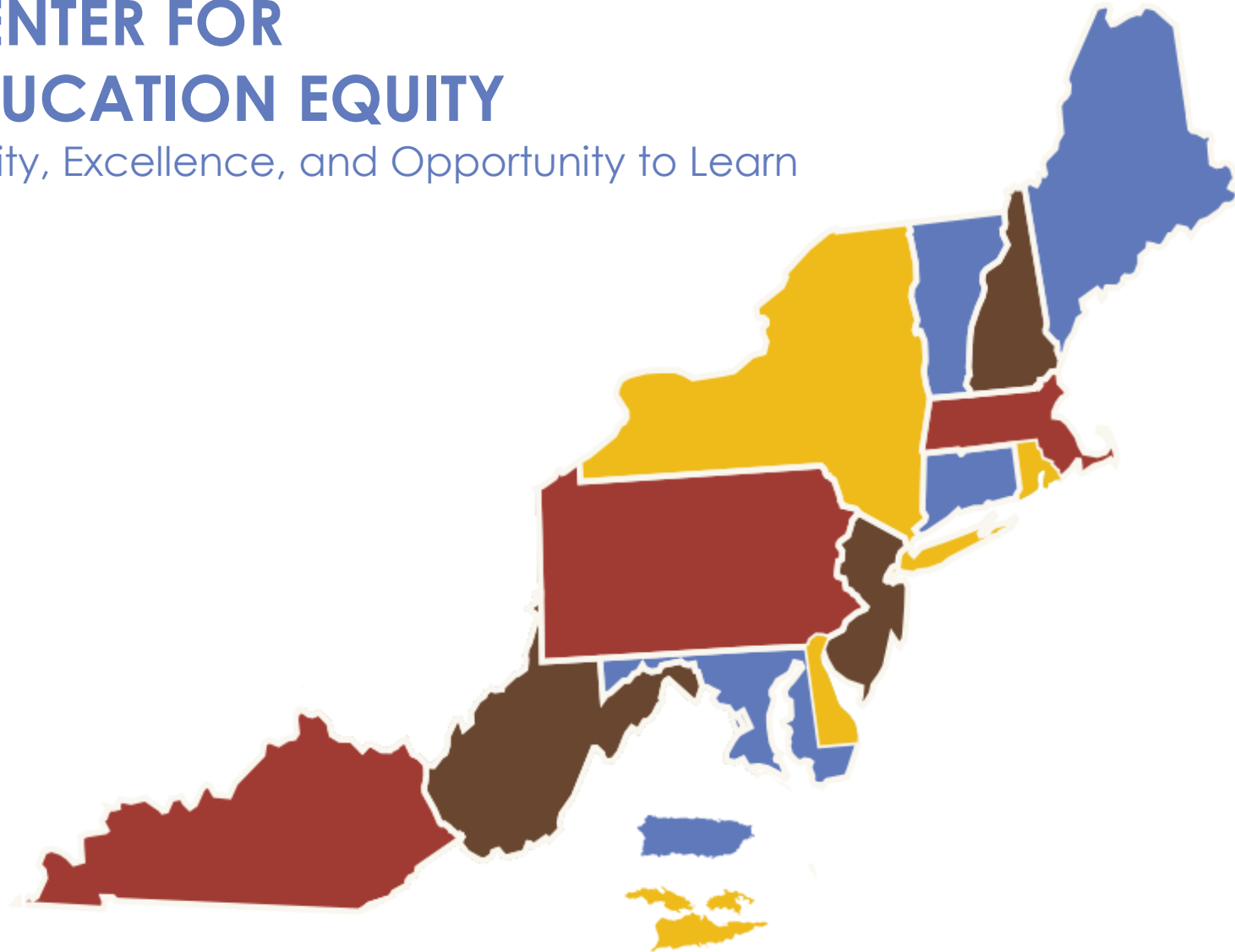
CEE is one of four regional equity assistance centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



*Center for Education Equity (CEE) is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. References to any specific publication, person, or idea is for the information and convenience of the public and does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of CEE. The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (S004D110021). However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.*

# CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY

Equity, Excellence, and Opportunity to Learn



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## REGION I EQUITY ASSISTANCE CENTER

# CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY

## CEE's goals are to:

- Improve and sustain the systemic capacity of public education systems to address problems caused by segregation and inequities.
- Increase equitable educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin (English Learners).

## Whom we serve:

- CEE provides technical assistance and training to states, districts, schools, and community-based organizations within Region I at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies.



# Webinar Etiquette

- ❑ Use the **Q&A box** if you have any questions.
- ❑ Use the **comment box** to share your comments or to engage other participants during the webinar.
- ❑ Complete a **brief survey** after the webinar.

# Presenters



**Deborah Bradley**

Parent of Transgender  
Daughter; Parent  
Facilitator (MA)



**Alexandra Brodsky**

National Women's Law  
Center



**Stephen Hamilton**

Parent of Transgender  
Daughter; Parent  
Facilitator (MA)



**Jabari Lyles**

GLSEN Maryland



**Christian McCormick**

Transgender Student  
Lafayette High School (KY)



# Overview of Presentation

Participants will:

- learn about strategies, best practices, and recommendations to ensure a safe and supportive school climate regardless of a student's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
- gain an understanding of the law and how it covers LGBTQ students;
- gain an appreciation for the experience of transgender families; and
- learn about resources available to administrators, educators, and families to better support the needs of LGBTQ youth to improve student learning.







Jabari Lyles  
Executive Director, GLSEN Maryland

# Poll Questions

1. Approximately how many gay or lesbian individuals do you know of, or have you come in contact with through work, family, or friends?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-7
- ☐ 8 or more

Please **respond to the poll** on the right hand-side panel to answer Q1.

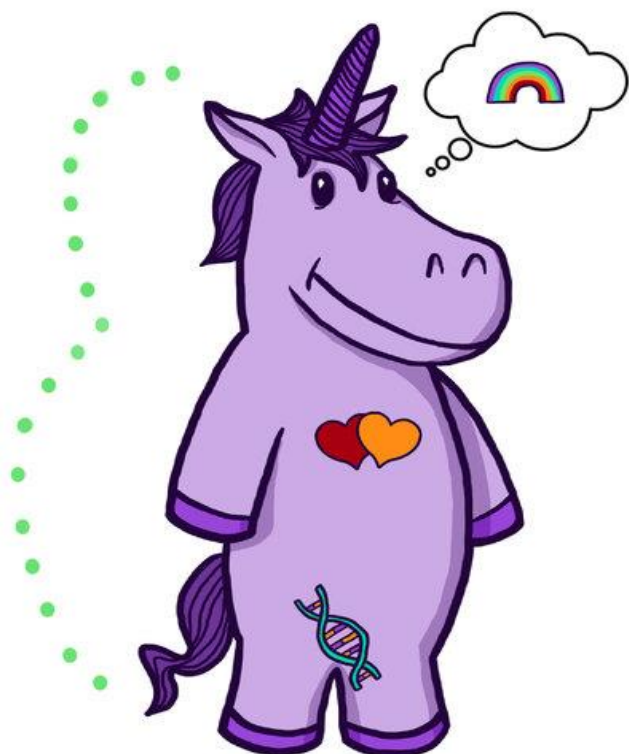
2. Approximately how many transgender individuals do you know, or have you come in contact with through your work, family, or friends?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-7
- ☐ 8 or more

Please **respond to the poll** on the right hand-side panel to answer Q2.

# The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:  
**TSER**  
Trans Student Equality Resources



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

Design by Landyn Pan

## Gender Identity

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

## Gender Expression/Presentation

-  Feminine
-  Masculine
-  Other

## Sex Assigned at Birth

-  Female
-  Male
-  Other/Intersex

## Sexually Attracted To

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

## Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To

-  Women
-  Men
-  Other Gender(s)

# Terms and Definitions

Assigned Sex	Gender Identity	Gender Expression	Sexual Orientation	Other
Female	Cisgender	Feminine	Gay	Romantic orientation
Male	Transgender	Masculine	Lesbian	Heteronormativity
Intersex	Man	“Androgynous”	Bisexual	Homophobia
	Woman	“Butch”	Pansexual	Transphobia
	Non-Binary / Gender Non-Conforming	“Femme”	Asexual	Biphobia
	Genderqueer / “Queer”	“Dom”	“Queer”	Intersectionality
	Gender-fluid	“Stud”		
	He/him; she/her; they/them; ze/hir; xe/xem;	“Queer”		

# Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

## What we know:



**Nearly 92% of all LGBT students have been verbally harassed, targeted and abused.**



# Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth



Students who have been victims of bullying and harassment have been reported to have higher incidences of **depression, anxiety, decreased school connectedness and poor grades.**

*GLSEN National School Climate Survey*

Gay students are **2 to 3 times more likely** to **commit suicide** than other students

*US Dept. of Health and Human Services*

**GLSEN**

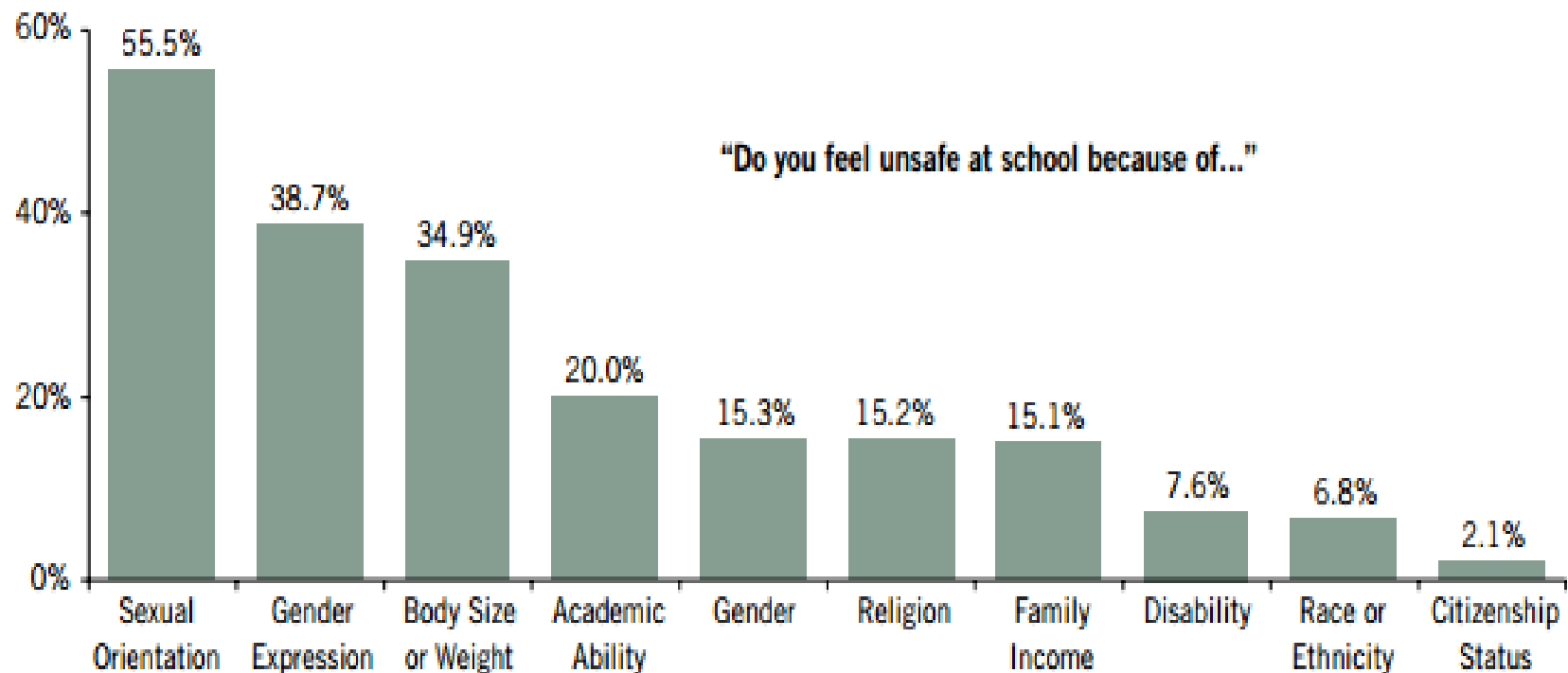


# Risk Factors for LGBTQ Youth

- 26% of all LGBTQ+ youth report having to leave their family of origin due to rejection of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.
- 30% of LGBTQ+ youth report experiencing physical violence within their family of origin after coming out.
- 40% of all homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+ ; 39% of LGBTQ+ homeless youth arrested each year.
- 78% of LGBTQ+ youth in foster care run away or are removed from their placements due to hostility towards their perceived sexuality and/or gender presentation.
- 1 in 2 transgender youth will attempt to commit suicide by the age of 20.
- Family rejection is the single greatest predictor of involvement in the juvenile justice system for LGBTQ+ youth.

# Statistics: National School Climate Survey

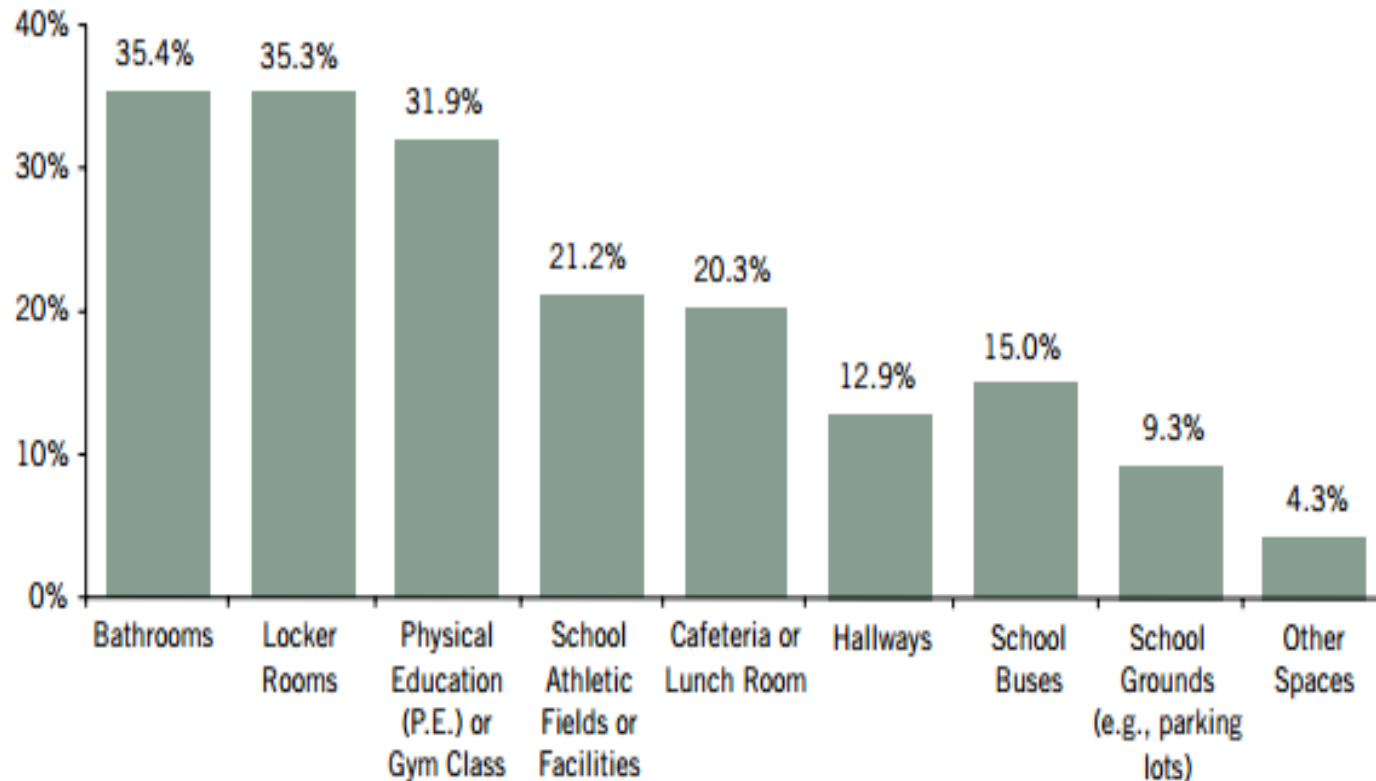
Figure 1.1 Percentage of LGBT Students Who Feel Unsafe at School Because of Actual or Perceived Personal Characteristics



Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN

# Statistics: National School Climate Survey

Figure 1.2 Percentage of LGBT Students Who Avoid Spaces at School Because They Feel Unsafe or Uncomfortable

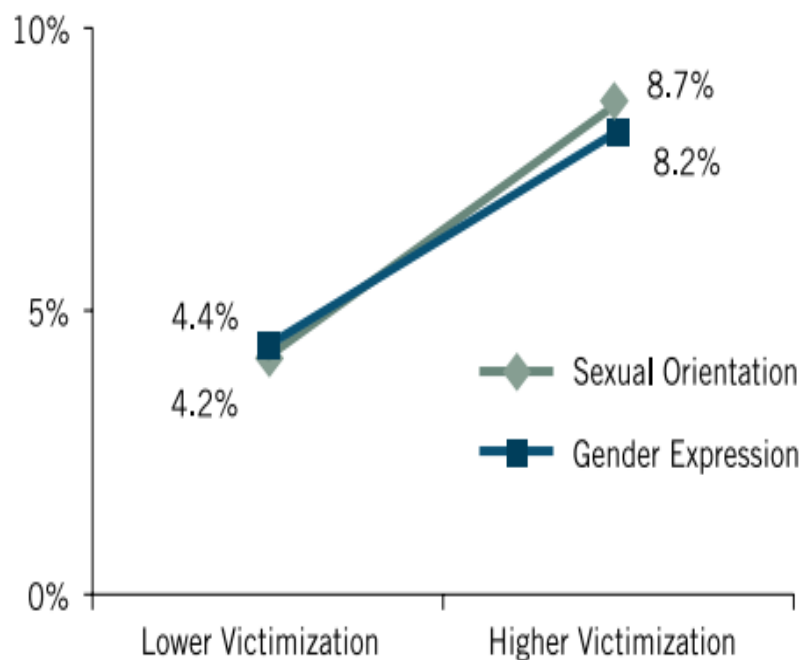


Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN

# Statistics: National School Climate Survey

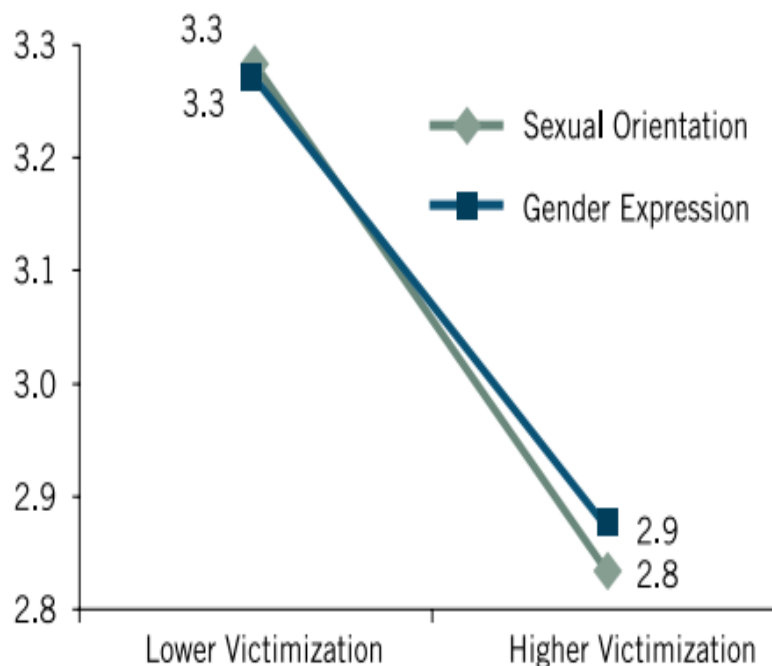
**Figure 1.25 Educational Aspirations and Severity of Victimization**

(Percentage of LGBT Students Not Planning to Pursue Post-Secondary Education)



**Figure 1.26 Academic Achievement and Severity of Victimization**

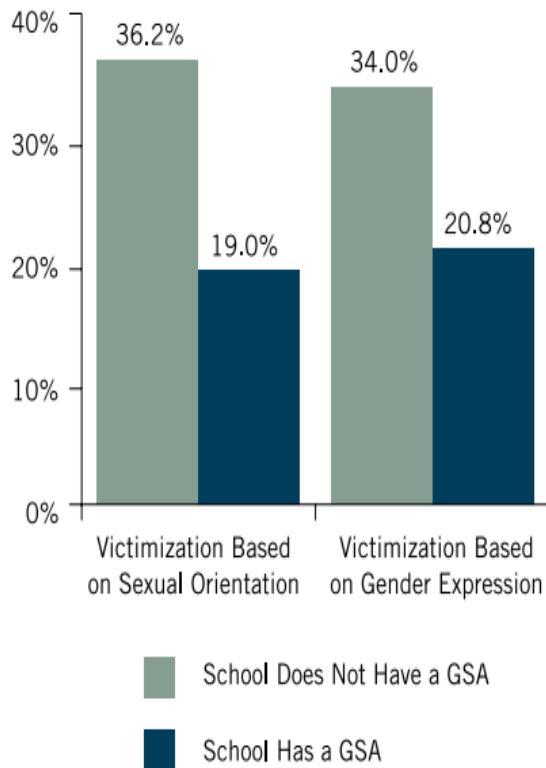
(LGBT Students' Mean Reported Grade Point Average)



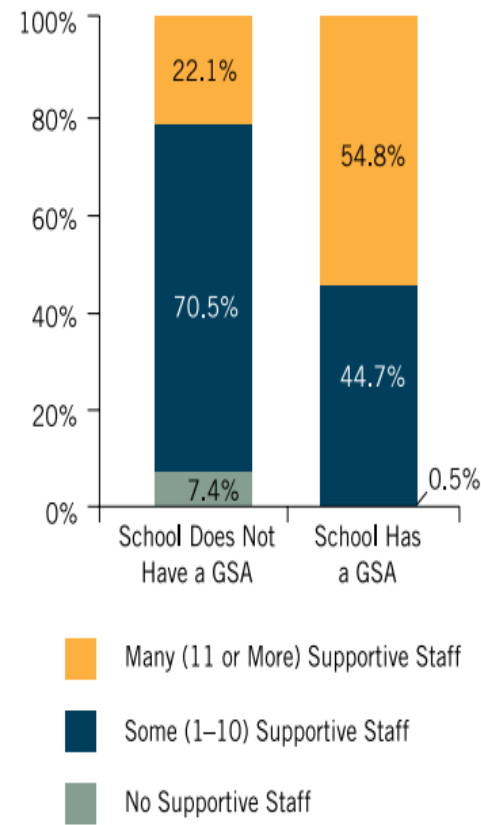
Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN

# Statistics: National School Climate Survey

**Figure 2.10 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Victimization**  
(Percentage of LGBT Students Experiencing Higher Levels of Victimization)



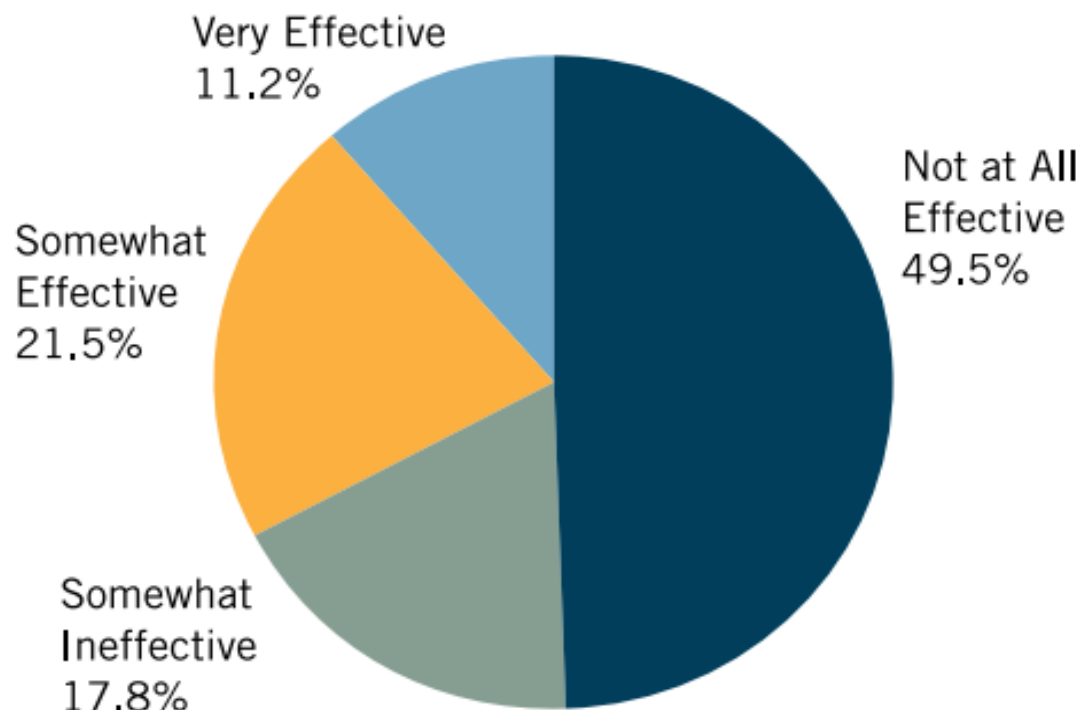
**Figure 2.11 Presence of Gay-Straight Alliances and Number of Supportive School Staff**



Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN

# Statistics: National School Climate Survey

**Figure 1.21 LGBT Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Staff Response to Incidents of Harassment and Assault (n = 2361)**



Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Bartkiewicz, M. J., Boesen, M. J., Palmer, N. A. (2012). *The 2011 National school climate survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York, NY: GLSEN



# Statistics: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Risk Behavior	% H (MD)	% LGB (MD)	% H (CC)	% LGB (CC)
<b>QN27: Percentage of students who seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months</b>	12.3	38.1	13.2	36.8
<b>QN21: Percentage of students who had ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to</b>	6.3	17.9	6.4	15.5
<b>QN16: Percentage of students who did not go to school on one or more of the past 30 days because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to or from school</b>	4.1	14.0	3.2	13.7
<b>QN24: Percentage of students who had ever been bullied on school property during the past 12 months</b>	15.5	29.5	17.9	33.8
<b>QN57: Percentage of students who have taken a prescription drug (such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) without a doctor's prescription one or more times during their life</b>	11.4	29.5	13.0	32.9

Source: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/YRBS\\_questionnaire\\_content\\_1991-2017.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/YRBS_questionnaire_content_1991-2017.pdf)

# Best Practices – Addressing Anti-LGBTQ Language

1. Stop the room. (“I’m sorry, let’s all wait one second.”)
2. Name the action. (“That language/behavior is completely inappropriate.”)
3. Educate. (“Do you understand why what you said was inappropriate?”)
4. Explain why. (“In this classroom, we respect all people and all identities.”)
5. Check for understanding. (“Do you understand?”)



# Best Practices - Individual

1. Ask/Respect gender pronouns and/or preferred name.
2. Do not “out” someone to others once they have “come out” to you.
3. Know the specific vulnerabilities and legal rights of LGBTQ+ youth.
4. Use gender neutral language.
5. Tuning into self: What are your values and triggers?
6. Educate yourself and others on the difference between “normal” and developmentally appropriate behaviors.
7. Familiarize yourself with LGBTQ resources within the region.
8. Post information about LGBTQ individuals and other communities.
9. Speak out against discriminatory treatment and language.
10. Don’t make assumptions, both about the youth themselves, or their experiences.

# Best Practices - Institutional

1. Conduct a climate survey at your school.
2. Post in visible locations both the state's and the school systems' inclusive, comprehensive anti-bullying policies.
3. Train all school personnel on policies and LGBTQ issues.
4. Identify supportive staff to work with diversity clubs or GSA's (gay-straight alliances).
5. Examine your school's method for reporting incidents.
6. Examine your school's methods for record-keeping, gendered practices (bathrooms, graduation robes, etc.).
7. Work with the librarian towards inclusive collections of literature.

# Questions

**Please type your questions in the Q&A box on the right hand-side panel.**



Alexandra Brodsky  
Skadden Fellow, National Women's Law Center



# Promise and Limits of Law

- Many LGBTQ students and their families have used the law to protect their education effectively.
- Sometimes the law lets us down.
- Legal losses don't change your fundamental, human right to be safe and thrive.



# What Laws May Be Helpful?

- State laws
- Federal law: Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendment



# What is Title IX?

- Federal civil rights law
- Prohibits sex discrimination in education
- Students can use it to sue their school in court or make complaints with U.S. Department of Education
- Courts: sex discrimination includes *sex stereotyping*



# How Can Title IX Protect LGBTQ Students?

- Anti-LGBTQ discrimination as sex stereotyping
- For trans students: “straight-forward” sex discrimination
  - Religious conversion analogy
- Protections for sexual harassment survivors apply to all students

**Injustice anywhere is a threat to Justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

# What Do Courts Say?

- Growing consensus in courts that sex discrimination includes anti-LGBTQ discrimination
- But Supreme Court hasn't weighed in yet





# U.S. Department of Education

- For many years during Obama Administration, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) said Title IX protects transgender students.
- Spring 2016: OCR releases guidance on Title IX protections for transgender students.
- Winter 2017: OCR rescinds guidance.
- The law is the law!





# Seek Assistance

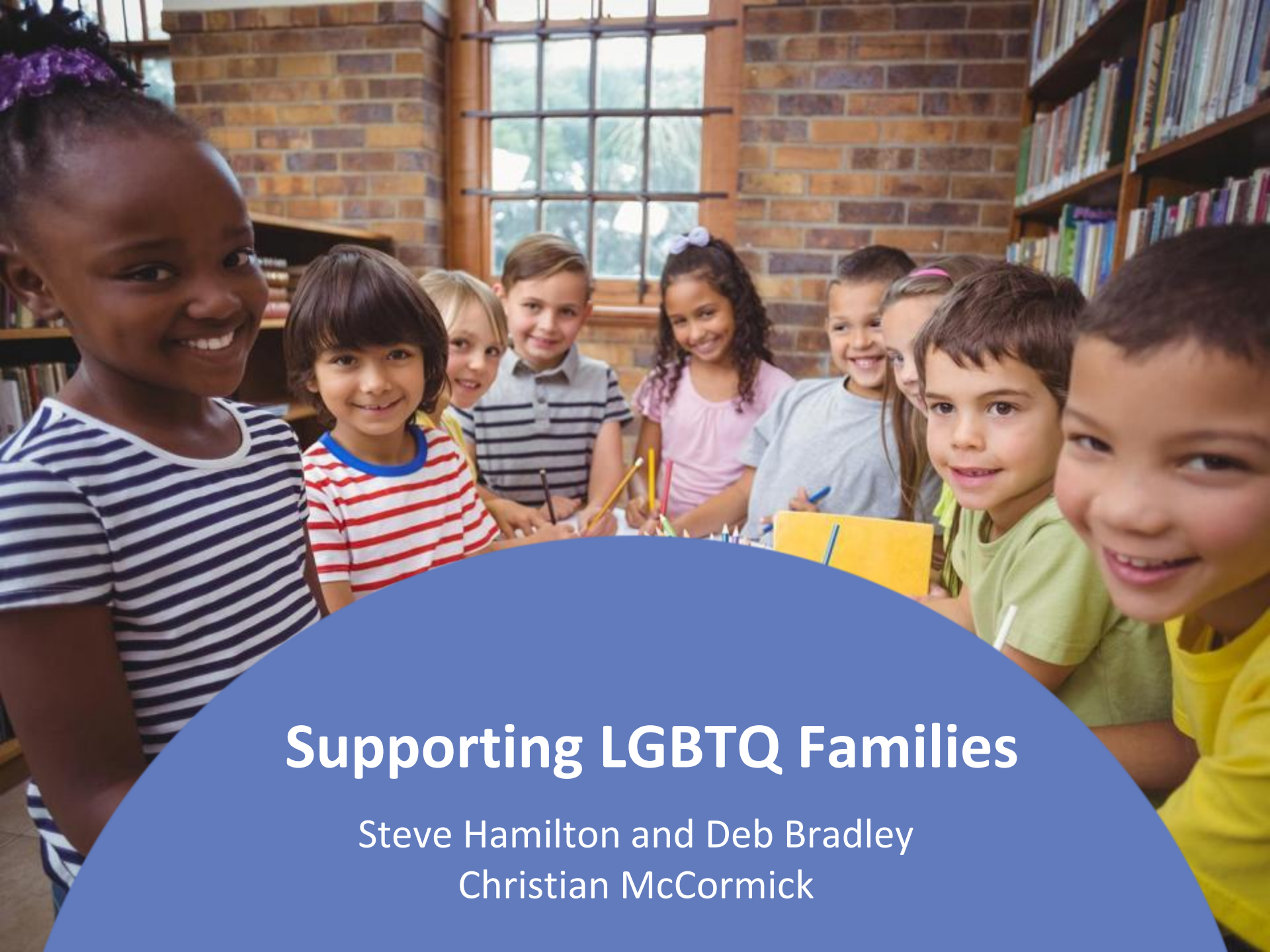


- Before taking legal action, talk to a lawyer
- Reach out to us for advice or recommendations for local attorneys:

<https://nwlc.org/legal-assistance/>

# Questions

***Please type your questions in the Q&A box on the right hand-side panel.***



# Supporting LGBTQ Families

Steve Hamilton and Deb Bradley  
Christian McCormick

# True or False

1. Schools need not be concerned about policies for transgender students until the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False
- ☐ I need more information

Please **respond to the poll** on the right hand-side panel to answer Q1.

2. Three markers that set transgender children apart is their declaration of who they are; insistently, persistently and consistently.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False
- ☐ I need more information

Please **respond to the poll** on the right hand-side panel to answer Q2.

# Experience of Transgender Student

- Being a transgender student in school
- What teachers and school staff are doing right.
- What teachers and school staff should know.



Christian McCormick  
Transgender Student  
Lafayette High School, KY



# "That's Good Enough"



## Instructions for viewing video

1. Video will play on the right-hand side panel under **multimedia viewing**
2. Please collapse all other open dialogue boxes (chat, participant list, Q&A, etc.)
3. Access the audio via your computer speakers.
4. If you have dialed-in using a land line, please mute your telephone during this section by pressing “\*6”.



## Link to Video:

<https://youtu.be/-oluw3ylyhl>

# Prevalence

- 0.6% of the U.S. population
- 1,400,000 in U.S.
- 29,900 in MA
- 2,334 north of Boston



Andrew R. Flores et al., "How Many Adults Identify as Transgender in the United States?" (Los Angeles, CA, 2016), <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf>.

# Origins of Gender Identity

- Biological factors
  - Genital and brain differentiation influenced independently
  - Prenatal androgen exposure influences brain structure and gender identity
  - Various factors influence androgen activity
- Social environment does not appear to be a factor





# When Do Children Identify?

## When do they become aware?

- 60% under 10 years
- 81% under 15 years
- 94% under 20 years

## When do they communicate?

- 15% under 15 years
- 81% greater than 16 years



U.S. Transgender Survey, 2015

# Emergence of Gender Identity

- Clues in words, play, expression, body language
- Consistent, insistent, persistent
- Trauma of wrong puberty during adolescence
- Suddenly with little warning



# Parental Response

- **Disbelief:** How do I know this isn't a phase?
- **Anxiety:** Will they be safe? Happy? Loved? Accepted?
- **Grief:** Why all the tears?
- **Guilt:** Did I cause this?
- **Anger:** Why me? Why now? Why my child?
- **Embarrassment:** What will others think?
- **Self doubt:** Do I have what it takes to deal with this?

# Factors Impacting Family Acceptance

- Social and religious values
- Extended family
- Cultural norms
- Psychological make-up and ability to adapt



# Parental Self-Care

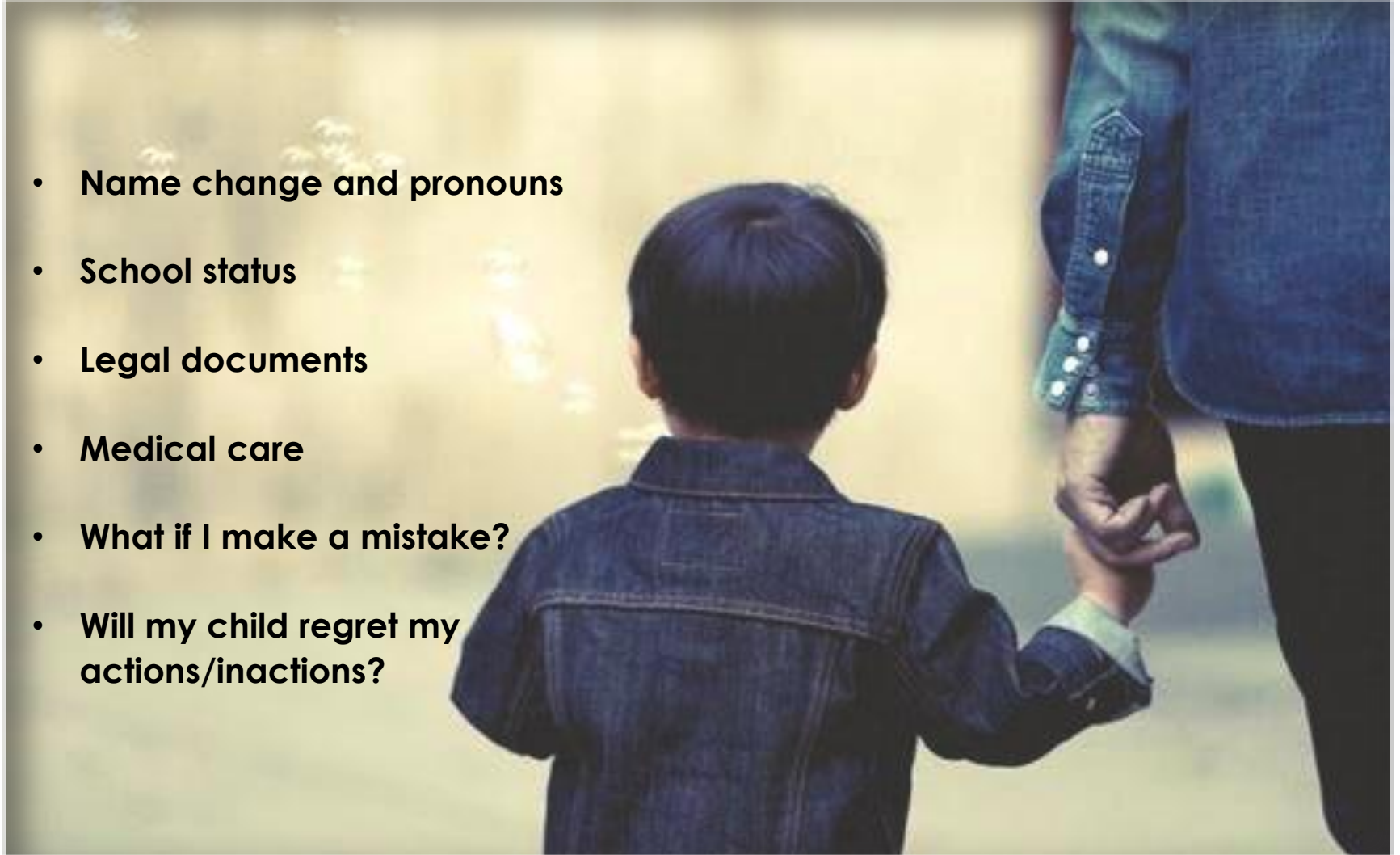
- Take time for education
- Explore assumptions
- Find support
- Embrace evolving perceptions, dreams, and aspirations
- Let go of the old and welcome the new





# The Challenge of Decision-Making

- **Name change and pronouns**
- **School status**
- **Legal documents**
- **Medical care**
- **What if I make a mistake?**
- **Will my child regret my actions/inactions?**



# Coming Out

- Who and when:
  - Extended Family
  - Playmates and parents
  - Family Friends
  - Neighbors and acquaintances
- Who and when to tell at school?
- What about congregations of faith?
- How do I handle those who don't understand when I'm feeling so fragile?





# Health Concerns

- Anxiety
- Social phobia
- Safety
- Depression
- Not all will express gender identity
- Substance abuse
- Self harm
- Suicide: 81% consider, 40% attempt, 54% if family rejection\*



\* U.S. Transgender Survey, 2015

## Reflection Question

How can families and educators partner effectively to address factors affecting the health and socio-emotional well-being of LGBTQ students?

***Please type your responses in the Chat box on the right hand-side panel.***

## Supporting One's Child

**Family acceptance is the single most predictive factor in the long-term health and well-being of transgender children.**

# It Gets Better

- Honoring the process of transition to a new identity.
- Getting to know child in affirmed gender dispels concerns.
- Time comes when gender is not central.
- Many parents become advocates, educators and ambassadors.



# For Parents and Students

- Act proactively rather than reactively when addressing concerns.
- Identify and communicate resources that students and families can access for support both within and outside of school (literature, support groups, counseling, etc.).
- Support a student's or family's choice in how, or if, they want to disclose transgender status.
- Develop systems and procedures to support individual students who might be fearful or choosing not to disclose to parents or family.

# For Administrators, Faculty, and Staff

- Provide professional learning opportunities on applicable laws, regulations, and the specific needs and concerns affecting LGBTQ students.
- Build awareness that student gender transitions are unique, individual processes that can happen at any time and that have implications relative to the privacy and supports desired by students and/or their families.
- Define and identify roles and responsibilities for staff most likely to act as resources and guides when students, parents, or staff have questions or need support.
- Be aware of misinformation distributed by groups promoting political agendas.
- Develop and share talking points to help guide staff communications and maintain student confidentiality.



# For School Boards and Community Members

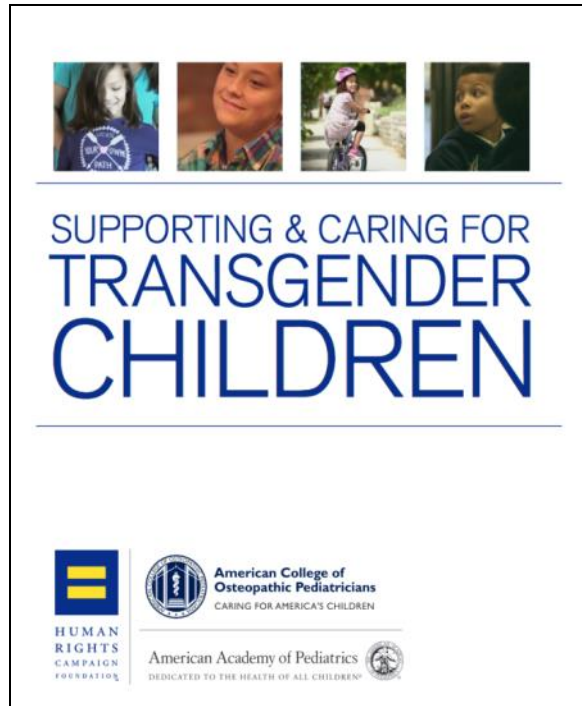
- Proactively schedule information sessions for board and community members to provide opportunities for stakeholder dialogue and discussion.
- Review, modify, and/or create school policy aligned with state and federal law.
- Work with other local entities and organizations to promote greater community awareness and understanding.
- Anticipate privacy and individual student needs when designing renovations or new building projects (e.g., consider adding gender-neutral facilities ).



## For Everyone

- Identify districts, schools, and individuals who have already made progress dealing with the issues; schedule opportunities to learn from their experiences.
- Schedule engagements and opportunities to hear from transgender individuals and/or their parents to develop greater staff and community understanding.

# Resources: Reports and Studies



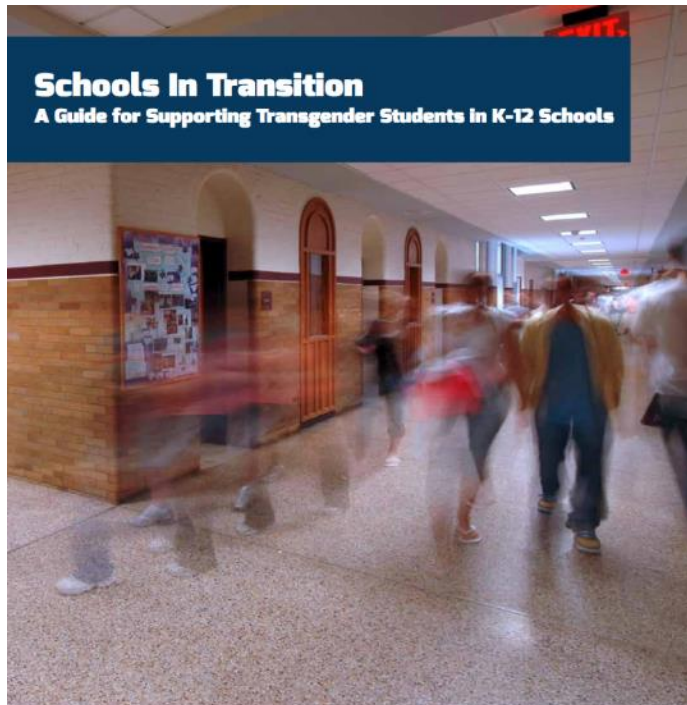
## **Supporting & Caring for Transgender Children (September 2016):**

<http://hrc-assets.s3-website-us-east-1.amazonaws.com//files/documents/SupportingCaringforTransChildren.pdf>

## **The Report of the U.S. Transgender Survey, 2015:**

<http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS%20Full%20Report%20-%20FINAL%201.6.17.pdf>

# Resources: Reports and Studies



## Excerpt from Principal Letter

I encourage anyone looking to support a transgender student to always focus on the needs of the transitioning child and think about what they need to feel safe, included and supported. I never had a political agenda; my agenda was to support our students. I listened and tried to understand when I faced obstacles. I worked to be an advocate, not an activist.

If your experience is anything like my own, you will be in unfamiliar — perhaps even uncomfortable — territory. It is important, however, that your own personal uncertainties do not interfere with your ability to do the right thing to protect the safety and well-being of these vulnerable children. This guide to supporting transgender students builds on the experiences of educators like myself and the advocates who have supported us along the way. Moreover, it ensures that the knowledge we have gained as we worked to support these students can serve as a model for other educators, parents, counselors and students. In doing so, we hope to provide a foundation so that schools and classrooms become more accepting of gender diversity and where all students can feel supported and safe.

Janice Adams  
Superintendent  
Benicia Unified School District



**Schools In Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K–12 Schools (August 2015):**  
<https://www.genderspectrum.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Schools-in-Transition-2015.pdf>

# Resources: Support Organizations

- **PFLAG**, supporting parents and families since 1972; 400 chapters and 200,000 supporters in all 50 states, <https://www.pflag.org>
- **GLAAD**, legal advocates and defenders of the LGBTQ community. <https://www.glaad.org>
- **GLSEN**, creating safe and affirming schools, K-12, for the LGBTQ community since 1990. <https://www.glsen.org>
- **Gender Spectrum**, offers information and training for families, educators, professionals, <https://www.genderspectrum.org>
- **Human Rights Campaign**, <http://www.hrc.org/youth-report/supporting-and-caring-for-our-gender-expansive-youth>

# Resources: Hotlines

- **TRANS LIFELINE:** (877) 565-8860, <https://www.translifeline.org/>
- **The Trevor Project**, serving youth to age 24: (866) 488-7386, <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/get-help-now>
- **GLBT National Youth Talk Line:** (800) 246-7743, <https://www.glbthotline.org/talkline.html>
- **National Runaway Safeline:** (800) 786-2929, <https://www.1800runaway.org>



# Questions

***Please type your questions in the Q&A box on the right hand-side panel.***

# CONTACT INFORMATION

**Deborah Bradley, Parent of Transgender Daughter; Parent Facilitator (MA)**

[dbradley2@gmail.com](mailto:dbradley2@gmail.com)

**Alexandra Brodsky, Skadden Fellow**

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[abrodsky@nwlc.org](mailto:abrodsky@nwlc.org)

**Stephen Hamilton, Parent of Transgender Daughter; Former School Administrator;**

**Former School Board Chairperson**

[shamilt@mac.com](mailto:shamilt@mac.com)

**Jabari Lyles, Executive Director**

GLSEN Maryland

[jabari@glsenmaryland.org](mailto:jabari@glsenmaryland.org)

**Christian McCormick, Transgender Student**

Lafayette High School (KY)

thank  
you!

## Get in touch with CEE

Susan Shaffer, Executive Director

301-657-7741 x111

[sshaffer@maec.org](mailto:sshaffer@maec.org)

[www.maec.org](http://www.maec.org)

## Still have questions?

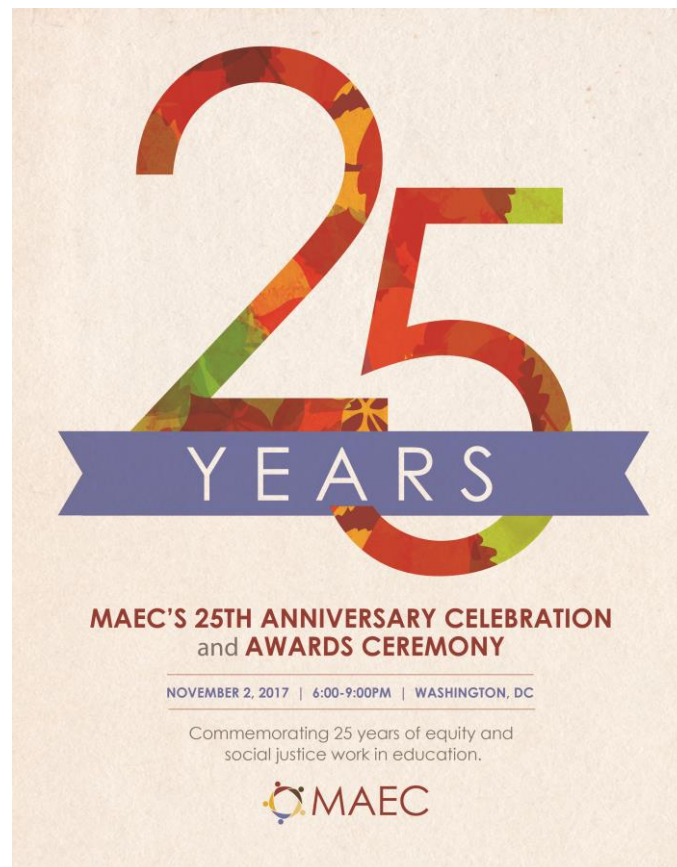
CEE is planning a follow-up call where you can drop-in and speak directly to available presenters from this webinar.

**Interested?** We will be emailing information on the call soon.



**Keep an eye on your email!**

## Let's Celebrate!



Learn more about the event and RSVP:  
[www.maec.org/celebrate25](http://www.maec.org/celebrate25)

